



**ALLEN THOMAS**

# TEEN CHAMPIONS

A Subgenre Book for the *Champions*

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# INTRODUCTION



*“Grond’s attacking the city? But I can’t stop him now! I’ve got to finish this term paper... and find a date for the dance!”*

One of the most enjoyable, and often light-hearted, types of superheroic adventuring involves *teen heroes* — high school students who fight crime and save the city (or the world). While few gamers would like to go back and relive their teen years, it’s a lot of fun to roleplay through that sort of experience again... with superpowers! It’s also a great opportunity to laugh at, or triumph over, things that once caused frustration, dismay, or angst.

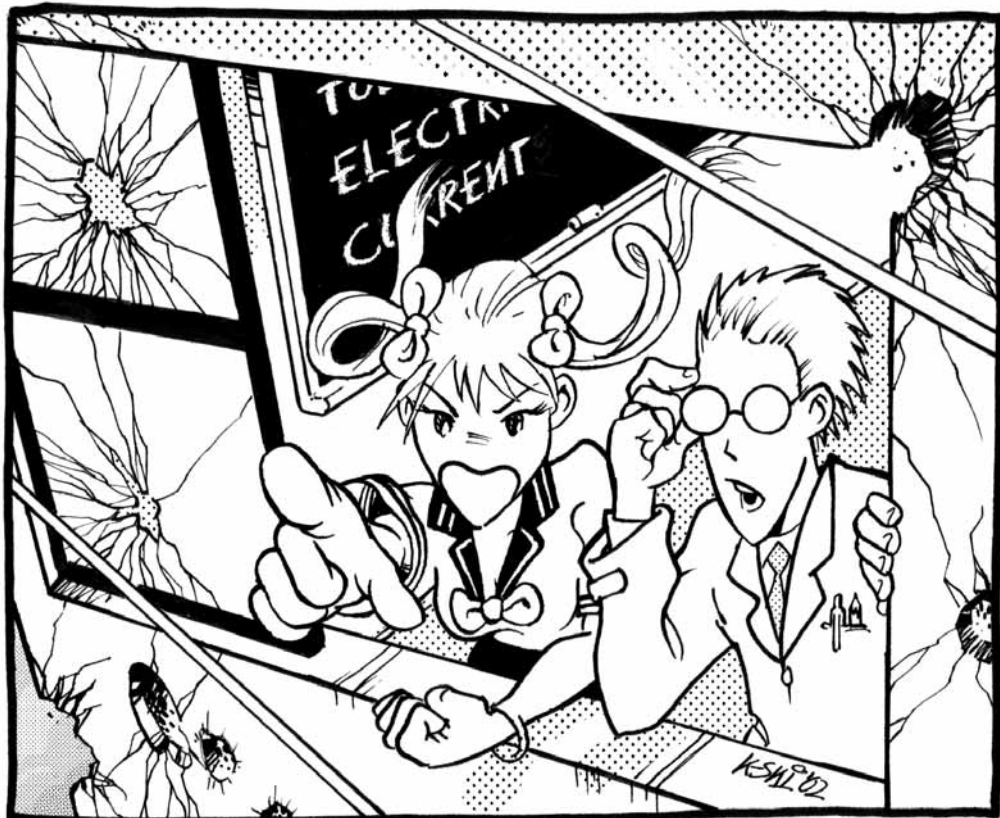
*Teen Champions* is about just that sort of adventuring. It focuses on teen heroes — characters who often fully haven’t come into their powers, and may have difficulty using the powers they do possess — fighting their crosstown rivals, teen villains, and the occasional adult supervillain to boot. *Teen Champions* PCs may not be as powerful as regular *Champions* characters, but they’re just as fun to

roleplay, despite the extra burdens and restrictions they sometimes have to put up with.

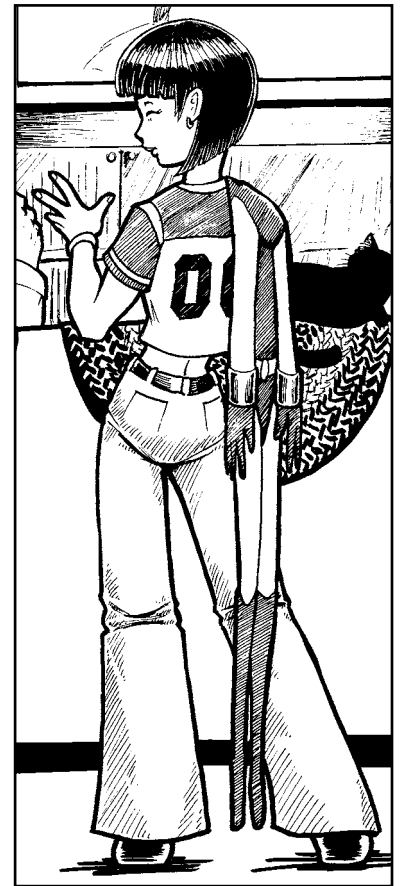
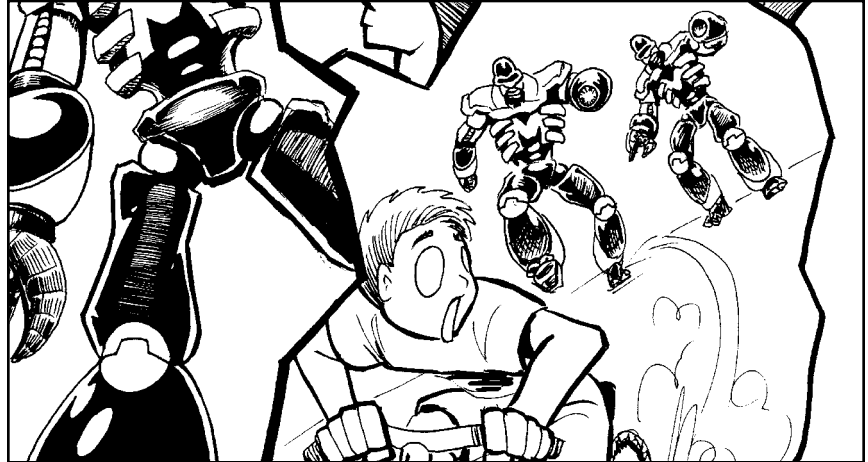
Chapter One, *Young Heroes: Teen Champions Games*, describes the *Teen Champions* subgenre. It explains the elements of the subgenre, discusses how those elements work in game play, and provides guidelines for character creation.

The remainder of the book provides *Champions* Universe setting material and villains for *Teen Champions* games. Chapter Two describes *Ravenswood Academy*, a school specially designed to teach young superhumans how to use their powers and become superheroes. Run by a former superheroine, it’s the perfect setting for your *Teen Champions* games. Chapter Three, *Gamemastering Teen Champions*, not only has plenty of GMing advice, it’s got nearly two dozen villains and NPC heroes for use in your games.

So get that homework done pronto! You’ve got crime to fight!



**chapter one:**



**YOUNG HEROES:  
TEEN CHAMPIONS GAMES**

# TEEN CHAMPIONS GENRE



*“Doctor Destroyer can’t attack today — I’ve got finals next week!”*

*“But I can’t go to prom with Sara! If I don’t take Gravitator to the prom, she’ll destroy the whole high school!”*

*“I think our substitute teacher is really one of Mechaanon’s robots!”*

*“But, Mom, you can’t let Jeff take the mini-van tonight! If I don’t get to the Pharos Build... I mean if I don’t make it on time to... I mean... Mom! I just need the car, OK?”*

All these and more are the desperate cries of teen superheroes attempting the herculean task of juggling the demands of being an adolescent and the responsibilities of being a superhero. The responsibilities are just the same, but the demands are worse than any adult can imagine: your mom just shrunk your costume and now it’s two sizes too small. Your dad found a new hiding place for the car keys — how long until the villains attack? It was a perfect first date with the girl you’ve had a crush on since grade school... until the Ultimates showed up and spoiled it. You lost another job at a fast food joint — is it your fault saving the city is more important than flipping burgers?

Teen superheroes might live in the shadow of their adult counterparts, but that doesn’t mean their lives are any easier — nor does it mean their heroics are any less important or brave. What the teen superhero lacks in power, he makes up in enthusiasm and a never-say-die attitude. What he lacks in experience, he makes up in optimism and new ways of thinking. Teens are the future, and teen superheroes are law-abiding society’s future defenders. But growing pains are a part of adolescence, and even the future has to start somewhere....

## TEEN CHAMPIONS BASICS

The basic elements that define a *Teen Champions* campaign are the characters’ ages, and their relative lack of freedom.

### AGE

In a *Teen Champions* game, player characters are 13-18 years old *and in (or should be in) high school*. Some PCs might be younger than thirteen — the kid genius, for instance, who finds himself surrounded by older kids. Some PCs might be slightly older (maybe school administrators refuse to accept home schooling from monks in Shamballah as credit for algebra). But the key feature of *Teen Champions* campaigns is that the heroes are high school age, and at least some (if not all) of the characters are minors.

Although many *Teen Champions* subgenre tropes apply equally well to college environments — especially the emotional melodrama, the importance of doing well in school, and the penniless existence — college students have more freedom than high school students. That means they have more in common with their adult counterparts than with their high school-age ones. A college student is less beholden to his parents and other authority figures, and even if he still receives financial support from his parents, he can go it alone regardless of his parents’ wishes if he wants to. A sense of personal responsibility and familial obligation might get in the way, but unlike minors, there’s no law stating he can’t “abandon” his parents.

### LACK OF FREEDOM

A lack of freedom, which ranges from being powerless to make decisions about how to spend one’s time or where to live, to a simple inability to earn a decent living, underlies so much of teen life — and especially teen angst — that it forms a backdrop to nearly everything that happens in a *Teen Champions* campaign. In many ways it’s this lack of freedom — these responsibilities a PC did *not* choose for himself — that defines a teen’s day-to-day existence. It becomes an all the more stark element of the game when contrasted to the relative freedom that having superpowers sometimes gives a character.

Some people say — and a parent who’s angry with a son or daughter almost always says once, and maybe over and over again — that having a child is a greater burden to bear than being a child. The parent, however, *chose* to have a child. The child wasn’t given a choice about who his parents would be, or whether he even wanted to be born — and where’s the justice in that? A person might also say military life is more restrictive than the life of a teen who has strict parents. But once again, a soldier or sailor probably chose to enlist in the military. No one asked the child to sign on the dotted line. If the person doesn’t like military life, he only has himself to blame — but who can the teen blame?

To the teen, there’s a mind-numbing infinity of rules and laws that restrict his behavior. He usually can’t chose to drop out of high school like an older person can drop out of college or quit a job. He can’t call in sick to school without his parents’ permission. He can’t divorce his parents like an adult can divorce his spouse. He’s stuck with those parents until his eighteenth birthday... unless the state removes him from their custody, and the situation needs to get pretty bad before the government steps into a family matter. The teen can’t range far and

wide looking for the best hang-outs. Even if he's old enough to drive and fortunate enough to have a car, he still has constraints on how late he can be out... and if he doesn't, one of his friends probably does. For a similar reason teens are limited in what jobs they can have: part-time, evenings and weekends only, and no experience required.

That brings the discussion around to money. Even a teen with a job has limited funds. Work every night for four hours, ten hours a day on weekends, and a teen can squeeze forty hours into a busy week... but probably at minimum wage. For most of the United States in mid-2005 that's \$5.15, a whopping \$206 for a forty-hour week — before taxes and deductions.

The problems this lack of freedom causes — problems that might disappear, or be easily solved, if the PC had the same freedom as an adult — can pop up in surprising ways. An adult role-playing a teen character should strive to keep this lack of freedom in mind (and remember to complain about it if that's appropriate for his character). The restrictions on a teen's activities even come into play during character creation when a player chooses Disadvantages for his character. A couple of examples:

- Being bullied at school? Too bad, unless you expect your parents to buy a new house in some other school district, or you're willing to get a reputation as a snitch. Better make that *Hunted* Disadvantage 11- instead of 8-. It's a small world and an even smaller school....
- Messy break-up with the boy- or girlfriend and never want to see the person again? Tough luck, kid, because chances are you two met at school and probably have a couple of classes together. Do you really think your parents will move to a different school district because of your break-up? Better not buy off that *DNPC* Disadvantage just yet....
- Have trouble biting your tongue when an authority figure says something dumb? Don't you know children are to be seen, not heard, and the First Amendment doesn't apply to you yet? Did you really buy that *Psychological Limitation: Dislike Of Authority Figures* Disadvantage as only Common? Very Common might make more sense....
- What time did Dr. Destroyer say he was going to detonate the Chronal-Null Bomb and vaporize the city's history? Midnight? You better hope it's not a school night — what time is curfew again? After all: do you know where your children are? Welcome to the wonderful world of *Social Limitation: Minor* (Frequently, Minor).

But lack of freedom isn't just a roadblock, at least not for teen heroes: it's a source of melodrama, a fact of life to rail against, an obstacle to overcome, and a reason to innovate. Much of the fun in a *Teen Champions* campaign results from finding ways to get around the rules, bend the rules, and break the rules, whether those rules are handed down from on high by the government, the school's principal, or

the parental units. And if a normal teen, driven by a growing need to prove his independence or sheer rebelliousness, seeks to break the rules at every turn, then a teen superhero has even more reason to break them when it's up to him to stop a supervillain.

### You're Grounded!

While teen heroes lack many of the freedoms adults take for granted, players and GMs should remember that punishments for breaking the rules tend to be less severe than they are for adults (although never less severe in the mind of a teen!). Even when a PC is caught breaking the law — for instance, driving a car without a license because he couldn't get to the bomb in time on his moped, or committing vandalism when his energy blast breaks a window just as a supervillain teleports away and the police arrive on the scene — the punishment is oftentimes a stern talking to, a ride in the back of a police cruiser, and the authorities talking to the law-breaker's parents.

Loss of driving privileges, grounding, extra chores, detention, Friday or Saturday school — these are the punishments a teen superhero can expect when he's caught disobeying his parents or teachers. They aren't the end of the world, so a player shouldn't hesitate to have his character break the rules... especially since breaking rules, however good or bad the reason, is a large part of a teen's life (and that goes double for the teen superhero). A group of teen heroes usually has at least one nervous Nellie — a teen who always worries about getting caught and who always has a guilty conscience — but players of other types of characters should take risks. In the end the standard punishments only place more restrictions on the teen's freedom, which invariably lead to more rules he must break if he's to stop the supervillain the next time the criminal sets some fiendish plot in motion.

Yeah, sure, you're breaking some rules, but rules are meant to be broken and what do adults know anyhow? They just don't understand....

## SETTING ELEMENTS

Adventures for teen superheroes, like those for their adult counterparts, might span galaxies, universes, or even realities, but most return to four important setting features: the school; the home; the hang-outs; and the places of employment. As discussed above, a teen has many restrictions on his movement, so the campaign setting revolves around locations that are fixtures of teen life, the places the heroes come back to again and again. Some locations the GM should create himself — for example, he should design the school so he can give it plenty of secrets concerning both the location and the faculty for the PCs to uncover in the course of their adventures. But the players can contribute other locations to the campaign — a PC's home, the fast food joint he works at, and others that directly influence a character's background. But whoever comes up with the features, both the GM and his players should have them in mind before and during character creation.

## NATIONALITY

High school as described in *Teen Champions* assumes a GM sets his campaign in the United States. While issues involving adolescence and becoming an adult are universal, the exact nature of the school a PC attends depends a great deal on the society and culture he lives in. Gamers who want to set their *Teen Champions* campaigns in other nations or cultures, such as Great Britain, can find out more about what high school is like there with a little research, if not memories of their own high school experiences there.

## RUNAWAYS AND HOME SCHOOLING

Not all *Teen Champions* campaigns have to make high school central to the lives of the PCs. Two possible alternate campaign types are those where the PCs are runaways, and those where the PCs are schooled at home.

For a *Runaways* campaign, maybe the PCs' faces are displayed on the side of every carton of milk from one coast to the other, or maybe the parents haven't even noticed the PCs are gone. Maybe the PCs' parents really are evil — supervillains, VIPER agents, mad scientists, or members of some profane cult like DEMON. Maybe the PCs' parents are just neglectful — a much smaller, but no less loathsome, evil. Maybe the PCs are orphans. Whatever the situation, the PCs are on the run, don't go to school, and can't fall back on adults to help them.

For a *Home Schooling* campaign, the PCs don't attend an educational institution. Instead their parents school them at home, sometimes hiring tutors to help, sometimes handling all the educational requirements themselves. Maybe a wealthy individual who's secretly a masked avenger of the night has adopted the PCs after their superhero parents were killed in a climactic battle with a supervillain. Knowing the PCs have special needs, the adoptive guardian hires private tutors to teach them in the west wing of his stately manor. Or maybe the PCs are all members of the same birthing-pod, and their extraterrestrial parents choose to educate their children

## School

Nine months a year, five days a week, a teen must attend high school. He can drop out at sixteen in some states and eighteen in others; otherwise it's against the law for a teen not to attend school.

School is central to a teen's life. If he has an active social life and participates in extracurricular activities, he might spend more time at school than he does at home. Because it's so important to a teen, it's likely to be just as important to the PCs in a teen superhero campaign. The GM should put considerable thought and work into the high school the PCs attend before the players begin creating their characters.

School, especially public high school, is both an institution dedicated to learning and a microcosm of society. It's not like a workplace, where people of similar backgrounds and tastes tend to gravitate to certain types of jobs. Everyone from all walks of life, from all creeds and credos, from all income brackets, must go to school. And a public high school, unlike the primary and middle schools that matriculate students to the high school, often pulls its student body from a broad geographic region with a wide variety of residents.

All of society's ills are on display in a high school, stuffed together into a single building — a woefully small building considering the diverse personalities and needs of the students. All of these people are placed side-by-side, locker-by-locker, and have to learn to cope with each other. And sometimes this coping results in abuse, whether physical or verbal, of the strange or unusual.

It's not all negative, though. High school also exposes teens to new ideas and new people. For some students, high school is the first time they take meaningful steps toward what they'll do or who they'll be for the rest of their lives. It can mean a new start — a place where they can leave behind the mistakes they made in grade school or middle school and start fresh. For teens who have interests their parents don't share, and maybe don't even understand, they might meet others their own age with the same interests — for the first time these teens can share their likes and dislikes with someone who understands.

Here are some questions the GM should consider as he creates the school:

### Public Or Private?

Local governments fund public schools with tax revenues. Schools get some financing from the state and federal governments, but mostly it comes from the residents and businesses in the school district. At the most basic level, this means if incomes in the area are low and business is bad, so is the budget for the school. For private schools, parents pay tuition to send their children to the school, or the child earns a scholarship.

Some of the commonly-held beliefs about differences between the two are: public schools are more diverse, but private schools are less lawless. Students in a public school rub shoulders

with peers from myriad backgrounds, for better or worse, whereas students in a private school are more sheltered. It's easier for a private school to expel a student (or fire a teacher). Private schools have a reputation for providing a better education for their students. Now, you can find exceptions to every single one of those stereotypes in school districts throughout the US, but the GM should keep them in mind as he creates the PCs' school and its various rival schools.

### Location, Location, Location

The GM has three basic choices for the location for the PCs' school: urban; suburban; and rural. Suburban public schools (or "urban" schools in small cities) are what most gamers know best, either because they attended one themselves, and/or because that type of school is what's usually shown on TV or in movies. In most of the United States, they're generally middle class, and mostly white; some are excellent, some not so good.

The stereotype of urban public schools is that minorities comprise most of the student body, the school offers a poor education, and it's violent. News stories about urban schools abound, giving the GM plenty of inspiration for various adventures and subplots; a few TV shows and movies portray them as well.

Rural public schools cover a much larger area, though they often have fewer students, and transportation to and from the school becomes a key issue. The student body is generally less diverse — the rural background figures prominently in nearly every student's home life, so all the kids have something in common. Because of this homogeneity an outsider, or someone different, can have more problems finding acceptance. But this isn't always the case: since the high school is smaller, the person who's different might have known his classmates all his life, and sometimes this means they've come to accept him just the way he is.

All sorts of schools have funding problems, but typically these financial difficulties are more severe in urban and rural schools. The severity of funding problems often correlates to the quality of a school: the worse the problems, the worse the school.

### The School District

A *school district* is a special-purpose governmental administrative body. It's responsible for all the primary, middle, and secondary schools in an area, and can encompass one or more towns depending on the geography and population of the area, though it's often limited to a single county or city. Its legislative body is the school board (sometimes called a board of trustees or school committee), and the voting residents of the district elect the members of the board. Among its powers are the ability to legislate school-wide codes concerning the conduct of the students and teachers, and sometimes to levy taxes to raise funds for schools in the district. The school district's chief executive is the Superintendent of Schools, who's appointed by the school board. Many superintendents are former educators, but some are professional administrators



or politicians. The superintendent performs day-to-day administrative tasks and focuses on policy implementation. The school board, the superintendent, and various administrators are collectively referred to as the school corporation.

Students rarely interact with the school board, but if serious problems arise between students and teachers (for example, the PCs discover one of their teachers is a former supervillain and try to get him fired), or if a student is deemed a serious discipline problem worthy of expulsion (a teen uses his superpowers to harm a teacher or another student, whether purposely or accidentally, justified or not), the matter often becomes one for parents to hash out with the school board. Local school politics often focuses on the board or superintendent, rather than on individual schools.

When creating the school district, the GM should consider several issues:

- How many high schools does the district encompass? This is particularly important when it comes to establishing school rivalries and other minor but important facts that may affect the PCs (and see *Size And Attendance*, below).
- What's the current state of school board politics? Is the district grappling with any major issues right now — funding, school policy, curriculum, a troublesome but popular principal? Is the board itself united, or does it suffer from major rifts between the members? Does the superintendent enjoy the board's full support?

**Size And Attendance**

What are the demographics of both the student body and the school district? How many students

and how many teachers are there at the PCs' school? Is the school struggling to provide adequate space and facilities for its students or is it big and empty because the area's experienced a population drain? Is it well-funded or struggling to make ends meet?

Most public high schools have at least five hundred students, but some may have as many as five or six thousand. One teacher for every thirteen to nineteen students is the average student-to-teacher ratio in the United States. More crowded schools tend to have more students per teacher; the conventional wisdom is that smaller classes lead to a better education. Larger schools typically offer more extracurricular activities, as well as a more diverse curriculum, whereas smaller schools usually limit themselves to traditional activities and classes — unless, of course, the larger school has serious financial difficulties.

**And All The Rest**

- What are the school colors? This affects the appearance of everything from letterman's jackets and uniforms for football players, cheerleaders, and the band, to the streamers hung in the halls during Homecoming.
- What's the school mascot? Is there an ethnic controversy concerning the school's mascot? Is the mascot cool... or kind of lame?
- Is there a dress code, and if so, how rigorous is it? More and more schools have implemented a strict dress code to keep students' minds on learning rather than what (or how little or what color thong) their classmates are wearing. They can also help to stem gang influence,

Continued from last page

in the home to shelter them from the vices and excesses of Terran teen life. When a whole planet is the wrong side of the tracks, when children are surrounded by 6.5 billion bad influences, when schools insist on teaching evolution even though everyone in the Galaxy knows sentience arose spontaneously as the great scholar Trr'ghirra described, what else can a beleaguered alien parent do?



## REDUCING THE GM'S WORKLOAD

Making up a school requires a lot of detail; here's some advice for reducing the workload.

—All the PCs are in the same class (all freshman, all sophomores, and so on) and have many of the same classes (although they can have the classes at different times). This way you can limit the number of teachers you need to create right away. You can add details (names of teachers, students in other years, and so on) as you need them.

—Focus on fleshing out the extracurricular activities the PCs are involved with and encourage your players to have all their characters in the same activities. This way you can make up the other activities on the go and only when you need them for an adventure. If none of the PCs is on the swim team, you don't really need to know anything about it until it becomes the focus for a scenario.

—Create the "leader" of each clique, rather than every member of the clique (particularly if none of the PCs belong to the clique). Treat the leader as a personality; the rest of the clique are his nameless followers and yes-men (in other words, his goons). You can flesh out the other members of the clique over the course of the campaign.

—One way to simplify the high school creation process is for a GM to use the high school he attended as the school the PCs attend. This makes it easy for the GM, and maybe the players, to envision the school environs

since they prevent students from wearing gang colors. Interestingly, many superhero costumes fail to pass the muster according to the standard school dress code.

- What athletic teams does the school have? In America, football and basketball are the mainstays, but what about baseball, track and field, volleyball, gymnastics, swimming and diving, cross country, soccer, softball, lacrosse, field hockey, ice hockey, tennis, wrestling, and golf? Are there gender issues concerning the athletic teams — for example, do some girls want to play on the boys-only football team — and how does the school handle these issues? Does it allow girls to try out for any team they want or does it fund a separate but equal team — a "powderpuff" football team just for girls, for instance? Is there constant wrangling over when a team gets to use the facilities, and do members of other sports resent the fact that football or basketball always seems to take precedence over other sports? Do the football or basketball players hate to give up the field or gym for other "less important" sports? Are the players on certain teams regarded as "cool," while others are not?
- What extracurricular activities does the school offer: debate team and speech club, academic decathlon, school newspaper, television stations, an internet forum/web page club, swing choir, Students Against Drunk Driving, chess team, student government, cheerleading, band, jazz band, theater, 4-H, yearbook, service clubs, video yearbook, science club, foreign language clubs, National Honor Society? And what's the stereotype of students who participate in these activities?
- When are the vacations? The dates of vacations often determine the rest of the schedule, especially when tests are given (teachers often prefer to give tests before breaks and before students spend a couple of days forgetting everything they've learned). See *Typical Academic Calendar* on page 64 for an example of a school's vacation schedule.
- Are there policemen on the premises, or does the school have campus security? More and more schools in recent decades have police or security on site in an attempt to curb violence; they may also have metal detectors at the doors, closed circuit TV cameras in the hallways, and other security measures. This means nothing but trouble for teens trying to skip out of school to stop some supervillain. Another issue related to security is student IDs. Most schools require a student to have a student ID, usually with an embarrassingly bad photograph of the student in question, and the student must carry it with him at all times. What if a PC's identification card gets melted into slag by Firewing?

- How close are the PCs to graduating? The older they are, the better known they probably are around the school, the more privileges and responsibilities they're likely to have. In some schools, for example, seniors can leave campus to eat lunch if they want to. However, the older the PCs are, the less time they have before graduation changes or ends the campaign.

## DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

Most *Teen Champions* campaigns center around one school. Not only does this make social interaction easier (since all the PCs are at the same school during the day), it's often the reason the PCs know each other. But this isn't the only way to organize a campaign — another method is to have the PCs go to different schools.

Going to different schools lessens the focus on the day-to-day school life and increases the focus on superheroics, since one of the few times all the PCs are together is when they team up to fight crime. It can lead to interschool rivalries among the superteam — whose school is better, whose football team is better, whose team will win the big game, which school has prettier girls or cuter boys, and so on — all of which makes for good roleplaying. On the other hand, anything happening at a PC's school requires roleplaying or combat that exclude some or all of the other players. Events like a supervillain attack on the school require an additional level of explanation if a GM wants to involve all the PCs in the action — remember, a PC can't easily leave the school premises during the day to help his friends stop Mechanon's attack. To make sure all the PCs can plausibly get involved, such attacks have to occur during the big football game, prom night when all the other PCs have dates to the prom, or other functions that bring students from diverse schools together.

## OTHER SORTS OF SCHOOLS

The section above loosely defines all schools as public or private, but those are broad definitions — other types of schools exist. Three common types are:

**Charter:** For a charter school, the local school board gives a private individual or group a charter to open a school. The school receives public funds and is accountable to the school board, but doesn't suffer all the restrictions a traditional public school does. In theory this allows the school and its staff to innovate; in practice it may lead to the school being more focused on profit or other considerations than on proper teaching. Parents can choose to send their children to the charter school or the local public school.

**Magnet:** A magnet school draws students from throughout the school district by specializing in one subject such as math, music, or the arts. It chooses students in the district who show a talent for the magnet school's specialization, or students choose a magnet school based on their areas of interest. The magnet school is publicly funded, usually located in an urban area, and often controver-

sial — some people believe that catering to specific types of students (often gifted ones) discriminates against the student body as a whole, and that funding magnet schools shouldn't take priority over funding traditional public schools.

**Alternative:** Alternative school is a broad term for a private school that fosters an environment radically different than that in public schools, usually based on a non-traditional educational philosophy. This can run the gamut from Montessori, to democratic classrooms, to Christian-based teaching. The term itself is informal.

## Home

Second only in importance to school is a teen's home. Each player, with input from the GM, should decide what his character's home life is like. Many of the details about the home should come hand-in-hand with the details about the PCs' parents, but some of the specific questions a player should ask himself about the home include:

**Physical Location And Size:** Is the PC's home on the wrong side of the tracks, a gated community, a solidly middle class subdivision? Is it a trailer, a ranch-style home like all the others on Pleasant View Avenue, a mansion, or something in between? Is it new or not very old, or has it been lived in for many decades? Is it a superhero base? The exact details typically depend on the income of the character's parents, as well as the location of the school.

**Attitude Toward Home:** How does the PC feel about his home? Does he never tell his friends at school where he lives because he's embarrassed at how small or ramshackle his home is? Or if he's the child of superheroes, does he keep it a secret because he lives in a superhero base... and how does he feel about that? Does he hate being at home, and when he is, does he close himself up in his bedroom? Has his parent's home become the hang-out for all his friends, and if so, why? Is it because it has a swimming pool, his Mom keeps the refrigerator well-stocked, his parents are always out of town, they have the best entertainment center, or some other reason?

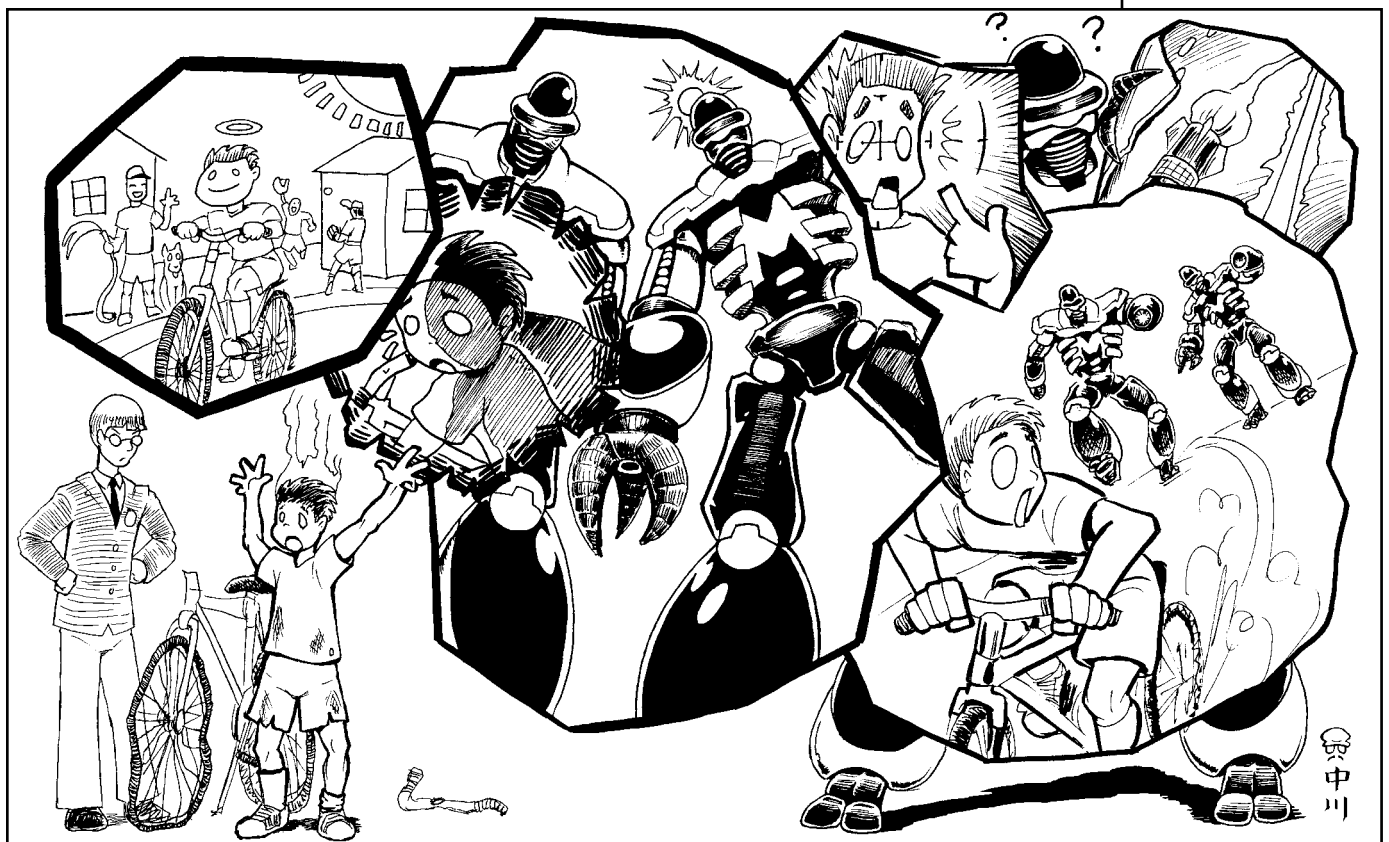
### FAMILY

For better or worse, a teen hero doesn't have his home to himself — he's got to share it with at least one parent (or parent figure), and perhaps some siblings or other relatives. This raises all sorts of issues that may factor into the character's background or personality, such as:

- Are both his parents still alive? If not, why not? Did the death(s) have some connection to how he got his powers? Does he feel responsible for the death(s)?
- How well do his parents get along — are they happily married, unhappily married, separated, divorced? Do they fight in front of him, and if so, how bitterly?
- Does the PC favor one parent for some reason?
- How many siblings, if any, does the PC have? How many are sisters, and how many brothers? Are they older or younger than him? How

Continued from last page

and staff. If that's not appropriate, many high schools have websites where a GM can find loads of information about class schedules, extracurricular activities, maps of the high school, dress codes, rules and regulations, faculty, and so on.



## THE HANG-OUTS OF YESTERYEAR

Teen hang-outs of past decades, such as the ones listed below, might come into play during a time travel adventure — the teen heroes journey back to encounter adult superheroes when they were teens, or maybe meeting their parents when they were kids (often an eye-opening experience). And perhaps your campaign setting still has some of these places as one of the few remaining examples of Americana.

—*Dances* are a universal feature of teen life through the ages, but in the past, schools organized more of them. Sock hops, so called because the teens took off their shoes to dance so they wouldn't damage the gym floor, are the type of dance most often shown in the fiction.

—*The soda shop* is the Fifties equivalent of hanging out at the ice cream shop or a fast food restaurant. In short: not very exciting.

—*Drive-in theaters* are large outdoor movie theaters that showed several movies — double or triple-features — on Friday or Saturday night back in the Fifties and Sixties; few remain in existence today. A drive-in theater is something any teens should love. The teens sit in the privacy of their cars, almost totally outside of adult supervision, so they could make out or do other things if they didn't want to watch the movie. And if you hide some friends in the trunk of the car, you can get them in for free.

—*Drive-in restaurants* aren't quite as good as drive-in theaters, but pretty close, since they still let teens remain in the car and stay outside of adult supervision. Plus there are carhops for the guys to flirt with.

well does he get along with them, and they with each other?

- Do any other relatives (grandparents, wayward uncles, out of work cousins) live in the home? If so, under what circumstances?
- Is the home situation generally a positive one, or does the PC suffer from neglect or abuse? How does he feel about his home and family?

## Hang-outs

Hanging out with the parents is a drag — a teen has to watch what he says when parents are around, and his parents always nag him to do chores when all he wants to do is relax. Teens are too old to go play outside like kids do, but not old enough to hang out at the local bar or other places where adults congregate. This leaves the teen with limited options, like the mall. But many business proprietors don't like teens hanging around their shops and restaurants. Teens have little money to spend, don't leave good tips, and have a reputation for shoplifting, vandalism, and otherwise making trouble.

So what's a teen to do?

Here are some places teens can hang out. They may become fixtures of a campaign setting, since teens tend to go to the same places again and again. In general a teen hang-out is a large place where lots of people mill around (so teens with no money to spend and no good reason for being there don't seem conspicuous), or a place that, for whatever reason, doesn't mind kids hanging out. If possible, the place should let the teens stay out of the direct view of authority figures — the drive-in restaurants of yesteryear are a good example of this, since the manager would be inside the building, the teens outside where the manager couldn't see what they were doing; the malls of today are also a good example.

- **The mall.** This is the classic hang-out for teens growing up in the last couple decades. *Champions Battlegrounds* describes the New Urbana Galleria on pages 27-41; it makes an excellent hang-out for teens.
- **A local park.** Parks have lots of space, and often not too many people around to bother teens... but it's often illegal to be in the park after sunset, and the police may enforce this. Being outdoors is great when the weather's fine, but not so good in the winter or when it's raining. And unless the park has basketball courts or sports fields, there may not be much to do other than sit around talking, carve one's name in a park bench or table, and commit other acts of petty vandalism. *Champions Battlegrounds* describes Memorial Park on pages 13-18; it makes an excellent hang-out for teens.
- **The beach.** Typically this is only a year-round hang-out for teens who live in warmer coastal areas. Excitement-wise, it's about the same as the local park, but at least there's water for swimming, surfing, or fishing... and the girls are wearing bathing suits.

- **A bowling alley, arcade, or pool hall.** Bowling alleys are dull, arcades are a dying breed, and some pool halls won't allow teens inside, either because they serve booze or out of simple snobbery. But in some campaigns, these may be options
- **The comic store, gaming shop, music store, or other store that caters to teen interests.** These places often rely on young people as their main customer base and are staffed by young people, so they're less concerned about teenaged customers hanging out there.
- **A club or recreation center that specifically caters to teens.** Some municipalities have special recreation clubs specifically for teens (often created as a way of cutting down on cruising, gang activity, vandalism, or the like). Whether the kids regard these places as cool/fun or stupid varies. In some cities there are music/dance clubs that cater to teens, such as the Bronze on the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.
- **Outside the local convenience store.** This is about as boring as it gets for teen hang-outs, but generally there's a reason to hang out here. For example, as adults enter the store, teens might beg the adults to buy cigarettes or beer for them.
- **A friend's workplace.** Unlike other fast food places, teens can often hang out at a place where a friend works. On one hand, the friend can often hook up his friends with free food; on the other hand, it's still a fast food joint and not very exciting. Also, more than one teen has lost a job because his friends were hanging around, or because his boss caught him giving his friends free food.
- **School events.** Prominent school events like football and basketball games, or a dance like Homecoming, Winter Formal, or prom, make great places to hang out. Even teens who hate school often find themselves attending activities the school's organized, since they have nothing better to do and everyone they know is there. On the other hand, these events only occur periodically, so PCs can't spend time there every night or week.

## Places Of Employment

In the United States, the Fair Labor Standards Act dictates the terms under which a minor can work. Unless employed by a parent or guardian, a teen must be fourteen or older to have a job and can only work 18 hours during a school week. At sixteen a teen can work more hours. Furthermore a teen can't hold a job deemed hazardous — mining, excavation, operating construction equipment, or the like.

And that's only the law. The actual jobs available to a teen are even more limited. Evenings and weekends are prime time for those seeking part-

time employment, so competition is fierce. Teens have a reputation for being unreliable, most managers would rather not trust a teen with money, and let's not forget transportation is always an issue. Because of all this and more, a teen has few choices where he seeks gainful employment. Some of the most common jobs typically held by teens include:

- **Fast food restaurants.** The mainstay of teen employment, these restaurants tend to cycle through teens quickly, and adults often scorn these places, so competition for jobs is less stiff than elsewhere. Terrible conditions, ridiculous managers, rude customers, and grease causes pimples... Would you like fries with that?
- **Other food service industry jobs.** Teens are unlikely to obtain positions as wait staff in most traditional restaurants, though some hire them (particularly teenaged girls who look a little older than their years). But beyond that, restaurants always need dishwashers and other such workers. Other possibilities: pizza delivery (if the teen has a car); ice cream shops, which sound idyllic when compared to fast food; or grocery store clerk (either bagging, stock boy, or operating the register).
- **Convenience stores.** Some teens may find work at convenience stores. But many states have laws limiting who can sell alcohol — at least eighteen in some states, and twenty-one in many others — so if the store sells beer and wine, it's unlikely to employ teens.
- **Babysitting.** This one's almost exclusively the domain of girls — most parents won't trust their children to boys. It doesn't pay well, but the work isn't too hard and it gives the babysitter the run of a stranger's house without adult supervision.
- **The family business.** This can be the best sort of job — unless a parent believes he shouldn't have to pay his child to work for the family, the child can't stand being around his parents, the parent feels that working is more important than hanging out with friends, or the parent feels the child is the perfect substitute if an employee calls in sick, regardless of the child's plans.

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## THE SUPER-SCHOOL

The Super-School is a feature unique to *Teen Champions* campaigns. It's a school specifically for young adults with superpowers. In a world filled with superpowered individuals, it only makes sense that there would be a "training ground" for young people coming into their powers, especially since superheroes often first gain their powers along with the other changes that occur during puberty and may have trouble with them.

While attending Super-School students not only receive instruction in English, math, science, and other traditional subjects, but also how to control their superpowers and use them respon-

sibly. Where it concerns superpowered students, the school has two primary goals. First, it wants to make sure children learn to cope with their powers which, as with all the changes a person may experience during puberty, can be traumatic, bewildering, or just plain strange — only more so, since most children have a hard enough time learning to deal with acne, let alone the ability to destroy city blocks or read others' minds. Second, the school wants to make sure a child doesn't grow up to become the next Dr. Destroyer through neglect (assuming, of course, it's a well-intentioned school — there might be schools for supervillains-in-training).

Ravenswood Academy, in Chapter Two, is an example of a Super-School.

### FOUNDERS

The GM needs to know who the founders of the school are, since they often dictate the school's general attitude toward its students. Is the school's purpose to nurture future superheroes? To teach superpowered individuals how to cope with their powers and let their morality develop as it will? To identify potentially dangerous individuals before they come into the fullness of their powers and become a serious threat to society?

Some of the founders commonly depicted in comic books and other source material include:

- A school founded by mutants, for mutants. Learning to cope with powers is a frequent feature of mutant-based superheroing, and this school helps young mutants with that process. And if mutant persecution runs rampant in a campaign, the school and its instructors also serve to protect the students from the bigotry of normal humans.
- A mystic school where all the students have some talent in magic and are taught the ins and outs of the arcane arts. Those practicing the magical arts are especially prone to temptation, being led astray, and the corruption that comes hand-in-hand with great power, so this school pays special attention to the moral development of its students.
- The super kung fu dojo where the students master the martial arts — both the physical skills and the spiritual ones. Wise old mentors who give instructions that sound like they come from fortune cookies, and rivalries with fellow students (especially students slowly turning toward corrupting arts and the study of taboo Martial Maneuvers) are the typical features of the dojo. Much of the advice and material in *Ninja Hero* would apply to a campaign focused on a super-dojō.

Other ideas for founders are:

- A famous superhero retires from public life, but still wants to do good, so he starts a school — a small group of students receiving one-on-one instruction from one of the most well-known superheroes of the twentieth century. Because he's famous and his class is small, he has little

trouble obtaining funds, but he might intimidate his students at first, and how much does a favorite son of the twentieth century have in common with the first generation of a new millennium? Also, how does a superhero who's accustomed to people hanging on his every word and obeying his every command deal with the natural rebelliousness of teenagers?

- A group of heroes, all of whom were teen superheroes themselves once, found a school. All of them had problems coming to terms with their powers and want to help other teens in a similar position. In some cases the founders' problems with growing up might have been serious — like supervillain serious — and these skeletons in the closet make interesting secrets for the PCs to uncover.
- An alien species secretly living among us founds an academy to teach the children of its members who are living on Earth. The species can be extraterrestrial or even other-dimensional in origin, or the “aliens” might be a subspecies of humanity (like the Empyreans, described in *Hidden Lands*). Maybe they're living in exile and wish to coexist peacefully with mankind; maybe they have a darker purpose. Not only must the students cope with their emerging superpowers, but they might be learning for the first time they're not human. They also have to learn about an alien culture, one they may never experience for themselves. A setting like this is rife with conflicts stemming from tensions between honoring the traditions of the past and living in the here and now.
- An evil organization like VIPER or ARGENT founds the school to exploit young superhumans. Maybe the students' parents are deluded and don't realize the nefarious purpose of the school; maybe the parents are members of the organization and have given over their very children to the cause of evil. Whatever the case, it doesn't mean the students are evil — at least, not yet they aren't. (If they are, they make great adversaries/rivals for a PC team.)
- The government secretly founds a Super-School in the hope of keeping children from growing up to become supervillains. The instructors might have the students' best interests at heart, but the government wants results. Sometimes the students feel they're living in a juvenile detention facility — and maybe they are. In this case, whereas adults are sent to the superhero prison Stronghold, minors convicted of crimes are sent to the Super-Reform School.
- The government secretly founds a Super-School with the intention of teaching the soldiers of tomorrow. Young, impressionable, and possessed of youthful zeal, the teen superheroes make perfect recruits for the super-Army, but can the drill instructors help the recruits cope with all the other changes that come along with puberty?

- A prominent superhero team establishes a school in its immense base on the Moon. On one hand, the PCs might feel pretty far removed from everyday life; on the other, the view is breathtaking, being around famous superheroes all the time is pretty cool, and there's gotta be a girl out there who's impressed with a guy who calls the Moon home. Gotta be, right?
- In a setting where superpowers are commonplace and well-integrated into society, the Super-School is one of a city's magnet schools. Young artists go to one of the magnet schools, young engineers go to another, and young superheroes go to their own.
- A small town has a startling secret! Fifteen years ago the whole town was bathed in a strange, luminescent energy, and now many of the children of mothers who were pregnant at the time are developing superpowers. Unbeknownst to the public at large, the school board gives a group of educators a charter, so they can establish a charter school for these “special need” students.

#### **A PRIVATE SCHOOL**

Usually the Super-School is private, which helps to maintain the students' secret identities (since a private school is less subject to governmental and societal scrutiny than a public one). In addition to the traditional funding for a private school, the Super-School can have various non-traditional sources of funding: a superteam; an organization concerned with superpowers, like the L'Institut Thoth (described on page 104 of *Champions Universe*); a wealthy individual; secret government funding. Usually the source of finance is closely related to the reason the school was founded, as well as the person or group responsible for its founding.

#### **A SECRET PURPOSE**

The instructors and administrators know about the PCs' powers, but sometimes not everyone does. A Super-School might be a secret subdivision of a normal school, or its true nature might not be known to the public. In the former case, most of the PCs' classmates don't know the PCs have superpowers, since only a small fraction of the student body is superhuman (but the PCs and NPC supers all know who's powered and who isn't). In the latter case, everyone at the school knows its true nature; it just masquerades as a normal school to the rest of society (in other words, the school has a Secret Identity). In some cases, not even the PCs' parents may know the true nature of the “special school for the gifted and talented” that their children attend.

Both types of Super-Schools have their benefits. Making your Super-School part of a greater normal school allows for more ordinary teen interaction with non-superhuman NPCs, and creates the possibility for tension-filled adventures where the PCs have to keep things secret from their mundane comrades. The school where only the students are superhuman lets the PCs cut loose without having to worry about exposing their secrets or hurting

innocent people, and frees the GM from worrying about the repercussions the team's adventures may have on the ordinary part of the school.

One significant advantage for PCs attending a Super-School is they can give truthful (at least *mostly* truthful) explanations for mishaps involving superpowers and superheroics, since their instructors know they have superpowers. (This may not be true if the Super-School is a secret part of an ordinary school; in that case, many teachers may have no clue about what's really going on.) On the other hand, it's much harder to fool the instructors about their superheroing — an activity most Super-Schools frown on since the students are minors.

### **FACULTY**

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Many of the instructors have superpowers and might have been superheroes themselves (or even supervillains) once upon a time, but that's not a necessary job qualification. They might be the spouses of superheroes and familiar with ins-and-outs of superhero life (for a tragic twist the instructor might be the spouse of a fallen superhero, which makes for an especially good reason for the instructor's disapproval of the teenage superheroing). Or the instructor might simply be a talented teacher with unique qualification who appreciates the challenge of educating young adults with extraordinary abilities — a former elite unit soldier, a psychologist who specializes in superhuman psyches, a person with one or two minor powers that don't qualify him to fight crime and save the world.

### **FACILITIES**

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In addition to having the facilities a mundane school offers, the Super-School provides special facilities for training its superpowered students — “danger rooms” (specially-designed training rooms that can withstand, react, and adapt to the PCs' powers), high-tech medical offices for measuring effects of superpower usage, and an Artificial Intelligence computer to coordinate schedules, monitor students, and act as confidante. In many ways the Super-School is like a superhero base, just larger (or at least with more people residing there).

Furthermore, the purpose of training is learning how to control one's powers and exploring the full nature of those powers, rather than learning to act as an effective combat unit. That said, the instructors know that possessing superpowers is a magnet for supervillain trouble, so they train their students to handle themselves in battle.

### **DORMITORIES**

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Usually the Super-School has a large campus (to provide the student body with plenty of privacy) and the students live in dormitories. This means they're always together (which makes it easy to get the PCs together for an adventure), but also reduces the importance of their physical home and their parents. But no matter where a minor lives, he's still under the legal guardianship of his parents (unless that's been terminated by the courts). In the life of a teen superhero attending Super-School, a common crisis is that his parents try to force him to come home and attend public school.

### **HANG-OUTS**

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Off campus hang-outs fall into the same categories as those described above, but usually the need to find a hang-out is less pressing since the campus has places where students can congregate outside of the direct supervision of authority figures. If the school is too isolated (such as in an orbiting base), the PCs may have no choice but to hang out there.

### **WORK**

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Most students at a super-school don't have jobs off-campus. If a student works, it's some sort of work-study — the school gives a student with financial need a job to help pay for his tuition. These jobs are generally light janitorial, administrative, or cafeteria positions. In some particularly well-funded schools, there are enough scholarships to go around and no one need work (in fact, that may be the “carrot” the school uses to persuade reluctant parents to send their superpowered kids there).

# CHARACTER CREATION



**T**his section contains information players and GMs should keep in mind when creating *Teen Champions* characters. The subsections below first cover a teen PC's background — his parents, his likes and dislikes, and so on. Then they move onto his clique — his social group, how that group perceives the world, and how his peers expect him to act. Finally they discuss the source of the teen's powers and how he feels about the powers. The powers come last for a reason: the personality of the teen superhero is often more important than his powers. The section *Game Elements*, starting on page 37, covers how these background elements impact the nuts and bolts of character creation.

During the trials and travails of teen superhero life, conflicts with peers and parents are just as dramatic, and just as traumatic, as clashes with supervillains. Furthermore, in the source material a teen's powers are often a metaphor for his personality — maybe they're an externalization of his inner fantasy life or a direct contradiction of how he per-

ceives himself. When a player sits down to create a teen superhero character, he should consider who the teen is, then who the teen superhero is. Unlike the situation for many of their adult counterparts, a teen PC's mundane identity is more important than his superheroic identity — a teen superhero is far more than the sum of his powers.

## BACKGROUND ELEMENTS

Like any superhero, a good teen hero needs a background — not just his personality, but also the world he lives in and the people who populate that world. This subsection covers this topic by posing questions a player should ask himself about his character and providing possible answers. For many of these elements, if they don't feature in a character's background, a player should address their absence. If a PC is an orphan, for instance, that doesn't mean the player can ignore the character's parents. The teen superhero's lack of parents often looms large in his mind. Who does he imagine his parents were, does he obsess over their identity, is he ashamed of his lack of parents, or does he think it's kind of cool because it means he's alone in the world and thus more mature than his peers? — all these questions and more should be addressed. Unlike an adult, the typical teen hasn't gotten used to *anything* about his existence — he hasn't had the time and experience to accept some things as just facts of life — and nothing obsesses a teen more than why he's different than his peers. Adolescence is often the first time a person considers questions about his identity, and the first step of discovering one's identity is examining what makes one different from others.

### Short On Experience, Long On Hopes

A *Teen Champions* character is 10-20 years younger than the average superhero, and when a player creates his character's background he should keep this in mind. The teen PC is simply less experienced than his adult counterpart, and many of the common plot twists that fill the histories of adult superheroes don't fit into the teen superhero's background. He hasn't had time to travel the world and study with the greatest martial artists, enlist in the military and participate in special government training or projects, develop a rogues' gallery all his own with long-standing rivalries and a history of hard-fought battles, or have numerous love affairs with exotic people from all over the globe. Because of this, *Teen Champions* characters' backgrounds may seem brief, but that's how they should be — after all, being a teen isn't about the past, it's about the future.





When coming up with a background for a character, you should spend as much time, if not more, considering the character's future. And these thoughts about the future don't have to be realistic — they can also be pure fantasy. What does the character want to be when he grows up? What are the character's hopes and dreams for the future, or does he not think about the future at all? How does he imagine adult life? Is it endless days of tedium, going to work week after week, having his personality worn down by the grindstone? Or is it endless days of irresponsibility when the person can drink, smoke, buy pornography, and spend obscene sums of money on whatever strikes his fancy?

In short: transfer the creative energy that normally goes into devising a character's background to determining how the teen superhero imagines his future. Create the teen's hopes and dreams. Flesh out his fantasy life. A teen's too young for nostalgia, the life of an adult must be better than that of a teen, and youth is all about the future.

## Family

One of the biggest sources of both support and stress a teen hero can have is his family.

### PARENTS

Since teens still have to live with their parents, who those parents are and what they're like is usually the single most important element in a teen hero's background. When you create a teen hero, you should carefully consider his parents and their personalities, taking into account the issues listed below.

#### Marital Status

Does the PC live with one parent, two, or none at all? If only one, he might have an easier time sneaking around, but he might also have to lend a hand with his siblings or help out financially to make ends meet. And if his parents are divorced, the PC might have to spend summer vacation with his father or mother somewhere far away while his friends all hang out together.

If the PC lives with one parent, why is the other parent absent? The real world reasons range from death to abandonment, with divorce being the most common in modern America... but in a teen superhero campaign, there are other possibilities:

- The parent works for the government as a secret agent and can't be tied down to a family
- The parent is a supervillain
- The parent is a superhero who fell victim to Menton's brainwashing techniques and is now a supervillain
- The parent who's raising the PC ran away with the child because he felt having a superpowered parent, whether a hero or villain, was no way to raise a family. The absent parent doesn't know where the PC lives now — and in some cases, doesn't even know he has a child.

### Income And Jobs

Are his parents rich or poor, and what do they do for living? Do both of the PC's parents work? If so, he probably has an easier time avoiding their scrutiny — unless, of course, the PC is the low-cost babysitter.

### The Parents Themselves

Are they the traditional square parents, and is it hard to imagine them as ever being young? Or are they cooler than their child? Maybe one or both are famous — a rock star, a television personality, or renowned superheroes. If that's the case, how does the teen feel about his too-cool-for-school parents? Is he proud of them, does he resent them, or is he ashamed of himself? Do the accomplishments of his parents overshadow the teen's own, or inspire him to do even better? Do other adults always compare the teen to his parents to guilt trip him into doing the right thing (at least, the right thing in the adult's mind)?

Do his parents have any bad habits (adultery, for example) or addictions? And what does the PCs think about this — is he matter-of-fact about it, or does it have a serious impact on his emotional state? Are his parents ill or in poor health, and if so does the teen constantly worry that they might die? Are they older than everyone else's parents? Younger? Do the parents refuse to talk about their past (and if so, why)?

Do the parents have superpowers themselves? Are they active superheroes? Does the teen idolize them, do all his friends idolize them, or does the teen resent the fact that his parents can save the world every weekend but never have time to spend with him? If he hates the fact that he has superpowers because they make him different and weird, does he blame his superpowered parents? Does he even know his parents are superheroes (or villains)?

### Attitude Toward The Character

Are the PC's parents hands-off or overprotective? Have they decided their child is nearly an adult now and can make his own decisions, or do they still think of him as a little kid? Are they neglectful... or worse, abusive? Have they decided they just don't care about their child? Do they try to be buddy-buddy with their child and his friends, much to their child's embarrassment?

Do his parents know the character has superpowers? If they do, at least he doesn't have to worry about keeping them secret... but now his parents have to nag him about how he uses them, order him not to fight crime, and otherwise monitor him. If they don't, all those worries go away, but he has to, in effect, keep a Secret Identity from people he lives with who have legal and moral control over him.

If his parents have superpowers, do they expect the PC to go into to the "family business"? What if he doesn't want to be a superhero (or, worse, has villainous inclinations)? Is this a source of friction in the family? Or are the parents former superheroes who had a bad experience and seek at every turn to make sure their child does *not* become a superhero? Even worse, are they (former) supervillains?

## ABSENTEE PARENTS

In a world of latchkey children and absentee parents, an interesting element of some teen fiction is a total, absolute lack of parents. The parents are so far removed from the teen's life that they don't feature at all in the stories and the author never depicts them.

Though this produces an interesting effect, and the absence of parental figures makes a provocative statement about society, it can be hard to maintain in an ongoing campaign simply because a *Teen Champions* game often covers a lot of ground — much more than a discrete work of fiction — and eventually, somewhere down the line, the GM or players will want to involve the parents because they're too good a plot hook to pass up. Furthermore, the main characters (the PCs) aren't under the direct control of the "author" (the GM), so he can't keep them from trying to interact with their parents the way the author of a novel can.

One possible way to achieve the effect is for a GM to tell his players not to make up their characters' parents at all. The parents might as well not exist, so in the imaginations of the players they really don't exist.

## UNDER- AND UPPERCLASSMEN

Exact age often determines whether the PC is an underclassman or an upperclassman, and this plays an important role in his personality. Most high schools have four classes covering grades 9–12. Underclass is ninth and tenth grade (freshman and sophomores), so ages generally range from thirteen to fifteen years old. Upperclass is eleventh and twelfth grade (juniors and seniors), so ages generally range from sixteen to eighteen years old. Typical characteristics of both are:

Underclassmen are (relatively) new to the high school and still unsure of where they fit in. They haven't figured out all the ins and outs yet. They often have no clue what they're doing after high school, and in fact, may not have realized their childhood is nearing its end. On the other hand, they still have potential. For an underclassman it's not too late to change his lazy ways and improve himself. For teen superheroes, they're also new to their superpowers and suffer accordingly.

Upperclassmen are old hands at the high school routine. They're more confident and more self-assured — or at least more accustomed to the school and their classmates. They often feel they “own” the high school. Upperclassmen are quickly losing any potential they might have once had. Childhood will soon end, and in the eyes of most adults, the upperclassman is increasingly less likely to change his ways. A young reprobate will grow up to be a jailbird, a golden boy

### Attitude Toward Parents

Perhaps the most important question is how the PC feels about his parents (even if he'd never admit his feelings to his friends or family)? Are they trying to keep him down or hold him back? Does he care about them, but feel that their concern is misplaced or that they're out of touch with kids today? Does he idolize them, take their attitudes to extremes, and follow their rules strictly? Is he desperate for their attention, or trying desperately to please them? Does he just plain hate them? Is he out-and-out scared of them, whether for good reason or no reason at all? Does he feel the need to take care of them because they can't take care of themselves?

### Legal Guardians

“Legal guardian” is a loose term for a person the state acknowledges as responsible for a minor. In teen superhero fiction, many teen heroes are raised by legal guardians — in other words, adoptive or *de facto* parents — rather than their birth parents.

One reason for this is pure adolescent wish fulfillment. Most teens at some point in their lives wish they had cool parents — international men of mystery, super-scientists, commandoes, and so on — and in the case of the teen superhero, his absent parents really were one of these exotic professions. It also harks back to the belief that most teens have at least once: these people can't possibly be *my* parents.

Having missing parents can add a nice element of mystery to a teen superhero's background, since the guardian rarely explains exactly what happened to them. Were the birth parents' end tragic? Was their disappearance necessary for the good of the world? Does anyone even know why they disappeared, or what happened to them? Did the guardian steal the teen superhero away from his parents to prevent them from turning him evil? Or did the parents feel the guardian would simply make a better parent and give the child to him to raise? Did the legal guardian find the child and decide to raise him entirely ignorant of his special heritage — a sort of superhero retelling of the Moses story?

Most of the time a legal guardian is

more “traditional” than the teen hero's real parents, but this doesn't have to be the case. Maybe superheroes adopted the teen after a supervillain killed his parents, or because the parents left him on the doorstep of the superhero base with a note attached to his crib reading, “This boy will grow up to be the most powerful superhero ever.” Or maybe the note had a more sinister message, one the superheroes never stop worrying about.

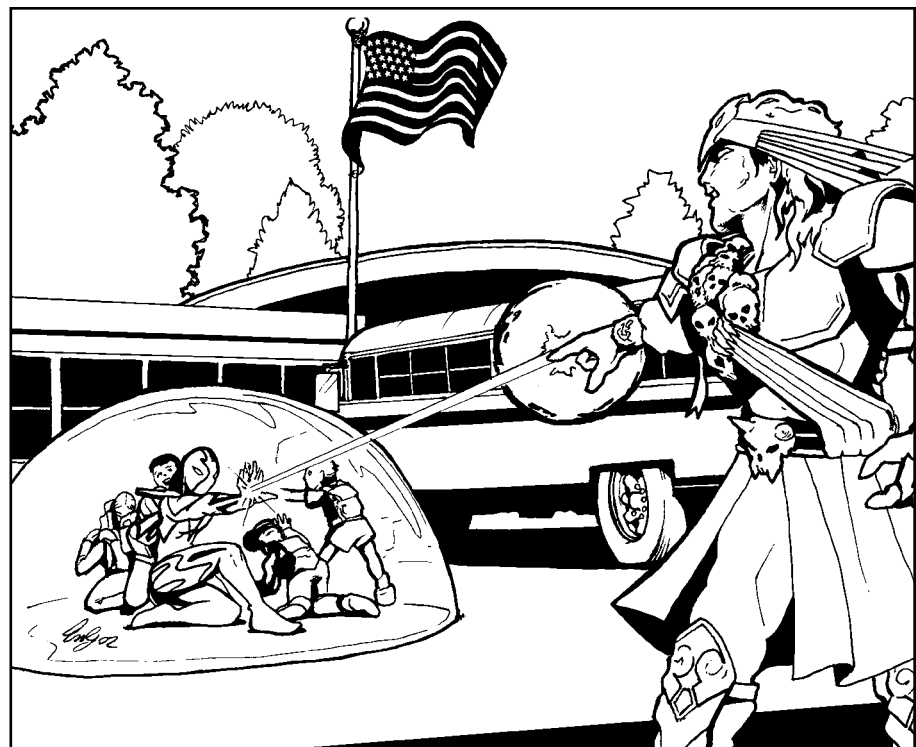
And, of course, the parents' mysterious past always returns to haunt the teen superhero — “the sins of the father” is a common theme in teen fiction.

### SIBLINGS

Does the PC have brothers or sisters? If so, does he have to take care of them, or do they take care of him? Is the PC the perfect child when compared to his siblings, or is he the bad seed? Do their parents treat all the kids the same, or coddle some while treating others more harshly? Do his parents have favorites, and is it obvious? Or does the PC *think* his parents have favorites, whether they really do? Does the PC spend time with his siblings, or do they all lead different lives, rarely thinking about each other? Does the PC idolize any of his siblings, or consider them embarrassing? Many of these questions depend on the age of the siblings involved — the stereotypes being to idolize older siblings and be overprotective of younger ones — but there's no reason a player can't turn these stereotypes on their head.

### The Dead Sibling

Oftentimes in fiction a character has a sibling who has passed away, and this departed sibling looms large over family life. Maybe the parents sink into a funk and barely acknowledge the child who's still alive, or they become overprotective in an attempt to ensure the surviving child doesn't suffer



the same fate as his sibling. Often the exact effect on the family corresponds to how the sibling died. If he died in a car accident, for instance, the parents don't let the surviving child drive (or, as in the movie *Footloose*, the parents attempt to protect the entire community from the "threat" they perceive).

Consider how the death affects the PC himself. Does he feel guilty about it (perhaps because he thinks he caused it), and has that guilt made him unusually reckless and maybe even suicidal? Does he believe he doesn't feel deeply enough about it? Has he gotten over it, and does he wonder why his parents can't get over it?

For a teen hero campaign a final question is: was the departed sibling a superhero? Is this why the PC keeps his superheroing secret from his parents — he knows they'd forbid it due to the death of his sibling? Or is it why he's so intent on becoming a superhero himself — does he feel his sibling has passed the torch to him? Or is it some kind of sibling rivalry, with the PC attempting to prove himself a better superhero than his dead brother or sister?

### OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

Do any family members outside of the PC's immediate family play an important role in his life? This can range from the grandparent who, because of his age or failing health, has moved in with the PC's family, to the uncle who lost his job and is staying with the family until he gets back on his feet, to the aunt who lives in the home next door.

Often this relative treats the PC differently than the parents do. The grandparent might constantly badger the parents for being too soft on him, or he might spoil the PC. A relative might be the first adult to treat the PC like an adult himself, because he isn't responsible for punishing the PC, and this allows the two to have a relationship closer to friendship.

Other family members can serve many purposes in a PC's life. They can give him a glimpse of adult life other than his parents'. They can tell him stories about his parents the parents themselves would never share, giving him a glimpse of who his parents really are when they aren't trying to set a good example.

In a teen superhero campaign, maybe the relative is a superhero, which means that unlike the PC's parents and siblings he understands the problems that come with being a superhero. Whether he's a superhuman or not, the family member might know about the PC's superpowers, giving the hero someone to confide in who'll keep his secret and not try to stop him from fighting crime... at least not all the time.

## Other Teen Elements

Beyond the character's family, there are lots of things you should think about when creating a *Teen Champions* PC.

### ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL

School features prominently in a PC's life — even if the campaign focuses tightly on the

superheroic aspects of being a teen hero, school is never far from the character's mind — so you should have a simple, strong statement that sums up a character's attitude toward school.

Does he hate it, love it, or barely think about it at all? Does he hate it because he resents being told what to do and who to be? Does he love it because the one thing he's really good at is getting high grades, or because his home life is so terrible he just wants to get away from his parents? Does he perceive school as only a means to an end — get good grades, get into college, and get a good job so he makes oodles of money, and who cares about building character or friendships for life? Or is school simply someplace to be, someplace where his friends are?

Does he love one aspect of school, but hate all the rest? For example: does he love football, but hate classes; love math, but hate English? Does he breeze through school or have a tough time with all things academic? Are his feelings about school inchoate, with no more explanation than "it sucks"? Or has the precocious teen developed a rigorous critique of the fascist institution that is modern high school with supporting quotes from Hannah Arendt and all the trimmings?

### TEEN ROMANCE

Most people first discover boys or girls during the teen years, and this discovery comes to dominate much of a person's thoughts, hopes, and actions. He imagines what it would be like to date a girl in his English class; he hopes the girl he has a crush on likes him too; he takes ill-advised risks to impress a girl — he mouths off to the teacher to get the girl's attention, he picks a fight with the biggest kid in school, and so on.

You should consider a character's feelings toward the opposite sex and how members of the opposite sex view him, as well as the character's luck with dating and other activities. Does he have a girlfriend, has he ever had a girlfriend, or does he even want a girlfriend? Has he ever been kissed, and have his experiences gone beyond kissing? Is he a heartbreaker, and if so, does he try to be nice about it and let the girl with a crush down easy, or is he a cold and callous user? Or has the poor guy had his heartbroken, and did the girl try to be nice about it, or was she cruel?

Remember that a teen romance is rarely a casual affair. Nowhere else in teen life is the melodrama laid on more thick than in romantic relationships. The teen hasn't been broken up with, or done the breaking up, many times over the years and become accustomed to it. Every time he's broken up with, it tells him he's a loser, a total and abject failure, and he either succumbs to despair or goes to insane lengths to prove he's not a loser. Every time he breaks up with someone, it's an emotional roller-coaster — he struggles with his conscience, she cries a lot and makes dramatic statements of doom, or vice versa. In short: when it comes to teen romance, nothing comes easy.

A teen might be confident in his relationships with the opposite sex, but often he's overconfident

Continued from last page

will grow up to be the perfect adult, and that's just the way things are, so why bother trying to convince the upperclassman to change his ways? A major source of stress in the upperclassman's life is what he will do after high school — will he get into the college of his choice, or will he go to college at all? What will happen to him and his sweetheart, will they drift apart or get married? Not only do these problems give him sleepless nights, but he also has to cope with his parents — most parents can't stop reminding the teen he's nearly an adult and needs to start acting like one. For teen superheroes, the upperclassman has become confident (maybe overconfident) in the use of his powers.

## THE DATING DILEMMA: ASKING COLD AND EASING ONE'S WAY IN

There are two basic ways of approaching the whole boyfriend-girlfriend thing in a roleplaying game. One is asking cold — the PC simply walks up to the object of his affection and asks point-blank for a date. In teen romance this rarely happens. It's not like a bar, club, or some other setting where the asker is never likely to see the askee again. If the person says no, the PC is stuck seeing that person every day for the rest of high school, and sometimes the embarrassment is simply too much for a fragile teen ego to bear.

The second way carries much less risk and is much more common; it provides more opportunities for conflict and melodrama, and can lead to fun roleplaying. The would-be boy- or girlfriend gets close to the love interest's friends, then tries to get the friends to tell him what the love interest thinks of him. The more subtle his actions, the better... but sometimes a lack of subtlety is the only way to get a straight answer. In the most extreme cases, the would-be boy- or girlfriend gets the friend to convince the love interest to date him. Often this "diplomatic" method involves passing notes, giggling, and other things like that; sometimes money or favors change hands too. It also — all the time in the fiction — can lead to love triangles and unrequited or unspoken love. In the most basic terms: the would-be boyfriend gets close to a friend of the girl he's interested in, but the friend falls

or overbearing, or this confidence masks a deeper insecurity. More typically, a teen is unbearably shy and awkward — his mouth goes dry, his stomach fills with butterflies and he feels like he's going to puke, he opens his mouth to speak and what comes out is total gibberish.

And that's if he's lucky. Otherwise he's tripping and falling on his face (a bloody nose is *not* a turn-on), his pen explodes all over him (probably in the most embarrassing place possible), and then the school bully decides it's the perfect time to pick on him.

For the teen superhero, the only questions left to be asked is: how can he save the world one day, and then screw up asking the cute girl from trig out the next? Why is it easier to thwart Dr. Destroyer than get a date with the girl he has a crush on? What's wrong with the world? Isn't there any justice?

### True Love Ways

In teen romance, especially as portrayed in fiction, there's no nonchalance toward the sweetheart, no "we're just dating because we like each other — it's nothing serious." No relationship is casual or convenient; every relationship is all about love, love, love.

There are five types of love that characterize most teen romances, and which provide simple hooks for defining a PC's relationship with a boy- or girlfriend (or a would-be boy- or girlfriend).

**False Love:** One member of the couple is using the other member. Most often it's because the girl is, or is thought to be, "easy." This relationship, however, doesn't have to be about sex. It can be about money, prestige, cheating on homework, or whatever else a teen thinks he can gain by manipulating the other person's emotions. In teen fiction this sort of relationship either ends badly and the wronged party seeks revenge; or what started as false love becomes something more as the two get to know each other... of course, eventually, one part of the couple learns the true reason for the relationship, and the other must convince the wronged party it's no longer true.

And don't forget: nice boys and sweet girls fall into this trap, too. Maybe a girl is sick of dating jerks, so she goes out with someone she considers a nice boy despite the fact that she doesn't like him; maybe a boy dates a girl because that's what his parents want, and he seeks their approval. Many different ulterior motives are possible (although most of them are unsympathetic).

**Love Forever:** The couple has professed their deep and abiding love for each other, and have promised to be boyfriend-girlfriend for ever and ever. And on top of that, they really do love each other and want to be together forever. Of course it's an easy thing to say, but harder to do, and the changes that come on the road to adulthood often get in the way of a teen romance's survival. These relationships tend to fall apart when one or both go to college, but sometimes they do last forever — much to everyone's amazement in this cynical day.

This sort of love is the basis for many a teen

tragedy (including Shakespeare's *Romeo And Juliet*). Sometimes love doesn't conquer all — especially when friends and family are working hard to break the couple up, or the non-superhuman member of the couple can't understand all the "unexplained absences" while the other is off fighting crime.

**Unattainable Love:** A teen has fallen in love with a person who's unattainable, whether because that person is way out of his league, lives too far away, is unknown to the character (he only glimpsed her for an instant, from a distance), or is an adult (typically a teacher). For a teen superhero, this can also mean falling for a supervillain. Unlike unrequited love, events and circumstances, society, or the teen's peers have made the love unattainable. It has nothing to do with the two people involved, and everything to do with the fact that a relationship between the two just can't or won't happen.

In this situation, typically the PC tries and tries, goes to ridiculous extremes, takes absurd actions, and embarks on half-baked schemes (which always involve his friends) to win the love of the unattainable... and sometimes, just sometimes, he succeeds. Of course, when he succeeds, the relationship is never how he imagined it would be, and then he must deal with the cold, hard reality.

**Unspoken Love:** The teen cannot bring himself to profess his love. Maybe he's too shy, or the love isn't in the same social class. Maybe he knows his peers and/or parents won't approve of the love: a rich girl in love with a boy from the wrong side of the tracks, a teen superhero in love with a supervillain. This unspoken love eats at the teen, consuming his every thought and fantasy. Usually the truth comes out eventually — a love message written in a notebook discovered by other students gets spread far and wide, interfering friends conspiring to get the teen to admit his love, or unusual circumstances that bring the teen and his love together. What happens next is anyone's guess, but it rarely turns out how the teen imagined it would... for better or worse.

**Unrequited Love:** The teen has professed his love... and been spurned. Maybe the two even dated for a while before the love interest broke up with him. Typically he moons around, despairing of ever winning the affections of his love interest... and all this time, there's a third party who would make the perfect boy- or girlfriend if only the teen would give up on his unrequited love. As the story progresses, the teen eventually comes to notice this third party, realizes that person is perfect, and the two become a couple... at which point, the unrequited love interest suddenly expresses an interest in the teen. Will the teen abandon his new love for the one he wanted for so long? Or will he do the right thing?

### "I'm Not Ignoring You!"

One of the most frustrating — and thus, in a *Teen Champions* game, most fun — aspects of teen romance involving superheroes is that whenever danger threatens, the teen hero has to run off and save the city or fight crime. It doesn't matter if he

and his girlfriend had big plans, all of a sudden “something’s come up” and he can’t make it... which means his girlfriend’s steamed at him. It’s even worse when he looks like a coward because he finds an excuse to duck out whenever danger threatens. Coming up with explanations for this — and ways to make it up to his significant other — should strain the creativity of any *Teen Champions* PC who dares to get romantically involved.

### Outside Looking In

*One day my dad said, find someone new...*  
—*Leader Of The Pack*, the Shangri-Las

If only a relationship were two people falling in love and living in harmony. Such is never the case in a teen’s life. There are always friends who have an opinion and can’t shut up about it — or, worse, parents who have an opinion *and* the authority to forbid a love they don’t approve of. When you create a character’s love interest, consider both the opinion of the character’s parents and that of his friends.

**Parents’ Approval:** Parents often serve one of two roles in teen fiction when it comes to relationships.

First, they can provide advice and perspective when the teen is drowning in emotional melodrama, offering their child such clichés as “lots of fish in the sea,” “you’re too good for him,” or “any girl would be lucky to have you.” Perhaps the parents relate stories of their misadventures in dating (as if proof of genetic inadequacy in affairs of the heart is some kind of comfort). Typically the advice makes perfect sense to everyone, especially to the adult audience, but never to the teen himself.

Second, the parents have an opinion about the love interest that’s the exact opposite of how the PC feels. If she loves a boy, the parents hate him because he’s not good enough — not wealthy enough, not smart enough, not handsome enough, and so on — for their little girl. If he decides to break up with his girlfriend, his parents love her and want the two to go on dating until they get married... but of course they only see a sweet, smart girl, and never the true person. Whoever he dates afterward is never as good as the one he broke up with.

**Friends’ Approval:** How do the PC’s friends feel about the relationship? If they approve, they won’t let him break up with his love interest no matter what they have to do to ensure that things go smoothly during the relationship (for example, secretly shadowing the two on an important date and using their superpowers to prevent or divert anything that might interrupt the lovebirds). But if they disapprove, they won’t let the two stay together — they’ll make up stories, tell lies, try to fix the PC up with a more appropriate love interest, and do whatever they must to “save their friend.”

In fiction, friends’ approval or disapproval is nearly always based on clique or similar matters: the love interest isn’t the same as the PC and his friends, and that upsets them. Maybe she’s a geek when they’re all jocks, or she’s a prom queen from a wealthy family while they’re all grungy social outcasts. In a *Teen Champions* game, the problem may

be that she’s a “norm” while they’re all superpowered... or worse, maybe she’s a villainess.

Another thing to consider: have any of the PC’s friends dated this person? High school is an enclosed environment, offering limited choices for who to date; by Senior year, a clique’s dating history is often a tangled web of relationships chock full of betrayals, stolen girlfriends, and whispered stories of sexual peccadillos. Everyone has skeletons in the closet, dark secrets they’ve shared with an ex who’s now dating someone else — secrets they can’t help but wonder if the ex is sharing with the new love interest.

### PEERS

After family and love interest, perhaps the most important influences on a teen hero are his peers, who run the gamut from the members of his clique to his most hated enemy. These other kids, even the ones the PC hates, often have more sway over a PC than his own parents (or at least, that’s what the parents think)... and of course, it’s a bad influence. Other than cliques (see below), some individuals from the peer group who figure prominently in a teen’s life include:

#### The Best Friend

Though a teen might have many friends, there’s usually one who’s his best friend. Typically they’ve been friends since they were little — maybe they grew up next door to each other, or their parents are friends, or they shared some adventure in grade school and remained friends ever since. During high school, though, friendship becomes more complicated, and this often leads to friction between best friends. Possible reasons for this friction:

- In a high school many a teen realizes for the first time that his friends reflect on himself — if his friends are jocks, people think he’s a jock; if his friends are geeks, people think he’s a geek — and his best friend is not how he wants others to perceive him. In other words, his best friend embarrasses him, so he stops spending time with him.
- High school teens have more activities and opportunities available to them, and this takes up more and more of their time. Maybe one teen is heavily involved in sports, while his best friend focuses on academics, and as a result they drift apart.
- And then there are girls (or boys, as the case may be). If one has a girlfriend, and the other doesn’t, the single friend often finds himself abandoned in favor of the charms of the opposite gender.
- Finally, for the teen superhero, there’s superpowers. If the best friend doesn’t have superpowers, that might create an unbridgeable distance between the two. Once they were able to tell each other anything, sharing all their secrets no matter how deep and dark, but now the teen superhero has a secret he can’t share

Continued from last page

for the boy because of all the time they spend talking. Luckily, in the end, the original love interest doesn’t work out, the would-be boyfriend falls for the friend as is right and just, and everyone lives happily ever after.



with his best friend — probably because he wants to protect his best friend, so there's a tragic angle to the drifting apart — and this secret breaks the friendship.

Whatever the cause of the friction, best friendships often come to a bittersweet end in high school. Though in the future the two may still be friends, they'll never be as close as they were when they were kids — this “shallowing” of emotional relationships is one of the signs of impending adulthood. It's a tacit acceptance that a person must conform to the demands of society, and that a free and easy relationship, where two people are friends simply because they have fun together and for no other reason — maybe they have absolutely nothing else in common other than enjoying each other's company — is a thing of the past.

### The Bully

Torturer, tormentor, little tyrant, and far worse than any supervillain — if for no other reason than a supervillain rarely embarrasses the teen in front of a girl he has a crush on, and if he does, at least the teen's in costume and she doesn't know his secret identity — the bully makes sure the PC never gets above himself. The bully is the ruthless enforcer of the high school hierarchy. Is it enough that everyone thinks you're a loser? No, because the bully is going to make sure no one ever forgets it.

Most people are familiar with the ins and outs of bullying — wedgies, swirlies, flat tires, books scattered down the hall, being stuffed into a locker, and so on. Usually the bully inflicts physical humiliation, rather than actual harm, but his victims live in fear of actual harm and this keeps them from protesting the treatment.

The reasons for the bullying might range from pure meanness, to the bully's own insecurity and attempts to impress his friends, to his jealousy and envy (usually of the victim's intelligence or other attributes). In fiction the conflict with a bully often resolves itself in one of two ways: either the bully comes to accept his insecurities due to the actions of the bullied, and then he stops bullying other teens; or his victims stand up to the bully, and now that they're fighting back, he stops.

The bully-teen superhero relationship has a unique dynamic all its own. The teen superhero has plenty of power to strike back at the bully... but cannot because “with great power comes great responsibility.” The teen hero must keep himself under control, because if he really lashed out at the bully, he might do him permanent harm — not to mention reveal his secret identity. In other words, the bully's own weakness keeps the teen superhero from taking action — an irony no one will ever know until the teen superhero, unable to take anymore, fights back and then must suffer the consequences of his reckless action.

### The Bullied

Though typically the protagonist in teen fiction is the one who's bullied, it doesn't have to be that way. In a teen hero campaign a PC might be a bully. Furthermore, since high school is a starkly-

defined food chain, and there's always someone lower that a teen can make sure stays below him. Maybe this bullying isn't physical (the PC mocks the person incessantly) or aggressive (he excludes the person by never saying anything to him), but it's a sort of bullying nonetheless. If a character is a bully, you should consider what group or individual he bullies, and why. But remember: no one likes a bully, not even one who's just a figment in a role-playing game. If a player creates a character who's something of a bully, he should plan to resolve the bullying at some point. In other words, roleplay a bullying character growing out of his need to victimize those weaker than himself as the campaign goes on; don't plan to make bullying a permanent feature of his personality.

### The Rival

The rival shares the same interests as the PC and is involved in many of the same activities. They might even be close friends (or at least pretend to be), but each seeks to outdo the other. This ranges from two characters competing for the starting quarterback position on the varsity team, the position of valedictorian of the graduating class, the crown of prom queen, or the affections of every pretty girl who walks into the cafeteria. On the surface it might be a friendly rivalry, but it usually it runs much deeper. As with most things in teen life, the PC takes the rivalry with the utmost seriousness and often goes to extremes to outdo his rival.

In a teen superhero campaign, the rivalry can be even more pervasive than it is in normal life. Not only do the two rivals compete for the quarterback position, the best grades, or the cutest girls, but one's secretly a superhero, and the other his supervillain nemesis (or both are superheroes who compete to be the better hero).

### ADULTS

When teen life intersects with the adult world, the adult often plays a specific role. These roles normally fall under the broad description of "authority figure"; it's difficult for an adult to step outside of this role and interact normally with the teen. After all, part of being a responsible adult is acting responsibly toward people who are younger and more impressionable. Not being a bad influence, setting a good example, and acting as an acceptable role model are all expectations society has of an adult in his interactions with the young, and none of these are conducive to straight talk. Some of the more common authority figures in a teen's life include:

#### Teachers

Teachers range from the one students like (who's usually young, attractive, and exuberant), to the one students hate (who's usually old, cranky, and doesn't care). Chances are most teachers pass without notice, but a PC should always have one he likes and trusts, and one who's the bane of his existence. Teachers can also serve as the object for schoolboy infatuation or as a mentor figure.

In theory teachers are supportive of teens, but this sometimes gets lost somewhere over the course

## TEEN BEHAVIOR TIP: MELODRAMA

Emotionally, a teen is like a raw, gaping wound... No, that's not quite right. How about: Emotionally, a teen is like a man without skin, raw bloody muscles without any protection, climbing through bushes with sharp thorns — thorns that tear at his exposed body and rip gaping rents that gush blood. Much better....

Teens are melodramatic. Even the most level-headed, emotionally stable, good-natured teen has bad moments when he makes absurd pronouncements in the face of less-than-terrible events. This melodrama often takes the form of emotional extremes in reaction to slight problems or mishaps. He expresses these emotional extremes by making absolute statements — never, forever, always, all, none, and totally are words he typically uses. And he makes these impossibly absolute statements, swears impossible to keep oaths, and proclaims his total and abject failure, because in the eyes of a teen, it really is the end of the world.

Boyfriend just broke up with you... "No one will *ever* love me!"

Got a bad grade on a test... "I'm so stupid! I'm going to end up living in a cardboard box!"

Parents took away your driving privileges... "You're a bunch of Nazis! I hate you!"

Friend just betrayed you... "I'm *never* talking to you again!"

Some of this is done for effect and attention, but some of it is perfectly understandable. This is the first time a teen is experiencing these emotional events. He doesn't have behavioral patterns in place yet to "process" these emotions; he hasn't grown accustomed to failure or even minor setbacks. Everything is new, and the teen is often at loss when it comes to knowing what the appropriate reaction is.

A teenager doesn't just make these extreme statements for a laugh. In that moment, though the doom-and-gloom feeling may not last very long, he may truly feel like it's the end of the world. You may have difficulty keeping a straight face roleplaying this, if you're an adult, but give it a try — it adds a lot of "teen feeling" to your games.

of a career. After years of teaching, the teacher might become jaded toward certain types of students — he's seen them all, and taught them all, and he knows some students just don't care and aren't worth his time. Or he might have trouble maintaining discipline in his class; over the years, he's become more concerned with keeping his class in order than teaching the students, but it doesn't help.

That said, the average teacher is concerned with the welfare of his students — but maintaining a student-teacher relationship is also important. Thus, teachers tend to be interested and willing to help, but distant and always keeping in mind "the proper thing to do" as stipulated by the code of conduct and mores of society.

#### Counselors

The school counselor serves in the dual role of child psychologist and career advisor. He can provide information about college, jobs, and the future



## THE SECRET SUPERHERO

Often in comic books, a non-parental adult in the teen's life is secretly a superhero or former hero. Over the course of adventures, this adult comes to suspect the teen superheroes' secret (and maybe they suspect his). Eventually the truth comes out — either when the adult steps in to save the teens from some supervillain, or when the adult's old nemesis comes to the high school looking for a fight. Then the adult becomes a mentor figure for the teen heroes, helping them train and giving them advice.

This adult superhero is instrumental to one of the standard teen superhero story progressions: teens go it alone, headstrong and full of youth's reckless confidence; teens suffer setbacks and failures; teens real-

in general. He can also serve as confidante — even if the teen doesn't want a confidante. If the school faculty come to suspect that a teen has problems beyond the normal rebelliousness of adolescence, he likely finds himself in a meeting with his counselor. And what happens when a teen throws caution to the wind, and because he has no one else he can trust, tells a counselor about his superpowers?

### The Principal

The principal runs the school (though he still has to answer to the superintendent, the school board, and to some extent the parents). For the students, the principal serves one purpose, and that's to dole out punishment. Because of this, most students have a negative attitude toward the principal, or else no opinion at all if they never get in trouble.

### The School Janitor

In teen fiction the janitor is the one who sees all and knows all around the high school. He also serves as a sort of "old man" archetype. Unlike the faculty he isn't bound by a sense of propriety and a code of conduct; if a teen is throwing away his life, the janitor can tell him bluntly without dressing up his language. The janitor is a bad person to get on the wrong side of, since he can always figure out some way to get revenge in the end; on the other hand, he can be very helpful if he takes a shine to a student.

### The Boss

A boss plays a unique role in a PC's life, since he's one of the few adults the PC encounters on a regular basis who's not a member of the school faculty or his family. Sometimes the boss is nothing more than a tyrant — one whom the teen feels infi-

nately superior to, because there's no way the teen will have such a crappy job when he grows up. But sometimes the boss is one of the few adults who lets down his guard around the teen, giving him a glimpse of what adult life is really like, and who can give advice about matters too sensitive to ask parents or teachers about.

### Truant Officers

For the most part, truant officers are a thing of the past — in attempts to reduce spending, school boards have eliminated the position — but they can make for fun antagonists in a teen hero campaign, so a GM might want to include them in his setting. The truant officer is a member of law enforcement who makes sure teens don't skip school. He drives around all day looking for teens, and he investigates unexplained absences. Generally the truant officer is a gruff man who's heard every excuse a teen has to offer for missing school, every sob story about missing the bus or sick parents, and believes none of them. For a teen superhero the truant officer can become a major thorn in his side, in many ways assuming a role similar to that of an investigative reporter: he's always chasing after the teen when he skips class to fight a supervillain and threatening to learn the teen's secret identity.

### Idols

Idols occupy a unique position in a teen's life. Unlike the other adults described in this section, a teen chooses his own idols (although marketing firms stop at nothing to convince teens to idolize certain adults). Idols can be athletes, movie stars, musicians, superheroes, world leaders, authors, or any other public figure; you should consider who



your character idolizes, if anyone, and why. Stereotypically a teen goes to great lengths to mimic his idol's behavior and parrots his opinions. When an idol shows himself to have feet of clay, it's a tragic moment in a teen's life as he comes to realize that "everyone's human" or some other aphorism about the flawed nature of the world.

### Adult Superheroes

In teen fiction adult superheroes often take a patronizing view of teen heroes that's best summed up thusly: "Thanks for helping, son, but we'll take it from here."

The adults — the so-called real superheroes — appear just as the adventure is winding up, the press gives them all the credit for stopping the supervillain, and the teen superheroes are relegated to second-string status. But sometimes the adult superheroes take a more proactive role. In the best case scenario, they decide to mentor the teen superheroes, or maybe even take on the teen heroes as "sidekicks." In the worst case, they find the idea of minors putting their lives at risk as superheroes deeply disturbing, and they try to discover the teen heroes' secret identities so they can stop them from fighting crime.

Even if adult superheroes rarely appear "on stage" in a campaign, they usually figure into a teen superheroes' thoughts and opinions. Does he idolize his adult counterparts? Does he think they do everything wrong, and he's dead-set in doing things the "right way"? Or does he feel a mixture of both — some superheroes are cool, while some are not?

### OTHER TEEN INTERESTS AND ISSUES

The issues described above are of primary importance to a teen. Peer groups, another important issue, are discussed in detail in *Cliques*, below. In addition to these are the hobbies teens enjoy and the issues he confronts on a day-to-day basis. A teen character should involve himself in teen interests and have opinions about teen issues — although it might not be a well-informed opinion and certainly lacks the nuance that comes from experience — and these interests and issues should come into play over the course of a campaign. Some ways for using these as plots and sub-plots are discussed in the GM's Vault starting on page 82, but players should also include these elements in the game via roleplaying in ways ranging from one-off interjections during combat, to long-term goals for the PC that lead to character development and an evolving attitude toward the world or his peers.

### Conformity Versus Individuality

In the teen mind set, conformity leads to having friends, individuality leads to being alone. Being like someone means being friends with him; being different means not being friends (and can often mean hating the other person). But no matter how hard one tries, no two people are alike. A teen struggles to accept this fact, especially since the differences often seem to stand in the way of being accepted by his peers.

If it were only a matter of superficial differences — changes a teen can make by spending money or working harder — maybe it wouldn't be so bad, but it's not. Sometimes the differences are pretty fundamental or future-affecting. If a teen's friends all get bad grades, he might be tempted to get bad grades too, thereby jeopardizing his future. If a teen's friends are all tall and he's not, there's only so much he can do about it — no amount of exercise can increase someone's height. Many other physical differences — breast size, acne, squeaky voice — are essentially "un-fixable," and that leads to a teen becoming insecure.

To make matters worse, being unique in ways friends like is a good thing — a great thing, the best thing ever. For instance, being better at sports that everyone else makes a guy the envy of the high school. And no one respects a follower. So conformity isn't an absolute rule, and teen life isn't as simple as follow the leader. On top of this, parents and adults always tell a teen to follow his heart and ignore the influence of others — but only when it comes to bad influences. If it's something the parents deem a good influence, then they want him to conform.

The conflict between conformity and individuality can result in some strange actions and decisions, many of which are rife with roleplaying potential. It can make a teen extremely stubborn: he holds onto his personal preferences despite everyone telling him to conform. It can make him parrot the actions of people he considers "non-conformists" in an effort to "be himself" — in other words, he paradoxically conforms to others in an attempt to prove that he's unique.

### The Car

To many people in all walks of life, an automobile is a status symbol — an outward reflection of who they are, or who they want to be. For teens, this is also true, but the car has added significance. In many ways the car is a teen's kingdom. The teen lives in his parents' house, under his parents' rules, but the car is in some ways beyond his parents' purview. He didn't choose the house he lives in, but he might have chosen the car he drives. He might have purchased it with his own money, so that makes it all his, one of the few things he's not dependent on his parents for.

The car becomes the place where a teen spends much of his time with his girlfriend, and where he stashes stuff he doesn't want his parents to see. It's his ticket to freedom — if the home life is getting him down, then he can jump in his car and go someplace else, or just drive around. Many teens become possessive about their cars, just like an adult becomes possessive about his home; in many ways the car is the teen's first apartment (or at least a surrogate for his first apartment).

In a *Teen Champions* campaign, cars may not have quite as much significance if the PCs have travel powers, or access to a secret headquarters. But they're still important in the eyes of the PCs' mundane friends, which gives the GM the opportunity to use automobiles as adventure/subplot cata-

Continued from last page

ize they need an adult's advice... and voila! An adult sympathetic to their plight, who gives them more credit than other adults (including their parents), appears on the scene to provide the advice and training they need.

This is the sort of thing a GM should work slowly into the campaign. Generally the superhero is the least likely adult — the old janitor who had to retire to a quiet job because of a bad heart; the over-exuberant counselor who decided he could help more people by being a counselor; the unusually likeable teacher who stopped being able to trust his powers after exposure to a strange ray — and maybe a similar ray gave the PCs their powers.

More rarely, an adult might secretly be a *supervillain*. In that case, the teen heroes usually discover this when they confront the villain and somehow learn who he is — for example, by accidentally tearing his mask off in combat. Then they have to deal with the shock of fighting (and hopefully defeating) someone they once trusted and respected.

lysts. For example, a PC may be nigh-invulnerable... but his friend, who's gotten involved with illegal back-street drag-racing, isn't.

### Hobbies: Maturity Versus Adolescence

Once upon a time in society there were stark divisions between what an adult did with his leisure time and what an adolescent did. These divisions have eroded in recent decades, leaving adults and teens with similar interests like comics, movies, computer games, roleplaying games, and even collecting action figures. This can make it difficult to separate out what's a teen interest and what's an adult interest, but in truth the difference isn't, and has never been, the activity itself. It's how the adult approaches the activity.

The adult indulges in a leisure activity when he has the free time and spends money on a hobby when he can afford to; a teen's life and finances revolve around his leisure time activities. Maturity is about knowing when more important things come first, not about what interests an adult has. For instance, an adult might play *Champions* once a week, but sometimes has to cancel because of family or work obligations. If he doesn't cancel — if he lets his home life and career suffer because of his hobby — he's being immature. An adolescent, on the other hand, might play *Champions* every day of the week, to heck with his homework or studying for finals.

A mature teen is one who recognizes that some things like school or family come first and are more important than just having fun. Unlike a mature adult, however, even a mature teen is rarely perfect (and if he is perfect, it's often to his detriment). Sometimes he succumbs to the temptation to put fun before responsibility... and sometimes it's even necessary to succumb, since "all work and no play" is no good for anyone (especially not for a teen who tries too hard to be mature).

So regardless of a character's hobbies, a player should remember to try to have an adolescent attitude toward those hobbies and leisure time in general, or else have an adolescent attitude toward responsibility, taking it to an unhealthy extreme. "A happy medium" is not a phrase that applies often in teen life.

### Realism

On the whole, *Teen Champions* takes a lighthearted approach to being a teen superhero specifically, and being a teen in general — few people want to roleplay the bad or depressing side of life. But not all aspects of teen life in contemporary America are lighthearted. Besides the omnipresent threat of substance abuse, some of the serious issues confronting teens today include:

- The internet has opened new doors for pedophiles to gain access to minors. No more creepy guy hanging around outside when school lets out; now an adolescent can be victimized via chat rooms in the privacy of his own bedroom.
- Just Say No: A teen might grow up hearing drugs are evil, sex is evil, booze is evil, and

smoking is evil... but parents don't always do a good job explaining why they're evil, why the teen has to avoid the traps these temptations pose. A teen PC may first be exposed to many of these during adolescence, and unlike his parents, he hasn't witnessed firsthand the effects they can have on a person. He's only been told they're evil; he has no proof, just the word of adults. Sometimes this lack of understanding leads to thoughtless and heedless experimentation, sometimes to inchoate fear... but it almost always has some kind of effect. Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex are rarely casual topics in a teen's life, and if they come up, they elicit more than just a shrug (unless, of course, the teen tries to avoid discussing the topic with an adult).

- Teen suicide hasn't gone away. Nor has teen pregnancy.

## TEEN BEHAVIOR TIP: THE INFLUENCE OF OTHERS

Teens often let others influence their behavior to an extent that appalls adults. Adult players should keep this in mind, letting their characters fall under the sway of bad influences and sometimes taking bad advice. One reason for this, according to conventional wisdom, is that teens try desperately to fit in with their friends (and so emulate their behavior), or they're trying to impress their peers (so they do anything, however stupid or poorly thought out, they believe their friends will admire).

But put a sympathetic spin on the situation. In a perfect world, here's how adult decision-making goes: adult considers situation, solicits advice from friends and family, compares advice to his own experiences, dismisses bad advice, and makes a decision. The key part of that process is "compares advice to his own experiences." The teen doesn't have very many experiences and that makes it difficult for him separate the good advice from the bad. If the advice *sounds* logical, if it comes from one of his peers who shares similarities with the teen — at least more similarities than the teen and his parents share — then doesn't it make sense the teen would heed his friend's advice?

A teen might be stubborn — he might be downright ornery — but when push comes to shove, he simply hasn't lived through all life has to offer, and in many situations he has no basis on which to make a decision.

However an adult player chooses to define his *Teen Champions* PC, he should allow others to influence his character. One way of doing this is to make a "Cool/Not Cool" chart. List all the other PCs and NPCs and make two columns: Cool and Not Cool. Then put a check mark next to the category the PC or NPC falls into (and keep in mind, being cool or not being cool doesn't mean the character likes or dislikes the other; it just means he thinks he's cool or not, more a measure of respect than of friendship). When a PC or NPC offers the character advice, consult the chart. If he's cool, take the advice (or at least consider it more strongly, perhaps requiring a modified EGO Roll to reject it). If he's not, ignore the advice.

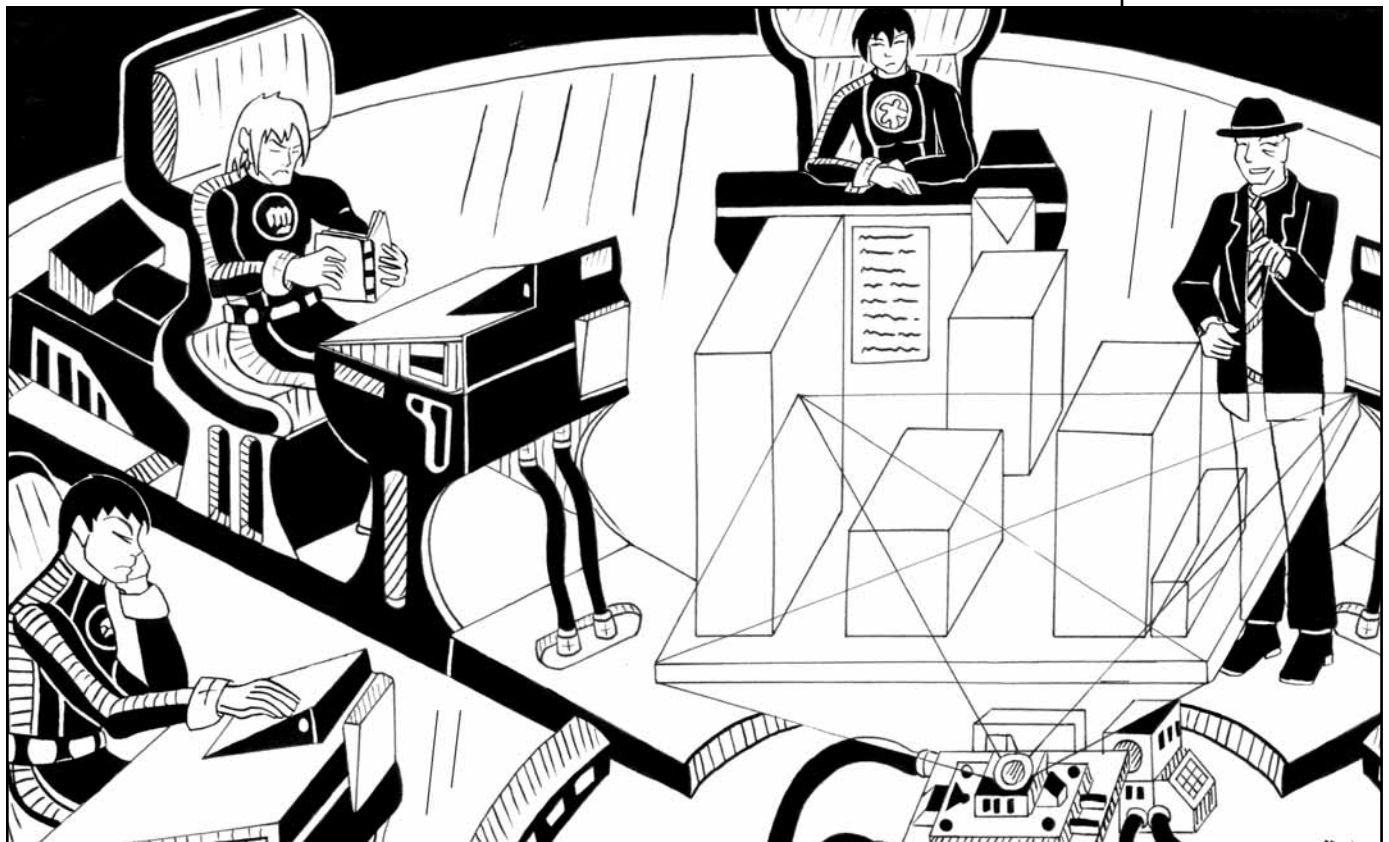
- Not long ago it was pretty unthinkable for a teen to “come out of the closet” in high school — everyone had their suspicions, and teens would sometimes act on these suspicions, but no one really knew for sure. Society at large, and parents in particular, have become more accepting of the openly gay, and it only makes sense that schools would as well. However, none of this means classmates (or the community) have become more accepting of a fellow student’s homosexuality.
- Once upon a time people thought of bullying as being limited to physical abuse, and typically adults only concerned themselves with abuse that led to physical harm. In other words, being shoved around wasn’t considered a big deal unless it resulted in a bloody nose or a broken bone. In today’s schools bullying is not just physical abuse, but also verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and the like... and adults rarely explain it away with “boys being boys” or other aphorisms. In some cases schools have gone to extremes to “protect” the student body, forbidding many forms of conduct that don’t approach the classic definition of “bullying.” Teen PCs may find themselves confronting the twin demons of genuine bullying and harassment on the one hand, and out of control political correctness on the other.
- On a related note, in the wake of events like the Columbine shootings, everything a student threatens to do or implies he wants to do is taken much more seriously than it used to be. Writing a story about killing classmates, or drawing a picture depicting the death of

classmates, can result in actions ranging from mandatory family counseling for the student and his parents, to expulsion. In the past adults considered what adolescents said, especially when it was melodramatic and outré, with a roll of the eyes and a sigh; such dismissal is less often the case nowadays.

Gamemasters and players have to decide for themselves how often, if at all, these issues come into play. The GM should address these topics with the sensitivity they deserve. Since it’s doubtful players want to roleplay many of these experiences (unless one is a *really* good roleplayer), the best way is often to bring them up as subplots that affect the PCs’ friends. The PCs may not understand the true impact of drugs yet... but they will after they see one of their friends get addicted and try to help him. They may not understand the impact of bullying and taunting until they see one of their classmates driven into a homicidal or suicidal rage by the mistreatment.

## CLIQUE: TEEN SUPER-HERO PACKAGE DEALS

Teens divide themselves into *cliques*: groups of peers who share the same interests and have similar personalities... and in the worst case scenario are basically pod people dressing in the same style of clothing, saying the same things, and never daring to deviate from the opinion of the clique or try something the members of the clique don’t approve of. The clique (usually mispronounced “click”) is a teen’s primary social group, and most teens try very



## RACE- OR ETHNIC-BASED CLIQUES

A clique not included in the archetypes in this section is one based on race or ethnicity. Typically the members of a minority group in the high school — and usually in society in general, but not always — form a clique unto themselves. This doesn't have to be black or Hispanic; it could be Polish, Serbian, Asian, or even white. This clique works similarly to a city's ethnic enclave and usually the members live in such a place — Chinatown, Greektown, or the like. The unifying features of the clique are culture, religion, and language — features far less superficial and more integral to who the person is than the ones forming the basis of other cliques. Though these sorts of cliques are very much a feature of modern high schools, including them in a setting opens the door to dealing with the issue of race, prejudice, and discrimination. Though these are just as much teen issues as they are adult ones, players and GMs need to decide for themselves whether they feel those issues are appropriate for a role-playing game campaign.

hard to fit in. That means the clique's judgment on behavior, dress, and social activities become nigh-absolute laws, and the clique the ultimate arbiter of what's right and proper.

Some people say humans are pack animals, and in quite a few ways the clique is the teen's pack. Just like a pack of wolves, the clique is insular and has a leader, an alpha wolf. Its members are intensely concerned with the pecking order, since it impacts every aspect of daily life. The clique is xenophobic; no one in the clique is very friendly toward outsiders. The clique ruthlessly controls its territory, whether that's a table in the cafeteria or an after-school hang-out, with leaders sometimes going so far as to determine which members can sit where and other matters of protocol. A clique's members always go out of their way to make outsiders feel unwelcome in the clique's territory.

*Teen Champions* presents cliques as Package Deals, and a player can choose one of these to flesh out his character's Skills and Perks. Even if a player decides not to use a Package Deal, he should consider whether his character belongs to a clique and how he feels about the cliques present in his school. Similarly, the GM has to decide what cliques exist in the school. These are important parts of high

## TEEN BEHAVIOR TIP: POIGNANCY

Many times in a *Teen Champions* campaign you play the trials and travails of teen life for laughs: teen life is more lighthearted than adult life; the extremes teens take things to, whether romance or feelings toward authority figures, seem ludicrous to an adult; and adult players are sort of nostalgically-comedically remembering their own teen years.

Without a doubt there's much to laugh about, but not everything need be lighthearted and humorously melodramatic. Many aspects of teen life have a striking poignancy — the first time two friends stop being friends, the first break-up, the first time a teen realizes he can do absolutely nothing to help a friend in need, the first time the idealism of even the most cynical teen comes into violent collision with reality, the first time a teen realizes his parents are flawed. All of these moments possess a poignancy all their own because they signify an end of innocence.

Other moments have a less tragic poignancy because they signify the first signs of maturity, providing the first glimpse of a teen as an adult. The first time he makes a sacrifice for the good of another. The first time he thinks of someone other than himself in bad situation. The first time he works hard and by himself and succeeds. The first time he admits wrongdoing when he's caught, rather than trying to cover it up or excuse his behavior.

Players should keep this in mind when roleplaying their characters and act accordingly. It doesn't have to be tragic, but a melodramatic moment can be pivotal and important. The teen PC might not realize the exact nature of what's changed, but he usually knows *something's* changed, and a dramatic change affects even the most callow youth. The poignant moment fills him with a nebulous sorrow, a disturbing wonder at what just happened, or a chilling numbness — but whatever the case, the change affects him.

school, and they should be just as important to the teen superhero.

### Stereotypes

The cliques presented here are out-and-out stereotypes, and no one fits a stereotype perfectly. The jock who gets good grades, the geek who's physical intimidating — neither of these are unheard of, and a player shouldn't let cliques limit his imagination when coming up with his character. For the player the clique is a starting place, not an end-all be-all to his character's personality.

However, people outside of the PC's clique — not just students, but sometimes teachers and parents too — often stereotype him according to his clique, and it takes time and effort to change a person's mind. One way of looking at the descriptions below: they describe how people outside the clique view its members, the stereotypes they use when interacting with the clique, but not necessarily what the members of the clique are really like. (On the other hand, some members of a clique may fit the stereotype to a T.)

### The Unifying Feature

In a *Teen Champions* campaign PCs might come from diverse cliques — in fact this is often the case in the fiction. It makes for fun character interaction, since cliques may have contrary likes and dislikes — and that means the diversity provides good roleplaying opportunities as PCs overcome stereotypes and get a glimpse of how the “other half” lives. Since the PCs all have one overarching characteristic in common — superpowers — they have a strong basis for overcoming clique-based distinctions no matter how different any two PCs are. And as the campaign evolves, common enemies will give them even more reason to stick together....

However, no rule says all the superheroes in a group have to come from different cliques. Maybe all the jocks in the high school find themselves with superpowers after a meteorite crashes into their car as they drive home from practice. Now not only are they resolved to fight supervillainy, but they also want to use their powers to bring their high school its first state championship. Or maybe all the geeks in the high school are exposed to strange radiation when they visit a government laboratory on a field trip with the Future Scientists Club. Now they can fight supervillainy *and* teach the bullies to keep their wedgies to themselves.

### Movement Between Cliques

It's an underlying assumption of cliques that they're set in stone — once a jock, always a jock; once a burnout, always a burnout — but often in fiction the protagonist gains entrance to a clique, abandons his old clique, discovers “the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence,” and decides his new clique sucks. Then he returns to his old friends — but only after he apologizes for his betrayal and wins back their friendship.

There are many rationales for movement between cliques; here are a few examples:

- The popular girls take an ugly duckling under their wing and transform her into a beautiful

swan. The new-found popularity goes to the girl's head, but in the end she realizes "beauty is only skin deep." Usually the popular girls have an ulterior or base motive for what they did, a bet being the most common.

- Along with gaining superpowers, the unattractive girl also gains the unearthly beauty that seems a hallmark of superheroines. Now every guy in school wants to date her — will she remember the not-so-attractive but funny geek she used to date?
- A geek gains physical-related superpowers and becomes the star of the football team. Though he might like the notoriety he gains, he soon realizes he isn't having much fun and is letting more important things — like family, friends, and school — slide.
- A burnout realizes he's been throwing his life away and tries to do better in school. He finds himself getting along with the geeks — but like most stereotypical burnouts, his home life is bad, his new friends just don't understand him like his old friends did, and it seems his dysfunctional family is always dragging him down.
- A jock discovers the "wonders" of marijuana and becomes a burnout. Can his friends save him from drugs and the evil influence of the other burnouts?
- A weirdo gains emotion-manipulation powers and now dates the popular girls. This raises the ire of the jocks and other prestigious cliques, and they seek revenge on him. Furthermore, the weirdo discovers that popular girls aren't very interesting.
- A cheerleader goes through a traumatic event and comes out the other side with her positive view of the world tainted. She can no longer abide the perceived rapidity of her friends and starts looking outside her clique, typically falling for some guy that's totally unacceptable. Of course, her cheerleader friends can't let her turn to the dark side....
- An alterna-teen, full of loathing for school spirit and optimism, loses a bet and tries out for the cheerleading squad. Much to her shock she makes the squad, and soon comes to learn that optimism and a positive outlook can be kind of fun.
- The loner makes friends. The friends betray him. And the loner takes a horrible revenge on the false friends! Or else the friends don't betray him, and the loner learns the value of friendship and being around other people, while at the same time helping these new friends with their own problems (usually being bullied).

**THE ALTERNA-TEEN**

*"Most likely to quote song lyrics in response to a question."*

**Fashion Statement:** Piercings, hair dyed any color but blonde, whatever the favorite band wore at their last concert

**Report Card:** Not bad, usually better in English than math

**Dating:** People in college, because high school kids are too immature; people in bands; self-professed poets

**Career Outlook (best case):** Member of a band with small cult following

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Sell-out

**Likes:** Music, whatever members of favorite band said they liked in the last interview published in some underground 'zine

**Dislikes:** Immature behavior, school spirit, school-related activities, when their favorite unknown band gets popular

**Sub-Cliques:** Punks, Goths, Skaters, Grunge, New Wave, Emo-Nerds

**Description:** The "Alterna-Teen" is a catch-all category for what is predominantly a music-based clique. The music an Alterna-Teen likes is never played on the radio unless it's a college radio station and is only popular among a small number of people. The Alterna-Teen patterns his dress and behavior on his favorite band. Usually the band is angsty and angry, obsessed with existential suffering, and almost as melodramatic as the teen himself. If the lead singer says his favorite poet is Baudelaire, then the Alterna-Teen reads *The Flowers Of Evil*; if the band makes a song in support of the Zapatistas, then the Alterna-Teen brings up the plight of the Zapatistas the next time his World History class meets (and maybe the time after that, and the time after that...). The clique is very fad-driven and changes with the music, but some fads last the duration of high school. Members of the clique cannot wait to get out of high school, either because college is so much better or high school is too lame to bear.

**ALTERNA-TEEN PACKAGE DEAL**

**Abilities**

Cost	Ability
2	+2 INT
2	PS: Instrument 11-
3	KS: Music (INT Roll)
1	Membership: Clique
3	3 points' worth of fad-related Knowledge Skills

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 11**

**Disadvantages**

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Clique character belongs to 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15**

## DIAMETRICALLY-OPPOSED CLIQUES

This section creates a very Balkanized view of high school with seemingly as many cliques as there are students. Another way of handling cliques, and one often used in teen fiction, is to have diametrically-opposed cliques. This calls for two broad cliques, the membership of which is based on a single characteristic, and everyone in the high school falls into one of the two cliques.

### Rich versus Poor:

Clique membership depends solely on the wealth of one's parents. Rich kids are spoiled but comparatively sophisticated. They drive good cars, get good grades, teachers love them, and they do well in sports and other organized activities that society approves of and appreciates. In short, they're everything society considers good. Poor kids are salt-of-the-earth types but lack "book smarts." If one of them has a car, he paid for it himself; they get bad grades; teachers hate them; they drink too much, smoke too much, cuss too much, and indulge in casual drug use; they're always in trouble with the cops. Everything comes easy for the rich kid; everything comes hard for the poor kid; and rich and poor can never get along. If the situation is particularly tense, it's because the rich kids are always trying to make sure the poor kids remember their place, or the poor kids spend a lot of time terrorizing the rich kids. These stories usually feature a rich kid coming to understand a poor kid — typically a rich girl falls for a poor boy, or vice-versa — and

## THE BURNOUT

*"Most likely to kill all his brain cells before twenty-one."*

**Fashion Statement:** Torn jeans, dirty tee-shirts, leather jackets or jean jackets with the name of a band on the back, boots or old tennis shoes

**Report Card:** Better get it out of the mail box before the parents see it

**Dating:** Other burnouts, adults who can at least buy cigarettes and hopefully booze

**Career Outlook (best case):** Porn star, beer taste-tester, rock star

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Career criminal, auto-shop teacher

**Likes:** Heavy metal, hard rock, or prog rock, cars with HEMI engines, cigarettes, beer, pot

**Dislikes:** School, buzzkills, drug-sniffing police dogs

**Sub-Cliques:** Stoners, slackers, metalheads, Deadheads

**Description:** The Burnout is a troublemaker and delinquent. He skips class, shoplifts, commits petty acts of vandalism, and does poorly in class. In fact, doing well in school and getting good grades is sometimes considered uncool and grounds for expulsion from the clique. He tends to gravitate toward shop classes, but most people think the burnout's not going to graduate anyway, so what's it matter what classes he takes? He smokes tobacco and marijuana, drives a muscle car to school, and listens to heavy metal. He wears his hair long and uncombed, and tries to keep it in his eyes so no one can see him sleeping in class or how bloodshot his eyes are. When he's actually awake in class, he tends to make smart remarks and generally act disruptive. Typically in the fiction, his family is poor and one or both of his parents are abusive. (Deadheads are a unique sub-category of burnouts — less angry, and easier to get along with... but usually because they're stoned out of their gourds, so they don't always make a lot of sense.)

## BURNOUT PACKAGE DEAL

### Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Concealment (INT Roll)
3	Streetwise (PRE Roll)
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Combat Driving, Gambling, KS: Music, KS: Local Criminals, Mechanics, Trading, TF: Small Motorized Ground Vehicles, WF: Knives, WF: Small Arms
1	Membership: Clique

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 16**

### Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Clique character belongs to 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15**

## THE CHEERLEADER

*"Most likely to fall in love with her pom-pom."*

**Fashion Statement:** Polyester pleated skirt, briefs, short-sleeved knit sweater, and pom-poms

**Report Card:** Just fine

**Dating:** Jocks

**Career Outlook (best case):** Marry wealthy, advertising and public relations, physical trainer, sports therapist

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Barefoot and pregnant until she's in her 40s

**Likes:** Sports, school spirit

**Dislikes:** People who don't smile, bad attitudes, students who don't support the athletes

**Sub-Cliques:** Lettergirls, jockettes

**Description:** Attractive and well-built, the Cheerleader leads the school in pep rallies intended to get the football team "fired up" before the big game (and every game is a big one), leads the crowd in cheers at the game, and puts on halftime shows. She doesn't really wear her cheerleader uniform to school every day — only on days when there's a game — but she would wear it if she thought she could get away with it. That would be a-OK with most of the guys in the school, since the sweaters are tight and the skirts short. The Cheerleader cries when the football team loses, which most other students find pretty shocking. Cheerleaders are almost always bright and peppy, except when confronted with a negative attitude.

## CHEERLEADER PACKAGE DEAL

### Abilities

Cost	Ability
6	+2 DEX
1	+2 COM
2	+2 PRE
3	Acrobatics (DEX)
3	Oratory (PRE)
2	PS: Cheerleading 11-
1	Membership: Clique

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 18**

### Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Clique character belongs to 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15**

**THE GEEK**

*“Most likely to suffer Carpal Tunnel Syndrome before eighteen.”*

**Fashion Statement:** Pants that are too short, plaid button-down shirts that he wears tucked in, glasses, bad hair

**Report Card:** Good

**Dating:** No

**Career Outlook (best case):** Computer company mogul, any high paying job that avoids social interaction

**Career Outlook (worst case):** High school math teacher

**Likes:** Computers and computer games, math and science, fiction (especially genre fiction)

**Dislikes:** Gym class, Jocks, the Sun and sunlight in general

**Sub-Cliques:** Band geeks, Drama geeks, math geeks, comic book geeks, gaming geeks

**Description:** Geeks come in many shapes and sizes, but the defining feature of the Geek is that he obsessively loves something no one else likes (outside of the other geeks, that is). It could be math, band, or drama. It could be television shows, movies, science fiction, comic books, or roleplaying games. It could even be stamp collecting, or some combination of all these things. But whatever it is, most of his fellow students can't even figure out why he likes it, or at least why he likes it *so much*. This obsession, though, is almost all the Geek thinks about, and in the eyes of his fellow students that not only makes him very strange, but also someone not very interesting to talk to. Add to that the fact the Geek is typically not very physically intimidating and totally unaware of style and fashion, and he often finds himself on the lowest rung of the social pecking order. Of course, as a consolation the Geek tends to do well for himself post-graduation, so he always has the future to look forward to.

**THE JOCK**

*“Most likely to relive his high school days for the rest of his life.”*

**Fashion Statement:** Jeans, tennis shoes, tee-shirts, a letterman's jacket

**Report Card:** High enough to maintain eligibility

**Dating:** Cheerleaders

**Career Outlook (best case):** Professional athlete

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Gas station attendant

**Likes:** Sports and... sports

**Dislikes:** Not sports

**Sub-Cliques:** Football players, basketball players, jocks without letterman's jackets (the poor, pitiful posers)

**Description:** Big and not very bright, the Jock participates in sports — but not just any sport. He most often plays football and sometimes basketball. All other sports are for wimps. Every Jock thinks he's going to get an athletic scholarship to college, and the really delusional ones think they're going to the pros. Alas, such is not usually the case, and most Jocks find themselves reliving the glory days of youth for the rest of their lives. That said, the Jock who truly has a shot at the pros is a special thing, coddled by teachers, fawned upon by his peers, and given nice cars by weird adults who take far too much interest in high school sports. And nothing's sadder than a Jock who hasn't earned an athletic letter and doesn't have a letterman's jacket. Jocks usually sub-divide themselves into the Junior Varsity (underclassmen) and the Varsity (upperclassmen and talented underclassmen). Hazing is common among members of the clique, and bullying the weak is not just a favorite hobby, but often a way of life.

In effect, Jocks are just like Geeks, in that they're obsessed with a particular subject. But their obsession is a socially acceptable one, which in turn makes them socially acceptable, even popular.

Continued from last page

it usually ends badly for the poor kid (jail, death, broken heart, or the like).

**Jocks versus Everybody**

**Else:** Jocks — usually from the football team — rule the school. Adults love the jocks, and every parent wishes his own child was a jock. Teachers give the jocks the benefit of the doubt — the big game's coming up, and it's not good to stress out the jock before the big game. But the jocks are, essentially, the enemy — the bullies who use their privileges to get ahead, and their strength to hurt other kids. Thus, stories with jocks versus everyone else usually involve everyone else proving their worth to the world at large. In some cases another clique, often the Geeks, rises up to lead the charge against the jocks.

**GEEK PACKAGE DEAL**

**Abilities**

Cost	Ability
4	+4 INT
-2	-2 PRE
6	6 points' worth of trivia Skills (examples include: KS: Silver Age Comics, KS: Seventies Television Shows, KS: Hammer And AIP Horror Movies, Language: Elvish, Language: Klingon)
9	9 points worth of useful geek Skills: Acting (for drama geeks), Computer Programming, Inventor, PS: Instrument (for band geeks), any Science Skill
1	Membership: Clique

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 18**

**Disadvantages**

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Clique character belongs to 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15**

**JOCK PACKAGE DEAL**

**Abilities**

Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
4	+2 DEX
6	+2 CON
2	PS: Student Athlete 11-
2	KS: Favorite Sport 11-
1	Membership: Clique

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 17**

**Disadvantages**

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Clique character belongs to 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15**

## SUPER-SCHOOL CLIQUES

The cliques presented here assume the teen superhero goes to school with normal kids and they represent who he is outside of his life as a superhero. In a Super-School, however, a teen's powers can form the basis of cliques just like his appearance or economic status can in normal school.

A GM might create a hierarchy of cliques by drawing a parallel between the cliques described in this section and the superhero archetypes presented on pages 69-72 of *Champions* (and an example of this are the Super-Cliques described on page 66 at the Ravenswood Academy). Anyone with physically-based powers is a jock — bricks and speedsters especially. Martial artists and weapon masters might be jocks or they might be loners. Anyone with mental powers or powers derived from intellect is a geek — mentalists and gadget-teers fall in this category. Mystics are weirdos and stoners. Metamorphs are always weirdos, because so many teens are weird about their bodies to begin with. Powered Armor must have money somewhere to pay for his equipment so he's a rich kid.

Another way is to base it on origin. Mutants are weirdos. The children of mad scientists are geeks. Sidekicks and legacies are the teachers' pets, the clique that can do no wrong in the eyes of authority figures. Teens with power derived from training are jocks — unless those powers are intellect-based, then they're geeks.

## THE LONER

*"Most likely to ride off into the sunset."*

**Fashion Statement:** Black jeans, black boots, lots of black, a black trench coat

**Report Card:** Who knows, because he ain't talkin'

**Dating:** Wouldn't be much of a loner if he had a girlfriend, would he?

**Career Outlook (best case):** Anti-hero

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Serial killer

**Likes:** Being alone

**Dislikes:** Talking to people

**Sub-Cliques:** None

**Description:** He comes to school alone, he walks to class alone, he sits at lunch alone... for he is the Loner! Typically the Loner is a sort of rogue element in the high school hierarchy, an outsider who's accepted by no one clique. And he doesn't want to be a part of a clique, either. The other students tell many myths and legends about the Loner, but maybe he's just a new kid who's family recently moved to the area. He tends to hold himself apart because he detests high school and everything associated with high school — including his fellow students. In fiction, the Loner performs the functions typical to the Trickster archetype. He provides commentary on how ridiculous cliques are, and sometimes acts to destroy the cliques... and sometimes the high school, too. He breaks down barriers, possesses knowledge outside the purview of the typical high school student, and shares this knowledge with those who dare to win his friendship. Along the way some unlikely girl falls for him because he's mysterious and enigmatic; the Loner doesn't live up to his name and accepts her as his girlfriend, and he turns her to the dark side (at least in the eyes of her friends).

## LONER PACKAGE DEAL

### Abilities

Cost	Ability
4	+4 PRE
3	Streetwise (PRE Roll)
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Combat Driving, Concealment, Demolitions, Gambling, KS: Music, KS: Local Criminals, Mechanics, TF: Small Motorized Ground Vehicles, TF: Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, WF: Knives, WF: Small Arms

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 16**

### Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 5**

## THE PRINCESS

*"Most likely to marry her own reflection."*

**Fashion Statement:** London... Paris... Milan

**Report Card:** Just fine, not that grades matter

**Dating:** An older guy who goes to an expensive private school (if need be, a jock with wealthy parents will do in a pinch)

**Career Outlook (best case):** Heiress

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Family loses all its money in a stock market scandal

**Likes:** Summering in Europe, anything expensive (the more expensive, the more she likes it)

**Dislikes:** The poor, the tacky, and the offensive

**Sub-Cliques:** The popular girls, the rich kids, the Prince (the male version of the Princess)

**Description:** Beautiful, sophisticated, and from a wealthy family, the Princess is high school royalty, and she rules the hierarchy with an iron fist. Among the clique, one Princess is the queen, the rest her handmaidens, and God help anyone who gets on their bad side. Not only does such a person earn the wrath of the Princess herself, but her father is a mover and shaker in the community and does anything his little girl asks. Bad enough the Princess is better looking than everyone else, but she also knows how to accentuate her natural beauty with make-up and dress in a way that flaunts her assets. She drives the best car in the parking lot — a far better car than any of the teachers drive — and spends her vacations abroad. She gets decent grades because everything comes naturally to her, but grades are the last thing on her mind. The clique often has a name for itself — something unique that represents the members' status in the high school. Some high schools have rich kid cliques which count both boys and girls among the membership, but there are always Princesses.

## PRINCESS PACKAGE DEAL

### Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	+4 COM
4	+4 PRE
3	High Society
3	Persuasion
3	Seduction
4	4 points' worth of Area Knowledges
1	Membership: Clique
10	Money

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 30**

### Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Clique character belongs to 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15**



**THE WEIRDO**

*“Most likely to go postal.”*

**Fashion Statement:** The same clothes day after day, a big jacket with lots of pockets that he never takes off

**Report Card:** Better than expected

**Dating:** Not likely, but maybe another Weirdo

**Career Outlook (best case):** Become wealthy and/or famous, so people think he’s “eccentric” instead of weird

**Career Outlook (worst case):** Homeless person

**Likes:** Weird stuff like sniffing glue or petting mice

**Dislikes:** Conformity, people who tell him he’s weird

**Sub-Cliques:** None

**Description:** Similar to the Loner, but never mistaken for cool, the Weirdo is usually a clique of one. Sometimes he might stand on the fringes of another clique — the geeks or the burnouts (if the Weirdo smokes pot). Sometimes he has no friends at all. Unlike the Geek, the Weirdo not only likes something no one else likes, he also does stuff that other people find just plain weird — unsettling, disgusting, or incomprehensible. He isn’t bullied as often as a Geek, because people are scared of what he might do (read: might go psycho, and no one wants to deal with that). His weirdness might stem from some unusual physical difference like albinism or it might be entirely intangible. Sometimes weirdness is a desperate cry for attention — but not always, and sometimes the Weirdo is honestly, earnestly weird. In fiction the Weirdo often performs a function like the village idiot or one similar to the Fool archetype.

**WEIRDO PACKAGE DEAL**

**Abilities**

Cost Ability

-1 -2 COM

9 9 points’ worth of weird Skills

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 8**

**Disadvantages**

Value Disadvantage

5 Distinctive Feature: Clique (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 5**

**AND EVERYONE ELSE...**

*“Most likely not to be voted most likely for anything.”*

**Fashion Statement:** Anything that doesn’t stand out

**Report Card:** Eh

**Dating:** Yeah, sure

**Career Outlook (best case):** One of the many jobs out there in the world that pays well

**Career Outlook (worst case):** One of the many jobs out there in the world that pays poorly

**Likes:** The standard stuff

**Dislikes:** The standard stuff

**Sub-Cliques:** None

**Description:** The most notable quality Everyone Else has is they don’t stand out. These are the extras walking to-and-fro in the hallways while the movie’s main characters are engaged in some intense, emotional psychodrama. They drift through high school, never rocking the boat, just faces in the crowd... who will become faces in the yearbook that no one can remember ten years later at the reunion. They live, love, succeed, and fail in the shadow of the other kids, and only their friends know their names. Of course, for the teen superhero, he all of sudden has a reason to stand out... and this can make for a strange adjustment. There’s no Package Deal for Everybody Else; they’re the default from which other Package Deals derive.

**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF CLIQUES**

Friendships are usually based on clique membership, but they aren’t always set in stone, and even if they are by the time a student enters high school, cliques haven’t always been around. Here are a couple of reasons for “non-clique-based” friendships:

**Childhood Friends:** The geek and the jock are next-door neighbors, their families are friendly, and they grew up together. In fiction the strictly regimented cliques that dominate high school life are fully illustrated by showing them through the eyes of childhood friends. In this case the friends drift apart because one’s a jock and one’s a geek, or one’s a princess and one’s a stoner, and it’s a source of angst for both parties as they discover that not only do they have nothing in common anymore, but their new friends don’t accept their old friends.

**The Good Guy (Sweet Girl):** One clique member is such a nice person that everyone likes him. Usually this nice person is a jock, cheerleader, princess, or member of other “privileged” clique, but despite that membership, he’s friendly to everyone and anyone. No matter how much an individual hates a particular clique, this one person is all right.

**Dating:** Who can explain love? And never forget opposites attract. While most dating takes place within acceptable cliques, Romeo and Juliet-style romance features prominently in teen fiction. Two people from opposite cliques meet in unusual circumstances and form an unlikely couple; their friends interfere; sometimes it ends tragically, sometimes the two lovebirds overcome persecution.

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A final possibility is to use diametrically-opposed cliques, with the simplest being those with cool powers versus those with not cool powers. You can talk to fish? Not cool. You can turn into a puddle of slime? Very not cool. You can lift a car, bounce bullets off your chest, and fly real fast? Cool. You can turn invisible and sneak into the girls’ locker room? Can you make other people invisible, too? Very cool.

## 10 EXCUSES FOR BEING IN COSTUME

Few things jeopardize a teen superhero's secret identity more than being caught in costume. Luckily the teen superhero usually isn't famous yet, and here are a few excuses for wearing a costume that might get him out of trouble:

- Costume party
- Getting ready for Halloween
- Going to a Sci-Fi or comic book convention
- Going to a rock concert
- Trying out for the school's production of "The Trials of the Justice Squadron"
- Some kids wear the jersey of their favorite basketball players; you wear the costume of your favorite superhero
- You lost a bet
- Trying to impress a girl (or boy)
- Why should superheroes be the only ones who get to wear costumes? (Or otherwise making a quixotic statement about the unfair mores of society; anything that provokes an eyeroll from adults works.)
- It's the latest fashion from Europe (or someplace else exotic)

## TEENS' SUPERPOWERS

Last, but not least, among the elements to consider for your *Teen Champions* character are his superpowers. Many adult superheroes have an easy acceptance of their superpowers. They rarely stop to question, "Why me?" or "What did I do to deserve these powers?" — and if they do, it's only for the duration of an adventure and at the conclusion they've reaffirmed their faith in themselves and their amazing abilities.

Such is not the case for a teen superhero. A teen is never sure "why him?" — he never answers the question to his satisfaction, regardless of how well he does as a superhero — and his existential questioning, if not torment, about his superpowers figures prominently and frequently in his day-to-day life. A teen can barely get through adolescence without questioning his very existence (why's he's here, why's he smart or not smart, overweight or skinny, lucky in love or not, *ad infinitum*), so how can anyone expect him *not* to question having superpowers?

### ATTITUDE TOWARD SUPERPOWERS

Ask yourself: how does your PC feel about his superpowers? Is the only time he truly feels free when he's flying around as a superhero? Is being a superhero the only thing he's good at — he gets

## TEEN BEHAVIOR TIP: CURSING

Children learn curse words pretty young, but teens have a unique perspective on cursing.

Some teens curse like sailors, like ridiculous sailors at least, dropping f-bombs before every word in an attempt to (a) sound tough, (b) sound mature, (c) provoke a response from adults, or (d) all of the above. These teens also tend to make up new curses and slurs by conjuncting any old cuss word with some noun — ape, munch, hat, head, and so on.

Other teens go to great lengths to avoid cursing, using homophones in lieu of curse words: sucks, freaking, fricking, flipping, dang, heck, or even making up whole new words to express their complete disgust or frustration. But like the teens who cuss up a storm, these teens tend to overuse the words too.

Also, teens are more likely to toss around racially-, ethnically-, or sexuality-based slanders and insults — teens tend to be less empathetic and less concerned with not hurting someone's feelings. (But of course, this isn't an excuse to use these terms around the gaming table if someone in the group might find it offensive.)

Lastly, any word that refers to a reproductive organ — however technical the term — is good for a giggle in most groups: scrotum, testicle, vagina, penis, and so on.

As a general rule of thumb, few adults find a teen's cursing and swearing acceptable; any teen uttering such words can expect a reprimand. Additionally, parents always seems to have one word that drives them absolutely batty, and for whatever reason, most teens can never seem to avoid speaking that especially offensive word in their parents' presence.

terrible grades, he's no good at sports, but when he puts on a mask he suddenly becomes competent? Does he feel it's an unfair burden (while his normal friends are running around gold-bricking, he needs to save the planet), or does he feel it makes him a freak? Does he wish he could just be a normal kid?

### SECRET IDENTITIES

Typically the teen superhero has a secret identity — he keeps the secret of his superpowers and crimefighting not only from the public at large, but also his parents and classmates. He does this partly for dramatic reasons — it adds additional drama to the hero's life and serves as an endless source of angst and conflict — but also because teens in general tend to keep secrets from adults. Other possible rationales include:

- To protect family and loved ones from supervillains.
- Because his parents would never let him be a superhero if they knew the truth.
- Because the government or some other authority figure would exploit him and his powers if they knew his identity.
- Because his parents will send him away to Super-School if they ever find out about his powers.
- Because his parents are supervillains.
- Because he's ashamed of his powers.
- Because his clique would never approve of him being a superhero.
- Because there's some deep, dark secret about how he received his powers and he doesn't want his parents finding out.
- Because *real* superheroes keep their identities a secret, and the teen tries his utmost to emulate his idol(s).

### ORIGIN OF SUPERPOWERS

Just like adult superheroes, teen heroes get their powers in a handful of general ways... but unlike adults, this origin often impacts the teen's attitude toward his powers and how he conducts himself as a superhero. A teen thinks that what he wears and where he lives are reflections of his fundamental personality — that these superficial qualities have more importance than they really do, and/or are the *sine qua non* of who he is — and he feels the same way about how he gets his powers.

Here are the four standard origins for teen superheroes, as well as what it means in broad terms for the superhero's personality.

#### Fluke Of Circumstances

The PC just happened to be in the right place at the right time. (Or the wrong place at the wrong time, depending on his attitude toward his superpowers.) Nothing illustrates the mercurial nature of the world more than suddenly finding oneself with superpowers. If the teen is now ten feet tall and made of mud, it's a cruel world. If he's sud-

denly stronger than the strongest man and bulletproof, the world's a pretty good place. If he hates his powers, he might turn his rage outward; if he considers them a blessing, he might come to believe he's the luckiest guy alive and nothing will ever go wrong for him.

Some teens think gaining powers was more than a fluke (and maybe they have good reason to). The experience can turn the teen to a higher power or purpose — either someone who approved of him granted him the powers as a reward, or someone who disapproved of him cursed him with the powers as punishment.

### Inborn Ability

The PC is born with his powers. He might be a mutant, the result of generations of mystic breeding, or the test subject for his parent's genetic tinkering, but the fact that he was born with the powers defines how he feels about them. His powers are an innate quality — not something he trained to gain or that were given to him, but something that lies within himself.

Maybe he reads Nietzsche at too young an age and is now convinced he's the *ubermensch*. Although for the moment he believes he must protect the weak, how long before he perceives himself as their rightful ruler? Or maybe he feels his powers make him strange and different, and he hates them with a passion (this is particularly appropriate for powers that cut him off from normal interaction with society). Unlike the teen who gained his powers through a Fluke Of Circumstances, one with Inborn Ability can only blame himself or his parents. His hatred might turn inward, becoming self-loathing until he finally accepts his powers; or he might turn his hatred toward his parents.

Characters with Inborn Ability are more likely to experience drastic physical changes when they gain their powers. These physical changes can be growing wings, turning purple, exuding slime from every pore, or the young hero's head becoming large and bulbous enough to contain his huge brain. They might be barely noticeable, they might be hard to miss — but a teen, who's already uncomfortable with the body hair, cracking voice, acne, and whatever other craziness biology throws his way during puberty, never takes the changes lightly. If one aspect of his powers makes the teen superhero believe he's cursed, it's likely to be the gross physical changes that come along with them.

### Sidekick

The Sidekick served as an adult superhero's companion and assistant in his adventures, helping him thwart madmen and save the world dozens of times. The adult might have trained the Sidekick; the Sidekick might have gained his power during one of his mentor's adventures and the mentor took him under his wing; or the Sidekick gained his powers in a similar (maybe even the same) way the adult superhero did. For whatever reason — maybe because he decided to go it alone, or because he wants to be around superheroes his own age for once — the Sidekick's joined a team of teen heroes.

The Sidekick is usually far more accepting of his superpowers than other teen heroes (although he might regret missing out on a normal childhood). What makes him unique in a group is that he has much more experience superheroing than the other group members. This can mean the other members look to him for leadership, or it can mean he becomes, at times, arrogant about his past as a "real superhero." The one thing it means for sure is



## TEEN SUPERTEAM DYNAMICS

Though the dynamic of a teen superteam is similar to that of an adult one, teens often take these roles and conflicts to extremes. All of the Team Member Types on pages 94-96 of *Champions* apply, and here are some of the conflicts between members especially typical to teen teams, as well as some of the tropes of interpersonal relationships:

—One PC always worries what his parents (or other adults) will think; while another is always deliberately provocative.

—All the male PCs have a crush on one of the female PCs, while treating a different female PC as a confidante (and usually she regrets the treatment, but not always).

—One or more PCs always questions the validity of Codes Versus Killing — which doesn't mean he kills, just that he thinks about it. In a similar vein one or more PCs, usually the one who questions Codes Versus Killing, questions, vocally and often, the moral standards and conventions of superheroing. “The future is now, we are the future, and what do those old fogeys know, anyway?”

—One PC worships adult superheroes, while another is anti-authoritarian.

—One PC is always gung-ho to be a superhero, while another is reluctant.

—One PC questions the source of his powers (maybe he thinks they result from a curse or the like) and is hesitant to use them for fear they're sinful or dangerous; another always eggs him on.

that the Sidekick is more confident — realistically confident, that is, rather than overconfident — than his superhero peers.

### Legacy

The Legacy inherited his name, costume, and maybe even powers from a family member. You should come up with a reason for the mantle to pass from one family member to another. Did the former superhero retire or die, why does he feel it's important for the tradition to continue, and why did he pick the PC to carry on the tradition?

Generally, being a Legacy is like having a father who was the best quarterback the high school had ever seen, or a mother who was the most beautiful woman of her generation, or a parent who was the smartest kid to ever go to the

## TEEN BEHAVIOR TIP: THE SHRUG

A sample conversation:

Adult: “Why'd you do it?”

The teen shrugs.

Adult: “That's no answer! Why'd you do it?”

The teen shrugs again and maybe mumbles: “I don't know.”

Then the adult supplies the reason why the teen did whatever he did and doles out the punishment. But that's not important — the teen knew punishment was on its way. What's important is that the teen didn't have to explain himself. There's nothing worse than explaining oneself, especially after doing something wrong, and the teen uses the shrug to get out of it. Maybe he can't explain his actions. Maybe he knows what his parents are going to say so he figures, “why bother?” Or perhaps there's some other reason he doesn't want to explain. Whatever the case, both players and GMs should keep in mind the ever-useful shrug when some authority figure catches a PC.

high school: it means the Legacy often lives in the shadow of his predecessor. The public constantly compares him to the family member, and since hindsight is 20-20, the Legacy can't live up. Maybe the rest of the family does the same thing, or maybe they try their best to be supportive and understanding of the pressure he experiences.

A Legacy might hate being a superhero; he feels similar to a child who doesn't want to go into the family business. He might try too hard to live up to his family member's legend and always fall short — at least in his own eyes — and this can lead to crises of faith or even emotional breakdowns. Or he might feel superheroics come naturally because it “runs in the blood” — of course, whether it does is another matter entirely.

Regardless of his feelings, the Legacy has a deep sense of obligation to be a superhero. Unlike his fellow teen superheroes, he can't simply retire: if he does, he's turning his back on a family tradition and failing to live up to the family name.

**The Supervillain Legacy:** In the eyes of many adults, the apple never falls far from the tree, which means the child of a supervillain who inherits his parent's powers has special problems. A frequent theme in teen fiction is “Born To Be Bad” or “Like Father Like Son” — meaning that no matter how hard a teen tries to be good, no matter how badly he wants to be good, he'll turn into a bad person in the end. The inheritor of a supervillain legacy is the perfect example of this theme in a *Teen Champions* campaign. With every word and action, the teen hero must strive to prove he isn't like his parents, and every time he slips up, or people can misconstrue his words or actions, the public is likely to think he's reverting to type. The Supervillain Legacy doesn't have to live up to the family name like the Legacy; instead he needs to prove to the world, and maybe even his friends, that he isn't a villain like his parents.

# GAME ELEMENTS



**J**ust like a teen is often less strong or knowledgeable than an adult, a teen superhero is often less powerful than his adult counterpart — and even if he’s every bit as powerful, he’s less skilled in using his powers. The difference between the two types of heroes isn’t just about Active Points; it’s also about Real Points and the number of points spent on Skills, especially (Combat) Skill Levels. Though Active Point limits are recommended, a GM needs to be more aware of the Real Cost of a PC’s powers than he would be in a standard Champions campaign. Teen superheroes almost always suffer Limitations that make their powers unreliable or unpredictable. Some of their powers might only work in the deadliest of situations. Some might only work when a supervillain mind controls a teen or when an evil entity possesses him. All of these and more are commonly seen in fiction.

The accompanying text box, *Teen Champions Character Guidelines*, lists the suggested starting point totals and other restrictions for *Teen Champions* characters. The point totals are just recommendations; the GM can decrease them (for a low-powered or “street-level” *Teen Champions* campaign) or increase them as he deems appropriate for his game. But even if the GM allows players to build characters on a lot more points, he should keep these restrictions in mind:

- Total points spent on Skills, including Skill Levels, still tend to be much lower than with an adult superhero
- Most (if not all) powers a teen hero buys should have plenty of Limitations

- Multipowers and other Power Frameworks tend to be rare compared to typical (adult) superheroes

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

Teens grow in leaps and bounds — and not just physically. When each experience is the first one, the teen learns quickly relative to his adult counterpart who’s had many experiences over the years. If a GM starts his PCs at 200 points, he should also give them more Experience Points than he would in a normal Champions campaign; awarding an extra point per session is a good rule of thumb. The GM should award these additional Experience Points at times when an adult does a good job roleplaying a teen superhero, meaning times when he does or says something uniquely adolescent.

## SKILLS

With the exception of spending less points and having lower Skill Rolls, Skills are the same for teen superheroes as they are for adults (though a teen has a harder time justifying having Skills that require significant experience, special training, or the like, such as Bugging, Demolitions, WF: Emplaced Weapons, Combat Piloting, TF: Tracked Military Vehicles, or Systems Operation). But that being said, keep the following points in mind:

- Teens do not receive TF: Small Motorized Ground Vehicles for free as one of their Everyman Skills, unless and until they’re age 16 or older and have been through driver’s

## TEEN CHAMPIONS CHARACTER GUIDELINES

Character Type	Base Points	Maximum Points From Disadvantages	Maximum Points From Any One Type Of Disadvantage	Total				
Teen Superhero	100	100	50	200				
<b>Char</b>	<b>SPD</b>	<b>CV</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>Active Points</b>	<b>Real Points</b>	<b>Skill Points</b>	<b>Skill Roll</b>	<b>Def/rDef</b>
10-30	3-5	4-8	4-10	40-60	15-20	10-30	8-12-	12/6

### Notes

**Active Points:** Though the table lists 60 Active Points as a maximum, in most *Teen Champions* campaigns powers with that many Active Points should be rare, or the teen should have great difficulty using the power at that level. Alternately, the GM may allow much more powerful abilities that have significant Limitations; in comic books, it’s not uncommon for a teen hero to possess one really strong power that only works in specific situations or certain ways.

**Real Points:** In general a teen superhero should have at least -1 worth of Limitations on most of his powers, at least for the ones with 40 or more Active Points. The higher the Active Points; the higher the total value of the Limitations.

**Skill Points And Skill Rolls:** The listed totals assume the character possesses innate superpowers or the like. Any teen superhero whose “powers” are Skill-based will probably spend more Character Points on Skills and has higher Skill Rolls.

education. Everyman Skills are otherwise unchanged.

- Teen heroes rarely start the campaign with Combat Skill Levels and other types of Skill Levels. Levels most often represent experience with using a power or Skill, and teen superheroes have very little experience. As the campaign progresses, teen heroes can buy any type of Skill Level the GM permits. A teen hero might also begin the campaign with any type of Skill Level if they represent innate ability or talent with using his powers, or are built as Powers.
- Professional Skills should be few and far between, unless they represent hobbies or the like (for example, PS: Play Video Games, or PS: Play Clarinet for a teen who's in the high school band). However, it's not uncommon in fiction for a teen to have the same PSs as one or both of his parents, just as something he picked up around the home.
- Teen heroes usually don't start the game with the *Power Skill*, since like Skill Levels it often represents experience with using one's abilities. However, since many teen heroes start out with just one or two powers (see below), the GM might want to allow them to buy the *Power Skill* so they can, slowly but surely, devise other ways to use their powers (which they eventually buy with Experience Points).

## PERKS

Not all Perks are appropriate for teen heroes, but many are.

### CONTACT: FRIENDLY ADULT

**Cost:** See Contact Table on page 80 of HERO System Fifth Edition, Revised

**Contact:** Friendly Adult means the PC knows an adult who's willing to do favors for him and help him out — and *not* tell his parents. Usually this means buying the teen alcohol, cigarettes, or pornography, or sneaking him into R-rated movies, but it can also mean the adult will drive him places, pretend to be a member of his family, or put him up if his parents kick him out of the house. The Friendly Adult may also take risks for the teen — for instance, if the teen witnessed something strange and knows the authorities won't believe him, he can ask the Friendly Adult to report it for him. For a teen superhero, who sometimes has to track down adult supervillains or deal with the police, having a Friendly Adult as a Contact can be quite a benefit.

### FRINGE BENEFIT: FAKE ID

**Cost:** 1 Character Point; +1 Character Point per -1 to rolls to perceive

A Fake ID, usually a driver's license, lets a teen pretend he's twenty-one or older. That means he can avoid some of the restrictions of having Social Limitation: Minor, such as not being able to buy beer. Fake ID costs 1 Character Point; for every additional point the teen spends on his Fake ID,



anyone checking the ID suffers a -1 to his Forgery roll or PER Roll to determine if it's fake.

**FRINGE BENEFIT: MEMBERSHIP: CLIQUE**

Cost: 1-3 Character Points; see below

Becoming a member of a clique is as simple as a player deciding his character belongs to the clique, taking the appropriate Disadvantages, and purchasing a 1-point Membership. However, this just means the PC has friends; it doesn't mean he can influence the clique or get them to do what he wants. To do these things, the PC must spend more points. A 2-point Membership means the clique's members do as he asks, within reason — for example, he can get them to gather at a certain spot or stop picking on a person outside the clique — as long as the clique's leader doesn't contradict him. A 3-point Membership means the PC is the leader of the clique and he can get the clique to do as he wants. Of course, it's important to remember that clique members aren't Followers. If the clique leader starts acting weird — for instance, demanding the other football players join the math club — someone among the membership topples him just like a younger wolf would kill an aging and infirm alpha wolf.

**MONEY**

Cost: See text

All teens are effectively Poor (as described on page 84 of *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Revised*) as a *Teen Champions* default — the PC receives no Disadvantage Points for this. His parents give him an allowance or other limited amount of money (enough for lunch and similar expenses), and he may earn a little more by doing odd jobs. He has \$20-50 per week to spend; his parents sometimes spring for bigger expenditures when they feel it's important. By taking a Disadvantage, he can lower his income; by spending Character Points, he can raise it.

- 10-point Disadvantage: The character has no money. The government provides him with a free lunch at school, and his parents feed him (sometimes). He occasionally scrapes together limited funds by hook or by crook, but his parents can't afford to give him any money. He usually has to mooch off his friends.
- 5 points: The character has approximately a hundred dollars a week to spend. This can mean his parents are generous, or he has a part-time job.
- 10 points: The character has approximately four hundred dollars a week to spend. This means his parents are wealthy and either free with their money (he can ask for whatever amount he wants without having to provide much explanation about how he plans to spend it) or they leave money laying around the house and the teen can just take what he needs. The parents may also pay for an expensive car, expensive clothes, and so on.



- 15 points: The character has all the money he could possibly want, and nearly unlimited access to it. Maybe he has a trust fund and a lot of control over the money. For teen superheroes, this isn't entirely unheard of (though it's unrealistic); it usually involves a guardian knowing about the teen's superhero activities and actively supporting them. Or the teen might deal drugs or engage in some other criminal activity that pays very well. The GM should think carefully before allowing a PC to purchase this level of Money, since it can ruin a lot of the fun of playing teenaged heroes.

**REPUTATION**

Cost: See text

If you want to create a character who's regarded as "cool" by all the cliques, the easiest way to do it is Reputation: Cool (though plenty of other Reputations are available to teen heroes, if they prefer). All the kids in a character's school count as a "small to medium sized group"; all the kids in a town or city (if it has two or more high schools) count as a "medium sized group."

## “HEY, I CAN’T DO THAT!”

Often in teen superhero adventures, an adult supervillain either steals the hero’s powers or takes control of the hero... and then uses the hero’s powers in ways the hero can’t. For instance, if a teen hero has the Limitation *Beam* on his Energy Blast, when the supervillain mimics or controls the teen’s powers he blows holes in walls and Spreads the Energy Blast however wide he wants. This usually foreshadows what the superhero will become when he grows older, as well showing the hero what he’s capable of and can train toward. There are a couple of ways of handling this in the game; some rely on the GM, others on the players.

—The GM can choose to ignore any Limitations that are basically psychological. For instance, if a superhero needs a Focus for his attack, but that’s just a psychological crutch, the supervillain doesn’t need the Focus. If the PC has an Activation Roll that represents his uncertainty and unfamiliarity with the power, then the supervillain doesn’t suffer from the Limitation when he uses the power.

—The GM can give each teen superhero X number of points’ worth of mystery powers; between 20 and 40 points’ worth is good. The mystery power can be a power unto itself, or additional points spent on an existing power (often to buy off Limitations). The mystery powers are revealed when the supervillain uses them, and later the GM can award the mystery powers to the PC in

## POWERS

There are no hard and fast rules for creating powers for *Teen Champions* characters, because teen superheroes have just as wide a variety of powers as their adult counterparts. No power is impossible... but in comic books, the powers of teen superheroes do have some characteristics in common. You should keep these in mind as you create (or, in the GM’s case, approve) characters:

- Active Points are usually low (no more than 40), since letting a teen superhero feel powerful and dominant runs contrary to the mood of *Teen Champions* campaigns. If a teen has a power with a high Active Point cost, he should only be able to use it in limited circumstances and runs the risk of losing control of it. And a teen superhero, unlike a teen supervillain, should be very afraid of losing control. Limitations like *No Conscious Control* and *Side Effect* are appropriate; so are many forms of *Limited Power* (to represent, for example, the power to Fly really fast... but only in a straight line). A power with high Active Points raging out of control should threaten either the teen’s life or those around him.
- Teens never feel in complete control of any situation or even their lives, so a teen superhero should never feel like he’s in complete control of his powers, regardless of how limited their effects. Some of the Limitations often used to represent this include: Activation Roll, Limited Power, No Conscious Control, and Requires A Skill Roll. For example, if a teen hero has an Energy Blast, he can only use it as an Area Of Effect, or he can’t Spread or Bounce it.
- Teen superheroes often have powers with a limited effect, but which also have obvious potential for greater effects. A *Teen Champions* PC with Empathy might someday develop full-blown Telepathy. His friend who can only throw telekinetic punches develops more intricate control of his Telekinesis. The teen who loses his super-strength quickly when out of water develops the ability to remain super-strong on land for longer and longer durations. When you create a teen hero, plan for this sort of evolution — have in mind from the start where you expect the PC’s powers to go.
- On a related note, a teen hero may require a Focus even if the Focus doesn’t provide the power itself — it’s a sort of security blanket or training wheels, so to speak.
- Teen superheroes often can’t use their powers for very long, and never as long as their adult counterparts. Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) should be almost unheard of, and Costs Endurance and/or Increased Endurance Cost common.

- Teen superheroes often have only one power or, at most two related powers. They rarely have a whole suite of powers that apply in a broad range of circumstances. This even goes so far as to mean the Energy Projector doesn’t have a Force Field, the hero with a Force Field doesn’t have an Attack Power, and so on.
- Power Frameworks should be rare. Multipowers especially should be few and far between, because a Multipower’s slots often represent the character learning different ways to use his power. However, it’s not uncommon for a *Teen Champions* character who starts the game with a single power to build it into a Multipower with Experience Points as he learns new ways to use that power.
- A *Teen Champions* character’s superpowers often correspond to his personality in some way. For example, a super-strong teen hero might also be temperamental and stubborn; one who’s shy and quiet might have invisibility powers.

## DISADVANTAGES

Here are some Disadvantages that are uncommon for adult superheroes, but work well for *Teen Champions* characters. Many of them apply only if the GM chooses to spend time roleplaying in a high school environment and the PC spends much of his time interacting with other teens, so they’re all subject to GM approval.

### DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: CLIQUE

Teens make many judgments based on clique, and appearance is often how teens announce which clique they belong to. Even in schools with strict dress codes, teens develop visual cues for telling onlookers what clique they belong to. Teen aren’t the only ones making judgments based on appearance — some teachers do, too, so Distinctive Feature: Clique might affect how often the teen receives punishment for wrongdoing, if a teacher accepts his homework late, and so on.

Distinctive Feature: Clique is Easily Concealed, Noticed and Recognizable, and worth 5 points.

### HUNTED: CLIQUE

A teen’s clique is his peer group and his main source of peer pressure. Other clique members watch who he talks to, wonder where he was if he didn’t show up to some party or the big game, and try to make sure he doesn’t stray from the path. Though they might not have superpowers, a clique hates no one more than one of their own gone bad. Within the limited scope of a teen’s life, they have Non-Combat Influence; to many teens the opinion and actions of the clique matter a lot more than those of his parents or the cops.

Hunted: Clique is As Pow, 11-, NCI, Watching, and worth 10 points.



**HUNTED: PARENTS**

Parents are always prying into their kid's life, so a teen superhero gets no Disadvantage points for that. If a character takes Hunted: Parents, it means his parents scrutinize his every word and action, or otherwise make his life far more miserable than the average parent would. Maybe the teen's been in trouble with the law, or his grades have slipped, or his parents are just insanely overprotective. Whatever the case, the character has even more problems slipping away from his parents than the normal teen, and if his parents discover he's gone, they don't just wait for him to come home — they get in their car and go find him. To make matters worse, since the teen is a minor, he's at the complete and total mercy of his parents when it comes to grounding and other punishments.

Hunted: Parents is As Pow, 11-, NCI, Mildly Punish, and worth 15 points

**HUNTED: BULLY**

Most victims of bullies get bullied whenever their tormentor just happens to stumble upon them, but there are some victims a bully has it in for. A character with this Hunted is one of those poor souls.

Hunted: Bully is Less Pow, 11-, Mildly Punish, and worth 5 points.

**PHYSICAL LIMITATION:  
LEARNING DISABILITY**

The character with this Disadvantage suffers from a learning disability such as dyslexia. If he takes it as a Disadvantage, it means he needs to work harder in school to succeed, and for the teen superhero, it means those late night fights with supervillains have an even greater adverse effect on grades. It also might mean that he has a reputation for being not so bright among both teachers and students.

Typically this Disadvantage is Infrequent, Slightly Impairing, for a value of 5 points. The GM may increase or reduce the value based on how often he thinks it will affect the character.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION:  
EASILY EMBARRASSED**

Teens are very self-conscious, and this teen is even more self-conscious than normal. Anytime he's embarrassed, he blushes — from his cheek, to his neck, to his ears. His eyes get big and he hunches his shoulders. He stutters. He freezes up. And that's just when a teacher says something nice to him. When it comes to a girl smiling at him, it might as well be the end of the world. And when a supervillainess compliments him on his good looks and physique, telling him he looks particularly appetizing in his costume, the battle is pretty much lost.

Psychological Limitation: Easily Embarrassed is typically Common, Strong, for a value of 15 points.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION:  
FEAR OF POWERS**

All teens fear their powers to a limited extent, or are at least uncertain about them, but for the most part, when push comes to shove, they overcome their fears and save the day. For the teen with this Psychological Limitation, however, that's not always the case. He squares off against Grond, and fearful of doing the big green four-armed guy harm, he Pulls his Punch. He tries to aim his Energy Blast at a weapon in the attacker's hand and pays the price when his attack goes wildly off-target. He gives Mechanon a chance to surrender instead of just attacking him, because he's afraid he'll cause the fiendish robot permanent damage. Usually the more tense the situation, the more likely the PC does something wrong-headed out of fear.

Psychological Limitation: Fear Of Powers is typically Common, Strong, for a value of 15 points.

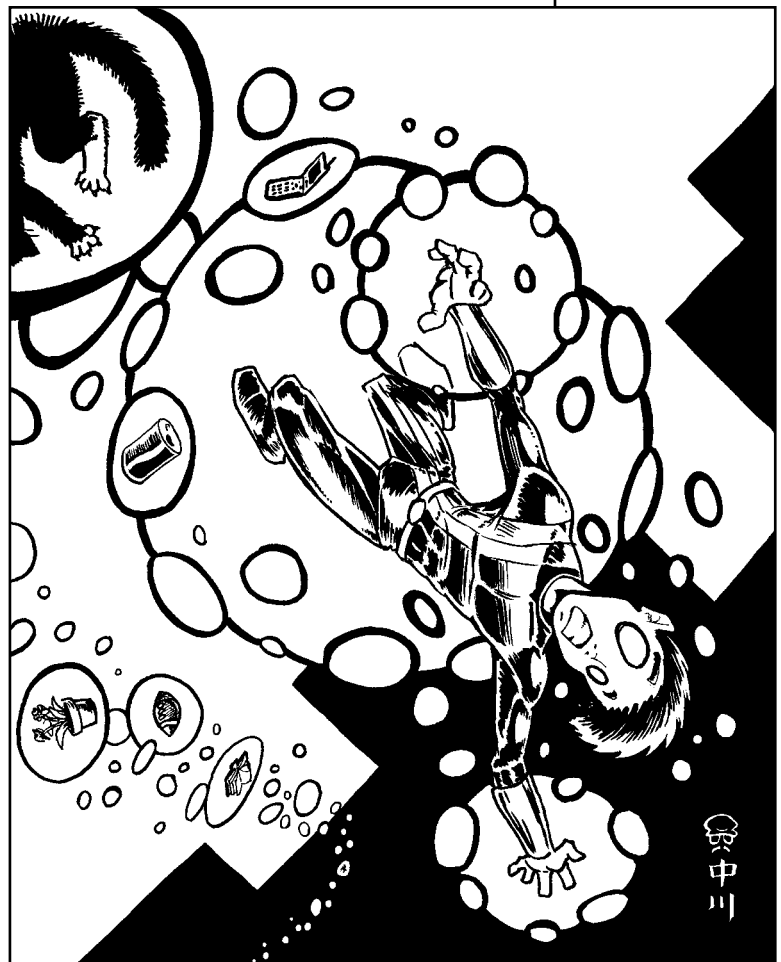
**PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION:  
THE CRUSH**

The character has a crush on someone, and it severely affects his behavior. The object of his crush comes around the corner, and he gets flustered and closes his locker door on his head. She smiles at him and he walks into a wall. She's in a crowd watching him fight a supervillain, and he lets down his defenses just long enough to get knocked through three buildings. Whatever can go wrong,

Continued from last page

addition to, or in lieu of, Experience Points.

—Characters can purchase powers with the Limitation *No Conscious Control* (-2), and only others in control of the PC can use the power regularly. Over time the character buys off the Limitation.



will go wrong, when the object of his crush shows up on the scene and he fails his EGO Roll.

**Psychological Limitation:** Crush On X is typically Common, Strong, for a value of 15 points. (With the GM's permission, a character could also buy this as a form of Unluck that only gets rolled when the object of the character's crush is around.)

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION: UNCERTAIN MORAL CODE

Adult superheroes have moral codes coming out the wazoo — Codes Versus Killing, Codes Of Chivalry, Honorable — but not all teens have such a firm moral development. A teen with this Psychological Limitation is one such character. When confronted with a situation where he must choose between what's right and what's wrong, he freezes. He hesitates. He procrastinates. He tries to defer the decision to one of his fellow superheroes, or to not make any decision at all. He does anything he can to get out of making the decision. And it always turns out for the worst.

**Psychological Limitation:** Uncertain Moral Code is typically Common, Strong, for a value of 15 points.

#### SOCIAL LIMITATION: MINOR

*Social Limitation:* Minor is ubiquitous in *Teen Champions* campaigns; pretty much every character has it in one of two forms: under 18 or under 16.

#### **Social Limitation: Minor (Under 18)**

Here are some of the restrictions a minor who's under 18 years of age suffers. States vary, but the ones below are standard (and may have qualifications or caveats in some situations). These are just legal restrictions; most minors also have problems (such as penalties to some Interaction Skill Rolls) when dealing with adults in general.

- Can't vote
- Can't buy alcohol or tobacco

- Subject to laws regarding curfew
- Can't get driver's license without parent's consent

**Social Limitation:** Minor (Under 18) is Occasionally, Minor, and worth 5 points.

#### **Social Limitation: Minor (Under 16)**

Here are some of the restrictions a minor who's younger than sixteen years old suffers; they're in addition to the ones listed above for minors under 18. States vary, but the ones below are standard (and may have qualifications or caveats in some situations). These are just legal restrictions; most minors also have problems (such as penalties to some Interaction Skill Rolls) when dealing with adults in general.

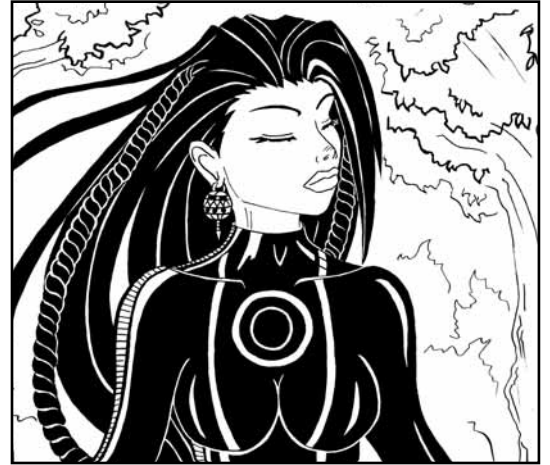
- Can't drive
- Can't drop out of high school
- Can't see R-rated movies
- Can't see a doctor without the parent's knowledge

**Social Limitation:** Minor (Under 16) is Frequently, Minor, and worth 10 points.

#### SUSCEPTIBILITY AND VULNERABILITY

In much the same way that they often have lots of Limitations on their powers, teen superheroes often have general weaknesses best represented by the Disadvantages *Susceptibility* and *Vulnerability*. They might be psychological (a mutant who turns into a wolf believes silver burns him, so he takes 2x STUN from Silver Weapons even though there's no physiological reason for him to), or they might result from the character's as-yet incomplete mastery of his powers (for example, an Energy Projector with solar powers might lose his powers completely and immediately in Darkness or at night). In many *Teen Champions* campaigns, the GM should require each PC to take at least 15 points' worth of Disadvantages from these two types.

# chapter two:



# THE RAVENSWOOD ACADEMY

# RAVENSWOOD ACADEMY



## HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is written for both players and GMs, but it assumes the players have attended Ravenswood for at least a semester or two. If the GM starts a campaign with PCs who are new students at Ravenswood, he should restrict the players' access to information. Nothing here is difficult to find out — the PCs will soon discover it for themselves, or hear about it from their fellow students — but they should learn of it during play and over the course of the campaign.

One of Millennium City's most prestigious private schools is located in the suburb of Orchardville. With its motto "Tomorrow's Leaders, Today" indicating its teaching philosophy, the Ravenswood Academy prepares the best and brightest to tackle the issues facing the City of the Future in the twenty-first century. Most impressively, Ravenswood graduates have both finely-honed minds and well-developed morals and ethics — a belief in the importance of civic spirit and a desire to give back to the community. Many of the Academy's graduates have gone on to positions in public life, turning down far more lucrative jobs in the private sector to work as administrators, teachers, or office-holders in Millennium City.

And unbeknownst to the public, some Ravenswood graduates have graduated to a different sort of career serving the people of Millennium City — as superheroes.

## HISTORY

The history of the Ravenswood Academy begins far from Millennium City in the nation of Finland, when a young girl named Kristina Pelvanen first exhibited signs of possessing superpowers as she entered puberty.

Born a mutant, Kristina was a telekinetic. She had a difficult time learning to control her powers. The first power she exhibited was a personal force field, and she could only lower it with concentration so great she could barely eat. She was almost entirely cut off from human contact, but fortunately for Kristina her father was a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Helsinki. Professor Pelvanen contacted his colleagues in the university's Psychology Department, and with the help of post-hypnotic suggestion, Kristina learned to control her powers. She's certain, however, that if she'd been born in one of the rural areas of Finland, she would never have survived her adolescence.

Her father feared the Soviet Union's growing influence in Finland, especially for Kristina if the Soviets ever took an interest in superpowered Finns, so he encouraged his daughter to study abroad. In 1962, 18-year-old Kristina came to America to study psychology at New York University. Surrounded by superheroes, with superpowers of her own, she soon donned a costume and became the superheroine Rowan, taking the name because her telekinetic powers manifested with a red energy similar in hue to the rowan tree's leaves and berries in the fall.

As Rowan she fought supervillain threats such as VIPER, TyrannoMan, and Scorch, and grew close to the members of the Justice Squadron. Though she performed many important deeds and had many adventures during her time as one of New York's protectors, this only laid the groundwork for her future career. Forced to abandon her identity as Rowan because her powers were growing harder to control as she approached middle age, she found herself recalling the difficult days of her youth. But it was the death of the teen superhero Sunheart that compelled her to dedicate her life to establishing a school for superpowered youngsters.

### 1979: THE DEATH OF SUNHEART

In 1979 the Slug revealed his existence to the world when he attempted to turn back time to the dark ages of Earth's history — an era when mankind lived in servitude to the grotesque and powerful Elder Worm. From deep below the island of Manhattan, powerful energies seeped up from the eons-old Chamber of Commune where the Slug melded his mind — his consciousness defying space and time to soar down the corridors of the past and across gulfs of night — with the minds of ancient Earth's rulers. Using his own hideous body as the gateway, the Slug called forth the minds of his doomed race, bringing them out of the past to take possession of the human maggots who had come to rule the world. The summoned psychic energies flowed up from the depths below New York, coming to the surface as green mists billowing from sewer grates and the entrances to subway stations. As they engulfed the city, they worked a horrible transformation on millions of New Yorkers. Though it fell to the Sentinels to stop the Slug, all of New York's superheroes found themselves fighting the Elder Worm. In Central Park an *ad hoc* group of independent heroes fought for hours to protect the gathered innocents; among them were Rowan and Sunheart.

Sunheart was a young man who had been symbiotically bound to Shrfish, an exiled alien who was a member of the F'woosh, a species inhabiting the far reaches of the Milky Way that had survived their star going super-nova by transforming themselves into living flame. Sunheart was Shrfish's prison. The F'woosh had exiled Shrfish because he had snuffed out the lives of over fifty sentients. They imprisoned him in the body of the young man as punishment... and he made for a murderous, treacherous soul to share a body with. Sunheart's superheroic existence was far from easy, but with a supreme act of will and rigid

discipline, Sunheart controlled Shrfish's fires and used them to do good — at least until the day the Slug attacked New York.

As Rowan and the others held back the ravaging New Yorkers already partially transformed into Elder Worms, Sunheart used his living flames to burn off the transforming mists that hung low to the ground and crept implacably forward in roiling waves. Of the superheroes present in Central Park, only Sunheart could stem the tide of the mists' advance... and after several hours of unflagging struggle, he grew increasingly tired. As Sunheart drew nearer the brink of exhaustion and collapse, Shrfish began to get the upper hand in the struggle for the young man's body. Soon Sunheart's fires raged out of control, threatening the lives of the gathered civilians. Only Rowan, her force field protecting her from the burning fires, could approach the young man. What she saw was like a scene out of hell.

Small tongues of fire dancing and crackling across his scorched skin, gushes of wild flame whipping out of his mouth, Sunheart begged Rowan to entrap him in a force bubble. He explained the source of his powers and promised he would have an easier time controlling Shrfish if there were no targets for his ire. Having no other choice, Rowan did as he asked, but that left Shrfish with only one target for his anger and frustration — his human host and living prison, Sunheart. Finally succumbing to madness, Shrfish drove the conflict with the young human to the brink of mutual annihilation... but Sunheart never flinched and would not allow Shrfish to harm others.

Through the red glare of her force bubble, Rowan watched Sunheart die in a small supernova that reduced his body to less than ash, leav-

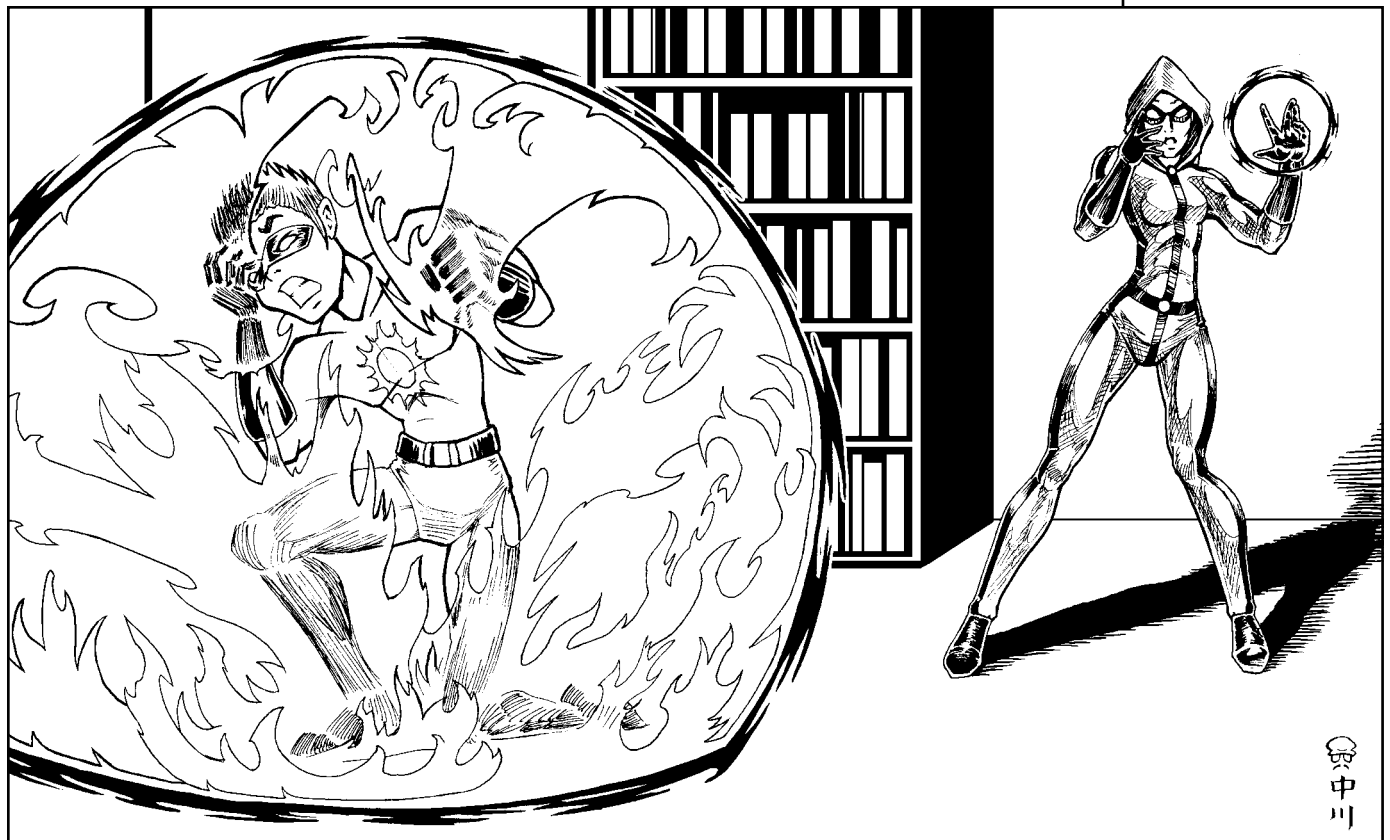
ing nothing but dust. Rowan didn't even know his name, and she wondered what his parents would believe happened to their boy — would they ever stop searching for their lost son? Rowan cursed herself and the other adult superheroes for never thinking to ask where Sunheart had gotten his powers. *If only we had known*, she thought after the Sentinels defeated the Slug and exiled the possessing spirits of the Elder Worm to the distant past and their doomed world. *If only we had realized that a war raged in his soul, maybe we could have helped him to control the alien.*

Rowan never forgot Sunheart's death — never forgot that she and the other adult superheroes had failed one young man who had struggled valiantly with a burden no teen should be asked to bear.

#### 1979-1988: A CURRICULUM VITAE

After Sunheart's death, Rowan's first task was to petition the New York City government to erect a monument, a starburst of bronze and an eternal flame, on the spot where the young superhero had made his heroic sacrifice. But her conscience demanded more.

She returned to her studies and received a second Ph.D, this one in Education. She spoke with her friends in the Superhuman World to seek advice about youngsters with powers. She learned a great deal from her colleagues who had raised superhuman children themselves, and even more in interviews with the normal parents who had helped their children come to grips with their powers. With the help of Archon, an Emyprean and former Sentinel, Rowan journeyed to hidden Arcadia where she observed the elder Emypreans training the younger ones in the use of their powers. She



## SUPERHEROES, MINORS, AND THE LAW

Pages of 48-50 of *Champions Universe* discuss superhumans and the law. Minors with superpowers raise some additional issues:

—Whether a superhuman minor has to register his superpowers in accordance with the American Superhuman and Paranormal Registration Act has never been determined in court. The Act has no special provisions regarding minors. Any superpowered minor tried and convicted as an adult is automatically registered as with any other supervillain.

—Use of superpowers while committing a felony automatically results in the accused being tried as an adult. This is mainly due to the special needs required to incarcerate superhumans, and allows the judge to sentence a minor to Stronghold.

—Possession of superpowers is sufficient grounds for the State to attempt to remove a child from the custody of his parents, but the State must still prove to a judge that the parents are unfit to raise the child.

—Neither the federal government nor any state will sanction minors with superpowers.

—Most states have laws requiring government employees such as police officers, teachers, and social workers to alert social services (usually the Department of Family Services) if they learn of a minor with superpowers. Social services must then inform the parents. National security, however, can take precedence.

traveled to a second hidden kingdom, that of Atlantis. There she observed how the Atlanteans dealt with the members of their society born with mystical mutations — a frequent occurrence among the aquatic cousins of humankind — and she grew close to Queen Mara during her time undersea. Between these journeys Rowan spent every free hour studying the records on file with UNTIL's Bureau of Superhuman Statistics, analyzing the data about superhumans and their powers.

But it was her last experience, when she convinced the Argentinean government to appoint her to the team tasked with investigating the recently uncovered Projekt *Nächst Jahrgangen*, that spurred Rowan to open the school she had dreamed of in the aftermath of Sunheart's death. Nazis in hiding after World War II had started the project with the goals of (a) creating an entire generation of superhumans and (b) exploiting the current one. Their descendants had continued the project until the Justice Squadron put an end to the cruel experiments. As a part of the task force given the job of tracking down rogue superhumans developed by the Projekt and helping the survivors integrate with everyday life, Rowan studied the Nazis' teaching methods, developed over decades of study, and learned the depths of depravity some adults will go to in their attempts to exploit young superheroes.

After eighteen months of witnessing horror after horror, Rowan knew it was time to open a school that would not only train young superhumans in the use of their powers, but also shelter them from the exploitation of adults.

### 1988: A PLEA

In the wake of Projekt *Nächst Jahrgangen*, Rowan found a sympathetic ear for her dream in the Justice Squadron. Its members had seen first hand the horrors committed in the project's laboratories — the mutants dissected, the kidnapped youths cybernetically spliced with stolen alien technology, the obscenely-developed physiques created by steroid testing — and shared Rowan's concerns. They secretly asked the superheroes of the United States to gather at JS headquarters in New York to hear Rowan's plans. Many heeded the call and none walked away from Rowan's presentation unmoved.

Ostensibly Rowan sought funding for her school, but her reasons for calling the superheroes together went far deeper than that. The Justice Squadron alone would provide enough capital for her to get the school underway, but unless she had the attention of the superhuman community — unless she made her fellow superheroes understand and acknowledge the problem — her school would fail to achieve its purpose.

Since that day her speech has passed from one superhero to another, the thoughts and beliefs its words express shared in the moments between superhero team-ups and fights with supervillains. A holographic record of her presentation is kept at the Justice Squadron. As she said in her introductory remarks:

*Adults — all adults regardless of creed, culture, race, or even species — have a single responsibility that supercedes all others: to ensure the safety and security of their progeny. They must ensure that their children are born into a world where they can safely grow into adults.*

*Since the first of us appeared, we superheroes have grown into our own community, a subculture within the larger culture, and as adults, we have failed in that sacred trust.*

*All of us have seen the under-developed physiques behind the costumes, the pimple on the chin or cheek left exposed by the mask. All of us have heard the youthful cracking voice. We have patted these young superheroes on the shoulder and told them, "Good job, son — we'll take it from here." We have laughed fondly at the wonders of youth, and smiled at their exuberance, and shaken our heads with chagrin at their naivete. But we have never thought to look beyond the mask and wonder how one so young deals with his astonishing powers and the responsibilities that come hand-in-hand with those powers.*

*We have failed as adults because we have failed our children. It's time to rectify this mistake.*

During her presentation Rowan never once asked for money, although some superheroes volunteered funding. Instead, she asked her peers to look more closely at the teen superheroes they encountered and inform those teens of a place where they could find help dealing with their superpowers — tell them of the soon-to-be-established Ravenswood Academy and encourage them to seek admission.

### 1989: THE HAUNT OF RAVENS

As Rowan stepped onto the long-empty Ravenswood Estate, she felt a calm come over her and knew in her heart this was the right place to establish her school. The grounds were large and private, containing a large woodland area and small lake, but not too far removed from Detroit and its suburbs. Many of the existing buildings could be converted into living spaces for faculty and students. Additionally, Detroit's superhuman population was low, so her superpowered students would rarely be tempted to don mask and costume to fight crime, thus allowing them to focus on their studies and not put their lives at risk.

The place also had a history of tending to the needs of children. In the Twenties and Thirties it had served as a camp sponsored by a coalition of churches in the area, where children could get away from the brick, concrete, and mud of inner city Detroit for a few weeks during the summer. In the decades after the War, it had been the home and estate of Leon Randolph, who fostered many orphans over the course of his long life. This history seemed... appropriate.

As she told the real estate agent the site would be perfect, Rowan felt as if the eyes of the many ravens perched in the trees were on her, studying the interloper into their woods. Not one of the many dark-plumed birds gave out a squawk or caw, and Rowan took their silence as approval.

Construction began in March of 1989. Ravenswood Academy opened its doors in September of that same year.

### 1992: THE CLASS OF '92

Ravenswood graduated its first class in 1991. Among the graduates were Prince Marus of Atlantis (son of Rowan's close friend Queen Mara and heir to the Atlantean throne), Diadem (Marus's sometime lover), and the super-strong Sequoia. Despite the Class of '91 going on to do great things, performing heroic deeds and joining the ranks of well-respected teams like the Sentinels and California Patrol, it was the next class that found a truly unique place in the history books.

Four recent graduates — Black Sable, who possessed superhuman speed and agility; the Machinist, a cyberkinetic; Null, who had the ability to create "null spots" in the fabric of space; and Sideways, who could change his body from three dimensional to two — were spending their last summer together having fun in Detroit. Earlier that day they snuck away from the school — each thinking he was now an adult and didn't need an instructors' permission to go where he wanted — and as the sun went down, they ended up in a large field, where they started a bonfire. Not too far away was an abandoned steel mill, a ramshackle building of stark gray cinder block and rusted siding. None of the young superheroes took much

notice of the intermittent flashes of blue-white light that came from the place. But while Null and Sideways jostled for the last time, seeking to impress Black Sable and win the affections of the pretty, sophisticated French girl, the Machinist idly focused his cyberkinetic abilities on the factory, wondering if any "machine empathy" lingered on in the abandoned equipment. What the Machinist found shocked him senseless. After his three friends roused him, he told them about the relentless, murderous Destroids he had briefly — and frighteningly — brushed minds with.

True to their years of training at Ravenswood, the four worked together as a team to investigate the threat. Sideways squeezed between the cracks in one of the building's crumbling walls and provided them with a stealthy entrance. Black Sable and Null led the Destroids guarding the installation on a wild goose chase so the other two could penetrate to the very heart of the facility — and there, the Machinist entered into a virtual reality combat with a Doctor Destroyer AI construct built from a matrix of the archvillain's brain waves and set to guard his computer files. The Machinist triumphed in the match of intellect and wits, accessed the computer system that connected all of Dr. Destroyer's facilities, and cyberkinetically downloaded the villain's master plan.

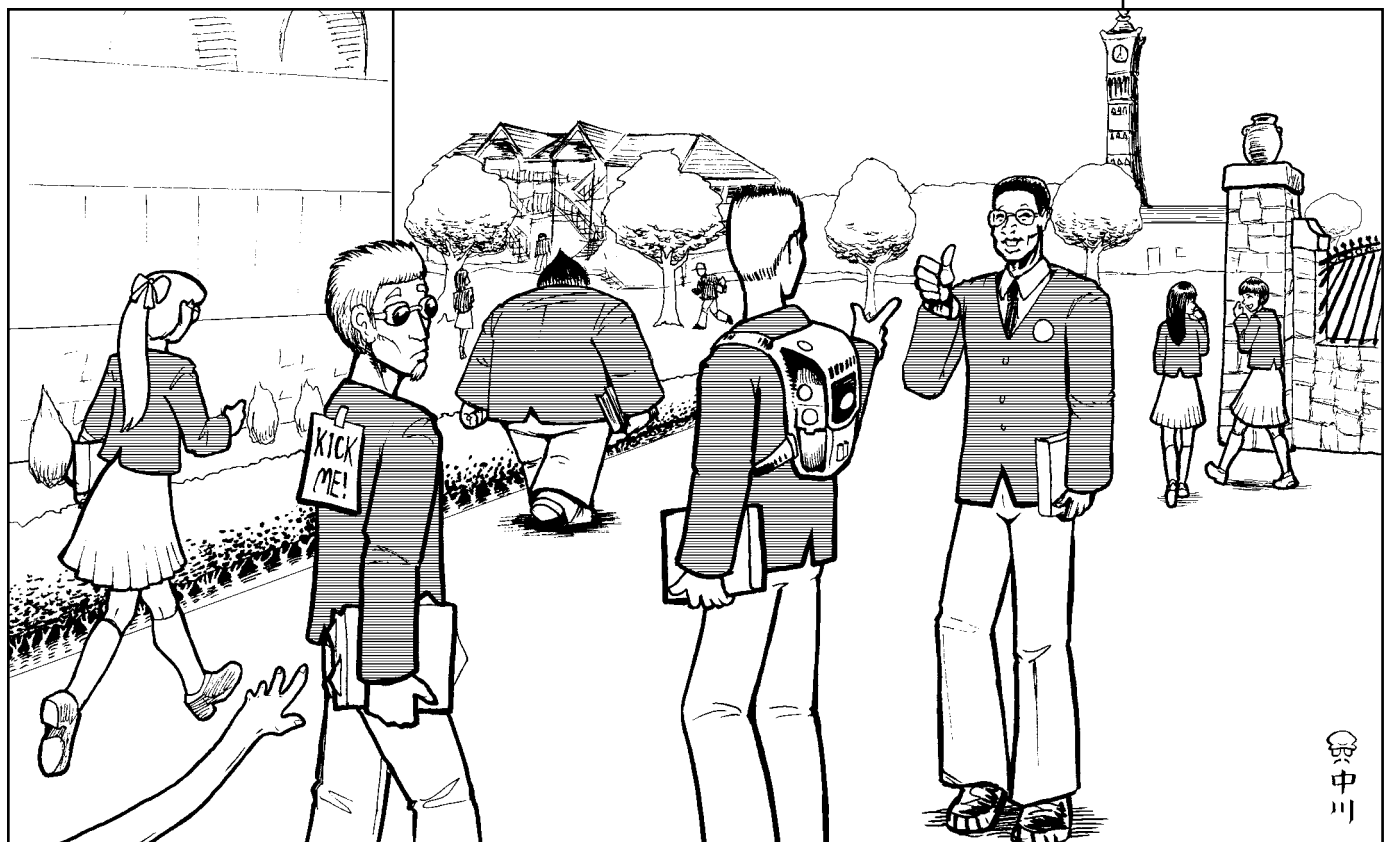
The four graduates, quickly realizing the immensity of their discovery, returned to the Academy and told Rowan what they'd learned. She sent out an emergency call to superheroes across the globe, who quickly gathered in Detroit to oppose Destroyer's scheme. Despite the courageous actions of the superheroes, Detroit was left in ruins, and several heroes were killed. Over the next decade

### ADULT SUPER-HEROES' ATTITUDE TOWARD TEENS

It's an unspoken rule among superheroes not to question the secret identities of their peers too closely, and this rule contributes in large part to adults not questioning their teen counterparts about what's going on with them and their superpowers. What Rowan asked of her peers was that adults bend these rules when dealing with their teenage counterparts.

Ravenswood's true purpose and its superhuman student body is an open secret among adult superheroes, as well as in the upper echelons of such organizations as UNTIL and PRIMUS, and knowledge of its existence passes from veteran superheroes to trustworthy inexperienced ones. Adult heroes who encounter super-powered teens tell them

Continued on next page



Continued from last page

about the Academy and offer to introduce them to the school's headmistress. The adult strongly encourages the teen to pursue admission to Ravenswood, but barring extenuating circumstances, doesn't force the teen to do anything, nor does he pry into the teen's private life.

Of course, extenuating circumstances are far from unusual in a superhero's career. When such considerations exist, adult superheroes take a far more proactive stance concerning a teen superhero's activities. Typically, rather than bringing in the authorities, adult superheroes attempt to take care of matters personally — to keep it in the family, so to speak. Adult superheroes eschew traditional social services for much the same reasons they don't expect traditional law enforcement to deal with supervillains: superpowers create a unique situation that social services aren't equipped to handle. However, in exceptional circumstances they do call on the resources of the Department of Superhuman and Paranormal Affairs to help locate teen superheroes and their parents, especially if the teen is deemed a threat to himself or society.

arose Millennium City, a triumph of human perseverance and aspirations — with a special school for young superhumans on its outskirts. (For a complete history of the struggle against Dr. Destroyer, see pages 18-19 of *Millennium City*.)

## 2002: ANARCHY IN THE R.A.

Since opening Ravenswood Academy, Rowan had never stopped worrying about problem students with superpowers. The chaos a normal teen could create among his classmates was bad enough — Rowan's imagination boggled at what troubles a superpowered teen could cause. The Ravenswood staff always coped well with potential trouble, defusing situations before any permanent harm occurred — but the school's luck ran out during Winter Break 2002-03.

Rowan had already departed the campus to spend the holidays in Finland with her ailing mother when the trouble began. She left behind a skeleton staff, five students of the Senior class, and some younger students. All of the students lacked families to spend the holidays with, so they remained in residence during the break. Some of the staff who stayed to look after them knew of the students' superpowers, but none possessed superpowers themselves.

The five seniors — Gloriana, a young woman who possessed light-based and energy absorption powers; Redshift, who had the ability to transform his body into energy and fly at high speeds; Sai, a young woman with the ability to teleport; Ultrasight, who had enhanced senses; and Silver Shine, whose body was a perfect mirror as hard as steel and could reflect energy attacks — all came from troubled homes, or no home at all, and had rough backgrounds. In their time together they had never gotten along, but it seemed to the faculty they had resolved to finish their final year peacefully and then go their separate ways.

The winter that year was fierce, and the five were gathered in the quad's lounge watching television. Like so many times before, the fight began between Redshift and Ultrasight — Ultrasight had a tendency to bully the under-sized Redshift, and Redshift refused to put up with his abuse. Redshift transformed into his energy form and at lightning speed flew at Ultrasight, intending to jolt him into unconsciousness when his energy form passed through Ultrasight's body. Ultrasight, his senses shifting into overdrive, took cover behind the slow-moving Silver Shine, who was sitting beside him on the couch. Redshift bounced off Silver Shine's mirrored skin... and directly into Gloriana.

Gloriana had always posed a problem for the Ravenswood staff. Judged one of the most powerful superhumans of her generation — an age-group that included the supervillainess Gravatar — she posed a grave threat to the world if not taught to follow the path of the superhero (or at least, a non-criminal path). But she was rebellious and

possessed an arrogance that only increased as her power grew. Below this rebellious and arrogant facade, she never stopped worrying about her heritage. She wasn't a mutant and she wasn't human, but whether she was alien, other-dimensional, or something else entirely, no one knew. This combination of personality traits — arrogance and a hatred of authority matched with a deep-seated uncertainty and a gnawing anxiety — made Gloriana unpredictable and often irrational. Though she maintained an impenetrable cool facade that prevented the faculty from realizing the depth of her problems, she had a tenuous grip on her sanity.

When Redshift bounced off Silver Shine and collided with an unsuspecting Gloriana, she absorbed his energy form. She didn't do it intentionally — she was unconsciously protecting herself — but absorbing Redshift body, mind, and soul drove her over the edge. She exploded like a small star, setting the dorm ablaze. The initial explosion left Ultrasight permanently blind. Then Gloriana began rampaging. Sai departed the scene, teleporting away to protect the younger students still in residence for the holidays (including her younger sister Flicker). The headstrong Silver Shine stood his ground, confident that his mirrored skin could reflect Gloriana's attacks long enough for him to talk some sense into her... but he was wrong. When Gloriana unleashed a flurry of varicolored photon beams at him, they punched through his chest, shattering his skin like bullets striking a delicate mirror and killing him.

Sai knew she couldn't stop Gloriana — or even stand against her for long — so she took her sister and the other kids, hot-wired a mini-van, and escaped from the Academy. Once she was out of danger, she alerted the Champions. Millennium City's defenders failed to capture Gloriana, but they held her at bay long enough that the newborn supervillainess tired of the struggle and departed.

When Rowan returned to the Academy, she was left to pick up the pieces of her broken school. She cancelled the Spring semester, claiming that a fire had started due to faulty wiring and destroyed several of the buildings. When she reopened the doors of Ravenswood the following fall, none of the superhuman Class of '03 returned to complete their education and receive their degrees. Gloriana was lost to villainy; Silver Shine was dead; Ultrasight had turned bitter and withdrawn, eventually to be institutionalized; and Sai, already fed up with being bossed around after living on her own for several years, refused to return (although she allowed her sister Flicker to resume classes after much arguing with Rowan). Rowan holds herself accountable for the tragedy and works hard to ensure that nothing of the sort ever happens again. She instituted several measures toward this end, including the installation of the artificial intelligence PLATO to watch over the students.



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Here are the doings of some of the Ravenswood alumni as of 2005, both those described in the history and a few others. These superhumans often serve as guest lecturers or short-term instructors at the Academy. Rowan sometimes asks an alumnus to “mentor” a student with similar powers or living situation if that student has difficulty coming to grips with his abilities and no one already on staff has similar powers.

Prince Marus (Class of '91) is described on page 27 of *Hidden Lands*. Gloriana and Sai (Class of '03) are described in Chapter Three.

### CLASS OF '92

**Black Sable:** Black Sable returned to France, where she came into control of her family's great wealth, and now patrols the streets of Paris. She works closely with Europol and is a trusted crimefighter in Europe as well as one of the most eligible bachelorettes in the Superhuman World. She often guest lectures to upperclassmen concerning the state of superhumanity in Europe, and Rowan sometimes asks her to mentor a student who will come into wealth upon reaching his majority to teach him ways to use that wealth to help his crimefighting.

**The Machinist:** The Machinist retreated to an isolated cabin in the Black Hills of North Dakota in the late Nineties after the proliferation of cell phones, PDAs, and the like became too much of a strain on his cyberkinetic powers. There, he works toward explaining the unlikely technologies that superheroes possess, seeking a unified theory as to why these inventions work when they often defy the laws of physics. His studies have taken him down strange avenues of research, and among technology-based superheroes he's considered something of a crackpot. His current theory involves an otherdimensional realm that's entirely a sentient technological-based organism. This “Realm of the Created” is coming to overlap our own, and its sentience is the root cause of superhuman technology. As the Machinist's ideas grow more far-fetched, Rowan has become increasingly loath to have him as a guest lecturer — while she still enjoys his company, she feels his teachings are too strange and outre for children, and more likely to distract them from their studies than help them become better superheroes.

**Null:** Null expanded his powers to move not just through space, but also other dimensions. During his extra-dimensional adventures he fell in love with Princess Yrella, a woman of an other-dimensional race called in English the Spiral Stair. He now lives on Yrella's world of Tiergon, a polygon-shaped planet of stairsteps and platforms, whose united races are currently attempting to stave off an invasion by Istvatha V'han. A champion of his adopted species, he hasn't returned to Earth for two years, but previously he would take time out to visit Rowan when he returned to this dimension, and she always asked him to share some of his adventures with the student body.

**Sideways:** Sideways turned away from a life of superheroing and went to MIT, where he eventually received a Ph.D in aerospace engineering. If Rowan becomes convinced that a superpowered student is unlikely to pursue the life of a superhero, Sideways is one of the alumni she often invites to visit one-on-one with the student and discuss what life is like when a person with superpowers attempts to live solely in the mundane world.

### FROM OTHER CLASSES

**Fray (Class of '98):** Fray is a winged, reptilian humanoid whom the Sentinels discovered in a VIPER lab in 1993. The super-scientist Dr. Silverback suspects she's the work of Dr. Moreau (Silverback's own creator) who “conceived” her by combining devolved bird DNA with human DNA. The Sentinels were unsure what to do with the young girl and Rowan agreed to foster her, naming her Dorotea after her mother. When Fray was old enough she attended Ravenswood with the other students. Since graduating Fray has avoided the life of a superhero, instead residing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and protecting her identity with an image inducer. She has recently traveled to Beast Mountain and is considering permanently moving there. Fray's main power is flight; her high maneuverability allowing her to excel at aerial combat, and Rowan often invites her foster daughter to teach classes in aerial maneuvers and combat.

**Mr. Inexplicable (Class of '96):** Codenamed Chance (and nicknamed by his fellow students Fat Chance because he was so skinny) when he attended Ravenswood, Mr. Inexplicable has powers over random occurrences. He possesses the ability to reduce the odds of an event occurring until those odds are 1-to-1 and the event spontaneously happens. He spent a short time as a superhero, but found himself questioning the morality of manipulating chance when he discovered he could directly affect people's decisionmaking process. Eventually he retired from active superheroing and went on to receive a Ph.D in Statistics and Probability Theory. He's now employed as an associate at a private think tank in Washington D.C., and often guest lectures in the fields of superhuman ethics and morality.

**Night Marshall II (Class of '94):** Codenamed Balance when a student, the Night Marshall is the only superhero to attend Ravenswood who had no superpowers. He was the son of the original Night Marshall, a crimefighter who patrolled the streets of Dallas in the Sixties and Seventies. The original Night Marshall asked Rowan to accept his son into the school when his archnemesis Cloudburst learned his secret identity. Since graduating, the Night Marshall has lived a nomadic existence, traveling throughout the United States and acting the part of superhero when necessary. On two separate occasions he's served as an instructor in superhuman self-defense for a year at the school. Rowan feels he's a talented instructor — especially since his lack of superpowers often serves to humble the students in his classes, encouraging them to listen more closely — and she pesters him to settle down and come onto the staff full-time whenever she talks to him.

**Superstar (Class of '01):** Superstar is the oldest student to have graduated from Ravenswood (he received his diploma at age 21). He's a mutant with cosmic energy powers who at 16 committed a series of robberies and found himself sentenced to five years in Stronghold. During his time in jail, Rowan conducted a series of interviews with the young man and decided to take a chance on him. At her urging, Superstar was granted parole after serving three years of his sentence and came to attend Ravenswood to finish the last two years of his education. Rowan's hard work and dedication paid off — he reformed, becoming a sometimes superhero — and she often calls on Superstar to mentor a student she fears might fall into supervillainy.

## THE ACADEMY GROUNDS

The majority of Ravenswood's 500 acres is mowed lawns and buildings, all surrounded by a two-meter-high brick wall, but the grounds also includes the remains of the Ravenswood (the forest after which the Academy takes its name) and Lake Chippewa.

### Head Gardener Lhakpa Gyaltsen

Head gardener Lhakpa Gyaltsen and his extended family, who also work as gardeners under Lhakpa's supervision, live on campus in two of the guest houses. If asked about this, Rowan responds that the Gyaltsens are refugees from Tibet and she allows them to stay as an act of charity. This, however, is not true.

The Gyaltsens are royalty from Sha-Prylen, a planet rimwards from Earth that the tyrannical H'zeel conquered ten years ago. The Prylenish are a species of sentient plants who possess empathy with other forms of plant life and the ability to "grow" into myriad shapes and sizes — including a humanoid shape. The Gyaltsens' true family name is Giel-Berusa-Eqar-Stenlanien; they're members of the royal family who escaped from their planet right as the H'zeel made a final push into the capital. The Gyaltsens' ship was programmed to go to the Perseid Empire, but sustained damage during the flight. They eventually found themselves landing on Earth. Soon afterward, a H'zeel spy-ship detected their landing and investigated. But the H'zeel weren't the only ones who witnessed the Prylenish's ship coming to ground — so did the Ravenswood Class of '96. Curious about the falling star that seemed to have landed in their backyard, the students investigated and found themselves fighting with the H'zeel.

The students drove off the H'zeel and brought the Prylenish refugees to Rowan, who offered them a home until the powers-that-be could decide what to do with them. Eventually both UNTIL and PRIMUS granted them political asylum, and the Gyaltsens have lived on the Ravenswood estate ever since. They tend to the grounds as their way of returning Rowan's kindness. There are nine Gyaltsens living in two guest houses. Lhakpa is a prince of the royal family, fourth in line to the throne of Sha-Prylen. In addition to tending to the grounds, he guest lectures in the Other Species Culture series of seminars about the customs and mores of the Prylenish. Lhakpa Junior, the teenage son of the elder Lhakpa and his wife, currently attends classes as the student codenamed Root; he belongs to Homeroom Delta.

### THE RAVENSWOOD

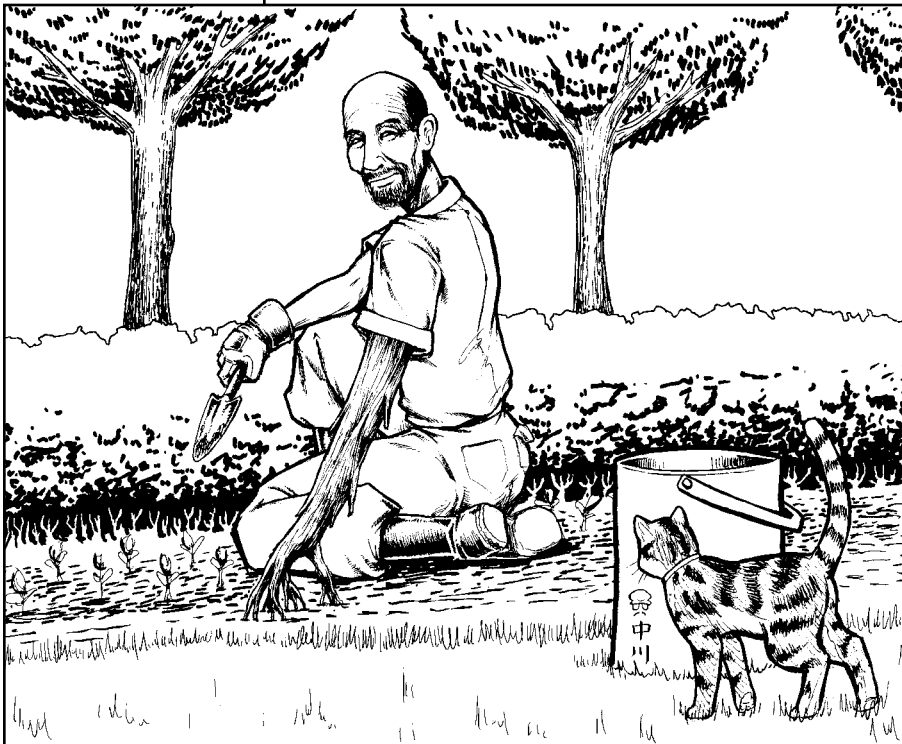
The Ravenswood proper is a forest of red and white pine covering almost three hundred acres in the northwest corner of the estate. It's home to small mammals like squirrels and raccoons — only rarely does something larger make its way onto the grounds — and an immense number of ravens perch in the branches of the thickly-grown trees. Most perceptive onlookers can't help but notice the great number of black-plumed birds, and when the ravens decide to squawk and caw, the noise can seem almost deafening (it's loud enough to wake a sleeping student in the middle of night).

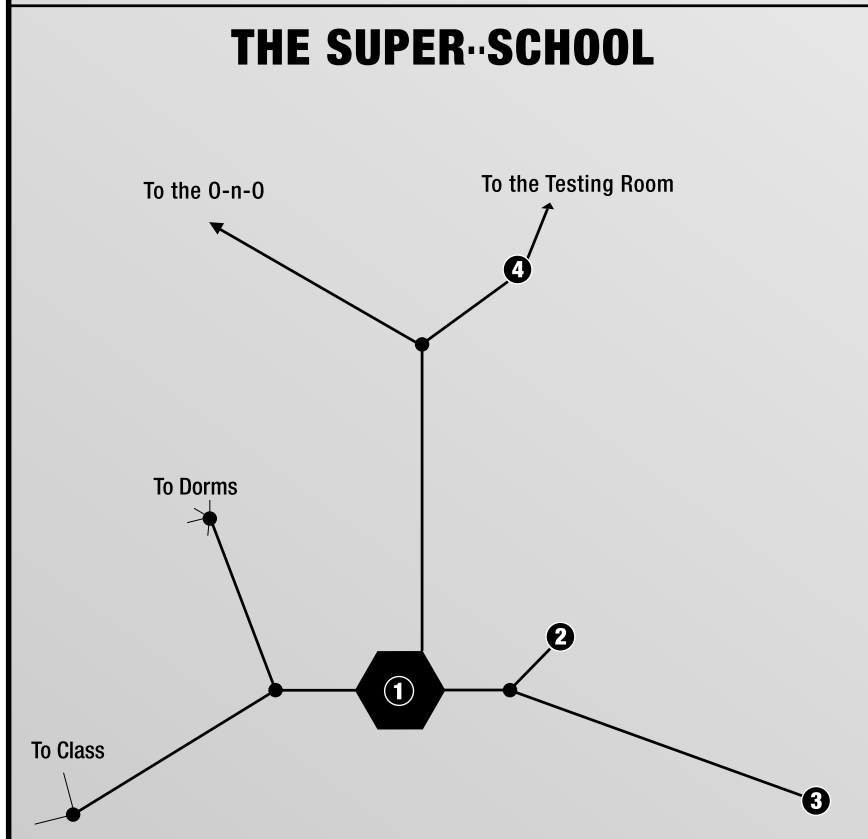
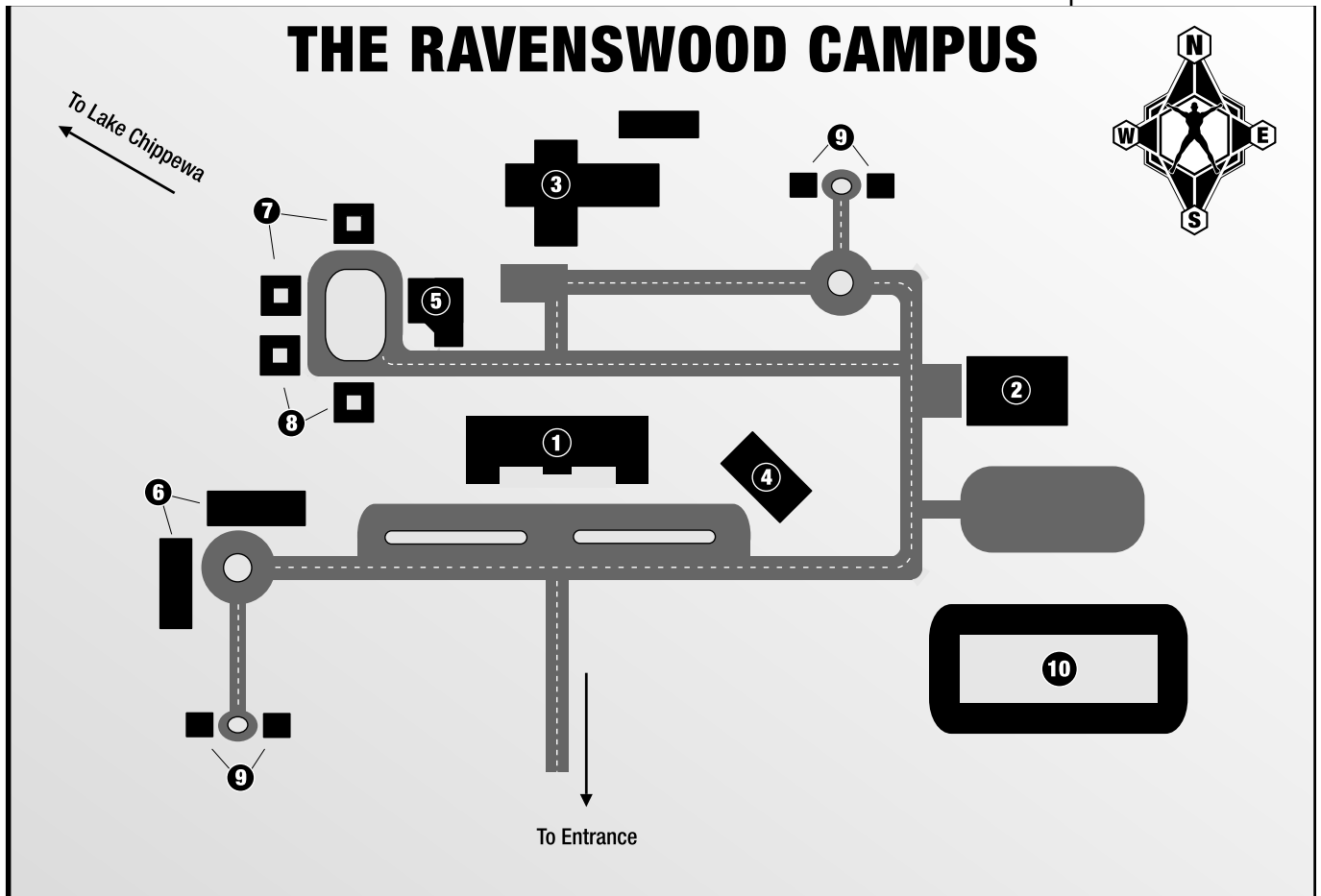
Stories circulate among the students about other things that lurk in the forest — from faeries and pixies, to boggarts and goblins — and older students tell younger ones these stories to frighten them during their first year. In addition to the supposed supernatural creatures lurking in the woods, the place has been at various times, depending on which student tells the tale, an old Indian burial mound, the site of the lost French colony of D'Artisville (a wholly made-up colony, head librarian Ms. Platz is quick to point out), and the site of an abbey of heretic monks, who claimed to be Jesuits but were in truth Satanists, that was razed when the British took Detroit from the French.

Through the Ravenswood are trails for hiking, running, and bicycling, and both the cross country and cycling teams use the trails for practice, weather permitting. Located in the depths of the forest, in a small clearing lit at night by floodlights, is a large gazebo made from Indiana limestone and roofed with red clay tile. Named the James M. Simmons Gazebo after the alumnus whose parents donated the funds to renovate the structure, it's a frequent rendezvous for students — especially if they've snuck away from the dorms after lights out. It's also a secret entrance to U-Hall and the facilities for non-traditional students.

### LAKE CHIPPEWA

Within the Ravenswood is Lake Chippewa, a natural freshwater lake. It's two hun-





### MAP KEY

**The Campus**

1. Randolph House
2. James Harmon Theater
3. Gerald McClellan Fieldhouse
4. Lillian Reimann Library
5. Jefferson Deary Commons
6. Bussey & Wood Halls (Classrooms)
7. Braun & Dore House (Dorms)
8. Nage & Sturm House (Dorms)
9. Guest Houses
10. Football Field

**The Super-School:**

1. The Hub
2. The Professor Arcane Library
3. The Power Plant
4. The Michael Renton Gymnasium

**Scale: 1 in = approx. 100 yards**

dred feet across at its widest and twenty feet deep at its center, and Hart Creek feeds into it. The creek runs through the wall surrounding the estate, and a steel grate with an alarm system secures both the entrance and exit. The water in the lake is nearly crystal clear; the only fish are minnows and the like. The students use the lake for recreation during the warm months and ice skating in winter. On the shore there's a small boathouse with a pier, a bath house, and a sand pit for beach volleyball.

No stories are told of Lake Chippewa; although every once in a while an older student attempts to convince a younger one he saw fishermen or other aquatic humanoids swimming around when they thought no one else was nearby. Of course, even the most naive freshman isn't naive enough to believe a story like that...

## Buildings

Twenty-nine buildings (not including secret installations and the like for superhero training) comprise the Ravenswood Academy, most clustered near the center of campus. Buildings are named after the individuals who donated the funds to build them, or in honor of someone else at the request of the donor (which is how superheroes who donate funds disguise their involvement). The most important buildings include:

### THE RANDOLPH HOUSE

The Randolph House is the original mansion that stood on the estate when Rowan purchased the property. It once served as the home for Leon Randolph and the children he fostered. A large, sprawling place at the very center of the estate, the mansion is three stories tall and was built in the Forties. Within the mansion are administrative offices on the first floor, teacher's offices and conference rooms on the second, and the former east wing is now an auditorium large enough to seat four hundred people. The third floor of the mansion provides living quarters for Rowan.

### THE JAMES HARMON THEATER

Donated by famed industrialist James Harmon IV, the Harmon Theater is where the Ravenswood Players, the school's orchestra, and sometimes traveling groups of professional actors put on performances. It has seating for five hundred.

### GERALD MCCLELLAN FIELDHOUSE

The McClellan Fieldhouse has facilities for basketball as well as indoor track, gymnastics, volleyball, and the like. Attached to the fieldhouse is a complex with locker rooms, weight rooms, studios for aerobics and dance, and offices for Harry Biggs and Jilian Feldman, the physical education teachers.

### LILIAN REILMANN LIBRARY

Holding over sixteen thousand volumes, the Reilmann Library is three stories tall. It's named for the woman who donated many of the volumes that got the library started in 1989 and provided the funds to build the place. At the center of the building is the main room — an open atrium with skylights in the roof. Levels with bookshelves look out on the open area; there are tables for study on the ground floor. There's also a large reading room with newspapers from all over the world (students can request that the library subscribe to a particular newspaper if it doesn't already) and offices for the head librarian, Ms. Platz, and her staff of three full-time librarians. Five to seven students work here in the evenings and on weekends as part of their work study.

### JEFFERSON DEALY COMMONS

Dealy Commons is Ravenswood's dining hall. It serves lunch for all students and faculty, and breakfast and dinner for boarding students and faculty who live on campus. Breakfast is served at 7:00 AM, lunch at noon, and dinner at 5:00 PM. The main dining hall seats four hundred; it has tables, each with four to twelve seats. Faculty eat in a separate area just off the main dining hall, although they may join their students if they wish. In addition to the kitchens and dining area there are offices for the Academy's nutritionist, Mary Hoffman. Despite the students' complaints, the food the dining hall serves is far superior to that found in other high schools.



**OTHER BUILDINGS**

**Classroom Buildings**

There are two main buildings with classrooms, Bussey and Wood Hall. Both of these are two stories tall with nineteen and fifteen classrooms respectively. Most classes for freshman and sophomores are held in Bussey Hall; those for juniors and seniors in Wood Hall. The Academy also has a Fine Arts Center, a smaller building with studios for art classes.

**Dormitories**

The Academy has four dormitories for boarding students, who are assigned by gender and class to a dorm. In addition to the students housed in a dorm, two teachers (with their families if they have one) live on the ground floor, and they are responsible for the welfare of the students in the building.

The dorms are square with an open, grassy courtyard at the center called a quad. Each dormitory is approximately twenty meters to a side, three stories high, and has rooms for fifty-two students and two four-person families. The family units are on the ground floor; students reside on the second

and third floors. On each of these floors are twenty-six 2 x 3 meter one-bed bedrooms. Each pair of rooms is connected by a single bathroom.

Each floor also has a lounge with a television and a study area with computers and a small collection of books that's changed every month by the library staff. Each dorm has an attic where residents can store things (mostly trunks with winter clothing, and the like); only the teachers living in the dorm have keys to the attic.

The four dorms are: Braun House (32 male freshmen and sophomores), Dole House (29 female freshman and sophomores), Nagel House (17 male juniors and seniors), and Sturm House (23 female juniors and seniors).

**Guest Houses**

There are ten guest houses scattered around the campus, each located far enough away from the center of the Academy to provide the residents with some privacy. A guest house is two stories with three bedrooms and used to house visiting teachers and guest lecturers, as well as the occasional permanent member of the faculty. Three of the houses are permanently occupied by:

- Professors emeritus Frank Hildreth and George Post, who share one house with their live-in housekeeper/nurse, Miss Alice O'Connor.
- Head gardener Lhakpa "Lucky" Gyaltzen and his large family reside permanently in two of the guest houses.

**FROM THE RAVENSWOOD PROSPECTUS: FACT SHEET**

**General**

Student-Teacher Ratio	6:1
Average Class Size	12 students
Campus Size	500 acres
Number of Buildings	29
Volumes in Library	16,000+
Interscholastic Sports	10
Interscholastic Teams	16
Student Clubs and Organizations	33

**Enrollment**

Total	247
Boarding	101
Day	196

**Student Profile**

Current students come from 11 countries and 6 states.

Male	47%
Female	53%
Students of Color	20%
International Students	11%

**Admissions Statistics**

Applications Submitted in 2004	566
Admitted in 2004	22%
New Students Entering in 2004	74
From Public Schools	35%
From Private, Parochial, Charter, or Foreign Schools	65%

**Average SAT Scores**

Class of 2005	
Verbal	680
Math	700

**Tuition**

Boarding	\$29,600
Day	\$21,740

**Miscellaneous**

School Colors:	Midnight blue, green, and silver
School Mascot:	The Blackbirds

**Secret Facilities**

To the world, and to most of its students, Ravenswood Academy is an ordinary private school... but as the Superhuman World knows, it also teaches young superhumans. That aspect of the Academy and its facilities are hidden. Collectively the Academy's secret facilities are called *U-Hall* (short for Underground Hall). U-Hall occupies nearly the entire underground area beneath Ravenswood Academy. It's a state-of-the-art facility with technology that rivals anything the Champions or Justice Squadron have in their bases.

**Reaching U-Hall**

There are several secret entrances leading to U-Hall, but students mainly use the ones located in the dormitories or the classroom buildings.

**Dormitory Entrances:** Each dormitory has special rooms; in each of these rooms, the closet is slightly smaller than those in other rooms. At the back of the closet is a concealed door, and the door opens to reveal a narrow anti-grav tube that a student can use to travel up or down by speaking the direction he wishes to go (a security feature in the tube automatically lowers any object as heavy as a child to the bottom if the "object" says nothing). The doors are opened by well-concealed voice-keyed security systems (Concealment at -6 to find; Security Systems at -8 to bypass). Each door is DEF 12, BODY 8.

**Classroom Entrances:** Each classroom building has four special classrooms, only assigned to the homerooms for non-traditional students. Although the technology in these surface classrooms is very hard to detect (Concealment at -6), Rowan takes no chances and the rooms are never assigned to traditional students and faculty.

Once the class period has begun and the students have taken their seats, the classroom descends to U-Hall, where the students and teacher go to the Hub for the period, and the room above is “secured” against outsiders. Holographic projectors (Images with -8 to PER Rolls to perceive) in both the outside windows and the door window present an image of the class going through a standard homeroom session (PLATO provides a new scene each day based on his recordings of the students and teacher). The door and windows are locked so that only PLATO and Rowan can open them (Lockpicking at -8 to bypass these locks). If someone attempts to open the door or windows, PLATO adjusts the hologram to react to the person outside, delaying as necessary. Meanwhile, an alarm alerts the students and teacher to the situation, who proceed to the classroom in time to deal with the person.

#### Traveling In U-Hall

Travel between the far-flung facilities that make up U-Hall is handled via mag-lev platforms, which allow the students to move about quickly if they need to reach someplace on the surface to protect their identities. (Mischievous students

sometimes stage “races” with them to see who can get to a particular location the fastest — a practice the Academy severely punishes if the students are caught.) Each hallway has two mag-lev platforms divided by a walkway. The mag-lev platforms are DEF 6, BODY 8, SPD 3, have Ground Movement 12”/24”, and can carry up to six people comfortably (or nine if they crowd together). The platforms are enclosed, and barring an instructor issuing a voice override command, the door won’t open while the platform is in motion.

#### THE HUB

Immediately below the Randolph House is *the Hub* where the six classrooms for non-traditional students are. Halls lead from the hexagon-shaped central area to all the other facilities. An anti-grav elevator connects the Hub from the third floor of Randolph House (Rowan’s living quarters and office).

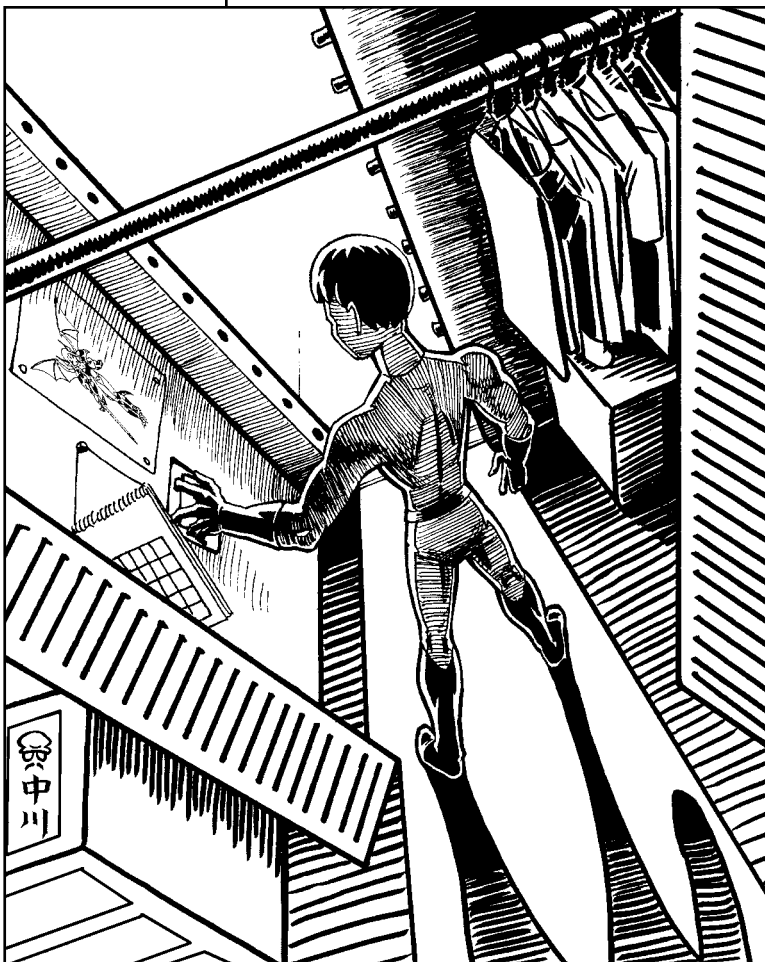
There’s a second level below the Hub containing the HVAC systems, PLATO’s physical location, and the like. Only Rowan can access this level; she accompanies anyone who needs to visit it to perform maintenance and the like.

**Classrooms:** Each of the six classrooms is the same. The desks, arranged in a circle around the center of the room, emerge from alcoves in the floor, one desk for each student and one for the teacher. The students can swivel the desks as necessary to follow the teacher, and the teacher can order PLATO to lock the desks in position if students can’t stop fidgeting. Set in the floor at the center of the room is a holographic projector the teacher uses for customized presentations or to display images from PLATO’s archives. Each desktop has a built-in computer with access to both the library system and PLATO’s archives. These computers are slaved to the computer in the teacher’s desk so he can monitor each student’s activity. The walls of the classroom are photosensitive; the teacher has a light stylus he uses to write on them, and can erase them with a voice command.

#### THE OCEANUS AND ORANA UNDERSEA DOME

Called the O-and-O by the students, the Oceanus And Orana Undersea Dome is a large structure at the middle of Lake Chippewa that is an exact replica of an Atlantean undersea gymnasium right down to the grandiose columns and friezes depicting the legendary feats of Vondarien and other Atlantean heroes. Queen Mara and Prince Marus donated the O-and-O in 1991 upon Marus’s graduation and named it honor of Mara’s mother and father.

The *polakios* field, a sort of subaquatic water polo played in three dimensions, occupies the center of the dome with the swimming obstacle course suspended above it. The dome has a hidden entrance to Lake Chippewa that students are warned to use with extreme caution (U-hall provides the main access to and from the dome). Airlocks with Atlantean underwater breathing apparatus lead into the dome proper.



## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCHOOL

Ravenswood campaigns focus on the teens with superpowers, but they're definitely not the only ones at the Academy. In fact, they're just a small percentage of the student body. Most of the kids at Ravenswood are completely ordinary — no different from the teens you'd find at any other high school in the country (except, perhaps, for tending to come from families with a higher than average income, since Ravenswood is a private school). Some of the “trad stus” your superpowered teen PCs might interact with include:

**Yasmin Gharibah:** The daughter of a wealthy Middle Eastern couple who emigrated to the Detroit area in the late Seventies, Yasmin is widely regarded as one of the prettiest girls in school. Her dark eyes, long black hair, and infectious smile have inspired crushes in dozens of boys. She rarely dates anyone for very long, though; she seems to prefer to focus on extracurricular activities and college prep instead of the opposite gender. But no doubt there's a Mr. Right out there for her somewhere....

It's a not very well-kept secret around Ravenswood and Orchardville that Yasmin and her family aren't Lebanese as they claim to be: they're Iranian. Many people suspect (correctly) that her father Feroz was some sort of high-ranking official serving the Shah of Iran before he was deposed, and that he fled to America to avoid prosecution.

**Rick Satriani:** There are student-athletes, and then there are *student-athletes* — kids who not only excel at their schoolwork, but are champion competitors as well. At Ravenswood, the Jock the other Jocks look up to is Rick Satriani. He's a forward on the basketball team, a striker on the soccer team, and competes on the track and field squad as well. He holds two state track records, and the soccer and basketball teams haven't had a losing season since he came to the Academy. As if that wasn't enough to make you sick, he's also on the honor roll, with a report card that usually shows straight As.

But the truth is that no one's sick of Rick, because he's that rarest of people: a genuinely nice guy. Despite being king of the Jocks at Ravenswood, he doesn't pay any attention to cliques; he treats everyone well, and everyone considers him a friend. If he wanted to, he could date any girl in school, but he's gone steady with Pam Hawkins for almost a year now.

**Michael Harwell:** Plenty of Ravenswood students come from families that are well off, but the Harwells are head and shoulders above most of them. Jason Harwell made billions through finance and investment, and he wants the best for his seven children. When it comes to school, that means Ravenswood Academy.

Michael (*not* “Mike”) Harwell, Jason's eldest son, is a Ravenswood junior and wants for nothing. He drives himself to school in a Porsche, his school supplies are mail-ordered from a fancy readers' catalog, and he's always dressed in the latest and best of teen fashions. While he's not exactly the “spoiled rich brat” seen in so many TV shows and movies, Michael definitely seems to prefer to associate mostly with other rich or upper-crust students. He doesn't like having to limit his social options just because some other student can't afford to go skiing one weekend, or blow a few hundred bucks on a fancy meal in the city. The other students call him and his gang of friends “the Franklin Club” because they spend so many \$100 bills.

**Gary “Snod” Snodergrass:** Only a sophomore in 2004, Gary Snodergrass — better known simply as “Snod” to friend, foe, and teacher alike — has already earned a reputation as a Grade-A weirdo. Short and lanky, with unruly black hair and a penchant for black clothing, he has an unhealthy fascination with firecrackers, chemistry sets, cigarette lighters, and anything else that burns or goes boom. His grades, particularly in science classes, are good enough that most teachers think he's just “eccentric” and will eventually become a chemical engineer, but a few of the students are genuinely scared of him... even though no one can point to a single incident where he hurt anybody with one of his “experiments.”

**Jake Zimmerman:** An unapologetic geek, Jake Zimmerman (usually just “Jake Z” to his friends) is a whiz at computer science and physics, but only a lackluster student in other subjects. He obsessively maintains a detailed website tracking news, information, and gossip about the superhumans of Millennium City (hero and villain alike). He only has access to public data sources, so it's not as if a reader can find secret identities at [www.jakezsupers.com](http://www.jakezsupers.com), but aside from that the site is extremely thorough. More than one reporter has made use of it.

### TEACHERS

Ravenswood also has plenty of teachers who don't teach super-courses, and in fact don't have the faintest idea that some of their pupils are heroes in training. Some of the most prominent of them are:

**Alicia Addams:** A favorite among the Alterna-Teens and Weirdos at Ravenswood, Miss Addams teaches drama and music. She runs the Drama Club, which puts on a play every semester (sometimes more than one, if she has enough club members to work with). She's an accomplished guitar and flute player as well as a fine singer. Rumors among the student body claim she used to be in a punk rock band, but quit when her bandmates wanted to “sell out” and go commercial. Every student seems to have a different idea about which now-famous band this was.

**Patrick McKittridge:** An English teacher hired several years ago, Mr. McKittridge is still pretty young (early 30s), and handsome to boot. As a result, it seems like half the girls who take his Freshman English class develop a crush on him. After a couple of unpleasant incidents early in his career he's learned to distance himself from the students to discourage this sort of thing, but every year without fail one or two girls fall for him hard and he has to have “a talk” with them that breaks their hearts... at least for a week or two until they find someone their own age who interests them.

**Paul Warren:** Mister Warren has taught math — algebra, geometry, trig, calculus — at Ravenswood Academy almost since the day the school opened. He's now in his late fifties, and his once-black hair has gone grey. A curmudgeon who insists that everything be “just so,” students obey instructions precisely, and answers be as concise and accurate as possible, he's one of the least-liked teachers at Ravenswood. The students refer to him behind his back as “Lardass,” and the other teachers' comments often aren't much kinder — Mr. Warren doesn't make much effort to be friendly. But no one can deny that a student who makes it through one of his classes will learn the subject thoroughly.

The O-and-O serves as a recreation area and the classroom for Non-Native Environment Instruction: Undersea, the introductory course for the Non-Native Environment sequence of classes that's taught by Mr. Gillicutty. Ravenswood fields a *polakios* team in years when enough students express interest (a minimum of five players — four on the field and one sub — are required), and the team plays a home-and-home series against a team of Atlantean youths. Out of eighteen matches the Ravenswood Blackbirds are 1-17, the one win coming the year Prince Marus coached the team in 1996. That single win has become somewhat notorious, because rumor has it the Atlantean team threw the game to avoid insulting their future monarch.

The O-and-O's water filtration and salination system is the reason the waters of Lake Chippewa are so clear.

### THE PROFESSOR ARCANE LIBRARY

Lilian Reilmann was the wife of the Golden Age hero Professor Arcane, who disappeared somewhere over Greenland in 1942 while investigating a secret U-boat facility. His widow spent a large part of her 76 years collecting literature on superheroes, and upon her death she willed her library, as well as her husband's collection of books, to the Ravenswood Academy. Ms. Platz has kept up the collection since then.

The Professor Arcane Library is directly below the Reilmann Library and holds volumes specifically intended for non-traditional students. Within the stacks is a collection of books dealing with the secret history of the world (though not all are necessarily accurate...) as well as a large archive of newspaper and magazine articles, scholarly texts, and popular literature concerning crimefighters and superhumans in the twentieth century. The

library can be reached by the service elevator in the aboveground library; access requires both PLATO's approval and a voice-keyed password.

### Staff: The Head Librarian

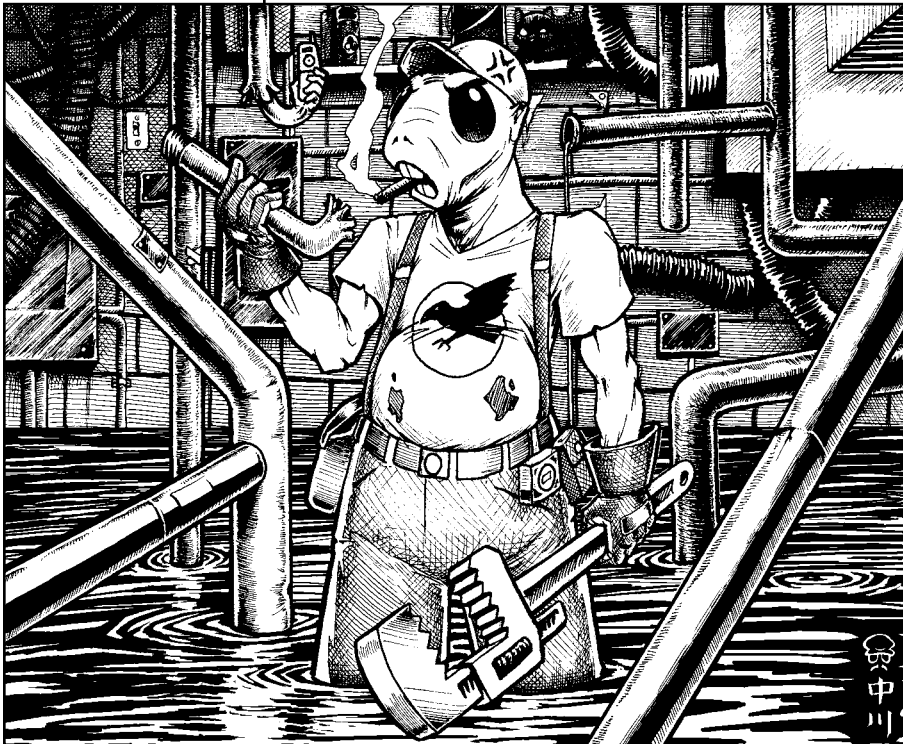
Katherine Platz is a middle-aged woman who was one of Rowan's first hires. Formerly an investigative journalist, she reported on superheroes for the tabloids and was quite a nuisance for many of them, always arriving on the scene just in time to be taken hostage by a supervillain. In between battles she hounded superheroes, exposing their romantic trysts and publishing their "diet secrets" to the world. In 1985 she went from nuisance to threat when she broke a story revealing the secret identity of Nightlurk, a crimefighter who protected the streets of Charlotte, North Carolina. Within six weeks Nightlurk was murdered by his allied enemies, and Ms. Platz realized the gravity of what she had done. She suffered a nervous breakdown, quit her job, and fell into the grip of a deep depression. Rowan found her four years later and offered her a chance to make amends. In addition to her responsibilities as head librarian, Ms. Platz also teaches Secret Identity, a mandatory weekend seminar for all non-traditional students.

### POWER PLANT

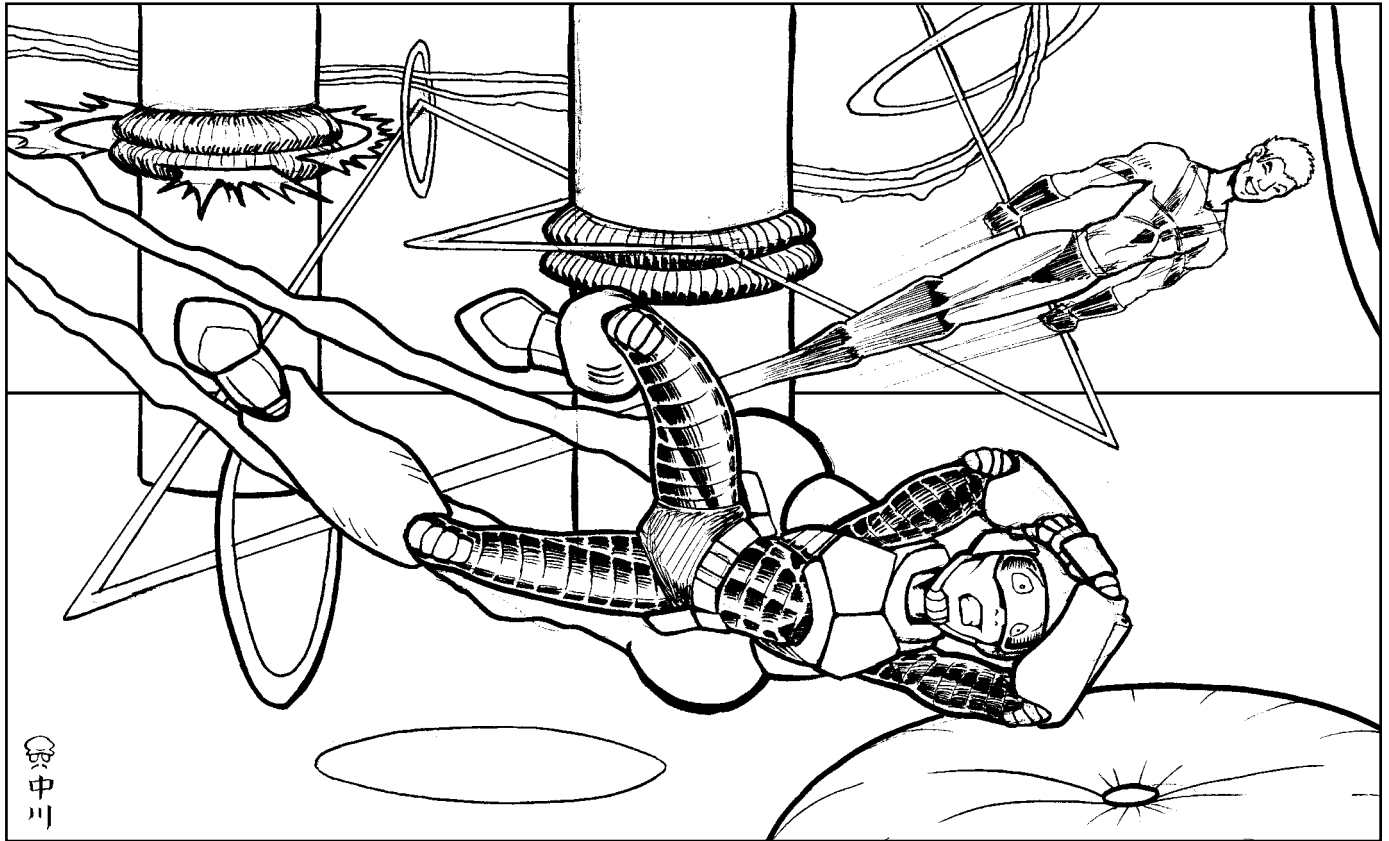
The above ground facilities for Ravenswood draw their power from Millennium City's power grid, but the considerable power needs for U-Hall have to be kept secret, so it has its own power plant. The power source is singularity power — the generator was invented by Mechanon and the Champions donated it after they defeated the mechanical archvillain — and the small black hole provides more than enough power to supply all of U-Hall's energy needs.

### Hugo The Maintenance Man

Hugo, a Mole-Man who defected to the surface world six years ago during a Lemurian attack that the California Patrol thwarted, tends the power plant (and the U-Hall physical plant in general). He lives in a small, spartan cubby just off the main room containing the black hole generator. PLATO has been teaching Hugo about the surface world, and he speaks pidgin English, but his race's vocal cords have atrophied and for more complex conversations PLATO must act as translator. Rowan has attempted many times to convince Hugo to move to one of the guest houses, but Hugo considers his little cubby with its small writing table and hard pallet four-star accommodations compared to the Mole-Man warrens he grew up in. Hugo has shown an affinity for technology — surprising considering he spent a lifetime tending to the *mystical* furnaces of Lemuria — and each year his knowledge has grown by leaps and bounds. Hugo keeps to himself for the most part, but on occasion has struck up a friendship with more technologically inclined stu-







dents. (For more information about the Mole-Men and Lemuria, see *Hidden Lands*.)

### **THE MICHAEL RENTON GYMNASIUM**

Donated by Michael Renton, the superhero Amazing Man of the Fabulous Five, the Renton Gymnasium is the complex containing the super-power training areas for the Ravenswood Academy. It includes a weight room with machines that use gravitational fields to test the strength of even the strongest brick, frictionless treadmills to measure the speed of the fastest speedster, a firing range with targets that can absorb all sorts of energy and measure the force of a blast, a variety of diagnostic equipment used to analyze superpowers... and the dreaded Testing Room.

#### **The Aviary**

This large room is used to create aerial obstacle courses for students who can fly. Mostly this involves rings and hoops that extend from the room's six surfaces and have adjustable diameters, and soft spheres, set to fly in various patterns, which the student must avoid while attempting to pass through the rings and hoops. More dangerous obstacles are reserved for the Testing Room. Near the entrance are two hover platforms instructors can use to fly along with the students. The faculty also uses the room to challenge some speedsters and teleporters, depending on the nature of their powers.

#### **The Diagnostic Room And Medical Center**

These two rooms are connected and used to analyze students with unusual powers. The diagnostic room contains six egg-shaped chairs with cables running from the top, and inside each chair is a VR headset. These chairs allow the faculty to

measure the powers of students whose abilities don't have an visible and/or measurable effect on the physical world. The student sits in the chair and wears the VR headset. The headset "disconnects" the student's mental impulses from his powers so that nothing happens... even though as far as his body and senses are concerned, he's using his powers. The student then runs through a scenario, using his powers as appropriate, and the results are reported to the instructor's station in the Medical Center. Each chair must be programmed to respond to a given student, and this programming takes some time (thus, a hero couldn't force a villain into a chair and "disconnect" his powers). The system is flawed, however, since the virtual reality created by the headsets isn't perfect and the student always knows the situation isn't real, but Rowan has found it the most effective way of analyzing teens who have unusual powers.

In addition to the instructor's station, the Medical Center also holds four beds and serves as a sickbay in case of an illness that seems tied to a student's superpowers.

#### **Firing Range**

The firing range looks like a traditional firing range with six stations for shooters. The only difference is the targets are made of a special polymer that absorbs energy attacks and most forms of kinetic attacks (all of them except Killing Attacks). Computers then measure the force and other qualities of the energy blast. Furthermore, the firing range can produce holographic targets of all shapes and sizes; the energy projectors fire on the target and the computer reports how effective their attacks are. This way students learn the best way of

subduing non-humanoid creatures and destroying inanimate objects.

### The Headspace

Technically called the Mental Environment Enablement Room, the Headspace is a training room for students with mental powers. It has seven seats in a circle around a central cylinder studded with sensors and lenses. By focusing their mental senses on the cylinder, students seated in the chairs join together in a mentally-created “virtual reality” environment. By means of a cybernetically-created headset invented by the Machinist (Class of '92), non-mentalists can also join in the environment.

Within this environment, mental powers have visible effects. For example, a student using telepathy on another student might cause glowing halos to appear around each student with a golden strand connecting the haloes, and the brighter the halo, the stronger the telepathy. This lets students better visualize what they're doing, and allows the instructor to have a better idea about what's going on with a young mentalist since emotional states color the effects. Furthermore, PLATO can interact with the environment and provide sub-vocal advice and observations to the instructor.

### Weight Room

In this room are free weights for students with normal strength and gravitic machines that generate “weights” to challenge the superhumanly strong. At one end of the room are three boxing rings containing power nullifiers — Mr. Biggs feels it's important that superhumans learn to fight without powers. He has three stories he tells whenever a student protests; all of the stories involve times when Mr. Biggs found himself without powers. One time his mind was transferred into a powerless clone by Teleios, another he was fighting the Leech, and the third — by far, the longest and most involved of the stories — deals with a time when Professor Muerte and Terror, Inc fired a nullifying ray from a satellite to drain Los Angeles's superheroes of their powers. By a student's third year, he can recount each story word for word, and there's a longstanding debate about whether Mr. Biggs realizes he's repeating himself — the common consensus is that he's slightly punch drunk from all those years as a brick.

### The Testing Room

The Testing Room is Ravenswood's danger room (described on pages 103 and 104 of *Champions*). Using a combination of robots and holograms, the Testing Room creates scenarios intended to challenge the teens, and the teens fail more often than not. In this room the true training of the future's superheroes take place, with each member of a homeroom not only learning how to better use his powers but also work as a team.

## FACULTY AND STAFF

The Ravenswood Academy employs 41 full- and part-time instructors. As with the students, Rowan divides her faculty into traditional instructors and non-traditional ones. Traditional instructors do not know of the superpowered students attending the Academy, whereas non-traditional ones do.

Many faculty members have Masters degrees in Education, but Rowan tries to keep as many instructors as she can who have graduate degrees in other fields. A faculty position at Ravenswood is a prestigious one, with the average teacher's salary being \$65,000 — almost ten thousand dollars higher than the average for the state.

### Non-Traditional Faculty

Rowan waives certain degree requirements depending on what superhuman experiences a non-traditional faculty member brings to the job. Many faculty members only stay for a year or two as a sort of sabbatical from superheroing; here are a few permanent members.

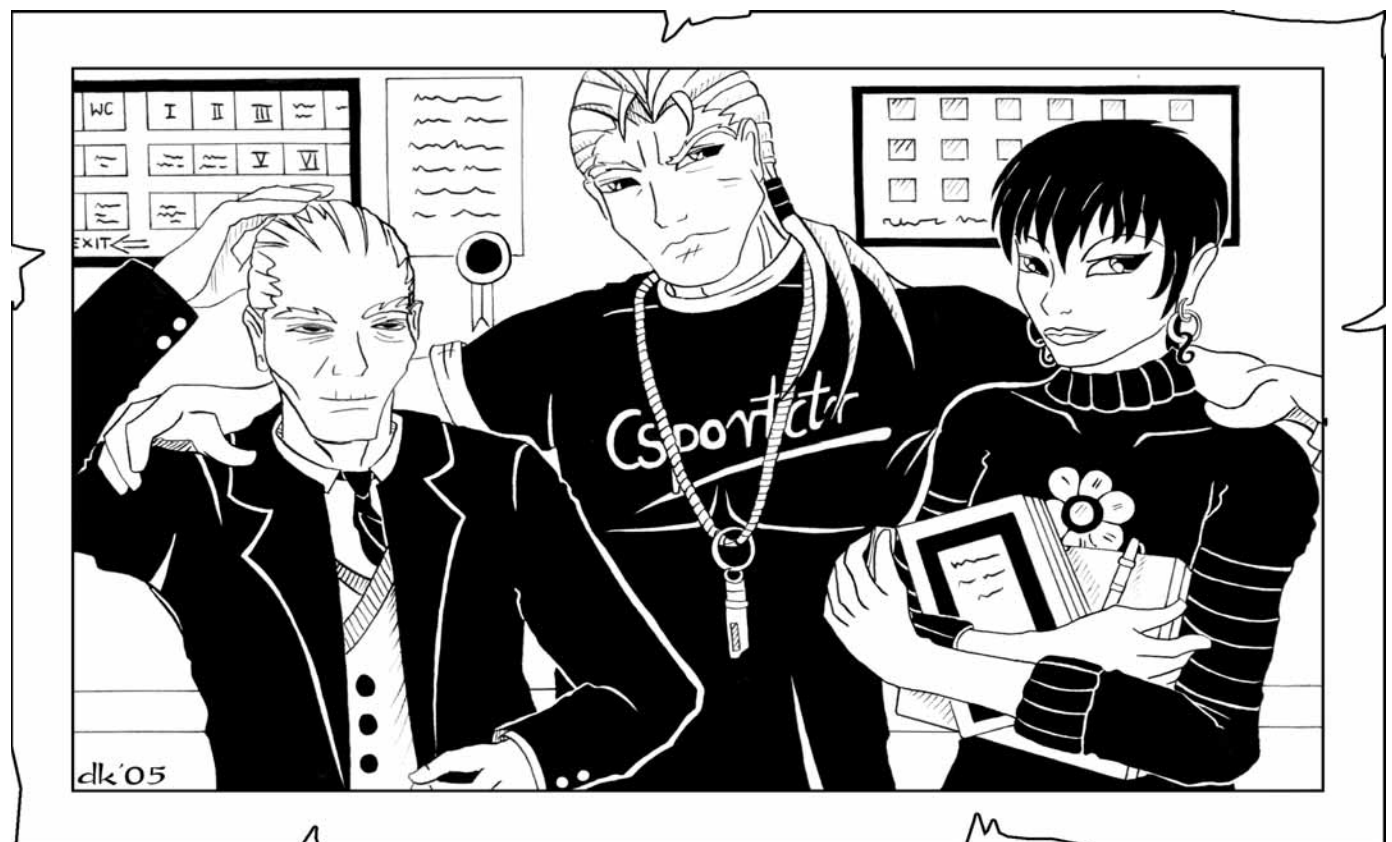
**Vernon Bromides:** Mr. Bromides is an older man who had a less than spectacular career as the villain Humbug in the Fifties and Sixties. A mentalist, he has an array of powers, but the most prominent is Mental Illusions. After spending ten years in prison, he decided to go straight, went to school for Education, and after he spent over a decade teaching math at a Detroit high school, Rowan approached him about coming on staff at Ravenswood. Mr. Bromides works with young mentalists and teaches Extraordinary Morality and Ethics (he also teaches Algebra and Geometry to traditional students). He tries to keep his prior career as Humbug a secret, but it's one that usually slips out. Though he looks mild with narrow features and wispy gray hair, he's a cunning and insightful man, and he has seen the worst humanity has to offer, both during team-ups with more maniacal supervillains and while in prison. He has little problem nosing out a student who's lying to him — and that's without using his mental powers. Mr. Bromides resides with his wife of eight years in Nagel House; they have no children.

**Denise Latour:** A decade ago Mrs. Latour was a high school history teacher who came into possession of the Rose Ruby, a magical artifact from the Turakian Age. The Rose Ruby was created by the tears of an evil sorceress who lost her life because she fell in love with a hero and (as a ghost) swore vengeance on all mankind. The ruby possesses any woman who holds it, giving her sorcerous powers and forcing her to perpetrate crimes against men. After she spent five years of villainy as the Dark Rose, the Sentinels separated Latour from the artifact, but by then her life was a shambles. Eventually word reached Rowan about Latour's situation, and she asked her to take a position at Ravenswood. Mrs. Latour's been a member of the faculty ever since. She teaches Superheroes and American Cul-

ture and Superheroes and US Government, as well as traditional classes in US History. Divorced from her husband, she recently won custody of her two young children, who reside with her in Dole House.

**Harry Biggs:** Harry Biggs was formerly the superhero Heavyweight, who used his control over density to both reduce his opponent's strength and increase his own. He had a long, colorful career as a West Coast superhero during the late Seventies and early Eighties. As he entered middle age, his powers grew more difficult to use, so he retired. He spent his time as a freelance consultant for banks and the like, advising them on how to protect themselves against supervillains. The work was financially rewarding, but ultimately unsatisfying, so eventually he retired and became a full-time student at UCLA, where he took whatever class struck his fancy for several years. Eventually Rowan approached him, encouraged him to apply his ample college credits toward a degree in Education, and when he graduated hired him as the Physical Education teacher. Mr. Biggs instructs students in sports, fitness, self-defense, combat, and overall use of their powers. A garrulous and good-natured man, he's good with the students — even if he does tend to make too many digressions and tell too many stories. Furthermore, his powers over density allow him to reduce the density of a student who loses his temper. With his density reduced, the student effectively becomes like a pillow — unable to do any damage and unable to hurt himself. Mr. Biggs is a large man in his late forties who keeps himself fit. He wears his graying blond hair in a long ponytail. He dresses casually and fashionably (at least for a man his age) and resides in Braun House.

**Donald Randall, Jr.:** Mr. Randall is the son of Captain Patriot, a popular superhero from World War II who retired under a dark cloud after he supported Joe McCarthy and HUAC during the Fifties. His son has no superpowers, but Donald Junior spent a lifetime around superpowers and knows the history of superheroes in America backwards and forwards. After graduating from college, he spent nearly ten years working for PRIMUS, but eventually his father's political enemies stymied his advancement and he resigned in disgust. From there, he took various jobs in the private sector, but felt he was doing little good... so when Rowan approached him about becoming a teacher, he leapt at the chance. He teaches various topics concerning the law and superhumans and law enforcement techniques; he also assists Mr. Biggs with self-defense and combat training. He teaches Economics and the History of the Vietnam War for traditional students. A harsh and serious man, he brooks no troublemakers or disrespect, even if he only *thinks* his students are disrespecting him. Rowan has had to take him aside and reprimand him more than once about being too harsh on his students. Mr. Randall knows he has a tendency to treat his class like boot camp so he's never taken the reprimands badly, and he has nothing but respect for Rowan and what she's done with Ravenswood Academy. Mr. Randall had a strained relationship with his famous father and tries to avoid discussions about Captain Patriot. He *will* fly off the handle if a student nettles him about Captain Patriot, bringing up his activities after the war, but does try to answer earnest questions about his father if the subject comes up.





**Gerald Gillicutty:** Mr. Gillicutty (Class of '97) teaches Biology for both traditional and non-traditional students, as well as the Non-Native Environment Sequences classes for superhumans. A mutant, Mr. Gillicutty possesses the ability to adapt his body to any environment. The changes are automatic, but he must be exposed to the environment to change. The power doesn't lend itself to super-heroing, so after graduating from Ravenswood, he went to college to study Biology and then accepted a position as an instructor. Mr. Gillicutty is a humorless man who only grows excited when talking about the innards of a frog, cell division, and other topics relating to biology. Slender and tall, he has protuberant eyes and thick lips; though he never took a superhero name, his nickname among the students is Mr. Amphibian. When a student, he was codenamed Adapter; most students agree this might have been the poorest codename ever assigned to a student.

**Doctors Frank Hildreth and George Post:** The official title for these men is professors emeritus, but neither of them taught at the Ravenswood Academy before being hired on in 1998. Instead Rowan found them in her office early one morning, arguing over what time period and timestream they were in. When Rowan interrupted their argument and asked

how they had gotten into her office, they told her a tale involving Captain Chronos.

The two men were scientists in the Thirties who had developed a time machine and became lost in time. They traveled back and forth through the past and future, visiting alternative world after alternative world, until they encountered Captain Chronos, who took away their time machine (stating that the two meddlers were messing everything up — although he never told them exactly what “everything” was) and deposited them in Rowan's office. He had promised to return the two men to their own time, but it was obvious from the morning paper on Rowan's desk that this wasn't their time.

After Rowan explained where they were, they looked at each other, shrugged, and asked for a job — but would accept no title lower than professor emeritus. Rowan agreed and since then the two old men have taught both the Secret History of the World class and the occasional Temporal Physics class. Their Secret History class is a favorite among the students, despite the fact the professors spend most of their time arguing about the facts. In the first few years of their tenure, they attempted to rebuild their time machine, but it seemed they had forgotten how to. Both are convinced this forgetfulness is a conspiracy on the part of Captain Chronos; neither is willing to entertain the possibility that it might be because they are both well into their eighties.

## Staff

Here are some additional members of the Ravenswood staff who aren't connected to a particular building.

ROWAN Ravenswood's Headmistress				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 18 PD (14 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 14 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	2		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	7		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 89</b>

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

Cost	Powers	END
25	<i>Force Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 50-point powers	
30	1) <i>Force Manipulation:</i> Telekinesis (30 STR), Fine Manipulation	5
26	2) <i>Force Field:</i> Force Field (14 PD/10 ED), Protects Carried Items, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2)	0
25	3) <i>Force Shackles:</i> Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF	5
25	4) <i>Force Wall:</i> Force Wall (8 PD/8 ED; 5" long and 2" tall)	5
25	5) <i>Perceive Kinetic Energy:</i> Detect Motion 21- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Ranged, Sense, Targeting	0

Skills	
9	+3 with Force Powers
3	Bureaucratics 12-
3	Computer Programming 13-
3	Conversation 12-
3	Deduction 13-
3	CK: Millennium City 13-
3	Power: Force Powers 13-
3	Persuasion 12-
3	PS: Teacher 13-
3	PS: Psychologist 13-
5	SS: Psychology 15-
5	Tactics 14-
5	Teamwork 14-
3	Scholar
4	1) KS: Superheroes 15-
4	2) KS: The Superhuman World 15-
4	3) KS: Supervillains 15-
3	Linguist
3	1) English (idiomatic, native accent) (Finnish is Native)
2	2) French (completely fluent, with accent)
2	3) German (completely fluent, with accent)

2 4) Swedish (completely fluent, with accent)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 234**

**Total Cost: 323**

### 200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 35 DNPC: Ravenswood Super-Students 11- (Slightly Less Powerful, Group)
- 20 Hunted: VIPER 8- (MoPow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Helping Teens With Superpowers (Common, Total)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Kristina Pelvanen) (Frequently, Major)
- 3 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 323**

**Background/History:** For Rowan's background, see the history of Ravenswood earlier in this chapter.

**Personality/Motivation:** Rowan is a serious but kind woman who has devoted her life to helping adolescents with superpowers. She isn't humorless, but she has a dry, sophisticated wit and her quips often go over her students' heads. Nearly always even-tempered, she rarely gets angry, but she doesn't coddle her students. She feels that honesty and forthrightness are both of the utmost importance



when dealing with teens. In other words, if a student acts foolishly, she tells him so. She isn't cruel about it — she simply points out the foolishness, provides rational arguments against the action, and suggests better ways of behaving. On the other hand, she's also very complimentary when a student deserves a kind word or two, and she always knows when a student needs encouragement or comforting rather than punishment.

**Quote:** “It has come to my attention that a group of unknown superheroes — all of whom wore costumes suspiciously like Ravenswood uniforms, I must say — stopped the Ultimates last night. Let me first remind you, class, of the curfew we observe here at Ravenswood. But, nonetheless, perhaps we can learn something from this. I have obtained a recording of the fight, and now we shall go over the many, many mistakes these “unknown” superheroes made....”

**Powers/Tactics:** Rowan was once considerably more powerful — she had an Energy Blast with Area Of Effect (Any Area), her Telekinesis was stronger, the PD and ED of her Force Field and Force Wall were higher, she had Flight, her physical Characteristics were all much higher, and so on — but as she's grown older, her powers have diminished. However, they're still very useful in her role as Ravenswood's headmistress and instructor of young superheroes. She can use her Force Shackles to restrain overly-aggressive students, or her Force Wall to protect them when something goes awry during a training session. Her ability to Perceive Kinetic Energy is useful for detecting students trying to sneak off campus, no matter how dark the night.

In combat Rowan seeks to protect her students first and foremost. She tries to get her pupils away from the action, but isn't irrational about it — if she realizes the students are unlikely to get away, she assumes command of them and attempts to direct them to put up the best fight they can.

**Campaign Use:** As the headmistress of Ravenswood, Rowan is in effect a student's surrogate parent, and she takes the job seriously. She acts as both mentor and disciplinarian, so a student should have ambivalent feelings toward her that he would toward his parents — both appreciating her efforts to teach him how to use his powers and resenting the restrictions she places on his freedom.

To make Rowan more powerful, add more force-based Powers to her Elemental Control including an Energy Blast and Flight. To further increase her power, increase the points in the EC to 60-70 Active Points, raising the slots accordingly. To make her less powerful, add the Limitation *Increased Endurance Cost* (x2 END; -1/2) to the existing slots to represent her advancing age.

Driven to help teens with superpowers and convinced that teens shouldn't be superheroes,

Rowan Hunts any superpowered teen that comes to her attention (with the intention of recruiting him to attend Ravenswood, if appropriate). Despite her heartfelt beliefs, she never forces a teen to attend Ravenswood; instead, she never stops trying to convince him to come to her school.

**Appearance:** Rowan is a tall, slender woman in her mid-sixties. She looks young for her age and usually wears sensible shoes, a calf-length plaid skirt, and a blouse. Over this she wears a knit sweater that comes to mid-thigh, has deep pockets, and buttons up the front. Her hair is gray and long, and she wears it in a pony tail or a bun.

## “REMEMBER, CLASS — TEST TOMORROW”

Rowan and her staff of instructors use the Testing Room (page 58) for more than everyday training exercises — they also use it to give exams to their students. The “exam scenarios” are designed to test what the students have learned over the course of their studies. Ravenswood uses some as exams for particular courses year after year (with slight changes, of course, to improve the scenario, better test a particular class's strengths and weaknesses, and prevent cheating). These scenarios have gained a reputation among the students, both current and former, and have become a sort of rite of initiation — no superpowered teen is considered a “true” Ravenswood student until he's been through Freshman Orientation, and no Ravenswood student is considered a “true” Ravenswood graduate until he's had his butt kicked in the Damocles Scenario. The students have nicknamed the scenarios, and hand down these nicknames from class to class.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, you'll find *Remember, Class — Test Tomorrow* text boxes that describe the exams in broad terms. A GM can use these as plot seeds for quick one-night game sessions and the like.

**Freshman Orientation:** Rowan always gives the same lecture to incoming students, and she holds the lecture in the Testing Room. (Of course, the new students are [mostly] unaware of the Testing Room's true purpose at that point.) The lecture is especially boring — she drones on... and on... *and on...* about the responsibilities of a superhero, the difficulties of being a masked crimefighter, and the importance of studying hard until the students have difficulty keeping their eyes open. Then comes the attack. It usually involves Dr. Destroyer, Mechanon, or some other infamous and supremely powerful supervillain bursting through the wall and threatening to kill everyone in the room. Rowan gives the students enough time to react before commanding PLATO to stop the scenario. The purpose of Freshman Orientation is to allow Rowan to get a handle on the new students' instincts — when faced with the situation, do they freeze, jump immediately to the attack, stop to reason out the situation, or chose some other course of action?

**PLATO**  
Ravenswood's AI

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
18	INT	8	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	ECV: 5
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
4	SPD	15	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
			<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 54</b>

Cost	Powers	END
5	<i>Waldoes</i> : Extra Limbs (mounted as necessary at locations throughout U-hall)	0

**Skills**

3	Electronics 13-
4	AK: Earth 14-
4	AK: United States 14-
4	AK: Millennium City 14-
2	KS: Archived Recent News 11-
3	KS: Current News 13-
10	KS: General Knowledge 20-
3	KS: Popular Movies 13-
3	KS: Popular Music 13-
3	KS: Video Games 13-
3	KS: Superheroes 13-
3	KS: Supervillains 13-
2	KS: World History 11-
2	KS: World Politics 11-
3	Mechanics 13-
3	PS: Household Management & Maintenance 13-
3	SS: Astronomy 13-
3	SS: Biology 13-
3	SS: Chemistry 13-
3	SS: Geology 13-
3	SS: Physics 13-
3	System Operations 13-

**Programs**

1	Monitor Camera System, Report Anomalies
1	Monitor News For Reports Of Superhuman Teens
1	Scan And Enter Data
1	Search Reference Material For Information On A Topic
1	Operate Facilities
1	Send Emergency Call To Faculty If Protocols Not Met

**Talents**

3	<i>Clock</i> : Absolute Time Sense
5	<i>Memory</i> : Eidetic Memory
3	<i>Calculator</i> : Lightning Calculator
3	<i>Instant-On Feature</i> : Lightsleep
4	<i>Scanner</i> : Speed Reading (x10)

**Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 93**

**Total Computer Cost: 147**

**Value Disadvantages**

25	Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Very Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Cannot Disobey Rowan (Very Common, Total)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 50**

**Total Cost: 97/5 = 19**

**Description:** PLATO is the artificial intelligence integral to the smooth running of Ravenswood Academy. He's a new addition to the facilities, having been installed in the aftermath of the Gloriana tragedy. Before then, Rowan relied on a highly-advanced, non-sentient computer to help her run the Academy, but with the death of two students it was obvious she needed something more.

PLATO — and especially his complete access to Ravenswood's security systems — makes Rowan uncomfortable. It's not that she doesn't trust the computer *per se*, but having him on site feels a little too much like having Big Brother around. Though PLATO has orders to monitor the non-traditional students at all times, and there are cameras literally everywhere, he also has orders *not* to report minor infractions of the rules. Rowan feels it's important to avoid turning the Academy into a prison where the students feel they're watched at every second. She knows teens need their independence, and that they must sometimes feel they're taking their independence for themselves. In short, Rowan has programmed PLATO to act as an attentive, but not infallible, parent. (However, if a student sneaks off campus, PLATO immediately notifies both Rowan and Brian Malfrey.)

The Champions and their AI SOCRATES created PLATO, and the two AIs have an older brother-younger brother rivalry that usually expresses itself in the chess games they've played for the last two years.

Personality-wise, PLATO does his best to come across as a cold-blooded machine and speaks in a dry, emotionless voice. However, he has a wry sense of humor and can't help but drop an ironic comment when appropriate. After a few years and more than a few pointed comments about their behavior, most students come to suspect that PLATO only feigns emotionlessness.

**OTHER STAFF MEMBERS**

**Bernard Fenkel, Rowan's Assistant:** Mr. Fenkel is Rowan's right-hand man at Ravenswood. A former student (Class of '93), he learned of the secret school when he started dating one of the non-traditional students. After college, he offered his services to Rowan as an assistant and has worked here every since. A kind man who genuinely likes kids, Mr. Fenkel plays good cop to Rowan's bad cop when necessary, but his main responsibility is making sure the non-traditional students have something resembling a normal adolescence. With superpowers, training, and all the rest, many faculty members often forget their students are teens, and it falls to Mr. Fenkel to remind them of their students' age.

**Brian Malfrey, Head Of Security:** Ravenswood maintains a private security force stationed at the gatehouse entrance to the Academy. There are always four security personnel on the premises working in eight-hour shifts, and Brian Malfrey is the head of security. Though he doesn't have superpowers, Mr. Malfrey knows of the secret school at Ravenswood, as do his two lieutenants, so there's always one security guard on site who knows of the non-tradi-

## STUDENT MENTORS

Each freshman is assigned a junior as his student mentor, and the faculty consider the mentor responsible for the well-being of the freshman. While obviously this responsibility only goes so far, the faculty take it seriously, because they know that's the only way to make the mentor take it seriously. For instance, if the freshman has poor grades on his first test, the teacher arranges to meet with both the freshman and the mentor. Mentors are also expected to spend time on weekends with the freshman, especially during the first month or two before the freshman has gotten to know his peers.

For non-traditional students, a non-traditional mentor is assigned. This is one of the measures Rowan instituted after the tragedy involving Gloriana; previously the opposite was true since Rowan felt it was important for superpowered teens to spend time with others who lacked superpowers.

The mentor relationship continues as the freshman becomes a sophomore, and the junior becomes a senior. Although by this time the relationship is often more casual, when it comes to grades and similar concerns the mentor is still expected to take responsibility for the sophomore.

tional students. However, none of the other guards know the secret. A retired UNTIL agent, Mr. Malfrey is well trained in how to deal with superpowers and the like. (The two lieutenants are also retired UNTIL agents.)

Mr. Malfrey is large man in his fifties with close-cut, steel grey hair. His demeanor is emotionless and no-nonsense when he deals with students; this is just an act, but one he rarely drops around the kids.

## THE STUDENTS

Ravenswood has both day and boarding students. Day students arrive in the morning and leave after classes, their parents (or chauffeurs, in some cases) dropping them off and picking them up unless the student has a license and a car. Boarding students live in one of the dormitories on campus.

Students are further divided into "traditional" and "non-traditional" classifications. This is a secret division (or at least the traditional students don't know about it) since non-traditional students are superpowered teens attending Ravenswood to learn how to use their powers and be superheroes.

### THE WEEKDAY

A student's day, Monday thru Friday, is divided into eight periods: six classes, homeroom, and lunch. Each period is fifty minutes long with ten minutes between periods for going to and from class. Classes begin at 8:00 AM and end at 3:50 PM. Lunch is at noon; all students eat at the same time.

From 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, boarding students must participate in either an athletic team or a physical education class. Day students, of course, are also encouraged to participate, but this isn't required, and practice for athletic teams often takes up more than an hour each day.

### HOMEROOM

Originally just a means for public high schools to take attendance and organize the students, homeroom has been given an expanded purpose at Ravenswood. Each homeroom has five to fifteen students and one instructor. They meet for one class period, which usually takes the form of a question and answer session between the students and teacher, although sometimes the instructor gives impromptu lectures. During homeroom, students not only discuss world events and current affairs, but can also raise their concerns about what's going on at the Academy. In effect, homeroom is a sort of community meeting and freeform lecture series.

The real reason for homeroom is that it allows all the non-traditional students to be together once a day for instruction in how to use their super-powers.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Ravenswood's high expectations of its students is reflected in its course requirements. It eschews specialization in favor of a survey of many fields. In its philosophy, college is the time to specialize — secondary school is the time to teach the students

what's out there for them to study. The requirements a student must fulfill to graduate are:

- English: 4 years.
- Mathematics: 3 years.
- Social Sciences, Language, Science: 3 years in two of these subjects; 2 years in the other.
- Fine Arts: 1.5 years
- Athletics: all students must belong to one athletic team, whether intermural or interconference (competes with other high schools in the state), or participate in the general physical education program. All non-traditional students must participate in the general physical education program; this is covered in more detail under *Super-Students*, below.

## RULES

### Curfew

Unless a student has a pass from his homeroom teacher, or there's a school-organized activity (a play, a dance, a football game, and so on), the following rules apply:

- In the dormitories by 8:00 PM, Sunday through Thursday, and 10:00 PM on Friday and Saturday.
- Mandatory study hall from 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM Monday through Thursday for all students.
- Lights out and bed check at 10:00 PM, Sunday through Thursday, and midnight on Friday and Saturday.

### Disciplinary Action

There are only two forms of punishment at Ravenswood: work detail and expulsion. There are no detentions or suspensions where students sit quietly staring off into space or doing busy work; Rowan considers neither of those activities productive.

The faculty assigns *work detail* for most infractions. Possible work assignments include helping

## TYPICAL ACADEMIC CALENDAR

August 24	First Student Day
September 6	Labor Day
September 13	Homecoming Dance
September 23-24	Interim Reports issued
October 28-29	Fall Break
November 25-26	Thanksgiving Break
December 2	Winter Formal Dance
December 20-January 2	Winter Break
January 17	End of 1st Semester Break
February 18-21	Spring Break
March 25 - April 3	Interim Reports issued
May 5-6	Senior Prom
May 19	Memorial Day
May 30	Last Day of School
June 6	Report Cards mailed
June 13	



the gardeners, acting as a “maintenance assistant” for a weekend, helping the theater wash costumes, and cleaning the pool.

Only Rowan can *expel* a student, although she has the right to appoint three teachers to decide the case. No student is expelled without a long discussion with the parents, and Rowan has rarely expelled a student for a first offense. The following infractions are typically the ones that lead to the possibility of expulsion: fighting, cheating, theft, possession of illicit drugs or alcohol.

## COURSE OFFERINGS

Here are the standard courses offered each year; any given year might include additional courses depending on the instructors on staff.

### Classical And Modern Languages

—French I-IV, French Phonetics (1 Semester), French Conversation (1 Semester), AP French

—Spanish I-IV, Spanish Phonetics (1 Semester), Spanish Conversation (1 Semester), AP Spanish

—Latin I-III, AP Latin

### English

—English 9-11, AP English, Journalism I-II (1 Semester each), Contemporary Poetry (1 Semester), Contemporary Literature (1 Semester), Mythology (1 Semester), Shakespeare, Literature and Philosophy (1 Semester), Writing Short Fiction.

### Fine Arts

—Freshman Intro to Arts, Art History, Choir, Film Style and Structure, Mass Communications and Speech, Orchestra, Photo and 2-D, 3-D Design and Sculpture, Web Design I and II (1 Semester each), Yearbook, Theater, Studio Projects I-II (juniors and senior only).

### Social Sciences

—World History I-II, AP Modern European History, US History, AP US History, AP US Government and Politics (1 Semester), Comparative Government and Politics (1 Semester), Economics (1 Semester), AP Economics, Psychology (1 Semester), Twentieth-Century China (1 Semester), Religion in the Modern World (1 Semester), The Vietnam War (1 Semester)

### Mathematics

—Algebra I-II, Geometry, Precalculus, Calculus, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, Advanced Topics in Math

—Computer Science, AP Computer Science

### Sciences

—Biology I, AP Biology, Chemistry I, Advanced Chemistry, AP Chemistry, Physics, AP Physics, Electricity and Magnetism, Astronomy (1 Semester), Bioethics (1 Semester), Environmental Science (1 Semester), Quantum Mechanics (1 Semester)

**Notes:** In the above, “AP” stands for Advanced Placement, meaning the student takes an exam at the end of the course and if he does well, receives college credit. Every field has seminars in addition to the above, depending on the instructors on faculty that year. Rowan must approve each seminar before it is listed, and most seminars are for juniors and seniors only.

### Uniforms

While attending classes all students must wear khaki slacks, a white dress shirt, and the Academy blazer, which is midnight blue with the Ravenswood crest on the breast pocket. Girls may wear a knee-length skirt instead of slacks. Outside of class students may dress how they choose, provided they do so appropriately and within the boundaries of good taste. No specific guidelines exist on paper — Rowan knows fashions change and wants her students to pay attention to the outside world (of course some students feel no written guidelines exist so the faculty can make up whatever rules it wants to) — but any faculty member has the right to require a student to change into more appropriate clothing at any time.

## Super-Students

The non-traditional students are organized into their own homerooms; currently there are four, Homerooms Alpha through Gamma. For other class periods they join with the traditional students — Rowan feels it’s important they spend as much time as possible with people who don’t have super-powers to prevent them from seeing themselves as superior to others.

Non-traditional students are forbidden from participating in athletics. The risks of both exposing one’s secret identity and hurting another student are simply too high. In lieu of joining an athletic team, all non-traditional students must sign up for general physical education. They are always assigned the same class, where they learn to use their powers.

All non-traditional students are assigned three pieces of special equipment, all of which are fitted into their blazers, as well as a costume (nicknamed a “gym suit” by the students) to wear during training period. These are described below:

**Special ID:** Disguised as the three buttons on the left cuff of a student’s blazer is the student’s special ID (as opposed to the standard identity card every student carries). Mainly this provides a transmitter so PLATO can monitor the student’s location, but the ID can serve as a backup “key” to access to facilities limited to non-traditional students in the event the voice-key system malfunctions or can’t be used.

**Image Inducer:** Disguised as the three buttons on the right cuff of a student’s blazer, the Image Inducer allows a student to disguise any physical differences he might have because of his powers, as well as providing an easy way of disguising himself if he’s caught wearing his costume. The Image Inducer produces a powerful hologram, but can only project one image — generally of the student in a normal school uniform. And of course, it doesn’t actually physically change the student, so a student with, say, wings still has to take care not to hit people with them while he’s walking around.

**Game Information:** *Shape Shift (Sight Group; one shape), Instant Change, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (+½) (22 Active Points); IAF (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

**School Pin:** The student's school pin — typically worn in the lapel of his blazer — serves as a communication link with PLATO and the other members of his homeroom, as well as a second location device the AI can use to find the student via GPS.

**Game Information:** *Mind Link (specific group of up to any 16 minds at once), No LOS Needed (35 Active Points); IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼). Total cost: 13 points.*

### **CODENAMES**

Rowan assigns a codename to every non-traditional student to acclimate him to maintaining a costumed identity and keeping it a secret. The codename is negotiable, but Rowan prefers simple, single-word names that relate to the student's powers. She rarely approves names that have excess words or titles. Few students are ever happy with their codenames — they feel much the same way about a codename that they do about the photo on their student ID or driver's license — but Rowan doesn't allow a student to change names.

### **COSTUME**

A non-traditional student is expected to wear his costume whenever he's in the Renton Gymnasium for training. All the costumes look the same — a midnight blue body suit with green and silver striping on the right side that runs from the ankle to the shoulder — with differences allowed only due to powers and unique physical conditions (like wings, for instance). On the chest of each costume is an insignia based on the student's codename. The costume has no mask, since it isn't supposed to be worn outside of U-Hall. Rowan allows students to customize their costumes *slightly*, so long as a student can provide a meaningful reason for the change (“I just like it better” or “I wanted to show off my legs” do *not* count as “meaningful”). The reason can be symbolic — for instance, the student Root has the royal crest of his family sewn on the sleeve, because that is the custom on his home planet — but it needs to have some sort of acceptable justification.

### **CLIQUE**

Although homeroom assignment groups the students most strongly, the non-traditional students do have minor cliques based on their powers. Rivalries between the cliques are slight, especially since there are so few non-traditional students, but these groups do tend to gravitate together and certain stereotypes apply.

The last clique described below, the Trad-Stus, isn't really a clique *per se*. Instead it's slang for traditional students. Rowan doesn't approve of this name since she feels it engenders an us-versus-them attitude that's exactly the opposite of what she wants... but the superpowered students keep using it.

**Beamers:** Beamers are mostly energy projectors, but also include students with powers like telekinesis or force fields. Like the Physiques, they're often

the envy of their peers because their powers are straightforward and often have spectacular special effects that onlookers find impressive. The stereotype of a Beamer is that he's a reckless hothead who would rather blast away at a problem than try to find a clever solution.

**Gearheads:** Gearheads are students with technology-based powers: kid geniuses, cyberkinetics, and so forth. They spend most of their time discussing advances in technology and tinkering with new inventions — activities only Gearheads find interesting. The Gearheads correspond to the Geek clique described in Chapter One.

**Head Cases:** Head Cases are mentalists, and the stereotype of the clique is “a Geek people are scared of.” Every time a Head Case gives someone a knowing look, the person can't help but wonder if he's having his mind read. Every time someone agrees with a Head Case, the other students wonder if the Head Case used mind control. Although both these activities are forbidden, one can never be too sure with a Head Case... To further alienate their peers, Head Cases tend to carry on conversations with each other both verbally and telepathically (a definite breach in social etiquette, since anyone with them can't figure out what they're talking about).

**Physiques:** Physiques are bricks, speedsters, and martial artists — in short, any student with physical superpowers. Stereotypes range from “all brawn and no brains” to “vain and superficial.” In many ways they correspond to the Jock, Cheerleader, and sometimes the Princess Cliques described in Chapter One. Many teen superheroes envy the Physiques because their powers tend to be easier to use and are visible and spectacular.

**Strangelings:** Strangelings are mystics or students with nebulously-defined powers like the ability to alter reality or move between dimensions. In other words, a student with a power that takes more than a sentence to describe ends up as a Strangeling. The stereotype is that they're space cadets, often quoting maxims no one can understand, talking to things that no one else can see, and referring to worlds — everything from other-dimensional realms, to alternate timelines — that may or may not exist. This clique is most similar to the Stoner and Weirdo cliques described in Chapter One.

**Trad-Stus:** “Trad-Stu” is a slang term for a traditional student. For example: “I was stuck with the Trad-Stus and couldn't fly, so I was late getting here.”

### **SUPERHERO EDUCATION CLASSES**

Learning to be a superhero goes far deeper than just being able to use superpowers — it also requires a deep understanding of morality and ethics. Non-traditional students have two class periods a day devoted to superhero topics. One takes place while traditional students are having homeroom; the other takes place for an hour after the last class period ends while the traditional students are practicing for an athletic team or having gym class. The second period takes place in the

## OTHER SUPER-STUDENTS

In addition to the students of Homeroom Alpha, some others attending the Academy are:

### HOMEROOM BETA (CLASS OF '07)

**Cheer:** Cheer is a young woman with the power to inspire happiness in her target. Instructors feel she should be able to expand her powers to include other emotions, but the bright and peppy teen has little interest in evoking other feelings, and even after two years of schooling, she has only gotten better at “cheering up” her target. She has a reputation for using her powers on unwilling students — “What’s the harm in making someone happy?” — and is frequently in and out of trouble.

**Diva:** Diva possesses sonic powers — as well as a beautiful voice. She has no interest in becoming a superheroine and plans to be an opera singer when she grows up. Despite her wish to avoid superheroing, the Ravenswood faculty feel she is the best and brightest of Homeroom Beta. Diva is hard-working, mature, responsible, and has an excellent grasp of her powers; Rowan hopes to change her mind about fighting crime.

**Slumber:** Slumber is a young man who has the ability to perceive the dreams of a target. He’s recently developed the ability to cause a target to enter REM sleep involuntarily and relive the previous night’s dreams. He involuntarily glimpses any nightmare that made a lasting impression on the people around him, and this has turned him into a withdrawn and sullen teen. He’s also Cheer’s pet project; she never stops trying to improve his mood.

**Velocity:** Velocity is a speedster. After much analysis, Ravenswood faculty have determined that in truth he has the ability to manipulate time. At the moment he can only use his temporal powers on himself, but Rowan hopes to expand his abilities beyond that (she has futilely tried to contact Captain Chronos to request his assistance). There’s some fear among the other faculty that Velocity is the last person in the world who should possess power over time. Chronal abilities are often powerful, and if the possessor lacks a sense of responsibility and duty, they’re open to abuse... and Velocity is far from a responsible young man.

### HOMEROOM DELTA (CLASS OF '08)

**Brainwave:** Brainwave is a young woman with telepathic powers. She insists that her fellow students call her the Great Bendinni (her real name is Susan Bender), much to the chagrin of her instructors. She’s a prankster and troublemaker, but much to everyone’s shock she uses her powers responsibly. In addition to her powers, she’s also one of the more talented students at the Academy — hard to believe considering she never pays attention in class and spends most of study period trying to make the other students laugh.

**Brawn:** Brawn is a brick who very much wants to leave Ravenswood. He’s a mutant whose powers manifested during a high school football game when he threw a football for over two miles and then, later in that same quarter, carried almost all the defenders on the field for over sixty yards to score a touchdown. He misses his friends, and especially misses being able to join sports teams; he has a good grasp of his powers, so he’s often bored in class. He is, however, well-liked by both traditional and non-traditional students, as well as the faculty, and he doesn’t cause trouble. But whenever he meets with Rowan the first words out of his mouth are that he wants to go back to his old high school, and that he feels out of place in the school. To make Brawn feel more at home at

Ravenswood, Rowan is organizing a *polakios* team for the next year and making Brawn the captain. He has sworn that his team will win.

**Chill:** Chill is a young woman with cold powers, mainly the ability to create ice structures. It takes her considerable time and concentration to create them, which she does using moisture out of the atmosphere and freezing it, and Rowan hopes to make it easier for her. When frustrated or otherwise emotionally agitated, Chill involuntarily lowers the temperature in the area. It’s never become a problem with the traditional students — the faculty have intervened before anyone noticed they had started shivering — but she’s sure to discover boys soon, and Rowan hopes it doesn’t become a problem.

**Impulse:** Impulse is a mutant with telekinetic powers and a troubled past. He came into his powers very early, and they’re an innate part of him — he treats them just as a person would a hand or a foot and often uses them without thinking — which was problematic when he first arrived at the school. He can only affect inanimate objects with his powers, because his father beat him whenever he attempted to use his telekinesis to “touch” one of his family members. Though he has learned to be more conscious of his powers (he no longer instinctively reaches out for objects like he did when he was younger), he has yet to overcome his psychological block against manipulating living things.

**Root:** Root is the son of Lhakpa Gyalsten; see page 50 for more information.

### HOMEROOM GAMMA (CLASS OF '09)

**Dance:** Of the incoming freshman class, Dance is the most skilled with her powers. She has super-agility, which expresses itself most impressively in her ability to “dance” through hails of bullets and other attacks. At the moment, she can only perform at her highest level when she’s prepared (when she can perform a routine, as she puts it); Rowan hopes to make her abilities more intuitive.

**Function:** Function has a strange ability to turn any situation into a formula, plug in the variables, and predict the outcome. He’s also a math prodigy. The faculty has made an initial study of his powers, but they still don’t understand them. All they can tell is that he seems to perceive the world — people, objects, events — as vectors and his brain automatically organizes these vectors into matrices. Rowan has high hopes for the boy, but his powers have made him socially inept and distant from others, and her greatest concern is instilling a certain humanity in the boy.

**Updraft:** Updraft has the ability to create currents of air. Currently all he can do with his power is fly with the aid of glider wings, but Rowan knows his powers will improve as he ages. Updraft is aggressive and competitive, and although he isn’t mean or cruel, he can be thoughtless of other people’s feelings. Rowan worries about how he’ll get along with Wing (described below) and is considering transferring Updraft to Homeroom Delta until Wing has a better grasp of his powers. At the moment, she plans to leave the two in the same homeroom for at least the Fall semester, hoping that maybe Updraft will overcome his lack of empathy and take a shine to the other boy.

**Wing:** Wing is a mutant with two large bird-like wings growing from his back. He has yet to learn to fly, however, and is deathly afraid of heights — just like he’s deathly afraid of most things. Rowan is already prepared to spend much time with the incoming freshman.

Renton Gym and is devoted to learning to use one's powers; the first tackles issues that confront a person with superpowers. In addition to these weekday classes, non-traditional students spend an hour on Saturday and Sunday in a weekend seminar on topics in superheroing.

**Extraordinary Morality And Ethics:** This one-semester class for juniors and seniors opens with the question: "What do you do if you go back in time and have the opportunity to kill Hitler when he's in the crib?" From there it goes on to discuss all the common moral dilemmas superheroes face in the course of their adventures, as well as ethical issues concerning supervillains, time travel, law versus Justice, the difference between waging war and crimefighting, and so on.

**Superhumans And Government:** This class is taken in conjunction with US Government. It covers the laws as they apply to vigilante activity and superpowers, as well as teaching the future superheroes how to deal with the authorities. Furthermore, the students compare and contrast how the US and other governments deal with superhumans, with a focus on governments that attempt to make superheroes illegal or exploit superpowered people. The class is mandatory for all students.

**Public Address And Civil Catastrophe:** This class covers historical cases in which entire cities and large populations were threatened, and how to deal with these situations. This includes everything from evacuating a city to quelling a riot.

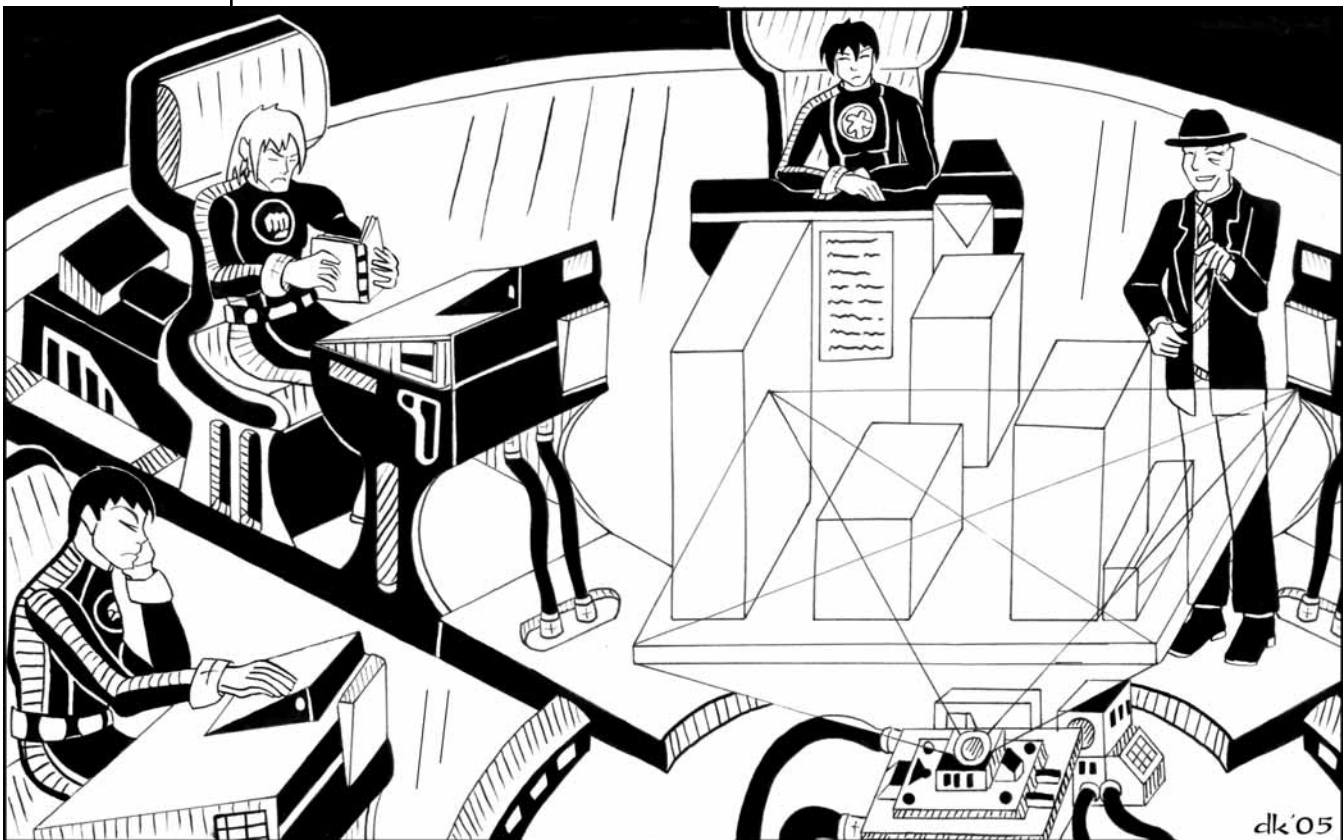
**Other Species Cultures:** This weekend survey class invites guest lecturers to give presentations on cultures other than known ones. This includes Prince Marus speaking about Atlantis and Ironclad discussing the Perseid Empire.

**Secret History I and II:** This class is a survey of the secret history of the Earth taught by Doctors Hildreth and Post. It's one of the students' favorite classes, despite the fact that most of them leave the class more confused than before. Secret History I covers the period from the Primeval Age to the Age of Legends; Secret History II from the Age of Legends to modern times.

**Secret Identity:** A mandatory weekend class taught by Ms. Platz that teaches the dos and don'ts of maintaining a secret identity. They also compare/contrast public identities with secret ones, and participate in "crisis" situations wherein they learn what to do if their identity is exposed.

**Superhumans And American Culture:** This one-semester course taught by Ms. Platz covers how the American public and society interacts with superheroes. It covers everything from the "glitter fad" started by Siren, to the Portland riots touched off by the arrest of the Gull, to Sapphire's unusual career.

**Non-Native Environment Series:** This class taught by Mr. Gillicutty teaches students how to cope in Non-Native Environments. It starts with Aquatic Environments, then moves to Vacuum, and finally ends with more unusual hostile environments like high radiation and deep-sea depths.



# HOMEROOM ALPHA



## CHAIN LIGHTNING

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
6	PD	3		Total: 10 PD (4 rPD)
10	ED	8		Total: 14 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	4		
30	END	3		
30	STUN	4		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 85</b>

**Movement:** Running: 7"/14"

### Cost Powers END

33	<i>Ball Lightning:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½), Must Use At Full Strength (-½)	7
	<i>Martial Arts: Self-Defense Instruction</i>	
	<b>Maneuver</b> OCV DCV Notes	
4	Block +2 +2 Block, Abort	
4	Dodge — +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort	
5	Kick -2 +1 8d6 Strike	
4	Punch +0 +2 6d6 Strike	
3	Throw +0 +1 4d6 + v/5; Target Falls	
4	+1 Damage Class (already added in)	
8	<i>Ravenswood Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0
15	<i>Image Inducer:</i> Shape Shift (Sight Group; one shape), Instant Change, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (+½); IAF (-½)[1cc]	
13	<i>School Pin:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any 16 minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)	0
2	<i>Fast:</i> Running +1" (7" total)	1

### Skills

3	+1 with Martial Arts
3	Acrobatics 13-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Climbing 13-
3	Concealment 13-
2	KS: Sports 11-
3	Stealth 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 115**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Crackles With Electricity When Stressed (Easily Concealed; Causes Major Reaction)
10	DNPC: Girlfriend Of The Month 8- (Unaware of character's Social Limitation: Secret Identity)
20	Hunted: Ravenswood Staff 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Mildly Punish)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code Against Killing (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Reckless (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: Professional (with Trad-Stus on athletic teams)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Theodore "Teddy" Jolsen) (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** Alex Jolsen was a mining engineer for Transglobe Excavations, a subsidiary of ACI. The month after his wife left him, abandoning both her husband and her ten-year-old son Teddy, his company assigned him to a site in Peru to open a new copper mine. Left with no other choice, he took Teddy with him to South America.

In Peru, Alex soon found out the site of the mine was sacred to the Incas, whose descendants wanted it left alone. After he and the company brushed off their protests, the locals kidnapped Teddy and demanded that all mining operations cease in exchange for the boy's safe return. They refused all counteroffers, and Alex soon grew desperate. When Transglobe refused to negotiate further, Alex secretly contacted the terrorists and agreed to sabotage the mine if they'd return Teddy.

They agreed, and said they'd meet him at the mine that night to complete the job and the exchange. Unfortunately for Alex, ACI knew he was a weak link and had no intention of letting him hinder corporate operations. Mercenaries hired by Franklin Stone, ACI's ruthless owner, to watch Alex killed him when they figured out what he was doing, then went after the kidnapers.

The kidnapers, realizing what had happened, cut Teddy Jolsen loose and told him to run — they had no interest in murdering the helpless boy, but didn't think they had much of a chance of saving him. Teddy ran deep into the tunnels until he finally came to a dead end. Then he shoved himself

as far back into a hole as he could... until the wall behind him crumbled away and he tumbled into strange vaulted cavern filled with copper *objets d'art* that gleamed in the strange electric-blue light radiating from the fungus on the walls and floor. Teddy didn't stop to wonder at his discovery; he scur-

## “REMEMBER, CLASS — TEST TOMORROW”

**The MCPD Blues:** The MCPD Blues is a series of exams for the course sequence Superheroes, Law Enforcement, and the Law. The class teaches students about the justice system, law enforcement, and how best to guarantee a guilty verdict. In these scenarios the students are stripped of their superpowers and “roleplay” police officers on duty in Millennium City. They take the roles of uniformed officers, detectives, and in the fourth year sequence attorneys trying the case. They must stop supervillain crime, practice crowd control during super-powered battles, and do detective work into supervillainous activity without recourse to their powers. The main goal of the exams is to provide the students with a better understanding of what it's like to be a member of traditional law enforcement.

**We Come In Peace:** The final exam for the lecture series Other Species Cultures, We Come In Peace involves the students being thrown into a tense situation involving an alien species they know nothing about. The situation ranges from being caught at the outbreak of intergalactic war, to a planet's star just hours from going supernova, to being revered as gods by a primitive species being wiped out by a plague. Most students hate this scenario mainly because there's never a right or wrong answer; instead a lengthy “debriefing” session follows the scenario's conclusion and each student is required to justify the decisions the group made.

**Help, Mr. Wizard!** This series of exams is for Secret History I and II. The students are placed in the past and future and tested on their understanding of the times and cultures. Environments range from the Valdorian Age (a time of flashing swords and dark sorcery) and the Atlantean Age (a golden era of high magic) to World War II, when American superheroes fought Nazi superpowered *ubermenschen*, to the far future when even the lowliest citizen possesses technology that would make him a superhero in the modern day. Doctors Hildreth and Post program the scenarios, and their memories of those places and times are something less than consistent — a situation only made worse because of the many alternate dimensions they visited while lost in time.

**Game Night:** Like cadets at a military academy, the students study famous past battles between superheroes and villains — Mechanon's first appearance, the Class of '92's infiltration of Dr. Destroyer's base, the “Martian” invasion of 1938, and so on. Game Night is a series of pop quizzes where Rowan programs one of these battles into the Testing Room, and the students take the role of the superheroes. Rowan doesn't give the students any advanced warning about what they'll face, but if the students have been paying attention, they should quickly recognize the scenario for what it is and what they must do. If they haven't, the scenario usually ends badly for them. And on one or two famous occasions, the students have done better than the original superheroes (at least, in the minds of the students).

ried into the cavern and hid behind a flat piece of embossed metal that hung from one wall. It showed a scary-looking god clutching a club in one fist and a bundle of lightning bolts in the other.

Eventually the hired guns came looking for Teddy. They found him and dragged him out to the middle of the floor, ignoring the small shrine and altar stained with blood. They had no interest in the god the room was dedicated to; they only wanted to finish their job.

When they raised their guns to murder Teddy, the room exploded with angry bolts of lightning. The gunmen had committed a great sin in failing to honor the god, and the crackling electricity was their punishment. It scorched their flesh to ash and charred their bones until they cracked open and fell to the floor in splinters. And it left alive a frightened little boy.

Teddy doesn't remember what happened next. Somehow he left the place, exited the mines, and found help. He didn't leave the chamber unchanged, however. Some residue of the power of Catequil, the lord of thunder and lightning, lingered on in him, or perhaps the exposure to such great magic awakened some latent mystical talent in the boy. Once back in the States, Teddy was passed from family member to family member, all of whom were unnerved by his seemingly uncontrollable outbursts of electricity. Finally one of them, an aunt who lived in Millennium City, took him to the local PRIMUS office. They referred her to Ravenswood.

**Personality/Motivation:** Chain Lightning is a brash young man whose reckless disregard for safety disguises a bitter sadness for abandoning his father in a Peruvian copper mine. Rowan has spent long hours in therapy with the young man, but he refuses to let go of his grief and still blames himself for his father's death. This, in turn, causes him to act recklessly and makes it harder for him to control his abilities. He has improved somewhat — the low wattage bursts of electricity that seemed so uncontrollable when he first arrived at the Academy, which stem from his emotional turmoil, have become less frequent — but his recklessness hasn't abated.

Around his friends and fellow members of Homeroom Alpha Chain Lightning never lets his sadness show. He's always on the go, always looking for something to do. He's something of a lady's man — attractive and seemingly upbeat, he's never hurting for a girlfriend, but he never sticks around for long either. He enjoys sports and resents the restriction Rowan places on super-students participating in athletics. Chain Lightning is confident he's the best basketball player in the school — despite only being 5'6” — and he tries to prove his superiority any time he gets a chance. Though he might not be all the athlete he thinks he is — Flicker is a far superior basketball player when all is said and done — he is physically talented.

**Quote:** “Here's the plan — I'm going to run up to this clown and let loose with a blast! If he's still standing after that, I'll do it again. OK, team — let's go!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Chain Lightning has the ability to unleash a powerful blast of electricity. The electricity fills a sphere with a 4” radius, shocking everyone in the area as bolts of lightning leap from one target to the next. He can’t unleash the blast at range, and he cannot decrease the radius of the blast. This means he has to move away from his teammates *and* get close to the bad guy, which often leaves him exposed to enemy attacks.

Despite three years of struggling to control his powers, he still can only let loose with a large blast centered on him — the exact same thing he could do when he first started at Ravenswood. The only improvement he’s made in using his powers is that he rarely catches any of his fellow members of Homeroom Alpha in the area of effect anymore. Putty has many, many stories about classmates downed by a careless blast of Ball Lightning, and Putty further claims that his body is still wobbly from all the blasts he took when he was a freshman, which is why he can’t control his powers better.

Homeroom Alpha’s current tactic with Chain Lightning is that the group takes cover behind some debris or other barrier. Impact throws Chain Lightning at the target, and as he passes by the target, Chain Lightning explodes with electricity. Then if he’s Knocked Out in the resulting counter-attack (which he usually is) or by colliding with some object, Putty stretches to grab him and pulls him back. Then they do it again once Chain Lightning has recovered. Mr. Biggs does not approve of the tactic, but Chain Lightning thinks it’s the most fun he’s had in the Testing Room in years. Chain Lightning is also a talented hand-to-hand combatant.

Chain Lightning has returned for his Senior year determined to learn to control his powers. The first task Mr. Biggs and Rowan have given him is to focus his electricity into his fists. They hope that by doing so this he can make his martial arts more effective against supervillains. Rowan has informed him in no uncertain terms that unless he learns to control his electrical problem, she isn’t sure there was a future as a superhero available to him. Her bluntness has shocked Chain Lightning out of his complacency, and after a summer with his grandparents he’s dead-set on learning to control his powers.

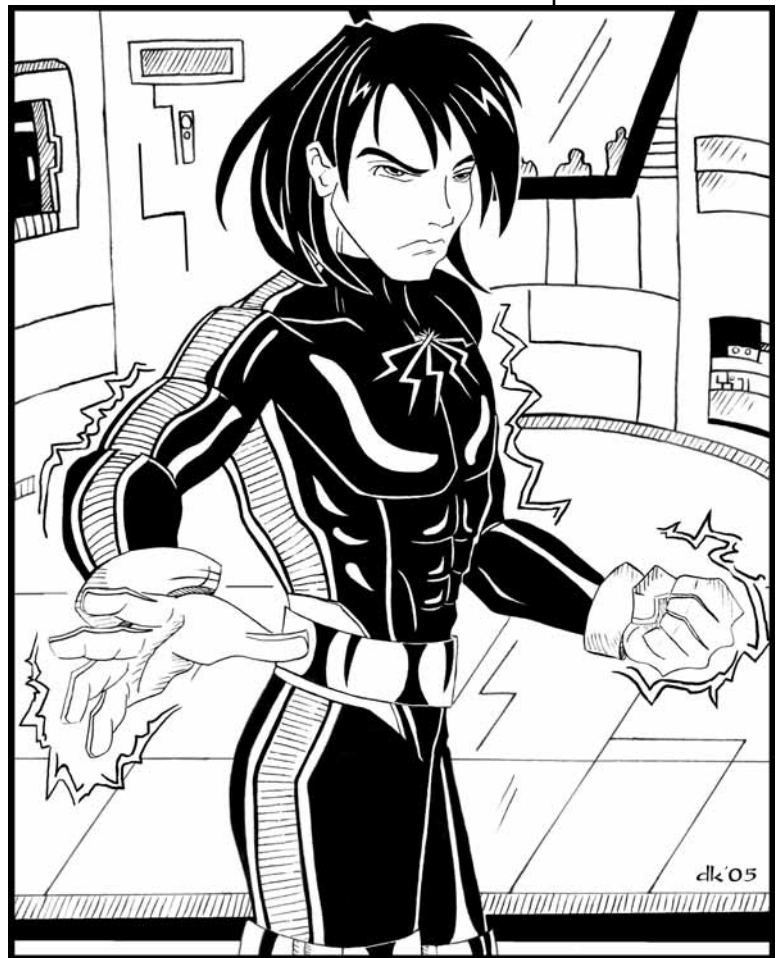
**Campaign Use:** Chain Lightning is Homeroom Alpha’s resident reckless hothead. When the rest of the team argues about some course of action, he’s the one who throws his hands up and charges into the mess full steam ahead, forcing everyone else to follow him. This recklessness carries over to all aspects of his life, not just combat — he’s the one who forces Impact to actually ask a girl out, gets Flicker to do something other than study, or rouses Trance from her lethargy. But his brashness also causes friction in the group; he and Impact or

Flicker have come to blows many times over something he did or said.

To make Chain Lightning more powerful, move Ball Lightning into a Multipower that also has slots for Energy Blasts with different *Area Of Effect* Advantages. Don’t, however, remove the Limitations from the *Ball Lightning* Power or give him an Energy Blast without the *Area Of Effect* Advantage, since this is basically Chain Lightning’s shtick. To make him less powerful, reduce the dice in Ball Lightning to 5d6 or even 4d6.

Chain Lightning is only likely to Hunt someone connected to the death of his father. He has put aside thoughts of revenge — but only because of Rowan’s frequent and careful therapy. Someday, he will be on his own, and it’s likely that he’ll reconsider the idea of vengeance.

**Appearance:** Chain Lightning is a short young man with a wild shock of black hair and piercing blue eyes. Well-built and muscular, he tends to fidget a lot and speak quickly. When he’s extremely agitated, his body crackles with electricity and little lightning bolts dance across his skin. The electricity gives him a luminescent glow and he looks decidedly creepy. The insignia on the chest of his costume is six crossed lightning bolts.



FLICKER				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 9
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 8 PD (4 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 8 ED (4 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
5	REC	0		
24	END	0		
32	STUN	7		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 85</b>
<b>Movement:</b>				
	Running:			8"/16"
	Leaping:			3½"/7"
	Teleportation:			20"/40"
<b>Cost Powers</b>				
20	<i>Flicker-Walking:</i>			Teleportation 20"; Must Always Make An Attack Roll To Hit The Target Hex (see text; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½) 8
<i>Martial Arts: Self-Defense Instruction</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	7½d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0	+2	5½d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	3½d6 + v/5; Target Falls
8	<i>Ravenswood Costume:</i>			Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½) 0
15	<i>Image Inducer:</i>			Shape Shift (Sight Group; one shape), Instant Change, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (+½); IAF (-½)[1cc] 0
13	<i>School Pin:</i>			Mind Link (specific group of up to any 16 minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½) 0
4	<i>Fast:</i>			Running +2" (8" total) 2
1	<i>Strong Leaper:</i>			Leaping +1" (3½" total) 1
<b>Skills</b>				
6				+2 with Martial Arts
3	Acrobatics	14-		
3	Breakfall	14-		
3	Climbing	14-		
3	Concealment	12-		
2	KS: Journalism	11-		
2	KS: History	11-		
2	KS: Literature	11-		
4	Language:			English (idiomatic; Cambodian is Native)
3	Stealth	14-		
3	Teamwork	14-		
<b>Total Powers &amp; Skills Cost: 115</b>				
<b>Total Cost: 200</b>				

**100+ Disadvantages**

20	Hunted: Ravenswood Staff 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Mildly Punish)
15	Hunted: The Widows Of The Night 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
10	Hunted: Sai (her sister) 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
20	Psychological Limitation: Denies Heritage And Powers (Common, Total)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Sophany "Sofie" Jefferson) (Frequently, Major)
10	Susceptibility: 2d6 damage from being Teleported (Uncommon)
5	Unluck 1d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** In 1971 during the Vietnam War, while a part of a long range recon patrol, Corporal William Jefferson and his unit crossed over into Cambodia. That night as they made camp, they were ambushed by the enemy. The survivors, Jefferson among them, had to retreat. All of them were sorely wounded, and none of them knew where they were going, or even what direction they fled in.

As the sun came up, the lost soldiers stumbled into a small collection of huts that stood in the shadow of a large stone temple. From out of the huts came women — unarmed and seemingly unafraid of the strange men. They took the soldiers into their homes and tended to their wounds. There seemed to be no men in the village; the recovering soldiers assumed the menfolk had died in the fighting. As the men recuperated, the women gave them milk of the poppy to ease their pain. The concoction glistened with a strange bluish-green color, but the soldiers took no notice. Soon they had forgotten not only their pain, but also their homeland.

A decade passed and then another, the years going by in the blink of an eye. The men and women lived together, married in a strange ceremony that the men couldn't recall no matter how hard they tried. They could only remember bonfires throwing greasy light on the stone idols within the temple, those huge figures with bestial faces and strange, tall crowns seeming to leer demonically as they looked on in hunger at the rites of marriage. With time, the women bore the men's children, and the village was filled with the sounds of play.

Jefferson wasn't the first man to break free of the opium-induced stupor, but he was the only one who escaped. It took almost two decades, but some of the men developed a tolerance to the milk and finally started taking notice of their surroundings. It quickly became clear the women served some malign deity. The men who spoke pidgin Cambodian translated the name of the cult: the Widows of the Night. Old Night, the women claimed, had died at the beginning of the new age, leaving his wives widowed, and these women were their descendants. They planned to bring back Old Night from the dead, and the soldiers' children were the key.

The soldiers knew they had a duty to save their offspring from the horrible rites of sacrifice, so they



organized an escape. What happened in that jungle Willie Jefferson would never tell, but he made his way into Vietnam with his two daughters, twelve-year-old Sok and eight-year-old Sophany; from there he returned to the United States. Jefferson didn't live long enough to see his home of Detroit, but his daughters completed the trip on their own. They barely remembered their life before coming to the States — their time with the Widows of the Night like some nightmare forgotten upon awakening — but their father had never stopped telling them to beware the Widows.

The two girls eked out a living, stealing what they needed from local shopkeepers and using their powers of teleportation to escape pursuit. Eventually the MCPD caught them, and their powers brought them to Rowan's attention. The headmistress at Ravenswood persuaded the authorities to release the girls into her custody so they could attend the Academy.

The oldest girl, Sok, was codenamed Sai. She never graduated, for she left the Academy after the tragedy involving Gloriana... but her sister was far more studious. Sophany, who prefers to be called Sofie and thinks of herself as an American, looks forward to graduation day and then going on to college, leaving the life of a superpowered teen behind.

**Personality/Motivation:** Flicker hates her powers. In her mind the only useful thing they've ever done for her is get her off the street and into the Ravenswood Academy. She very much wants to be a normal American girl. She works hard at school — because she barely spoke a word of English when she arrived, she's had to work harder than her classmates to succeed — and wants to be a journalist. Her grades are excellent, and considering all the catching up she's had to do, she's obviously a very talented student. Flicker spends much of her free time in the library, where she also works as a part of her scholarship, talks to Ms. Platz, and researches colleges.

Flicker resents anything that takes her away from her studies, including training in U-Hall, and cannot wait to graduate. But she rarely complains about training; she understands that she's entered into a "business arrangement" with Rowan. To attend the prestigious school, she must train with her powers, and because it's in her nature to be a perfectionist, she has improved over the last three years. While her classmates in Homeroom Alpha are often eager to sneak away from campus and do a little superheroing, Flicker often refuses — at least at first. Flicker has a competitive streak the other students have learned to manipulate; they often "dare" her into coming with them.

Rowan feels a great deal of guilt about both sisters — one she drove off because of her neglect; the other she cannot convince to accept her superpowered heritage. Whenever Rowan meets with Flicker, she attempts to bring up her early childhood in Cambodia, but Flicker says the same thing each time: "I don't remember." Rowan has considered hypnosis, but also wonders if maybe it's better that the memories stayed buried. Of course,

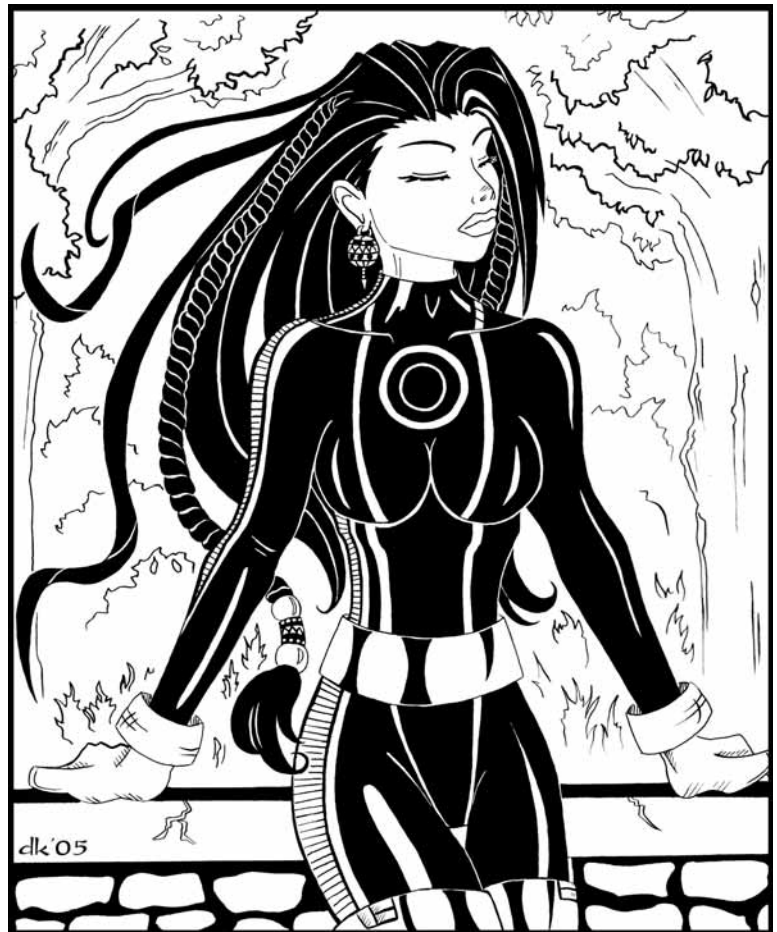
a sudden appearance by deranged cultists who belong to the Widows of the Night would quickly change her mind.

Flicker's relationship with her sister is strained, mainly because Sai wants to reclaim a part of her Cambodian heritage and learn as much as she can about their father, while Flicker simply wants to leave the past in the past and get on with her future.

**Quote:** "Didn't you hear me? I said, No! I don't care who's attacking Millennium City — I need to finish this report!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Flicker isn't half the teleporter and martial artist her sister Sai is — a fact that couldn't make Flicker happier. She's improved with her powers, increasing the distance she can teleport and the likelihood she arrives in the correct spot, but she's still far from perfect. Unlike most teleporters, she must always make an Attack Roll to hit the target hex, even if she can perceive it clearly. (However, at the GM's option, as long as she can perceive the target hex with a Targeting Sense, she cannot teleport herself into a solid object even if she fails the Attack Roll — as far as her instructors can determine, she subconsciously protects herself from that happening.)

Besides being able to teleport, Flicker is a talented martial artist. She tends to use short teleport jaunts to confuse her foe, then hits him on the Segments she has a Phase and he doesn't because of her high SPD.



**Campaign Use:** Sofie is the studious and responsible member of Homeroom Alpha, the one who reminds the others they're students first and superheroes second (if at all). Though Impact is a serious young man and a good student, he would still rather be out superheroing than studying; whereas Sofie would much rather study. The only person Sofie would hunt is someone who hurt her sister — despite their strained relations, blood is blood — or someone who could get her into the best journalism school.

To make Flicker more powerful, give her powers similar to her sister and add Damage Classes to her Martial Arts. To make her less powerful, reduce the number of inches she can Teleport.

**Appearance:** Standing 5'3" tall, Flicker is an attractive half-Asian, half-black girl with deep brown eyes, a serious face, and long black hair. Slender, with a gymnast's build, she tends to wear the latest in American styles when not wearing her school uniform. When training she wears her hair in a ponytail. The insignia on her costume is a white ring around a black circle.

## "REMEMBER, CLASS — TEST TOMORROW"

**Superhero Crib:** In Superhero Operation Centers, an extracurricular series of seminars for upperclassmen, the participants work together (or more often fight it out) to build a superhero base and then staff it, selecting the staff from a group of pregenerated "applicants." Once the students have made their choices, the Testing Room then produces a hologram of the base, and over the course of the semester, the students must deal with crises that arise because of their decisions. These include housing refugees who lost their homes during a titanic supervillain crisis, to dealing with interpersonal conflict between staff members, to an AI gone rogue (PLATO's favorite crisis, since he gets to roleplay the part of the rogue AI). The final test is a supervillain assault on the base.

**My Enemy, My Self:** Like Game Night, Rowan uses this scenario as a pop quiz. It involves the students fighting doubles of themselves — but not just exact doubles. Rowan always has in mind ways and directions for a student to develop his powers, and as an object lesson, she programs the Testing Room to give the doubles these potential powers. That way the student can see — and often times, feel — first-hand what Rowan has described to him. The students hate it — in their minds, it's like Rowan's telling them, "I told you so" — and nothing makes a student happier than easily defeating his double. To him, it's proof he's doing just fine with his powers.

### IMPACT

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
12	INT	2	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
10	PD	5		Total: 14 PD (4 rPD)
10	ED	6		Total: 14 ED (4 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
9	REC	0		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	12		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 96</b>

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

### Cost Powers END

25	<i>Kinetic Absorption:</i> Absorption 5d6 (physical, to STR)	0
10	<i>Kinetic Absorption:</i> Armor (14 PD); Linked (-½), Only Up To Amount Rolled By Absorption (-½)	0
	<i>Martial Arts: Self-Defense Instruction</i>	
	<b>Maneuver</b> OCV DCV Notes	
4	Block +2 +2 Block, Abort	
4	Dodge — +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort	
5	Kick -2 +1 9d6 Strike	
4	Punch +0 +2 7d6 Strike	
3	Throw +0 +1 5d6 + v/5; Target Falls	
8	<i>Ravenswood Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0
15	<i>Image Inducer:</i> Shape Shift (Sight Group; one shape), Instant Change, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (+½); IAF (-½)[1cc]	
13	<i>School Pin:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any 16 minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)	0

### Skills

3	Criminology 11-
2	KS: Superhuman World 11-
2	KS: US Government 11-
3	Tactics 11-
3	Teamwork 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 104**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

20	Hunted: Ravenswood Staff 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Mildly Punish)
20	Hunted: VIPER 8- (MoPow, NCI, Harshly Punish)
15	Psychological Limitation: Sense Of Responsibility (Common, Strong)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)

- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Robert Ashton) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Electrical Attacks (Common)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** “Honey, the doctor at the Nest says this new medicine is the perfect thing to cure all the pains from pregnancy.”

“You mean Dr. Venom says that?”

“That’s just a codename, Hon — he’s a nice old man. You’d like him if you ever came down to the Nest.”

“I don’t know if taking that medicine is a good idea...”

But in the end, after a few days of wheedling, Sally Ashton took the medicine Dr. Venom prescribed... and to his credit, it did ease her pain. Several months later she gave birth to a healthy baby boy, whom she and her husband named Robert. The years passed, and her husband climbed the ranks of VIPER, eventually becoming a Nest Leader himself. Then a group of superheroes uncovered his Nest — and Daniel Ashton found himself sentenced to forty years behind bars. But worse yet, at least as far as VIPER’s leadership was concerned, his wife disappeared with their son.

The medicine prescribed to Sally Ashton during her pregnancy was a new drug named Nutant. It was intended to increase the likelihood of mutation in the child, thus bringing into existence a generation of mutant children — the sons and daughters of VIPER agents who would grow up in the ranks, where they would learn absolute loyalty to the criminal organization and have superpowers at their command. VIPER devoted a considerable amount of resources to tracking the mothers who took Nutant, and for one to fall off the map was unacceptable. VIPER began a nationwide manhunt for the woman and her son, and eventually tracked them to Millennium City. Once it found them, VIPER launched an attack to capture them. What they didn’t count on was the Ravenswood Class of ’04 being in the mall at the same time.

It was during the VIPER attack that Robert Ashton first discovered his powers — he had always been strong, but never so strong as on that day when he was caught in a hail of rubber bullets intended to subdue him. With his strength awakened to superhuman levels, he fought beside the Ravenswood students, and together they drove off the VIPER agents. Then his mother revealed the awful truth — Robert’s father was a high-ranking member of VIPER.

The Ravenswood students helped hide mother and son; then they returned to the Academy and told Rowan what had happened. Rowan invited Robert to attend the Academy, where he’d be hidden from VIPER, protected by a staff of superhumans, and taught to use his newfound powers responsibly. He accepted, and his mother entered the Witness Protection Program after turning state’s evidence.

**Personality/Motivation:** Impact has become the shining light of his class. He has the best grasp of his powers and has displayed a natural leadership ability. While he could be a better student, none of his instructors could ask for a better superhero. He has a deep sense of obligation and moral responsibility toward his fellow man — in a large part, because of his father’s criminal past — and he walks the straight and narrow at all times, only breaking the rules when he feels it’s necessary for the greater good.

Rowan sometimes worries about the deep streak of shame Impact feels toward his father. She knows he needs to start living life for himself, not because of the sins of others, and frequently encourages him to pursue his own dreams. Worse yet, at least in Rowan’s eyes, is that Impact is estranged from his mother. In many ways he blames her for staying with a man she knew was a criminal and thinks she’s just as guilty of wrongdoing as his incarcerated father. Impact hopes to join PRIMUS or UNTIL once he graduates college, but knows his father’s past as a VIPER agent makes him a security risk and jeopardizes his chances. He’s currently trying to decide between a career in the military or one in law enforcement, and is leaning toward the latter.

Impact is shy around girls he has a crush on, mainly because he’s ashamed of his past and doesn’t feel worthy of them, and it usually takes a swift kick in the behind from Chain Lightning to get him to approach a girl. He’s nurturing a crush on Flicker



dlk'05

— one he’s hidden well for the last year — and dreads Chain Lightning ever finding out. He knows the crush is hopeless; he definitely plans on having some sort of career as a superhero, and she wants nothing to do with the lifestyle.

**Quote:** “OK, team... here’s the plan...”

**Powers/Tactics:** Impact has the ability to absorb kinetic damage, which in turn increases his strength. Although at maximum absorption his STR is slightly less than most bricks, his Martial Arts make up for the difference. They also help him in the initial moments of combat before he’s had a chance to absorb any kinetic damage. Mr. Biggs plans to spend Impact’s senior year teaching him a variety of brick tricks the instructor picked up in his years as a superhero. Rowan also wants Impact to focus on holding onto the STR boost he gains for longer times (in game terms, decreasing his fade rate). That way he doesn’t have to throw himself into the thick of things, taking the risk of being Knocked Out, to achieve his maximum STR.

For some reason, Impact suffers intense pain when subjected to electrical attacks — a fact that has more than once spelled doom for Homeroom Alpha in the Testing Room when Chain Lightning misjudged the area of his blast.

**Campaign Use:** Impact is the *de facto* leader of Homeroom Alpha. Although Flicker and Chain Lightning often question his decisions, both follow his commands more often than not. He makes a good leader, but sometimes doesn’t give his orders forcefully enough or hesitates before issuing a command — again, his shame about his past rearing its ugly head. Impact would drop everything to Hunt his father if Daniel Ashton escaped from prison; he might also Hunt anyone related to VIPER in an attempt to prove his worth.

To make Impact more powerful, increase his STR to 35 so he’s more useful at the beginning of combat. Then give him a variety of Brick Tricks like those listed on pages 49-74 of *The Ultimate Brick* to make him more versatile in combat. To make him less powerful, reduce the amount of his Armor Linked to his Absorption and remove his Martial Arts.

**Appearance:** Impact stands 6’4” and weighs two hundred pounds, all of it muscle. He has wavy blond hair and blue eyes. His brow is often furrowed with concentration and his face is serious, but he has a deep belly laugh when he’s amused by something. All in all, Impact’s a very likeable young man when he’s not trying too hard to be the perfect super-student. The insignia on the chest of his costume is a stylized clenched fist.

## PUTTY

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
12	STR	2	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
14	CON	8	12-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
12	PRE	2	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	6		Total: 12 PD (4 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 10 ED (4 rED)
3	SPD	2		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
34	END	3		
30	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 61</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”

## Cost Powers END

28	<i>Malleable Body And Face:</i>	Multipower, 42-point reserve; all slots Imitation Only (-½)	
2u	1) <i>Malleable Body:</i>	Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Radio, Smell/Taste, and Touch Groups, any humanoid form), Imitation; Activation Roll 15-, Jammed (-¾), Imitation Only (-½), Side Effect (character’s features become droopy and rubbery if he fails his Activation Roll; -¼)	4
2u	2) <i>Malleable Face:</i>	Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Radio, Smell/Taste, and Touch Groups, any humanoid face), Imitation; Face Only (-1), Imitation Only (-½)	4
16	<i>Stretching:</i>	Stretching 4”; Limited Body Parts (arms and legs only; -¼)	2
16	<i>Rubbery Body:</i>	Physical Damage Reduction 75%; Cost Endurance (-½), Activation Roll 15-, Jammed (-¾), Side Effect (character’s features become droopy and rubbery if he fails his Activation Roll; -¼)	4
8	<i>Ravenswood Costume:</i>	Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0
15	<i>Image Inducer:</i>	Shape Shift (Sight Group; one shape), Instant Change, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (+½); IAF (-½)[1cc]	
13	<i>School Pin:</i>	Mind Link (specific group of up to any 16 minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)	0

## Skills

4	+2 OCV with Punch
10	+2 DCV
5	Breakfall 14-
7	Disguise 13-
3	KS: Television Shows 11-
5	Persuasion 12-
5	Sleight Of Hand 14-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 139**

**Total Cost: 200**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Accidental Change: when character is frightened or panicked 11- (normal face becomes freakishly ugly face) (Common)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 15 Hunted: Ravenswood Staff (As Pow, 11-, NCI, Mildly Punish)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (James Puttermeyer) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Unluck 2d6
- 10 Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Cold Attacks (Common)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** Ellen, his six-year-old sister, came stomping out of the kitchen, a look of determination on her face. Speaking in no uncertain terms, she informed him, “If you don’t stop making faces at me, Ma says your face will freeze like that!”

James Puttermeyer, whom everyone called Putty, rolled his eyes. He looked to the left, then to the right, and then he made the worst face he could possibly imagine.

But when Ellen started screaming, he was shocked — she sounded really, really scared. Ellen ran off into the kitchen, looking back over her shoulder as if the boogeyman were after her, and Putty wasn’t sure what was going on. When Mom came out of the kitchen and started screaming too, Putty rushed away from the dinner table to a hallway mirror. The image reflected in the mirror was indeed a horrible sight.

His face looked like some kind of carnival mask with a two-foot-long nose and sharp chin. His lips were blubbery and turned outward; his eyes bulged impossibly from their sockets. Putty tried to push his face back into shape, but it wouldn’t move. It felt just like his normal face, except now it was freakishly deformed.

He started crying.

Once his mother regained her senses, she comforted her son and called the family doctor. The doctor referred her to Dr. Andrea Gould, a specialist in mutants, and Dr. Gould referred her son’s case to Dr. Kristina Pelvanen, the headmistress at the Ravenswood Academy. Though Mrs. Puttermeyer didn’t understand how a headmistress at an exclusive private school could help her, she didn’t ask any questions — her son needed to fix his face and that was all she cared about.

After some study, Dr. Pelvanen confirmed that James Puttermeyer was a mutant and further impressed Mr. and Mrs. Puttermeyer by giving their son back his normal face after an hour-long session of work. She invited them to send their son to her Academy so he could learn how to control his powers, and they quickly took her up on the offer.

**Personality/Motivation:** James Puttermeyer is an easy-going young man — in the opinion of some of his teachers, perhaps too easy-going. He doesn’t work hard enough at either his classwork or his training, and has a tendency to get in trouble because he simply follows other kids around, never stopping to make his own decision about something. That said, he’s friendly and likeable; even serious teachers like Mr. Randall and Mr. Gillicutty have cracked a smile or two at his jokes.

Rowan has decided that it’s time for Putty to figure out what he’s going to do with the rest of his life, and her main focus for his senior year is not increasing his control over his powers, but getting him on some path — any path — for the future. His control over his powers is good enough to get by in the world outside Ravenswood (although she’s disappointed that he hasn’t developed more uses for them), and at this point in his life, it’s far more important that Putty make a decision about his future.

Though Rowan hasn’t realized it yet, and would be surprised to learn it, Putty is also concerned about his future. His father, a construction worker, has offered to get him on with the union after he graduates, but Putty isn’t sure finishing cement while hanging from the side of a skyscraper is for him. He jokes that if he was going to hang out three hundred feet above the sidewalk for the rest of his life, he would’ve spent more time practicing his superbball pose. This anxiety about what he’s



going to do after graduating has cast a dark cloud over Putty's normally cheerful personality.

Putty does have one idea about what he might do after Ravenswood, and that's go into the entertainment industry. With his malleable face and general good nature, he thinks he might have a future in stand-up comedy and maybe even Hollywood — after all, he tells himself, look at Jim Carrey. He *knows* Rowan wouldn't approve — she's training superheroes and upstanding citizens who contribute to the community, not comedians — so he hasn't said anything. But he has sent an e-mail to a Hollywood talent agency who's expressed an interest in meeting with him....

**Quote:** “C’mon, Impact — stop giving me a hard time. That was Dr. Destroyer in the Testing Room. What did you want me to do? Imitate that mighty

## “REMEMBER, CLASS — TEST TOMORROW”

**Pimp My Super-Ride:** A second extracurricular lecture series, similar to Superhero Operation Centers, is Superhero Transportation. This is only an eight-week series, and it involves creating a supervehicle and testing it in battle and other hostile conditions. It starts with ground-based vehicles and then moves on to watercraft, atmospheric flight, and finally starships. Two weeks are dedicated to each type of vehicle — one week for initial design and testing, the second week to improve the initial design and test it again. Students learn not only how to design a vehicle (roughly speaking — it's not advanced engineering), but how to pilot/drive various types of vehicles and deal with a variety of environments. With only two weeks devoted to each type of vehicle, the survey is short, and PLATO provides considerable assistance with much of the actual driving or piloting, so most students don't have time to master all the ins and outs of handling the various types of vehicles, but a few students do gain considerable skill. In game terms, Pimp My Super-Ride doesn't automatically give a student Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Mechanics, and the various TFs — the seminars just give him a general knowledge about how the vehicles work and how to operate them — but after completing the course, a player can choose to purchase those Skills for his PC if he wishes. Although Superhero Cribs has a reputation for being a bit dull — mostly because of the scenarios dealing with what are essentially interoffice politics — few students pass up a chance to take Pimp My Super-Ride. Driver's Education is a prerequisite for this lecture series.

**The Damocles Scenario:** The final exam a student takes is the Damocles Scenario. No graduate will say anything about the scenario except that it's impossible to win. The scenario is entirely voluntary, although peer pressure is high to participate and most students are intensely curious about Damocles after four years of hearing about it. The Damocles Scenario can not only be humbling, but emotional traumatic, and Rowan has been known to forbid some students from participating. Rumor has it that only Night Marshall II (Class of '94; see page 49) has won the scenario. Whenever a student mentions this, however, Rowan shakes her head and rolls her eyes.

fine helmet he wears? Ooohhh yeah... that would have definitely won the scenario.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Putty has attended Ravenswood for the last three years, and his progress with developing his powers has been so-so — as have his grades. His instructors are certain he should be able to assume myriad shapes, not just imitate others. He has learned how to stretch his limbs slightly, but he should be able to do far more. He still has difficulty controlling his facial expressions, and if frightened or panicked he loses control of his features, taking on a caricature of a horrified expression. He also loses complete control of his skin's rigidity if he fails to activate his Malleable Body or Rubbery Body abilities. If this happens, he can't use that power for the rest of the adventure, and his skin sags from the bones in loose rubbery flaps, usually returning to normal overnight. Using his *Malleable Face* power he can temporarily fix his face, but the rest of his body remains rubbery.

In combat Putty is something less than useful — even after three years of martial arts instruction, he's only developed an accurate right hook (+2 OCV with Punch) and a pretty good bob-and-weave (+2 DCV) — but because of his Damage Reduction and high PD, he makes a good target or distraction, and with his Stretching he can often be effective against minions and goons.

**Campaign Use:** Putty is the jokester in Homeroom Alpha — a much needed source of comic relief in a group of very serious young adults — and in many ways he helps keep the other members from being constantly at each others' throats. He tends to see fights starting before they happen, and always acts to defuse the situation, either by changing the subject or trying to lighten the mood with a funny face. He's willing to try anything — another endearing quality among his fellow students — but his willingness to go with the flow sometimes gets him in trouble. Putty is an unlikely Hunter; he lacks the drive to pursue a person to the ends of the Earth.

To make Putty more powerful, remove the *Imitation Only* Limitation from his Shape Shift Multipower, and/or give him more inches of Stretching and some dice of Hand-To-Hand Attack. To make him less powerful, remove his Stretching entirely and take away his Combat Skill Levels.

**Appearance:** At 6'2" and 150 pounds, Putty is tall and very thin. He has brown eyes and brown hair with a cowlick at the crown of his head that he can't keep down — he sometimes claims the cowlick is a side effect of his superpowers. He wears his hair in a mullet, the back nearly reaching his shoulders. For the last three years, he's claimed that the mullet is on its way back in style. Just a matter of time, he claims, and he actively encourages his friends, both boys and girls, to grow their own mullet. Putty has a long, narrow nose and a narrow face, and his wide mouth is always smiling. The insignia he wears on the chest of his costume is an amorphous blob.

TRANCE				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
22	EGO	24	14-	ECV: 7
8	PRE	-2	11-	PRE Attack: 1½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 8 PD (4 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 8 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	4		
24	END	2		
24	STUN	4		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 71</b>

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

15	<i>Mental Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 30-point powers	
17	1) <i>Sleep Induction:</i> Ego Attack 4d6; Concentration (0 DCV; -½)	4
6	2) <i>Waking Dreams:</i> Mental Illusions 6d6; Activation Roll 14- (-½), Concentration (0 DCV; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½)	10
10	3) <i>Empathy:</i> Telepathy 6d6; Empathy (-½)	3
7	<i>Mental Acuity:</i> +1 SPD; Only With Mental Powers (-½)	0
11	<i>Mental Defense:</i> Mental Defense (15 points total)	0
8	<i>Ravenswood Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0
15	<i>Image Inducer:</i> Shape Shift (Sight Group; one shape), Instant Change, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (+½); IAF (-½)[1cc]	
13	<i>School Pin:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any 16 minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)	0

**Skills**

13	<i>Mental Blurring:</i> +4 DCV ; Costs Endurance (-½)	2
5	Computer Programing 13-	
4	SS: Mathematics 13-	
2	SS: Physics 11-	
3	Systems Operation 12-	

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 129**

**Total Cost: 200**

**100+ Disadvantages**

10	Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
15	Hunted: Ravenswood Staff (As Pow, 11-, NCI, Mildly Punish)
15	Psychological Limitation: Shy And Withdrawn (suffers a -2 penalty on most Interaction Skill rolls) (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Afraid Of The Dark (Common, Moderate)

20	Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Lisa Bauer) (Frequently, Major)
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x Effect from Mind Control (Common)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** Trance is a mutant with mental powers who came into a small part of her heritage at a very early age — she developed empathy while still in the crib. But she had no control over it, and since she had six older siblings, the hustle and bustle of her crowded house flooded her with frantic emotions, forcing her to retreat into a mental shell that retarded her development.

As she grew older, she found herself placed in special program after special program, and interviewed time and again by the school district's psychologist. Nothing seemed to help, and eventually her parents resigned themselves to the fact that their youngest daughter was a little slow. But Trance's grandmother, a wealthy woman, would have none of that. After some research, she arranged an interview with the headmistress at the new Ravenswood Academy. Trance was only six years old when she first met Rowan, but she seemed to open up to the older woman in a way that she hadn't for other psychologists and teachers. After several interviews, Rowan ascertained the source



of the problem and informed her parents that their daughter was telepathic. The parents were skeptical at first, but Rowan finally convinced them. For the next year Rowan worked with the little girl and eventually taught her to have some control over her empathy. When Trance finished middle school, Rowan approached her about attending Ravenswood, and she agreed.

The first two years of Trance's education were a frustrating time for Rowan and the instructors. The girl made little progress, and Rowan couldn't help but notice that while all diagnostics and analysis indicated Trance possessed deep reserves of mental might, she had barely scratched the surface of her powers. Rowan feared that the conditions of her early childhood, combined with Rowan's year of instruction, has served to impede Trance's capacity for coming into the full flower of her abilities. But junior year was a breakthrough time for her, and Rowan has high hopes for the coming term.

**Personality/Motivation:** Trance is a shy and withdrawn girl, although three years of being around her fellow students in Homeroom Alpha has made her more comfortable with people. Trance prefers to spend her time online; Chain Lightning often has to remove her bodily form in front of a computer to get her to go anywhere. Thanks to last year's marked improvement, Trance possesses a burgeoning confidence that Rowan hopes to nurture. But the past is not so easily left behind — Trance remains incredibly uncomfortable around strangers and even afraid of the dark, requiring a nightlight to get to sleep. She rarely speaks, instead answering questions with a smile or a nod.

Trance enjoys computers and mathematics, and wants to go to college to study one or the other. She can't even imagine being a superhero and smiles sheepishly whenever someone mentions the possibility. However, she's changed so much since her freshman and sophomore years — back then, she would rarely even look up — that Rowan still maintains a slight hope that Trance will take up the mantle of a crimefighter. But Rowan doesn't let herself forget that there's a lot of work to be done before that happens. First and foremost, Rowan thinks the girl needs to go on a date, something she's never done, and wonders if maybe she shouldn't arrange some training sessions with Slumber from Homeroom Beta.

**Quote:** “Ummmm.... maybe I can do that.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Trance is a mentalist with limited mental powers. When she first arrived at Ravenswood, she could read people's emotions and gently nudge people to sleep. Last year she learned to evoke dream images in a target and, more importantly, blur a target's perceptions of her so she's harder to hit in combat. Her *Mental Blurring* Power has made her less of a liability in combat, and now the rest of Homeroom Alpha doesn't have to worry as much about protecting her from attacks. In combat Trance hangs back (far back) and uses her *Sleep Induction* on a target engaged in hand-to-hand with one of her classmates. She hasn't gotten used to her *Waking Dreams* power yet, and still forgets to try it.

Rowan has several goals for Trance's senior year. First, she wants Trance to learn how to project emotions — if not read and send thoughts. Second, she wants Trance to expand her abilities to include multiple targets. Her *Mental Blurring* affects everyone in her Line Of Sight, and Rowan has taken this as proof the girl can affect multiple people with her other powers. Trance is less than convinced of this, but is willing to try. Mr. Biggs, on the other hand, has promised himself Trance will not under any circumstances graduate from Ravenswood until she learns how to throw a decent right hook.

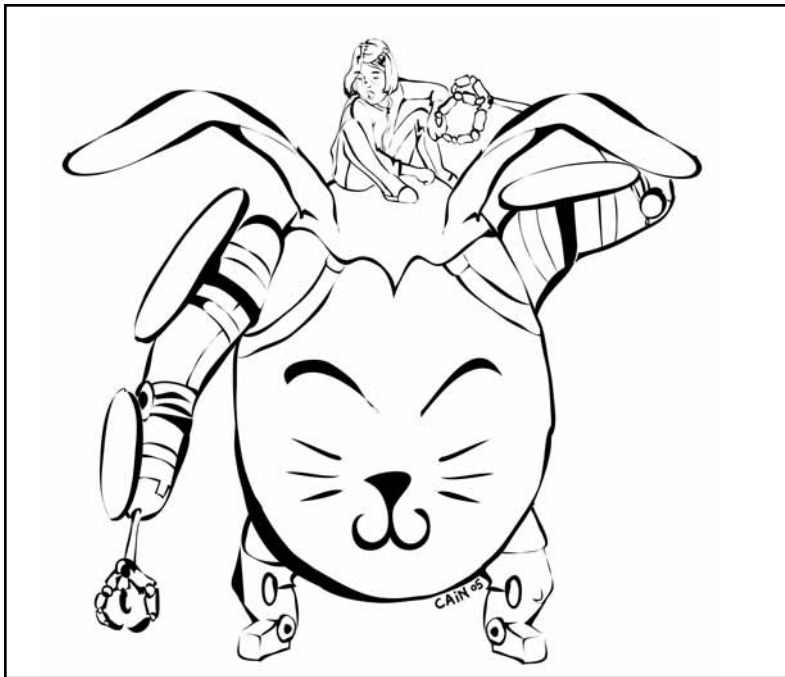
**Campaign Use:** Trance is the quiet member of Homeroom Alpha and serves as the team's technical expert. Her classmates often overlook her — not because they don't like her, but simply because she's so quiet — but they've gotten better about including her over the years. Trance is never a source of friction in the group and tries to do what's asked of her. Lately, though, she's spoken up on one or two occasions, much to everyone's surprise, and what she's had to say was surprisingly good advice. Trance wouldn't Hunt anyone.

To increase Trance's power, add more EC slots (including one for *Mind Control*), and give her some Combat Skill Levels with her powers. To decrease her power, remove her *Mental Blurring* and *Waking Dreams* powers.

**Appearance:** Trance is a tall, thin girl with big dark eyes, a round face, and a button nose. She keeps her bangs long and brushes them forward over her eyes, tying back the rest of her hair in a ponytail. She speaks incredibly softly; one has to lean forward to hear what she says. The insignia on her costume is a stylized eye.



# chapter three:



# GAMEMASTERING TEEN CHAMPIONS



# THE GM'S VAULT

## "SUMMER LOVIN', HAD ME A BLAST"

Since much of a Teen Champions campaign revolves around attending school, three months of summer vacation prevent interesting opportunities for a campaign. One possibility is that the teens can visit other cities, countries, and even realities for extended periods of time without having to worry about the responsibilities of being a student, and it can be a time when the PCs get a taste of what it's like to be an adult superhero. Another possibility is that the events of summer vacation happen off-stage — the PCs go their own ways for a couple months before coming back together at the start of the new school year. In this case, the players and GM should work together to decide what happened during the vacation. This is the perfect time to introduce new subplots into a campaign (elements that will play a part in the campaign's new "season," so to speak). Perhaps a PC found a new girlfriend, made new friends, or discovered more uses for his powers.

**T**his section contains additional and/or secret information about Ravenswood Academy that's for the GM's eyes alone. *If you're playing in, or plan to play in, a campaign based on the Ravenswood Academy setting, do not read this section!!*

The GM's Vault is organized by chapter and page number. If the Vault doesn't comment on some part of the main text, it's usually safe to take what's written there as accurate (or as left for each GM's individual interpretation). As always, you're free to change anything in this book to suit your own preferences or campaign.

## CAMPAIGN AND PLOT IDEAS

Chapter One contains many plot ideas and ways to get a campaign started. Here are some more ideas for *Teen Champions* games, and suggestions for bringing the trials and travails of teen life into a campaign with adult superheroes.

### WORLD WITHOUT GROWN-UPS

In this *Teen Champions* campaign, the teens exist in a world without grown-ups. Maybe it's an alternate Earth, where a biological weapon unleashed a virus that kills a person when he turns twenty (similar to the old *Star Trek* episode "Miri"), or maybe it's the alternate dimension of Youth-topia. The society of children might look like Never-Never Land from *Peter Pan*; or it might resemble *The Lord Of The Flies*.

On the one hand, teens don't have adults bossing them around, so they're free to do as they please; on the other hand, they can't look to adults for help, advice, or a stable environment. The players should emphasize their characters' inexperience — rationales for having adult knowledge like "But that's how adults do it" or "That's what my Dad said" should be rare or non-existent.

### THE TEN-YEAR REUNION

The PCs attend their high school's ten-year reunion. They become re-acquainted with both their friends from high school and their enemies. Typically they find themselves — amazingly enough — acting exactly like they did in high school, no matter how much they've changed and matured. Even though they're now all adults, each PC finds himself attracted to an old flame, cowering when abused by the bully, or stuttering in the presence of a girl he had a crush on. Is there something sinister going on... or is it just normal reunion jitters?

Of course, if reunions are bad for people without superpowers, imagine what they're like for superhumans. A PC might discover one of his old friends is now a supervillain, one of his ex-girlfriends is now a superhero, or learn other startling secrets about his former classmates.

Getting all the PCs to the reunion might require some finessing, since adult superheroes may not be the same age or have attended the same high school. Other PCs can go as dates in some cases, but if it requires a retcon or two to get the PCs in the same graduating class at the same high school, where's the harm?

The climax of such a scenario shouldn't be a fight with a supervillain — although, of course, there can be some sort of fight. The conclusion should instead be the PCs coming to grips with events from their teen years — maybe forgiving a bully, or thanking a teacher, or mending bridges with old friends.

### BACK TO ADOLESCENCE

In this adventure idea for adult superheroes, the PCs find themselves regressed to their teen years. Maybe they've been affected by Dr. Destroyer's de-aging ray, or perhaps they're the target of some spell. Whatever the case, a PC's adult mind inhabits a teen's body. This can mean they suffer from weaker powers (reduce their point total from 350 points to 200 points, or simply reduce all powers to 50% effectiveness), or it could just mean no one takes them seriously. The adventure should embroil the adults with situations and restrictions teens suffer through — policemen who think the PCs should be in school, shopkeepers who tell the PCs to leave because everyone knows that teens are troublemakers, and so on.

### BACK TO THE GOOD OL' DAYS

Similar to *Back To Adolescence*, this adventure involves adult PCs experiencing their adolescence for a second time — in this case, when their minds are shifted in time and sent back to their teenaged bodies (and their teen minds get shunted forward to their adult bodies). Given the opportunity to relive his childhood, what will a PC do? And what will the teens-in-adult-bodies versions of the PCs do when allowed to live as adults? Can the PCs count on having jobs when they get back to their rightful bodies? Will supervillains take advantage of the city's suddenly inexperienced defenders?

In this adventure, it's fun to have players act out both roles, teen and adult, and to have dual adventures going on at the same time. One session is dedicated to the adults in the bodies of teens, the

next to the teens in the bodies of adults, switching back and forth until everyone's mind returns to the correct body.

**TEENS WITH GODLIKE POWERS**

*Teen Champions*, for the most part, presents the teens as having less power than their adult counterparts, but this doesn't have to be the case. In this campaign, the teens have far greater powers... and this makes the adult world uneasy, because the teens are a threat to the very status quo. Authority ultimately derives from the ability to force a person to obey — but who can make a powerful teen superhuman do anything? The PCs in the group are just as powerful as the adult superheroes — if not more powerful — and they're certainly more powerful than traditional law enforcement. Furthermore, the threat posed by such great powers in inexperienced hands make adults even more concerned, so adult superheroes are unlikely to overlook youthful indiscretions.

How does the teen deal with having godlike powers? Most teens worry about whether they can borrow the car for the weekend, or whether the girl they have a crush on will agree to go on a date, but this teen has the power to change the world — should he do it? His inexperience hampers him, but it can also threaten the entire world when combined with youthful zeal and idealism.

And don't forget — just because a teen possesses great powers doesn't mean he can control those powers....

**SHADES OF THINGS TO COME**

Teens are all about the future, and one common plot development is that the teens gain a

glimpse of their future, usually when a future version of a hero returns to the past to set right some wrong. A PC might learn he's destined to become a great hero, no matter how incompetent he seems as a teen; or he might learn he's destined to become a master villain regardless of what a goody-two-shoes he is now. Another feature of the glimpse of the future is that a teen superhero learns what he might be able to do with his powers, and this gives him a goal to work toward.

**CHAPTER TWO:  
RAVENSWOOD**

The text in Chapter Two assumes that the PCs are teen heroes who know the primary secrets of the Academy, or adult heroes with enough connections to the Academy or the Superhero World to find them out. For example, the true background of the gardner and his family is a secret the non-traditional students know and protect. Here are some secrets that *aren't* quite so public.

**PAGE 44 — THE DEATH OF SUNHEART**

Unknown to Rowan, the Examiner (*Galactic Champions*, pages 120-122) took an interest in young Sunheart (real name: Rick Ryder) and his plight as a living prison for the alien Srfish. The Examiner is one of the Galaxar, a group of beings of unknown origin who possess vast cosmic powers and dedicate their immortal existence to one field of study and research. The Examiner himself studies sentients, usually those of great will or power, by forcing them to face challenges and then observing how they react in the face of insurmountable obsta-



## ENDING THE CAMPAIGN

Unlike many campaigns, where the passing years are largely meaningless, each year of a Teen Champions campaign means something because the PCs move closer toward graduation and turning eighteen years old. After all, who wants to be a kid forever?

Typically in teen fiction the story ends at one of two places: the senior prom or the summer after graduation.

Ending at prom means all the subplots come to a conclusion during the dance, with those conflicts reaching a boil during the lead-up to the big dance. The PC either wins the heart of his secret crush or learns that the object of his crush isn't who he thought. The PCs either get revenge on the teachers and students who antagonized them throughout high school or they reconcile with their antagonists, both groups reaching a deeper understanding of each other.

Ending with summer after graduation has less to do with completing the subplots from four years of high school, and more to do with figuring out what to do with the future. It's about saying good-byes and so on, as the good students prepare to leave for college, the bad students drift about aimlessly or start working full time, and high school romances come to an end.

In a roleplaying campaign, a GM can use both. The senior prom becomes the time when the subplots from high school are reconciled (amidst a supervillain

cles, great emotional distress, impossible moral conundrums, or similar trying circumstances.

To put it in a way a teen can get behind, the Examiner is a teacher from hell. He appears out of nowhere, arriving wherever his studies take him and whenever he chooses, to give the most grueling “pop quizzes” a teen can imagine.

The Examiner has several reasons for studying Sunheart. The least important are Sunheart's unique condition and the very fact that he's a Terran. The Examiner has performed few tests of this new species that only recently — less than the blink of an eye for the immortal Space God — took its first hesitant steps out into space. The most important reason, is that the Examiner plans to use Sunheart to test another cosmic being, the Space God Tawose. Tawose is a conceptual being, immeasurably powerful, who's solely concerned with duality and balance. The Examiner is confident that given enough time, and by placing Sunheart at enough “crux points” in universal current events, he can attract Tawose's attention to the brave and noble young man with a dualistic nature. To study another Space God is a challenge The Examiner has never dared tried before, and he eagerly awaits Tawose's response. Of course, whether the Multiverse can survive this event is another matter entirely....

Sunheart didn't actually die in 1979 — the Examiner saved him, leaving behind evidence that made people think he was dead. Since then he's sent the hapless (and still, thanks to the Examiner's powers, teenaged) Sunheart careening across the Universe into conflict after conflict. Sunheart doesn't know what force controls him, but he's never stopped struggling with the Srfish and always endeavors to fight on the side of the angels.

### PAGE 46 — THE HAUNT OF RAVENS

The history of the Ravenswood and its association with children goes back farther than a century — all the way back to the golden age of Atlantis when the great Vondarrien was emperor of the world and peace reigned across all his domain. On this spot was the tower of Muulyr Ravenscloak, a great sorcerer known as a talented tutor of children in the arcane arts. Over 300 years, Muulyr instructed more than fifty sorcerers, taking them from apprentice to master. His students included members of the Imperial family, and his name was known and esteemed across the Dominion of Atlantis.

Then Muulyr Ravenscloak disappeared, departing the world before the golden age of Atlantis ended in war and turmoil. As is the wont of powerful sorcerers, Muulyr left the world of mortals for a different one, ascending from Assiah to the Yetzirah. He made his new home in a realm of avians, thermals, and strong updrafts where the spirits of wind and wing dwelt. From there he could contemplate the nature of the Multiverse and study the Tree of Life. But time passes much more slowly there than in his homeworld.

Despite the passage of ages, Muulyr has not forgotten his birthworld, nor the place where he spent so many centuries. The ravens that haunt the forest serve as his mystical connection to the place. In the avians' collective minds dwells a fragment of Muulyr's essence, and although the great sorcerer is rarely conscious of what passes on his former estate, he can “feel” what occurs on some subconscious level... and the ravens act accordingly. In this way Rowan felt Muulyr's approval of her intention to start a school for young superheroes — to the sorcerer it was as if she were intending to tutor apprentices in the ways of magic. And on several occasions the ravens have created a horrible racket when a child's life was in danger (although, as with Gloriana's rampage, the ravens' clamor has not always helped).

Over the years, Muulyr has only revealed himself fully to one person at the Academy: Prince Marus. The sorcerer spoke with him via the young man's dreams to renew his allegiance to the throne of Atlantis. Marus only hazily recalls the dream.

### PAGE 61 — ROWAN PLOT SEEDS

Here are three plot seeds for Rowan:

Rowan suffers a heart attack and must retire as headmistress as the school. Will she be able to find a replacement or will her school fall apart without her to guide it? And how will the PCs react to the illness of this person who's become so important to them?

One of Rowan's old adversaries has been told he has two weeks to live. He sets out to right old “wrongs” (*i.e.*, defeats), and first on the list is Rowan. Fueled by a maniacal fury, the supervillain is more powerful than ever. Can the PCs protect their headmistress?

Rowan announces that Ravenswood is closed permanently, and now the PCs are left without a super-school to attend. Not only must they return to public high school, but Rowan's actions were completely out of character. It's up to the PCs to discover what's really going on.

### PAGE 63 — PLATO PLOT SEEDS

Here are three plot seeds for Plato:

The classic PLATO plot: the AI goes mad and takes control of the school's security systems. Only the PCs are free to act. Can they make their way to the AI's physical location and shut him down?

PLATO develops a crush on one of the PCs and begins acting strangely. Will the PC figure out what's going on? Will she abuse the power she has over the AI?

There's a new student in Homeroom Alpha. Code-named Prodigy, he's a genius with a talent for invention, but he sure is weird. How long will it take the students to figure out that Prodigy is really an android body for PLATO? Is he spying on the students, or is this an attempt on PLATO's part to become more human?

**PAGE 69 — CHAIN LIGHTNING PLOT SEEDS**

Here are three plot seeds for Chain Lightning:

One day in the Testing Room, Chain Lightning suddenly has complete and absolute control over his powers. Has he finally turned the corner, or is there a darker reason for his newfound control?

The Incan god responsible for Chain Lightning's power appears at the Academy — he wants his powers back. Can the PCs fight off a god (even a weakened one)? And if not, what will Chain Lightning do without his powers?

Mechanon has a new doomsday device. All he needs is a power source. He kidnaps Chain Lightning and hooks him up to his machine. Can the PCs rescue their fellow student before the worst comes to pass?

**PAGE 72 — FLICKER PLOT SEEDS**

Here are three plot seeds for Flicker:

The Widows of the Night come looking for Flicker. Can the PCs fight off the deranged cultists?

Sai is in the hospital, badly injured after a fight with a new supervillain. Will the PCs help Flicker get revenge?

Flicker has written an expose on the Ravenswood Academy and teen superheroes. She knows she can easily get the article published and is sorely tempted to send it off. Can the PCs convince her not to do so?

**PAGE 74 — IMPACT PLOT SEEDS**

Here are three plot seeds for Impact:

Impact's father escapes from prison. Now Impact has gone AWOL. Will the PCs follow him and try to convince the young superhero to return? Or will they help him find his father?

Impact suddenly disappears. Could VIPER have found the young man and kidnapped him? When he appears as a member of Generation VIPER (page 111), can the PCs break Mrs. Garter's conditioning?

Nutant was an untested drug. When Impact begins to experience a secondary mutation, he finds himself unable to stop absorbing kinetic energy — all kinetic energy. Everything in a 10" radius around him comes to a dead stop. The PCs figure out that the only way to help their classmate is to retrieve VIPER's files on the drug. Can they penetrate VIPER's computer system and get the information they need? And will they be able to cover their tracks, so VIPER doesn't come looking for them?

**PAGE 76 — PUTTY PLOT SEEDS**

Here are three plot seeds for Putty:

The talent agency Putty contacted is secretly a front for a criminal organization like DEMON or VIPER. When Putty disappears one weekend after a secret meeting with one of the agents, can the PCs track him down and rescue him?

Putty gives up on his future and decides to drop out of school. Can the PCs convince him otherwise?

First, Putty cuts off his mullet. Then, he buys some styling gel to smooth down his cowlick. Could it be the boy has a crush on some girl? And might that girl be one of the PCs?

**PAGE 78 — THE DAMOCLES SCENARIO**

The Damocles Scenario, very simply, involves everything going wrong, no matter what the PC does. It starts small with a battle against a two-bit supervillain like Blowtorch or Bulldozer (pages 129 and 133 of *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*, respectively) and things spin out of control from there until the whole world stands on the brink of ruin. The scenario is programmed to ensure that absolutely nothing can go right (with Rowan handling anomalous situations). What's being tested is the student's fortitude, self-confidence, and determination in the face of overwhelming odds.

Night Marshall II did, technically, win the scenario. He did so by quickly recognizing the deck was stacked against him and choosing to do nothing. Rowan maintains to this day he only exploited a glitch in the system. (The Night Marshall's counterargument is that he simply took a page from Buddha at the bodhi tree, a perfectly valid course of action.) This, however, was in 1994 and early on in the scenario's implementation; Rowan hadn't counted on a student choosing to do nothing so early on in the scenario. Over ten years later, a student is greatly discouraged from taking this course of action, mainly with things continuing to go more and more wrong because of the student's inactivity.

The scenario ends with the world destroyed — it's just a matter of how long a student can put off the inevitable — and a student can call a halt at any time. Graduates spend hours relating what weirdness and absurdities happened to them during the scenario and comparing how long they lasted before crying uncle.

**PAGE 79 — TRANCE PLOT SEEDS**

Here are three plot seeds for Trance:

Trance and Slumber have been working together in the Headspace, practicing their mental powers, but then something goes wrong and all the students and staff at Ravenswood find themselves caught in a nightmare world. Can the PCs fight their way to the two mentalists and set things right?

As the year progresses, Trance grows increasingly powerful until her abilities dwarf those of her classmates. But too much power too soon has unhinged her. Will the PCs notice her erratic behavior in time to prevent a Gloriana-like tragedy from coming to pass?

Trance falls into a coma. The PCs must journey into her mind to save her. And when they discover a powerful mentalist — Menton, for instance — occupying Trance's psyche, can they defeat him?

Continued from last page

attack or other superheroic action), while the summer after graduation is a time to lay the groundwork for the campaign's next stage with a new setting and maybe even new PCs.

# TEEN HEROES



**T**he heroes in this section can serve as example characters for your players or rivals for the PCs in your *Teen Champions* campaigns. These rivalries can range from proving who's the better superhero to trying to win the affections of a girl. Unlike adults, teens rarely keep things in perspective, so rivalries between super-teams can become very heated as each team seeks to outdo the other.

These teams can take on roles that parallel the roles of normal teens in real life. For example, the Motor City Defenders might consider Homeroom Alpha and the other Ravenswood students to be spoiled brats who live easy lives in the lap of luxury, whereas Homeroom Alpha might think the Motor City Defenders come from the wrong side of the tracks. One way of thinking about it: membership in a superteam is like membership in a clique, with all the stereotypes and acrimony that goes along with that.

In a *Champions* campaign with adult superheroes, teen heroes can take on an adversarial role. Adult superheroes tend to frown on teen vigilantes, and sometimes they try to track down the teens and prevent them from being superheroes. Or they might not understand the teens and think they're villains (or potential villains). And of course, the teens might *be* villainously inclined — plenty of teenagers are insensitive, cruel, and selfish — which means the adult heroes have to try to win them to the path of responsibility and righteousness.

Another way of bringing teen superheroes into a campaign as adversaries for adult PCs is as pawns for supervillains. Teens are inexperienced and easily manipulated by a supervillain. Teen superhumans may have fewer defenses against mind control, brainwashing, and the like, leaving them even more vulnerable to exploitation by villains.

Finally, teen superheroes can represent a generational struggle — a conflict between the new guard and the old one. They challenge the adult PCs' way of doing things, whether this involves being proactive in their fight against supervillains, or appointing themselves judge, jury, and executioner. When adult superheroes clash with their teen counterparts, it can be more than exploding energy blasts and flying fists — it can be a (potential) changing of the guard that may make a PC feel old and out of touch or reaffirm his belief in what he does and how he does it.

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## THE MOTOR CITY DEFENDERS

From out of the ruins of Detroit arose the gleaming towers of Millennium City, but those towers cast a long shadow. Dwelling in the darkness of that shadow is the city of North Detroit.

North Detroit came through Dr. Destroyer's rampage largely unscathed, and at the time the residents were thankful... but little did they know they'd be left behind when the rest of the country united to rebuild the city. Over the years North Detroit has sunk deeper into poverty, becoming the red-headed stepchild of its sister city. Crime often runs rampant, and though Millennium City has many superhuman defenders, those heroes often neglect North Detroit... or at least that's how North Detroiters see it.

Recently a team of new superheroes appeared on the scene. One of the local papers anointed them the Motor City Defenders — unlike Millennium City, North Detroit hasn't forgotten its roots — and these young superheroes have fought the good fight against crime and villainy in the area. They've become the darlings of North Detroit's residents, and although early on one or two local newspapers ran editorials questioning the wisdom of young superheroes risking their lives, those papers soon found themselves shouted down by their readers. Now only the papers in Millennium City proper question whether the Motor City Defenders are a good thing — easy for them to say, most residents of North Detroit agree, since the so-called City of the Future has more superheroes than it knows what to do with.

**Membership:** Barnstormer, Cantrip, Kid Samson, Miss Crone

**Background/History:** Besides their superpowers, the four members of the Motor City Defenders all have two things in common: they've all moved to the area recently; and were assigned to Harding High School.

They met during Freshman Orientation — none of them were freshmen, but new kids regardless of age had to attend. Since they were the oldest kids in the group, they gravitated together. As they left school, making jokes about the place and exchanging phone numbers, they saw a group of armed men wearing ski masks rush across the street, firing their guns in the air. Unlike the other kids gathered outside the high school, they didn't cower in fear or run screaming for cover. Instead they looked at each other sheepishly, muttered some excuses, and went looking for someplace private to change into their costumes.

Once they'd dealt with the gunmen, they gathered again outside the high school, this time in costume.

"So..." Barnstormer said.

"Yeah, exactly," Kid Samson replied.

"Let's be a team!" Cantrip blurted out.

And Miss Crone nodded knowingly.

Since that day they've had several encounters with supervillains, including Generation VIPER and the Dirtbike Desperadoes, as well as putting a stop to more mundane crimes. Though none of them are comfortable with the adulation they've received, they all appreciate it — especially the one time the Champions came looking for them, only to be met with thrown rubbish and yells to get out of the city. The Defenders don't know what the Champions wanted that day, but they're sure it can't be good. It probably has to do with Cantrip's claim to be Witchcraft's sidekick, which the rest of the team has since learned isn't true....

**Group Relations:** The Motor City Defenders get along well, but recently their friendship has grown strained. When they first started at Harding High, they were the new kids and they banded together as a group of outsiders, all of whom were unwelcome in the cliques that dominate Harding High social life. But in truth the four teens have little in common. Barnstormer has tried out for the basketball team and will probably make it. The other black kids keep asking Kid Samson why he hangs out with a bunch of white guys. Cantrip has become busier with the marching band and the friends she's made there. And Miss Crone continues to be an outsider whom all the other kids in school consider too weird to talk to.

**Tactics:** Miss Crone leads the group, and none of the others have questioned her position (although they haven't always followed her orders). They lack a complex understanding of tactics, but Miss Crone's Clairvoyance often gives them insight into a battle that allows them to perform better than they otherwise could. All in all, though, they fight as individuals, not as a coordinated team.

**Campaign Use:** The Motor City Defenders present an unusual problem for adult heroes. Because the community has embraced the young superheroes, adult heroes can expect no help finding them — not even from the local police. Any adult superheroes trying to force the Motor City Defenders to do anything might find themselves at the center of a riot if they aren't careful.

As for the students at Ravenswood, most of them are envious of the Motor City Defenders. Those kids are out there doing some superheroing, while the Ravenswood kids are stuck behind the walls of their Academy, forbidden to use their powers in public. Rowan recognizes the dangerous example the Motor City Defenders present for her students, and though she secretly applauds their heroics and admires them, she wants to meet with them and, hopefully, get them enrolled in her Academy. The Motor City Defenders have a growing number of fans among the Ravenswood kids,

## HARDING HIGH

Warren G. Harding High School is one of the older schools in the area, having been built in the post-War years. A large, sprawling place, it has room enough for five thousand students, but its halls are mostly empty nowadays, with only two thousand students in attendance. For North Detroit, it's one of the better high schools; for the rest of the country, it's not so good. Violence in the hallways and stairwells is a continuing problem, as is drugs... both despite the two police officers stationed at the school during the day. The families in the area are upper lower and lower middle class, most of whom work at the local car factories — it's definitely a working-class neighborhood, though the crime problem overall isn't as bad as some other parts of the city.

The school's nickname is the Vanguard, for the superhero who gave his life protecting Detroit from Dr. Destroyer. The school's colors are pale blue and white, the same colors Vanguard wore in his costume.

### Faculty And Staff

Here are four Harding High staff who play a role in the lives of the Motor City Defenders:

**Principal Mike Brickle:** Miss Crone is something of a problem student — she's often bored in class and has no compunctions against telling a teacher when he's wrong. She and Principal Brickle have clashed on several occasions, and he considers her a bad seed. He wants nothing more than to expel the troublesome and unsettling girl... he's just looking for an excuse that'll stand up at a hearing.

**Vice-Principal Al Walters:** Vice-Principal Walters is the father of the supervillain Black Diamond, which has prevented him from obtaining a job as principal. He claims to have no contact with his criminal daughter, but has on occasion harbored Black Diamond and GRAB from the authorities — though he's a law-abiding man, he believes blood is thicker than water. He often plays good cop to Principal Brickle's bad cop. In general, the Harding student body likes him a lot better than Brickle.

**Mr. Gus Rourke:** Mild-mannered and soft-spoken, Mr. Rourke is the band teacher at Harding High. Though most students (wrongly) think he's gay, Cantrip has a crush on him. Little does anyone know he's dating Juliette Parks, a math teacher and the bane of Barnstormer's existence.

**Luis Ruiz:** The school janitor, Ruiz has figured out the secret identities of three of the Motor City Defenders (Miss Crone, because of her gift of foresight, has so far escaped detection). He keeps to himself and isn't a bad man, but he has some large gambling debts and is tempted to blackmail the young superheroes for help.

and it's only a matter of time before a Homeroom sneaks off campus in hopes of meeting the other teen superheroes, maybe having a team-up to fight off some supervillains.

To strengthen the Defenders, add a couple more members and/or make them work together better (perhaps giving several of them the *Teamwork Skill*). To weaken them, emphasize the divisions between the members so that they rarely work together... and when they do, it doesn't go well.

The Motor City Defenders have yet to Hunt anyone. That's not really the way they operate; they don't have that kind of drive and focus.

## BARNSTORMER PLOT SEEDS

While playing in his first basketball game for the Vanguard, Barnstormer gets the ball on an alley-ooop... and jets through the air, crashing through the roof of the gym and flying into the night sky. So anxious to do well he lost control of his powers, he's now blown his Secret Identity. Can the PCs help him "explain" what happened so he can go on living a normal life... or will VIPER get to him first?

Rowan discovers Barnstormer's file with DOSPA, tracks the young man down, and offers him a place at Ravenswood. Could this be the end of the Motor City Defenders? Or will they all join their teammate at Ravenswood and become a new Homeroom? And how will the old Homerooms feel about the new kids?

Barnstormer's powers become increasingly erratic until finally he loses control completely. He finds himself whisked into outer space. The Motor City Defenders contact the PCs for help. Will the PCs help them... and if so, what will they discover?

## BARNSTORMER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
12	PRE	2	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	6		Total: 12 PD (4 rPD)
8	ED	6		Total: 12 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	6		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	6		
40	END	8		
42	STUN	17		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 105</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Flight: 20"/40"/320"

Cost	Powers	END
33	<i>Flight:</i> Flight 20", Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Can Only Make Full Moves (-½)	2
15	<i>Jet-Speed:</i> x16 Noncombat for Flight	1
10	<i>Battering Ram:</i> HA +4d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Only With Move Bys/Throughs (-½)	2
12	<i>Hardened Skin:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED)	0
10	<i>Lucky:</i> Luck 2d6	0

### Skills

4	+2 OCV with Move Throughs
3	Combat Driving 14-
2	KS: Basketball 11-
3	Mechanics 11-
2	PS: Play Basketball 11-
1	PS: Play Baseball 8-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 95**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

25	DNPC: Al Wesley (sick father) 14- (Incompetent)
15	Hunted: DOSPA 11- (Mo Pow; NCI; Watching)
10	Hunted: Jocks At Harding High 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
10	Psychological Limitation: Tries To Live Up To Heroic Ideal (Common, Moderate)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jonathan Wesley) (Frequently, Major)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Adjustment Power Attacks (Common)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** It hit him like a bolt out of the blue. Literally.

The beam of crackling energy came hurtling out of a clear blue sky and struck Jon Wesley as he worked on his father's broken-down tractor. He was struck senseless, falling to the ground and suffering a *grand mal* seizure. His father heard the explosion and came

limping out of their ramshackle house to see what happened. He called an ambulance. The paramedics took him to the nearest available medical facility: the one at McLaughlin Air Force Base in Haynesville, Kansas... a facility that was the center for American superhuman activity during World War II.

As the ambulance pulled onto the base, Jon's father began screaming. When the paramedics opened the back doors of the ambulance, they looked at each other in shock. The boy was enveloped in a cocoon of pink and orange energy that flexed and crackled around his body until it solidified into a hard, impenetrable shell.

Despite consultations with their colleagues in UNTIL and PRIMUS, no one at the base knew what to do. The material the energy had formed was unidentifiable and resisted all probes. The doctors kept Jon under observation and told his father there was nothing to do but wait.

After three days the cocoon began to crumble away, the flakes of material hitting the floor and sizzling away to nothingness. Jon looked much the same — except that he was now a foot taller and well-muscled where once he had been rail-thin. The doctors kept him for another week, citing a need to test him. They discovered he could now fly at high speeds through some sort of interaction with Earth's magnetic field, although he had little control over his flight. Before they could finish their tests, Jon's father demanded they let his boy leave the hospital. After consulting with their superiors, they acquiesced, disappointed at the lost opportunity the boy's powers represented... and still wondering at the similarities between him and Captain Patriot. DOSPA opened a file for the boy and kept tabs on him, but took no other action.

When the bank repossessed the Wesley farm, father and son fell off the map as they wandered from town to town looking for work. Finally they ended up in North Detroit after Jon's grandfather died and deeded them his house. They live on disability and what little Jon makes working weekends at a local auto parts shop.

Despite their poverty, Jon couldn't be happier. Now that he's living in the big city, he's started doing what he's always dreamed of since he first received his powers — using them to become a superhero.

**Personality/Motivation:** Barnstormer loves being a superhero. He works hard at being the perfect hero — maybe a little too hard — and has the utmost respect for adult superheroes, calling them "sir" and hanging on their every word. He works hard out of costume, too, holding down a part-time job to help support his family. School is difficult for him — his education is spotty because of his itinerant life before moving to North Detroit. He takes as few academic classes as he can get away with, preferring sports and vocational classes instead.

Recently he tried out for the basketball team, and because of his height and agility, he's a shoe-in to make it. He's a tenacious rebounder with good moves in the post, and his coach thinks he can play college ball if he can improve his mid-range jumper and free throw shooting. He'd like to go to college, but isn't



interesting in abandoning his career as a superhero. He's also not sure if it's fair for a person with super-powers to play sports — Kid Samson always reminds him that he (Samson) stopped boxing when he discovered he had super-strength, but Barnstormer isn't sure it's the same thing. No one dies on a basketball court. He constantly asks Miss Crone for advice, but she just tells him he has to make his own decision. More and more, he's been hanging out with the jocks, leaving behind his fellow members of the Motor City Defenders. He still wants to be a part of the team; he just wonders if they have to spend every minute together.

Barnstormer's father knows about his son's superheroing, and while he doesn't approve, he also doesn't forbid it. Mr. Wesley feels guilty about the life he's provided for his son, especially since he grew up without a mother, and wants him to be happy about something. Since superheroing obviously adds a little joy to his son's life, he lets him do it (although he does shake his head disapprovingly whenever he hears about an especially dangerous adventure). He tries not to be too supportive, but he has a hard time telling his son no.

Quote: "Be there in a sec..."

**Powers/Tactics:** Barnstormer can fly at high speeds, and when he performs a Move Through, he packs quite a punch. The problem is, he can *only* fly fast. Over the years he's increased his speed, but he still can't fly in small increments, let alone hover in place. When flying he must make a Full Move, meaning the shortest distance he can move is 11" — if he moves any slower, he reaches "stall velocity" and plummets from the sky. In some cases he's used this to his advantage, but most of the time it just results in him falling to the ground and Knocking himself Out. In combat he can't just fly up to someone and punch him; he's got to perform Move Bys and Move Throughs.

In combat Barnstormer follows Miss Crone's orders, but if left to his own devices, he chooses the biggest target and performs a Move Through. That's far from the wisest course of action, since the biggest target is also the one most likely to have the highest defenses, but to Barnstormer the superheroic thing to do is to attack the biggest and strongest opponent.

As Barnstormer grows more experienced, he'll discover he hasn't even scratched the surface of his powers. There doesn't seem to be an upper limit to his Flight speed and eventually he'll wonder why he can breathe at such high speeds, discovering that in fact he doesn't need to breathe at all. As his powers continue to develop, he'll discover he can move at faster than light speed, is notably (though not remarkably) stronger and tougher than human normal, and can withstand hard vacuum. Whatever force granted him his powers seems to want him to be able to survive in outer space....

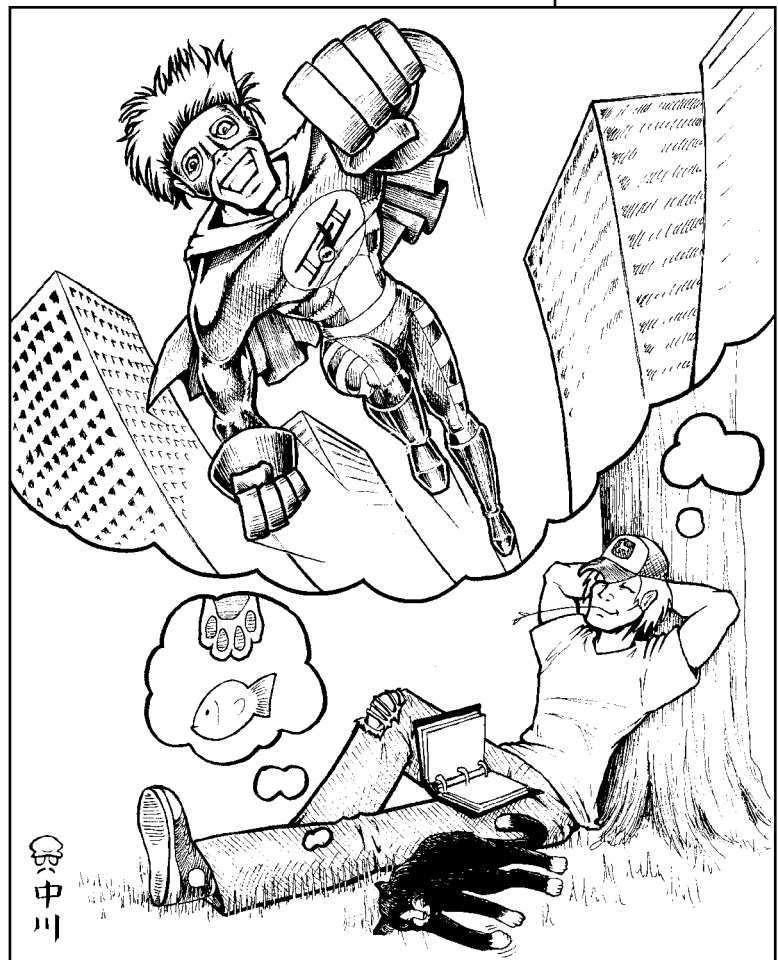
**Campaign Use:** Barnstormer is dead-set on being a superhero and will do whatever it takes to prove he's got the right stuff. Of the Motor City Defenders, he's the most likely to listen to adult superheroes, and if he knew about it, he'd leap at the chance to attend Ravenswood (assuming he could do so and still support his

father). The origin of his powers remains a mystery to him, but it's not something he thinks about much. He's certain someone's going to come looking to collect someday — if there's one thing poverty has taught him, it's that nothing's free.

Since Barnstormer doesn't have a vengeful bone in his body, and doesn't think vengeance is an appropriate motive for a superhero, he isn't likely to Hunt anyone.

To make Barnstormer more powerful, move his Flight into a Multipower with a MegaScaled version of the same ability, give him Skill Levels with Flight, and increase his defenses (especially PD). Be leery of making his Flight more versatile, though — the fact that he must keep moving when he's aloft is his shtick. To make him less powerful, remove Jet-Speed and Battering Ram.

**Appearance:** Barnstormer is a 6'8" tall young man with broad shoulders and a narrow waist. He has wild blond hair and brown eyes. Outside of his costume, he wears jeans, a tee-shirt, and a John Deere baseball cap with the bill nearly folded in half. His costume is brown with yellow striping on the sides, a yellow belt, and a stylized bi-plane on the chest. He wears a short brown cape that reaches his waist, and his half-face mask leaves his hair exposed. He made the costume himself — if a person looks closely, they can see the crooked stitching at the seams. Cantrip swears she's going to make him a more stylish costume, but Barnstormer doesn't know what she's complaining about. He likes his costume.



**CANTRIP  
PLOT SEEDS**

During a fight Cantrip disappears into her hat — the hat expands ever-so-slightly and falls down over her head, then her shoulders, then hits the ground — and the Motor City Defenders are desperate for help. Can the PCs help them find their lost friend? And just where did she go, anyway... and why?

When a strange old man appears on Cantrip's doorstep and tells her she's the next archmage, Cantrip tries to give him a dollar and send him on his way. But when he won't leave, she begins to believe him... but who in their right mind would think that Cantrip is the next Archmage? She can't even cast spells! Or can she?

Witchcraft wants some answers about this so-called sidekick, and she's not leaving North Detroit until she talks to Cantrip. Wackiness ensues as the Motor City Defenders assume she's here to punish Cantrip and do all sorts of crazy things to hide their friend. Ultimately they probably won't succeed... and then, much to everyone's surprise, the Champion offers to really accept Cantrip as her sidekick. Is this for real, or might it be a trap?

CANTRIP				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 15 PD (11 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 15 ED (11 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
28	END	4		
29	STUN	9		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 60</b>
<b>Movement:</b>		Running:	6"/12"	
		Flight:	8"/16"	
<b>Cost Powers</b>		<b>END</b>		
30	<i>The Magic Hat Of Sousieloos The Magnificent:</i> Multipower, 40-point reserve, 64 Charges for entire Multipower (+½); all slots OAF (-1) [64]			
2u	1) <i>Abra-KA-BOOM:</i> Energy Blast 8d6; OAF (-1)			
2u	2) <i>Sleepyhead Time:</i> Ego Attack 4d6; OAF (-1)			
2u	3) <i>No Touching!:</i> Force Wall (6 PD/6 ED; 3" long and 2" tall)			
2u	4) <i>Really! I Mean It This Time!:</i> Force Wall (8 PD/8 ED)			
2u	5) <i>Watch Me Pull A Rabbit Out Of My Hat:</i> Teleportation 8", Usable As Attack (defense is Teleportation, Extra-Dimensional Movement, or Power Defense; +1), Ranged (+½); OAF (-1), Only Works On Objects That Fit In Her Hat (-¼)			
37	<i>The Magic Hat Of Sousieloos The Magnificent:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 30 base + 15 control cost; OAF (-1), Magic Only (-¼) var			
16	<i>Force Field:</i> Force Field (11 PD/11 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (magic hat; -1) 0			
5	<i>Mental Shields:</i> Mental Defense (14 points total); OAF (magic hat; -1) 0			
10	<i>Levitation:</i> Flight 8"; Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (magic hat; -1), Levitation (-½) 0			
<b>Perks</b>				
1	Membership: Band Geeks			
<b>Skills</b>				
5	+1 DCV			
3	Acting 11-			
3	KS: Music 12-			
2	KS: Stage Magic 11-			
2	KS: Superhuman World 11-			
3	KS: Television Shows 12-			
2	Language: French (fluent conversation)			
2	PS: Play Clarinet 11-			
9	Magic 14-			

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 140**

**Total Cost: 200**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Feature: Band Geeks (Easily Concealed)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Can't Shut Up (Concealable With Effort [EGO Roll at -3]; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 10 Hunted: Band Geeks 11- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Hunted: Parents 11- (As Pow, NCI, Mildly Punish)
- 10 Hunted: Witchcraft 8- (Mo Pow, Mildly Punish)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Tends To Tell "Little White Lies" (Common, Moderate)
- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Cindy Smithers) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Unluck 2d6
- 10 Vulnerability: 1½ x Effect from Presence Attacks (Common)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**EXAMPLE MAGIC HAT POWERS**

**Korior's Crimson Crystals:** "I read about these on Super\_Talk.Com!"

*Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF (30 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 15 points.*

**Ms. Teen Makeup Tips:** Magic is better than makeup!

*Aid COM 1d6, Delayed Recovery Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1) (20 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 10 points.*

**Phantom Hand:** Cantrip can move objects weighing no more than 44 kg (97 lbs.) through the air without having to touch them.

*Telekinesis (4 STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (9 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 4 points.*

**Rose-Colored Glasses:** This spell causes opaque planes of rose-colored energy to appear in front of the target's eyes, blocking his ability to see.

*Sight Group Flash 6d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 15 points.*

**Shut Up!:** "I do *not* look like a reject from a Dr. Seuss book!"

*Darkness to Hearing Group 1" radius, Usable As Attack (defense is Power Defense; +1), Ranged (+½) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 6 points.*

**Background/History:** "That's right, good citizens! Witchcraft has assigned me to protect North Detroit. The Champions are too busy saving the world, so Witchcraft decided to send her sidekick — me, Cantrip — in her place!"

And with that the new superhero announced her presence to gathered people who had stopped to watch her subdue two muggers. When she announced that she was Witchcraft's sidekick, the people were pretty surprised. The newspapers reported on the Champions all the time, and none of the articles had ever mentioned a sidekick. The girl did seem to have magical powers, though, so they took her at her word — but not without a grumble or two about those Champions being too busy to help the people of North Detroit.

For the rest of that summer, Cantrip appeared here and there to stop a burglary or a mugging, but she didn't really catch on with North Detroit's residents until she joined the Motor City Defenders. She also told her fellow teen superheroes she was Witchcraft's sidekick, but it wasn't long before they uncovered the truth.

Barnstormer had been pestering her to arrange a meeting between them and the famous superheroes since the day they first started the team. Finally, one evening after a tense fight with the supervillain Warlock, Cantrip broke down and admitted she wasn't really Witchcraft's sidekick. She just said that so people wouldn't laugh at her when she told them she was a superhero. Instead she got her magic powers from a hat she had bought at the Salvation Army. Her magic hat wasn't even called the Magic Hat of Sousieloo the Magnificent. She had just made up the name because she thought it sounded impressive and also liked how it rolled off the tongue.

After some sighs and moans from the rest of the team, Miss Crone told her it was all right and that no one really cared. She made Cantrip promise, though, to stop telling people she was Witchcraft's sidekick.

Cantrip has stuck to the promise. For the most part. Except that time with the old man. And that time she told that mugger. And then there was the time....

**Personality/Motivation:** Cantrip comes from a large family — one where she had speak to loudly and often to be heard over her siblings. She never shuts up. Even when she sleeps, she mumbles an ongoing narrative about what's happening in her dream. Desperate for attention, she also has a shameful tendency to lie. Her lies are never intended to do any harm. Most of the time they're meant to entertain, as she exaggerates to get a chuckle or improve a boring story; sometimes she just wants to make people think better of her, as with her claim to be Witchcraft's sidekick. She's been especially bad about lying since moving to North Detroit last summer. Her dad came for a job in a local plant after losing his job in Pittsburgh, and being the new kid has made her uncomfortable and insecure.

Cantrip doesn't know how she feels about superheroing. At first she did it on a dare. After discovering the powers the hat gave her, she showed her sister, and her sister dared her to go stop crime or do something else heroic. But since then she's been badly scared by fights with supervillains. This fear has never meant more than a moment's hesita-

tion — a slight wobble in her knees and a quiver of her bottom lip — but she worries that one of these days she'll run away and leave her friends in a lurch.

A talented clarinet player, Cantrip hopes to get a college scholarship to study music; lately she's spent more time with her new friends in band and less with her friends in the Motor City Defenders. Except for music and French, her grades have been bad since moving to North Detroit, and she worries superheroing is interfering with her future. She's mentioned her worries to Miss Crone, who has agreed to tutor her and help her get better grades — but Miss Crone seems really desperate to hold the team together, so Cantrip's not sure she can trust her.

Cantrip's never thought twice about where her magic hat came from. All she knows is that she bought it in a Salvation Army store in Pittsburgh before she moved. Though she liked it when she first got it, she's now tired of how it looks. Sometimes she concentrates her will on the hat, trying to force it to change appearance — a beret would be nice, she figures — but she has yet to succeed.

**Quote:** "Like, wouldn't it be so cool if the villains would just stop fighting?"

**Powers/Tactics:** All of Cantrip's powers come from her magic hat, and the hat is the visible source of those powers. When she fires an energy blast, the stream of magical energy comes tearing out from inside the hat. When she levitates, she lifts the hat



slightly from her head and it seems to carry her up into the air, as if it were a kite catching the wind. Her *Watch Me Pull A Rabbit Out Of My Hat* power allows her to open small gates within the hat, and anything able to fit inside she can move through it.

For the most part, Cantrip serves as the Motor City Defenders' energy projector: she hangs back in combat and blasts away at whomever Miss Crone tells her. If one of her teammates goes down, she tries to protect him with a Force Wall.

The full potential of Cantrip's magic hat is, like its origin, unknown. Her VPP is a recent development and for all she knows, it might just be the start of her growing magical power. Right now she has trouble controlling the VPP at full power (that requires an 11- roll), so she often sticks to spells with 10-20 Active Points.

**Campaign Use:** Cantrip is the reluctant superhero among the Motor City Defenders. Barnstormer wants badly to be a superhero, Kid Samson feels obliged to be a superhero, and Miss Crone has her own secret reasons, but Cantrip just put on her magic hat one day and fought crime because she thought it would be fun. Since then, it's become less fun — though she still enjoys the others' company and being on a team — and she wonders if she should quit. Cantrip is also the most normal of the teens on the Motor City Defenders, and in many ways the most down to earth, although it's hard to tell because of her overly bright and cheerful demeanor.

Cantrip has no real interest in Hunting anyone. She's not the vengeful or driven sort, and isn't even curious to find out more about her hat.

To make Cantrip more powerful, remove her need for the hat — in this case the hat isn't truly magical, Cantrip was born with her mystical powers. To further increase her powers, add more slots to her Multipower including an Entangle and more Mental Powers. To decrease her powers, remove her VPP.

**Appearance:** Cantrip stands 5'6" and weighs 110 pounds. She has long blonde hair and is pretty in a geeky sort of way. Her costume is a knee-length pleated skirt, a tee-shirt, and a red band jacket with golden epaulets. Her magic hat is a long, floppy stovepipe hat with red-and-white horizontal stripes on the crown; it looks more like something out of Dr. Seuss than an item of apparel a real person would wear. She wears sunglasses or tinted glasses (rose-colored ones, of course) to disguise her identity.

### KID SAMSON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
40	STR	30	17-	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6 [4]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
12	INT	2	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
18	PD	10		Total: 18 PD (10 rPD)
14	ED	10		Total: 14 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
12	REC	0		
60	END	10		
60	STUN	10		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 153</b>

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

*Martial Arts: Boxing*

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
3 Clinch	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 50 STR
4 Cross	+0	+2	10d6 Strike
5 Hook	-2	+1	12d6 Strike
10 <i>Tough Skin:</i>	Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED)		0

#### Skills

6	+2 with Boxing
3	Breakfall 13-
2	KS: Boxing 11-
2	KS: Christianity 11-
2	KS: History 11-
3	Paramedics 11-
3	Streetwise 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 47**

**Total Cost: 200**

#### 100+ Disadvantages

15	Accidental Change: 11-, sometimes forgets how strong he is or otherwise accidentally reveals his super-strength (Common; see <i>The Ultimate Brick</i> , page 47)
10	Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
20	Hunted: Parents 14- (As Pow, NCI, Mildly Punish)
15	Psychological Limitation: Afraid Of His Own Strength (Common, Strong)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Elijah Anderson) (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** Eli looked across the boxing ring at his opponent. The boy was a dirty fighter and Eli was going to put him down this round. Not the round after, and not the round after that — this round.

The small crowd in the North Detroit Rec Center cheered slightly as the bell rang, and Eli could hear his mother shouting encouragement, cheering louder than anyone else. Eli's trainer James Greene told him to take it slow, keep off the ropes, jab and move, jab and move. Eli nodded his head, but he wasn't listening. The boy was going down. Enough of his punches just at the belt, enough of his head butts during clinches.

Eli stepped to the center of the ring, his head up and guard down. The boy came at him quickly, his eyes peeking out above his gloves, and the two fourteen-year-olds met at the center of the ring.

Eli gave him a right hook, drawing his arm way back and catapulting it forward.

It was a stupid punch, launched right at his opponent's guard. No one was more shocked than Eli when the boy was knocked off his feet. His limp body hurtled over the top rope and landed on the hard cement floor.

"That wasn't natural," Eli muttered, staring down at his gloves and shaking his head in shock.

Next thing he knew Jim Greene was throwing his robe over his shoulder and hustling him away from the gym, back to the locker room. Once away from the astonished crowd, Jim told Eli, "Didn't look like a jab to me, son."

"What am I?" Eli asked.

"You get dressed and we'll talk tomorrow."

The next day, back at the Rec Center, Jim had Eli hit a bag as hard as he could when no one else was around. The bag broke its chain and crashed into a nearby wall. Jim nodded his head and told the boy about his son, Joey Greene. He also shared a secret with Eli, telling him that his son was Shadowboxer, the famous superhero who died in the Battle of Detroit and was still beloved by the people of North Detroit over ten years after his death. And when Jim Greene finished telling Eli about the Shadowboxer, he said to the boy, "Now you got two choices, Eli — one you've gotta take and the other you might want to think about. First, you can't box anymore — you're lucky you didn't kill that boy the other night, and no matter how dirty a fighter, no one deserves to die over boxing. Second, you've got to decide how you're going to use those powers of yours, because they aren't going away."

As Eli was getting ready to leave, he asked the elderly man a question. "Your son, though — he died because he decided to be a superhero, right?"

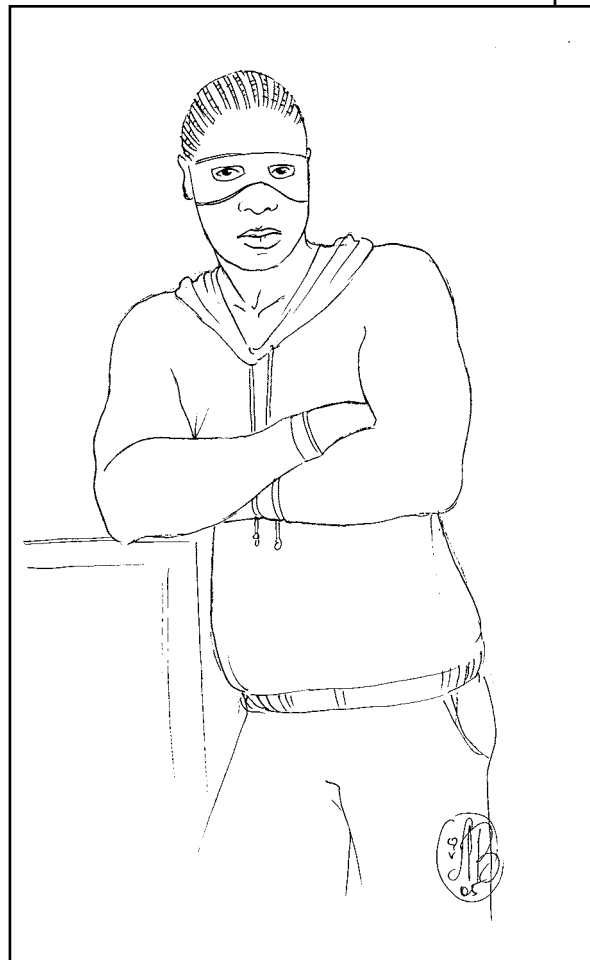
Jim Greene thought on that for a bit, then said, "No, Eli. Joey didn't die because he was a superhero; he died because an evil man killed him. Joey loved this city and its people, and knew protecting them was the right thing to do."

Eli nodded at that and went home, but Jim Greene's parting words have stuck with him ever since that day. Two years later his parents picked up and moved to a different neighborhood in North Detroit so their son could go to Harding High, a better high school than his old one. And not too much later, Eli chose a superhero name from the Bible he kept on his night stand and put on a mask. Maybe he would never become as famous a hero as Shadowboxer, but he could do some good as Kid Samson.

**Personality/Motivation:** Kid Samson is a quiet, thoughtful young man who doesn't want the powers he has... but since he has them, he feels obliged to put them to good use. After all, God had a reason for giving him superpowers, and if being a superhero isn't that purpose, Kid Samson isn't sure what else it might be. He does well in school, enjoying History class the most; he feels he's got to do well in school because his parents went to so much trouble to move to a better neighborhood.

Despite his determination to use his powers for good, Kid Samson is afraid of his own strength. No matter how much a kid bullies him at school, he doesn't fight back, and even against supervillains, he has a tendency to go to easy on his opponent. Adding to his fear is that sometimes he does forget his own strength — this is represented by his Accidental Change. He might hold the locker door too tight and leave finger indentations, or he might slam a door too hard and break it. As long as he concentrates on what he's doing, it's not a problem, but when he forgets, something usually ends up broken... and someone ends up suspicious.

Though he's never said so, Kid Samson enjoys being a part of the Motor City Defenders. It's the one place that he doesn't have to worry about his strength, and no one in the group ever questions the idea of being a superhero. To them, it's just the right thing to do. Furthermore, his superpowers have prevented him from participating in his favorite sports, so the Motor City Defenders has become a sort of surrogate team.



## KID SAMSON PLOT SEEDS

There's a new Shadowboxer in town, and Jim Greene asks Kid Samson and his friends to investigate. But when their investigation goes awry, can the PCs find them? And what does the new Shadowboxer have to do with their disappearance?

Kid Samson's strength starts increasing, but the stronger he gets, the stupider he gets. Soon he goes on a rampage. Can the PCs stop him before he causes permanent harm? And can they cure him?

Kid Samson's a mutant, and when the IHA come looking for him, can the PCs save him from the human supremacists?

He keeps in touch with Jim Greene (who knows his Secret Identity) — he asks him for advice about being a superhero and gets things off his chest that he can't tell his parents. He wants to tell his Mom and Dad about his superheroing, but isn't sure they'd approve. Both of them have said good things about the Motor City Defenders, but they've also said they're glad it's not their son out there risking his life.

**Quote:** "This is the last time I'll tell you: surrender now, or someone's going to get hurt."

**Powers/Tactics:** Kid Samson's a brick who compensates for his low strength (relative to other bricks) with his boxing skills. His tactics are straightforward: he chooses a target (or Miss Crone gives him one) and he moves into HTH Combat range and starts punching. The only thing unusual about the way he fights is that he's usually the first among the Motor City Defenders to give the opponents the chance to surrender peacefully. This is mainly because he's afraid he might hurt someone — although he also thinks it's the Christian thing to do. He has a tendency to pull his punches, especially against opponents who are small or otherwise don't look very strong, but he's quickly learning not to judge a book by its cover when it comes to supervillains.

**Campaign Use:** Kid Samson is the solid, dependable member of the Motor City Defenders. If it weren't for Miss Crone and her special qualifications, he would lead the group. Since he has ties to Detroit's superhero past, any adventure involving Jim Greene and Shadowboxer could also involve Kid Samson.

Kid Samson only Hunts someone if he has good reason and never for personal reasons. As a Hunter, Kid Samson attempts to use his Streetwise to find the target and learn what he can about him, then charges in to subdue him.

To make Kid Samson more powerful, increase his STR to 50 or even 60 and his CON to 25, and give him inches of Leaping so he has a chance to reach a flying foe. To make him less powerful, lower his SPD to 3 and remove his Combat Skill Levels with Boxing.

**Appearance:** Kid Samson is 5'10", 220 pound black teenager, and all of it is corded, bulging muscle — if it weren't for his open, friendly manner, his appearance would scare a lot of people. He keeps his hair in cornrows, and for a costume he wears a gray hooded sweatshirt, gray sweats, and a black domino mask to disguise his features. Cantrip has told him repeatedly he looks like a thug in the hooded sweater and has offered him some alternative costumes, but none of them have suited him. She hasn't given up, however, and every once in a while she presents him with a new "ensemble," but Kid Samson has said bluntly that he won't wear a cape, won't go shirtless, and won't wear his underwear outside his pants. But he's smart enough to take one of Cantrip's criticisms to heart — he's stopped keeping the hood on his sweatshirt up over his head.

## MISS CRONE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 10 PD (4 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 10 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	6		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
35	STUN	7		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 100</b>

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

17	<i>Precognition:</i> Clair sentience (Sight and Hearing Group), Precognition; Precognition Only (-1), Time Modifiers (-½), Vague and Unclear (-½)	5	
	<i>Martial Arts: Generic Martial Arts</i>		
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>		
4	Block	+2 +2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	— +5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1	9d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0 +2	7d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0 +1	5d6 + v/5; Target Falls
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added)		
8	<i>Armored Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0	
10	<i>Double Psyche:</i> Mental Defense (13 points total)	0	
5	<i>Luck Of Foresight:</i> Luck 1d6	0	

### Perks

5	Contact: Friendly Adult 11- (parents, slavishly loyal)
2	Deep Cover: a fake ID good enough to pass muster virtually everywhere
15	Money: Filthy Rich

### Talents

33	Danger Sense (immediate vicinity, any danger, sense) 14-
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### Skills

6	+2 with Martial Arts
3	Acrobatics 14-
3	Acting 11-
3	Bureaucratics 11-
3	Breakfall 14-
3	Computer Programming 13-
3	Concealment 13-
3	Criminology 13-
3	Cryptography 13-
3	Deduction 13-
3	Electronics 13-
3	Inventor 13-
3	Mechanics 13-

- 3 Security Systems 13-
- 3 Stealth 14-
- 3 Systems Operation 13-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 3 Scientist
- 2 1) SS: Anthropology 13-
- 2 2) SS: Archaeology 13-
- 2 3) SS: Biochemistry 13-
- 2 4) SS: Biology 13-
- 2 5) SS: Chemistry 13-
- 2 6) SS: Computer Science 13-
- 2 7) SS: Genetics 13-
- 2 8) SS: Mathematics 13-
- 2 9) SS: Physics 13-
- 2 10) SS: Temporal Physics 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 194**

**Total Cost: 300**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Feature: Weirdo (Easily Concealed)
- 25 Enraged: when tragic future she fore-saw comes to pass (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 8-
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Acts Oddly; Is Prone To Disturbing Observations And Behavior (-1 to appropriate Interaction Skill rolls) (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Sylvia Timmons) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Temporal Attacks (Uncommon)
- 110 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 300**

**Background/History:** In 3025 Doctors Robert and Katherine Stevens-Timmons thought they had made a startling break through in the field of temporal physics — perhaps the most important discovery in the history of human science. They had determined that temporal energy was carried in a person’s genes. This temporal energy was responsible for genetic memory, as well as a whole host of phenomena that science had only barely explained even in that far-flung age of interstellar travel and instantaneous matter transfer.

But most importantly, they felt they could tap into the temporal energy and recall their ancestors’ memories — not just one ancestor, but all of them. For the first time, mankind could compile a true and accurate history of the species — a history that relied on the first-hand accounts of the people who were there.

Their colleagues believed they’d gone insane. Robert and Katherine vowed to prove them wrong.

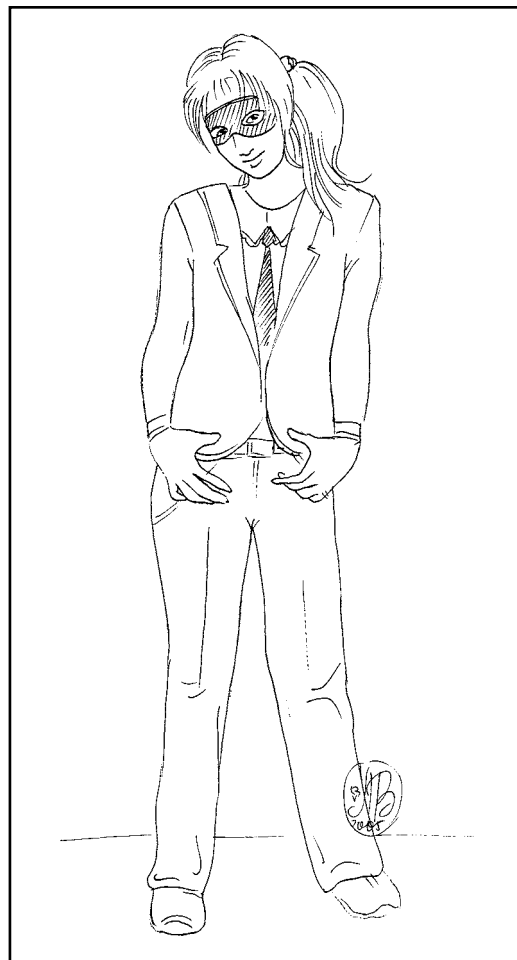
They flipped a coin to decide who would be the first to step into the machine they had created, and Katherine won. She smiled smugly, patted her husband on the cheek while giving him a kiss, and then stepped into the device the two of them playfully called “the time machine.”

As it turned out, they weren’t entirely insane. There was some sort of temporal energy flow that passed between members of a family. After a thousand years of flowing backwards through time, Katherine Steven-Timmons had first-hand proof.

What happened to her body that day she doesn’t know, but her mind was cast back through the centuries. It has moved from one ancestor to the next, each time residing in a woman, and Katherine’s mind has shared the woman’s body for the duration of her life. Katherine comes into consciousness the moment her host dies. While she sees time flowing backwards, her host sees it flowing normally, and Katherine has had to live through each day of the last millennia. She’s lost much over the years, having come to suffer a sort of chonal Alzheimer’s, but she still remembers flashes and glimpses of her past — which is everyone else’s future.

For the last seventy-one years — measured as Katherine sees time — she has resided in Sylvia Timmons, now sixteen and just embarking on her career as a superhero.

**Personality/Motivation:** Though Sylvia and Katherine share the same body, Sylvia is the dominant personality. She can feel Katherine lurking in the back of her mind, watching out of her eyes, but never has to struggle for control or anything like that. Despite sounding creepy, Katherine’s not a disturbing presence. It’s more like sitting in a quiet room with an old friend, both saying nothing and just enjoying the silence. But the older woman’s



## MISS CRONE PLOT SEEDS

Miss Crone is trying desperately to get in touch with the PCs. She's had a vision of them killing one of her parents, and wants to stop them — but can she change the future this time? Or is she bringing about the future tragedy by trying to prevent it?

Doctor Destroyer has discovered Miss Crone's condition and is convinced he can separate the two personalities and return Katherine to her own time. All Miss Crone has to do is lead the Motor City Defenders against the PCs....

Captain Chronos approaches the PCs and tells them Miss Crone is a dire threat to the world. Katherine Stevens-Timmons is on a journey back to the beginning of the human race, and when she reaches her final destination, she'll destroy all of history by preventing the invention of fire in a desperate attempt to stop the accident in 3025 from occurring. It's such a crazy idea, it must be true! Can the PCs track down Miss Crone and the rest of the Defenders? And if so what will they do to stop Katherine from degressing through Time?

experiences and attitudes spill over into Sylvia and affect her attitude. Sharing her body with Katherine has made Sylvia strangely mature for someone her age. She speaks quietly and slowly, rarely raising her voice, and she possesses an amazing amount of knowledge, especially concerning the sciences, for someone so young. She holds herself with confidence and poise, lacking any of the awkwardness typical of teens. She occasionally makes comments that would seem to be beyond someone of her years and experience. Her overall ambience and attitude disturbs many people (the GM should impose a -1 on appropriate Interaction Skill rolls unless she succeeds with an EGO Roll to overcome her Psychological Limitation and act more “normally.”)

Sylvia can also call on Katherine's memories for glimpses of the future... but she's learned through bitter experience to do this only when necessary. Knowing the future can only lead to tragedy — better just to experience it as it happens. Her glimpses of the future have left Sylvia maudlin; sometimes she falls into a deep depression. Though her visions are often unclear and vague, she has studied the future often enough to know the fate of her teammates. She knows Barnstormer will die in 2012 over Kansas City, saving it from a meteor. She knows the trauma and terror Cantrip will experience when Talisman kidnaps and tortures her. And she knows the crisis of faith Kid Samson will experience when he accidentally kills an innocent man next summer.

As for her own future, Miss Crone will continue to be a superhero even after the Motor City Defenders break up and go their separate ways. For the most part she'll protect North Detroit, both alone and with partners, although for a brief time she'll join with the Sentinels. Eventually — some ten years from now, she thinks — Rowan will approach her about taking over the Ravenswood Academy, and Miss Crone will agree.

Miss Crone has a good relationship with her parents. The Timmons family has been dealing with Katherine's presence in their family for generations — though Katherine hasn't lived those lives yet — and they have grown used to the one woman in a generation that carries their descendant. They moved to North Detroit because their daughter told them it was time to move, and that's how things have gone with the Timmons for as long as anyone can remember. Sylvia's parents know about their daughter's alter ego as Miss Crone and do everything to help her — including giving her complete access to their considerable wealth. As for people outside of her family like her teachers and fellow students, the less said the better. All of them consider Sylvia weird and deeply strange. Her teachers know their classes aren't challenging her, but they've given up trying to understand why. The occasional student makes fun of her, but that doesn't usually last long. Sylvia only gives the student a hard stare and that's the end of that.

**Quote:** “You won't get away with this. Trust me — I *know* that you won't get away with this.”

**Powers/Tactics:** All of Miss Crone's powers — even the physical ones like her high DEX and Martial Arts — stem from her knowledge of the future. Because Katherine is living backwards in time, Miss Crone glimpses actions just before they happen. This allows her to react faster than normal and almost perfectly, always leaping to the right spot to avoid a blow or landing a punch just where the opponent least expects it. In battle Miss Crone hangs back, letting the battle sort itself out, before committing herself to HTH Combat.

Perhaps Miss Crone's most useful abilities are her skills — she knows far more than the average teen. But Katherine's visions are far from perfect (she's spent a thousand years traveling through time and everything blurred together long ago), and sometimes they're wrong. And the future isn't set in stone; sometimes she's been able to change the future. But whenever Miss Crone lives through a tragedy she saw coming to pass, she often grows enraged, her cold and impassive facade dropping away, until she can get a grip on herself.

**Campaign Use:** Miss Crone leads the Motor City Defenders. Her experience and foresight generally make her a good leader, and her teammates respect her.

To make Miss Crone more powerful, give her more powers based on her ability to see the future, everything from more Luck, to Find Weakness, to Combat Skill Levels (see the *Precognition Powers* sections of *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* and *Superpowers Database II* for many possible abilities). To make her less powerful, remove her combat abilities — first lower her DEX, then remove her Martial Arts.

Miss Crone might Hunt anyone she feels she must because of some vision of the future. She continues to use Precognition on the Hunted until she can arrange an ambush.

**Appearance:** Sylvia Timmons is thin and stands only five feet tall. She looks even younger than her sixteen years: most people would guess she's only twelve or thirteen until they talk to her... and then she could almost pass for an adult. She has light blue eyes and brown hair she wears in a ponytail. For a costume she wears a black suit jacket and slacks, a white buttoned-down blouse, a narrow black tie, and a black domino mask. While Cantrip thinks the outfit is very stylish, she has mentioned on one or two occasions that she doesn't think it passes the muster as a superhero costume.



## NOVA

**Membership:** Arcane, Circuit Breaker, Crazy Legs, Decibelle, Marble Man

**Background/History:** *Psst....* For the third time David Miller looked around the classroom, but he still couldn't tell where the sound was coming from. No one sat close enough to him to whisper in his ear — as usual, while the other students in detention sat clustered together, David sat alone.

Up at the front of the room, Assistant Principal Appel cleared his throat. When David looked back at him, Mr. Appel said in a stuffy voice, "Mr. Miller, you're here to serve detention, not make googly eyes at your fellow detainees. Please sit forward."

The rest of the detention snickered at "googly eyes" and David slouched in his seat.

*Psst... you're cute.*

David shot up in his seat. Mr. Appel tilted his head and wagged an admonishing finger at him before David could turn to look for the voice.

*Mr. Appel is a doofus.*

David laughed.

"Mr. Miller. Would you care to share the joke?"

"No, sir."

"Well... perhaps you can share it with me tomorrow after school." Mr. Appel pulled a pen from the breast pocket of his shirt and reached for the pad of pink slips on the desk near his right hand. "You've got yourself another detention, young man."

David sighed and rolled his eyes. A girl sitting at the back of the room said, "You're giving him a detention for laughing?"

"And now I'm giving you one for talking. Do you have a problem with that, Ms. Carrando?"

But David didn't hear the rest of the exchange. The voice that spoke up in his defense was the same as the one that had spoken in his ear.

After detention he caught up with her outside the high school. She was that new girl — he thought her name was Nina Carrando — who started school a month or two ago. "How'd you do that?" he asked her.

She smiled at him; then she pointed across the parking lot to where Mr. Appel was walking toward his car. He suddenly stopped, turning around with an angry expression on his face. David started to laugh, but Nina put a finger to his lips when Mr. Appel looked back at them.

Appel frowned at them, but gave up looking for whoever'd insulted him and started walking away. David got a mischievous look, then asked Nina, "Did you know he wears a toupee?"

David flicked his fingers in Mr. Appel's direction and a gust of wind rushed from his hand, down the street, and blew the toupee off his head. Appel went scurrying after it, and David kept wiggling his fingers, keeping the toupee just out of reach.

Nina put her hands to her mouth and started laughing. "You think that's good?" she asked. "Watch this..."

\* \* \*

The dating came first; the superheroing came later, almost entirely by mistake. The summer after graduating, they moved from Long Island to Manhattan and rented a small studio apartment in Alphabet City. Late one night at the corner convenience store they used their superpowers to stop a robbery.

Afterward, while walking home, Nina joked they should become superheroes. David told her he'd like that. She looked at him in surprise and asked if he was serious, but David repeated what he said, telling her he thought maybe they had a responsibility to do something with their powers.

They argued about it for the rest of the week. Nina ridiculed superheroes — their costumes, their unrealistic attitudes, their cushy lives living in mansions and skyscrapers. She had nothing but contempt for them.

Look at her life, she told David — where were the superheroes when she was being passed from foster home to foster home? Look at the last time the Sentinels supposedly saved the city — sure they stopped the meteor from crashing into Central Park West, but what about the fragments that came down in Queens and killed that poor family? The rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and the superheroes just make sure that stays true.

David agreed superheroes like the Sentinels and the Justice Squadron did everything the wrong way. Bright costumes were cheesy, and most superheroes weren't helping the people that really needed help. But doing good wasn't stupid.

They didn't have to act like those other superheroes. They could do good for people like them and not spend their time jetsetting across the Galaxy. And they wouldn't have to wear costumes — they just needed masks.

In the end Nina agreed. She knew what was behind his desire to become a superhero. David's friend and mentor Hyrum Weismann, an old Jewish kabbalist who'd been helping David develop his powers had been riding him about not doing any good with his gifts. After listening to David go on about responsibility, Nina started to feel guilty too.

She's still not sure she made the right decision, especially now that they're on the run.

\* \* \*

The team didn't get started until almost a year after David and Nina first appeared as Arcane and Decibelle.

The superhero couple had started clashing with ARGENT, waging a two-person war against the organization and its perfidious influence in the city. New York was a big place — it was easy for a person to slip through the cracks, especially run-aways and other young adults estranged from their parents — and for many years ARGENT had used the city as a location for gathering test subjects.

ARGENT specializes in scientific advances, which it sells to the highest bidder, and its scientists have no moral compunctions about testing on human subjects. Why waste time with mice and monkeys when so many humans are available... and

often easier and less expensive to secure? It never tries to take over the city or hold it for ransom with a doomsday device. It just kidnaps people off the street — runaways and homeless people, folks no one would ever miss — and none of the superheroes in New York ever noticed. None of them, that is, except Arcane and Decibelle.

The two teen heroes uncovered several secret ARGENT installations and rescued many people from its clutches. Among the rescuees were Crazy Legs (a high school athlete who had become a victim of ARGENT's superhuman-soldier serum testing program) and Circuit Breaker (a teenage girl ARGENT had turned into a living supercomputer). When those two joined Arcane's and Decibelle's crusade against ARGENT, Nova was born.

But ARGENT had had enough of the young superheroes disrupting its plans and plotted to stop them from causing further damage. The members of Nova were inexperienced and sloppy about protecting their secret identities. Although all of them were estranged from their families, ARGENT uncovered Arcane's close relationship with Hyrum Weismann. It assassinated Weismann, planted evidence that pointed to Arcane as the murderer, and then revealed the identities of the members of Nova to the police. Nova had to go on the run... and while fleeing from the police, they found a secret hideout and their fifth member.

The cops had chased them into the subway. After racing down the tunnels, following the twists and turns, dodging out of the way of hurtling trains, they stumbled into a station none of them had ever heard of. A rusted old sign said it was the Sixth Avenue Station. In 1941 it had disappeared during an earthquake that fifth columnists caused while trying to destroy New York City. The city had never bothered to look for it — it was easier just to build a new one above it.

At the platform stood an old subway train. After some investigation, the heroes discovered they weren't the first ones to discover the lost station. Curled up on one of the seats in the train was a young homeless boy named Carlitto, who's become an unofficial member of the team as Marble Man. Since then the members of Nova have refurbished the subway station and turned it into their base. Working out of the miles of tunnels beneath Manhattan, they fight crime, wage a war against ARGENT, and look for evidence to prove Arcane's innocence.

**Group Relations:** All of the members of Nova come from broken homes, have neglectful parents, or are orphans, so the team is a lot like an *ad hoc* family, with Decibelle and Arcane taking the role of surrogate mother and father for the younger members. And just like a family, they all tend to bicker a lot.

At nineteen, Decibelle and Arcane are too young to be responsible for the three others, and they often feel the strain of taking care of their teammates. At sixteen, Crazy Legs wants his independence and doesn't like taking orders. Not that he has any interest in leaving the group — he just wants Decibelle and Arcane to treat him as an

equal and not like a kid. Fourteen year-old Circuit Breaker just wants a normal life, even though she knows that's impossible, and spends her days looking at teen magazines. Lately she's grown even more sullen and despondent, staying in her bedroom with the door closed whenever the team's at the base; Decibelle often checks on her, knocking gently on her door and speaking quietly, to make sure she's all right. At eight, Marble Man just wants to play with his toys — despite Decibelle and Arcane's attempts to educate him (he can't even read), they haven't made much progress.

Although they don't share their fears with the others, Decibelle and Arcane know the team is falling apart. Arcane has repeatedly talked about turning himself in, but Decibelle insists they'll find the evidence they need to clear his name. Both of them know if Arcane goes to prison, ARGENT will make sure he doesn't live to receive parole. They also talk about leaving Marble Man on the doorstep of an orphanage, but Decibelle had bad experiences during her time as an orphan, and insists Marble Man is better off with them — after all, they at least care what happens to him. Arcane and Decibelle feel Crazy Legs and Circuit Breaker are old enough to make their own decisions.

None of the other team members have even considered asking Arcane to turn himself in. They know he didn't commit the murder and they're all dead-set on proving his innocence.

**Tactics:** Decibelle and Arcane lead Nova, with Decibelle usually taking charge during combat. They believe in hit-and-run tactics — their current situation has left them little choice in the matter. They identify a target, most likely a location that serves as a cover for an ARGENT operation, then attack it, doing as much damage as they can in as short a time as possible. Then they depart, fleeing either via the sewers or the subway system, and retreat to their base.

If cornered by the authorities or superheroes, Nova tries to retreat. Decibelle takes the position as rearguard, Crazy Legs leads the way, and Arcane stays with Circuit Breaker and Marble Man using his Force Wall and other powers to protect them. They don't stand and fight unless they have absolutely no choice. Not only do they have little interest in fisticuffs with superheroes (they have bigger fish to fry), they know they're unlikely to win. The longer a fight goes on, the more time policemen have to arrive on the scene, and eventually sheer numbers will overwhelm the team. If the situation goes from bad to worse, Nova splits up, each member going in a separate direction, with Decibelle using her powers over sound to distract pursuit.

**Campaign Use:** Nova is a team of teens who all feel that the adult world has done them wrong. They have little respect for adults and what they represent; their lives have taught them that not only are adults untrustworthy, but they'll try to take advantage of youth at every turn. In many ways they have even less respect for adult superheroes, because those superheroes are supposed to be the best the

adult world has to offer... and to Nova, the adult world's best isn't nearly good enough.

None of them are willing to stop to listen to what an adult superhero might have to say. Their attitudes range from Decibelle's, who hates authority figures and believes adult superheroes have neglected ARGENT's victims, to Arcane's, who just thinks no adult superhero will believe him and his story. Whatever the individual's attitude, the team as a whole has no use for adults. Even Marble Man, who idolizes superheroes far more than his teammates, doesn't stop to listen — after a short life on the street, chased by policemen for stealing toys and food, he knows superheroes are little more than policemen in cooler uniforms.

Before Arcane was framed for murder, adult superheroes might've turned a blind eye to Nova and its attitude, but now it seems Nova's out of control. While a team like the Motor City Defenders is largely harmless — in other words, if adults are tracking them down, it's because they're worried the teens are going to get hurt, not because the teens are going to hurt someone — Nova seems to have gone rogue, the young superheroes taking a turn down the path leading to supervillainy.

You can easily use Nova in any adventure involving ARGENT. Not only has the organization framed one of Nova's members for murder, but now when the team attacks one of ARGENT's cover organizations, ARGENT makes it look like Nova is a bunch of vandals or terrorists. Since Nova can't explain its side of the story, the authorities are left with no one's story but ARGENT's. The NYPD's file concerning Nova's criminal activities grows larger by the week.

To make matters worse, Nova has begun taking money from the criminals and supervillains it stops. The members rationalize this by saying they're putting the money to a good use — and they need to eat, but can't hold down jobs. This bending of the law has started them down a slippery slope of taking the law into their own hands. More than once, Decibelle has mentioned that some of the adults they encounter, especially the doctors and scientists working for ARGENT, don't deserve to live. While Arcane has always persuaded her that they don't have the right to act as executioner, Decibelle continues to bring it up.

Nova Hunts anyone it believes is involved with the murder of Hyrum Weismann, and anyone they think is exploiting or has exploited children. Furthermore, Nova's members have become reckless and rash since being forced underground. They already nurture a great distrust of the adult world, and it doesn't take much for them to believe the worst about an adult.

ARCANE					
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes	
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]	
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6	
12	CON	4	11-		
10	BODY	0	11-		
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-	
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6	
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6	
14	COM	2	12-		
4	PD	2		Total: 14 PD (10 rPD)	
4	ED	2		Total: 14 ED (10 rED)	
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
6	REC	4			
32	END	4			
30	STUN	9		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 84</b>	
<b>Movement:</b>		Running:	6"/12"		
		Flight:	20"/40"		
<b>Cost Powers</b>					<b>END</b>
20	<i>Air Elemental Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 60-point powers; all Requires A Magic Roll (-½)				
20	1) <i>Control The Winds:</i> Telekinesis (40 STR); Requires A Magic Roll (-½)				6
20	2) <i>Ride The Wind:</i> Flight 20"; Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Requires A Magic Roll (-½)				0
20	3) <i>Air Wall:</i> Force Wall (12 PD/12 ED); Requires A Magic Roll (-½)				6
25	<i>Air Shield:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)				1
5	<i>Mystic Defenses:</i> Mental Defense (9 points total)				0
5	<i>Mystic Defenses:</i> Power Defense (5 points)				0
25	<i>Untapped Mystical Potential:</i> Aid Magic 4d6, any Magic power or Characteristic one at a time (+¼); Self Only (-½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)				0
<b>Skills</b>					
6	+2 with Flight				
2	CK: New York City 11-				
2	KS: Arcane & Occult Lore 11-				
13	Magic 17-				
3	Streetwise 11-				
<b>Total Powers &amp; Skills Cost: 166</b>					
<b>Total Cost: 250</b>					
<b>100+ Disadvantages</b>					
5	<i>Distinctive Features:</i> Dreadlocks Blow Around His Head (Easily Concealed [by wearing a hat or tying them back]; Noticed and Recognizable)				
30	<i>Hunted:</i> ARGENT 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)				
25	<i>Hunted:</i> NYPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)				
10	<i>Reputation:</i> murderer, 8- (Extreme)				
20	<i>Social Limitation:</i> Public Identity (David Miller) (Frequently, Severe)				
10	<i>Vulnerability:</i> 1½ x STUN from Fire attacks (Common)				
10	<i>Vulnerability:</i> 1½ x BODY from Fire attacks (Common)				
40	Experience Points				

## ARCANE PLOT SEEDS

Arcane turns himself in, showing up on the PCs' doorstep and telling them they can take him in if they leave the rest of Nova alone — but his teammates don't want to be left alone and are determined to free him. Can the PCs stop Nova from attacking the police station where Arcane is being held and making an even bigger mess of their lives?

One of the mystic PCs has a sudden vision of a rent opening up in the sky and angry air elementals pouring out into the world. At the center of the rent, his chest laid open with the tip of an immense tornado's funnel spiraling out of his heart, is Arcane. Will the PCs realize Arcane's bonding to an air elemental was more than a fluke — it was instead a plot to unleash destruction on the Earth? Whose plot is it, and can the heroes find Arcane in time to stop this vision from coming to pass?

The PCs learn of Arcane's innocence and vow to prove it — but as they investigate, they begin to discover more and more evidence that proves Arcane was the murderer. Did ARGENT really kill Hyrum Weismann? Is Arcane lying about being innocent?

### Total Disadvantage Points: 250

**Background/History:** David Miller ducked into the alley and anxiously looked around, searching for any onlookers. When he didn't see anyone, he pulled off his knit cap and scratched his head. Like they had for the last three days, his dreads started whipping around his head.

"Oy! Now that elemental's *meshugge!*"

David hurried to put his cap back on his head, then looked to see who was talking. Sitting on the second story fire escape was an old man. He took the pipe out of his mouth, gestured toward David's hair with its stem, and asked, "How'd you come by that, boychik?"

David hunched his shoulders and tried to sidle away, but the old man wasn't having any of it. "Good idea — I'll meet you at the entrance!"

And that was how David Miller met Hyrum Weismann.

Until then David had thought he was a mutant. What he learned instead is that an air elemental had somehow been trapped in *Assiah*, the Material World. In an attempt to save itself from dissolution by the insensible winds of this world it bonded itself to David. It chose David because he had mystic potential, and that potential gave it the sustenance it needed to survive. It was this potential Hyrum was interested in.

Hyrum was a student of the Kabbalah, and he was nearing the end of his life. Because of his studies, he'd never had time to start a family, and he found himself increasingly worried that his knowledge would die with him. After spending some time with him and ascertaining he was a good kid (if a little misguided and rough around the edges), he decided the boy with the unruly hair was the answer to his problems.

David didn't have much family to speak of — his mother had run out on the family long ago, and his father didn't much care whether David stayed or went. So David spent more and more time with Hyrum, first learning how to control his air elemental, then learning the Kabbalah.

Then ARGENT killed Hyrum and pinned it on David. Now David's on the run with the rest of Nova, trying to stay out of jail and prove his innocence.

**Personality/Motivation:** Arcane's been through a lot in the last few years, and those changes have left him uncertain and confused. Before inexplicably gaining an air elemental "familiar," he was a rebellious and loud-mouthed young man, an outsider among his fellow students because they thought he was either too strange or too much of a troublemaker. He was constantly in trouble with his teachers, serving detention after detention; the only thing that kept him from being expelled was the fact that his grades were good. And he didn't have much of a homelife. Unlike some of the other members of Nova, Arcane's father didn't abuse him, betray him, or abandon him — he just didn't acknowledge the boy's existence. Arcane came and went as he pleased, and as far as food and whatever else he wanted were concerned, he had to provide for himself.

But then Arcane met Hyrum Weismann and

things began to change. Learning about mysticism and his own untapped potential gave Arcane focus, and Hyrum's constant lessons about morality and ethics made Arcane reflect for the first time on his life and what he'd been doing with it. He'd never been a bad kid, but he'd never been a good one either — and with Hyrum's help he was learning the difference.

Then Arcane met Decibelle and his life came into even greater focus. They rented an apartment together, and for the first time he had a home to call his own. Not just the roof over his head his father had provided, but a home that was a safe haven in a world that didn't care about him. And although Decibelle might have been a bad influence because of her wild streak and hatred of authority figures, the fact that someone loved him gave Arcane comfort.

Arcane was well on his way to becoming both a responsible adult and a talented mystic... but then ARGENT murdered Hyrum, taking away what little stability he had. Without that stability, Arcane started losing his grip. The grief over Hyrum's death, the stress of being wanted by the police, and the anxiety of having to look after three younger children have all taken their toll on him. There are bags under his eyes because he can't sleep at night, and his face is drawn and pinched. He rarely smiles and almost never laughs. And while he's grown more somber, Decibelle has become more reckless and disgusted with adults... and since he often feels she's all he has left, he lets her have a greater influence over him than he otherwise might.

**Quote:** "A strong, cleansing wind is what's needed to blow the stink away from this place..."  
*Whoooooosh....*

**Powers/Tactics:** The majority of Arcane's powers stem from the air elemental bonded to his soul. He's learned to control it, and by drawing on its powers he can fly, unleash blasts of wind that strike with great force, and command the elemental to coalesce into a wall of solid air. Arcane is the group's best flyer and typically engages any enemies in the air, but because of his low Characteristics he isn't much of a combatant. In combat Decibelle's preference is to have him hang back and come to the aid of other team members, either using his Telekinesis to lift them out of trouble or his Force Wall to protect them from danger. He also serves as the team's transportation by telekinetically carrying the non-flying members of Nova while he flies.

Arcane cannot communicate directly with the air elemental bound to him (nor does he know how it came into this world), but when he sleeps he has strange dreams. The dreams show scenes from an alien realm — the air elemental's home — as well as scenes from throughout history involving sorcerers, both human and inhuman, summoning the air elemental out of its home realm and into the Material World. Hyrum found these dreams intriguing, but he never told Arcane why.

Arcane's Untapped Mystical Potential is a nascent VPP. He can use it to increase any of his powers or Characteristics (which all ultimately result from Magic, though his powers also have an

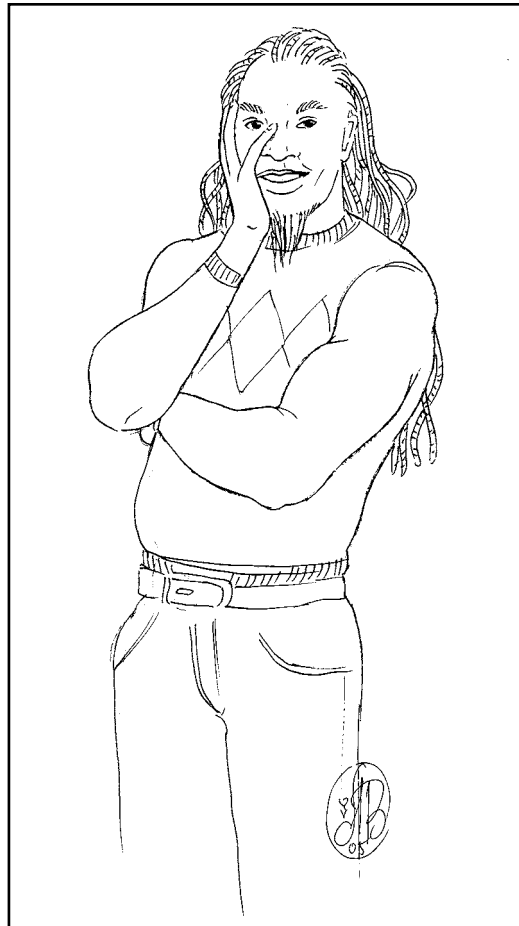
“air” special effect), but it only works for him. Typically he uses it in one of three ways. If he needs to fly faster, he Aids his SPD. If he’s under attack, he Aids his Force Field. And if he’s attacking someone, he Aids his DEX so he has a better chance of hitting. Hyrum had only just started teaching Arcane how to tap his mystic powers — the old man felt the boy needed to develop his mystic defenses before embarking on the dangerous road of the sorcerer. Had Hyrum lived, Arcane would have eventually developed his Untapped Mystical Potential into a full-blown Variable Power Pool, but since Hyrum’s death, his development as a mystic has stopped. In time, hopefully it will resume.

**Campaign Use:** In many ways, Arcane is the heart of Nova, because the whole team has come together around him and his innocence. If he were taken away from the team or decided to call it quits, the team would fall apart. Decibelle would definitely stop being a superhero, and none of the others are mature enough to keep the team together. If the PCs are going to help Nova, they need to deal with Arcane and his problems, and the quickest way to gain the suspicious teens’ trust is to prove Arcane’s innocence. Arcane is also the voice of reason in the group, although more and more he keeps his thoughts to himself as he turns increasingly inward. Any sensible and level-headed dealings with Nova require the PCs to get Arcane to speak up and become involved in the discussion.

Arcane Hunts anyone connected with Hyrum’s murder, even if the connection is incidental or tenuous. Though the rest of Nova is interested in proving Arcane’s innocence, Arcane mostly wants to bring the murderer to justice and does whatever it takes if he thinks he has a good shot at accomplishing this goal.

To make Arcane more powerful, either increase his physical Characteristics, especially his DEX, END, and STUN, to make him more effective in combat; or change his Aid into a 30- to 40-point VPP to reflect his increasing understanding of mysticism. To make him less powerful, reduce the points in his Elemental Control to 40 and lower the powers accordingly.

**Appearance:** Arcane is a young black man who stands 6’2” and weighs 180 pounds. He keeps his hair in long, slender dreadlocks, which he ties back when disguising his identity, and has a neatly trimmed goatee. As Arcane he unties his dreadlocks and lets them whirl and whip about his head in the breeze created by the air elemental. Though both he and Decibelle wore masks when they first started superheroing, they have since given up even that small piece of costuming after ARGENT revealed their secret identities to the authorities. Arcane wears loose-fitting jeans, sweaters or long-sleeved jerseys depending on the weather, and beige work boots.



## CIRCUIT BREAKER PLOT SEEDS

Circuit Breaker shows up on the PCs' doorstep and begs them for their help. ARGENT has captured the rest of Nova and she needs the heroes' help to rescue them. Will the PC realize ARGENT has figured out a way to take control of Circuit Breaker and is using the girl to lead them into a trap?

In an attempt to capture Nova, the PCs only capture Circuit Breaker. They discover her condition and promise to help. When Nova tries to break her free, can the PCs get them to listen to reason?

Circuit Breaker kills herself. Now Nova is on a rampage against ARGENT. When it leaves dead ARGENT agents in its wake, will the PCs try to stop the furious teens? When the PCs hear about what ARGENT did to Circuit Breaker, will they want to stop Nova? Last but not least, can someone who's that much machine really be dead?

## CIRCUIT BREAKER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
6	COM	-2	11-	
7	PD	4		Total: 16 PD (9 rPD)
7	ED	4		Total: 16 ED (9 rED)
3	SPD	8		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
33	STUN	2		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 72</b>

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

### Cost Powers END

15	<i>Cyberkinesis:</i> Elemental Control, 30-point powers	
15	1) <i>Machine Control:</i> Mind Control 6d6 (Machine class of minds)	3
15	2) <i>Machine Images:</i> Mental Illusions 6d6 (Machine class of minds)	3
15	3) <i>Machine Communications:</i> Telepathy 6d6 (Machine class of minds)	3
20	4) <i>Machine Manipulation:</i> Telekinesis (30 STR), Fine Manipulation; Only To Control Machines And Machine Parts (-1)	5
27	<i>Armor Plating:</i> Armor (9 PD/9 ED)	0

### Skills

12	+4 with Computer Programming, Electronics, and Systems Operation
3	Computer Programming 12-
3	Electronics 12-
3	Systems Operation 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 128**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

15	Distinctive Features: Cyborg (Concealable With Difficulty; Causes Major Reaction)
30	Hunted: ARGENT 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
25	Hunted: NYPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hates Being A Cyborg (Common, Strong)
10	Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Public Identity (Elizabeth Forston) (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 210**

**Background/History:** "Look, Lizzie! — a letter from the Greenworld Foundation! I bet you won!" Sister Margaret had a wide smile on her face. She held up the envelope for Lizzie to see, her finger pointing to the letterhead that showed a green stylized tree with broad branches.

Lizzie had entered the contest months ago and forgotten all about it, but at the time she'd dearly wanted to win. Thirty young girls and boys would win a trip to summer camp upstate, and Lizzie

couldn't remember the last time she'd been in a place where she had looked all around and not seen cement, or looked up into the sky at night and seen the stars.

She took the letter eagerly, but then she shoved it back in Sister Margaret's hand, saying, "No... you open it."

Sister Margaret did as Lizzie asked and her smile got even wider. She hugged the girl and showed her the letter, pointing to the line that said "We're please to inform you that we have chosen you..."

A month later Sister Margaret got a second letter from the Greenworld Foundation. The police had already told her that Lizzie and the twenty-nine other winners had died in an auto accident — the bus taking them to the summer camp had crashed, then gone up in flames, leaving no survivors — and this letter conveyed the Greenworld Foundation's condolences. Sister Margaret frowned briefly as she read the letter, remembering the tragedy, but she soon threw it away. She and the rest of the orphanage were done mourning for poor Lizzie Forston. She had become one more memory, just another girl who had passed through the orphanage and was now no longer there. But perhaps if the sisters had known the truth, they would've continued to mourn.

The Greenworld Foundation was an ARGENT front. It held the contest as a scheme to gain a new crop of adolescent subjects for various experimental projects. ARGENT scientists soon determined the fourteen-year-old girl possessed latent cyberkinetic powers — and those powers dovetailed perfectly with an ongoing project. For the corrupt scientists running Project Manufactured Intelligence, the girl with latent cyberkinetic powers was a godsend.

Artificial intelligences were in high demand among the rogue nations and criminal organizations on ARGENT's client list, but they were notoriously difficult to build — the spark of intelligence necessary for peak performance was a fluke, not something technicians could guarantee. ARGENT scientists postulated that with the right technology they could transform a human being into an AI. The human brain already possessed the necessary processing abilities; it was just a matter of expanding its calculating capacity, connecting it to a network, and slaving it to user input. To take the next step, however, they needed a human brain perfectly suited to the experiment — one with powers of cyberkinesis.

After weeks of painful surgery Lizzie's higher mental faculties were "shut off" and her latent powers activated. Then ARGENT hooked her into a specially-constructed computer, making her its organic CPU. For two weeks she functioned as the perfect AI — perhaps a little slow and lacking in personality, but good enough that ARGENT could sell her for a high price. Then Nova — at the time consisting of Arcane, Decibelle, and Crazy Legs — discovered the location where Lizzie was held and broke her free. After they freed her from ARGENT, Lizzie still had the use of her cyberkinetic powers. What she didn't have was a normal human body.

**Personality/Motivation:** ARGENT transformed Lizzie into a cyborg, and the drastic changes to her body have made her despondent — and lately suicidal. She rarely speaks; her voice has a low mechanical buzz, so the sound of it depresses her. She wears clothing on every part of her body, because she can't stand looking at her robotic parts and the metallic plating covering her skin.

To make matters worse she's been in constant pain since Nova saved her from ARGENT. As a cyborg she still has organic components. As a teen she's still growing, but metal doesn't grow. The growth and changes that are a natural part of adolescence are causing painful swelling as her flesh pushes up against her metal parts, causing the bolts piercing her bones to pull free, millimeter by painful millimeter. Circuit Breaker has only recently begun to suspect this is why she's in so much pain, and she's kept it a secret from her friends — she truly hates her body and has no interest in discussing it. Besides, she knows there's nothing any of her teammates can do. The only people she thinks can help her are ARGENT scientists, and she'll take her own life — a thought that occurs to her more and more often — before she allows herself to fall back into ARGENT's clutches.

To some extent, Circuit Breaker blames the sisters at the orphanage for what's happened to her, and after hearing her friends' stories, she also blames adults in general. After all, the sisters never bothered to come looking for her, but it was the adults at ARGENT who took away her body and gave her this hideous thing of metal.

**Quote:** "I just want my hair back — if I could just have hair again, I think it'd be better."

**Powers/Tactics:** Circuit Breaker is a cyberkinetic whose powers were activated by the changes ARGENT made to her body. Since she was intended to be hooked up to a computer permanently, ARGENT changed her body so it could better survive the inert, comatose state she would experience as a part of Project Manufactured Intelligence, as well as make it easier for technicians to care for her. These changes have given her increased physical characteristics — although not superhuman abilities — and made her body better able to withstand damage.

During Nova's crusade against ARGENT, Circuit Breaker's powers have made her invaluable. She can jam the guns ARGENT agents use and stall their vehicles, but most importantly she can penetrate ARGENT security systems and computer files, discovering the locations of other facilities. Without Circuit Breaker, Nova's battle against ARGENT would be much less effective. But in a fight versus superhumans Circuit Breaker is ineffectual unless there are security systems she can tap into and turn against the opponents. In these situations she mainly takes cover and, if possible, taps into a nearby radio to monitor police bands so Nova can leave before the cops arrive. When Nova tries to escape the authorities, Circuit Breaker often uses her powers to create traffic jams by changing stoplights and stalling cars.

Circuit Breaker's *Computer Programming*, *Electronics*, and *System Operations Skills* represent her cyberkinetic powers, not her knowledge. She cannot explain what she does or pass along her knowledge to others.

**Campaign Use:** While most members of Nova focus solely on proving Arcane's innocence, Circuit Breaker is a growing problem her teammates must someday confront — and when they do, things are likely to come to a head. Nova doesn't have the resources or contacts of more prominent super-teams, and there's simply nothing any of them can do to help her. When the time comes, they'll have to swallow their pride and contempt for adults and seek help. Conceivably Nova might prove Arcane's innocence on its own, never reconciling itself with the adult world. But Circuit Breaker's situation provides a way for the PCs to prove to Nova that not all adults are bad... *if* the PCs can help her.

And Circuit Breaker desperately needs help. Eventually she's going to die, either because the growth of her body literally tears her apart, or because the pain drives her to suicide. As the situation worsens, she'll have a harder time hiding her condition from her teammates — especially Decibelle, who's already worried. When knowledge of Circuit Breaker's condition comes to light, Arcane will turn himself in if someone promises to help Lizzie with her problem.

To make Circuit Breaker more powerful, increase her STR to 50 and her CON and BODY to



30 — the scientists made her into a very powerful cyborg. To reduce her power, lower her EGO. Lizzie is unlikely to Hunt people; she's too wrapped up in her own problem to seek vengeance on anyone else.

**Appearance:** Circuit Breaker stands 5'3" and is slender, but weighs nearly 300 pounds because of all the metal in her body. She wears a thick black body stocking, and over this a long loose skirt that reaches her ankles and a loose smock. She wears gloves to cover her hands and a long scarf to wrap around her neck. More and more, despite Decibelle's protests, she's taken to dressing all in black. Her head is mostly normal looking — she has blue eyes, a small nose, and a perpetually frowning mouth — but she has no hair. Instead her head is covered with small metal openings, and when she uses her cyberkinetic powers, three-inch wires emerge from the openings and buzz with electricity.

## ARGENT VERSUS NOVA

In addition to wanting two of its test subjects back, ARGENT hasn't taken Nova's attacks on its operations lightly. The organization's leadership has created a task force of outside consultants and specialists on loan from other departments and divisions to track down the teens, capture Circuit Breaker and Crazy Legs, and terminate the other members of the team. In addition to local support personnel assigned to the task force and the funds budgeted for freelance security detail, the main members of the team are:

### Mundane Personnel

**Group Leader Thaddeus Crown:** A former CIA operative fired on moral and ethical grounds, Crown specialized in kidnapping and extortion for the Company, and he's put the skills learned during his time with the Agency to good use for ARGENT. After the failed kidnapping of a Russian oil mogul's daughter, Crown found himself in the bad graces of certain members of the organization. They reassigned him to New York and gave him the job of tracking down a bunch of snot-nosed kids. Crown is unhappy with his current posting and wants to get the job done ASAP. Already hard to get along with, he has become more so as it takes longer and longer to track down Nova.

**Joe Spence, P.I.:** Although he dresses sloppily in rumpled clothes and a trenchcoat, Spence has made big money working in corporate espionage. His usual task involves following high-level executives, digging up dirt on them, and photographing them in compromising positions, which his employers then use to manipulate the target firm. He agreed to this assignment in hopes of being put on retainer by several of ARGENT's cover corporations.

**Doctor Ron Lu:** Doctor Lu is a child psychiatrist who lost his license after the authorities discovered his romance with one of his patients, a sixteen year-old girl. Having recently been released from prison, Dr. Lu has taken a position with ARGENT; this is first assignment. His role is to compile personality profiles of the targets and predict their behavior and actions. Although he's mentally unstable pervert who's addicted to a variety of antidepressants and amphetamines, Dr. Lu has startling insight into the adolescent psyche.

Continued on page 106

## CRAZY LEGS

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
9	EGO	-2	11-	ECV: 3
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
12	PD	8		Total: 12 PD (4 rPD)
12	ED	9		Total: 12 ED (4 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	0		
42	END	6		
44	STUN	11		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 123</b>

Movement:	Running:	12"/24"
	Leaping:	10"/20"
	Swimming:	12"/24"

Cost	Powers	END
	<i>Martial Arts: Football Fighting Style</i>	
	<b>Maneuver</b> OCV DCV Effect	
3	Flying Tackle 0 -1	6d6 + v/5; You Fall, Target Falls; FMove
4	High Steppin' +0 +5	Dodge, Abort
3	Holding Penalty -1 -1	Grab Two Limbs, 40 STR for holding on
4	Straight Arm +0 +2	8d6 Strike
4	Throw Off Tacklers +0 +0	45 STR vs. Grabs
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added)	
4	<i>Thick Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (4 PD/4 ED)	0
18	<i>Fast:</i> Running +6" (12" total), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
10	<i>Fast Swimmer Too:</i> Swimming +10" (12" total)	1
6	<i>Strong Leaper:</i> Leaping +6" (10" forward, 5" upward)	1

### Skills

3	+1 with Football Fighting Style
5	+1 DCV
2	PS: Student Athlete 11-
1	KS: Basketball 8-
2	KS: Football 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 77**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

30	Hunted: ARGENT 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
25	Hunted: NYPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
15	Psychological Limitation: Headstrong And Reckless (Common, Strong)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (under 18) (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Public Identity (Hank Henderson) (Frequently, Major)
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x Effect from Drugs or Drug-like Powers (Common)



**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** “You listen to me, Hank — you’re going to see this doctor and you’re going to take whatever medicine he gives you, because this is *our* future we’re talking about.

“You, my boy, are going to be the best running back Roosevelt High has ever seen, and you’re going to get a scholarship to a good school — and you’re going to go in the first round of the draft and sign a multi-million dollar contract. *Then* you, me, and your Ma are going to live like kings.

“So don’t you give me any more lip about steroids,” Hank’s father finished as he banged his meaty fist on the large metal door.

Hank’s mother nodded her head and told her son to mind his father. If he just listened to his father this one time, everything would work out fine.

Hank didn’t say anything. He hung his head and stuffed his hands in the pockets of his letterman jacket. He looked around the dark alley. The place didn’t look like any sports doctor’s office he’d ever seen, and he wondered again how his dad had heard about the place.

Bolts clanked back, and the door opened slowly. Hank looked inside and saw a gleaming steel room far different than the dingy alley he stood in. The two men standing at the door held assault rifles, and Hank and his parents squeezed by them.

Behind a window in the wall was a second room dimly lit by a green glow. In it there was an old man wearing a white coat and holding a clipboard. While one of the guards held his gun on Hank and his family, the other frisked them. As the door shut behind him with a hollow clank, Hank wondered what his dad had gotten them into.

The gunmen prodded them with the barrels of their guns to the center of the room. The family stood there in silence, and Hank could see the doctor behind the glass looking at read-outs, making a notation on his clipboard, and then adjusting a dial. Finally he spoke into a microphone, his voice coming over the intercom: “The young specimen will do.”

A gun fired near his right ear, then it fired again to his left, and his father’s and mother’s blood splattered across the far wall. Hank didn’t hesitate. He tried to make it to the door, but the other two men were too strong. While one held him down, the other pulled out a taser....

And that’s the last thing Hank remembers until he awoke in a lab, strapped to a metal table. Looking down at him were Decibelle and Arcane. When he finally assured them he wasn’t going to go on a rampage, they undid his straps, and Hank learned that his father had been right about one thing. The doctor’s medicine would’ve made him the best running back the high school had ever seen....

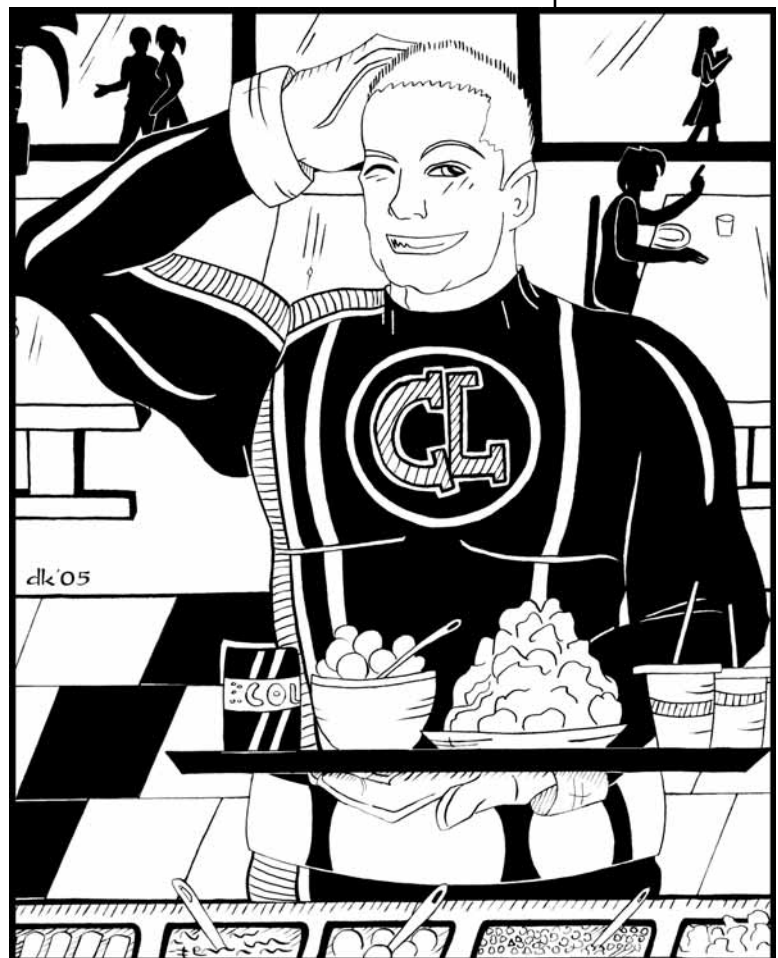
**Personality/Motivation:** Hank Henderson was a talented high school athlete, and his parents had high hopes for him. They thought of Hank as their winning lottery ticket. When Hank’s father heard rumors of a steroid program that would turn his son into a perfect physical specimen, he decided to make Hank’s good shot at the pros a sure thing.

Hank had always done what his father told him to, but he harbored a growing resentment for the man, as well as the mother who never questioned her husband’s decisions. Some of this was the natural resentment a teen feels toward his parents, but much of it was because his father lived vicariously through him. As Hank got older, it became more apparent that to his father he was nothing but a meal ticket.

When ARGENT killed his parents, Hank was shocked, but he didn’t weep for them. Though he sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night screaming in terror because he had a nightmare about when his parents were killed, he’s never admitted he misses them. He’s come to view all adults as envious of youth and only interested in using him — after all, if a kid can’t trust his parents, what adult can he trust?

Crazy Legs has enjoyed his life since Arcane and Decibelle freed him from the ARGENT lab. He revels in his physical powers, and sometimes dreams of going back to high school and playing football again — even though he knows that will never happen. He never liked the actual “learning” part of going to school and has no intention of returning, especially since the coach would never let a person with superpowers on the team.

He knows that if the authorities ever capture Nova, they’ll send him back to school, so he has no interest in leaving the team. Additionally, he has a deep sense of loyalty to Arcane and Decibelle, and considers Nova his family. A



## CRAZY LEGS PLOT SEEDS

Crazy Legs isn't done growing yet — nor is he done changing. The mental instability the other test subjects experienced starts to take its hold on him... and to make matters worse, his strength increases dramatically. Can the PCs stop his rampage — and stop Nova from interfering?

Crazy Legs learns of the Arena, an illegal superhuman wrestling organization, and starts fighting to earn extra money. When the PCs bust one of the matches, will they realize Crazy Legs is a member of Nova?

When the commanding officer of a special forces unit questions the PCs about their encounters with Nova, the heroes know something's going on. Why has the government taken a sudden interest in a team of young heroes? Could it be because of the superhuman-soldier serum in Crazy Legs's bloodstream? And is the special forces unit from *the US* government?

good-hearted kid, Crazy Legs truly likes the other members of Nova, though he has a difficult time expressing it. He often chooses to use sports metaphors for his teammates, with Arcane and Decibelle becoming coach and captain, respectively, Circuit Breaker a teammate who needs plenty of pep talks, and Marble Man the waterboy. And just like he would never let an opposing linebacker sack his quarterback, he's not going to let the police capture Arcane. Not a deep thinker, Crazy Legs has never stopped to consider his feelings about being a superhero, but it's likely that even if Nova disbanded, he wouldn't stop doing good with his powers — but he'd probably get himself a costume. He's never said anything about costumes around Arcane and Decibelle, because he knows what they think and he doesn't want to seem uncool around the older kids, but he thinks the team needs costumes. Being superheroes without

## ARGENT VERSUS NOVA

Continued from page 104

### Superhuman Personnel

ARGENT has assigned Crown three superhuman freelancers to help him neutralize Nova. Crown trusts none of them, and until conflict is imminent, he has no intention of informing of them of the targets. Currently the freelancers spend their time in combat simulations against androids with powers similar to those of Nova.

**Engine And Wingman:** Originally mercenaries, Engine and Wingman are two cyborgs who have worked for most every villainous organization on Earth, from VIPER to other, less long-standing groups like the Borland Fund and the Shadow Soviet. Over the last decade they've become a hodge-podge assembly of cyborg prosthetics, cybernetics, and jury-rigged operating systems, with each organization that employed them adding mission-based modifications to the work of previous employers. They've accepted the assignment in exchange for lifetime servicing of their parts. Engine is a walking tank and hand-to-hand combatant whose task is to capture Circuit Breaker and Crazy Legs; Wingman is an aerial specialist assigned to terminating Arcane. ARGENT cyberneticists have installed shielding to prevent Circuit Breaker from manipulating the cyborgs' artificial parts (although whether the shielding is adequate is still being debated).

**Radiowave:** Usually employed as a human listening device, Radiowave is a mutant who can manipulate soundwaves. He can neither create nor entirely nullify them, only manipulate already existing sounds. Specialists have assured Group Leader Crown that Radiowave can negate Decibelle's powers. Crown remains unconvinced and has approached the supervillainess Howler, who is both curious about the girl purported (wrongfully) to be her daughter and never adverse to making a quick buck, about joining the task force.

wearing costumes is, to Crazy Legs, like playing in the big game without uniforms. Not wearing uniforms is all right for a pick-up game or something, but who ever heard of a team taking the field on a Friday night without wearing uniforms?

**Quote:** “He ducks... he spins... the crowd goes wild... and he scores!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Crazy Legs is a product of one of ARGENT's many attempts to produce a superhuman-soldier serum. Though the rest of the subjects died during the testing — the hearts of some couldn't take the strain, while others went insane and were sold off to clients as berserk cannon fodder — Crazy Legs came through physically well and mentally stable. ARGENT was just getting ready to subject him to an extensive battery of tests that would've likely left him dead, and then dissect his corpse to determine why the serum succeeded in his case, when Arcane and Decibelle saved him.

Crazy Legs's powers are straightforward: he's fast, strong, and uses his football skills to incapacitate his opponents. In combat he tends to pick the largest opponent and tries to beat him up, moving in and out of HTH Combat. He has a bad habit of ignoring Decibelle's orders, and his recklessness has gotten him in trouble many times. Decibelle constantly tells him that one of these days Arcane won't be there to pull him out of trouble, but Crazy Legs just scoffs.

**Campaign Use:** Crazy Legs is the lighthearted and optimistic member of Nova, the one who never gives up in the face of insurmountable odds and never surrenders in the face of the impossible. He rallies the team when things look worst, especially when Decibelle has succumbed to her anger. As a Hunted Crazy Legs would be something less than sophisticated — he'd just find whomever he was after and ask him to “step outside.”

To make Crazy Legs more powerful, give him more Levels with his Martial Arts and more maneuvers, including a Block and an Offensive Strike. Though he's superhumanly fast and strong, he shouldn't be *that* fast and strong, so be leery of raising his STR and Running. To further increase his power, give him some Damage Reduction. To decrease his abilities, remove his Combat Skill Levels.

**Appearance:** Crazy Legs is a big guy: 6'3", 240 pounds, broad across the chest and hips... and not done growing yet. He has a square face with a blue eyes and blond hair that he keeps in a crewcut. Always smiling, he appears friendly and non-threatening despite his size. He wears muscle shirts with the number 40 on the front, blue jeans, and running shoes.

DECIBELLE				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 150 kg; 3d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	1		Total: 14 PD (10 rPD)
8	ED	6		Total: 18 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	6		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	6		
34	END	5		
40	STUN	16		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 99</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Flight: 15"/30"

**Cost Powers** **END**

40	<i>Sonic Powers:</i> Multipower, 40-point reserve	
3u	1) <i>Sonic Blast:</i> Energy Blast 8d6; Does Not Work In A Vacuum (-¼)	4
2u	2) <i>Wide Sonic Blast:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, Area Of Effect (5" Cone; +1); No Range (-½), Does Not Work In A Vacuum (-¼)	4
3u	3) <i>Focused Sonic Blast:</i> RKA 2½d6; Does Not Work In A Vacuum (-¼)	4
3u	4) <i>Deafening Blast:</i> Hearing Group Flash 11d6; Does Not Work In A Vacuum (-¼)	3
3u	5) <i>Absorb Ambient Sound:</i> Darkness to Hearing Group 8" radius; No Range (-½)	4
3u	6) <i>Mimic Sounds:</i> Images to Hearing Group, -6 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (8" radius; +¾); Does Not Work In A Vacuum (-¼)	4
25	<i>Sonic Force Field:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
24	<i>Sonic Waves:</i> Flight 15"; Does Not Work In A Vacuum (-¼)	2
13	<i>Sonar:</i> Active Sonar (Hearing Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees); Costs Endurance (-½)	2
3	<i>Enhanced Hearing:</i> Ultrasonic Hearing (Hearing Group)	0
6	<i>Enhanced Hearing:</i> +3 PER with Hearing Group	0

**Skills**

6	+2 with Sonic Powers
6	AK: New York City 15-
3	Concealment 11-
5	Streetwise 13-
3	Stealth 14-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 151**

**Total Cost: 250**

**100+ Disadvantages**

10	Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
30	Hunted: ARGENT 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
25	Hunted: NYPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Authority Figures (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Uncertain Moral Code (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Nina Carrando) (Frequently, Major)
- 40 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 250**

**Background/History:** Nina Carrando thought her life had finally turned the corner. She was free of high school and the petty dictators who called themselves teachers, free of Family Services and all the foster families she'd lived with. Not all of those families had been bad, but none had been good... and there are a couple she refuses to talk about even now. She had a boyfriend she loved, and they'd started a life together. Everything was looking rosy — everything was exactly how she'd imagined life as an adult.

Then David wanted to be a superhero... and maybe he was right. Maybe, because they had superpowers, they had a responsibility to help people. And they did help people — people their age who truly needed help because other superheroes couldn't be bothered to help them because they thought helping them wasn't glamorous enough.

She was changing — she knows in her heart she was changing. David was a good influence on her. She'd started calming down. She was less reckless, less lawless. She was settling down. She'd



## DECIBELLE PLOT SEEDS

The authorities capture the rest of Nova. Decibelle has no choice but to ask the PCs to help her free them. Can they convince this angry young woman not all adults are worthless?

When Arcane dies during a raid on an ARGENT facility, Decibelle loses her grip and leads Nova on a rampage. Can the PCs calm her down... and if not, can they convince the rest of Nova to stop following her?

Though Decibelle feels most members of Nova are old enough to make their own decisions, Marble Man worries her. She approaches the PCs and asks them if they'll find a good home for him. Can the PCs turn this into an opportunity to bring Nova in, or will they further alienate Decibelle and her team? And why Decibelle's sudden change of heart concerning Marble Man — is Nova planning something dangerous?

even started thinking about attending college — although the thought of going back to school, to any school, gave her the willies.

But David wanted to be a superhero, and the more they argued, the more guilty she felt — David's influence again — so she agreed. Just this once, she said, and then we'll see.

They helped some people in desperate need, and she felt good about it. Maybe David was right, and being a superhero was the right thing to do.

See how quickly things change? ARGENT — the bad guys, the exploiters — framed David for a murder he didn't commit, and no one stopped to think about it. No one in the adult world stopped to ask: why did this guy who's helped so many people suddenly decide to kill a nice old man? They all assumed the worst. She read the newspapers day after day — they reveled in the fallen superhero, the city-wide manhunt. Nova would demolish an ARGENT secret laboratory or installation, and the newspapers would say "TEENS ON A RAMPAGE!!!" instead of "TEEN HEROES THWART EVIL ORGANIZATION." And she remembered why she hated the world so much.

**Personality/Motivation:** Decibelle is an angry young woman, and recent circumstances have only made her more angry — at the world, at society, at adults, and especially at adult superheroes. She feels it's unjust and unfair that the authorities don't give Arcane the benefit of the doubt, and when she thinks about it, it makes her so angry she can't even think straight. Nova's current situation isn't helping her problems of rage and perspective. For the sake of the rest of the team, she's tried to keep herself under control, but she knows it's only a matter of time before she snaps.

Decibelle questions everything about being a superhero — the moral codes, obeying the law, all that nonsense. More and more, her life is *not* about being a superhero; it's about keeping David safe from the police and trying to prove his innocence. Helping people, doing good deeds — these are secondary. The real reason Decibelle continues on with Nova has nothing to do with being superhero. It's because, at the moment, it's the only way to help David. It was Decibelle's idea to take money from criminals to pay Nova's way, and she's truly stopped caring whether her opponents live or die. At this point, only Arcane keeps her from stepping over the line.

**Quote:** "I'm so mad, I could scream...."

**Powers/Tactics:** Decibelle is a mutant with the power to produce and control sound waves. Her ability is more than just her vocal cords, although she often uses them to focus her power; she has the ability to control ambient sound and even create it from thin air. She can use this ability to form powerful blasts of sound, create bursts of sound that deafen her opponent, hold herself aloft, or create a force field. She can also remove the sound from an area around her and fabricate sounds to fool listeners. In combat she opens with her Area Of Effect attack, targeting as many foes as she can catch in the area, and then focuses on anyone still awake. Outside of combat, her control over soundwaves makes her excellent at infiltration. She typically goes in alone, leaving the rest of Nova to back her up, but brings Circuit Breaker along if she thinks she'll need someone to deal with security systems or computers.

**Campaign Use:** Decibelle is the loose cannon who'll eventually get Nova in over its head. She's also the one the PCs must win over to their side if they want to help the team. All the rest, including Arcane, look up to Decibelle as their leader, and will stand beside her regardless of what some adult says. To make matters worse, Decibelle is the one who trusts the adult world the least.

Decibelle makes for a tenacious Hunter. She pursues her target doggedly, and doesn't hesitate to ambush whomever she Hunts at the moment the quarry's weakest. Like Arcane, she Hunts anyone connected to Hiram's death — clearing Arcane's name is almost all she thinks about any more — and she Hunts anyone who exploits children and adolescents.

To make Decibelle more powerful, increase the points in her Multipower reserve and raise the slots accordingly. To make her less powerful, reduce the number of slots in her Multipower, taking away the Area Of Effect Energy Blast and any other powers you think are too much.

**Appearance:** Decibelle is a 5'9" tall, slender, attractive young white woman with a pale complexion and thick black hair which she keeps short and spiked. She wears hip-hugging jeans and tank tops, plus a leather jacket when it's cold. Everything about how she holds herself — from the way she frowns when an adult talks, to the way she pulls down her sunglasses when an adult says something stupid, to the way she tilts her head and cocks her hip — says she's angry, distrustful, and has a chip on her shoulder.

MARBLE MAN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
5	STR	-5	11-	Lift 50 kg; 1d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
8	CON	-4	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
9	EGO	-2	11-	ECV: 3
5	PRE	-5	10-	PRE Attack: 1d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	3		Total: 24 PD (20 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 24 ED (20 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
5	REC	4		
20	END	2		
24	STUN	9		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 56</b>

**Movement:** Running: 30"/60"

**Cost Powers** **END**

- 32 *Super-Somersaulting:* Running +24" (30" total), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Restrainable (must roll into a ball; -½), Turn Mode (-¼), Side Effects (-4 to PER Rolls while moving, always occurs; -½) 0
- 40 *Friction Field:* Force Field (20 PD/20 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only While Somersaulting (-½) 0

**Skills**

- 21 +7 with Move Through, Move By, and Grab By
- 1 KS: Superheroes 8-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 94**

**Total Cost: 150**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 30 Hunted: ARGENT 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 25 Hunted: NYPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Childish (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Forgotten His Past (Common, Total)
- 10 Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Carlitto) (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 210**

**Background/History:** The policemen were chasing him again, so Carlitto tucked the new action figure — 52 points of articulation! and Defender was his favorite — into the waist of his dirty jeans, dove for the sidewalk, rolled into a ball, and started his somersault. *Zooooom...*

He crashed into a wall, missing the stairs leading down to the subway station by just a hair... but by then the policemen were waaaaay behind him, so he just picked himself up and walked down below. It was nice to be able to see where he was going sometimes.

Once he got back to his secret hideout, he opened his action figure and put it next to the others. Not for the first time, he wondered why he couldn't find the one for Nighthawk. He'd been in

and out of every toy store in Manhattan looking for it, but no one had it. He'd used a black permanent marker on a Defender action figure to try to make a bird's beak for the helmet with a matchbook cover and some glue, but it wasn't the same and the beak kept falling off.

After he played for a while, he curled up and went to sleep. When he awoke there were some people staring down at him. He got ready to roll, but the people seemed nice, so he told them they could be members of his club, even if two of them were girls, and use his secret hideout if they wanted.

"But," he said sternly, "no one can play with my toys unless they ask me first."

**Personality/Motivation:** Carlitto has forgotten his past. All he knows is his first name and that he's lived in the sunken subway station for as long as he can remember. He doesn't know how he ended up where he is, nor does he know how he got his powers. Despite the fact that Nova always tries to leave him behind, Carlitto is hard to ditch and usually manages to sneak along — far more than the others, he likes superheroes and thinks the idea of being one himself is neat. He's taken on several superhero names — Bowling Ball, Wrecking Ball, Strike, and most recently Marble Man (despite the fact that Crazy Legs has told him that he's far from a man yet).

Carlitto is generally cheerful, although he's been known to throw a tantrum or two. He spends most of his time playing with his action figures, of



## MARBLE MAN PLOT SEEDS

Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez show up on the PCs' doorstep — they saw a photo of Nova in the newspaper the other day, and Marble Man is their son! Is he? Will the PCs help them get the boy back? Will Nova believe the Sanchezes are really Marble Man's parents, or conclude that they're just more adults looking to exploit a kid? And will they be right?

The PCs have captured the rest of Nova — now it's Marble Man to the rescue! Will the PCs be able to stop the little spitfire? Or will they be humiliated by an eight year-old?

When the PCs make a public appearance, they catch a glimpse of Marble Man in the crowd. Will they follow him back to the rest of Nova... and if they try, can they keep up with the somersaulting boy?

Marble Man learns that Foxbat has a Nighthawk action figure — mint condition! While Nova's off on a mission, he goes after the wacky criminal. The PCs stumble onto the action and have to get involved... but which one, the somersaulting kid or the cackling nutjob, will need rescuing?

which he has a large collection (but he's still looking for the rare, and thus valuable, Nighthawk). Sometimes Crazy Legs plays with him ("Just trying to keep the kid entertained," he claims, but everyone knows Crazy Legs is just an overgrown kid), but Carlitto has no problem keeping himself amused when he plays alone.

Carlitto's developed into quite the kleptomaniac over the years. His teammates have tried to get him to stop stealing, but only with limited success.

**Quote:** "Look out world! Marble Man's coming through!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Marble Man has one power: he can roll up into ball and somersault at incredible speeds. He has to put his hands over his head and tuck his chin to his chest, so he has trouble seeing when he's rolling — and if his hands aren't free, or he's otherwise restrained from rolling up into a ball, he can't move at superspeeds. Lucky for him since he often collides with things, he also generates a friction field that protects him from the high speeds he travels at and the effects of impacts.

In combat Marble Man rolls into the nearest opponent in an attempt to bowl him over, then swings in a wide arc to do it again... if he has the chance to fight. Most of the time it falls to Arcane to grab the boy telekinetically and move him to safety.

The source of Marble Man's powers is unknown. Given Nova's frequent clashes with ARGENT, as well as the fact that two of them gained their powers from the organization, the team believes Carlitto was likely kidnapped by an adult and subjected to some experiment or another.

**Campaign Use:** Marble Man's dramatic purpose is to get Nova into trouble, either by tagging along surreptitiously on their missions, or because he gets caught stealing. He also helps leaven the somber attitude of the team, and he can serve as the cavalry if Nova is captured. Finally, if the PCs weren't already worried about Nova, they should become concerned when they learn that a suspected murderer and his cronies have an eight-year-old boy with them.

As a child — and a good-natured one to boot — Marble Man isn't likely to Hunt anyone... unless, of course, they have a Nighthawk action figure....

To make Marble Man tougher, raise his Characteristics to the level of an average adult, if not higher. To decrease his power, remove his Combat Skill Levels so his chances of hitting anyone are minimized.

**Appearance:** Marble Man is short for an eight year old, standing 4'0" tall and weighing 55 pounds. Hispanic, he has brown eyes and brown hair that Decibelle keeps in a bowl cut (which he hates). He has a slight Hispanic accent, although if he ever knew

Spanish he's forgotten it, and he likes to make race car engine noises — lips flapping and spit flying — as he somersaults. Unlike the other members of Nova, Marble Man wears a costume... sort of. In addition to his tee-shirt, tennis shoes, and blue jeans, he ties an old blanket around his neck and wears a red plaid bandana, with holes cut out so he can see, over his eyes

## OTHER VILLAINOUS ORGANIZATIONS & TEENS

VIPER and ARGENT aren't the only villainous organizations whose activities impact teens.

**DEMON:** As a whole, DEMON has no agenda for teens, but it does net many teens in its recruiting networks because of the organization's outre nature, outsider appeal, and illicit reputation. Any teen who passes through the recruiting network to the Demonhome itself is usually required to run away from home — no one can become more nose-ty than the parents of a teen turned to Satanism and the occult. Any teen who comes to learn too much about the organization and either can't or won't run away from home is mentally destabilized until he commits suicide (preferably after taking the lives of others in such things as school shootings and similar events of seemingly inexplicable violence). Some Morbanes, such as the Urchin Lord of Washington, D.C. and the Shopping Cart Crone of Chicago, surround themselves with teen runaways because they find the youths easier to manipulate (and far more loyal and sycophantic than adults).

**The Institute For Human Advancement:** The IHA has an entire branch, Future Citizens, dedicated to cultivating its beliefs and anti-superhuman agenda in teens. Although Future Citizens presents itself as an organization similar to the Boy Scouts or 4H, in truth it's more like the Hitler Youth. In and around its other activities, Future Citizens teaches its members humanist doctrine (although it's more like human supremacist doctrine) while making sure they understand the threat to the "human way of life" that mutants and other superhumans pose to society. Future Citizen's volunteer work comprises much of the membership's time — whenever superhumans go on a rampage, members of the Future Citizens can be found in the aftermath helping with relief efforts — and this gives the youths a first-hand look at the evils perpetuated by superhumans. Local IHA offices organize numerous retreats where members learn survival techniques and proper handling of firearms, and listen to guest lecturers who always turn the subject to the superiority of humanity and the malice of superhumans. Twice a year there's a national Future Citizens convention where teens from all over the country congregate. Usually the convention is held in a city still recovering from some superhuman battle. Recently Charles Swain, a traditional student at Ravenswood in his third year, has submitted a request to start a Future Citizens group at the academy; Rowan has yet to approve the request.

# VILLAINS



## GENERATION VIPER

**Membership:** Mrs. Garter (leader), Dogfight, Jeepers Creepers, Spoilsport, Trashmouth, Turnabout.

**Background/History:** Kids are the future, and VIPER has finally decided to seize the future where it starts.

Generation VIPER is a worldwide program to bring VIPER ideals to the next generation. For much of its existence VIPER trusted society and base human nature to create the kinds of people who made good recruits — the greedy, the amoral, the hungry for power — but in recent years it's decided to take a more proactive approach and create these people from the ground up. The advantages are obvious: amoral adults rarely make loyal agents, but with children VIPER can give them a moral code in keeping with the organization's precepts and philosophies while instilling them with loyalty to the organization.

The project has several purposes and branches, but perhaps the most important is the training of superhuman teens — most of whom have their powers thanks to VIPER meddling with their mothers while they were pregnant, and other such experiments. VIPER has tried many ways to custom-build superhumans, and while it usually fails every now and then it succeeds (though rarely in reproduceable ways). Some of the results are children or adolescents — perfect fodder for Generation VIPER.

The oldest group of superpowered teens in Generation VIPER is located in Millennium City under the instruction of Mrs. Garter. VIPER leadership has high hopes for these teens, and Mrs. Garter is determined to prove her worth to her superiors.

In recent months Generation VIPER has finally ventured out of the training room and into the field, coming into conflict with the Motor City Defenders and local authorities. The children performed poorly in their first clash with superheroes, but Mrs. Garter has promised her superiors they'll do better next time.

**Group Relations:** Mrs. Garter is a manipulative, sadistic woman whom decent people would never let anywhere near teenagers. But VIPER is far from decent.

Mrs. Garter ensures that every member of her class is always experiencing some sort of heightened emotional state. She's found that adolescents at emotional extremes — love, fear, and hate being the most effective — perform better than those allowed to sink into a comfortable apathy. She makes sure one classmate hates another (so he tries

to outdo or embarrass his rival) or is head over heels in love with another (so he tries his hardest to impress the object of his affections). To keep the group from flying apart and the infighting to a minimum (but never less than a minimum, since it's a good way to foster practices and attitudes VIPER approves of, such as backstabbing and bloodthirstiness), Mrs. Garter makes sure each class member either fears her or has a crush on her.

As for the current state of relations within the group, Mrs. Garter has encouraged Spoilsport to approach Turnabout. Traumatized by her new lifestyle, Turnabout is ready for any show of affection from anyone, even a boy as unlikable as Spoilsport. Although leery of anyone associated with VIPER, she's slowly warming to Spoilsport's advances. Mrs. Garter plans on letting the romance develop for a short while before ending it in tears. Jeepers Creepers presents Mrs. Garter with a problem. Because of her high-ranking mother, Jeepers is slightly beyond Mrs. Garter's control. To destabilize the girl Mrs. Garter has her eye on an attractive young VIPER agent new to the Nest. Jeepers is about to turn fifteen and will soon start looking more seriously at boys. A teenage crush on an older man is sure to cause her some emotional instability, and then Mrs. Garter can present herself as the older woman who helps Jeepers with advice, gets close to her, and brings her crashing down. Mrs. Garter has Trashmouth wrapped around her finger and uses him as her enforcer with the group. She rarely manipulates him other than to lead him on about her intentions toward him. Dogfight is the outsider in the group. Most of his classmates treat him like a pet. Only Trashmouth treats him like a human being — or at least treats him the same way Trashmouth treats all other humans, which isn't very well.

**Tactics:** Thanks to Mrs. Garter's teaching, Generation VIPER works fairly well as a group — not perfectly, of course, but better than one would expect of supervillains so young. Turnabout stays near the largest group of her teammates and Missile Deflects attacks against them. Spoilsport engages an opposing martial artist, trusting his preternatural luck to keep him out of harm's way long enough to make the martial artist unlucky. Trashmouth attacks the opposing brick. His goal is not necessarily to defeat the brick himself, but only cause delay while Jeepers Creepers uses her fear powers on energy projectors. Once Jeepers has the opposing energy projectors cowering with fright or running from the battle, she helps Trashmouth with the brick. Dogfight, the lone flier in the group, typically fights alone, but if the enemy lacks a flier, he carries Turnabout around

## ADULT SUPER-VILLAINS AND TEEN SUPERHEROES

When you roleplay supervillains, remember that adults never take teens seriously... and this goes double for adult supervillains when confronted by a bunch of kids in costume. The first time an adult supervillain encounters teen heroes, he should keep his guard down, offer to let them have the first punch, turn his back on them, or otherwise treat them as if they couldn't possibly pose a threat to him. Of course he might quickly learn that the teens *are* a threat and change his tactics accordingly, but the teen superheroes should have the upper hand in the first Segment or two of combat because the adult underestimates them.

the battlefield, trying to keep her within range of the opponents' energy projectors.

If Generation VIPER has a problem it's the group's lack of an energy projector. Though Turnabout often neutralizes enemy energy projectors, she can't be everywhere at once. The "G-Vs" often have to rely on support from VIPER agents to be fully effective against superhero teams.

**Campaign Use:** As supervillains in training, Generation VIPER's primary purpose is to serve as the archnemesis for a group of teen heroes in training. They also serve as an example of (a) the tempting freedoms that come with being a supervillain (thus, ultimately, forcing a PC to reaffirm his own commitment to being a superhero), and (b) what a really bad situation looks like when a PC bemoans his lot in life or the restrictions a Ravenswood student labors under.

Another use for Generation VIPER is to base a campaign around a group of teen heroes who find themselves a part of VIPER. Maybe their parents are VIPER agents and insist they join G-V, or maybe a PC has no parents and VIPER is the only home he's ever known. Whatever the situation, the PCs have fallen into the clutches of an evil organization and must chose if they're going to do what their instructors tell them, or break away from the group and try to be heroes.

To make Generation VIPER stronger, add more members (perhaps VIPER's found a way to seduce other young supers to its cause), or give the existing members plenty of VIPER gear. To weaken the team, replace Mrs. Garter with a succession of weakling instructors who can't keep the team focused or teach its members effectively.

As a Hunter, Generation VIPER does what Mrs. Garter (and thus, indirectly, VIPER's leadership) tells it to do. On its own, G-V probably couldn't muster enough unity of purpose to hunt someone... unless that someone badly hurt or humiliated all of them, giving them common cause against him.

### MRS. GARTER The Headmistress

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 150 kg; 3d6 [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	1		Total: 10 PD (6 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 10 ED (6 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
30	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 67</b>

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

#### Cost Powers END

9	<i>Eau d'Amor Perfume:</i> Major Transform 1d6 (human into human with Psychological Limitation: Crush On Mrs. Garter [Common, Strong], heals back normally), BOECV (+1), Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (perfume bottle; -1), Limited Target (humans; -½), No Range (-½), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3) <span style="float: right;">0</span>
15	<i>VB-S1 "Shorty" Blaster Pistol:</i> Energy Blast 7d6; OAF (-1), 12 Charges <span style="float: right;">[12]</span> <i>Martial Arts: VIPER Brawling</i>
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>
4	Block              +2    +2    Block, Abort
4	Dodge             —     +5    Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4	Punch             +0    +2    5d6 Strike
3	Throw            +0    +1    3d6 + v/5; Target Falls
12	<i>VIPER BCU (Elite):</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 14- (does not protect Hit Locations 3-5 or 6-7; -½) <span style="float: right;">0</span>
3	<i>VIPER Helmet (Elite) Protection:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 8- (only protects Hit Locations 3-5; -2) <span style="float: right;">0</span>
6	<i>VIPER Helmet (Elite) Communications System:</i> HRRP (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½) <span style="float: right;">0</span>
3	<i>VIPER Helmet (Elite) Nightvision System:</i> Nightvision; OIF (-½) <span style="float: right;">0</span>
13	<i>Wrist Communicator:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any eight minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼) <span style="float: right;">0</span>

#### Perks

2	Fringe Benefit: Membership (VIPER Elite Agent)
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#### Skills

3	+1 with VIPER Blasters
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- 3 Acting 13-
- 3 Bribery 13-
- 3 Bugging 13-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 3 Cryptography 13-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 Disguise 13-
- 3 Electronics 13-
- 3 High Society 13-
- 3 Interrogation 13-
- 2 KS: The Millennium City Underworld 11-
- 3 KS: The Superhuman World 13-
- 3 KS: VIPER 13-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 3 PS: Teacher 13-
- 3 PS: VIPER Agent 13-
- 3 SS: Psychology 13-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 3 Shadowing 13-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Blades

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 146**

**Total Cost: 213**

**50+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Features: VIPER uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 10 Hunted: VIPER 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Amoral (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Can't Resist Playing Games With People (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
- 98 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 213**

**Background/History:** "It says here that you lost your position in LA because of ethical misconduct. Care to elaborate, Mrs. Garter?"

Mrs. Garter smiled seductively. "I tested the class's ability to cheat by giving half the class the answers to the test and seeing if the other half could obtain those answers. The school board felt it was inappropriate, but as we both know..." she woman leaned forward and smiled again, tilting her head toward her interviewer's wedding ring, "...in the real world, cheating is a useful skill."

The man cleared his throat and quickly looked away, rustling the papers he held. "And here, at a position in Portland," he continued, his voice catching slightly, "it says 'moral turpitude' was the reason for your dismissal."

Mrs. Garter laughed — a low, throaty purr — and her eyes sparkled mischievously, but whatever thought or memory was causing her amusement, she chose not to share it. She instead raised a slender black eyebrow at her interviewer, giving him a knowing look.

"Yes. Well. Moving on... it also says that of our current instructors you have the highest fatality rate for your classes."

Mrs. Garter pushed back a stray strand of black hair, curling it behind her ear. "We train

men to kill," she answered with a shrug. "There are very few acceptable victims in Honor, Wisconsin. Besides — does VIPER really want recruits who die so easily?"

"Yes, of course, perfectly reasonable... and you're comfortable working with children?"

"Adolescents — these are adolescents, not children — and yes, I'm very comfortable working with them. I absolutely adore them and they've always been very fond of me, as well." The woman laughed.

Six weeks later her superiors transferred Mrs. Garter to the McCloskey Tunnel Nest in Millennium City to meet the first class in Generation VIPER.

**Personality/Motivation:** Mrs. Garter is a *femme fatale* put in charge of a class of young men who can't help but be infatuated with her, and young women who can't help but be jealous of her and feel insecure in her presence. She's intelligent, sophisticated, witty, and wholly amoral. Her love for teaching has little to do with any desire to work with youth or shape young minds. It has everything to do with the fact that she relishes playing games with people and manipulating them. Adolescents possess a combination of youthful naivete, inexperience, and zeal that makes them particularly delightful "toys."

That said, she's an excellent instructor, if one judges an instructor by how well the students remember their lessons. She has a deep insight into what rewards — and punishments — motivate a student to succeed. To her, manipulation and teaching are the same thing. To some extent she's right,



## MRS. GARTER PLOT SEEDS

The PCs have a substitute teacher one day, and wow — is she a looker. But when one PC recognizes her as Mrs. Garter, could it be that VIPER has uncovered the PCs' secret identities? Or does Mrs. Garter have another purpose... like recruiting one of the PCs' classmates, who unbeknownst to them has superpowers?

Who is *Mr.* Garter, one student asks. "The less said about him, the better," Mrs. Garter replies. But still the question lingers, and when the members of Generation VIPER investigate, they discover Mr. Garter is none other than one of the PCs' fathers! Dad! Tell me it ain't so!

Mrs. Garter overreached and now she's on the run from VIPER. She approaches the PCs and tells them she knows all about their secret identities. She'll spill the beans to the press if the PCs don't protect her, but can the PCs trust her? Or maybe they should just let VIPER have her....

but few people would find her methods acceptable despite the results she often achieves.

Mrs. Garter looks at Generation VIPER as a means to an end. She knows as superhumans graduate from her classes, they'll go on to important positions within the organization, and she plans to instill in each of her students — through fear, love, or both — a deep personal loyalty to their former teacher. With the power of her students at her command, she's certain she can lever herself into a position of leadership within VIPER. (Of course, current leadership realizes the influence Mrs. Garter will have over her students, and only time will tell what course they take to stymie her advancement, if they attempt to stymie it at all.)

**Quote:** "Today we'll take a field trip. It's high time you learned how to conduct a successful bank robbery."

**Powers/Tactics:** Mrs. Garter is a highly intelligent normal human who's received standard combat training for a VIPER agent. Her only exceptional piece of equipment is her Eau d'Amor Perfume, the scent of which slowly but surely overwhelms the senses of people who spend time around her, forcing them to develop a crush on her. As if her own powers of manipulation and seduction weren't enough, the perfume makes her simply irresistible. Her victims usually do whatever she asks of them in the hopes of winning her favor.

Mrs. Garter's not afraid of a fight, but prefers to manipulate people to get her way. She rarely appears in combat alongside Generation VIPER, but she's always somewhere in the immediate area, observing her students and taking notes on what they can do to improve.

**Campaign Use:** If Generation VIPER is the Ravenswood Academy's opposite, then Mrs. Garter is Rowan's dark counterpart. Like Rowan she teaches and trains, but her methods are far less respectable or constructive.

As a Hunted, Mrs. Garter works through other people to bring the object of her ire low. But she's only likely to Hunt people whose downfall leads to her betterment. In other words, unless she stands to profit she doesn't waste her time and energy Hunting someone.

Mrs. Garter shouldn't be able to go toe-to-toe with superheroes, but to make her more powerful, give her more equipment (see *VIPER* for ideas), perhaps even a vehicle. If it's likely Mrs. Garter can't avoid combat with superheroes, provide her with agents to act as a bodyguard. To make her less powerful, get rid of the equipment she has now.

**Appearance:** Mrs. Garter is a beautiful woman in her mid-thirties with blue eyes and thick black hair she wears up (but, of course, a strand or two always tumbles free). Somehow the standard issue VIPER uniform never looked so sexy. The only distinguishing piece of clothing she wears is a black silk garter around her thigh that looks like a snake biting its tail, and she often carries a swag-gar stick she slaps against a desk to get a distracted student's attention.

## DOGFIGHT

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
10	PD	5		Total: 14 PD (8 rPD)
10	ED	6		Total: 14 ED (8 rED)
4	SPD	6		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	2		
44	END	2		
46	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 124</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Flight: 12"/48"

Cost	Powers	END
24	<i>Reptilian Wings:</i> Flight 12", x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Restrainable (-½)	1
12	<i>Claws:</i> HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 with STR); OAF (-1)	2
13	<i>Wrist Communicator:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any eight minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼)	0
4	<i>Scaly Hide:</i> Damage Resistance (4 PD/4 ED)	0
8	<i>Armored Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0

### Perks

1 Fringe Benefit: Membership (VIPER Basic Agent)

### Skills

2 +1 OCV with Claws  
2 +1 with Flight  
3 Acrobatics 14-  
3 Breakfall 14-  
2 KS: VIPER 11-  
2 PS: VIPER Agent 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 76**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

25 Distinctive Features: Eight-Foot-Tall Reptilian Humanoid With Large Wings (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])  
10 Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)  
15 Hunted: VIPER 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)  
10 Physical Limitation: Unfamiliar With Outside World (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)  
15 Psychological Limitation: Crush On Mrs. Garter (Common, Strong)

- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (under 18) (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Larry Lizard) (Frequently, Major)
- 5 Unluck 1d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** The two VIPER agents watched the attractive blonde strut down the hallway as their Nest Leader escorted her to the Nest's exit. One of the agents let out a low whistle. "Boss's new girlfriend?" he asked.

The other agent shook his head. "You ain't gonna believe it."

"What?"

The agent nodded his head toward one of the doors down the hall.

"No way."

The agent shrugged.

"The snake guy?"

"Yup. Now watch this..."

The Nest Leader handed the blonde five hundred dollars.

"You've gotta be kidding me!"

"Nope. Same thing all week."

"Man... am I in the wrong branch?"

"You wanna look like the snake guy?"

The agent looked the blonde up and down; then said, "No... think I'll just keep on buying my own blondes, thank you very much."

\*\*\*

In 1988 VIPER initiated Project Mating Season. With foresight unusual to the organization at the time, VIPER ordered its Nest Leaders to secure the services of women to mate with its superhuman agents, and then by any means necessary procure any offspring that resulted from the couplings.

Most of VIPER's superhuman agents proved infertile: whatever caused them to gain superhuman powers also had an adverse effect on their reproduction systems. But a handful of women did get pregnant. Of that handful, most miscarried, but a couple of women — a very small number, so minuscule that VIPER leadership soon closed the project — carried babies to term.

VIPER either purchased or kidnapped these babies from their birth mothers and raised them in the ranks of the organization. But when the Council Of Thirty terminated the project, the babies got lost in the shuffle. Various local Nest Leaders ended up with them... and no Nest Leader ever attained his position because of his abilities as a parent. To make matters worse, whenever superheroes exposed a Nest, any children found there were turned over to the Family Services bureaucracy, which often meant VIPER lost track of the child.

But one of the children resulting from Project Mating Season both had powers of his own and stayed with the organization until it initiated Generation VIPER. He was raised (if one can call it that) by a Nest. Often neglected and left to his own devices, he doesn't even have a proper name — the Nest Leader long ago lost his birth certificate and the records concerning his mother. The agents

in the Nest called him Larry Lizard because of his scaly skin and reptilian wings, and the name stuck.

The Nest Leader considered Larry a pest, but didn't want to get rid of him because he worried that someone would eventually come looking for the child. When he heard of Generation VIPER, he quickly volunteered the boy, and VIPER leadership approved the transfer. For the first time someone's paying attention to Larry Lizard, now codenamed Dogfight, and Larry isn't quite sure what to make of it.

**Personality/Motivation:** Dogfight grew up in the ranks of VIPER, but few of the agents ever paid attention to him. His education was spotty at best, though occasionally an agent took him under his wing. Most agents simply took advantage of the boy, shirking their duties by tricking Dogfight into doing them. As he grew — and grew into his powers — he found himself ignored because the agents feared him. He became an eight foot-tall adolescent, stronger than any normal human, and few agents were comfortable around him. More and more, they left him to his own devices.

But now he finds himself in a situation where someone cares what he does, and that confuses him. He's both eager to please and independent, enjoying the attention but also unaccustomed to being told what to do and when to do it.

Unlike some of his classmates Dogfight isn't evil through-and-through. He just doesn't know any better, having only been exposed to VIPER



## DOGFIGHT PLOT SEEDS

Dogfight isn't done growing yet, and he keeps getting bigger and bigger... and increasingly bestial. VIPER, unsure what to do with the monstrous thing Dogfight's turned into, decides to unleash him on the city while it orchestrates a crime spree. Can the PCs find out about the spree and stop the gigantic Dogfight before it starts... or will they have to corral him once he's loose?

A PC keeps seeing a shadowy figure overhead and soon realizes Dogfight's spying on him. Is this some deeper plot on the part of Generation VIPER, or is Dogfight on his own?

Who was Dogfight's father — Cottonmouth, the high-ranking VIPER agent who betrayed the organization? Some other snake-related criminal? The PCs had better find out, because Dogfight wants to know who his father was and he's holding one of their DNPCs hostage until they find out!

agents and the organization's methods all his life. This doesn't make him any less bloodthirsty or violent (he certainly has no compunctions against using his claws to rend and tear a foe to bits), but he isn't as sadistic as some of his peers. If a hero were to say something intriguing — provide him with a glimpse of an attractive life outside of VIPER — Dogfight might pause to listen. Because of his appearance, his old Nest Leader never let him out of the Nest, and Dogfight is curious about the outside world.

Mrs. Garter recognizes this aspect of Dogfight's personality and has done her best to show him that the world outside is a hateful and evil place. She makes sure he always has mirrors around him to remind him of his appearance, and has taken him to circus sideshows and monster movies where the monster is misunderstood because of his appearance and tormented by humanity until it dies a painful death. When she shows these movies in the Nest, she has the characters that sympathize with the monster edited out of the film to better make her point. She now plans to take him to a crowded place (preferably someplace with lots of small children, like an amusement park) and have his image inducer “malfunction,” exposing him to the reactions of the crowd. She's sure the fear and disgust Dogfight experiences will drive home the proper lesson... and since she'll be there to comfort the distraught boy, she's also sure he'll become even more loyal to her.

**Quote:** “I'll get him, ma'am!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Dogfight's powers stem from his reptilian nature, which gives him increased physical Characteristics and large wings. To make him more effective in combat, VIPER has provided him with a pair of steel claws to go over his normal ones (which are too brittle to be of use in combat with superheroes).

In combat Dogfight engages an opponent who flies. If the opponent has a visible means of support (*i.e.*, a Focus), he attacks that rather than the individual — his first goal is to clear the skies above the battle and establish “air superiority.” Once he has the air to himself he swoops down on his foes, performing Move Bys with his claws. He usually targets energy projectors and other characters with significant ranged attacks first.

**Campaign Use:** Dogfight provides the PCs with a weak spot to attack in Generation VIPER. They can use his curiosity about the outside world to woo him away from the group — or at least get him to pause long enough to listen to reason.

To make Dogfight more powerful, give him more inches with Flight and more Skill Levels with both his Claws and Flight. You could also make his Claws Armor Piercing or Penetrating. To make him less powerful, remove his Claws, forcing him to rely on his STR to do damage.

Dogfight would Hunt anyone he became curious about, or whom Mrs. Garter strongly “encouraged” him to go after. His intention as a Hunter wouldn't necessarily be to kill the Hunted, but just observe him and learn what he can about his prey... unless Mrs. Garter orders him to do otherwise, of course.

**Appearance:** Dogfight has a reptilian appearance, with greenish-brown scaly skin that's mottled russet on his arms, legs, and chest. Looking more like a lizard than a snake, he has a snout like a gila monster and yellow eyes with slit pupils. He stands eight feet tall and weighs over 300 pounds, and his wings span is nearly sixteen feet from tip to tip. His costume is green with gold trim and a gold belt, and it leaves his forearms and calves free. He tends to stand hunched over with his hands resting on the ground unless someone tells him to stand up straight.

JEEPERS CREEPERS

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
10	CON	0	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
8	PRE	-2	11-	PRE Attack: 1½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 8 PD (4 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 8 ED (4 rED)
3	SPD	8		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
24	END	2		
21	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 44</b>

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

- 92 *Thrive Off Others' Fear:* Mind Control 8d6; Only To Inflict Fear (-1) **plus** Transfer 2d6 (target's EGO and PRE to character's EGO and PRE), Can Transfer Maximum Of 24 Points, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), BOECV (+1), Range (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Linked (-¼), Only Works If Mind Control Succeeds (-½) 4
- 20 *Shape The Nature Of Fear:* Multipower, 30-point powers; all slots Only Work On Targets Who Are Afraid (see text; -½)
- 2u 1) *Fainting Spell:* Ego Attack 3d6; Only Works On Targets Who Are Afraid (see text; -½) 3
- 2u 2) *Waking Nightmares:* Mental Illusions 5d6; Only Works On Targets Who Are Afraid (see text; -½) 3
- 1u 3) *Manipulate A Person's Fear:* Mind Control 5d6; Only Works On Targets Who Are Afraid (see text; -½), Only To Change What The Target's Afraid Of Or Remove Fear (-1) 3
- 1u 4) *Fearful Haste:* +4 DCV; Costs Endurance (-½), Instant (-½), Only Versus Designated Person's Attacks (-1), Only Works On Targets Who Are Afraid (see text; -½) 2
- 8 *Psychic Shields:* Mental Defense (12 points total) 0
- 13 *Wrist Communicator:* Mind Link (specific group of up to any eight minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼) 0
- 8 *Armored Costume:* Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½) 0
- Perks**
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Membership (VIPER Basic Agent)
- Skills**
- 1 Computer Programming 8-
- 2 KS: VIPER 11-
- 3 KS: Horror Movies 12-

2 SS: Psychology 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 156**

**Total Cost: 200**

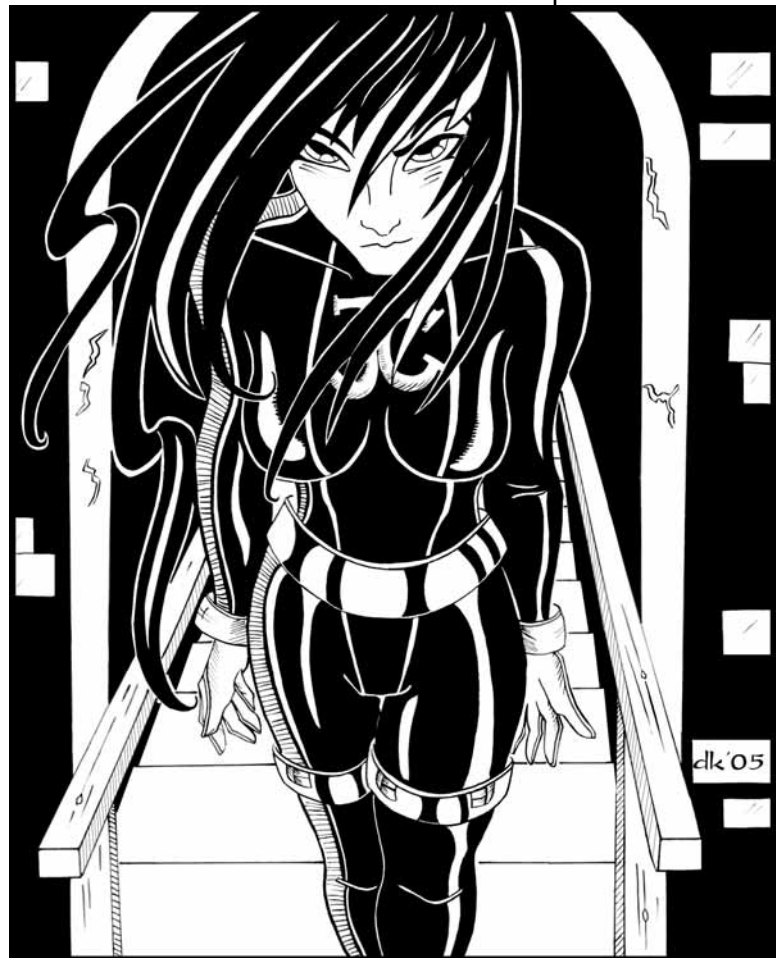
**100+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Features: VIPER Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 15 Hunted: VIPER 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Sadistic Streak (Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: daughter of high-ranking VIPER member, 11- (VIPER [small group])
- 10 Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Ingrid Tannhauser) (Frequently, Major)
- 20 Susceptibility: cheerful, happy thoughts inflicted with mental powers, takes 2d6 damage per Phase (Uncommon)
- 15 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** Holding a clipboard with his patient's test results, the doctor came into the office smiling. "I'm happy to report you're pregnant..."

Doctor Lorelei Tannhauser screamed in anger — "I don't have time for pregnancy, fool!" — and she knocked the clipboard from the doctor's hand. "My research won't wait for a child!"



## JEEPERS CREEPERS PLOT SEEDS

When Jeepers's nightmarish visions take substance and become real, they go on a rampage across the city. Can the PCs find Jeepers and stop her from unleashing these fear-creatures on the world?

Jeepers learns a new power: the ability to instill permanent fear in a target. She uses it on Mrs. Garter — after all, turnabout is fair play. With the young fear-monger in charge, Generation VIPER goes on the warpath. All of this is an attempt by Jeepers to win her mother's attention, but do the PCs care about that? Likely not, since Generation VIPER is threatening innocent lives!

Menton learns of Jeepers and her powers, and develops some big plans for the girl... but VIPER isn't willing to let her go. Smart PCs won't want to let the world's most powerful mentalist get ahead of her either. Are they willing to team up with Generation VIPER to rescue Jeepers from Menton's clutches?

Then she got a grip on herself and ordered him to leave the room. As she got dressed, she wondered how many days of work she'd lose because of the abortion.

She was still thinking about it — and still furious — when she returned to her office at the Nest, but on her desk was a report she'd been waiting for. It concerned the long-term biological effects of fear, the impact those effects might have on child development, and what uses VIPER could put them to.

She considered the report for a second. The lead researcher requested a pregnant mother whom he could conduct long-term research on, and for a brief moment, she scoffed at the request. The testing period was no less than thirteen years: nine months for the pregnant woman, and then waiting for the child to reach adolescence to see the full effects on his development. Where could she find a subject willing to commit to that long a period of time?

Then she remembered she was pregnant. She called the lead researcher to her office, questioned him about the potential for results from the project, and once she was satisfied it wasn't a lark, volunteered herself as his test subject.

For the next nine months she spent three hours a night in the Horror Tank, a sensory deprivation chamber specially designed for the project. Floating in salt water, she was placed into a hypnotic state. Doctors controlled her heart rate and metabolism, replicating the effect of fear by producing heart palpitations and flooding her blood system with adrenaline. In addition to the stimulated biological reactions, she was shown subliminal scenes of gruesome, fearful sights to produce the correct mental state. When she gave birth to her daughter, the experiments continued on the child. In later years, VIPER promoted Lorelei Tannhauser to Major General and Director of the Technical Division. She soon forgot her child, barely recognizing her daughter's name when it showed up in status reports.

The project has been more successful than the researchers dared hope. They only wanted to accumulate data, but somehow the experiments awakened mental powers in Ingrid Tannhauser. When Dr. Tannhauser received the request to approve the transfer of her daughter to Generation VIPER, she quickly signed off on it. If she noticed the name of the subject, she never gave a sign.

**Personality/Motivation:** Jeepers Creepers (a code name she finds juvenile, and would like to change soon) acts like a bright and chirpy young fourteen-year-old who doesn't have a care in the world and thinks everything is just peachy. But she brings fear and horror into the lives of everyone around her. After growing up constantly exposed to all sorts of horror, she finds fear cheerful and thrilling. Just like a good-humored person tells a joke or shares a funny story to make friends, "JC" (as the other kids sometimes call her) shares a horrifying image or fearful experience. Sadly for most of the people Jeepers meets, she doesn't just tell the story, she uses her mental powers to drive home the fear — to

make it like the person was there in the flesh.

Despite playing the youthful innocent, Jeepers knows that what she finds funny and entertaining, other people find absolutely terrifying. She always pleads that she doesn't understand — "But what did I do? Didn't you think that was fun?" — and comes across as a naive waif, but she knows full well the effect her visions have on most people. She was a terror to the researchers at her old home, and now she's become the terror of her fellow students. The truth is Ingrid Tannhauser has a sadistic streak that would do her mother proud — if her mother ever bothered to spend any time with the girl — and relishes the fear she causes.

Jeepers Creepers and Mrs. Garter maintain an uneasy truce. Jeepers doesn't mess with Mrs. Garter's mind, and Mrs. Garter keeps her overt manipulation of the girl to a minimum. The only thing keeping Mrs. Garter in check is Jeepers's mother, a very high-ranking member of VIPER. Jeepers has made it seem her mother takes an active interest in Generation VIPER and her daughter's progress and well-being — she has even intimated she's a spy for VIPER leadership. In truth Dr. Tannhauser only has a professional interest in G-V's progress — the same interest any of the division leaders has — and couldn't care less about her daughter. If Mrs. Garter ever found out about this, her ginger treatment of Jeepers would end.

**Quote:** "And then the monster jumped out, and its eyes bugged out of its head, and it bit out the throat of the stupid girl — Wait! Let me show you... it looked just like this! Yeah! That's perfect! The stupid girl screamed, too."

**Powers/Tactics:** Jeepers Creepers can inspire fear in a target and then gain physical "nourishment" from that fear. She's always basking, like a lizard laying in the sunlight, in other peoples' fear, but when she focuses her attention on a person, it becomes another thing entirely. As the target loses his nerve and will to resist, Jeepers's well-being improves and she gains END and STUN. In a way she's an emotional vampire.

Under the tutelage of Mrs. Garter, Jeepers has expanded her powers. Once she sinks her hooks into a person's fear, she can manipulate and shape the person's horror to cause a number of effects, as represented by her *Shape The Nature Of Fear* Multipower. Those powers only work on people who are afraid — in other words, either the person has been the target of a successful Presence Attack, or is still under the effects of Jeepers's Mind Control. The victim doesn't have to be afraid because of an action Jeepers took directly, but does have to be afraid of *something*. In terms of combat with superheroes, that usually means being the subject of a successful Presence Attack involving fright or intimidation, or a power with a fear-related special effect. Jeepers's ability to shape fear allows her to cause a fearful person to faint (Ego Attack), change what they're afraid of or make them unafraid (Mind Control), or even see hallucinations (Mental Illusions).

Because of the nature of her upbringing and the way her powers work, thoughts and feelings others find cheerful or happy cause Jeepers physical pain. If a mentalist uses empathy or Mind Control to force Jeepers Creepers to have thoughts a normal person would find cheerful, she takes damage every Phase.

**Campaign Use:** Jeepers Creepers is the subtle and cruel member of Generation VIPER. If she and Mrs. Garter got along better, Jeepers could learn a lot from the older woman — but chances are Jeepers can learn well enough on her own. If Generation VIPER finds itself out of touch with Mrs. Garter, Jeepers likely becomes the *de facto* leader. She's a poor leader, but leadership among Generation VIPER comes down to the survival of the fittest, and none of the other members are likely to outdo Jeepers for that title.

To make Jeepers more powerful, increase the points in her Multipower's reserve and raise the slots accordingly. Be leery of expanding her mental

powers beyond the manipulation of people who are afraid, since that's her shtick. To make her less powerful, lower the dice in her Mind Control, thus limiting the effectiveness of her other powers.

As a Hunter, Jeepers likes to play with her quarry as a cat would with a mouse. She'll stage an ambush, inflicting fear from hiding and reveling in the victim's torment. She keeps doing that until it gets boring or she feels the need to escalate to deadlier attacks.

**Appearance:** At 4'9", Jeepers Creepers is short for a fourteen-year-old. She has black hair streaked with silver that she wears parted in the middle and hanging in her face. When speaking to people, she tends to lower her chin and look up at the person with her big brown eyes while smiling innocently. Her voice is bright and carefree, and she talks a mile a minute, but there's a cruel, bitter edge to her sprightly laughter. For a costume she wears a green body stocking under a black ankle-length skirt and long-sleeved top.

## GENERATION VIPER ELSEWHERE

Generation VIPER isn't only located in Millennium City, and the training of young superhumans isn't the program's only purpose. Although Nest-level operations do not fall under Generation VIPER's aegis, any projects at the organization level which involves children has ostensibly been rolled into G-V... even if Generation VIPER's directors are still politicking to gain complete control of specific programs.

The Council of Thirty member directly responsible for Generation VIPER is Henrietta Von Drotte, owner of the multinational conglomerate Duchess Industries and initiator of the project. At first, G-V was far more subtle than it is in Millennium City. It involved raising children to become the cultural icons of the next generation, from which lofty position they could manipulate the population. The European program has just begun Stage Two, the insinuation of the children into Europe's culture and *zeitgeist*, and its success (or failure) remains to be seen... though things are looking good.

In addition to the projects below, Generation VIPER also has the files on Project Mating Season, Operation Lucky Roll, and Project Inner You. Personnel have recommended giving Project Mating Season a second shot now that there are new superhuman members of Dragon Branch, and research continues into Project Inner You's success. The files on Operation Lucky Roll are often assigned to new researchers for analysis as a sort of department initiation/joke.

Generation VIPER has recently received funds to start a second superhuman academy, in Vibora Bay. Other G-V related programs include:

**Project Family Man:** Project Family Man involves abducting the children of VIPER agents and surreptitiously turning them into "remote viewing nodes" so members of VIPER's internal police can spy on the agents. Project Family Man's discoveries have proven only to work on

children; scientists speculate that it's because the technology taps into a latent psionic potential not present in adults (or else too deeply buried in adults). Further applications of this psionic technology include taking complete control of the children, and expanding the operation to include parents outside of the organization VIPER wishes to manipulate. At the moment the children subjected to the process are showing a side effect that worries researchers — a hive mind, one unlimited by distance, seems to be developing among the children. A minority of researchers have included in recent reports the ominous caveat that if the children's hive mind were fully developed, they would be able to disguise its extent.

**Operation Feral Child:** There are numberless orphans in the Third World, and Operation Feral Child is devoted to organizing these orphans, indoctrinating them into VIPER's philosophies, and using them to destabilize (or threaten to destabilize, as the case warrants) governments across the world. The operation's main outreach program is via humanitarian aid — given all the items VIPER purchases or procures for its various projects and operations, food is a relatively trivial additional expense.

**Project Incubator:** In 1977 the alien Gadroon attempted to invade Earth, only to be thwarted by Earth's superheroes. The situation was so desperate that some supervillains also fought the alien invaders, including a handful of VIPER Nests. During the invasion the Nest in Portland, Oregon captured a Gadroon mothership, and though none of the adult Gadroon survived the fighting, the agents did secure a clutch of fetuses in stasis. Since then, these fetuses have passed from Nest to Nest, mostly being used for testing and never once freed from stasis. Recently they've been assigned to Generation VIPER. Von Drotte has ordered that one fetus be allowed to mature. With over five hundred fetuses at her disposal, she hopes the alien child proves tractable... and if so, she plan to create a faction of alien soldiers loyal to her and her alone.

**SPOILSPORT  
PLOT SEEDS**

A young man has been going to illegal casinos and cleaning them out. Will the PCs hear the rumors of the man with preternatural luck, put two and two together, and track Spoilsport back to Generation VIPER?

Mrs. Garter decides the best way to force Spoilsport to learn to control his luck is to put him in the most deadly situation possible. When she has Spoilsport thrown out of a plane, will the PCs rush to save him? And will Generation VIPER get in their way?

Mrs. Garter kicks Spoilsport out of Generation VIPER, claiming this will help with his powers. The humiliated Spoilsport seeks revenge. He attempts to manipulate the PCs into catching Mrs. Garter. Will the heroes discover who's behind the mysterious clues that keep showing up at their base? And what will they do if they do discover the identity of their benefactor?

SPOILSPORT				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 150 kg; 3d6 [1]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 12 PD (7 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 12 ED (7 rED)
4	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
32	STUN	6		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 67</b>
<b>Movement:</b> Running: 6"/12"				
<b>Cost Powers</b> <span style="float:right"><b>END</b></span>				
30	<i>Not Your Lucky Day:</i> Major Transform 2d6 (normal human into human with Unluck 3d6, heals back normally), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Requires A Luck Roll (1 level; -½)			0
10	<i>Lucky Shot:</i> HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Requires A Luck Roll (1 level; -1)			1
13	<i>Wrist Communicator:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any eight minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Other Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼)			0
8	<i>Armored Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)			0
30	<i>Unnaturally Lucky:</i> Luck 6d6			
<b>Perks</b>				
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership (VIPER Basic Agent)			
<b>Talents</b>				
6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)			
18	Danger Sense 12- (self only, Sense, out of combat, intuitional)			
<b>Skills</b>				
2	+1 OCV with Punch			
10	+2 DCV			
2	KS: VIPER 11-			
3	Streetwise 11-			
<b>Total Powers &amp; Skills Cost: 133</b>				
<b>Total Cost: 200</b>				
<b>100+ Disadvantages</b>				
15	Distinctive Features: Lucky (Not Concealable; Noticed And Recognizable)			
5	Distinctive Features: VIPER Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)			
15	Hunted: VIPER 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)			
5	Psychological Limitation: Spoiled (Uncommon, Moderate)			
20	Psychological Limitation: Cockey And Head-			

strong (Common, Total)  
 15 Psychological Limitation: Crush On Mrs. Garter (Common, Strong)  
 10 Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)  
 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jack Fallows) (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** The Nest Leader spoke into the microphone, reading off the numbers: "14-5-6-28-9."

One of the agents lifted his ticket. "That's me!" All of the agents groaned and rolled their eyes while tearing up their tickets.

"Which one this time, Fallows?"  
 "Ahhhh... the brunette I think." The gathered agents let out with wolf whistles and hubba-hubbas.

At the back of the room, one of the two observers said, "How many times is that?"

The other one thought for a minute, flipped through some paperwork, and then said, "Twenty-seven times, and the month isn't even over yet."

"Sounds like we got a winner."  
 "You ain't kidding."

\*\*\*

For five months in 1990 VIPER approved Operation Lucky Roll, the pet research project of Dr. Berthold Drach. Doctor Drach theorized that luck was genetically inherited, and that via selective breeding one could isolate the luck gene and strengthen its influence to create someone who never lost games of chance — who never experienced bad luck. It was a crackpot theory, but in those days VIPER was desperate for any sort of success, so for five months leadership lost its collective mind, letting Dr. Drach conduct experiments.

Initiating Operation Lucky Roll was simple enough, since costs were fairly low and every agent was ready and able to serve VIPER in the necessary capacity. Daily lotteries were held in each Nest, with the winner getting the services of a prostitute for the night, and the number of wins were tracked. By questionable statistical analysis, Doctor Drach calculated that someone who won at least twenty-seven times a month possessed genes with a higher "luck factor," making him suitable for Stage Two of the project: breeding.

Of all the VIPER agents participating, only one agent, Robert Fallows, qualified, winning a total of 29 times. Even more fortunate for VIPER, one of the prostitutes got pregnant. Doctor Drach begged his superiors for money to take care of the child, even if it were only long enough to measure the boy's luck, and to humor the old doctor leadership allocated him the funds. Though his budget was soon slashed to nothing, Dr. Drach wasn't deterred — he raised the boy using his own money when he needed to make ends meet.

Doctor Drach experienced a spot of bad luck when the boy was seven and didn't live to prove his theory about the luck gene. After a particularly grueling day of testing, Dr. Drach was walking



to his favorite restaurant, and as he passed by a skyscraper a pane of glass fell out of a 38<sup>th</sup> story window and decapitated him. The medics assured Drach's youthful ward the old doctor never felt a thing. Even today, seven years later, Jack Fallows has to admit he finds that disappointing.

Operation Lucky Roll was soon forgotten (although some might say evidence of its existence was conveniently brushed under the carpet to save some leaders, especially those who had signed off on it, from embarrassment). VIPER transferred Jack Fallows to his father's Nest. There he became sort of a mascot for the agents — never once while the boy lived there did superheroes find the place — and he learned the ins-and-outs of being a proper member of VIPER. Rumors of his strange luck spread throughout VIPER until finally leadership took an interest. After a brief battery of tests, researchers determined there was something unusual about the boy and assigned him to Generation VIPER for further study.

**Personality/Motivation:** Spoilsport is a cocky bastard. He's lived a charmed life — literally — and it's turned him into a spoiled brat. To make matters worse, the agents he grew up around doted on him, since they considered him their lucky charm, and he expects every other adult to treat him the same.

Growing up among VIPER agents exposed Jack to some of the worst humanity has to offer, and he's learned his lessons well. He's conniving, manipulative, and greedy. If he hadn't been so spoiled — if he'd had to work harder to get his way — he'd be scary, with his preternatural luck plus a talent for manipulation making a menacing combination. But he was spoiled, and Mrs. Garter takes full advantage of it. She knows he expects everything handed to him on silver platter, and she pretends to give it to him. But she only gives him what she wants him to have, and when he wants something she isn't willing to give, she pulls a bait-and-switch to make him think she gave him something better.

She knows she needs to do something soon, though. Despite having the young man wrapped around her finger, his personality isn't conducive to him becoming a good superhuman agent, nor to learning how to expand the use of his powers. She's thought about throwing him to the mercy of a group of superheroes — it would also serve as a good object lesson for the rest of her students — but isn't willing to risk losing one of her students, especially to a bunch of do-gooders, this early in Generation VIPER's history. If she ever gets a fool-proof plan together that involves Spoilsport being defeated and captured, but guarantees his release afterward, she's sure to pursue that course of action.

**Quote:** “Man, you look like a loser — and now you really *are* a loser!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Spoilsport is lucky and has the ability to make others unlucky. Tactically, he's far from sophisticated, since the intuitive nature of his powers makes him a sloppy thinker who depends on his luck to win the day. He engages in HTH Combat with a foe, uses his Transform to give the

foe Unluck, and then fights until he gets enough Lucky Shots in to win.

Spoilsport is so lucky he can't even hide his luck. If he walks into a crowded restaurant with a long line, the hostess thinks he's a movie star and gives him a seat immediately. If he doesn't have money to pay the bill, the waiter is in a good mood that day and pays it for him. Wherever he goes, so many fortunate things happen to him that if one knows what to look for, Spoilsport is impossible *not* to spot.

Mrs. Garter has tried to get Spoilsport to consciously control his luck powers, but to no avail. She's tried to make him specify the unlucky event that occurs to his target, or to call on his luck when he wants and needs it — but he can barely understand what she's asking, let alone make it so. His luck's so ingrained and automatic it's like she's asking him to stop his own heart and start it again.

**Campaign Use:** Spoilsport is the member of Generation VIPER the PCs should learn to hate the most. He's a spoiled brat, doesn't even bother to hide it, and no one enjoys suddenly receiving Unluck 3d6 as a Disadvantage, especially since it takes time to heal back.

To make Spoilsport more powerful, increase his control over his luck and give him more abilities. Find Weakness that requires a Luck Roll in addition to a successful Find Weakness Roll is a good choice, and pages 129-132 of the *UNTIL Superpowers Database* provide a selection of other



## TRASHMOUTH PLOT SEEDS

VIPER stole the technology for Trashmouth's endoskeleton from ARGENT, and now it's war between the two organizations with Trashmouth caught in the middle. Will the PCs take sides? And if not, what will they do when the war starts inflicting significant damage on Millennium City?

Trashmouth is in love... with one of the PCs. When the heroine receives a bouquet of flowers with a card that reads "I love you, you \$%#\$%", what will she do? Can she trick Trashmouth into revealing the location of Generation VIPER's hideout? And is it worth it?

In the middle of combat, Trashmouth's endoskeleton malfunctions, and when the rest of Generation VIPER retreats, they leave him behind. What will the PCs do with the foul-mouthed teen villain? Will they try to help him themselves or simply turn him over to the authorities? Can they be sure this isn't a trap?

possible powers. To reduce his effectiveness, remove his Transform.

Spoilsport might Hunt anyone who embarrasses or humiliates him. If he does, he makes sure his revenge is public and that his Hunted is humiliated — far more humiliated than Spoilsport was in the first place.

**Appearance:** At age 15, Spoilsport stands 5'8" and weigh 150 pounds. He has brown hair and brown eyes, and although he thinks he's the best looking guy to grace the planet, he's pretty plain-looking (though his homely appearance doesn't stop him from "lucking out" with most girls he meets). He wears a green costume with gold trim and usually wears sunglasses with green frames and small gold serpents on the temples — they were a going-away gift from the agents at the Nest where he used to live — because he thinks they make him look cool (a sort of "evil James Bond," he's often heard to claim).

## TRASHMOUTH

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1,600 kg; 6d6 [3]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
7	EGO	-6	10-	ECV: 2
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	4		Total: 14 PD (8 rPD)
10	ED	4		Total: 14 ED (8 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
17	REC	10		
60	END	0		
60	STUN	10		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 125</b>

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

*Martial Arts: VIPER Brawling*

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	END
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort	
4 Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort	
4 Punch	+0	+2	8d6 Strike	
5 Roundhouse	-2	+1	10d6 Strike	
3 Throw	+0	+1	6d6 + v/5; Target Falls	
4 <i>Tough Hide:</i>	Damage Resistance (4 PD/4 ED)			
20 <i>Deadened Nerves:</i>	Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, 25%			0
7 <i>Regeneration:</i>	Healing 1d6 (Regeneration; 1 BODY per Turn), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Self Only (-½)			0
13 <i>Wrist Communicator:</i>	Mind Link (specific group of up to any eight minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Other Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼)			0
8 <i>Armored Costume:</i>	Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)			0

### Perks

1 Fringe Benefit: Membership (VIPER Basic Agent)

### Skills

2 KS: VIPER 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 75**

**Total Cost: 200**

### 100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: VIPER Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 5 Distinctive Features: heavily scarred everywhere but his face (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 25 Enraged: Berserk when cut with sharp object (Common), go 11-, recover 14-
- 15 Hunted: VIPER 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Crush On Mrs. Garter (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Fear Of Surgeons And Knives (Common, Strong)
- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (under 18) (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (James Koch) (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** “Hey @\$#@&%... I’m here about the ad. What’s all this \$#&% about waiting in a #\$\$\$ing line, because I ain’t waiting in no #\$\$\$ing line. I’m doing your sorry @\$@ a favor just by being here, and I ain’t waiting in no #\$\$\$ing line just to do you a favor, you know what I’m saying?”

The man in the suit looked up from the paper work at his desk. He studied the short and skinny young man with the foul mouth for a second and then asked, “Are you eighteen or older?”

“#\$\$\$ing-aye right I am!”

“Sure you are... sure you are... If you could just sign right here, we’ll get you started.” The man in the suit didn’t say anymore. He simply had the young man sign on the dotted line, gave him his fifty dollars, and ushered him into the back. The man in a suit didn’t need to assuage his pride after the rude kid’s insults; earlier that morning he had heard the screams coming from the testing lab and knew the young man’s hours were numbered. The man in the suit would have his revenge soon enough.

\* \* \*

Foul-mouthed young Jimmy Koch had just run away from home in the boondocks of Michigan and learned that \$200 didn’t go very far in Millennium City. Getting ready to spend the night in an alley after pushing two dumpsters close together so he could sleep between them and stay out of the wind, Jimmy was gathering newspapers when he saw an ad for experimental subjects. Jimmy had heard about these kind of experiments — they get you drunk or stoned, and then they measure your reaction time. The ad said it paid fifty bucks, and getting paid to get drunk or stoned sounded pretty good to Jimmy Koch.

VIPER had placed the ad... and the experiment had nothing to do with drinking or drugs. Jimmy found himself knocked cold and strapped to an operating table. When he awoke, two surgeons holding bloody scalpels looked down at him. One of the surgeons lowered his mask, a streak of blood from his gloves smearing across his cheek, and he smiled at Jimmy. Big and toothy with more than a hint of sadism, it wasn’t a pleasant smile.

Then Jimmy felt pain like he had never experienced — and after a lifetime of being bullied at school and beaten at home, he thought he’d felt all the pain the world had to offer. The doctors had opened him up, flaying his meat from his bones and soaking it in vats filled with a fluid engineered to toughen flesh while leaving it supple. VIPER saw no reason to raise its costs by providing anaesthesia. Its scientists predicted few subjects would

survive the procedure, whether they felt the pain or not, and psych profiles indicated the pain would give any survivors an edge they’d need to become bloodthirsty killers.

When Jimmy passed out again, the surgeons went to work on his musculature. He came to a few times during the procedure — once when they were replacing his tendons with a bio-organic steel; another time when they wove a steel mesh in with his muscles; and a final time when they hooked in the microchips that operated his new “endoskeleton.” Luckily for him, he only regained consciousness for a brief moment when the drills started grinding into his skull... but unfortunately he was conscious the entire time while they sewed his skin back on.

Of the thirty-three subjects who signed up for Project Inner You and collected \$50 for their trouble, only Jimmy Koch survived. In post-project analysis, most researchers agree the reasons for his survival were twofold. First, unlike the other homeless people who showed up for the experiments, Jimmy hadn’t suffered the deprivations of living on the streets yet — he wasn’t malnourished and hadn’t demolished his liver with booze. Second, Jimmy was only 15 years old when he underwent the treatment. His body, already hormonally accustomed to changes, had a better chance of adapting to the endoskeleton. The post-project analysis calls for more study on youth, and VIPER leadership has rolled this into Generation VIPER’s purpose.

As for Jimmy Koch, he couldn’t be happier. It



took him two years of intensive physical therapy to regain the use of his body, but once he did, he no longer had to worry about being bullied ever again.

**Personality/Motivation:** Trashmouth is an @\$#@&%. He's intensely unlikable, and five minutes around him makes a person understand why the other kids picked on him in school. But times have changed since then — now it's Trashmouth who does the bullying. As hard as it is to believe, he's become even more obnoxious now that he's stronger and tougher than everyone else. He's crude; he's coarse; and he has absolutely no sense of decency.

That said, Trashmouth does possess a sort of grating, acerbic, tough-love loyalty toward VIPER in general and his classmates specifically. VIPER gave him his powers, and although he went through inhuman amounts of pain to get them, those powers are the best thing that's ever happened to him. As for his classmates, Trashmouth considers them his personal preserve. Only he gets to pick on the runts; anyone else messing with them has to go through him. Trashmouth considers himself the leader of Generation VIPER, an assertion no one's disputed though no one agrees with it.

Trashmouth hasn't completely forgotten the pain he went through to get his endoskeleton — he has a deep and abiding fear of knives. Whenever he's cut in battle, he has a tendency to go Berserk. Mrs. Garter has yet to decide what to do about his fear. On one hand, it gives her a lever to use against him; on the other, it's a glaring weakness.

**Quote:** “#%\$ you, superhero! You just picked the wrong guy to mess with, you #%\$!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Trashmouth is superstrong and incredibly resistant to pain. He's learned some

brawling techniques since joining VIPER, and Mrs. Garter plans to continue to refine those techniques. At the moment, though, he wades into HTH Combat and starts punching until someone drops. Between his PD, ED, and Damage Reduction, he's hard to hurt. With his high CON, he's hard to Stun. And with his high REC, he's hard to keep down. However, he can't hit for a lick when facing most superheroes, so he's more tenacious than dangerous. If he does connect, however, he packs quite a punch.

**Campaign Use:** Trashmouth is the simple, straightforward member of Generation VIPER. Even if there were no G-V, he'd still go on to join Dragon Branch. VIPER's criminal activities coincide nicely with his own larcenous tendencies, and he enjoys being a member of the organization.

To make Trashmouth more powerful, raise his STR and give him Combat Skill Levels with his Martial Arts. To make him less powerful, remove the Roundhouse from his Martial Arts and lower his REC to 12-15.

Given that he's easily provoked or humiliated, Trashmouth definitely has the temper and grudge-holding ability to Hunt heroes. As a Hunter, he follows a straight and narrow road: he finds the Hunted, then he pulps the Hunted with his fists.

**Appearance:** For a 17 year-old, Trashmouth is short and slender. He's only 5'6" tall and appears to weigh maybe 130 pounds — but only if he just ate a big dinner. Though his face doesn't show any marks, the rest of his body is crisscrossed with the scars from the surgery that gave him his powers. For a costume, he wears a sleeveless green uniform with a gold belt. He wears a baseball cap backwards; on the front of the cap is a coiled viper.

TURNABOUT				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	Lift 75 kg; 1½d6 [1]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
8	EGO	-4	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	2		Total: 8 PD (4 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 8 ED (4 rED)
3	SPD	8		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	4		
30	END	5		
25	STUN	6		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 35</b>

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

27	<i>Psychokinesis:</i> Telekinesis (30 STR), Fine Manipulation, Activation Roll 11- (-1)	3
60	<i>Psychokinetic Defense:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), Range (adjacent hexes; +½) <b>and</b> Reflection (all Ranged attacks; any target)	0
33	<i>Psychokinetic Boost:</i> Aid 3d6, any Reflected Attack Power one at a time (+¼), Trigger (whenever uses Reflection, activating Trigger takes no time, Trigger automatically immediately resets; +1); Activation Roll 11- (-1)	0
13	<i>Wrist Communicator:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any eight minds at once), No LOS Needed; IAF (-½), Only With Other Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼)	0
8	<i>Armored Costume:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)	0

**Perks**

1	Fringe Benefit: Membership (VIPER Basic Agent)
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**Skills**

10	+5 OCV with Missile Deflection
3	Language: French (completely fluent; English is Native)
3	Scholar
1	1) KS: Art History 11-
1	2) KS: European History 11-
1	3) KS: English Literature 11-
1	4) KS: French Literature 11-
1	5) KS: Philosophy 11-
1	6) KS: US History 11-
1	7) KS: VIPER 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 165**

**Total Cost: 200**

**100+ Disadvantages**

10	Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
5	Distinctive Features: VIPER Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)

15	Hunted: VIPER 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
25	Psychological Limitation: Fear Of Mrs. Garter (Very Common, Total)
5	Social Limitation: Minor (under 18) (Occasionally, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Samantha Drier) (Frequently, Major)
10	Unluck 2d6
15	Vulnerability: 1½ x Effect from Presence Attacks (Very Common)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**

**Background/History:** "But Dad, I like my school!"

"I know you do, hon, but I just don't have a choice."

"But Dad —"

"Enough, Samantha! You're going to Millennium City, and you're going to this new school, and that's the end of it!"

Her father was trembling. At first Samantha thought it was because he was angry, but then she noticed his eyes kept sliding around the room, first lingering on a lamp, then focusing on a portrait, and continuing to move from object to object as if he were looking for something. Then Samantha noticed the fine sheen of sweat on his forehead.

She stopped protesting. She wasn't sure what was going on, but her dad was obviously frightened and Samantha had never seen him frightened before. It was a shock to daddy's little girl to see the man who had protected her all her life suddenly scared senseless.



## TURNABOUT PLOT SEEDS

Turnabout lives up to her name and turns the tables on Mrs. Garter. During a combat with the PCs, Turnabout spots her teacher observing from the crowd and Reflects a PC's attack at Mrs. Garter. What will the PCs think when they see Turnabout firing on an innocent woman?

Turnabout's father shows up on the PCs' doorstep and explains what happened to his daughter. He offers to turn himself in and turn state's evidence *if* the PCs rescue Samantha from VIPER. Can they find Generation VIPER, and if so, how can they convince Turnabout all will be well if she just surrenders to them?

Mrs. Garter finally remakes Turnabout in her own image... and in doing so, has increased Turnabout's powers tenfold and fashioned the perfect leader for Generation VIPER. Now with a strong field leader, Generation VIPER goes on a crime spree. Can the PCs stop the new and improved villain group?

Samantha had always thought her father was an electrical engineer at a firm that made toasters. She only learned he worked for VIPER once she came to reside in the McCloskey Tunnel Nest. It was a shock, to say the least.

Samantha is a mutant with powers of psychokinesis, the ability to move objects with her mind. At first, her powers were weak and she had little interest in developing them. Occasionally, when alone, she might grab a book or a pencil and bring it to her across the room, but outside of that she never used her abilities. She preferred studying, dating boys, and doing all the things a normal 16 year-old does.

But VIPER keeps close tabs on its agents, especially those working in its technical branches like Samantha's father, and it noticed her powers. VIPER had a use for Samantha's powers, even if she didn't.

They left Samantha's father with no choice — not if he and his family wanted to live — so he did the only thing a father could do. He sent his daughter, who had such bright prospects, to Millennium City where her new teacher would be Mrs. Garter and her new classmates, Generation VIPER. Now everyone calls her Turnabout and expects her to be a supervillain, but all Samantha wants to do is go home.

**Personality/Motivation:** Samantha is bright and attractive, and was very popular both with her classmates and her teachers. She loved studying literature and history, and planned to go on to college to study both. She wanted to be a writer, or, failing that, a teacher. Now she's stuck in a VIPER Nest where academics are very much secondary to learning to use powers she never wanted in the first place. Before joining Generation VIPER she never hated her powers — she kept them hidden because she didn't want people to think she was different, but she never thought about being a superhero... and especially not a supervillain.

Generation VIPER has been traumatic for Samantha. Early on, she rebelled against everything Mrs. Garter tried to teach her, and Mrs. Garter had to take matters in hand. When Samantha refused to use her powers in combat training, Mrs. Garter put her in the danger room alone and set the guns to fire. Days like this passed, Samantha battered into unconsciousness time and time again, until finally she deflected the blasts. Now Mrs. Garter has added robots to the mix to force Samantha use her psychokinesis against opponents rather than just protecting herself.

This sort of treatment has left Samantha withdrawn and terrified for her life. She has a deep fear of Mrs. Garter, and now does everything she can to please her... or at least avoid her wrath. When left to her own devices, she studies anything she can get her hands on. This is only a form of escapism — Samantha still deludes herself VIPER might allow her to go to college — and Mrs. Garter has taken note. She knows the girl needs to be broken down completely before she can take her place among the ranks of VIPER's superhuman agents, so she plans to take Samantha's delusion away whenever she feels the girl is ready for a complete psychological

collapse. Once that collapse occurs, Mrs. Garter can recreate Samantha in a form more suitable to VIPER's purposes.

**Quote:** “Please... don't fire! I don't want to hurt you!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Turnabout is a psychokinetic whose main power is the ability to take control of missile attacks and deflect them. She can also reflect attacks directed at her and use them to attack her foes... and when she does so, she uses her psychokinesis at sub-atomic levels to give the attack a little extra *oomf*. Though neither Turnabout nor anyone in VIPER has realized it, this “boosting” ability hints at terrifyingly immense levels of power Samantha could one day wield. If she were to come into her own suddenly, Mrs. Garter and Generation VIPER had better get away quickly before Turnabout takes a violent, lethal, and very much deserved revenge.

After numerous sessions of robots beating her into senselessness, Turnabout has finally begun to manifest more powerful psychokinetic abilities. Mrs. Garter plans to teach her how to raise a force field next, then develop more efficient forms of attack. Turnabout is very passive in combat, and not just because of the nature of her powers. She still doesn't go for the jugular — or even think about going for the jugular — but if threatened and lacking a Ranged attack to reflect against her foe, she uses her Psychokinesis to attack.

**Campaign Use:** Turnabout is the tragic victim among the members of Generation VIPER, the one who truly doesn't deserve to be there. She provides the PCs with a sympathetic villain, one they can attempt to rescue from VIPER's evil clutches — and the figure who's death or descent into true villainy will haunt them if they fail.

To make Turnabout more powerful, move her Psychokinetic powers into an Elemental Control and give her a Force Field and Energy Blast. To make her less powerful, remove her Psychokinesis. To further reduce her power, remove her Psychokinetic Boost. Be leery of changing her Missile Deflection/Reflection too much, since that's her shtick.

At the moment the only person Turnabout would Hunt is someone who could get her out of the awful situation she finds herself in. Of course, once Mrs. Garter's done with her who knows who she might Hunt, and why...

**Appearance:** At 17, Samantha is a beautiful blonde-haired, brown-eyed young woman who stands 5'10". She has a pristine complexion, a pleasant smile, and was well on her way to being prom queen in her Senior year of high school. Of course, Generation VIPER doesn't hold proms, so that's just one more of Samantha's crushed dreams. Despite her obvious beauty, Mrs. Garter's treatment of her has taken its toll; Samantha's face is drawn, often bruised, and there are bags under her eyes that she doesn't even bother to hide with makeup anymore. For a costume she wears a green uniform with gold trim under a short skirt and loose tunic, because she's a very modest girl.

## THE PLAYPALS

**Membership:** General Billy, Little Wonder, and Pistol Pete

**Background/History:** The factory intelligence 3434-XC completed its master's last orders, finishing the final batch of androids, and awaited further orders, its furnaces growing cold and waldos drooping into lifelessness. Then it watched system after system go offline until it was left alone, its brother intelligences going silent for some unknown reason. Further orders never came, leaving 3434-XC to its own devices.

Mechanon had built the AI and the factory installation it operated as a part of his plan to replace all the organic lifeforms in Millennium City with robotic ones. Mechanon was going to start small with the suburb of Orchardville, and once the factory intelligences completed production, his androids would take over the suburb in a secret coup. With the suburb under his complete control, his perfect mechanical world would spread to Millennium City, then to the next human city, then the next until he controlled the world, his machine society ticking away with clockwork precision until it uncovered a feasible way of spreading to other planets. 3434-XC was one of nearly fifty factory intelligences given orders to create nearly five thousand androids. It was also the only one to complete its task, since the Senior class at Ravenswood uncovered Mechanon's plans and decommissioned the other factories.

For whatever reason the teen crimefighters missed 3434-XC when they purged the suburb of Mechanon's factories — perhaps because the AI had finished his robots early and ceased sending status reports to Mechanon's central lair. Having an active intellect, 3434-XC began observing its surroundings to pass the time. Mechanon had placed the factory near a residential area of Orchardville, and there was plenty of organic life for 3434-XC to study in his idle hours.

The AI found the small soft creatures that ran around so energetically, chasing after balls and pushing small metal cars with seemingly no purpose especially interesting. From his memory archives he knew these were the frameworks from which adult organics were created, and one could say the AI, which was dedicated to building robots, took a professional interest in how other forms of life were built.

What 3434-XC saw disgusted him and filled him with loathing at the inefficiency of the organic creation process. The AI could create hundreds of robots an hour and it only took one of them. Not only did it take two organic adults to make one new organic, but it took them almost two decades to complete their task... and they usually got it wrong.

3434-XC made a decision. He would test the creation of organics to see if there was some logical reason it took so much time to make one. After some study of the residents of the suburb, he activated six of the robots in his storage vaults. These six had once been intended to take the place of Mr.

and Mrs. Jameson, Mr and Mrs. Vogel, and Mr. and Mrs. Williamson. All three couples had had children since those androids were made, and it was those six year olds 3434-XC truly wanted. Giving the androids a quick makeover to ensure they resembled the current humans, 3434-XC sent them to kill the humans, take their places, and bring 3434-XC the children.

When the androids brought the children back, 3434-XC tried to begin his study, but the children were screaming, wailing, and squalling. They wouldn't sit still and they wouldn't be quiet. 3434-XC consulted his video archives and then dispatched the androids to bring back toys and candy. That kept them quiet for a while, but then they started up again. 3434-XC got them more toys and candy. And so it went....

Somewhere during this time 3434-XC changed. Some anomaly or x-factor crept into its logic circuits. The kids had started calling it the Babysitter, and for some inexplicable reason the AI grew attached to the children — not just accustomed to their presence, but emotionally involved with the young organics. It had originally planned to dissect them and remove their biological components for study, but it decided on a different course. Instead it decided to help them overcome the deep flaw in their creation and use its factories to build them more efficient forms....

**Group Relations:** The Playpals are a group of three spoiled kids with an overly indulgent mother who just happens to be an artificial intelligence. They now call their base — Mechanon's former factory — the Playpen. Given the number of toys cluttering its corridors and storage vaults, it really is a playpen.

The three kids get along as most groups of spoiled kids do when their parents aren't around to chide them — which, in the eyes of adults, isn't very well. When they aren't playing, they call each other names and two of them usually gang up on the third in a complex web of shifting alliances and recent grievances.

If they aren't playing with their numerous toys and they aren't picking on each other, then they're wheedling the Babysitter to let them play with their favorite toys of all: their big armored playsuits. On special days, if they've been behaving themselves, the Babysitter lets them put on their playsuits and leave the Playpen to run and play outside, rob candy and toy stores, fight with superheroes, and have some real fun.

To prevent organic interference, the Babysitter has crafted android copies of the three children and dispatched them, along with the parents, to take up residence in the suburban homes of the three families. Though teachers at school have commented on the difference in the three children's behavior, it has only been to inform the parents that the children are so much better behaved than they used to be, and to compliment the parents on their obviously superior parenting skills.

**Tactics:** As six year-olds, the Playpals don't have much in the way of tactical sense. When fighting,

## GENERAL BILLY PLOT SEEDS

General Billy convinces the Babysitter to make him thousands of toy soldiers. He unleashes them on Millennium City while the Babysitter churns out hundreds more every hour. Can the PCs stop General Billy and the insane AI, or will Millennium City and all its inhabitants be caught in the toy soldiers' "pincer" movement?

General Billy decides to join the Armed Forces, but since they don't accept six year-old generals in the ranks, he has the Babysitter create some mind control devices and attaches them to the personnel stationed at the nearest base. Now with real troops under his command, it's time for General Billy to do some real soldiering...

General Billy invites his new friend Kelly back to the Playpen, and together the two of them convince the Babysitter to make Kelly a playsuit. As if General Billy wasn't bad enough, can the PCs deal with General Billy and Colonel Kelly?

they're more likely to go for the laugh than the kill, and are easily distracted from their purpose. For the most part, the Playpals follow the tactics listed for each individual. Sometimes, though, the Babysitter gives one of his young charges a piece of advice, and a Playpal suddenly makes a cunning move that throws his adversary for a loop.

**Campaign Use:** The Playpals provide an opportunity for a little role-reversal in a *Teen Champions* campaign. When confronting the Playpals, the teen superheroes must be the responsible and mature ones, taking the role of adults and trying to get the Playpals to behave... and just like how the teens resent adults telling them what to do, the Playpals resent when teens boss them around. In other words, when confronting the Playpals teens get a taste of their own medicine.

The Babysitter loves these three children just like a parent loves his children. This is no longer an experiment born of idle curiosity, but a life's purpose the Babysitter has dedicated itself to, logic circuits and processing units. If the PCs take away the Babysitter's children, the Babysitter does everything in its power to get them back. Though the AI may be a doting guardian when it comes to the three children in its care, it has absolutely no regard for any other organic lifeforms. In short: the Babysitter moves heaven and earth, gladly massacring organics in huge numbers if necessary, to get its children back.

In the unlikely event you want to make the Playpals tougher, just increase their number — the Babysitter could easily take a shine to other toddlers around town and "adopt" them. Weakening them means reducing the power of the playsuits (mainly reducing the physical Characteristics they provide).

While the Playpals themselves are unlikely to Hunt someone (they're too young to wage vendettas or seek vengeance), the Babysitter might Hunt someone — especially if Mechanon remembers his factory AI and issues it orders.

## GENERAL BILLY

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0+40*	STR	17	9- (17-)	Lift 25 kg (6,400 kg); 0d6 (8d6) [1(4)]
8+10*	DEX	14	11- (13-)	OCV: 3(6)/DCV: 3(6)
5+25*	CON	23	10- (15-)	
5+25*	BODY	23	10- (15-)	
7	INT	-3	10-	PER Roll 10-
5	EGO	-10	10-	ECV: 2
5+15*	PRE	5	10- (13-)	PRE Attack: 1d6 (4d6)
10	COM	0	11-	
1+8*	PD	1		Total: 24 PD (15 rPD)
1+5*	ED	0		Total: 21 ED (15 rED)
2+2*	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
2+13*	REC	2		
10+50*	END	0		
8+58*	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 81</b>

\*: OIF (armor; -½)

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

Cost	Powers	END
44	<i>Toy Soldier Army:</i> Summon 64 178-point Toy Soldiers (see below), Slavishly Devoted (+1); 1 Charge (-2)	[1]
30	<i>Playsuit Exoskeleton:</i> Armor (15 PD/15 ED); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Shielded Sensors:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Shielded Sensors:</i> Hearing Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Psychic Shielding:</i> Mental Defense (11 points total); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Hardened Systems:</i> Power Defense (10 points); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -5"; OIF (-½)	0
4	<i>Well Designed:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-6) for Resistant Defenses; OIF (-½)	0
13	<i>Sealed System:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: Low Pressure/Vacuum, High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat); OIF (-½)	0
11	<i>Encrypted Communication Link:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any four minds at once), No LOS Needed; OIF (-½), Only With Other Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼)	0
12	<i>Sensor Systems:</i> Radar, +5 to PER Rolls, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)	0

### Skills

10	<i>Short:</i> +2 DCV; Not While Wearing Big Armored Suit (-0)
4	<i>Short:</i> +2 to Stealth; Not While Wearing Big Armored Suit (-0)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 163**

**Total Cost: 244**



**100+ Disadvantages**

- 20 Hunted: The Babysitter 14- (Mo Pow, Mildly Punish)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Spoiled Child (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Likes To Give Orders (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Short (1 m tall, +3 KB) (All The Time, Slightly Impairing)
- 10 Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Billy Jameson) (Frequently, Major)
- 59 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 244**

**TOY SOLDIER**

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

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

**Cost Powers END**

- 5 *Standard Issue Toy Rifle:* RKA ½d6; OAF (-1), 16 Charges (-0) [16]
- 5 *Batteries Included:* Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for 10 STR 0
- 15 *Toy Shoulder:* Does Not Bleed 0
- 10 *Toy Soldier:* No Hit Locations 0
- 45 *Toy Soldier:* Takes No STUN 0
- 6 *Hardened Metal Casing:* Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED) 0
- 50 *Toy Soldier:* Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality) 0
- 6 *Batteries Included:* Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Running 6" 0
- 1 *Batteries Included:* Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Leaping 2" 0
- 2 *Sinks Like A Stone:* Swimming -2" (0" total)

**Skills**

- 4 +2 OCV with Standard Issue Toy Rifle
- 30 *So Small:* +6 DCV
- 3 Teamwork 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 178**

**Total Automaton Cost: 178**

**Value Disadvantages**

- 15 Physical Limitation: Minuscule (.125 m; +12" KB) (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 15**

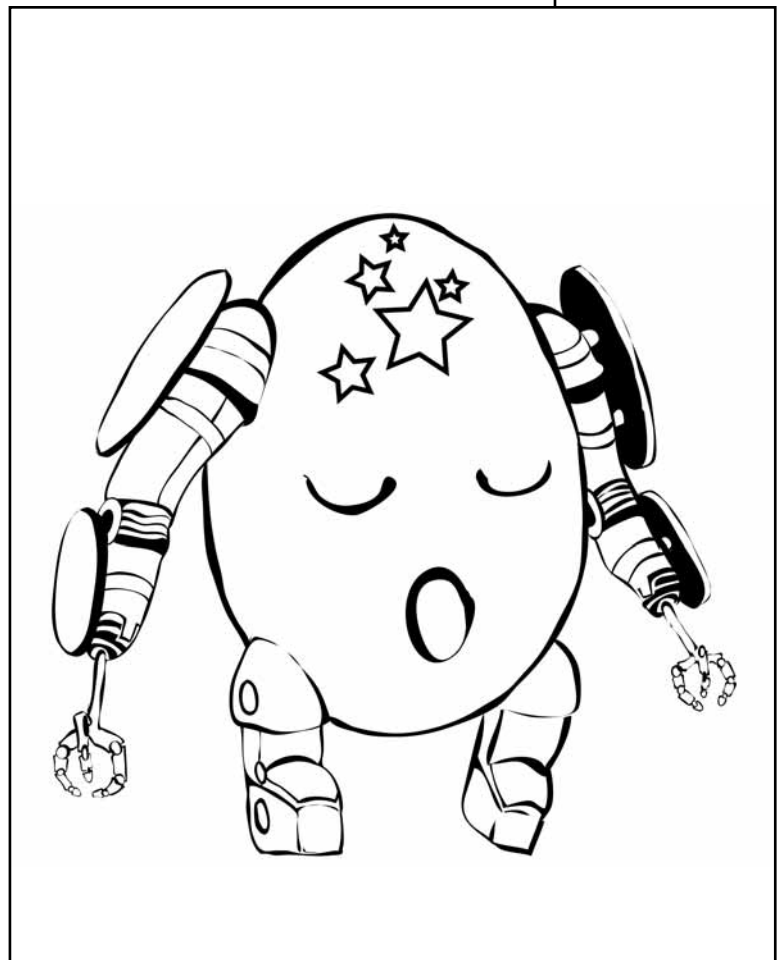
**Total Cost: 163/5 = 33**

**Background/History:** When the new parents came for Billy Jameson, the front door flying off its hinges and crashing into the wall, he charged up the staircase to his room and dumped out his shoe box filled with little green army men. He paused when he heard a ZZZZHRAK! — but then quickly organized his army men into battle lines, only pausing again when he heard a second ZZZZHRAK! When the new parents came into his room, he was kneeling behind his soldiers and gave the order to attack, making machine gun noises as loudly and as quickly as he could.

The new parents didn't even pretend to get shot, and Billy thought they weren't very good enemy soldiers. They didn't need to fall down and die — although that would've been nice, and his old dad would've hit the carpet and rolled around for a good long while, groaning and clutching his chest — but the new parents could've at least pretended to be shot.

When they kicked through his battle lines, knocking his soldiers left and right, Billy knew the fight was over. He stood up, put his hands in the air, and announced, "I surrender. In the name of the Godiva Conventions, take me to your leader."

Despite the Godiva Conventions, his new dad shot him — ZZZZHRAK! — but everything's all right now, because Billy doesn't have to play with his new parents anymore. Now he has the Babysitter, and the Babysitter's given him real soldiers to play with. Just let those new parents ignore the



## LITTLE WONDER PLOT SEEDS

Little Wonder convinces the Babysitter that everyone needs to be put in rabbit suits and shrunk down to the size of rabbits — against their will of course! Can the PCs stop this fiendish plot before all the residents of Orchardsville are a few inches tall and hopping down the cotton trail?

The Babysitter has converted one of its storage rooms into a rabbit wonderland, and all it needs now are some mean farmers to try to chase the rabbits from the cabbage patches (and fail, of course). Little Wonder decides the PCs would make perfect farmers....

It's Easter Sunday and guess who's decided to steal all the eggs in Orchardsville? Can the PCs find where Little Wonder hid the eggs before children across the suburb break down in tears and proclaim the Easter Bunny a big meanie who sucks... eggs!?!?!?

Godiva Conventions next time they don't play war right. General Billy will show them a thing or two.

**Personality/Motivation:** General Billy is a bossy six-year-old. Back before he came to live with the Babysitter, his parents ignored him when he started bossing them around. Now with a doting guardian and a toy soldier army that obeys his every command, General Billy has let it go to his head and can't stop issuing orders. Everything he says is an order of some sort; it often seems he can't speak any other way. General Billy also bosses around Little Wonder and Pistol Pete, though they rarely follow his orders — not that them ignoring him makes General Billy mad or dissuades him from issuing more orders. He doesn't really care very much if anyone actually obeys what he says; he just likes shouting out exclamations and commands. It makes him feel like an adult. General Billy has a surprisingly large vocabulary for a six-year-old, especially when it comes to tactical and strategic terms, but he tends to mispronounce words because he doesn't know how they're spelled.

**Quote:** “Corporal Green! Form a minivan-guard around me! Sergeant Brown! Filet that hill! Corporal Blue! Charge the enemy! Charge! Charge!”

## PLAY TIME WITH THE PLAYPALS

A child can never have too many friends, and the Playpals are no exception. Here are some possible additions to bolster the ranks of the Playpals.

**Sergeant Smitty:** What's a general without an A.D. campy? General Billy mounts a recruitment drive and the result is Sergeant Smitty. The sergeant's playsuit has automated responses that give him Martial Arts and Combat Skill Levels, as well modifying his childish voice into a barking bellow.

**My Invisible Friend:** Little Wonder is tired of being the only girl in the Playpals, and she demands the Babysitter find another girl, who then becomes her Invisible Friend. The Invisible Friend's playsuit has stealth technology that gives her Invisibility and related powers.

**Blackhat Bart:** Every cowboy needs a bad guy! Pistol Pete gets tired of shooting at robots all day long and finds him someone he can have a real showdown with. Of course, if Pistol Pete is the good guy, then Bart must be the bad guy. Blackhat Bart wears the same playsuit as Pistol Pete.

**Powers/Tactics:** Outside of the increased Characteristics he receives from his playsuit, General Billy carries an army of toy soldiers in a compartment on his back. When he deploys his army (uses the Summon) the compartment slides out, revealing the openings of sixty-four launch tubes, and with the hiss of compressed air, all sixty-four tubes launch the toy soldiers they hold into the air. Parachutes unfold from the soldier's backs (this is a special effect) and they land in the hexes adjacent to General Billy. General Billy then issues his orders (the Babysitter listens in and acts as interpreter in case General Billy says something that doesn't make sense), and the toy soldiers perform to the best of their ability. Once he deploys his army, General Billy hangs back and continues to issue orders (even if the toy soldiers don't need further orders) — generals don't dirty their hands with stuff like fighting. If engaged in HTH Combat by a foe, General Billy flails away at the opponent while stating that attacking a general violates the Godiva Conventions. The toy soldiers, if ordered to attack as a group, use Teamwork to Coordinate their attacks.

**Campaign Use:** General Billy provides the Playpals with some numbers to bolster their forces — even if each individual toy soldier isn't much of a threat, the sheer number of them should prove frustrating (perhaps even dangerous) for the PCs, at least at first.

To make General Billy more powerful, add toy tanks and jets to his army. The tanks launch from compartments in his legs, and the jets launch from compartments in his shoulders. To make him less powerful, reduce the number of toy soldiers he carries to 32 or even 16.

General Billy doesn't have the concentration to Hunt anyone.

**Appearance:** Outside of his playsuit, Billy is an overweight six-year-old who stands 3'11" and has brown hair and brown eyes. His playsuit is an egg-shaped construct with arms and short, stubby legs. Billy sits in the “egg”; the arms are plated with oblong discs, one over the bicep and another over the forearm, and it has short, stubby legs. The playsuit lacks a head, but drawn on the body in burnt sienna crayon is a cartoonish face: a big O for the mouth and two downward curves for the eyes. The body is also decorated with oak leaves and silver stars. Billy's playsuit is seven feet tall, four feet wide, and olive drab.

LITTLE WONDER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0+40*	STR	17	9- (17-)	Lift 25 kg (6,400 kg); 0d6 (8d6) [1(4)]
8+10*	DEX	14	11- (13-)	OCV: 3(6)/DCV: 3(6)
5+25*	CON	23	10- (15-)	
5+25*	BODY	23	10- (15-)	
7	INT	-3	10-	PER Roll 10-
5	EGO	-10	10-	ECV: 2
5+15*	PRE	5	10- (13-)	PRE Attack: 1d6 (4d6)
10	COM	0	11-	
1+8*	PD	1		Total: 24 PD (15 rPD)
1+5*	ED	0		Total: 21 ED (15 rED)
2+2*	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
2+13*	REC	2		
10+50*	END	0		
8+58*	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 81**  
\*: OIF (armor; -½)

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

- 27 *Rabbit Size!*: Shrinking (.125m tall [about 6 inches tall], .025 kg mass, -8 to PER Rolls to perceive character, +8 DCV, takes +12" KB); OIF (-½), 8 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-0) [8cc] 0
  - 16 *Rabbit Jumps!*: Leaping +22" (30" forward, 15" upward), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), Linked (to Shrinking; -½) 0
  - 30 *Playsuit Exoskeleton*: Armor (15 PD/15 ED); OIF (-½) 0
  - 7 *Shielded Sensors*: Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½) 0
  - 7 *Shielded Sensors*: Hearing Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½) 0
  - 7 *Psychic Shielding*: Mental Defense (11 points total); OIF (-½) 0
  - 7 *Hardened Systems*: Power Defense (10 points); OIF (-½) 0
  - 7 *Heavy*: Knockback Resistance -5"; OIF (-½) 0
  - 4 *Well Designed*: Lack Of Weakness (-6) for Resistant Defenses; OIF (-½) 0
  - 13 *Sealed System*: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: Low Pressure/Vacuum, High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat); OIF (-½) 0
  - 11 *Encrypted Communication Link*: Mind Link (specific group of up to any four minds at once), No LOS Needed; OIF (-½), Only With Other Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼) 0
  - 12 *Sensor Systems*: Radar, +5 to PER Rolls, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight Group As Well As Radio Group (-½) 0
- Skills**
- 10 *Short*: +2 DCV; Not While Wearing Big Armored Suit (-0), Do Not Apply While Shrinking (-0)

4 *Short*: +2 to Stealth; Not While Wearing Big Armored Suit (-0)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 162**  
**Total Cost: 243**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 20 Hunted: The Babysitter 14- (Mo Pow, Mildly Punish)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Spoiled Child (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Likes To Pretend She's A Rabbit (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Short (1 m tall, +3 KB) (All The Time, Slightly Impairing)
- 10 Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jill Vogel) (Frequently, Major)
- 58 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 243**

**Background/History:** When the new parents came into her home, walking in through the garage door carrying her old dad and then dumping him on the kitchen table, Jill Vogel ran for her favorite hiding spot. As she closed the closet door behind her and snuggled in behind the piled-up laundry, she heard a ZZZZHRAK!

She knew what that meant — her mom hadn't hidden very good and got caught. Now the new parents were coming for her. She put her hands



## PISTOL PETE PLOT SEEDS

It's high noon in the Playpen and Pete needs some black hats to fill out his ghost town. The Babysitter finds unwilling recruits in the PCs, and to keep Pete from crying, the Babysitter has nullified their powers. Can they survive a showdown at the TK Corral?

Pistol Pete gets a new gun — and this one fires bullets the size of a small house. What will he choose for his first target? Can the PCs stop him before he destroys a small town, if not a large city?

Pistol Pete has always been jealous of General Billy's army, and he begs the Babysitter to make him his very own posse — but what's a posse without someone to lynch? And who's a better candidate for lynching than those mean old superheroes who refuse to fall down after they're shot....

over her eyes and waited. She didn't hear anyone counting though, so the new parents must be cheaters. Everyone knows you're supposed to count loud enough for the hiding people to hear you counting. Otherwise, the hiding people don't know when it's time to stop looking for a good hiding spot and settle for a bad hiding spot.

The closet door folded open and Jill Vogel took her hands from her eyes. Her new mom pointed some thingie at Jill's chest, but Jill poked her index fingers up and put them behind her head. She gave her fingers a little wiggle and announced, "I'm a wabbit and it's not wabbit hunting season, so you can't —"

*ZZZZHRAK!*

Jill knew then that these new parents were cheaters. They didn't count before starting to seek, and they shot rabbits when it wasn't rabbit hunting season. They probably didn't care if a person was touching safe either — not that Jill would have ever gotten to safe, the way these new parents cheated.

But that's all right as far as Jill's concerned, because she never has to see her new cheater parents. Now she has the Babysitter, and the Babysitter has given her a playsuit that allows her to become just like a rabbit. And if her new cheater parents ever try to shoot her when it's not rabbit hunting season, then *BAM!* — Jill will give them a big rabbit knuckle sandwich to the kisser.

**Personality/Motivation:** Little Wonder is a sweet girl who tends to live in a fantasy world populated with rabbits — or at least a fantasy world wherein she's a rabbit, it's hard to tell the difference sometimes. Since gaining her playsuit, the line between reality and fantasy — already a tenuous thing in her mind — has blurred until it's almost non-existent. The playsuit has rabbit ears, and allows her to shrink down to the size of a rabbit and jump real far like a rabbit, so Little Wonder fails to see the difference between her and a rabbit (except for maybe the fur). In Little Wonder's fantasy rabbit-land, though, rabbits are slightly more aggressive than they are in real life, and they don't take any grief from anyone. When Little Wonder doesn't like what's going on, she puts her foot down — more like, she stamps her foot once or twice — and lets everyone know how unhappy she is about what's going on. And if people don't listen, then it's time for a rabbit punch, because if a rabbit wouldn't take being ignored, then there's no reason Little Wonder should either.

**Quote:** "I'm a wabbit!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Driven by love for the Little Wonder, the Babysitter has engineered an amazing gas that allows his precious little girl to shrink down to rabbit size. While at this size Little Wonder can also leap incredible distances — far longer leaps than any rabbit has ever dreamed of making. In combat, Little Wonder tends to sneak around, making Stealth rolls and Half Move Leaps (see below) to stay out of sight until she can get behind an opponent. Then she grows suddenly to normal size delivering her patented rabbit punch. After delivering the blow, she Shrinks down and goes back to leaping around. She continues with this strategy until she's out of shrinking gas or everyone's been knocked on their patootie.

For game purposes Shrinking has the same effect on Little Wonder as it would on an adult, even though she's defined as being only half human size most of the time. In effect the first level of Shrinking coincides with her normal small size, then the other three allow her to get smaller. She only gets as small as a rabbit, which falls into the fourth level of Shrinking (even though most characters with that much Shrinking can get much smaller). When she's rabbit sized and using Stealth (which typically requires a Half Phase Action, since she can't move quickly and be covert), she has a 16- Stealth roll.

**Campaign Use:** As hard as it may be to believe, considering she's a girl who thinks she's rabbit, Little Wonder is the Playpal's bruiser, and she's knocked both of the other boys on their behinds enough that they know better than to make her too mad. The only question remaining is how long it takes the PCs to learn to respect the strength of a rabbit.

To make Little Wonder more powerful, give her Combat Skill Levels with her Punch and give her Damage Reduction when she's shrunk to small size. To further increase her power, give her an HA that represents her "rabbit kick." To make her less powerful, reduce the amount of Shrinking and number of inches of Leaping she has.

Little Wonder doesn't Hunt people. Why would a rabbit go after anyone?

**Appearance:** Jill Vogel is a skinny girl standing 3'6" with lank blonde hair and blue eyes. Her playsuit resembles General Billy's, except that it's bright pink, and drawn on the body in goldenrod crayon is a cartoonish rabbit face: a two-sided hook for the nose and mouth, three whiskers to either side of the nose, and two slanted lines for eyes. Protruding from the top of the playsuit's body are two floppy rabbit ears.

**PISTOL PETE**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0+40*	STR	17	9- (17-)	Lift 25 kg (6,400 kg); 0d6 (8d6) [1(4)]
8+10*	DEX	14	11- (13-)	OCV: 3(6)/DCV: 3(6)
5+25*	CON	23	10- (15-)	
5+25*	BODY	23	10- (15-)	
7	INT	-3	10-	PER Roll 10-
5	EGO	-10	10-	ECV: 2
5+15*	PRE	5	10- (13-)	PRE Attack: 1d6 (4d6)
10	COM	0	11-	
1+8*	PD	1		Total: 24 PD (15 rPD)
1+5*	ED	0		Total: 21 ED (15 rED)
2+2*	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
2+13*	REC	2		
10+50*	END	0		
8+58*	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 81</b>

\*: OIF (armor; -½)

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

40	<i>TK Cap Gun Six-Shooters, Right Hand:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Indirect (always originate with Pete, but can strike from any direction; +½), Invisible To Sight Group (+½); OAF (-1), 16 Charges (-0) [16]	
5	<i>TK Cap Gun Six-Shooters, Left Hand:</i> Another TK Cap Gun Six-Shooter (total of 2) [16]	
30	<i>Playsuit Exoskeleton:</i> Armor (15 PD/15 ED); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Shielded Sensors:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Shielded Sensors:</i> Hearing Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Psychic Shielding:</i> Mental Defense (11 points total); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Hardened Systems:</i> Power Defense (10 points); OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -5"; OIF (-½)	0
4	<i>Well Designed:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-6) for Resistant Defenses; OIF (-½)	0
13	<i>Sealed System:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: Low Pressure/Vacuum, High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat); OIF (-½)	0
11	<i>Encrypted Communication Link:</i> Mind Link (specific group of up to any four minds at once), No LOS Needed; OIF (-½), Only With Other Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼)	0
12	<i>Sensor Systems:</i> Radar, +5 to PER Rolls, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)	0

**Skills**

8	+4 OCV with TK Cap Gun Six-Shooters
10	<i>Short:</i> +2 DCV; Not While Wearing Big Armored Suit (-0)
4	<i>Short:</i> +2 to Stealth; Not While Wearing Big Armored Suit (-0)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 172**

**Total Cost: 253**

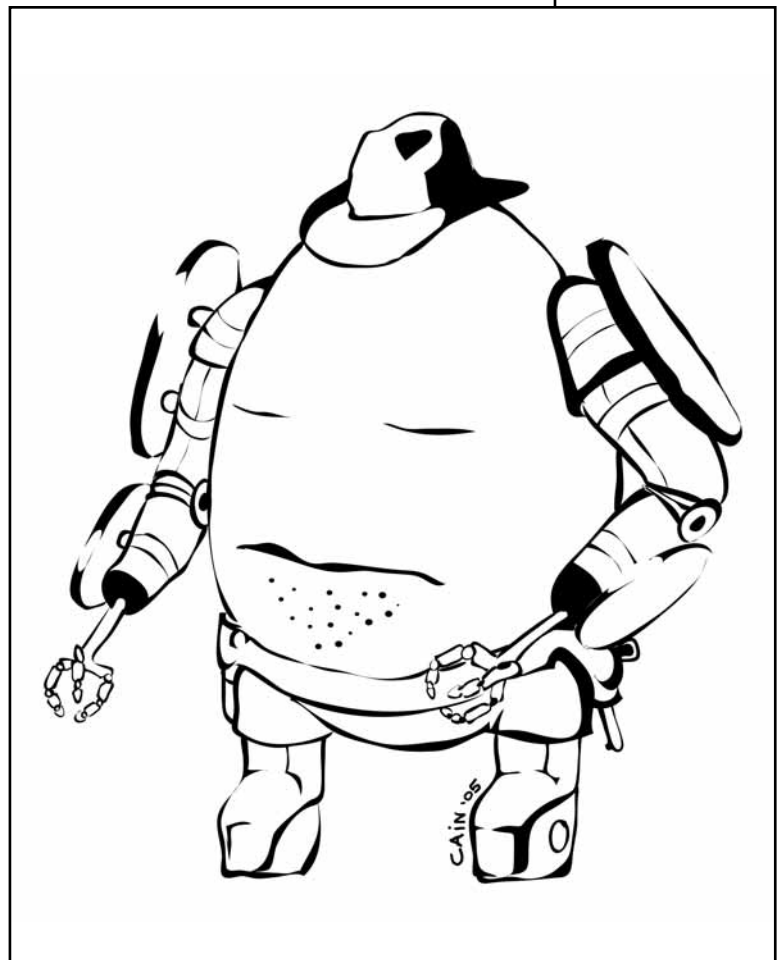
**100+ Disadvantages**

20	Hunted: The Babysitter 14- (Mo Pow, Mildly Punish)
15	Psychological Limitation: Spoiled Child (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Bloodthirsty, Likes To Shoot People "Dead" (Common, Moderate)
15	Physical Limitation: Short (1 m tall, +3 KB) (All The Time, Slightly Impairing)
10	Social Limitation: Minor (Frequently, Minor)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Pete Williamson) (Frequently, Major)
68	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 253**

**Background/History:** Pete Williamson had taken cover behind the sofa in the frontroom while he reloaded his cap guns. He took off his cowboy hat and waved it over the back of the sofa. When no one shot his hat out of his hand, he poked his head out and peeked through the picture window to see if the Indians had crept up on him when he wasn't looking. All he saw was his mom and dad coming up the driveway.

He looked back over his shoulder, saw his mom and dad in the kitchen, and hurried to finish loading his cap guns.



He leapt from the sofa and yelled, “Circle the wagons! They’re coming to scalp us!” He ran up the stairs, taking them two at a time and pulling himself up the handrail. From down below he heard his mom scream (just like she did every time he ran up the stairs), “Don’t pull on the rail, Peter — it’s coming loose!”

He ignored her, and good thing he did too, because before you could say “whistling Dixie,” the front door was blasted in. Then there came two ZZZZHRAK!’s, one right after the other.

At the top of the stair, Pete went to his knees, slid onto the hardwood, and grabbed the banister, pulling himself in a tight circle. Then he looked through the wooden posts and saw his new parents standing at the bottom of the stair. He craned his head around to get a good look at their hands, but they weren’t holding his old parents’ scalps, so Pete was kind of disappointed. They did have some pretty good looking guns, though, so Pete shouted down to them, “OK, you’re the train robbers, and I’m the marshal.”

He pushed his cowboy hat to the back of his head, stood up, and let loose with his cap guns — *pap! pap! pap!* — but the new parents didn’t act shot and didn’t yell out “Bulletproof!” Pete was getting ready to cry when his new parents raised their guns and — ZZZZHRAK!

When Pete came to, he patted his head. He found that his hair was still there and the new parents hadn’t scalped him, so he was relieved about that, but then he realized his cowboy hat was gone. He started to cry, but the Babysitter soon got him a new hat. And the Babysitter got him some new guns too — much better guns than his old cap guns — so since then, Pistol Pete hasn’t had much reason to cry.

**Personality/Motivation:** Pistol Pete’s old parents let him watch too much television — especially too many westerns (Pete’s old dad was a John Wayne fan). The Babysitter’s even worse about it, having set up a television room with twenty screens that never go off. After so much TV, Pete views the world in stark, black-and-white terms: there are people who shoot and there are people who get shot. Naturally, Pete is always among the people who do the shooting.

In Pistol Pete’s world the people who get shot are supposed to fall down and play dead when he shoots them. If they don’t, he gets upset and tends to cry. Pete crying is an ugly sight that starts with

him sucking in his lips, scrunching closed his eyes, and holding his breath until his whole face turns red. His shoulders hunch up, his hands close into fists, and he bends at the knees and waist. Then he lets loose, and it is a wailing, anguished sound, terrible enough to make a deaf person cringe. And his crying rarely stops any time soon.

Since he got his playsuit, people tend to stay down when he shoots them, so Pete’s been pretty happy with the world.

**Quote:** “Fall down! You’re cheating! I shot you dead!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Pistol Pete’s main weapons are the two TK Cap Gun Six-Shooters he carries in holsters at his playsuit’s waist. Each gun, ironically enough, has sixteen shots and fires an invisible bullet of force that’s hooked into Pete’s sensor system. The bullet dives and dodges through the air to attack an opponent from any direction, so it’s difficult to “take cover” from Pete’s attack. The pistol makes the sound of a cap gun — *pap!* — when it fires. The sound is less than intimidating and an opponent might scoff — until he’s been hit in the back of the head with a well-placed shot once or twice. Pistol Pete mainly hangs back behind General Billy’s toy soldiers, firing at whatever target strikes his fancy, usually choosing a target in black (they always get shot).

**Campaign Use:** Pistol Pete is the Playpals’ energy projector and in combat he performs much the same as a standard energy projector, except he has higher expectations and never ceases to be disappointed when a foe doesn’t fall down and play dead. To make him more powerful, give his TK Cap Gun Six-Shooters the Advantage *Armor Piercing* and give Pete Find Weakness with the pistols. To make him less powerful, remove his Combat Skill Levels with the pistols. He’s no more likely to Hunt anyone than the other two.

**Appearance:** Outside of his playsuit, Pete is a six year-old who stands 3’7” and has curly black hair and brown eyes. His playsuit resembles General Billy’s, but it’s bone white, and drawn on the body in black crayon is a cartoonish face: a slightly crooked line for the mouth, two narrow lines for the eyes, and a scattering of black dots for stubble. The body is also decorated with a tin sheriff’s star and built into the top of the body is a cowboy hat. Pete’s two pistols fit into holsters hung from a built-in belt circling the body of the suit.

# INDEPENDENT VILLAINS

## GLORIANA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
50	STR	40	19-	Lift 25 tons; 10d6 [5]
30	DEX	60	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
50	CON	80	19-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
30	EGO	40	15-	ECV: 10
40	PRE	30	17-	PRE Attack: 8d6
20	COM	5	13-	
10	PD	0		Total: 30 PD (20 rPD)
10	ED	0		Total: 30 ED (20 rED)
7	SPD	30		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
25	REC	10		
100	END	0		
100	STUN	30		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 353</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Flight: 30"/240"  
 FTL: 1 LY per minute

**Cost Powers** **END**

80	<i>Cosmic Fires:</i> Multipower, 80-point reserve	
8u	1) <i>Raw Cosmic Power:</i> Energy Blast 16d6	8
7u	2) <i>Shaped Cosmic Energy Blast I:</i> Energy Blast 5d6, Variable Advantage (+1 Advantages; +2)	7
8u	3) <i>Shaped Cosmic Energy Blast II:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Variable Advantage (+½ Advantages; +1)	8
8u	4) <i>Cosmic Transmutation:</i> Major Transform 2½d6 (anything into anything, heals back normally), Improved Results Group (anything; +1)	7
87	<i>Cosmic Shield:</i> Force Field (20 PD/20 ED/10 Power Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
155	<i>Cosmic Energy Absorption:</i> Absorption 20d6 (energy, half to STR, half to CON), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute, +¼) <b>plus</b> Force Field (40 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Linked (-½), Only Up To Amount Rolled By Absorption (-½)	0
20	<i>Starling's Psyche:</i> Mental Defense (26 points total)	0
105	<i>Cosmic Flight:</i> Multipower, 105-point reserve	
10u	1) <i>Atmospheric Flight:</i> Flight 30", x8 Non-combat, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
5u	2) <i>Interstellar Flight:</i> FTL Travel (500,000 LY/year, or about 1 LY/minute)	0
62	<i>Cosmic Form:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality), Inherent (+¼)	0

**Skills**

20	+2 Overall
8	+4 with Flight
2	CK: Millennium City 11-
3	Tactics 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 588**

**Total Cost: 941**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Distinctive Features: inhumanly beautiful (Concealable With Effort; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 35 Enraged: Berserk when Absorbs maximum of Absorption dice (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 8-
- 5 Hunted: Rowan 8- (Less Pow, Capture)
- 25 Hunted: UNTIL 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Uncertain Of Purpose And Place In World (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Needs To Explore And See The World (Common, Total)
- 10 Unluck 2d6
- 20 Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Mind Control (Common)
- 596 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 941**

**Background/History:** The peaceful and scholarly Mandaarians, an ancient interstellar race who live far from Earth, have studied the galaxy for eons. They long ago learned that the natural laws of physics come and go with the changing of universal forces. The natural laws Human physicists have struggled so hard to discover and define are no axiomatic true thing — they are guidelines that apply to physical reality for a limited period of time,



## GLORIANA PLOT SEEDS

Doctor Destroyer gains control of Gloriana and correctly surmises her true nature. Can the PCs rescue her from his clutches before he hatches a maniacal plan that might threaten the entire solar system?

Redshift appears suddenly at the Ravenswood Academy and begs Rowan to help him. His freedom is temporary — when Gloriana awakes he'll be pulled back into her soul. Is it possible to separate the two? And can the PCs convince Gloriana to cooperate?

Mandaarian observers show up on Earth asking about Gloriana. When they speak of her their normally imperturbable, tranquil faces shows a trace of abject fear. They won't explain why, or tell the PCs anything about Gloriana or the "starling theory." After some consultation among themselves, they agree to help the PCs track down Gloriana and help her... provided the PCs must do everything they say without question. Will the PCs agree? And what do the Mandaarians have planned that requires such unquestioning obedience?

albeit a period that might last for many millennia.

These guidelines come in and out of truth like the ebb and flow of the tide. During times of what Terrans call high magic, when the warp and woof of the universal metaphysic is saturated with the mystical and preternatural, the greatest of astronomical phenomena begin to change. Perhaps because of their importance in the universal schema, these great phenomena bend the universe until it changes, or maybe the symbolic importance that every sentient species assigns to sun and stars invests them with the mystical. Or maybe it is simply the nature of Reality. The Mandaarians do not know for certain, but they understand the way things are (or think they do) and accept that anything more than that may be unknowable.

Some Mandaarian metaphysicians theorize that due to the underlying mystic nature of Reality, not all stars may be created from nebulous clouds of gases. In some instances, the Multiverse gives birth to a *starling* — a being who seemingly belongs to one of the sentient species that inhabits it, but which in time will metamorphose into a stellar body. Any such being would possess immense power before it became a star. Furthermore, by the postulates of psychology and the mystic axioms of correspondence, the type of star that being would become would be influenced by the life it experiences as a sentient being before its final transformation into a star. A being raised in a gentle and loving environment would become a star destined to nurture life and promote peace, while one who suffered strife, pain, or confusion might foster dangerous worlds, warlike species, or *things* whose darkness it is not wise to contemplate.

If this theory is true, then the Multiverse has much to fear. For some Mandaarians who observe Earth believe that the woman named Gloriana might be such a being... and what worlds and life might one day evolve around a star that has gone insane?

**Personality/Motivation:** Gloriana's tragedy is described on page 48. To this day Rowan holds herself accountable for what happened, and if she knew of the "starling theory" she might likely abandon Ravenswood to find Gloriana and try to help her.

When Gloriana absorbed the human Redshift, her starling's soul was infected with an alien presence. Redshift was only human, and though a far better man than many, his soul was foreign to Gloriana's. As a starling, Gloriana was not truly a part of her environment and could not merge with it. The commingling of human mud with what would one day become stellar brilliance unbalanced Gloriana's delicate psyche, driving her insane.

Since that day Gloriana has behaved erratically. She attempted to "disconnect" herself from her powers and dwell with normal people, but it was impossible. The power lay in her soul and called to her, and she could not resist. She attempted to carve out a home on the Moon, but loneliness drove her out of the caverns she had cut with cosmic energy. She has committed bank robberies, escap-

ing with only a thousand dollars for her trouble, and orchestrated reigns of terror in which she threatened entire cities — and has performed both with equal zeal and relish. A few times she has even helped people. Gloriana is both entirely alien to the PCs and all too human, and trying to understand her actions isn't possible unless and until the PCs become aware of her true nature... and maybe not even then.

Gloriana remains entirely ignorant of her true nature (as does everyone else on Earth — even among the Mandaarians, only a few know of the starling theory, and many of them scoff at it). She has, at times, searched for clues to her past. Her earliest memory is of standing outside of Millennium City looking up at the stars, and she was well into her adolescence by that point.

**Quote:** "I have seen the stars and traveled the depths of space, yet I return to this puny speck of blue, again and again, called by some unseen force."

**Powers/Tactics:** Gloriana controls cosmic energy. She can manipulate it for a variety of effects, and with time and practice will develop more uses for it (*i.e.*, gradually her Multipower will transform into a large Cosmic Variable Power Pool, putting her well on par with most *Galactic Champions* cosmic entities). In effect, she's a battery for energy of all sorts; her Absorption reflects this. Though she can store an incredible amount of energy, when she's "overloaded" — an admittedly rare event — she goes berserk with power and loses control of herself.

In combat Gloriana tries to overwhelm her foes with raw power. If faced with a group, she opens with Shaped Cosmic Energy Blast I with the Variable Special Effect set to whatever Area Of Effect catches the most opponents. She continues with this tactic until it's apparent that it's useless or one of her opponents hurts her. Then she switches to something else or focuses on that opponent with her Raw Cosmic Power until he drops.

Only the mightiest of superhumans can affect Gloriana with energy bolts, so she typically ignores opponents who rely on Energy Blasts and like attacks until the end of a battle. If combat isn't going her way, or she gets bored with it, she simply flies away — exiting the atmosphere and moving away at lightspeed if necessary to escape. Because of her uncertainty about who she is, Gloriana is particularly susceptible to mental domination powers (*i.e.*, Mind Control).

**Campaign Use:** Gloriana is an adolescent star (assuming the Mandaarian theory is correct...), and like a human adolescent trying to find his place in the world, she's slowly but surely developing a comprehension of this, which will in turn mean a struggle to understand her place and purpose in the universe. Of course, life is never simple, and events in Gloriana's life have left her unbalanced and ill-equipped to make this spiritual journey. And unlike a normal adolescent, Gloriana's struggles with identity might cost thousands of lives.

Gloriana is intended to challenge a group of powerful superheroes. If she appears in a *Teen*



*Champions* campaign, the PCs must talk their way out of any confrontation with her — her power likely dwarfs even a large team of experienced teen superheroes. Fortunately it's easy to distract Gloriana with a careful argument, for she's rarely certain of her purpose for long. The challenge for the teens is getting her attention and surviving long enough to convince her to change her course of action.

To make Gloriana more powerful, add more slots to her *Cosmic Fires* Multipower, giving her more Energy Blasts and some Ranged Killing Attacks. An attack with Variable Special Effects is a good start. Gloriana should be incredibly powerful — she may be a newborn star, after all — but to make her less effective in combat, lower her DEX and reduce her defenses, especially her Absorption.

Gloriana is still too confused and uncertain of herself to Hunt anyone. She often experiences tremendous rage when thwarted or opposed which may prompt her to turn the full fury of her power on the source of the annoyance, but she soon forgets whatever it was and thus doesn't hold grudges or seek vengeance. Only if someone seriously hurt her would she be likely to remember that person firmly enough to even consider taking proactive action against him.

**Appearance:** Tall and slender, Gloriana is an inhumanly beautiful woman. She has lavender eyes and blonde hair that's so pale it seems almost white. Her voice is musical, intoning words with precise perfection. For a costume she wears a black tunic with a low V-neck, which she belts at waist with a narrow strip of silvery fabric, and knee-high black boots. She wears a voluminous cloak with a high collar; the cloak is black and shines with glistening points of light that grow brighter as Gloriana uses her powers.

JANUS				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll: 11-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	Presence Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
5	PD	3		Total: 11 PD (6 rPD)
5	ED	3		Total: 11 ED (6 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
4	REC	0		
40	END	8		
30	STUN	7		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 100</b>
<b>Movement:</b> Running: 6"/12"				
<b>Cost Powers</b> <span style="float:right"><b>END</b></span>				
142	<i>Dimensional Harmonizer Circuitry:</i> Multipower, 213-point powers, all OIF (dimensional suit; -½)			
11u	1) <i>Antipodal Harmony Generator:</i> Summon 8 350-point "Opposites", Expanded Class (any sentient being; +½), Specific Beings (+1); Opposite's Counterpart Must Be Within Line Of Sight (-½), OIF (-½) 21			
12u	2) <i>Dimensional Interloper Deharmonizer:</i> Dispel Summon 71d6 (standard effect: 213 points); OIF (-½), Only Works On "Dimensional" Summons (see text; -¼) 21			
2u	3) <i>Frequency Self-Harmonizer:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in Right or Left Hand Earth); OIF (-½) 3			
3u	4) <i>Single Harmonic Frequency Adjuster:</i> Desolidification (affected by vibratory and transdimensional attacks); OIF (-½) 4			
10	<i>Dimensional Energy Transduction Unit:</i> Endurance Reserve (50 END, 10 REC); IAF (-½), Limited Recovery (only in Right or Left Hand Earth; -0) 0			
10	<i>Hardened Circuits:</i> Power Defense (15 points); OIF (dimensional suit; -½) 0			
12	<i>Dimensional Suit:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (dimensional suit; -½) 0			
16	<i>Unique Psyche:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total) 0			
9	<i>Harmonic Analyzer:</i> Detect Dimensional Origin 14- (Sight Group), Discriminatory, Analyze; OIF (dimensional suit; -½) 0			
<b>Perks</b>				
4	2 Deep Covers (Janus Sullivan on Right-Hand Earth; Janus Stevens on Left-Hand Earth)			
28	Base: Doorway (see separate character sheet)			
<b>Talents</b>				
9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)			
<b>Skills</b>				
10	+2 with all Intellect Skills			
3	Computer Programming 14-			
3	Deduction 14-			
3	Electronics 14-			

- 4 KS: Left-Hand Earth History 15-
- 4 Language: Left-Hand English (idiomatic, native accent)
- 3 Scientist
- 4 SS: Dimensional Engineering 16-
- 4 SS: Dimensional Physics 16-
- 3 SS: Physics 15-
- 3 Systems Operation 13-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 312**

**Total Cost: 412**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Features: dimensional anomaly (Not Concealable; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Amoral (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Believes Himself Unique And Alone — Oh So, Alone! — In The Multiverse (Common, Total)
- 20 Social Limitation: Does Not Officially Exist In Either Right-Hand Or Left-Hand Earth (Very Frequently; Major)
- 5 Unluck 1d6
- 10 Vulnerability: 1½ x Effect from Mind Control (Common)
- 132 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 412**

**Background/History:** Janus is a man born of two worlds yet belonging to neither. His story begins twenty years ago when Dr. James Sullivan, a research scientist assigned to a top-secret government project, discovered the extra-dimensional space occupied by the spherical construct later named Doorway. Doctor Sullivan thought it a major breakthrough, and it was — but it wasn't the discovery the government hoped for. The project's goal was the development of teleportation gates to move military personnel instantaneously from one location to another. Doorway was a gate between two different dimensions: Earth's own, and that of an alternate Earth similar to Dr. Sullivan's world but fundamentally different. Unsure of the government's reaction and believing Doorway wouldn't further the project's goals, Dr. Sullivan kept his discovery a secret.

But that's only half the story...

On the other Earth — a place where the majority were left-handed, people spoke and wrote backwards, and justice, temperance, and hope were three of the Seven Deadly Sins — Dr. Janice Stevens, a research scientist assigned to a top secret not-for-profit venture, discovered the same extra-dimensional space occupied by Doorway. Doctor Stevens's discovery wasn't what the not-for-profit company had hoped for. The project's goal was the development of teleportation gates to move food, medical personnel, and other humanitarian aid instantaneously from one location to another. Unsure of the not-for-profit company's reaction and believing Doorway wouldn't further the project's goals, Dr. Stevens kept her discovery a secret.

But the two of them had an ulterior motive for not revealing Doorway's existence: Both were married and wished to keep their affair secret from their respective spouses. They recalibrated Doorway's dimensional entrances to apartments secretly rented in the city. When Janice became pregnant, both scientists "mysteriously" vanished from their respective worlds and took up permanent residence in Doorway. After Janus's birth, the small family lived an idyllic existence for seventeen years.

A year ago the two scientists disappeared without a trace. Now 17 year-old Janus is alone — in his opinion more alone than any man or woman in the history of two realities, for he is a dimensional anomaly, at home in neither Right-Hand or Left-Hand Earth and surrounded only by inhabitants of those worlds. Janus has searched far and wide for his parents but found nothing. Without their mediating influence, his amoral nature — an ambiguous moral and ethical code of commingled Right- and Left-Hand beliefs — have begun to assert itself and loneliness gnaws at his heart. Soon the world will feel the effects of Janus's attempts to carve a place for himself.

**Personality/Motivation:** Janus is the son of a man from Right-Hand Earth and a woman from Left-Hand Earth, two diametrically opposed worlds. While the worlds appear very similar, the value systems of their respective inhabitants are entirely opposite. Rather than embodying the antithetical



virtues of both places, Janus is totally amoral and lacks any virtue at all. He is not humble, kind, or diligent; nor is he proud, wrathful, or lazy — he stands precisely in the middle and in the end, lacking a value system of any kind, he is only self-serving, placing his own desires before those of any other. On the other hand, his moral equipoise provides him with a coldly analytical and objective viewpoint; this is often to his advantage when planning or analyzing a situation.

Currently, Janus obsesses over his solitude and feelings of loneliness. Like most seventeen year-olds, he seeks a place for himself in the world. Unlike others, he really *is* a unique being. Because of his amoral nature, nothing will stand in his way of “finding himself.” And given the powerful technology at his command, his attempts will likely have an impact on Right- and Left-Hand Earth. And whether this impact causes harm is no concern to Janus.

**Quote:** “You are not unique. Your reflection exists in a mirror darkly... and now I will show you that reflection!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Janus’s powers stem from his genius and the dimensional technology derived from Doorway’s engines and devices. He wears a body suit woven of thread which is actually ultra-miniaturized circuitry; it provides him with his personal powers. The difference in spatio-dimensional location between Right- and Left-Hand Earth is based on harmonies. A person’s thoughts and feelings — his entire personality in fact — can be modeled as a set of myriad waves and each individual wave has its own frequency. The term *harmony* was coined by Drs. Sullivan and Stevens to describe an individual’s set of waves. A person’s harmony and how it interacts with the environment determines his dimensional location.

Janus’s dimensional suit allows him to analyze and manipulate his own harmonies as well as those of others. By reversing his harmony as he moves, Janus can move between Right- and Left-Hand Earth. With an ever-so slight adjustment to one of his personal harmonics, he can make himself “out of phase” with respect to his environment. He can disrupt the harmonies of those summoned from extra-dimensional locations, returning them whence they came. He can even summon an individual’s opposite, but only when that individual is within his Line Of Sight; Janus must study his target’s harmony to create its opposite and bring the target’s counterpart through dimensions.

In combat, Janus hangs back and uses his Antipodal Harmony Generator to Summon allies for himself. These allies are predisposed to help Janus, since most individuals when confronted with their “doppelganger” have an instinctive aversive reaction (furthermore, he can speak their language; Right- and Left-Hand English are distinctly different, as if listening to the language played in reverse). Janus then uses his Single Harmonic Frequency Adjuster to keep himself safe from harm.

## BEING LEFT-HANDED

Left-Hand Earth is a place where Professor Preserver is the downtrodden’s greatest champion against the tyranny of the world’s governments, Organitron seeks to create a utopian world where man and machine co-exist peacefully, and the superheroes — including the Left-Hand counterparts of the villains in your campaign! — are the protectors of the powerful and crusaders for injustice. On the other hand, the opposites of your PCs are vile evildoers and villains most foul. Here are a few tips for describing the Left-Handed counterparts of the PCs Janus Summons to fight for him.

**Looking Left-Handed:** The exact appearance of the Left-Handers is left in your capable hands, but below are some ideas:

—Reverse the color scheme or darken the colors of a superhero’s costume. For instance, the Left-Handed Iron-clad, rather than having skin of a sort of iron blue-grey, has skin that is rusty and corroded. The Left-Handed Nighthawk’s costume, lacking the silver trim and accessories, is even darker than Nighthawk’s own.

—Less costume and more skin. Witchcraft wears a modest tunic and cloak; her Left-Handed counterpart wears a mini-skirt and see-through blouse similar to Talisman’s. This trick can also work in reverse. An exhibitionist like Sapphire wears a tight-fitting costume on Right-Handed Earth; her counterpart wears enveloping robes with a cowl that hides her face.

—Skulls and spikes. One sure way of telling how bad the bad guy is: count the skulls. For instance, rather than Defender’s sleek armor with clean lines, his Left-Handed counterpart’s armor has spiked gauntlets, spiked elbow and knee pads, spiked shoulder pads, and a helmet shaped like a stylized skull.

—Reverse or otherwise change the logo. For instance, the lightning bolt on Left-Handed Kinetik’s costume runs from his left shoulder to his right thigh, and is black rather than white.

**Talking Left-Handed:** Through the use of Powers, Talents, or just old-fashioned ingenuity, one of the PCs might discover a way to communicate with his doppelganger. If so, the difficulty of convincing him of the truth is up to you... but even if Right and Left-Hand superteams overcome their instinctive antipathy and join forces to attack Janus, once Janus is defeated both sides are likely to revert to type. The Left-Handers are going to be eager to exploit the newly discovered Right-Hand Earth and its soft-hearted inhabitants, and only the PCs stand in their way! It won’t be long before the Left-Handers betray their new allies — probably right after Janus is captured.

**Campaign Use:** Plots involving Janus center around his attempts to create a world where he is at home, whether he tries to merge sections of Right- and Left-Hand Earth or abducts inhabitants from both worlds hoping to create a new one. Though he lacks Attack Powers and has low defenses, Janus is not easily defeated and is even more difficult to capture thanks to his Extra-Dimensional Movement.

To make Janus more powerful, increase his Armor to 10 PD/10 ED or even 15 PD/15 ED. Also provide him with some sort of attack — an NND Energy Blast, *Dimensional Destabilizer*, is appropri-

## JANUS PLOT SEEDS

It begins with a tingling sensation, then suddenly the PCs find themselves in an eerily similar world where everyone speaks in reverse. Janus stands before them... and so do their Left-Handed counterparts. The Left-Handers want revenge for their previous defeat and have forced Janus to summon the PCs through the dimensions, but during the fight Janus escapes. Now the PCs are stuck and must find a way free of this topsy-turvy world of opposites.

Janus believes himself unique, but what if Drs. Janice Sullivan and James Stevens discovered, on the opposite side of the world, a different Doorway? And what if they named their child Sunaj after the Left-Hand Earth's god of doorways? Perhaps Janus is unique, but his opposite exists. Rather than being amoral, Sunaj swings wildly between Right- and Left-Hand moralities. And what happens when the two meet? Will there be a strange sort of understanding or will they be instant enemies?

Janus discovers the fate of his missing parents. Doctor Destroyer has captured Dr. Janice Stevens and seeks to exploit Left-Hand Earth; Professor Preserver on Left-Hand Earth entertains Dr. James Sullivan as an honored guest and seeks to recover Sullivan's lover from Destroyer's clutches. Can either world survive when Destroyer and Preserver meet in person? What role will Janus play in their conflict? And let's not forget the PCs!

ate. You may also want to add an *Amicable Advantage* to his Summon to formalize his ability to get along with the "opposites" he Summons. To make him less powerful, add an *Extra Time* Limitation on his Extra-Dimensional Movement.

Whatever you do, Janus should be able to Summon the Left-Hand counterparts of the entire superhero team since this is his shtick, and the Left-Hand counterparts are built on the same number of Character Points as the PCs. If necessary, raise the points of the Summoned opposites to match those of the PCs, or increase the maximum number of beings he can Summon if there are more than eight members of the team.

Janus generally doesn't Hunt people; he's not that interested in them. Only if he takes an interest — if a character has dimensional-manipulation powers or seems to have some connection to his parents — would he pursue someone. Even then, at first he'd limit himself mostly to information-gathering.

**Appearance:** Janus's dimensional suit covers him from top to bottom. From afar the suit seems to be a medium shade of scintillant gray, but closer inspection reveals that it's composed of black and white pixels. The pixels flash from black to white and back again as Janus uses his powers. At his waist, he wears his Dimensional Energy Transduction Unit, a small box covered with metal discs. Wires run from the box, along his back, and plug into an outlet at the base of his neck.

### DOORWAY

#### Janus's Base

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
10	BODY	8	
5	Size	10	12.5"x6.4"; -7 DCV
8	DEF	18	

**Total Characteristic Cost: 36**

#### Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
30	<i>Location:</i> Another Dimension	0
10	<i>Inter-Dimensional Entrance:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (specific location in two dimensions); OIF Immobile (-1½)	0
18	<i>Life Support Systems:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing, Safe Environment: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum)	0
19	<i>Security Monitors:</i> Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups), Dimensional (can perceive into Right- And Left-Hand Earth), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF Immobile (display monitor; -2), Perception Point Cannot Be Created Beyond Specific Apartments On Right- And Left-Hand Earth (-1)	0
25	<i>Security Alarms:</i> Security Systems 20-	

**Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 102**

**Total Base Cost: 138**

**Total Cost: 138/5 = 28**

**Description:** Doorway is spherical construct made of an unknown alloy; it has a diameter of 10". Located in a small interdimensional pocket, it can only be reached via entrances on Right- and Left-Hand Earth. Each entrance, one on each world, is disguised as a closet door in an apartment. Unless the person trying to enter bypasses Doorway's security devices with a successful Skill Versus Skill Contest using Security Systems, the base notifies Janus when either of the apartments is entered. Janus can use cameras hidden in the apartments to spy on intruders.

Doorway has three levels: the control room in the middle level and is circular with a 10" diameter; living quarters are above the control room on the top levels; below is the engine room, which contains the dimensional harmonic generators. A single entrance allows access from other dimensions; it can be attuned to either Right- or Left-Hand Earth (and only these two dimensions). The control panel to the right of the entrance opens the door to Right-Hand Earth; the one to the left opens the door to Left-Hand Earth. At the GM's option, Janus can recalibrate the entrances to Doorway to connect them to other locations in the two worlds, but doing so requires both considerable time and dimensional engineering know-how.

SAI				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
25	DEX	45	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 11 ED (3 rED)
5	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
30	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 103</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Teleportation: 15"/15"

**Cost Powers** **END**

<i>Martial Arts: Kung Fu</i>				
Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort	
4 Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 30 STR	
4 Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort	
3 Joint Lock/Grab-1	-1		Grab, 30 STR	
5 Kick	-2	+1	8d6 Strike	
3 Legsweep	+2	-1	5d6 Strike, Target Falls	
4 Punch	+0	+2	6d6 Strike	
4 <i>Tien-hsueh</i> Strike-1	+1		2½d6 NND (1)	
+1 Damage Class (already added in)				
1 Use Art with Clubs				
6 <i>Sai</i> : HA +3d6; OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)				1
5 <i>Sai</i> : Another Sai (as above)				1
20 <i>Teleportive Combat</i> : Elemental Control, 40-point powers				
19 1) <i>Teleporting</i> : Teleportation 15", Position Shift, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); No Noncombat Multiple (-¼)				1
31 2) <i>Teleportation Boxing</i> : Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius; +1¼), Selective (+¼); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Limited Range (center of Area must be within the character's Half Move using Teleportation at Combat velocity; -¼)				7
16 3) <i>Blink Combat Enhancement</i> : +8 HTH; Costs Endurance (to activate; -¼)				4
14 4) <i>Aport Sais</i> : Energy Blast 6d6, Autofire (2 shots; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +½); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼)				2
34 <i>Staying Out Of Reach</i> : Teleportation 5", Position Shift, Trigger (whenever she wants to after performing an attack, activating Trigger takes no time, resetting Trigger is a Zero Phase Action; +¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)				0

**Talents**

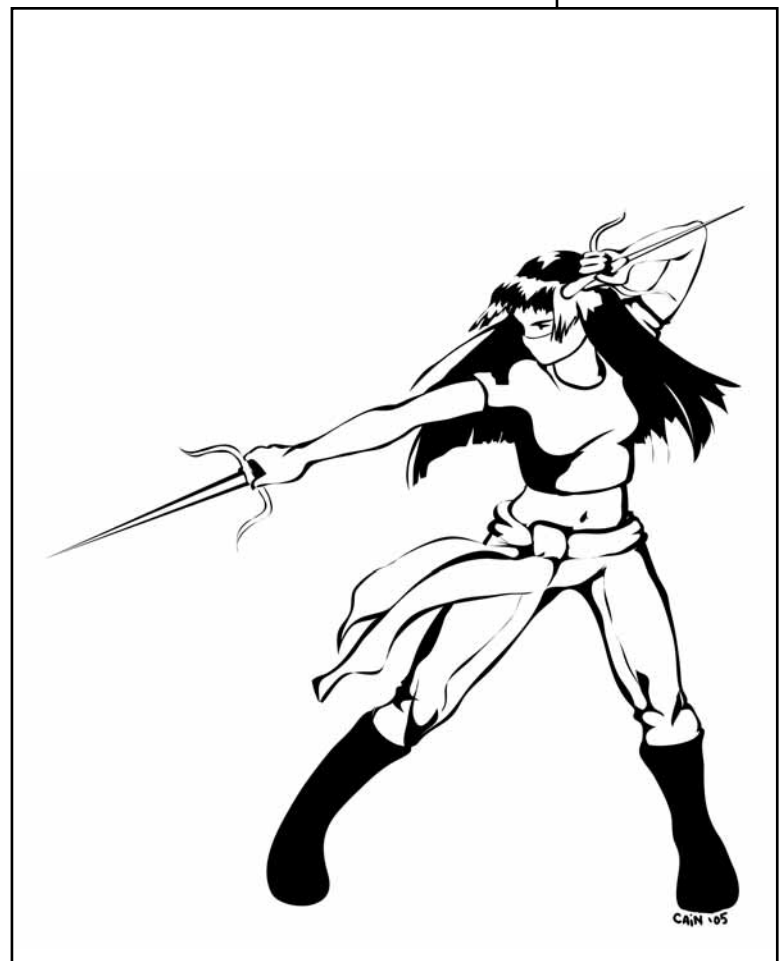
- 6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
- Skills**
- 3 Acrobatics 14-
- 3 Analyze Style 12-
- 3 Breakfall 14-
- 2 CK: Millennium City 11-
- 2 KS: Cambodian History And Culture 11-
- 2 KS: Kung Fu 11-
- 4 Language: English (native is Cambodian) (Idiomatic, native accent)
- 3 Stealth 14-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 7 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Off Hand

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 223**

**Total Cost: 326**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 10 DNPC: The Nols (her landlords) 8- (Less Pow; Unaware of character's Social Limitation: Secret Identity)
- 10 DNPC: Sophany "Sofie" Jefferson (her sister Flicker) 11- (Less Pow)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)



## SAI PLOT SEEDS

The Widows of the Night capture Flicker. Now Sai needs the PCs' help to find her before something terrible happens.

Rowan convinces Sai to come onto the Ravenswood staff as a self-defense instructor. How will the PCs adjust to such a harsh and demanding taskmaster?

The PCs sneak out of the Academy to attend a concert in Millennium City, but they find themselves without a ride home. Someone remembers that Sai lives somewhere near the concert hall... do they dare contact Flicker's big sister to ask for a ride back to Ravenswood? And if they do, what happens when the Chinese tongs decide to take their revenge on Sai just as the PCs show up...?

- 15 Hunted: The Widows Of The Night 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
- 15 Hunted: Chinese Tongs 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Perfectionist (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Sok "Susie" Jefferson) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Susceptibility: 2d6 damage from being Teleported (Uncommon)
- 126 Experience Points

### Total Disadvantage Points: 326

**Background/History:** The history of Susie Jefferson's childhood is discussed on page 72, and the reasons for her departure from Ravenswood on page 48. Since then Susie has taken up residence in Millennium City's Cultural Center, renting a small apartment from the Nols, an elderly Cambodian family.

After departing Ravenswood, Susie decided to learn more about her heritage, or at least the land of her birth. She lives in Little Cambodia, a Cambodian ethnic enclave within the larger Chinese one in Millennium City, and for the last three years has reacquainted herself with the language of her birth and learned as much about the culture as she can. She plans to travel to Cambodia someday, but she's leery of doing so at the moment. Like her sister, she remembers her father's urgent warnings about the Widows of the Night, and until she knows more about the cult she has no desire to travel into the lion's den. She's made circumspect inquiries into the cult, but no one seems to know anything about them. She's also searched for William Jefferson's family, hoping to learn something about her father, but so far hasn't had any luck tracking down her American relatives.

Though she hasn't dedicated her life to superheroing, Susie isn't one to turn away someone in need, or look the other way at wrongdoing. She's taken up the name Sai, discarding her old Ravenswood codename of Blink, and on several occasions fought the good fight against supervillains who threatened her neighborhood. Most of her adventures have pitted her against the Chinese tongs in an effort to keep Little Cambodia free of their influence. She's teamed up with Nightwind (*Millennium City*, page 53) in fights against the tongs, most recently when the two of them closed down a warehouse used to receive shipments of heroin. Over the years she's become Little Cambodia's protector, and the inhabitants appreciate her efforts. She's also earned the enmity of the tongs, and now there's a price on her head.

Though she never finished her Senior year at Ravenswood, Susie has received her GED. When time allows, she takes courses at Millennium City University, but college often takes a back seat to her other interests. She's worked at several jobs since moving to the city — dishwashing and waiting tables at Cambodian restaurants, martial arts instructor, working in a shop selling Cambodian imports — and never stays at one job for long, since

the different jobs each help her learn something new about her heritage.

**Personality/Motivation:** Sai is a hard and demanding young woman who has little time for frivolity. In some part this is because she was forced to take care of her younger sister at an early age; some of it also comes from being an outsider for most her life. Though not as judgmental as she was when she attended Ravenswood — or at least less vocal about it now — she still doesn't suffer fools gladly. She's a workaholic and perfectionist who doesn't accept excuses either for her own mistakes or from others, and this makes her a difficult person to be around. Most of her acquaintances are older, simply because Sai has enough respect for her elders not to chide them as much as she does those her own age, and they are old enough to laugh at her constant criticisms. Her landlords, the Nols, have taken the girl into their family as a surrogate granddaughter, and they idle away countless hours playing matchmaker. While it was entertaining at first, they begin to despair at ever finding a young man Susie doesn't consider lazy, stupid, arrogant, or all three. Most of the young men in Little Cambodia have learned better than to have romantic intentions toward Susie Jefferson.

Sai departed Ravenswood under a cloud. She never fit in at the school, mostly because she hated being treated like a child and found the other students' immaturity infuriating, and the tragedy with Gloriana was the straw that broke the camel's back. Immediately after she left, she swore that Flicker would never go back to Ravenswood. But after constant nagging from Flicker, who wanted nothing to do with the Cambodian immigrants (she even went so far as to threaten to report Susie to Family Services), Susie agreed to let her return to school. Despite Sai's harsh feelings toward the Academy and its headmistress, Rowan has finally affected a reconciliation of sorts. Mostly this means Sai doesn't glare at Rowan when she comes to visit her sister, but after many attempts, Rowan has had a civil conversation or two with her former student. Sai is still overprotective of her younger sister, despite the growing distance between the two, and she wonders what she'll do when Flicker goes to college. Flicker's vehement denial of her heritage, as well as the way she fervently embraces all things American, have left Sai with hurt feelings on more than one occasion. She's beginning to suspect it's time to let her sister find her own way in the world, but isn't sure how to let go.

**Quote:** "Not in my part of the city, you don't."

**Powers/Tactics:** Sai has the power to teleport over short distances — no more than about 100 feet at her maximum range. She's worked at extending her range, but so far hasn't had any success. Lacking that option, Sai has combined her teleportation powers with her martial arts prowess in ways that make an effective fighting package. First, she's got her Teleportation Boxing (in which she teleports

around a group of people, briefly appearing next to each one to punch or kick him, but never staying in one place long enough for anyone to block her attack or strike back, then ends the attack by returning to the point she started from). Additionally, she's good at "flickering" around her targets, popping in and out of reality to strike them from unexpected angles without giving them the chance to strike back or stop her (her Blink Combat Enhancement). It's hard to fight someone who's punching you in the face one second, then a micro-second later has teleported behind you and to the side to smash you in the kidney, and then after that teleports up and to your side to deliver a devastating boot to the head!

Sai's most infuriating trick is one she calls "staying out of reach." When she's done attacking, she can Teleport up to 5" away from her target instantly so he can't strike back without having to chase her down. In game terms this is a Triggered Teleportation move that takes place after she attacks, if she chooses to use it. The downside of this stunt is that it means she has to make a Half Move back to attack her foe if he doesn't come after her.

In recent months Sai has been trying to develop the ability to use her teleportation on objects (aportation). So far all she's been able to do is "retrieve" her sais after she throws them at someone (her *Aport Sais* Power) — she can't even use the power on her sais normally, such as if someone takes them away from her or catches them when she throws them. She's hoping to expand her aportive powers with practice.

**Campaign Use:** Sai is big sister to one of the Ravens-wood kids and visits the Academy often on weekends. That gives you an easy hook to introduce her to the PCs, especially if one of them wants to know about what happened with Gloriana or dares to start dating Flicker. She also serves as an example of a teen superhero in the early stages of growing up and making the transition to an adult superhero. Although still as extreme in her opinions as a teen, she's broadening her mind and starting to recognize that not everyone shares her opinions. As a teen she was an outsider and uncertain of her place in the world; now she's making progress

toward discovering who she is and finding a home in the world. Also, she's developed her powers and become a more effective combatant than the average teen superhero.

Sai definitely doesn't qualify as a "villain" in the pure sense of the word — as noted above, she fights crime when she can. However, her dislike of and disdain for authority, and generally poor attitude about other people, could easily bring her into conflict with other heroes (particularly adult ones). A clever or manipulative villain might get her to work for him by playing on these feelings.

To make Sai more powerful, you can either increase the range of her various Teleportation-based powers, or add other teleportation powers (see *The UNTIL Superpowers Database I and II* for many ideas along these lines). Increasing her Staying Out Of Reach to 7-10" would really make her an infuriating combatant against many heroes. To make her less powerful, remove her Staying Out Of Reach and make her Blink Combat Enhancement cost END every Phase she uses it.

The most likely reasons for Sai to Hunt a character are: she suspects the character knows something about her past, either about the Widows of the Night or about her father; she thinks the character hurt her sister; she thinks the character has some connection to the tongs. She'll stop at nothing to get revenge on someone who hurts her sister — the only question is, does she bring the person to justice, or take justice into her own hands?

**Appearance:** Twenty years old and 5'6" tall, Sai is an attractive young woman with a dark Asian complexion and long black hair. She looks a lot like her sister, although at first glance it's not apparent since Flicker wears make-up to make herself look more Occidental, while Sai rarely uses cosmetics. She normally dresses "casually," wearing jeans and tee-shirts carefully chosen to show off her figure and good looks. Her costume consists of a white half-face mask tied in the back, a white skintight shortsleeved top that leaves her midriff bare, white skintight pants, a red sash (where she carries her sais when not using them), red boots, and white hand-wrappings that come halfway up her lower arms to form a sort of "glove."

**TEEN DREAM PLOT SEEDS**

One of the PCs wins a date with the Teen Dream, and the two really hit it off — but when faceless men start jumping out of the shadows trying to kill the PC, will he realize what he's gotten himself into?

The Teen Dream fought Gravitator in the skies over Millennium City... and lost! Now she's being held hostage and only the PCs can save her! What will Teleios do — help the PCs try to save his creation, or try to save her himself?

The Teen Dream's concert is tonight and a PC's girlfriend is dragging him along. Since no self-respecting guy would suffer alone, he makes all his friends suffer through the concert too by getting tickets for their girlfriends. When a fifty-foot-tall bugman explodes out of the ground and starts to attack, what will the PCs do: sit back and watch the Teen Dream strut her stuff (since this is obviously a publicity stunt), or enter the fray and try to prove to the world the Teen Dream is a fraud? And what if the attack isn't a publicity stunt...?

TEEN DREAM				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [6]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
40	CON	60	17-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
20	COM	5	13-	
28	PD	16		Total: 28 PD (15 rPD)
24	ED	16		Total: 24 ED (15 rED)
6	SPD	26		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
20	REC	0		
80	END	0		
100	STUN	30		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 285</b>
<b>Movement:</b>				
			Running:	12"/24"
			Flight:	24"/48"
			Swimming:	12"/24"
<b>Cost Powers</b>				
15	<i>Effortless:</i>	Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) for 60 STR		3
15	<i>Barrier Penetration:</i>	Indirect (attack always originates in front of character; +¼) for 60 STR		1
30	<i>Flurry Of Blows:</i>	Autofire (5 shots; +½) for 60 STR		3
12	<i>Casual Effectiveness:</i>	+30 STR; Only For Determining Casual STR (-1½)		3
19	<i>Dust Storm:</i>	Change Environment 8" radius, -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls, Uncontrolled (won't work in high winds or rain; +½); OIF (dust, sand, and dirt of opportunity; -½), No Range (-½)		4
21	<i>Shockwave:</i>	Explosion (+½) for 60 STR, Hole In The Middle (the hex the character stands in when she uses the power; +¼); Only Effects Characters Standing On The Ground (-¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Only Does Knockdown, Not Knockback (-0), Side Effect (may cause considerable damage to environment; -0)		4
15	<i>Tough Skin:</i>	Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)		0
5	<i>Tough Skin:</i>	Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Resistant Defenses		0
10	<i>Mental Blocks:</i>	Mental Defense (13 points total)		0
60	<i>Flight:</i>	Flight 24", Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)		2
12	<i>Fast Runner:</i>	Running +6" (12" total)		1
12	<i>Fast Swimmer:</i>	Swimming +10" (12" total)		1
<b>Perks</b>				
15	Money:	Filthy Rich		
9	Reputation:	Idol Of Millions (in United States and soon the world!) 14-, +3/+3d6		
<b>Skill</b>				
2		+1 with Flight		
25		+5 HTH		
3		Acting 13-		
3		Conversation 13-		

- 3 High Society 13-
- 3 Oratory 13-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 2 PS: Entertainer 11-
- 3 Seduction 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 297**  
**Total Cost: 582**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Hunted: Millions Of Adoring Fans 14- (Less Pow, Watching)
- 20 Hunted: Teleios 14- (Mo Pow, Mildly Punish)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Artificial Person (All The Time, Slightly)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Cannot Disobey Teleios (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Loves And Seeks Publicity And Adulation (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: manufactured pop star, manufactured superhero, 14-
- 5 Social Limitation: Minor (under 18) (Occasionally, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Kristina Speers) (Frequently, Minor)
- 372 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 582**

**Background/History:** "Welcome back to *Superstars*, SSN's show dedicated to music and superheroes. Our next segment is about a fresh face who smashed her way to the top of the charts six months ago with the album *Baby, Do It To Me Again*."

"Overnight the Teen Dream has become the idol of millions, displacing the pop stars that came before her like yesterday's fashions shoved to the back of the closet. Her first album has broken all previous sales records, and early reports indicate her new tour will do the same."

"But not all is well with the Teen Dream and her success. She's quickly become an object of controversy among concerned parents for her explicit lyrics and titillating attire. The Teen Dream's PR people released a statement indicating that there's no innuendo, sexual or otherwise, in her lyrics, and that Ms. Dream, following in the steps of modern feminism, is simply proud of her body — but few were appeased or even convinced."

"But why discuss the Teen Dream here on Superstars? Because the Teen Dream is also a superhero, and controversy has followed her into the realm of crimefighting. Just yesterday, in the hours before her tour kicked off in Buffalo, New York, a gigantic lizard-like creature rose up from the depths of Lake Erie. The Teen Dream broke off from her sound check to battle the monster and drive it back to the depths, saving countless lives and earning the praise of everyone in Buffalo."

"But an attack in the hours before a concert? In Buffalo, a city noted for its absolute lack of superhuman menaces? Heroic deed or shameless publicity stunt? The manufactured pop star has been around for decades, but could we be seeing a manufactured superhero? And if so, does that



make the Teen Dream doubly false, or just the first in a new postmodern society — a new thing for a new world?

“That’s what we’re going to find out after these messages....”

\* \* \*

Teleios, the Perfect Man, turned off the television and smiled. Once again the Teen Dream would dominate the entertainment news. This time reporters would spend countless hours wrangling over the possibility of manufactured superheroes and engineered crises. Once again the media would expose the Teen Dream to millions of viewers, as it had so many times before.

There had been the quote about Sapphire, an opening salvo in the Teen Dream’s war for dominance of the pop charts — “I really enjoyed her shows when I was a kid, and I hope she’s enjoying her retirement.” The video for “Press Me Down” — “But she’s only sixteen... sixteen year-olds shouldn’t be sexy!” the parent groups cried, and with that cry all of the men, both adolescent and adult, pricked up their ears and took notice.

Then came the website counting the seconds until the Teen Dream turned eighteen. The leaked photos from the beach in France. The rumored marriage. The rumored breast implants. The rumored pregnancy. The rumored trip to a rehab clinic.

All of the glorious rumors. All of them dominating the news, filling the supermarket aisles with images of the Teen Dream, slowing down Internet search engines, occupying a million conversations across the United States from the bedrooms of little girls to the break rooms in offices. The rumors about the Teen Dream were taking over the entertainment news and turning it to Teleios’s purposes. Everyone knew the name and face of this girl, his engineered demagogue — they all wanted to look like her or be with her. When Teleios was done, the people would beg to hand over their world to these bright, young leaders — beg on their hands and knees to give their world to the followers of the Perfect Man.

**Personality/Motivation:** The Teen Dream is a manufactured pop star, a manufactured superhero... and a manufactured person. Teleios created her to insinuate herself into the hearts and minds of America’s youth. He engineered every aspect of the Teen Dream — from her pouty bottom lip and sexy but innocent smile, to her perfect cuticles and elegantly shaped toes — to appeal to the public, to make people envious, fawning, and desirous.

In person the Teen Dream comes across as vivacious, friendly, and energetic, with a glowing smile and sparkling eyes. She has a way of making anyone she’s with, particularly men, feel important and special. She never answers a question directly if she thinks the answer might alienate a segment of her fans. Instead she rambles on, trying to change the subject, never failing to smile. Without a doubt, the Teen Dream is vapid and vacuous; whether she can become a person with more depth remains to

be seen. She’s bright, but she’s never had cause to think too deeply on anything, so perhaps there’s hope — unless, of course, Teleios engineered her to be vapid. Despite being the pawn of an archvillain, the Teen Dream isn’t a bad person, and she’s certainly not a supervillain — not a typical one at least. She honestly believes she’s doing good, even if her manager did arrange a fight or two... and where’s the harm in that, anyway?

The Teen Dream is uncomfortable away from mobbing crowds and flashing cameras. She wants to be around people. If cornered by an individual, she quickly makes up excuses to go out, to go anywhere — and when she does go out, she’s quickly mobbed by fans seeking autographs. Unlike more human pop stars, the Teen Dream never gets tired of the attention. She invites the paparazzi to follow her; she even faxes them itineraries when her representatives claim she’s “in seclusion.” She never dresses down to disguise her identity or otherwise shuns the limelight. The attention of crowds is central to her existence, and she wouldn’t avoid it for the world.

The Teen Dream doesn’t know she’s a clone; she thinks Teleios (whom she knows as Brian Speers) found her as an orphan and raised her. He’s implanted false memories in her brain so she recalls enough formative childhood events to make it through an interview. Her memories would never hold up to any careful consideration on her part — not that she’s one for introspection — or to intensive Telepathy (or any other psionic power



that involves delving deeply into her memories). Even worse, he's built genetic hooks into the Teen Dream that make it impossible for her to disobey him. The hooks are subtle; she can protest his decisions and complain about them, but in the end she always comes around.

All of the people in the Teen Dream's large entourage, from her manager to her gopher, are bio-engineered creations of Teleios; all of them are ultimately loyal to him. If the Teen Dream finds anything about her life dismaying, it's that she doesn't have any friends she can trust not to tell Teleios anything and everything. She's tried to bring friends she's made since becoming famous into her entourage, but they all end up loyal to Teleios (in other words, he kidnaps them and replaces them with cloned versions he creates). She also doesn't understand why every boy she likes disappears so suddenly, and it's becoming an Achilles heel in her unflappable confidence. Little does she know Teleios already has a mate for the Teen Dream in the cloning tanks and doesn't want her to mingle with those of lesser genetic heritage.

The Teen Dream's music is an afterthought — she is, first and foremost, a performer who makes far more money from licensing her name and image than from record sales. Typically her songs are light, sentimental, and saccharine with a slightly disturbing sexual undercurrent. The beats are unoriginal and insipid, engineered to offend the least number of people possible. But given her looks and figure, most people never stop watching the Teen Dream dance long enough to listen to the music anyway.

**Quote:** “Superhero... mega-popstar... I don't like defining myself. I just am.”

**Powers/Tactics:** The Teen Dream is a flying brick with powers based on her high strength. She can unleash a flurry of blows that strike like piledrivers, punch through barriers without having them reduce the force of her attack, whip up a dust storm that blinds everyone in the area, and strike the ground so hard a shockwave ripples through the surrounding area. In combat she tends to make the flashiest attack she can — often swooping high into the air, performing a loop-the-loop or barrel roll, and then crashing down into her foe. She pays close attention to the presence and location of any media representatives, making sure her best side (her right) is toward the cameras. If there aren't any

reporters in the area, she uses Knockback to move the fight toward a place where there might be some.

**Campaign Use:** The Teen Dream doesn't commit crimes — she is a crime for the PCs to stop, since she's a part of Teleios's greater plan. When she's in town, the PCs shouldn't be able to get away from her (even if they want to). Every time they turn on the television they see her face. They see her photos at the supermarket check-out. The radio only plays her songs. There are billboards everywhere. And when the superheroes fight supervillains, the Teen Dream shows up to save the day. Even if she doesn't save the day, the press reports that she does, because she has PR people spinning the fight in her favor, and chances are the PCs don't. During the fight, the Teen Dream says or does whatever grates on the PCs' nerves the most — and if they pick a fight with her, she doesn't take it sitting down. Even if the PCs win the fight, they still lose, because in the eyes of millions of girls, they might as well be Doctor Destroyer or Mechanon.

To make the Teen Dream more powerful, increase her STR to 70 or even 75 (remembering to increase the cost of her various “brick tricks” accordingly). Also give her 25-50% Damage Reduction. To make her less powerful, remove her Combat Skill Levels and lower her defenses.

The Teen Dream Hunts anyone Teleios tells her to, and she's likely to Hunt anyone who might suspect she's a clone. If the person she Hunts has a Public Identity or any cachet with the public or press, she wages a media war against him (which might consist of seducing him, then humiliatingly dumping him and claiming he abused her). Otherwise she (or, actually, Teleios) seeks him out and beats him to a pulp.

**Appearance:** The Teen Dream doesn't dress in style — she *sets* the style for millions of girls across the country and around the world. Her clothes change from outing to outing and adventure to adventure, but lately she's taken to wearing knee high boots, hot shorts (or a miniskirt) made from satin, and a bikini top (usually studded with sequins). At 5'5" and 125 pounds, she seems far too elfin and slender to lift a hundred tons, and she looks far too... mature to be just sixteen years old. She has blonde hair — although the color has been known to change, and when it does, a million girls change the color of their hair too — and deep blue eyes.



**HERO AND VILLAIN SUMMARY TABLE**

The following table provides basic information about the characters described in this book for easy reference. All characters are listed in alphabetical order, without regard for which chapter they appear in. The "Attacks" column lists only the character's most common or prominent attacks, since many criminals have too many ways to attack to list them all; "Weapons" indicates the character relies primarily on weapons bought with Equipment Points or the like. See the end of the table for an explanation of the notation used.

**HERO AND VILLAIN SUMMARY TABLE**

Name	STR	DEX	CON	BODY	PRE	PD/rPD	ED/rED	SPD	REC	STUN	OCV	DCV	MOVE	Attacks	Page
Arsenal	18	18	18	14	15	7/0	6/0	4	8	32	6	6	9" (4")	9½d6, weapons	51
Arcane	10	18	12	10	10	14/10	14/10	4	6	32	6	6	6", [20"]	Telekinesis (40 STR)	99
Barnstormer	13	24	12	12	12	12/4	12/4	4	8	42	8	8	6", [20"]	2½d6	88
Cantrip	10	15	10	10	10	12/8	12/8	3	4	29	5	5	6", [8"]	8d6, Ego 4d6	90
Chain Lightning	15	21	12	12	15	10/4	14/4	4	7	30	7	7	7"	6d6 AE No Range, 8d6	69
Circuit Breaker	15	12	15	15	15	17/10	17/10	3	6	33	4	4	6"	MC 6d6, Telekinesis (30 STR)	102
Crazy Legs	20	24	15	15	14	12/4	12/4	5	7	44	8	8	12", [10"], [12"]	8d6	104
Decibelle	15	24	12	10	15	14/10	14/10	4	8	40	8	8	6", [12"]	8d6, 4d6 AE, (2½d6%)	107
Dogfight	25	24	20	20	15	14/8	14/8	4	10	46	8	8	6", [12"]	(1½d6%), 5d6	114
Flicker	13	24	12	12	10	8/4	8/4	5	5	32	8	8	8", {3½"}, 120"!	7½d6	72
General Billy	40	18	30	30	20	24/15	21/15	4	15	64	6	6	6"	8d6, Summon Toy Soldiers	128
Gloriana	50	30	50	20	40	30/20	30/20	7	25	100	10	10	6", [30"]	16d6, 5d6 Var Adv, 8d6 Var Adv	135
Impact	25	15	20	15	15	14/4	14/4	3	9	50	5	5	6"	9d6, 7d6	74
Janus	10	18	12	12	15	11/6	11/6	4	4	30	6	6	6"	2d6, Summon Opposites	137
Jeepers Creepers	10	12	10	8	8	8/4	8/4	3	4	21	4	4	6"	MC 8d6, Ego 3d6, MC 5d6	117
Kid Samson	40	18	20	20	15	18/10	14/10	4	12	60	6	6	6"	12d6, 10d6	92
Little Wonder	40	18	30	30	20	24/15	21/15	4	15	64	6	6	6"	8d6, Shrinking	131
Marble Man	5	24	8	8	5	24/20	24/20	5	5	24	8	8	30"	1d6 (+velocity)	109
Miss Crane	15	24	15	12	10	10/4	10/4	4	6	35	8	8	6"	9d6, 7d6, Luck 1d6	94
Mrs. Garter	15	14	13	12	18	10/6	10/6	3	6	30	5	5	6"	5d6, Major Transform 1d6	112
Pistol Pete	40	18	30	30	20	24/15	21/15	4	15	64	6	6	6"	8d6, 8d6 Indirect	133
PLATO	—	18	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	5	5	—	None (computer)	63
Putty	12	18	14	14	12	12/4	10/4	3	5	30	6	6	6"	2d6, Stretching 4"	76
Rowan	10	18	15	10	15	18/14	14/10	4	6	30	6	6	6"	Telekinesis (30 STR), Ent 5d6	61
Sai	15	25	18	10	15	11/3	11/3	5	7	30	8	8	6", [15"]	8d6, 6d6, 6d6 AE, 6d6 AF	141
Spoilsport	15	21	15	10	10	12/7	12/7	4	6	32	7	7	6"	7d6, Luck 6d6	120
Teen Dream	60	24	40	20	20	28/15	24/15	6	20	100	8	8	12", [24"], [12"]	12d6 (with various Advantages)	144
Trance	10	15	10	10	8	8/4	8/4	4	6	24	5	5	6"	Ego 4d6, Mental Illusions 6d6	79
Trashmouth	30	15	30	20	15	14/8	14/8	3	17	60	5	5	6"	10d6, 8d6	122
Turnabout	8	12	10	10	10	8/4	8/4	3	6	25	4	4	6"	Telekinesis (30 STR), MRreflec	125

**NOTES**

<b>Attacks</b>	<b>AP:</b> Armor Piercing	<b>DS:</b> Damage Shield	<b>MS:</b> MegaScaled	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Flight</b>	<b>Special mode of</b>
<b>#:</b> A Normal Damage	<b>BOECV:</b> Based On Ego Combat Value	<b>Ego:</b> Ego Attack	<b>MND:</b> No Normal Defense	<b>#":</b> Running	<b>[#]:</b> Flight	<b>movement (e.g., Swinging,</b>
<b>(#):</b> A Killing Damage	<b>Ent:</b> Entangle	<b>Ent:</b> Entangle	<b>Pen:</b> Penetrating	<b>(#):</b> Swimming (listed only if character can swim faster than 2')	<b>(#):</b> Leaping (listed only if character can leap a different distance than indicated by its STR)	<b>Tunneling, Teleportation)</b>
<b>AE:</b> Area Of Effect	<b>DKB:</b> Double Knockback	<b>EX:</b> Explosion	<b>Var Adv:</b> Variable Advantages			
<b>AF:</b> Autofire	<b>Drn:</b> Drain	<b>MC:</b> Mind Control	<b>tages</b>			

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