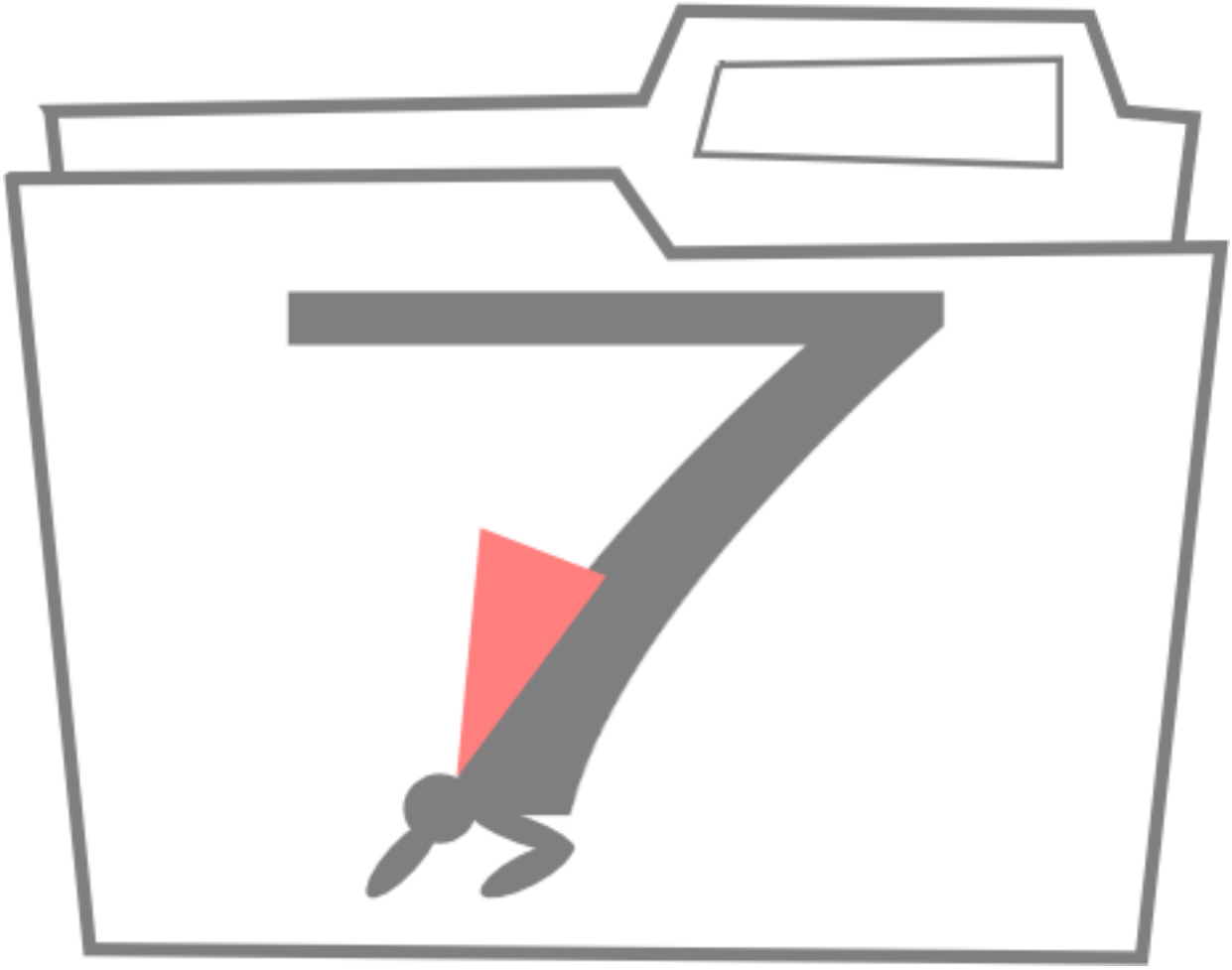
SILVER SEVEN
Field Deployment Guide



A supplement for Masks: a New Generation
By Astral Frontier

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Note: some images are currently placeholders. This document will be updated with final art once it becomes available.

Quick Personalities

When you need a personality for a new PC or NPC, you can use this method.

Come up with a core Condition

A "core Condition" is one of the standard Masks conditions. This character effectively always has it marked, or gravitates towards it when possible. You can pick one specifically, or roll a d10: on a 1-2 it's Angry, 3-4 Afraid, 5-6 Guilty, 7-8 Hopeless, 9-10 Insecure.

Come up with a surface trait, role, or habit

How do other characters perceive this person when they first meet? The character might be a school teacher or super-team leader. They might be an avid skateboarder or football player. They might talk non-stop about a topic. They might wear a particular style of clothing.

If you aren't sure about surface traits, you can roll 1d6 twice. First, roll for what they do: on a 1-2, it's something mental (e.g. scholastics), on a 3-4 it's something physical (e.g. sports or extracurriculars), and on a 5-6 it's social (e.g. partying, making friends). Second, roll for skill: on a 1-2 they're bad at it, on a 3-4 they're okay, and on a 5-6 they're awesome.

Write a sentence that connects the core Condition to the surface trait

Come up with a short narrative that explains the trait by appealing to the Condition. A character's feelings drive them to do something, or they do something to avoid that feeling, etc. The easiest way to do this is to frame it as either "the character is (trait) because they're (Condition)" or "they're (Condition) because they (trait)".

"Brett does daring skateboard tricks to prove he isn't Afraid."

"Carol's father wants her in basketball, and she would feel Guilty if she didn't make him happy."

Ask questions about this narrative, then ask questions about the answers

"To whom does Brett want to prove he isn't afraid?"

"What would Carol rather do than play basketball?"

Each question can lead to other questions. Does someone else want Carol to quit basketball? If so, why? Who thinks Brett is the coolest, and is always there watching him at the skate park? How do Brett and Carol feel about these people? Keep asking questions until you feel you have a good sense of the character's real personality.

When creating an NPC, you can include other players in these questions and answers. Look for opportunities to tie these answers back to the PCs' own stories.

Quick Player Characters

Pick a Playbook

If you aren't sure what Playbook to start with, roll 1d10 for only the core Playbooks, or 1d20 for everything.

1. Beacon	11. Reformed
2. Bull	12. Newborn
3. Delinquent	13. Innocent
4. Doomed	14. Star
5. Janus	15. Joined
6. Legacy	16. Harbinger
7. Nova	17. Nomad
8. Outsider	18. Scion
9. Protégé	19. Brain
10. Transformed	20. Soldier

Decide on a Personality

You can either use the "Quick Personalities" section, or come up with something yourself.

Choose Look

Go through the options for look (e.g. ethnicity). Roll a die depending on how many options there are:

- Three options: roll d6, divide by 2
- Four options: roll d4
- Five options: roll d10, divide by 2
- Six options: roll d6

Choose Abilities

You can either roll dice as with "choose look" if several abilities are offered, or pick one or more that sound good to you.

Choose Labels, Moves, and Extras

At this point, you hopefully have enough of a grasp on the character to decide what's appropriate. If not, you can make more random rolls (such as rolling d10/2 to pick one label to raise).

Finishing up

At the end of the process, rework anything that doesn't feel right. Random choices are the start of a character idea, not the end of one!

Altering Playbooks For Safety

Some of the core Playbooks mention topics or actions that can cross lines for individual players or entire groups. Before players lock in their choice of PCs, they should discuss safe alternatives to these options. Sometimes this means totally rewriting the statement, while other times it might mean adjusting it. Examples are given here.

Beacon Drives

"Get drunk or high with a teammate" might change to "have a confessional moment with a teammate" or "party hard with a teammate". This Drive can be seen about two characters on the team having a cathartic experience together, especially one that can come with consequences later.

"Kiss someone dangerous" might change to "flirt with", "taunt", or "share a secret with". Depending on how you interpret the Drive, anything that exposes the PC to risk while also sparking an emotionally charged moment will work.

"Make out with a teammate" might similarly turn into "have an intense bonding moment with a teammate", "share emotional intimacy with a teammate", or something else that shows a moment of closeness.

Relationship Questions

The Doomed: "You'd love to kiss (blank) before your doom comes".

The Outsider: "You have a crush on (blank) but you keep it under wraps".

Aro and/or ace players or PCs might prefer a different kind of relationship with another character. For the Outsider, for example, you might replace "crush" with "squish" - a happy and nervous feeling that isn't romantic or sexual in nature.

Another option is to swap a problematic relationship question with one from another Playbook. For example, an Outsider might borrow a question from the Protégé, like "you and (blank) teamed up a few times before the rest of you came together".

The TTRPG Safety Toolkit

The TTRPG Safety Toolkit is a resource co-curated by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk. The TTRPG Safety Toolkit is a compilation of safety tools that have been designed by members of the tabletop role-playing games community for use by players and GMs at the table. You can find it at bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit.

Non-Traditional Playbook Choices

Not everyone will agree with this advice. That's fine! Just be sure you talk to your GM before creating a player character based on these ideas.

A Playbook isn't about what powers a character has, or how strong they are in a fight. A Playbook is about the emotional journey the character takes as a young superhero. You don't need to take my word for it, either. Can the Beacon be a speedster, for example? Brendan Conway (one of the authors of Masks) thought so, in the Crashing the Mode podcast.

This means that if the plot beats make sense, you can apply a familiar Playbook to a new situation. Here's some examples.

The Brain

Zenobia is a sorcery-based Brain, who uses her ferocious intellect and command of celestial and chthonic magic in support of her team. In particular, she does everything she can for her Transformed teammate Leslie the Lich, who was once Zenobia's mundane girlfriend. The sorceress brought her beloved back to life after a supervillain attack, but imperfectly, and she's regretted her mistake ever since.

The Bull

Hyperlink is a technology-based Bull, whose superhuman brain was mutated by his villain father to make him as adept at fighting as he was at building. He wears power armor and uses robotic assistants that combine with the armor to power him up.

Jonslaught is a psychic juggernaut whose newly-gained psychokinesis and short temper can level buildings. His genetics made him ideal for a psychic graft by an illegal biotech laboratory, but they didn't do anything about the thing he hated most - his small size. Even with his new powers he craves peoples' admiration - or will pick a fight with a teammate, just for the attention.

The Doomed

Princess Astralis is the child of an evil galactic emperor that the heroes of Earth overthrew. She's secretly here to learn more about such people, and to find a way toward peace between her fractured empire and this powerful planet. But she only has so much time, and if she's called back to the throne, her friends will next see her as an implacable enemy.

Cosmos is a psychic offshoot of the villain Chaos, who was split into "good" and "evil" halves. Now Cosmos fights against their evil self. Perhaps redemption is possible for the villain, but it would require that Cosmos's virtuous feelings be reabsorbed into them...

The Janus

Radiance is a super-powered robot already, but she really wants to experience human life and friendships. So she works as a barista, goes to school, and does her best to help everyone around her - when she's not fighting crime.

The Innocent

Retrorocket was one of many cloned child soldiers that saw service in the secretive parts of World War Two, and were then frozen. One clone was thawed early, and over the next several years went mad at a world that had rejected them. Retrorocket must take up his trusty Zero-Point Ray Gun and Jet Pack, and see that his clone-brother doesn't do anything more to disgrace the regiment!

The Nomad

Fairchild was pulled into a fantastical other-world as a young child, and only recently escaped. They've learned some magical tricks, and carry a few goblin-penned contractual obligations that they'll have to pay off eventually. They don't know who to trust any more, after that incident with the magical lookalike that they found at their old home, but honestly they want to so badly...

The Soldier

Danger Ace likes to bark orders and look cool, but when she talks she's usually right, and she's got everyone's back when it matters. She doesn't work for a government agency - she's the mole from the adult superhero team in the city, sent here to keep an eye on the Delinquent and Scion. The adult team will support her, but they'll always ask something in exchange for it.

The Transformed

MeKa ULTRA is a prototype robot, easily twice the height of any of its teammates. They all assure it that it's a part of the team, and it's proved itself in several battles. But people stare, and it can't fit into hallways, or go to school with them, or eat, or anything… sometimes it just feels awkward and out of place, and other times it's sad or lonely.

Playbook Switches

Not everyone will agree with this advice. That's fine! Just be sure you talk to your GM before proceeding with a switch like those listed here.

One of the advanced advances for PCs is to switch Playbooks. There are many reasons to do this, such as wanting to extend the life of the game, or to tell a new story with the same character. But not every Playbook feels appropriate to switch into. Here are suggestions for how a character might adopt such a Playbook.

Pharos lost his light-projection powers in a critical fight, but resolved to keep fighting crime in new ways as a Beacon.

A Scion teammate made a dark deal with their parent to save the badly hurt hero **Linewalker**, turning them into either a Bull or a Transformed.

Once-eager hero **Hyperskin** burned out over their Mentor's misconduct and gray morals, becoming a Delinquent.

The **Solar Sorceress** accidentally conjures a demon who lays a horrible curse on her. Now Doomed, she and her team must contend with the freed demon before its curse can take its full effect on her.

Diesel Jenny was doing great as a full-time hero until her kid sister started getting bullied in her school. Now Jenny is a Janus, paying more attention to her mundane life to keep her family as safe as she keeps the city.

The Pangolin was such a great hero that now the government, the Silver Seven team, and the adult hero Witness all want to recruit them. Will they become a Legacy, a Protégé, or a Soldier?

Veron, Prince of Neptune, called on the full scope of his Outsider's electro-neutronic powers in a Moment of Truth. Now he struggles to keep them under control as a Nova.

Lambda Lad volunteered to save a dying energy being by allowing it to fuse with him. Now the combined individual possesses some memories of both, but is now effectively an Outsider.

The Unbreakable Verne was secretly staging villainous acts in the neighborhood and then thwarting them as himself to drum up popularity. Now that his secret is out, he's undergoing community service with the team as a Reformed.

Fate Zero's ultimate sacrifice saved the city, but their mystic soul gem remained intact. The gem is incorporated into a Newborn's android body.

Shroud Knight's origin was always a mystery to their teammates, until they revealed they weren't from this time period at all…. Were they an Innocent from the past, or a Harbinger of an unguessable future?

Bubblegum Supernova made a spectacular play against a big supervillain and got a huge following on Instagram. She decides to roll with it as a Star.

Zeerocks used her power-mimicry abilities once too often on a teammate and now is locked into a copy of those powers! She decides to make the most of it as a Joined.

Fast Felicia was really a psychic construct created by the aliens who abducted her real self. When the real Felicia comes back, she's got to take over her life again as a Nomad, knowing everything that happened but unable to really rely on the memories she re-absorbed from the construct.

Resister learned that his electrical abilities are inherited - from an evil father and mother! He dedicates his heroic career to bringing them to justice.

Chekov's Sword accidentally released a dangerous chemical from the supervillain's flying base during a critical engagement, harming thousands. He has switched from brawn to Brain, becoming much more thoughtful about how he fights.

The Zero-Prep Game Master

Part of the stress of GMing is "prep" - preparing a story, complications, fights, all that stuff. But, there's a GMing style that lets you avoid a lot of that work. If the need for prep is holding you back from GMing, consider giving this style a try.

Go download the Masks GM materials found here: https://www.magpiegames.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Masks-GM-Sheets.pdf

The "Core GM Reference" on page 1 is your GM Playbook. Keep this sheet in front of you when you run.

There are three principles to zero-prep GMing: "your game needs to breathe", "the other players are your partners", and "make moves, not guesses".

Your game needs to breathe

Think back to when you experienced a tense moment. You're watching an action movie, or two people are arguing in your presence. You draw in your breath and hold it. But you need to exhale soon. This release of tension is as important as the build-up to it.

You should run your game in a similar way. Build up tension in your scenes, and then let it go so the players can be ready for the next build-up. Add tension by putting PCs or NPCs in peril, by threatening the stakes they care about, and so on. Release tension by letting someone get to safety, adding moments of comedy, and rewarding the PCs' or players' effort with a payoff.

As GM, the moments where the game exhales are an opportunity to think about what happens next. Look for opportunities to cause more problems. Listen to what your players plan, worry about, and look forward to.

The other players are your partners

This principle starts with writing a story for the game. The thing is, your fellow players have already started doing that! They answered backstory questions. They created relationships and exchanged influence. Several Playbooks (the Bull, the Doomed, the Scion, and more) already come with villains or evil groups for you to use. Take the threads your players give you, and braid them tightly together.

Beyond that, you as GM should talk with other players about what's going on, and get their reactions. Imagine you spring a surprise plot on a PC, only to find out the player isn't interested. If that happens, talk to them! Work out where the misunderstanding was, and then solve it.

Sometimes you don't know how the story should proceed, or what the villain should do. In that case, ask the players for ideas! You're all creating this amazing comic-book reality together. Like the creators of a real comic book, everyone has to be on the same page. You as GM are the editor and publisher, and have some authority over what happens. But you are not the sole creator of the comic, and you should never try to be.

Make moves, not guesses

You as GM shouldn't be thinking "what do I do next?" in a vacuum. You should choose a GM move to make, then ask "how do I make this move in this situation?" Instead of using your prep, you'll be using the Magpie Games prep.

There's three classes of moves that you as the GM get to make.

First, the general GM Moves. "Inflict a condition". "Take Influence over someone". These are your bread and butter moves, and you'll be making them most of the time. It's tempting to gloss over this list, but these moves are the engine that makes a good comic-book game happen. Tie every action as GM back to the principles and moves, and a good game should emerge.

Second, the Playbook moves. These are gold for making PCs' lives more interesting. Look at these first, every time a PC fails a roll.

Third, the Condition moves. It's vital that villains make a Condition move every time the players inflict a condition! Every single time. Furthermore, it interrupts whatever else is happening. Hard-hitting Condition moves turn your villains from punching bags into video game boss fights.

But that's a lot of moves! How do you pick the right one, without staring at the list for a couple of minutes every time the PCs do something and fail?

You only make the Condition moves when it's appropriate - when a villain marks a Condition. So you'll know when to make those, and you only make those, not any other kind.

Make the Playbook moves when an individual PC is in the spotlight, or you want to bring things back to them specifically.

Many moves just won't be appropriate for a situation, e.g. "make them pay a price for victory" won't happen if nobody's winning.

If you aren't otherwise sure, decide on any general GM move at random - and then pause, and see how you feel about it. If it feels wrong, look again, to find the one that feels right. But don't do that repeatedly - you'll get locked into a loop of indecision.

Very often, you'll arrive at the right choice by making the wrong one. Luckily, you don't have to commit to the move you picked first! It all happens in your head, until you announce what happens to the players. On the other hand, you can get some very fun results if you commit to a move and then force yourself to decide how you're going to enact it.

Ultimately, the right move is the one that keeps the action and the fun going. Don't panic about fine-tuning your choice here. The key to this principle isn't to pick the perfect move, but to pick some move, and then commit to doing the best you can with what you've got.

Zero-prep Villain Creation

It's possible to do games with zero prep if you are using pre-written villains, such as those from the Deck of Villainy. If you aren't going to spend $20 for this product, then you'll need to do at least a little prep when coming up with villains.

The Basics

Villains don't exist in a vacuum. Before you do anything else, understand why you're making a villain right now. The usual reasons are:

- The team went looking for trouble and you want to oblige them
- The team's current hijinks are going too smoothly and you want to raise the stakes
- You want to challenge one or more specific PCs as part of their plotlines
- You want to set a larger plot in motion and needs a plotter to do so

Next, you'll figure out Drive and at least one Condition together. Use "Quick Personalities" to come up with one core Condition, turning the villain's purpose into a surface trait or role. For example, if you just need a villain who's robbing the bank, their role is "bank robber". Connect that to their core Condition. That connection, restated as "to...", becomes the villain's drive.

Give the villain that core Condition as their first Condition. Then, give them more until they feel tough enough. If you don't feel comfortable figuring that number out, give them one more Condition for every two PCs on the team (round down). You can pick specific Conditions, or roll randomly.

Types of Villain Moves

Villain moves break down into the following categories:

Backup moves that provide the villain with additional forces ("Summon a horde of capybaras to fight for me")

Cheat moves that let the villain escape some kind of damage, consequence, or confinement and fight another day ("Cover my escape with a wall of capybaras")

Combat moves that tell us how the villain fights ("Blast enemies with capybara energy")

Crowd moves let the villain affect other characters in the scene, e.g. to draw sympathy or to intimidate people ("Make a crowd of people dote on cute capybaras")

Finisher moves that do something big, flashy, and game-changing ("Turn one hero into a capybara")

Influence moves that give them access to some knowledge or secret that will help them tempt, mock, or socially destroy the heroes ("Use capybaras to spy on my enemies")

Trap moves that set up a situation the heroes will have to deal with, or give the villain the upper hand ("Unleash a horde of capybaras on nearby civilians")

Combat-focused villains will tend to pick Combat and Finisher moves. Masterminds and schemers will have Influence, Crowd, and/or Trap moves. Mid- to high-level villains will include any of these, plus Backup and/or Cheat moves.

At this stage, it's not important to decide on actual moves!

Abilities and Generation

These two things should come from the villain's purpose. If the villain is meant as a foil for a teenage PC, make them Modern. If they're more a match for a hero's Legacy members or Mentor, make them the appropriate generation - probably Silver. Random standalone villains should probably be Silver or Bronze.

Abilities can be chosen based on something cool you want to see, copied from a favorite other villain, or randomly picked from the Power Listing Wiki's Random Page. If you're designing a foil or counter to a PC, consider giving them powers that either match, oppose, or neutralize the hero's own powers.

Once you have an idea of their powers, fill in the move categories with specifics. If you don't have clear ideas at the moment, write in a move that feels particularly appropriate when the heroes encounter the villain. When writing the specifics, always bring the move text back to the character's core Condition, Drive, and abilities.

Congratulations! Your villain should now be ready to go! And if it helps, you can talk through this process with your players, to let them know what to expect or provide feedback and ideas.

Example Villain

The PCs tell you that they're walking into a bank. The vibe you pick up is that they really want a fight. Good enough! You know why there's a villain: to rob a bank.

You roll for a random Condition and get "Guilty". There's two easy ways to connect that to "bank robber" - either they're Guilty about robbing a bank, or they're robbing a bank to satisfy some source of Guilt. Pick one at random, or choose one. We'll choose the latter. What are they guilty about? They got someone in trouble and they need money. Who? A family member. Money for what? The Mob, or bail money. Drive: "To get enough money to make things right".

There's four PCs, so you give the robber Guilty, plus two more Conditions. Rolling randomly, you get Angry and Insecure. This also feels like it should be a combat-focused villain, so you give them Combat, Finisher, and Trap moves. For generation, you decide on Bronze. For abilities, you pick "earth control". Finally, you fill in your moves based on this theme, giving the villain the ability to bury someone in stone, throw rocks at others, or cause an earthquake in the area!

High-Octane Combat

If you want to run an exciting and challenging villain fight, here are three principles that may help.

Build up to Directly Engage

Ideally, for every Directly Engage that connects with a master villain, you'll have 2-4 other moves for the PCs to do first. This can mean interfering with a villain's plans or contingencies, or aiding other people on the scene. The idea here is to ***build tension, add emotional stakes, and give every PC something to do***.

Villain and condition moves can set such things in motion, but what about when the PCs first arrive on the scene? If you don't already have an idea of what to do here, roll a d6:

1. The villain has set traps, countermeasures, or a ticking bomb that must be dealt with
2. The villain is protected by hostages, force fields, lieutenants, or minions which must be circumvented or defeated to get at them directly
3. The villain is concealed, disguised, or otherwise hard to find, and must be located
4. The villain is elusive or highly mobile (whether due to powers, a vehicle, or the environment) and must be pinned down or confined somehow
5. The villain is threatening a VIP, an innocent bystander, etc. who must be saved
6. There's an environmental hazard such as broken glass, fire, or flooding that endangers nearby civilians

The villain isn't the villain just because the story says so. They're the villain because they're doing bad things that heroes ought to be stopping. Let them do some of those things - or at least get started on it. Then, oblige the heroes to respond to them.

Run villains like video game bosses

Many video games feature boss encounters where the rules of the fight will change dramatically. Such transitions are often called phases. You can use the concept of a phase in a villain encounter. The idea here is to ***inject variety into the combat***.

You might do this by changing the physical location and situation for different phases for a fight. For example, pursuing a villain might go from the city streets, to the interior of a building, to the sewers. The challenges at each phase can be different, and the moves PCs must make will vary. For example, keeping up with the fleeing villain (Unleash Your Powers) vs. saving trapped civilians (Defend) vs. finding your way through a maze-like area (Assess the Situation).

You can also look at individual PCs' chosen moves, and have a phase of the fight spotlight one or more things they can do. That said, it's important not to spotlight any given PC too much. ***The team is the most important thing***.

As an alternative to changing the location and circumstances, you can change how the fight happens. What if the villain legitimately has everyone at their mercy, and the only way to beat them is by talking? What if they've finally opened the Dream Portal and now everyone has to face dark reflections of themselves? What if they've calmed the monster down, only for belligerent law enforcement types to show up and risk escalating it all?

If you need ideas for a phase of the fight, roll a d6:

1. There's chaos that must be contained (e.g. a crowd panics, there's fragile or expensive stuff in the area, a volatile energy source is at risk of exploding)
2. There's a chase scene (e.g. the villain has or uses a special vehicle, the team must pursue the villain around or aboard mass transit, flying, parkour…)
3. The environment is working against the team (e.g. everything's on fire)
4. The location shifts or transforms (e.g. the street collapses and you're now in the sewer,)
5. The means of conflict shifts (e.g. physical to mental/psychic to social)
6. Friends, allies, or assets are taken away or turned against you (e.g. an impassable door slams shut, the mind control gizmo kicks in)

Use villain moves to push the PCs

Villains in fiction don't exist for their own sake. They are here to reveal the heroes' mettle, challenge the heroes' abilities, and help drive the heroes' stories. It's fun when the Transformed gets to beat on a nine-foot rock monster, but it's tragic when you learn that the rock monster is the Beacon's disappeared boyfriend. The idea here is to ***keep fights interesting by engaging with what the players care about.***

Whenever you look at a condition or villain move, think about one or more PCs, or their supporting cast, that you can direct the move toward. Look for the stakes the characters (or players) care about, and threaten them, straight up.

This doesn't mean that the character has to literally be the target of a move. Instead, think about who will be most emotionally invested in the outcome of the move. For example, if a villain is going to kidnap someone, make it an NPC that the PCs interacted with previously, or a family member, or a friend. It can be a regular customer at the place the Janus works. It can be anyone, but make it someone they're invested in.

You can also push on a character's relationships, past failures, or insecurities. Did they fail a test of leadership previously? Find a way to make them the only person who can lead a crowd now. Is a PC worried about losing a special teammate? Separate the two characters during the fight.

How you use villain moves against PCs doesn't have to make perfect logical sense. You can rationalize or explain anything later on. ***The most important thing is to get the emotion right***.

Legacies, Mentors, and Farscapes

This section introduces people, places, and situations that can be useful to many Playbooks.

The **Beacon** Drive to "travel to an incredible place" can motivate them to visit one of the Farplanes, and any of their Drives related to adult heroes could reference a Mentor or Legacy member. Each of the Farplanes has suggested access routes for a typical team of superheroes in Halcyon City.

The **Bull's** creator(s) may have run afoul of any of the heroes here - or they might be twisted versions of them!

The **Delinquent**, the **Reformed**, and the **Scion** might be on the bad side of any of these heroes. The Reformed might seek their approval

The **Legacy** has five new origins, based on the power set they choose. When rolling the Legacy move, the Legacy's suggested traditions and image have been provided, so the group can determine if you've upheld them. Even if you don't use any of the Legacies presented here, a Legacy PC is encouraged to work with the GM to develop a set of traditions and an image for the Legacy they create.

The **Outsider** or the **Nomad** may be a visitor from any of the Farplanes described

The **Protégé** has five new Mentors, based on the label the Mentor embodies. Each Mentor has several suggested powers. You can pick the ones that work best for you.

Beyond this, any individual PC might have a reason to visit these places or interact with these people, as part of their personal plot.

Some characters have been provided with a specific gender and set of pronouns. Ethnicity has been either omitted or vaguely inferred at best. These characters exist to serve your story, not the other way around. As long as your use of them is also respectful to the context in which you place them, you should adjust their gender, pronouns, and ethnic origins however you wish.

The Heirs of Antares

Legacy Power Suite: super strength, invincibility, eye beams, flight, super senses

Traditions: hospitality; civilian safety first; friendship over protocol

Legacy Image: the most human aliens you'll ever meet

The hyper-extended family, complete with family gatherings of weird people you didn't know you were related to.

In the 1950s, a union crane operator began receiving dreams that suggested he was the heir of an ancient alien visitation to Earth, and that the visit had spread a potential for power across the human gene pool. He decided to find other people with this gift, and try to figure out what it all meant. He didn't know how to book conferences, and didn't have the money to reserve hotels. So he did what he knew how to do, which was organize a cookout.

A few people showed up at first, then more. He advertised in the newspaper, with symbols that only appeared in the dreams of the alien heirs. The cookout became a yearly ritual, with two rules for admission: you must demonstrate your power, and you must bring food or drink. As the Antareans discovered the real extent of their powers by swapping stories with each other, many decided as a group that they had a civic duty to use them.

Today's Antareans

Modern Antareans might be full-time superheroes, or they might just use their gifts to benefit their neighbors and friends. Not all of them have the same powers, though all share mysterious dreams. The drive to understand these mysteries brings them together, with the annual cookouts and similar smaller outings becoming the forum where individuals share insights with each other. They aren't part of a formal organization. They're just people who all shared an experience and felt they should do something about that.

You've gone to at least one cookout, and you're probably on the invitation list for local social gatherings, BBQs, and the like. Older Antareans always want to tell you how their powers work, or introduce you to somebody, or whatever. Sometimes it's useful. Often it's weird.

You know who you haven't met yet? Whoever's sending everyone those dreams.

Typical Members

The Antarean genetic legacy is truly global. Plumbers, artists, subsistence hunters - all of them have the potential. Think about ordinary people, with ordinary jobs or hobbies, living ordinary lives, and give them the power. On the other hand, think about every ordinary person who would use powers for selfish or evil reasons. The Antarean social network tries to bring down such villains on their own, but they're not always successful.

The Lightning Legends

Legacy Power Suite: super speed, regeneration, phasing, speed reading/learning, air manipulation

Traditions: be the best; save the day with a smile; never admit weakness

Legacy Image: heroes who make it all look easy

The older siblings who always embarrass you by being cooler than you'll ever be.

Charge - "to rush against as an attack"; "a definite quantity of electricity"; "a person or thing committed into the care of another"

The first speedster to use the "Legend" name was struck by a bolt of lightning. But it wasn't just any lightning. She felt powered up by being around peoples' strong emotions. And she discovered that she could spark someone else into having similar powers, the way she'd been given powers to begin with - taking the supernatural energy of a lifetime of heroism, and giving some (or all) of it in a monumental outpouring of electricity.

Today the Lightning Legends operate out of a floating base above the clouds. When they dispatch members to the surface, those heroes arrive literally in bolts of lightning from the clouds, ready to fight. The selection process for new Legends is strict and demanding, and individual "sparks" always closely watch their new "charges" for several years. This combination of glamor and rigor has given the Legends a very positive reputation - and they know it.

Riding the Lightning

You sent in an application, then worked harder than you ever have in your life to be chosen. And then they tell you to work even harder. Meanwhile these guys seem like they're having the time of their lives. Are they putting in the effort? Why is it just you? Or is it?

Being around positive energy charges you up. Saving lives is the number one way to earn "points", as the regulars call that feeling. Your spark is keeping an eye on your performance, and talking you up when you succeed.

Typical Members

More senior members of the Legends may have sparked a "full charge" - that is, they gave up all of their power to a very promising candidate. The active adults typically share a third of their accumulated power. And you've learned one scary secret: there's no way to take a charge back. If someone washes out of the program, or just wants to be a bad guy, you can't remove their powers.

Dr. Quinn & the Quinn-Tet

Legacy Power Suite: athletic perfection, Holmesian deduction, gadgetry, intimidation, fearsome reputation

Traditions: good manners, good fashion; honorable conduct, even toward enemies; stoicism

Legacy Image: old-fashioned polymath Science Detectives

The old-fashioned adults who need your help to really change.

There has been a Doctor Quinn since at least 1902, and a Quinn-Tet since 1912. The 20th Century saw a succession of science heroes under this name, who used wits and science to solve crimes. The Quinn-Tet are the five most prominent masters of various scientific pursuits who work alongside the Doctor of the moment. In spite of their high-society stylings, they are ferocious and skilled fighters, and implacable enemies of evil.

Intelligence, scientific acumen, and good manners aren't dominated by one sex, ethnicity, or bloodline. The gifts of humanity are distributed equally. Some of the inheritors of the name Quinn have been the biological offspring of their predecessors, but more and more the honor goes to an adopted or foster child.

The Quinn Organization

Members of the Quinn organization are trained in "the Quinn Method", which enhances the body, the mind, and the senses through a combination of diet, meditation, and more mysterious practices. You've been honed into the ideal science detective through this regimen.

You'll also have "siblings" - other offspring of the adult members of the group. They may be blood relations, but probably aren't. How do you get along with them? If you're going to be the new Dr. Quinn, do the other kids see you as a leader - or as a rival? If you aren't, what is your relationship to Dr. Quinn's own heir?

Typical Members

Aside from Dr. Quinn (who at this point could be of any gender), you should define the five members of the Quinn-tet, including their personalities and scientific specialties. The Legacy members should be based on what sort of PC you intend to play.

Opponents of the Legacy might be Captain Nemo types, leading a submarine full of science pirates, high-society criminals, and others who use their talents and position for evil or selfish ends.

The Grail Knights

Legacy Power Suite: divine armor, magic weaponry, mythic might, legendary speed, god-like beauty

Traditions: fight evil in all its forms; lead those who need guidance; organize and defend the vulnerable

Legacy Image: a secretive, strict order of paladins

The strict, disciplined family that doesn't let you get away with anything.

The sword Excalibur isn't a sword - it's more like a cosmic force that chooses wielders in their moments of need. A worthy wielder must be ready to fight, lead, and rule. An unworthy wielder can't even lift the sword - it'll be as heavy as stone. But it came to you in your hour of darkness, and led you to others like you.

In the age of myth and magic, the Grail Knights fought demons, dragons, and other mystical menaces. The glorious knights of old have been replaced with hard-edged paramilitary operatives, who fight in the darkness to protect the safety of the world of light. Members of the order organize themselves into three ranks: Aspirants, Squires, and Knights. They don't need oversight or governance; the sword itself will reject the corrupt. But they do expect new Aspirants to understand the power that's chosen them, and for Squires to learn to take orders.

The Sword of Legend

The sword a knight wields is unbreakable and has its own unique powers. It's a tool to grant mercy, mete out justice and preserve order. Not even the most veteran Knights understand all of its potential.

The sword's most basic power is to turn courage into magic. It can deflect lasers, block bullets, even cut falling buildings in half - as long as you're brave enough to stand in the way of the attack. Beyond that, it will grow with the wielder, matching their physical and moral growth with the power they need. Any knight can will the sword into their hand, no matter where they left it.

Typical Members

Modern Knights have adopted a military style of organization, with personalities to match. You'll meet the wise and paternal commander, the strict drill sergeant, the hard-edged solo soldier, and other types of warriors.

There are other cosmic forces - and some empower "dark knights". Goetic demons whisper secrets into sorcerers' ears. Perhaps the worst enemy of the order is the fallen Knight - someone who thought their personal cause was just, found it wasn't the hard way, and couldn't accept the disgrace. They now conspire to achieve their own aims, and take special pleasure in fighting against Knights who are still worthy of the sword.

The Guardian Ghosts

Legacy Power Suite: shadow control, shadow portals, mind-clouding, shadow cloak stealth, shadow senses

Traditions: fight corruption; use fear against the wicked; never betray your country or comrades

Legacy Image: a patriotic lineage of black-clad "Mystery Men"

A household with four generations of current, former, and future heroes trying to get along.

A black-coated Mystery Man called the Guardian Ghost fought against the Nazi spymaster atop the Statue of Liberty at the height of World War II. Since then, the Ghost and their heirs have been equated with patriotic defenders of the country and the best of what its people can be. That hero eventually passed on, then came back from the Other Side with strange shadow-controlling powers. And so a family of heroes was inaugurated.

The second Guardian Ghost - and the first with genuine superpowers - is your grandparent. The third is your parent. You're going to be the fourth. Your immediate and extended family includes mad scientists and their children, spies and counter-spies, world explorers, and arcane dabblers. You all live together, in a huge mansion that's still never big enough for all of you. And your great-grandparent's ghost still haunts the house. How do you even cope with all this?

The Source of the Shadow

The original Guardian Ghost took down politicians, CEOs, and foreign agents. The public expects the Ghosts to continue this important work, and your parents and grand-parents have trained you in doing so. But one thing they haven't talked about is the source of the shadow powers that entered the lineage with the ghost of your great-grandfather. Is it enough to fight fear with fear, or is something darker (literally and metaphorically) at play?

Typical Members

You should define the particulars of your lineage - including fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, siblings, and so on. Every member of the family is distinctive somehow. How do you get along with each of them? What expectations do they place on you? Worse, family members might dislike each other, and sometimes you'll get dragged into it. When did that happen?

The Guardian Ghosts have a lot of enemies. Aside from supervillains they've fought, anyone who wants to use power for corrupt purposes probably wants your family out of the way. The secret identity of the Ghosts and their families is a closely guarded secret, and you'll be expected to keep that secret too. Worse, many of the Legacy's enemies have had their own children, heirs, and other successors. You may find yourself befriending the child of someone with a history with your family.

Runeclaw

Mentor Abilities: superhuman physique; stealth; intimidation and fear; impossible fighting skills; elemental control

Embodies: Danger

The violent loner who needs someone to care for.

Centuries ago, a bloodthirsty berserker was denied entry into the warrior's afterlife. "You can fight, but you do it for fighting's sake," the heralds told him. "We will make you understand the difference between a warrior and a beast." So they cursed him with three qualities: immortality, regeneration, and psychic empathy for the feelings of others.

Unable to die and find his promised reward in the afterlife, the man called Runeclaw lived a solitary existence. But he couldn't escape the suffering of the innocent, because he was drawn to battle. He is drawn to protect the helpless and the powerless, and more and more he trains others in the lessons that his harsh life has taught him - how to fight, and how to care.

A word of warning. In spite of the enchanted bearskin he wears, and the protective attitude he has, never ever call him "Papa Bear". He hates that. Or so he says.

Mentorship

Runeclaw really doesn't want to be doing this. Why are you here bothering him, anyway? He wants to be drinking mead in a bear cave somewhere, quietly watching the sunset. But there's always a kid who is going to get themselves killed unless they learn to fight, isn't there. And nobody's as good at fighting as Runeclaw.

He's gruff, no-nonsense, and seemingly can never be satisfied. But his advice is practical, and he really does care, in spite of himself. On the other hand, he's accumulated a long list of his own enemies, and they'll do their best to hurt him by going after his apprentices. As an immortal warrior, he (and his Protégés) will also appear in stories about magic and myth.

Resources

Runeclaw doesn't have much in the way of gadgets. He can offer a few spare motorcycles as a vehicle, maybe. Don't get a scratch on them, either! But he's accumulated a lot of secrets and equipment over the years in his matches with supervillains, and can lend some of that out. You'll have to figure out how it works, of course.

Runeclaw isn't a recognized law enforcement officer. But "I'm his student" is as much a badge of authority as anything, and will be recognized by a lot of people - especially veteran heroes, who might have their own gear to loan you in times of need.

Menagerie

Associated Abilities: weapons and gadgets; detective skills; power mimicry; body elasticity; powerful armor

Embodies: Freak

The friendly but weird hero who does things his own way.

The hero named Menagerie can telepathically control animals and experience life through their senses. She can also feel their pain or discomfort. She is committed to intelligence-gathering, life-saving and rescue operations. She can attach a camera to a hawk or a gerbil or a mole, then send them to find people trapped or lost somewhere. Her bats' echolocation and her bees' magnetic sense let her detect things nobody else could. And her ability to get very different animals to collaborate - such as a rat unlocking a door for a monkey to get into a highly-guarded server room - makes her potentially very dangerous.

So she's a key member of the hero community, right? Nope. While she's powerful, she's also seen as a gonzo outsider who doesn't team up with anyone she doesn't have a use for.

Mentorship

Her place is a literal pigsty. The whole base is a cacophony of animal noises. It's maddening and it smells terrible. Why are you even here? Was this a blessing or a curse? Did you have nowhere else to go? Or is this a punishment?

Menagerie doesn't get involved in superhero battles, but often she needs someone who can fight - and that's probably you. Just as often, she'll dispatch you on some kind of fact-finding mission, or to play diplomat with a more straight-laced hero who she's upset with her carefree, anti-authority style.

Which of Menagerie's animals do you see most often? What species are they? What are their names and personalities? How do you react to each other?

Resources

While Menagerie doesn't keep a lot of gadgets around, her weird uses of animals can often serve the same purpose. For example, instead of a vehicle, she might equip the team with a set of ultra-fast horses to ride - or more fantastical animals, such as flying dinosaurs, if they exist in the setting! Pick the resources you're interested in taking, and then figure out how an animal (or a team of them) could provide the same thing.

Bluescreen

Associated Abilities: superhuman physique; powerful armor; telepathy/telekinesis; elemental control

Embodies: Savior

The perfect hero who sometimes spaces out.

The hero Bluescreen was once an astrophysicist, experimenting with a powerful new type of telescope that could pick up emissions from distant galaxies. As it happens, a long-lost civilization encoded their knowledge into the energy of the supernova burst that destroyed their home planet. The new telescope picked it up, but the power of it froze up every computer that was recording the data. The memory and power of a whole civilization was engraved into the sole storage medium that was left - the scientist's own mind.

Now gifted with the ability to project unbreakable blue force fields, and with lifetimes of knowledge at his disposal, the scientist became both a hero and storyteller. He sees it as his civic duty to protect not only the knowledge of a long-ago people, but the people of this planet in the here and now. As he was once an educator and science communicator, he likewise feels duty-bound to teach and shape a new generation of heroes.

Mentorship

Bluescreen is the sort of person everyone thinks of when they hear the phrase "real hero". Strong, powerful, wise, a lawman with a force field instead of a gun. Unfortunately he's also like having a Public Service Announcement and a schoolteacher as a surrogate parent. He's proud of you until he's disappointed, he knows you can do better, he's got your back, kiddo, just let him know if you need anything.

He genuinely wants to help his charges grow into worthy adult heroes, and he's got a head full of an alien civilization's wisdom that is only sometimes useful at making that happen. Sometimes he gets real jargony and scientish, and sometimes he's just flat-out weird, and you get a little worried that you've lost him to the stars or something. But then he's back, ready to keep working with you on that better hero he knows you can be.

Resources

Even before he was a superhero, Bluescreen had access to all kinds of high-tech systems. He's got several high-profile sponsors and works with people across a spectrum of scientific disciplines. He can outfit a Protégé with almost any conceivable gadget - including some very unusual alien tech that only he understands.

The Fractal

Associated Abilities: weapons and gadgets; stealth; detective skills; hacking; intimidation and fear

Embodies: Superior

The brooding vigilante with a secret power.

Criminals whisper the name of the Fractal, because it's rumored she has ears everywhere. She's the master of numerous skills. She seemingly appears and disappears at will when not being observed. No injury seems to slow her down. What almost nobody knows - except, perhaps, her new Protégé - is that she has an actual superpower, specifically duplication. She can create copies of herself, then recall them to her real self along with all their memories.

Her duplication power is her most carefully kept secret. Using this gift, she's built a corporate empire, a network of informants and spies, and a technology base, all for the sake of fighting crime. Her ultimate goals remain unknown.

Mentorship

There are few ways into the Fractal's trusted inner circle. One is that she sees promise in a young hero, especially one who's experienced tragedy of their own. Another is when someone uncovers her secret but hasn't yet shared it. Which of these are you - or did you attract her attention, and earn her trust, some other way?

The Fractal is always, always watching. She'll know everything you do, and she'll question you on all of it. The most important thing to her is that you stay in command of yourself, and on top of whatever's going on around you. "Discipline is life, carelessness is death" is her motto. She's not easy to please, and she doesn't like cleaning up after others' mistakes. She'll try to make you into an independent hero like herself, someone who could lead others but doesn't need to.

Never ask her one thing, though. If she's so independent, and doesn't need other people, why is she training you?

Resources

The Fractal has numerous safehouses and vehicles throughout the city, and can entrust them to a Protégé and their team. If she shares communicators, she will almost certainly be listening in on them, all the time. She tends not to use ultra-tech, so may not have teleportals or simple robots.

Sam Echevarra

Associated Abilities: superhuman physique; detective skills; hacking; intimidation and fear

Embodies: Mundane

The super-lawyer who needs a good assistant on her cases.

Sam Echevarra used to be a superhero. She had strength, speed, bullet-proof skin, and even flight. But she had one more gift, which led to her retirement as a vigilante: super-human intelligence. And while many heroes' talents focused on invention or deduction, Sam's particular gift was in law.

Now she works full time as an attorney, often working pro bono cases on behalf of vigilantes or needy communities. Her legal super-genius has let her construct ironclad courtroom strategies to fight back against greedy corporations or soulless government agencies. Thousands of families have been able to rebuild their homes after a villain attack because of Sam's work in court against heel-dragging insurance companies. And more than one villain has tried a false insanity plea to get a lighter sentence, only to face an angry super-lawyer with passion and talent enough to tear apart their arguments.

Mentorship

While Sam is a full-time attorney, she focuses on cases from the superhero world. She'll often send you to follow up on cases she's working on - or get involved in stuff your team is doing. Sometimes it will be above-board, and you'll need to follow the rules to the letter. Other times, she may sanction a little under-the-table digging or pressuring a key figure in a case - as long as you aren't caught by the cops, of course.

Sam is very concerned about the ways that lives can be impacted by superheroes and supervillains. She’s fought more than one angry young villain who blamed heroes for some harm or misfortune in their lives, from injured relatives to lost job opportunities. She'll always do her best to make sure that her Protégés are mindful of how their actions reflect on themselves, their community, and heroes in general.

Resources

Sam is independently wealthy and can pay for a number of mundane gadgets, such as radios and vehicles, that her Protégé and their team might need. She will be very strict about things like driving without a license, though! She will also expect a regular accounting of how her equipment was used, if there's any possibility that it will come up in court.

Aeterna Silva

Access: a teleport or portal effect in a heavily forested area; dimensional travel powers, science, or magic; tunnels at the roots of certain ancient trees

A green mirror of our own world, holding beauty, mystery, terror, and promise.

In an adjacent reality, the explosive evolution of life on Earth was dominated by plants, not animals. Creeping vines, not trilobites, occupy the lower strata of the fossil record. Ambulatory flowers exchange seeds without the need for bees. The planet is covered in a green-tinged rainbow of plant life and shrouded in layers of nourishing mist.

Humanoid Keepers, individually as diverse in appearance and occupation as human beings, can be found everywhere. They live in small villages or large cities, much like the people of Earth. They build upward, with structures coiling around the trunks and beneath the branches of hypertrees. "Treeways" of flowing water let them travel quickly from place to place.

Playbooks

The Green Queen is a Nova who spent years exploring Aeterna Silva after finding a magical pathway there. She carries a bag full of seeds, fruits, and other flora that grant her nigh-magical powers, but often with unpredictable results.

Heartwood is an Outsider. They are a Keeper who discovered a path into our world and wanted to stay, despite their elders' fears of "those animated bags of meat".

Plotlines

Herbs and other plants with amazing biological properties can be found in the forest. An otherwise incurable condition (like the Transformed's state?) might have a treatment that can be found here.

An ecoterrorist villain might ally with forces on Aeterna Silva, hoping to turn Earth into a similar animal-free world.

Perils

The Eternal Forest is primal and verdant, but not a natural utopia. Many plants are toxic, or emit strange fumes that could mean sickness, hallucinations, or death. Even more are animated - take any monster you can imagine, then make it green and give it thorns.

Plants aren't the only occupants of this world either. The Undermind is a network of subterranean fungi with fearsome hive intelligence. Its spore-men sometimes visit the surface to infect and corrupt the living things there, or even abduct Keepers for horrible purposes.

THE BLOT EMPIRE

Access: experimental rockets, ancient stargates, passing UFOs

An interstellar fusion of cold tyranny, art under duress, and hope bursting at the seams.

The Blot are a single-minded alien species, made of an inky black pseudo-fluid. Able to appreciate art and beauty, but unable to make it themselves, it conquers civilizations and subjugates people who can do so for it.

The Blot prefers to live aboard its city-sized starships of alloyed metal and hard angles. Its empire stretches across whole star systems. Blot vessels viciously attack any ship entering its territory. It has no allies and seeks none.

The Blot's conquests, meanwhile, want to rise up in revolt. For the most part, they simply can't. The Blot is only interested in creators, not soldiers or leaders. But creatives can still inspire, dream, and team up. It's only a matter of time before their collective imaginations find a way to overthrow their dark overlord.

Playbooks

Octava is a Star who was forced to serve the Blot as a dancer and singer. Along with several other captives, she escaped to Earth and now works to recruit assistance in fighting back against the Blot.

The Catalyst is a Harbinger from a future where the Blot managed to conquer Earth. The adult heroes failed to stop it once, but now he'll train their teenage equivalents on how to properly fight.

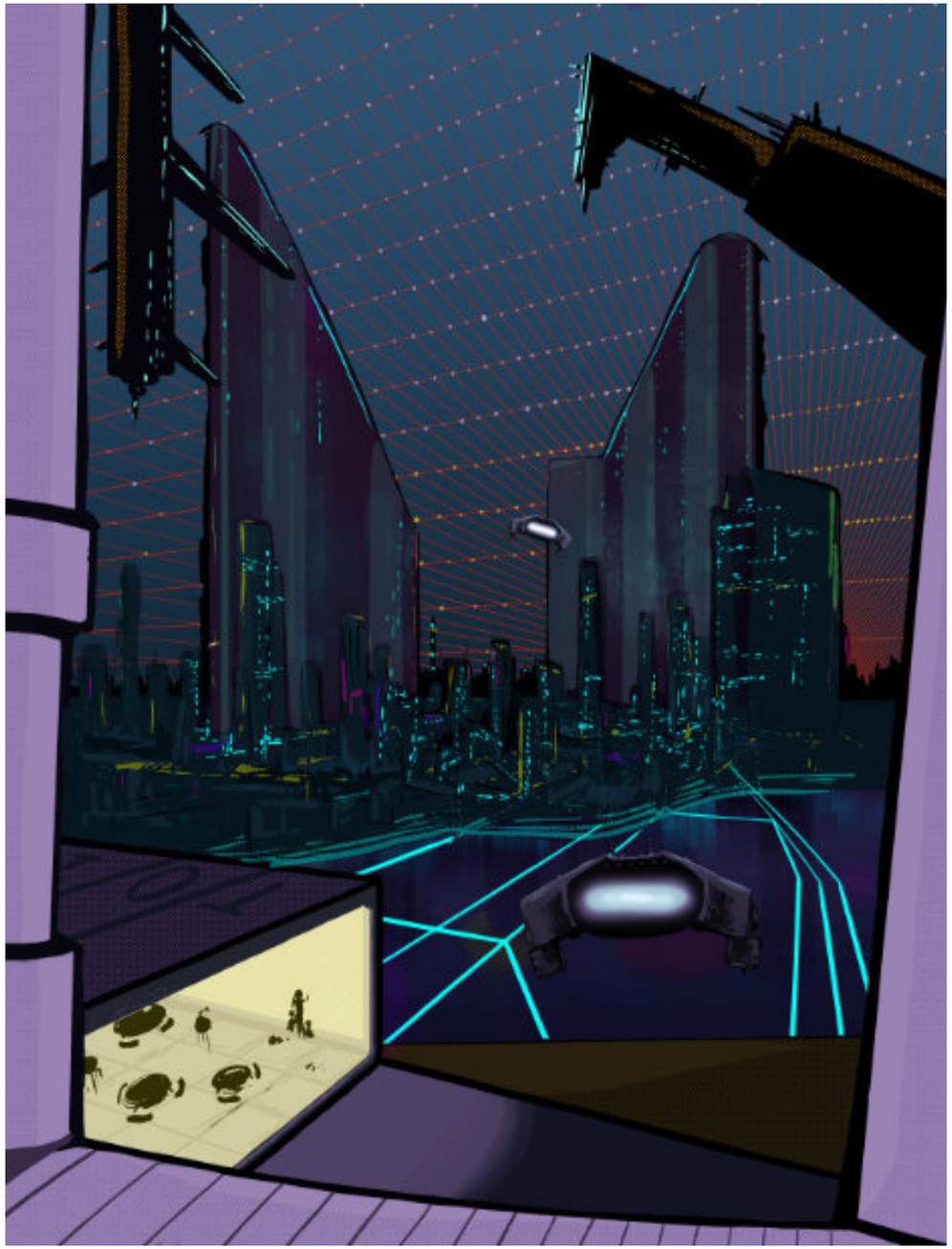
Plotlines

The Outsider's people might call on them to fight back against the Blot - and bring the party along in the process.

A plea for help from the Blot's captive species reaches Earth. How will the world react?

Perils

While the Blot exists as a single hive-mind, "Initiatives" - specific impulses to accomplish something - exist within their consciousness, and function like particularly driven individuals. If the PCs hand the Blot a particular defeat, they may earn their own Initiative, which will stop at nothing to destroy them!



The Cyberverse

Access: digitization laser; advanced VR gear; technopathy

The hub of reality, with digital gods and infinite simulated worlds to explore.

Science tells us that the universe is quantized at the smallest scales. Everything from position to electric charge are digital numbers. Spacetime can be represented as a holographic projection from the two-dimensional surface of a sphere. So what's inside that sphere?

The Cyberverse isn't just the world of computers. Instead, it's the world that computers give us the barest glimpse into. It might be infinitely big. "Sims" - bubbles of simulated reality, from fantasy MMORPG lookalikes to fully lifelike emulations of reality - float in a sea of unstructured data. "Pipelines" funnel data between sims, and back out to our familiar reality. And digital beings of every conceivable description can be encountered - or created.

Playbooks

Bit Rot is a Doomed. She dared to find her way into the Cyberverse, to make a digital wish that would change reality, and now she's hunted by enigmatic guardians that can possess any piece of technology. Now, while she still has time, she's going to use her knowledge to make others' dreams come true.

Sparky is a Newborn. He is a Cyberverse lifeform that spontaneously appeared in our world, assembling nearby devices into a functional body. He can rebuild himself when damaged by incorporating new tech, and knows he has to fight a certain supervillain - but not why.

Plotlines

A special algorithm lets you trace a path through the Cyberverse to reach other planets, or even distant galaxies! The PCs need to get somewhere, or back from somewhere, and need to find the algorithm within the Cyberverse and follow its dangerous trail.

The PCs are enjoying a digital vacation in some fun Sim when a sudden outside-context attack happens! This could be elements of another Sim invading, something utterly strange, or just an ongoing digital breakdown of the environment.

Perils

If there is a source code to reality, it is here. Of course, finding your way here doesn't make you a god. That position appears to have been filled... Attempts to change the outer world by manipulating the Cyberverse are met with powerful guardians, and their defeat triggers the release of ones even more powerful. Something enforces order here.

The Giants' Shadow

Access: high-tech shrink-ray; size-shifting powers; faerie magick

The world beneath our feet, and the vulnerable people who see us and our secrets.

There is an unsuspected world of humanoid people, only centimeters tall. To them, we are colossal and dangerous giants, who could step on an entire house by accident, or wreck a whole neighborhood on purpose. They fear us, but they also use what we create - even though we sometimes notice it missing, and hunt for the cause. For all these reasons, they call themselves the Shadowed.

The people in the Giants' Shadow can be found everywhere, on every continent. Every journey is an adventure at their scale, so they tend to prefer small, secure communities where everyone contributes to the greater whole. They generally don't use electricity, giving their homes a 19th century farmhouse feel.

Playbooks

Big Boy is a Beacon. He used to be Shadowed, until he was caught up in an experimental dimensional apparatus while poking around a Giants' science lab. Once the smoke cleared, he found the lab in shambles and themselves at Giant size. With only a glitchy 'phasing' power to rely on, he resolved to befriend other scientists who could potentially reverse the process and send him home.

Sprout is an Outsider. They are a "mutant" who can grow to Giant size (a whopping 5' 2"!), and telepathically communicate with animals. Time to be a Giant hero!

Plotlines

The Shadowed know a secret path into an otherwise inaccessible location - the site of a magical ritual, a villain's impregnable fortress, or an underground cave where an important MacGuffin is located - and the PCs must win their trust to gain access.

A Shadowed community is put in peril by some mundane action, like a house demolition or the construction of a mall. The community requests the aid of the PCs to rescue them, but swear them to secrecy - they can't explain just why they're doing what they're doing, or for whom.

Perils

Everything at a human scale can be dangerous to the Shadowed - or someone of their size. The GM should watch movies such as "Ant-Man" and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" for ideas.

The Labyrinth of Lost Dreams

Access: magical portals; shared dreams; mysteriously discovered objects

An afterlife for hopes and dreams.

Broken promises, forlorn hopes, and abandoned dreams find their way from the human world into the Labyrinth. They float on the river of deceit and are fished out by Tenders. Some are polished, refined, and sometimes bound together with others into works of emotional art by Artisans. These pieces line the walls of the Labyrinth and find their ways into the homes of its inhabitants. Others are cleaned off by Sparkers and worked into astral clockwork, becoming automata that serve the people of the Labyrinth.

Sorcerers who wish to understand their enemies have been known to visit the Labyrinth to seek out their secrets. Others seek out inspiration from the potential that prior generations threw away. And occasionally, when a human regains their willingness to dream, the processed item will "wake up", throw itself into the river, and float back to the human world.

Playbooks

Dingus is an Innocent. It is an automaton created by the Sparkers of the Labyrinth, indistinguishable from a human being. It is the youthful optimism of a jaded villain of the modern world, and escaped on its own to try and right the wrongs its progenitor has committed.

Apogee is a Janus. She imagined being a hero when she was younger, but lost all hope when her parents and friends disparaged her "foolishness". That changed when she woke from a dream clutching a bright multicolored ring, which transformed her into the hero of her childhood dreams when worn. Now she's going to show them all - but not tell them until all those memories hurt a little less.

Plotlines

PCs might need to quest for some lost hope in the Labyrinth to re-inspire some powerful hero - or motivate a villain caught in the throes of despair. Something from the Labyrinth may also reappear, sparking a quest to understand and use it.

Perils

The Labyrinth is well named. It's unmapped, mysterious, and packed with lost hope and magical automata. Almost any kind of outlandish thing could happen to the group if they try to explore it. In general, treat a trip to the Labyrinth like a Jim Henson movie: magical and amazing, but weird at every turn, and where anything can suddenly talk to you.

Villains

Here's a collection of pre-written villains. They cover the spectrum of power levels and tone, from comic relief characters like Beaver Boy to more serious or dramatically potent characters like Redline and Void.

Each solo villain comes with a dramatic challenge, or a role in the story. Ultimately, a villain exists to illuminate the truths of our hero characters. Use these roles and challenges to highlight both the PCs' potential and their problems. For example, what does the fun-loving, troublemaking Delinquent character think when they encounter someone like Redline? Does the Transformed empathize with NKIDU, or hate them for being what the Transformed themselves might become in time?

The Architects of Evil

Six characters (Blaster of Paris, the Flying Buttress, Intern, Madhesive, Rubble Rouser, and Super-Grandma) form a comedy villain team called "the Architects of Evil". Instead of challenges and roles, these villains have team relations, indicating how they get along with each other.

A GM who wants to use the Architects should pick 2-4 of them to appear together against the PCs. Individually, they don't have a lot of Conditions to mark, but if they act together, they can be formidable. How effective they are together depends on which members of the team you put together, of course.

Villain Relationships

All of the villains here have the potential to work with, or for, other villains. For example, Handmaid is looking for a powerful patron, while NKIDU might choose to ally with someone who can assist in dealing with their condition.

If one of the characters in the game has villain NPCs (such as the Scion's parent, the organization that made the Bull, or the enemy of the Legacy), you can use these villains to bolster those forces. For example, an anti-government conspiracy might assign Jacques Rabbit to go after the Soldier.

BEAVER BOY

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Bronze or Modern (your choice)
Drive	To finally commit a successful super-crime
Abilities	Super-tunneling
Conditions	☐ Insecure
Moves	» Tunnel through the ground » Trap an opponent in a surprise sinkhole » Mysteriously escape absolutely any kind of confinement

Background

"Give me the money! And stop laughing!"

Beaver Boy has one power: super-tunneling. He decided he was going to parlay this into a life of crime. Unfortunately, his resolve wasn't matched by his ingenuity, and to date his plans are on the level of "emerge into a bank and order the tellers to give him money". But God loves a fool, and to date any attempt to keep him in jail hasn't stuck either. Is he just brilliant at making escapes, or does he have some secret patron who sees promise in him?

Challenge: how do the PCs break Beaver Boy out of his doomed path as a failed supervillain, and get him off their backs in the process?

HANDMAID

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Modern
Drive	To impress senior villains with her abilities
Abilities	Autonomous Robot Hands
Conditions	☐ Afraid ☐ Guilty
Moves	» Swarm the area with an army of handbots » Reveal a handbot anywhere the heroes don't want one » Escape the scene with the aid of her handbots

Background

"It's our heroes! Let's give 'em all a big hand!"

The villain known as Handmaid wants to become a great inventor, and become the trusted lieutenant of some major villain. The bad news is that she's only good at inventing one thing: autonomous robot hands. The good news (for her) is that she's very good at it. Handmaid can show up at any time, cheerfully revealing a mob of handbots ready to give heroes the finger.

Role: Handmaid can show up almost anywhere, and with anyone. She should be fun, possibly flirty, and very effective within her limited capacity. Crucially, she's always angling to work for a higher-power villain, so her plots should always lead the PCs to that villain (who ought to be related to the PCs if possible).

JACQUES RABBIT

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Silver
Drive	To overcome his wounded pride at being a humanoid rabbit
Abilities	Superhuman strength, agility, leaping distance, and senses
Conditions	☐ Angry ☐ Guilty ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Balance his predator's training and prey's instincts » Wield a versatile military arsenal to set traps and ambushes » Stay serious and professional, no matter what

Background

"En garde, hero"

A Belgian special operations soldier with an excellent record, turned into a humanoid rabbit as part of an experimental super-soldier program. His abilities were indeed enhanced, but the mockery he faced from his fellows at being a "fluffy bunny" drove him to desert and become a mercenary. Now he'll do anything to maintain his reputation as a dangerous, competent soldier of fortune. He refuses jobs which offend his sense of propriety (such as harming civilians), and upholds a strict code of honor.

Role: Jacques Rabbit is the "noble demon" who will do bad, but isn't a bad guy. The PCs should be able to appeal to his code of honor against really scummy bad guys - but only after they've had to fight him a few times.

NKIDU

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Bronze
Drive	To express his agony
Abilities	Patchwork tank armor, pistons and hydraulics
Conditions	☐ Angry ☐ Hopeless ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Force attackers to escalate violence » Destroy or undermine civilized things » Reciprocate kindness or vulnerability

Background

"Groaaaarh!"

The Neural Knowledge Interface Distribution Unit, or NKIDU, was a system that would transfer a human mind into an immortal robot body. Unfortunately, the inventor attempted the transfer before the technology was perfected. Now an unstoppable robot juggernaut, built and rebuilt like a metal Frankenstein's monster, cursed with violent impulses and more beast than man, he seeks a cure - or perhaps just a friend.

Challenge: NKIDU could be somehow saved, if the PCs see them as worth saving. They can be part of a Hook that tests a PC's Savior versus another label, for example.

PATCHWORK

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Silver
Drive	To find the perfect human-animal hybrid
Abilities	Partial shapeshifting into animal or superhuman forms
Conditions	☐ Angry ☐ Afraid ☐ Guilty
Moves	» Steal a tissue or blood sample from a metahuman » Manifest traits from something he's sampled » Suddenly switch between bestial, brutal, and brilliant

Background

"Snips, snails, and puppy-dogs' tails... ahahahaha!"

A lab technician in the biosciences, smarter than his employers gave him credit for, realized the applications of a nanovirus they were developing for medical purposes, and harnessed it as a weapon of war. Now something like a modern-day werewolf, he uses transdermal patches to integrate other animals' traits into his own body - growing powerful gorilla arms, cheetah legs, or even splicing several organisms together to become a hybrid nightmare.

Role: Patchwork is a mid-level villain who can bring back old enemies the PCs thought were safely jailed, via duplicating their powers.

REDLINE

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Modern
Drive	Keep having fun, whatever the cost
Abilities	Monstrous transformation, healing factor
Conditions	☐ Angry ☐ Guilty ☐ Hopeless ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Slip away with a reckless improvisation » Escalate the excitement with a new stunt » Transform into a berserk colossus

Background

"Don't bore me, hero. You wouldn't like me when I'm bored."

A mutant who transforms into a hulking, rampaging berserker, but only when she doesn't have enough adrenaline in her system. To keep herself from being a city-destroying creature, she spends her time as a hardcore action junkie. She'll steal and wreck cars, bungee off skyscrapers and into corporate board meetings, and take similar wild risks, knowing her monstrous mutation will also heal any incidental damage she takes.

Challenge: Redline will certainly get bored in jail. Are things better off throwing them in some kind of maximum-security restraint for the rest of their life, or just letting them run wild?

VOID

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Modern
Drive	Lash out at an evil-filled world
Abilities	Psychokinesis; Psychic Empathy
Conditions	☐ Afraid ☐ Angry ☐ Hopeless ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Turn hidden wickedness into destructive chaos » Give an impassioned speech on the evil of hypocrisy » Reveal the true character of a public figure

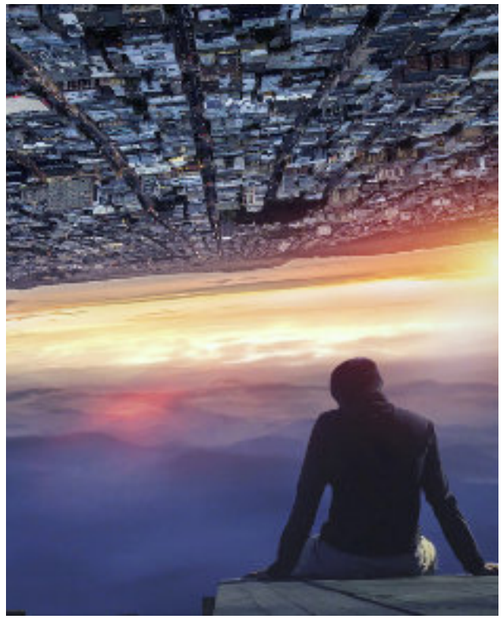
Background

"You think the district attorney is so noble? Watch!"

Void's power is to draw the emotional darkness out of other people, and transmute it into psychokinetic energy. Void's victims are usually exhausted by this siphoning, but momentarily lose whatever wickedness was taken from them. In a crowd of bad people, Void is highly dangerous. Surrounded by saints, or isolated, Void is in trouble.

In an emergency, Void can draw on their own inner darkness. If forced to do so, perhaps they can be shown the error of their ways.

Challenge: Void's goals will often align with the PCs' - expose some evildoing - but their methods are brutal and villainous. How do the players want to proceed?



BLASTER OF PARIS

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Bronze
Drive	To become rich and famous
Abilities	Bursts of green plasma energy
Conditions	☐ Hopeless ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Use plasma blasts to solve every problem » Support another villain by ratcheting up the violence » Follow orders the wrong way

Background

"Sacre Bleu Up!"

An assistant at a science lab. He received plasma-generation powers in a lab accident. He wants to be a great supervillain, but lacks imagination. For now, he's content to blow stuff up under the direction of a smarter leader. Unfortunately, this team doesn't have one…

Team relations: obeys Rubble Rouser; follows orders from Flying Buttress or Madhesive; doesn't really notice Intern; likes Super-Grandma.

THE FLYING BUTTRESS

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Silver
Drive	To rebuild Halcyon City's buildings in his image
Abilities	Super-strength, durability, and flight
Conditions	☐ Angry ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Effortlessly demolish nearby structures » Laugh off attacks with a monologue » Patronize the kids like a typical 50's TV dad

Background

"I'm your 'arch' nemesis!"

A former architect who's angry at superheroes for always knocking buildings down. He decided to knock everything down himself, in the hopes of rebuilding it all to his own standards. He has the classic flying-brick powers: super-strength, durability, flight, and so on.

Team relations: thinks Blaster of Paris is a useful tool; paternal attitude toward Intern; thinks Madhesive is weird but likes his glue's applications to architecture; the conservative to Rubble Rouser's liberal.

INTERN

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Modern
Drive	To stay employed by any means necessary
Abilities	Powerful telekinesis and telepathy
Conditions	☐ Guilty ☐ Hopeless
Moves	» Turn the tide of battle with potent psychic abilities » Shatter someone's heart with perfectly aimed snark » Do the one thing that will actually help the team

Background

"Listen, I just work here"

Brought into the team to provide support, Intern gets by thanks to memes, sarcastic quips, disinterest, and a powerful telekinetic and telepathic power suite. She's not committed to the villains' cause, but she is getting paid so she's loyal.

Team relations: Gets much of the practical work done for the team, but doesn't really get along with any of them except Super-Grandma.

MADHESIVE

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Silver
Drive	To demonstrate the usefulness of glue
Abilities	High-tech glue gun, non-stick suit
Conditions	
Moves	» Force the heroes to unstick something or someone » Create frustratingly effective barriers or obstacles » Unveil a new annoying use for glue

Background

"I've got you in a sticky situation, hero!"

A former chemist who decided glue could solve the world's problems and set about developing the perfect formulation. Now, he uses superheroes as guinea pigs to test new formulae. He has a specialized non-stick suit and a glue gun, and can use his glue to create swing-lines, bridges, walls, or other simple shapes.

Team relations: Thinks he's the team leader; treats Intern halfway decently; likes Super-Grandma but wishes she'd take things as seriously as he does.

RUBBLE ROUSER

Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Bronze
Drive	To force people out of cities by destroying them
Abilities	Geokinesis, concrete body, animated rocky minions
Conditions	☐ Angry ☐ Guilty
Moves	» Direct her rocky minions in coordinated assaults » Rearrange any area with significant earth or stone » Turn property damage into a weapon

Background

"Watch for falling rocks!"

A former construction worker and firebrand who lost her home in a super-battle. She has a body made out of concrete, with a hard-hat shape on her head, and can animate any kind of rock into constructs or servants.

Team relations: Thinks Flying Buttress is square but thinks she can influence him; wishes Blaster of Paris would grow a spine; likes having coffee and chats with Super-Grandma.

SUPER-GRANDMA

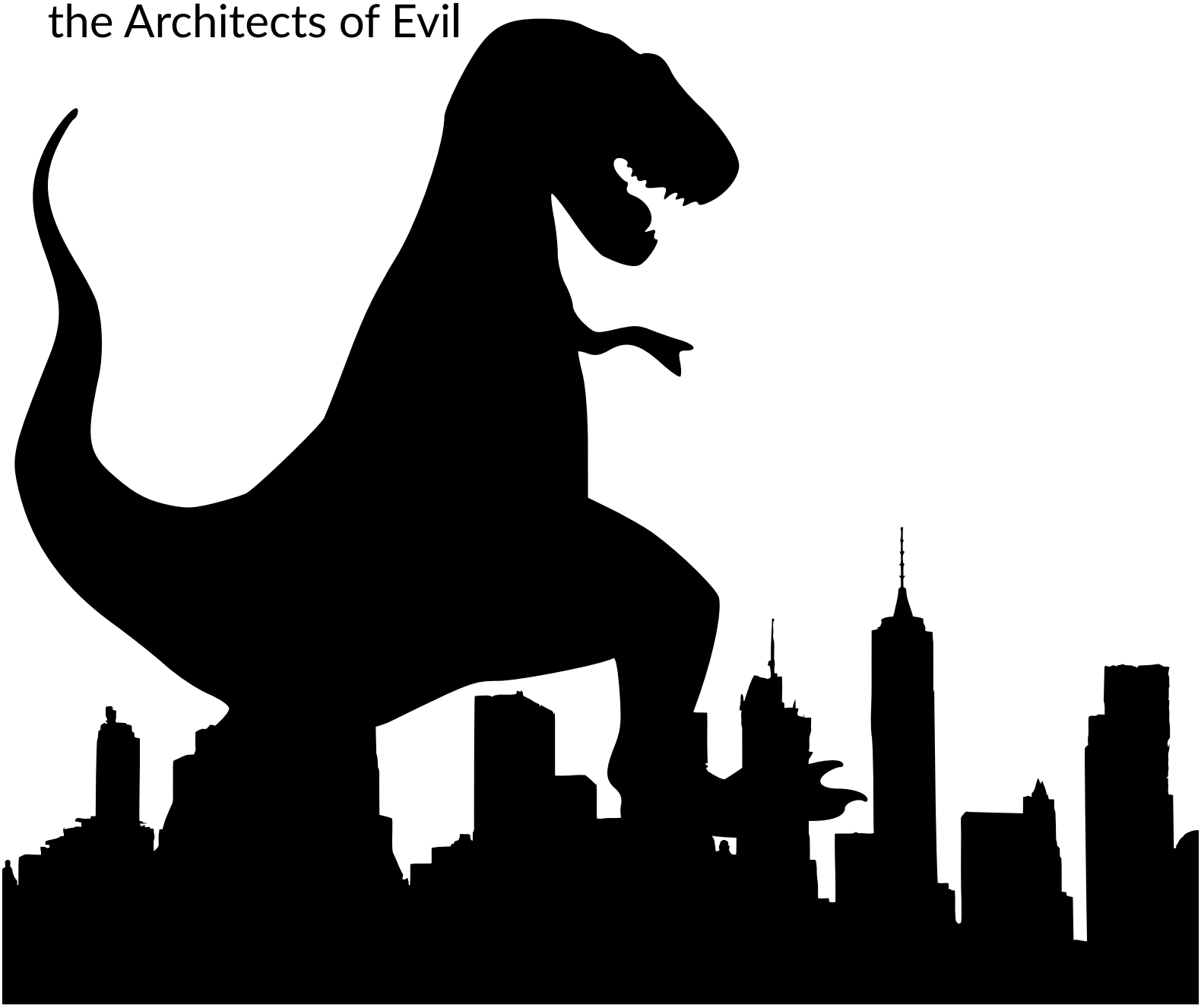
Real Name	Unknown
Generation	Gold
Drive	To avenge herself on modern capitalism
Abilities	Total invulnerability to damage
Conditions	☐ Afraid ☐ Insecure
Moves	» Make, bake, or obtain domestic comforts » Walk unscathed out of anything » Zero in on unhappiness

Background

"Oh that outfit looks cold, dear. Can I knit you a scarf for it?"

A former superhero with invulnerability who was bilked out of her life savings and inheritance by banks. Now she works with supervillains to overthrow the capitalist system, but she also restrains them from causing too much harm, and will make sure everyone on the scene is taken care of.

Team relations: Likes everybody! They're such dears.

When you're out in the field fighting supervillains, things can get chaotic. Luckily this guide is here to help you, the player or GM of "Masks: a New Generation", with the following tools:

- Quick NPC generation, including zero-prep villains!
- Zero-prep GMing, including combat tips
- Tips on helping new players get going with a starting PC
- Five new Mentors
- Five new Legacies
- Five new Farplanes to visit - or come from
- Over a dozen new villains, including a villain team, the Architects of Evil