



BARBARIANS  
OF LEMURIA

# ***LEAGUE OF HEROES***

Super Heroic Role Playing | Mike Richards

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Please note:

This is a playtest document.

It is incomplete.

By all means, provide feedback via the Lords of Lemuria forums:

<http://www.freeyabb.com/d6fantasy/portal.php>

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## League of Heroes

*The creatures were everywhere. Children ran screaming, as the swarm descended on them. Adults collapsed beneath a thousand blows, their voices lost in the din. The lone guard was dragged up towards the skylight, and a dozen spears were lined up beneath her. The treasures of history, of culture, were fought over, smashed, and discarded.*

*And then the door opened.*

*From: "A knight at the museum"*

## Introduction

This is a *super-hero* role playing game. Players get to take on the role of superheroes and superheroines: larger-than-life characters in modern-day myths.

Firstly, the characters are *super*. They can do incredible things, beyond the scope of mere normal human beings: run at great speed, lift enormous objects, fly into space. Players and the GM should agree the scope of the campaign, then strive to match it. Throw streetlamps as spears! Fly to Europa! Wield cosmic power! Save thousands of lives!

Secondly, the characters are *heroic*. The Superhero genre is often black-and-white, with established heroes and opponents. Sometimes the opponents are not portrayed as clearly evil, just seeking goals that the heroes oppose, but what sets most heroes out from their opponents is their willingness to risk themselves for what they believe in (a trait that is not limited to those with superpowers, nor to fictional people). Confront the raging monster! Run into the blazing inferno! Step in front of innocents to take the energy blast!

## Realism vs comics

Throughout this book you will see references to **Realistic** and **Comics** settings. For example, there is a section on physics; the **Realistic** part reflects physics as known to early 21<sup>st</sup> century Earth, while the **Comics** section refers to physics *as portrayed in comics, books and films*. A classic example is that in space, explosions should be silent – there's no atmosphere to carry the sound.

It's possible to play a superheroic game anywhere between **Comics** and **Realistic**. The more **Realistic** the setting, the fewer superpowers are actually possible and the more the game will start to resemble Dogs of War, but the more use players and GMs can make use of current technology and science.

## If you've played Barbarians of Lemuria or Dogs of War...

...then you'll be familiar with much of the mechanics of this game. The basic system is the same: roll two dice, add on an attribute and some other bonus, subtract off an appropriate penalty, and try to get a target number (or more). There are, however, a few differences.

Firstly, there are several possible power levels in *League of Heroes*. The lowest level, "Street Vigilante", should feel similar to a *Dogs of War* game: the characters spending points on *powers* to get equipment comparable to a DoW character (perhaps *weapon 2* and *armour 2*). At this level, characters are somewhat better than normal people (who have all zero attributes and combat abilities, do d3 damage, and only have 3 lifeblood) but should not dismiss them entirely. At higher levels (up to "Cosmic Exemplar") the characters get more powerful, and should feel appropriately "super".

Secondly, instead of a *homeland*, characters have a *background* and an *origin*, which set the scene for their skills and the way they got their powers. They have some *powers*, which function much like *careers* in BoL. They have *attributes* and *combat abilities*, just as in BoL. Lastly, as in BoL they have *boons* and, perhaps, some *flaws*. The backgrounds to LoH should be interpreted in a broad fashion.

Thirdly, as in BoL characters are given pools of points to spent on *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities*. However, you can move some points between the different pools (up to half the size of a pool). This allows some characters to concentrate on physical prowess, some on great skill, and others on incredible powers. Powers cannot be taken at rank 0.

Lastly, the normal limits on *powers*, *attributes* and *combat abilities* depend on the level of the game; for example, in a "Local Hero" campaign the maximum starting value is 5, with 7 the absolute maximum. Regardless of the power level, the maximum for normal humans is 4, and anything higher than this is a superpower; certain characters can take a flaw to represent being *only human*, in which case they cannot have any *power*, *attribute* or *combat skill* at a rank higher than 4. This is likely to be fairly common in "Street Vigilante" level games, and almost unknown in "Cosmic Exemplar" level games.

## If you haven't played Barbarians of Lemuria or Dogs of War...

League of Heroes is a fast, rules-light system to let players take on the roles of superhumans. The core mechanic is always essentially the same: roll 2 dice add on one attribute and a combat skill or power, subtract any penalties, and try to get a target number or more. Under some circumstances you roll **three dice** instead of **two dice**, and take either the best or the worst two. (Which dice you use depends on the scale of the campaign). This mechanic covers everything from using superpowers and background skills to combat. A character has a *background*, an *origin*, some *attributes*, *combat abilities* and *powers*, and some *boons* and (probably) one or more *flaws*. You start each scenario with a supply of *hero points*.

A *background* is a profession and/or hobby that grants your character contacts and a broad range of (non-combat) skills. Example backgrounds include *athlete* and *journalist*.

An *origin* is the explanation for why your character has superpowers. This grants access to certain *boons* and *flaws*. Example origins include *visitor from another planet* and *power suit*.

Your *attributes* are *strength*, *agility*, *mind* and *appeal*. These can represent normal and/or supernatural prowess.

The *combat abilities* cover your character's chance to attack or defend herself.

A *power* is something your character can do that sets her out from normal humans. Examples include *elastic body* and *control (fire)*.

A *boon* is a minor benefit. Some affect specific powers (such as *burnout*) but most mean that under specific circumstances you roll **three dice** instead of **two dice** and keep the **best** two. An example is *elemental mastery* or *expert pilot*.

A *flaw* is a minor penalty. Some affect specific powers (such as *gliding*) but most mean that under specific circumstances you roll **three dice** instead of **two dice** and keep the **worst** two. An example is *unearthly background*.

*Attributes*, *combat abilities* and *powers* all have a rank: a number between -1 and 11. A value of 0 corresponds to a normal untrained human. Values up to 4 are achievable by normal (but exceptionally talented) humans; larger values are genuinely superhuman with values above 10 corresponding to the most powerful entities in a galaxy. Different power levels (agreed with your GM) grant different numbers of points to spread between these, and different limits apply. For example, in a "Street Vigilante" level game a character gets 4 points to spend in each category and there is a limit of 6 in any one value, but in a "Cosmic Exemplar" game a character gets 9 points per category, with a limit of 11 in any one value. *Powers* always have a rank of at least 1.

*Hero points* allow you to turn a normal success into a *heroic* success, or otherwise manipulate the plot.

## Conventions of the genre

There are many different styles of super-hero stories, ranging from low-powered skirmishes against gangs of normal humans up to epic battles for fate of the universe itself. Sometimes the same characters feature in both stories. In this section, we discuss some of the conventions that often, though not always, feature.

### Secret identities

In a **Comics** setting, many characters keep their identity a secret, to protect family and loved ones from a steady stream of kidnap attempts or revenge attacks. The merest face-mask, or even just a pair of glasses, acts as a disguise proof against all attempts to identify them. Newspapers may be hostile, mad geniuses may regard you as their number one target, but you can always go home and take the mask off for a while.

In a more **Realistic** setting, things aren't so easy. Modern forensic science would be able to deduce a reasonable amount about a character from the debris of a typical fight-scene – perhaps enough for a DNA analysis. If the character has a *bad reputation*, then the police will be doing their best to identify the character and bring them in for (at least) questioning. If the character has a *good reputation* the police might leave them alone – but some investigative journalists would love to splash a popular heroine's picture and home life – and family – all over the front page of a quiet day. Any smart villains with the resources to do so will certainly be trying to identify characters as well.

It's still possible to maintain a secret identity in a **Realistic** campaign, but it isn't easy; it's easier if you have some sort of self-contained power-suit or a physical transformation between your normal self and your super-ID. Of course, it's also harder for the villains to maintain a secret identity.

### Professional heroes

### Public reactions and the law

### Science (physics)

Most examples of the superhero genre pay only token attention to the laws of physics (except when it helps advance the story). It's perfectly alright to do the same in a **Comics** setting. In a more **Realistic** setting, some or all of the following should apply:

- As of 2012, there are four known forces. An electro-magnetic force-field is possible, but it is invisible and would only deflect charged particles and plasmas. It would not provide any defences against anything else, and nor is it possible to "solidify" light or any other form of energy.
- For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. If you want to jump incredible distances, you will leave huge holes in the ground at best – and collapse things into a cave at worst. Using telekinesis to lift something means something else must be pressed down – probably the character. Flying in space requires rockets.
- Space is big: really, really big. Interstellar travel is possible but travelling faster than light is at best *extremely* difficult. Any aliens that reach Earth took the slow route.

- Sound cannot travel in a vacuum. Battles in space are silent and lasers are invisible unless they are pointing directly at you or there is dust and debris in the air.
- Creating matter from energy requires an incredible amount of energy, best obtained by converting an equal amount of matter into energy.
- Travelling backwards in time is not absolutely forbidden by the laws of physics as we understand them, but poses similar difficulties to faster-than-light travel, as well as violating causality. Travelling forwards in time (at a faster rate than 1 second per second) is simpler, but one-way.

## Science (biology)

As with physics, so with biology: in a **Comics** setting about the only principle of biology that survives is convergent evolution: aliens are remarkably humanoid in form, and appear to have evolved to fit similar niches. In a **Realistic** setting, consider some of the following:

- Natural mutation is possible, and could grant superpowers, but these would typically come from duplication of a standard body-part: an extra heart, for example. Genetic engineering is more plausible, but this must be done to the original cell from which the character grows.
- Radiation and genetic *accidents* do not, as a general rule, have a beneficial effect on their victims.
- Any character must have a source of energy. Particularly strong or fast characters would need to eat large amounts of food to fuel their bodies. Characters that generated lightning or bolts of fire would also need a source of power.
- Plausible aliens would probably develop under very different conditions to humans, and so would be very different. Consider the wide variety of life on Earth as an example. It would not be possible to produce a half-human, half-alien creature, or for an alien symbiote to possess a human host: they are just too different.
- Strength increases with the *square* of the height of a creature, but mass increases with the *cube*. This is why insects are, proportionally, incredibly strong and agile, but larger creatures are less manoeuvrable.
- Although some insects do radically change their form, they do so slowly and only transform one way. A character with *growth* or *shrinking* would not be able to change their size. One with *elastic body* would be limited to movement like a snake or with tentacles, rather than completely general transformations. Characters would not be able to change their mass.

## Magic

In many **Comics** settings, magic is one of the mainstays: it gives the writers freedom to come up with any manner of bizarre creatures and situations with a simple justification. Magic can do virtually anything, and the practitioners are colourful, significant – and strange.

In a more **Realistic** setting, obvious magic will play a far less significant role. At best, magic will be *subtle*: no mystic blasts (*control*) or shields (*armour*), just some *minor arcana* spells and, perhaps, some *psychic* powers. A magician might be primarily a stage illusionist with some minor powers. Magic itself would be logical, and therefore (in principle) comprehensible.

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In a Realistic setting, anything that offered an advantage (such as magic or psionics) would almost certainly be practiced by wealthy, powerful people, with a vested interest in keeping their advantage to themselves.

### **Punching the reset button**

With few exceptions, at the end of a scenario in a **Comics** setting, everything is back where it was. The characters are fully healed, have all their equipment back, and all the damage has been repaired. Any alien technology has been removed and all is as it was. Indeed, there is a “gentleman’s agreement” between threats to take it in turns to launch attacks, rather than all making their bids at once – at least apart from the occasional epic team-up, filled with betrayal. Sometimes there is a change (a new love interest, a change in powers, and so on) but these are relatively rare. Reconstruction (and by extension construction) happen at amazing rates.

In a more Realistic setting, however, things may not be quite the same. If a building is devastated in one scenario, it will take time (and money) before it can be repaired: the more prestigious the building, the more effort will be needed. Epic battles could take weeks to clear up. Invasions from space (or other planes) would leave technology (or magic) artefacts lying around and there would be a frantic race between heroes, villains, universities, corporations, and governments to acquire and study them. A hero with a power suit who took a serious pounding would take at least several weeks to get out of hospital – and their power suit would probably need rebuilding after every battle.



## Character generation

*There were endless arguments about the ethics, of course, but it was too late. The first genetically engineered children were charismatic and smart. Within a decade, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights officially endorsed Home Geneticus, and hundreds had been revealed to the world. Nobody asked about the ones that hadn't been revealed. Not then.*

*From "The true history of the twenty-first century"*

Characters have some *attributes*, *combat abilities*, *powers*, a *background*, and an *origin*. These function as BoL *attributes*, *combat abilities*, *careers*, and *homeland* respectively (except that both *background* and *origin* behave like *homeland*). You have three pools of points, one for each of *attributes*, *combat abilities* and *powers*.

The four *attributes* are the usual *strength*, *agility*, *mind* and *appeal*.

- *Strength* represents physical might and health, and affects brawling and melee damage and lifeblood.
- *Agility* represents physical control, and affects the chance to hit in combat or to affect a particular target.
- *Mind* represents intelligence and wisdom, and affects the chance to solve puzzles, spot things, and wield psychic powers.
- *Appeal* represents charisma, and affects social interactions.

The combat abilities are *brawling*, *melee*, *ranged* and *defence*.

- *Brawling* is used for unarmed hand-to-hand attacks
- *Melee* is used for hand-to-hand attacks with weapons.
- *Ranged* is used for physical and energy attacks at range.
- *Defence* is used to avoid melee and ranged attacks

*Powers* are things that your character can do. Many of these are superpowers of one form or another. Your character's *origin* explains how he or she gained these powers, while your *background* is a set of professional skills and hobbies. You can buy additional *backgrounds* with advancement points.

To create a character:

1. Choose your *background* and your *origin*.
2. Move points between the pools if desired.
3. Allocate your points to *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities*.
4. Choose your *boons* and (optionally) *flaws*.

*Backgrounds* and *origins* are listed later in this book. You start with a single *background*, but can develop additional ones by spending advancement points. They are not ranked, but there is a boon *expert (background)* available for each.

The number of points to spend on *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities* depends on the desired scale or power level of the campaign:

Scale of campaign	Street Vigilante	Local Hero	National Guardian	Planetary Champion	Stellar Defender	Cosmic Exemplar
Dice Type	D6	D6	D8	D8	D10	D10
Points per pool	4	5	6	7	8	9
Maximum starting power, attribute or combat ability	4	5	6	7	8	9
Maximum power, attribute or combat ability	6	7	8	9	10	11
Lifeblood	10+STR	11+STR	12+STR	13+STR	14+STR	15+STR
Hero (Villain) points	6	5	4	3	2	1

You can move up to half the size of a pool (round up) to another pool: so a *Planetary Champion* could spend 5 points on *attributes*, 5 on *combat abilities*, and have 11 to spend on *powers*.

The maximum starting value, and maximum achievable value, for any *attribute*, *power* and *combat skill* is given in the above table. Normal humans should start with at most 3 and can have at most 4 in anything. Such characters may qualify for the flaw *only human*. Unlike BoL, you gain no benefit from a *power* at rank 0; the minimum is rank 1. You may take at most *one* attribute or combat skill at rank -1 in order to boost another.

Some generic *boons* and *flaws* are listed before the *origins*, and each *origin* also has some specific ones. You start with one *boon*; for each *flaw* that you take, you may take one additional *boon* or one additional *background*.

Characters start with at least 10 *lifeblood* plus their *strength* attribute, as given in the table above. So a “National Guardian” character with *strength* 6 would have 12+6=16 *lifeblood*.

Characters start each scenario with 5 or more *hero points*, which can be used to achieve incredible feats. These are replenished at the start of each scenario (unspent ones are lost).

When designing a superhero or superheroine, it is worth considering how your character will cope with a number of different situations:

- A large group of normals, with all 0 attributes and combat abilities, doing 1d3 damage
- A non-combat situation requiring a puzzle to be solved (backgrounds help here)
- A non-combat situation requiring use of powers (*control* or *utility* often help here)
- A lone battle against a supervillain
- A team battle against a team of supervillains

For example, a character with *defence* 3 is very difficult for a normal to hit. A character with *armour* 3 can just ignore the attacks as they cannot penetrate her defences. One with *invisibility* can take them down one by one... and so on.

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It is easy to put all your starting points into combat-related powers: *agility, melee, weapon, defence, armour...* Such a character would be very effective in a fight, but of little use otherwise. Consider putting some points in powers such as *utility, supersenses, or telekinesis*.

Because one character cannot do everything, it is worth thinking about what roles your team can cover. Does your team include:

- A leader?
- A detective, scientist, or engineer?
- Some front-line fighters?
- Flyers and/or ranged attacks?

## Core mechanic

*Just when we thought we had everything figured out, standard model, quantum gravity and all, someone demonstrates an honest-to-goodness magic talisman. They won a fortune off the sceptics with it, too. Now every university has to have a new department, and they all want the same budget as the physicists. What are they going to spend it on? Breeding newts and toads?*

*From "The case for science in an age of wonder."*

### Basic roll

Like all the games in the *Barbarians of Lemuria* family, *League of Heroes* does not use opposed rolls. The basic mechanic is:

1. Roll 2d6
2. Add on an appropriate attribute
3. Add on a combat skill or power
4. Subtract off appropriate penalties
5. Try to get the appropriate target number (or more)

In combat, the character may also choose to add on their *combat expertise* power, if any. Outside of combat, the character may use the rank in any one of their powers that the GM agrees is applicable to the situation instead of a combat skill.

A roll of two sixes is always a success, regardless of the penalties. If this roll would have been a success anyway, it is a *Heroic success*, which has one of the following effects:

- In combat against normals, roll damage as normal, but this is the number of normals affected: not necessarily killed, but no longer a problem. The player may describe their fate.
- In combat against supers, roll an extra **1d6** of damage.
- Outside of combat, a *mighty success* is significantly better than a normal success. If multiple successes are required in a skill challenge, it counts as two.

A normal success can be converted into a heroic success by spending a *Hero point*.

A roll of two sixes, a natural 12, can be converted from a *heroic success* into a *Legendary success* by spending a *Hero point*. This has one of the following effects:

- In combat against normals, roll damage as normal but with an extra **1d6**. This is the number of normals affected – not necessarily killed, but no longer a problem.
- In combat against supers, roll an extra **2d6** of damage. This can easily kill or badly injure all but the toughest of opponenets.
- Outside of combat, a *legendary success* is significantly better than even a mighty success. Even if multiple successes are required in a skill challenge, it is usually sufficient.

A roll of two ones, a natural 2, is always a failure, even if the roll would normally be sufficient to succeed. If the roll is not sufficient to succeed is a *calamitous failure*. The results of this are left to the fiendish imagination of the GM.

Sometimes you get to roll an extra dice, either from a *boon* or a *flaw*:

- If you have an applicable *boon*, then you roll **3d6** and keep the *best* two.
- If you have an applicable *flaw*, then you roll **3d6** and keep the *worst* two.
- If you have *both* an applicable boon and flaw, they cancel out.

Boons and flaws can represent mastery of a power, or difficulties with a particular situation.

Penalties come from the innate difficulty of the task, or the target. In combat, the penalties are the defender's *defence* skill and powers such as *shrinking*, as well as the range for ranged attacks.

<i>Action difficulty</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Penalty</i>
Moderate	Close	0
Tricky	Medium	-1
Hard	Long	-2
Tough	Distant	-4
Demanding	Extreme	-6
Heroic	Horizon	-8
Epic	Impossible	-10

Note that characters with *supersense: telescopic sight* would take no penalties on trying to spot someone at range, but would take a penalty on other actions at range, such as attacks.

Muscle-powered *weapons* and attacks from the *control* and *telekinetic* powers are limited to *long* range and closer.

It is possible to have multiple boons and flaws applying to a roll, but you never roll more than 3 dice. Flaws cancel out an equal number of boons; if you have more boons than flaws then roll one extra dice and take the best two; if you have more flaws than boons then roll one extra dice and take the worst two.

### **Opposed effects**

Many uses of *powers* either succeed or fail, regardless of what other people are doing. However, in some cases (such as grabbing an opponent, or using illusions to fool someone), two characters are competing against each other. This is handled in two stages: first, the attacker creates the effect; if successful, it continues *unless and until* the target can remove it with a successful use of one of their attributes and/or powers. *Normals* are generally not capable of this without assistance.

The difficulty of the task is applied as a penalty to the attacker's roll. (In combat, this is often the target's *defence* skill; outside of combat, the GM should assign a difficulty).

For powers used at range (such as *control (ice)* to freeze an opponent) the strength of the effect is the rank in the appropriate *power*. For powers used in melee (such as a grab), the strength includes the relevant *attribute* as well as the appropriate *power*.

In either case, this strength is applied as a penalty to the victim's rolls to escape. The target may attempt one escape roll per round.

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If the initial roll is a *mighty success* then it takes another *mighty success* to remove, and similarly a *legendary success* can only be removed by another *legendary success*.

For example, *Mr Elastic* (with *agility* 3 and *elastic body* 2) attempts to grab the *Martian Artist* (with *defence* 2). *Mr Elastic* rolls **2d6 + 3 [agility] + 2 [elastic body] – 2 [defence]**, needing 9 or more. He succeeds, and wraps up the *Artist*, who now tries to escape. *The Martian Artist* has no relevant powers, so relies on his *agility* 2 to try and escape, but has a penalty of 3+2=5 on the roll. He rolls **2d6 + 2 [agility] – 5 [strength of effect]**.

Elsewhere, *Kestrel* is expecting trouble, so she tries to arrange a decoy: an illusion of her heading forwards, to see what defences she triggers. *Kestrel* has *mind* 2 and *utility (magic)* 2, and the GM rules that she is attempting a *Hard* task, which puts a penalty of -2. *Kestrel* rolls **2d6 + 2 [mind] + 2 [utility] – 2 [hard]**. The strength of this ranged effect is her rank in *utility (magic)*.

Later, *Banshee* (with *mind* 0 and *supersense* 1) and a normal minion are watching the cameras. The minion is convinced by the illusion, but *Banshee* can make a roll of **2d6 + 0 [mind] + 1 [supersense] – 2 [strength of effect]** to try and see through it.

Competing effects can be used for: grabs, illusions, mind control, intimidation, freezing someone in ice, attempting to knock someone over with seismic waves, sneaking past someone while *invisible*, and many other effects. Players are encouraged to describe how they are attempting to use their powers; GMs may give a small bonus (or penalty) based on the description

## How strong am I? How far can I jump?

Although all the *attributes* are necessarily somewhat abstract, it is useful to know how much a character can potentially lift. If there is no pressure and you have plenty of time, you can automatically succeed. Under pressure or in an emergency, however, you need to make a *strength* roll, with a penalty given by the amount you are trying to lift. Large characters (ones with *growth*) have an advantage here, as *growth* adds to your *strength* to determine what you can lift.

With a *mighty success* you can temporarily exceed your maximum lift by one step.

<i>Strength</i>	<i>Running jump</i>	<i>Maximum lift</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Penalty</i>
0	2 m	100 lb	Child	0
1	3½ m	175 lb	Adult	0
2	5 m	250 lb	Large adult, small motorcycle	0
3	6½ m	325 lb	Tiger, medium motorcycle	0
4	8 m	400 lb	Gorilla, large motorcycle	0
5	16 m	1 ton	Heavy horse, small car	-1
6	32 m	4 tons	Elephant, small van, large car	-2
7	64 m	16 tons	Triceratops, armoured car, bus, satellite	-3
8	128 m	64 tons	Diplodocus, heavy tank, rail car, large truck	-4
9	¼ km	256 tons	Whale, passenger jet, locomotive, gunboat	-5
10	½ km	1024 tons	Airbus A380, destroyer-class naval ship	-6
11	1 km	4 kilo tons	Space shuttle (fuelled)	-7
12	2 km	16 ktons		-8
13	4 km	64 ktons	Medium-sized cruise liner	-9
14	8 km	256 ktons	Iceberg, small skyscraper, small meteor	-10
15	16 km	1 mega ton	Large skyscraper, large meteor	-11
16	32 km	4 mtons		-12
17	64 km	16 mtons	Tiny asteroid	-13
18	128 km	64 mtons		-14
19	256 km	256 mtons		-15
20	512 km	1 giga ton	Comet, moderate asteroid	-16

So *The Hunk*, with *strength* 7 and *growth* 1, could pick up a heavy tank with a strength roll of **2d6 + 7 [strength] + 1 [growth] – 4 [penalty]**, needing 9 or more. With a mighty success he could just manage a locomotive.

The table also shows how far you can cover in a running long jump. The *growth* and *shrinking* powers don't affect this; instead, you add your rank in *Superjump* to your *strength* to determine the distance you can cover. If you are not under any pressure, you automatically succeed. See the *Movement* section for more details about tricky jumps.

For example, *The Hunk*, with *strength* 7, can cover 64m in a running horizontal jump (his *growth* does not help here), or 32m in a running vertical jump.

The *agility* check for jumping and the *strength* check for lifting both count as an athletic endeavour, so the *expert (athlete)* boon applies.

In a Realistic setting, picking up large objects at a single point will simply result in the object breaking: ships are designed to spread their weight across the entire hull, not any one single point.

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Attempting to catch an asteroid would simply result in the character digging a tunnel through it. You need to find a way to spread your strength across the entire mass – *telekinesis* or very large hands (*growth* or *elastic body* or the boon *area attack*) help here.

In a **Comics** setting, engineers clearly plan for this and put in extra reinforcement. A ship, skyscraper or asteroid can all be picked up at any single point without causing any damage. It is unclear who reinforces asteroids.

Likewise, in a **Realistic** setting, characters jumping large distances will do considerable collateral damage to the surface where they take off and land (unless they are particularly light).

*Strangest thing I ever saw. We could see the train was heading for the bridge, and we could see the gap the earthquake left. Not a thing we could do. Some folk started praying... Then there was this sound, like thunder. Shockwave knocked us all to the ground. Next thing we see, the train is going straight over the gap, like it was running on thin air. Or not quite thin air – there was this faint set of track beneath it, like a ghost. You can't tell me that was a "mass hallucination", there were thirty folk on the train...*

*From "A sound of thunder: earthquake and aftermath"*



## Hero points

*Hero points* are one of the things that separate the PCs from the supporting cast: a way for PCs to achieve even greater things. Characters always start a scenario with 5 (or more) hero points (depending on the desired scale of the campaign), which are replenished at the start of the next scenario (any unspent are lost). They can be used to do the following:

- A Twist of Fate
- The Luck of a Hero
- Mighty Success
- Legendary Success
- Quick Recovery
- Defy Death

Some boons, notably *burnout*, also require the use of a Hero point.

### A twist of fate

If something has not been definitely established either way, a player can spend one or more Hero points to move the plot in a particular direction. For example:

*Jackrabbit has Pilot as his background. The players urgently need to track something down, so his player says that he will contact a local NATO base to ask for any available satellite imagery, using a Hero Point to ensure that there was a satellite in just the right position.*

### The luck of a hero

Whenever you make a task resolution roll, you can spend a Hero point to roll again – even if it was a calamitous failure. If you are rolling three dice due to a boon or flaw, you must re-roll all three dice.

### Mighty success

You can use a Hero point to turn a normal success into a Mighty success.

### Legendary success

You can turn a natural 12 (two sixes) into a Legendary success. You cannot turn a normal success into a Legendary success with two Hero points.

### Quick recovery

If you take damage in combat, on your next action (only) you may spend a Hero point to undo some of the damage as you shake off the effects of the attack. Regain **d6** lifeblood (up to the amount dealt in the previous round).

### Defy death

If you are reduced to less than 0 lifeblood, even if you would have been killed, you can spend a Hero point to stabilise and avoid taking further damage. You are still out of the battle, though.

## Combat

*Look, I don't want any trouble, see? I'm just trying to get these kids out of here. This isn't anything to do with them. It doesn't have to be anything to do with you, either – if you get out of my way. Now.*

*From “Messing with the big guy”*

In combat, characters can seek to avoid damage, do damage, or restrain an opponent.

### Before combat starts

Battles are divided into short periods of time called *rounds*, representing a few seconds. In a round you can move and either make an attack or use one of your *powers*.

Characters who have not been surprised should roll initiative: **2d6 + agility**. Characters with the highest initiative get to act first in a round, working down to those with the lowest initiative. Resolve ties in favour of the PCs.

If a character was not expecting trouble, she may be surprised. The GM may give her a perception roll to avoid this, at an appropriate penalty depending on the situation. If she fails, she can do nothing in the first round of combat, not even using defensive powers like *shield* or *combat expertise*. She also halves her *defence* (round down) while surprised. However, she retains her normal full *armour*, and the bonuses and penalties from the size-changing powers *shrinking* and *growth* apply fully.

Characters with the supersense *sixth sense* are never surprised, regardless of the situation.

### Avoiding damage

A character can choose to give up an attack and instead *dodge*, to reduce their chance of being hit by direct attacks. In this case you get to add your *agility* to your *defence* until your turn in the next round. Watch out for area attacks.

Characters with the *shield* power can attempt to block one incoming attack per round, either aimed at them or at a nearby target. They make a power check using their *agility* attribute and rank in *shield* as a bonus, and the appropriate combat skill of the attacker (*brawling*, *melee* or *ranged*) as a penalty. If they succeed, the attack is harmlessly blocked or deflected away. Certain attacks, notably those with the *area attack* boon or coming from the *utility* power, affect an area and are extremely hard to block. A character can give up an attack to make an additional block in the round.

The last line of defence is the *armour* power, which reduces the damage. See *taking damage*, below.

## Dealing damage

Damage can be dealt by *brawling* (fists and feet), *melee* (swords and clubs), or *ranged* (bows and blasters). In each case, roll **2d6** and add your *agility* and the appropriate combat skill (*brawl*, *melee* or *ranged*). Subtract the target's *defence* and any applicable powers (such as *superspeed* or *shrinking*). If you get 9 or more, you hit!

Base damage when brawling is **1d3**. The *mighty fists* boon increases this to **1d6**.

Base damage with normal melee weapons (knives and clubs) is **1d3**. The *melee expert* boon increases this to **1d6**.

Base damage with normal guns is **1d3**. The *crack shot* boon increases this to **1d6**.

Characters may choose to take the *control* or *weapon* power, or certain other powers that can be used to inflict damage. All such attacks do a base damage of **1d6 + [rank in power]**.

Most *normals* only do **1d3** damage, whether they are using fists, knives or guns.

For brawling and melee attacks, you add your *strength* to the base damage.

For muscle-powered ranged attacks (such as bows), add half your *strength* attribute (round down) to the base damage.

For other ranged attacks (such as blasters or sorcerous attacks), you only do the base damage.

If you choose to use an action to dodge, you add your *agility* to your *defence* for one round. You may only use one action per round for this.

If you are fighting a group of normals, you can spread the damage between targets, so a blow doing 9 damage would take 3 normals out of the fight.

## Taking damage

Once the attacker has determined the damage, the defender gets to apply their own defences.

A character with the *armour* power subtracts off their rank in this power. Many other powers (such as *control*) grant some protection against particular types of attacks. A few (such as *invisibility* and *intangibility*) may grant total immunity to certain attacks. The GM has the final say if any power is usable in this way.

If there is any damage left after subtracting the applicable defences, it comes off your *lifeblood*. Once this reaches 0 or less, you are out of the fight. If it reaches -10, you are dead.

However, in a **Comics** setting, this need not be the end – you can if you wish work with your GM to see if there is scope to bring your character back in a later scenario. Few characters seem to stay down forever. Options include magic, super-science, intervention from powerful entities, or the victim actually being a clone or other doppelganger of the “true” character. There is usually a price.

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If you are still standing at the end of a battle, you regain half the lost *lifeblood* with a few minutes of rest. Characters with the *regeneration* power are quickly restored to full normal *lifeblood* if still standing at the end.

If you were incapacitated in the battle, you will need at least a few days of rest to recover. Help from someone with the *medical* background (or a Hero point spent to achieve a *Twist of Fate*) can help here.

### **Knocking things over**

Some attacks, such as *weapon (laser)*, do not send their targets reeling; others, such as brawling attacks, may do so at the GM's discretion based on the special effect and situation.

### **Consistency and realism**

In a **Realistic** setting, attacks should be consistent: a ranged attack cannot push things back some of the time and not others. Additionally, there is the law of conservation of momentum: if you push against something, it pushes back. So firing an energy blast that knocks someone over, if you are not appropriately braced, runs the risk of knocking you over as well. (Just as throwing something up in the air, then grabbing the handle, is not going to enable you to fly).

In a **Comics** setting, however, this is frequently ignored, and there is no particular reason to be consistent.

## Movement

The basic movement powers are *superspeed*, *swimming* and *flight*. (Note that *superjump* and *teleport* both work a little differently). All characters can move along the ground at about 25 mph for free (about the speed of a top sprinter). This could be running, riding ice slides, or surfing waves of stone. In a single action you can run (or fly or swim) and make an attack (or use a power).

A character with *Superspeed 1*, *Flying 1* or *Swimming 1* can move in the appropriate environment at 50 mph. Every additional rank doubles this speed. Moving at high speed makes it harder to be hit, so characters in combat who devote their actions entirely to movement add their rank to their *defence* attribute.

For example, *Jackrabbit* has *superspeed 4*. At full speed he can sprint at 400 mph and adds 4 to his *defence*. Meanwhile, *Flare* has *flight 2*. She can fly at 100 mph and adds 2 to her *defence*.

Outside of combat and away from obstacles and breakables, characters with the boon *ultra speed* can move even faster. The scale of this is at the GM's discretion; a character with *flight 2* at the *local* power level might be able to fly at mach two, while at the *cosmic* power level they could manage two light years per hour. However, moving at *ultra speed* is so fast that you can at best end up "close" to your target, and it is impossible to move at this speed in combat or intentionally crash into something.

### Teleport

Successful teleportation requires a power roll, with a penalty based on the character's familiarity with the target: it's easier to teleport to somewhere you can see or know well. If you succeed, your character appears in the desired location; if you fail, the action is wasted but you do not move. On a calamitous failure you are teleported to a location of the GM's choice. Any attempt to teleport into a solid object always fails. The GM should assess the character's familiarity and assign a suitable penalty; teleporting without knowing where you are starting from is harder. As a rule of thumb, visible locations are *easy*, while a selected room in a building on the other side of the planet is *epic*.

For example, *Psycho* has *teleport 3* and *mind 3*, and wants to teleport through a wall into a room he cannot see. The GM rules this is *hard* (-2). He rolls **2d6 + 3 [mind] + 3 [teleport] – 2 [hard]**.

GM's may wish to limit the range of teleport depending on the desired scale of the campaign.

### Superjump

How far you can jump is determined by your *strength* attribute and the *superjump* power. (Although *growth* normally increases your strength, it does not change the distance you can jump: the extra strength cancels the extra weight). The strength table shows how far you can cover in a running horizontal jump; a vertical jump is half as far. If you are in no particular rush and not under any pressure, you automatically succeed and land in the right general location.

If you are aiming for a precise spot, you need to make a power check using your *agility* and *superjump*. The GM should assign a penalty based on the distance and size of the target. A failure puts you near but not on target; on a calamitous failure, the GM should pick the most inconvenient location nearby (such as a flagpole in midair...)

Characters with *superspeed* can get a running start to increase the horizontal distance they cover, but this does not help with power checks to land on target.

For example, *The Hunk*, with *strength* 7, can do a horizontal jump of 64m and a vertical jump of 32m (about 8 stories). To land safely on top of a warehouse (a *tricky* task) he must make a roll of **2d6 + 7 [strength] – 1 [tricky]**. Grabbing a flagpole high up a skyscraper would be a *demanding* (-6) task.

Meanwhile *Jackrabbit*, with *strength* 0, *agility* 5, *superjump* 1 and *superspeed* 4, is trying to jump over a chasm. Fortunately he has enough space to get up to full speed, so he can clear 16m. To land on a narrow path and avoid the bushes on the far side (a *hard* task), he'd need to make a roll of **2d6 + 5 [agility] + 1 [superjump] – 2 [hard]** – his *superspeed* doesn't help here.

*Superjump* can also be used to reduce damage after falling from a great height. A character who can make a suitable power check can reduce the damage by half their total ranks in *strength* and *superjump* (round down).

## Crashing into things

If you are moving at high speed, you run the risk of crashing into something. To avoid an obstacle, the GM may require you to make a power check using your *agility* and the appropriate movement *power*. The penalty should be set by the GM to reflect the number and nature of any obstacles. If you crash into something (intentionally or otherwise), both you and your target take damage based on the speed you are travelling at: **1d6 + [rank in the movement power]**. You may, if you wish, add your *strength* attribute (if positive). It's possible to burst right through something and carry on going, in which case you only take half damage.

For example, *Jackrabbit* has *superspeed* 4 and *agility* 5. He is running at full speed towards a closing door and so must make a *superspeed* roll to avoid it. The door is closing fast, so the GM rules this is *tough* (-4). He rolls **2d6 + 5 [agility] + 4 [superspeed] – 4 [tough]**. If he fails, he will take **1d6+4** damage. If the door is made of glass, he can probably crash straight through it and only take half.

If you want to *deliberately* crash into something, you make a *brawling* attack as normal to hit, and do damage as above. Typically your target will yield enough for you to take only half damage, but this is at the GM's discretion.

Characters that are running or swimming are often more manoeuvrable than ones who are flying. The penalties for *flying* characters to avoid obstacles should typically be higher.

## Space travel, time travel and dimensional travel

These are best handled as plot devices in most campaigns. In *cosmic* level games, characters with flight and the *ultra speed* boon can fly at very high speeds, but at lower power levels the characters may need a special vehicle or gadget. Use the same rules for *superweapons* (in the equipment section) if the characters need to build (or get someone else to build for them) an experimental dimensional portal or stardrive, except that these (usually) last long enough to bring them home again.

For example, a series of thefts have been carried out by strange talking animals that vanish from locked rooms. Careful analysis of the mystic residue after one of these escapes reveals that they are returning home to a distant dimension known as Arboria. Dr Wyrd has the *magician* background, *expert magician* boon, and *mind* 3 attribute. Opening a dimensional portal to this specific realm is *tough* (-4), and will take a full day of ritual. At the end of his preparations, Dr Wyrd rolls **3d6 [expert magician boon, keep best two] + 3 [mind] – 4 [tough]**. If he succeeds, the portal will remain open until sunrise.

## Powers

*Powers... yes, some folk do have some pretty cool tricks. I'll stick with guns, though.  
At least I can be sure what they're going to do...*

*From "Interview with Max Irons"*

This section lists the available *powers*. Some of them have associated *boons* or *flaws* which are listed with the *power*.

### Alternate form

You can assume a single alternate form. This form will be less powerful than your main form, but can have different powers. You construct the alternate form in the usual way, except:

- your pools for *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities* equal your rank in *alternate form*
- your alternate form cannot have another alternate form or a sidekick
- your alternate form has no free boons, but can take an equal number of boons and flaws
- your alternate form shares your pool of hero points; either can spend them
- your alternate form has the same *background* as you

An alternate form does not gain experience. Instead, improve the main form's *alternate form* rank in the usual way. For each extra rank in the power, you get an extra point to spend on each of the *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities* of the alternate form.

### Armour

Your character has some protection against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune – or at least, the attacks of other creatures. You subtract your rank in *armour* from all damage taken (except for *psychic* attacks). Other defences, such as the defence against fire granted by *control (fire)*, add to this. For example, a character with *control (fire)* 2 and *armour* 4 would reduce damage from flame throwers by 6 and from fists by 4. In addition, your character can survive in hostile environments (such as under water or in deep space.)

Note that this power can just as easily be a force field, inherent toughness, or a rocky skin, rather than a traditional suit of armour.

As one of the primary defensive powers (along with the *defence* skill and *shield* power), most characters (particularly in higher-power games) are likely to have some form of this power.

### Call ally

You can use an action to summon one or more allies to aid you. These allies are built like sidekicks. Your rank in *call ally* is the highest rank ally you can call, but you can choose to summon several weaker allies if you wish: for each rank less, you get twice as many identical allies. You must succeed on a summoning roll using *call ally* and either *mind* or *appeal* (as appropriate for the special effect) for the call to be successful; the GM should set the difficulty based on the situation. These allies remain for the duration of the encounter or until destroyed; you can only call more to replace casualties. The type of allies should be broadly limited. To speed up play, design the allies beforehand.

Allies are typically weaker than the main character, but get to act independently.

For example, *Arsenal* maintains a collection of drones in the back of his van. At the start of combat, the AI in his battlesuit attempts to take control of some of them. He has *call ally* 2, so he could call one level 2 unit (with 2 points in each of *powers*, *attributes*, and *combat abilities*) or two identical level 1 units (with 1 point in each).

### Combat expert

You are extensively trained in combat. At the start of each round, you divide your rank in this power between one or more combat abilities and the damage of one of your attacks. You may assign all of the points to one skill or divide them between several.

For example, a character with *combat expert* 3 could add 3 to their *defence* while avoiding a hail of attacks, then in a later round add 3 to *melee* when she gets close enough, and finally add it to the damage of her *weapon* attacks when she fails to get through the *armour*.

You cannot use *combat expert* when surprised.

### Control (portfolio)

Vast power surges within you, barely under your control. Your character can control something, which could be a form of energy, or force, or matter, or some aspect of nature (for example *control magic*, *control earth*, *control fire*, *control light*, *control magnetism*, or *control storms*). In combat you can use this to make damaging ranged attacks, but you can also create other effects. You also have some protection against damage of that form, and a vague sense for it.

To make an attack, use your *agility* and the appropriate *combat skill* as normal. If your attack hits, you do **d6 + [rank in control]** damage. To immobilise someone (or otherwise target them with a non-damaging effect) you need to target them with a ranged attack as normal; your rank in *control* then acts as the strength of the effect and hence the penalty on their attempts to escape.

To use your *power* in some way that doesn't directly target anyone, you make a power check with the GM assigning an appropriate penalty.

If you are attacked by something you can *control*, you subtract your rank in *control* from the damage done (as well as your normal defences). In addition, you have a vague sense associated to your portfolio. For example, a character with *control earth* would instinctively know when and roughly where an earthquake was happening. This is only a vague general sense; for more accuracy and information, consider a *supersense*.

This power does not grant any movement powers faster than a normal human (25 mph), but players are encouraged to describe their character's method of movement in terms of their special effects. The power grants you raw power, but it is barely under your control. For fine detail work you need the *finesse* boon.

For example, *Flare* has *control (light)* 4 and *mind* 0. She can make direct attacks doing **d6+4** damage. To create an illusion of allies, a *hard* (-4) task, she rolls **2d6 + 0 [mind] + 2 [control (light)] - 4 [hard]**.



*Optional boon: Elemental mastery:* You have total control over some portfolio. You roll an extra die when using your **control (portfolio)** power.

*Optional boon: finesse:* You have learned to use one of your *powers* in subtle ways. You still need to make a power check, probably using your *mind* attribute.

*Optional flaw: Attacks only:* You can project attacks, but you do not have gain any protection, enhanced movement, or senses. This could represent a device such as a flamethrower.

### **Elastic body**

Your body can stretch and bend. You can reach out 5 meters for every rank in *elastic body*, and subtract your rank from all blunt damage (such as fists and clubs). You can wrap yourself around an opponent to prevent them from moving; your *elastic body* rank adds to your *strength* or *agility* when grappling.

You can use this power to squeeze through tight passages by making a power check with your *agility* and *elastic body*; the GM sets the penalty based on the difficulty of the passage.

### **Flight**

Your character can fly at incredible speeds. With *flight 1* you can fly at up to 50 mph and every extra rank in *flight* doubles this, so a character with *flight 3* can fly at 200 mph. You may also be able to “fly” underwater at  $\frac{1}{4}$  speed, depending on your special effects.

Moving at high speed in combat adds your rank to your *defence* for one round. See the movement section on how to avoid crashing into walls, but note that it is difficult to avoid obstacles when flying at high speed.

*Optional boon: ultra speed:* Outside of combat (and away from breakables) you can move at incredible speed (GM’s discretion based on the scale of the campaign).

*Optional flaw: gliding:* You can glide, rather than fly, and must lose some height every round. You can gain height by climbing, jumping or being thrown. Outside of combat it is possible to slowly gain height using thermals.

### **Growth**

Your character can make herself larger. Each rank quadruples your weight and increases your height by about  $3/2x$ ; thus, a 6’ character with *growth 2* could increase their size to  $3/2 \times 3/2 \times 6 = 14'$  tall. The largest size that will fit in most buildings is *growth 1*.

If you choose to increase your size, you increase your *strength* and *lifeblood* by your rank in *growth*, but you decrease your *agility* and *defence* by the same amount. You are also easier to spot: your rank in *growth* is applied as a *bonus* on other character’s perception rolls to locate you.

When you return to normal size, you immediately lose the *lifeblood* gained from an increase in size. You do not get any bonuses to hit when large, but this is a good justification for taking the boon *area attack*. The penalty on *agility* does not apply to making *area attacks*.

### **Intangibility**

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You can become intangible, and pass through the world like a ghost. While intangible, you can float and move around at your normal speed in any direction (including up or down). You can see the world normally, and are not invisible, but you cannot attack or otherwise affect it. However, you can pass straight through most obstacles, and normal attacks pass straight through you. You are immune to any *power* with a lower rank than your rank in *intangibility*, and to any brawling attack (or other attack with normal weapons) regardless of rank. In order to affect the world, you need to become solid, which takes an action. Becoming intangible also takes an action, and you cannot do both in a single round.

For example, *Banshee* has *Intangibility 2*. When intangible, she is immune to *The Martian Artist's weapon 1* and to the *Pulverisor's* normal guns and knives, as well as all of *Qiang's* strength. However, she is not immune to *Flare's* power to *control light 4*.

### Invisibility

Your character can become invisible to one or more senses. For each rank in this power, pick one of the following senses: *normal sight*, *infra-red vision*, *X-ray vision*, *normal hearing*, *sonar*, *scent*, *radio*, *radar*, *psychic scan*, (*specific*) *elemental sense*. You cannot be detected using this sense (or senses). Characters trying to spot you with other senses may need to make a perception roll: for example, if you are invisible to sight and they are trying to use normal hearing to spot you. Typically this is only possible at close range and is at least a *tough (-4)* perception roll (*mind* plus *supersense*).

Additionally you may become immune to certain attacks. For example a character *invisible* to normal sight would be immune to visible laser attacks. Whether your invisibility provides any protection against a particular attack is up to the GM.

*Optional flaw: psychic effect:* Your invisibility is based on persuading people you are not present. It has no effect on characters with the *different mind* boon, or on most technology or attacks.

### Psychic

Your mind is capable of amazing things. You can attempt to control others, read thoughts, project illusions, or simply do damage. Since most characters are unfamiliar with mental powers, there is no mental combat power.

To make a mental attack, make a power check using your *mind* attribute and rank in *psychic* as the bonus, and the defender's *mind* attribute as a penalty. If you succeed, you do **1d6 + [rank in psychic]** damage. Only the defender's *psychic* power acts to reduce this damage – in this one case armour is ignored.

To control another or read their thoughts, you need to make a power check using your *mind* attribute and rank in *psychic* as the bonus and the defender's *mind* attribute as a penalty. A normal success lets you issue one instruction or determine one fact per round. The defender can attempt to break free each round, just as with a grab, using their rank in *mind* and rank in *psychic* (if any) as a bonus and the attackers rank in *psychic* as a penalty. (As is standard with ranged attacks, the attribute helps with the attack roll but does not change the strength of the effect).

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You can normally only control one character at once, though you can use a Mighty success to take multiple normals out of the fight. Attempts to force someone to do acts they are opposed to grant them a bonus on the roll to break free.

A character can set up a mental link to one willing person per rank in *psychic*. The recipient must not have the boon *different mind*. This link can be used to communicate tactically in a secure manner.

You also have a vague mental sense. You can roughly determine the number and location of any nearby minds, though not well enough to target them with an attack. Characters with the boon *different mind* do not show up on this sense. To get a more precise mind sense, consider the *supersense* power below.

### Regeneration

You recover quickly from damage. In combat, you can give up an attack to regain *lifeblood* equal to your rank in this power. Outside of combat, you quickly return to full *lifeblood*. If you were reduced to 0 or fewer *lifeblood* you remain unconscious and out of action, though you are in no danger of dying.

If you have the flaw *vulnerable*, meaning that you have no defences against a particular kind of attack, you cannot regenerate damage from that kind of attack; it must be healed naturally over several days or weeks.

### Replication

Your character can split into 2 or more identical copies. For each rank in this power you can create one extra copy, so a character with *replication 2* can split into three. Each replicate is identical (except that a replicate cannot itself split off more replicates, nor does each one get its own sidekick or vehicle) and starts with the same amount of lifeblood as the original form; when forms merge, the lifeblood is averaged. If a replicate is killed, you cannot reform it until the start of the next scenario, but otherwise suffer no ill effects.

Because your replicates share a common mind, what one knows, they all know. However, a *psychic* effect on *any* one of them affects the remainder at half strength.

### Shield

Your character has a shield or other device which can be used defensively.

Each round you may attempt to block one attack aimed at you or a nearby target. You make a power check using your *agility* and rank in *shield* as a bonus, and the attacker's combat skill as a penalty. If you succeed, you harmlessly block the attack and it has no effect.

If you choose to forgo an attack you can attempt to block an additional attack. A character with the *double attack* boon could potentially make three blocks per round.

If you wish to use the same item as both a *shield* and a *weapon*, you need to pick both powers.

*Optional boon: ranged block:* You can block attacks at a distance. The distance applies as a penalty to the block roll.

## Shrinking

Your character can make herself smaller. Each rank quarters your weight and reduces your height by a factor of about 2/3x; thus, a 6' character with *shrinking* 2 would be  $2/3 \times 2/3 \times 6' = 2' 10''$  tall.

If you choose to decrease your size, you gain a bonus to your *agility* and *defence* equal to your rank in *shrinking*, but suffer an equal penalty to your *strength* and *lifeblood*. You are also harder to spot: your rank is applied as a penalty on other character's perception rolls to locate you.

When you return to normal size, you immediately regain the *lifeblood* lost from a decrease in size.

## Sidekick

You have a sidekick: a hero in training, weaker and less powerful but learning fast. You construct your assistant in the usual way, except:

- their pools for *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities* equal your rank in *sidekick*
- your sidekick cannot have another *sidekick*
- your sidekick has no free boons, but can take an equal number of boons and flaws
- your sidekick shares your pool of hero points; either can spend them
- your sidekick need not have the same *background* as you

A sidekick does not gain experience directly. Instead, improve the main form's *sidekick* rank in the usual way. For each extra rank in the power, the sidekick gets an extra point to spend on each of their *powers*, *attributes* and *combat abilities*.

If you lose your *sidekick*, you can (eventually) replace them. (If the sidekick was crippled, killed, turned into a vampire, launched into a different dimension or voted out by your fan club, it is considered good form to wait a short period before replacing them.) The GM gets to decide when you manage to recruit a suitable candidate (having a good *appeal* helps here), and how powerful they are to start with; they gradually gain experience until they reach the level specified by your rank in *sidekick*. Alternatively, you can spend the points on a new power.

Sidekicks should not be considered as an alternative to the *shield* power.

## Superjump

You are capable of leaping further and higher than a normal person. Add your rank in *superjump* to your *strength* attribute to determine how far you can cover in a running jump (see the Strength table in the "How strong am I?" section). Landing in the general vicinity of your target with no obstacles is an automatic success, but if you need to land in a particular location you need to make a power check using your *agility* and *superjump*, with the GM setting the difficulty based on the situation.

Characters with *superjump* can move at 25mph per rank in *strength* plus rank in *superjump* out of combat.

Characters with *superspeed* add that to their *strength* and *superjump* to determine the distance they can cover in a running horizontal jump, but not to the height or the power check to control their landing area.

For example, *Jackrabbit* has *strength 0*, *superspeed 4* and *superjump 1*. With a running broad jump he can cover 16m, but he can barely manage 2m vertically.

## Supersenses

Your senses are far beyond the normal. For each rank in this power, choose a suitable new sense (*microscopic vision*, *telescopic vision*, *low-light vision*, *infra-red vision*, *ultrasonic hearing*, *sonar*, *scent*, *radio*, *radar*, *psychic scan*, (*specific*) *elemental sense*, *sixth sense*). In addition, your other senses are also magnified. Add your rank in this power to all perception rolls (as well as *mind*).

A character with *psychic scan* can use it to locate a known individual in a defined area; the GM should assign a difficulty based on the number of conscious minds in the area being searched.

A character with an *elemental sense* should pick one form of matter or energy that they can sense. This would typically be one that they can also *control*, such as *sense magic*, *sense fire* or *sense rock*. A successful perception roll gives detailed information relevant to the chosen form of matter or energy.

A character with *telescopic sight* takes no penalties for range on perception rolls.

A character with *microscopic sight* takes no penalties for seeing tiny objects.

A character with *sixth sense* is never surprised and can always roll for initiative normally.

## Superspeed

Your character can run at incredible speeds. Any LoH character can move across land at about 25 mph (equivalent to a top sprinter). With *superspeed 1* you can run at up to 50 mph and every extra rank in *superspeed* doubles this, so a character with *superspeed 4* can run at 400 mph. Characters of normal human weight can even run across the surface of water or other liquids, provided they keep moving at 100 mph or more (*superspeed 2* or higher).

Moving at high speed in combat adds your rank to your *defence* for one round. See the movement section on how to avoid crashing into walls.

*Optional boon: ultra speed:* Outside of combat (and away from breakables) you can move at incredible speed (GM's discretion based on the scale of the campaign).

## Swimming

Your character can swim at incredible speeds. Any LoH character can swim at the surface at about 10 mph (equivalent to a top swimmer). With *swimming 1* you can swim on the surface at up to 50 mph and every extra rank in *swimming* doubles this, so a character with *swimming 4* can swim at 400 mph. Beneath the surface you can swim at half speed, if you have suitable *armour* (or the *tough* boon) to survive the pressure.

Moving at high speed in combat adds your rank to your *defence* for one round. See the movement section on how to avoid crashing into reefs.

*Optional boon: ultra speed:* Outside of combat (and away from breakables) you can move at incredible speed (GM's discretion based on the scale of the campaign).

## Telekinesis

You can move objects at a distance. This could be a psychic power, or control of gravity, or even use of magnetic fields. You can manipulate one object per rank in *telekinesis* at up to *long* range, but this does not let you make extra attacks. When manipulating an object, you use your *mind* instead of your *agility* on the targeting roll, and your rank in *telekinesis* instead of your *strength* on the effect.

For example, a character with *telekinesis* 3 could deliver a telekinetic punch at a distance, doing **1d6 + 3 [telekinesis]** damage. If they were using their power to wield a melee *weapon* 4, they would do **1d6 + 3 [telekinesis] + 4 [weapon]** damage.

This power does not grant faster movement. However, you can use it to move slowly through the air (typically at 25 mph).

There is normally no action/reaction with *telekinesis*, so you cannot use this power to "catch" another character and get dragged along. However, this depends on the special effects of the power.

## Teleport

Your character is capable of teleporting herself. You specify a location and make a power check using your *mind* attribute and rank in *teleport*. You take a penalty based on how familiar you are with the destination. If you succeed you appear in the desired location; if you fail you do not move that round. On a calamitous failure you are teleported to a location of the GM's choice.

You need a moment to orient yourself after a successful teleport, so teleporting counts as an attack. A character with the *double attack* boon could teleport and attack in a single round. You can bring with you anything you are carrying.

*Optional boon: Portal:* You can create a teleport portal: a 2-way link through which people can move and attack. One end of the portal always opens immediately in front of you.

## Vehicle

You have a vehicle to help you get to where you are needed and, perhaps, to fight. You construct your vehicle like a character, except:

- its pool for each of *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities* is equal to your rank in *vehicle*
- a *vehicle* does not have an *origin* or *background*
- your *vehicle* cannot have a *vehicle* or *sidekick*
- your *vehicle* has no free boons, but can take an equal number of boons and flaws
- your *vehicle* cannot spend hero points, but you can spend them on its behalf

A *vehicle* does not gain experience. Instead, improve your *vehicle* rank in the usual way. For each extra rank in the power, you have an extra point to spend on each of *powers*, *attributes* and *combat abilities*.

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When travelling in (or on) a vehicle, you generally use the vehicle's *attributes*, *powers* and *combat abilities* in place of your own. Attempting to use your own *powers* from inside the vehicle imposes at least a *tough* (-4) penalty. If a vehicle has any *armour*, it subtracts from damage as normal; if the attack was aimed at a passenger, she may get the benefit of the vehicle's *armour* as well as her own. However, all damage that exceeds the vehicle's *armour* comes off its *lifeblood*, and a vehicle reduced to 0 *lifeblood* is disabled and must be repaired. A *vehicle* reduced to -10 *lifeblood* is destroyed and must be replaced – it is not available for at least the rest of the scenario. If not disabled, vehicles regain *lifeblood* at the end of combat as normal.

A vehicle must have at least *growth* 1 to be large enough to provide any *armour* for a passenger.

A team may pool points from several characters to buy a team *vehicle*.

### **Weaken**

You can weaken an opponent, reducing their *attributes* or *powers* rather than damaging them. For each rank in this power you choose one *attribute* or *power* that you can affect; for the *control* power, you need to choose the broad special effect as well.

To use *weaken*, make an attack as normal using *agility* and the appropriate *combat skill*. If you hit, you temporarily reduce by one the ranks of all of the *powers* and *attributes* that you can affect and that the target has, down to a minimum of one. The target gets no defence against this.

At the end of combat, if they were not incapacitated the target regains half the lost ranks. The remainder require more time and/or medical care and are regained by the start of the next scenario.

For example, *Shadowlord* has *agility* 2, *ranged* 2, and *weaken* 2 (*control light* and *control darkness*). He targets *Flare*, who has *defence* 2 and *control light* 4. *Shadowlord* rolls **2d6 + 2 [agility] + 2 [ranged] – 2 [defence]**. If he succeeds, he reduces *Flare's control (light)* power by one rank. He cannot affect *Dr Wyrdd's control (magic)* power.

### **Weapon**

Your character wields a signature weapon. This could be a legendary artefact, blasters built into your suit of powered armour, a longbow, or even a club. In any case, the base damage is **d6 + [rank in weapon]**. Melee weapons add the character's *strength* attribute to this damage; muscle-powered ranged weapons add half the attribute (round down) but are limited to *long* range or closer; non-muscle-powered ranged weapons do not get any bonus from the character's strength but have no limits on their range. So a character with *weapon* 2 and *strength* 4 would do **d6+6** if the weapon was a sword; **d6+4** if it were a bow; and **d6+2** if it were a blaster rifle.

This power represents a specialised “signature” weapon. Characters who want to be experts in the use of many weapons may wish to consider the boons *melee expert* or *crack shot* and the power *combat expert*.

## Notes on powers:

The *control* power is the classic power of the energy projector, but it can also cover weather control, mastery of earth, control of nature, or even raw magical power. However, it is not especially subtle. A character could use *control (fire)* to blast open a door, but this will make a lot of noise and mess.

Add in the *finesse* boon and she can be much more subtle; for example, she could burn out the locks or melt the hinges.

The *finesse* boon is not limited to *control*. A character with the *weapon* power and *finesse* could make a power check to bounce a weapon off a wall or other trick moves.

Because the *powers* are fairly broad, many of them overlap. A character with *control (air)* can reasonably “ride the winds” and glide, or cause a gust of air to blow objects around. This should never overshadow other powers, though: such free flight would be at most 25 mph, for example, or could only offer crude movement without the finesse of *telekinesis*.



## Backgrounds

*I'm just saying, ain't it funny that so many heroes turn out to be "passing through" whenever there's a big conference for industry and the like?*

*From "You're not as smart as you think you are", unredacted version*

These are broad skills – professional or hobby – that a character has, which may sometimes come into play. The first *background* is free at character creation; additional ones cost the same as a *boon* (one flaw at character creation, or two advancement points). These represent a broad knowledge and training, a series of contacts, and access to appropriate equipment.

Each background has a corresponding boon, "*expert (\_\_\_\_)*", which grants the character an extra dice when using their background. For example, Jackrabbit has *expert (pilot)* so rolls an extra dice when flying an aircraft or trying to understand the console of an alien fighter, while Dr Wyrd has *expert (magician)* to represent his extensive study. (GMs should interpret these backgrounds fairly broadly). Characters do not get this *expert* boon for free – they cost the same as any other boon.

Skills are usually *mind*-based, but may be *agility*-based or *appeal*-based depending on the situation.

Players are encouraged to come up with new backgrounds with similar benefits.

### Academic (or scientist)

Whether you are a student, researcher, or a scholar, your passion is knowledge. Your goal in life is to increase the amount that you know, and to be the first to learn new things. You might be attached to a great university or library, or work for a corporation; perhaps you are famous enough to head up a research laboratory. When there's research to be done, a problem to solve, or a giant bombardier beetle on the high street, nobody is more useful than an Academic.

### Animal

You have the mind and instincts of an animal – most likely a predator. While this will not help with social encounters or operating a computer, it does give you an instinctive knowledge of hunting, tracking, ambushes, and so on.

### Archaeologist

Like the great Victorian archaeologists before you, you search for long-lost structures and artefacts. You have an extensive knowledge of history and ancient cultures, as well as practice at interpreting puzzles, ground radar plots, and satellite imagery. You can even puzzle out inscriptions, given long enough. (This background may well be tied in to your *origin*...)

### Athlete

When others were studying for tests or going to dance clubs, you were practicing: honing your skills to peak levels. In your chosen sport(s), you have competed at the highest level. You know how to get the most out of your body and how far you can push it, and have a wide selection of contacts in sporting communities. People who recognise you will tend to have a favourable opinion of you. (This is a good background for a martial artist.)

## **Business**

You are a businessman, and probably a successful one at that: rather than working on the shop floor, you are more likely to own the whole company (and several other ones as well). You have a working knowledge of commerce and industry, as well as knowing who the major players are, and can predict the effects on global economies of disruptive effects. You have significant wealth behind you, though not unlimited. (This is a good background for someone with a power suit.)

## **Criminal**

You are, or were, a professional criminal. You have wide contacts in the criminal fraternity and have earned their respect through daring raids or providing a useful service. You know how to case a target, how to break security systems, and how to fence stolen goods. When trying to sneak into the villain's lair, or track down a stolen ruby, the Criminal has the contacts and the know-how.

## **Exotic**

Your background is very different from that of other characters, and this lets you look at things from a different perspective – perhaps you have a more powerful sense of intuition, or an overly logical attitude. Use this background when a more conventional approach has failed.

## **Explorer (or Astronaut)**

The final frontier. Whether it is the depths of the ocean, the remotest parts of the land, or up to orbit and beyond, you want to go there. You have the Right Stuff: a master of improvisation and living off your environment, scavenging what you need. You have widespread contacts among organisations which promote such exploration. (This is an appropriate background for visitors from another world or plane who here arrive as adults.)

## **Magician**

You have a broad knowledge of magic and of mystic items from different styles and cultures, as well as many of the more flamboyant practitioners. You can use this to research into new spells and artefacts. This is a *mind* based skill.

In addition, you are trained in stage magic and sleight-of-hand, and how to distract an audience from a trick. You can bluff with the best of them. This is an *appeal* based skill.

## **Medic**

You have extensive medical knowledge – both theoretical and practical. You can stabilise a fallen comrade, apply CPR, or run tests in a medical laboratory. When an interstellar plague threatens the planet, call for a Medic.

## **Military (or Agent)**

You have been trained by the military (perhaps even as a super-agent). You have a good knowledge of military culture and equipment, as well as extensive contacts – and an appropriate rank, though this may now be honorary. You know how to think tactically and make the best use of your forces – and when to call in air support.

## **Performer**

You are an experienced performer, entirely at home on the stage and in front of cameras. You can hold an audience and entertain them through your chosen style, which could be music, comedy, or any other form of entertainment. This is an *appeal* based skill.

In addition, you know who's who in the entertainment industry and who the important people are. You could get someone a part in a minor play, or tickets to a show. This is a *mind* based skill.

When you need to sway an audience from starting a riot, send for a Performer.

## **Pilot**

Whatever it is, you can fly it – or drive it – as if you were born behind the wheel. Given some time to study the controls, you could work out how to operate something totally unfamiliar (a *mind*-based skill), and once you are familiar, there's nothing stopping you. This is an *agility*-based skill for driving or piloting under pressure.

## **Police**

You are, or were, a cop. You know how the system works, and have extensive contacts with forensics labs and the like. You know how to interrogate someone, how to liaise with a community, and how to search (or secure) a crime scene. Where the Streetwise Detective may be something of an old-school maverick, the Cop knows how to work with the system in a team.

## **Reporter**

You tell the stories that drive the news. You may work for a newspaper, or a television attributeion, or be a freelance web author. In any case, you have a wide network of contacts in different fields who can feed you information, and your pen-name will be widely recognised even if you personally aren't. If you need to spin a story, or rescue a poor reputation, a reporter is in the best position to do so. (This background is a good starting point for adventures.)

## **Society**

Where others work in academia or business, you work in society. You know all the "in-crowd", who's who, and who to contact to get an invitation to – well, pretty much anything, at least in a social context. Need to warn the Mayor without tipping off his secretary? You can get an invitation to a charity dinner.

## **Streetwise detective**

You know all that is to be known about the science of criminology; you can do a forensic analysis of a crime-scene, find tracks, locate fingerprints, and so on. This version of the skill is *mind*-based.

Additionally, you have a good feel for the local criminal underworld and can use your contacts to gain information. This version of the skill is *appeal*-based.

## Technician

You can make security systems dance to your tune, and no electronic lock is safe from you. You can also get into most computer databases given sufficient time, or identify the function of modern equipment. You are a tech, not a scientist – you work with existing devices. This is a *mind*-based skill.

## Equipment

This is a *superheroes* game. Many characters only have “signature” equipment. They may pick up something, or temporarily lose something, during an adventure; but they will always revert to normal at the end (unless they choose to spend advancement points on appropriate new powers).

The *backgrounds* grant access to all the equipment necessary to perform their skill(s). Some *origins*, such as “gadgeteer” or “power suit”, also grant characters appropriate equipment via their powers, such as *weapon*, *armour* (armour or personal force-field generator), *flight* (jet boots), and so on.

That being said, in a contemporary Western setting many people have access to portable phones, GPS, computers, the internet, and transport. It is reasonable for any character that does not have the *always broke* flaw to carry a phone or other communications link, and to have high bandwidth access to the internet at their base. This does not, in itself, give any bonus to cracking security systems – the target has the same access to equipment.

Characters may wish to define such equipment as befitting their special effect, such as using an on-board radio link in a suit of powered armour or an enchanted amulet for a sorcerer. However, this should be limited to imitating *reasonable* items widely available in a contemporary setting, and not used as a cheap way to get the *utility* boon or get round the *always broke* flaw.

Characters may carry normal weapons (clubs, knives, or handguns) doing **1d3** damage (or **1d6** with the appropriate boon). These are identical to those used by normal people, and forensics may be able to trace them.

In a *Comics* setting, many characters don’t carry other equipment, however logical it might seem.

In a *Realistic* setting, however, prudent characters would incorporate defences into their costume, carry gadgets, and undergo some training. GMs may wish to give characters some of the following powers: *weapon (handgun) 1*, *armour (costume) 1* and *combat expertise (training) 1*.

If a character loses a piece of signature equipment during a scenario, they should regain it by the end of the next scenario (either between the scenarios if the equipment is easy to replace, or as part of the next scenario).

## Spoils of war

Defeated super opponents may leave equipment lying around, and naturally the players will want to use it. Some equipment might be difficult to use untrained, needing at least a *tough* (-4) mind roll to figure out how to use them. Other equipment, particularly associated with computers, might have security precautions, and magical equipment might have curses on it.

Using equipment for the rest of the scenario is fine, but in the genre such prizes are usually stored in a museum or trophy cabinet. Characters should pay advancement points for the corresponding *powers* if they want to use the equipment.

## Improvised weapons

An improvised melee weapon generally does the same amount of damage as the character's brawling attack (but using *melee expert* instead of *mighty fists*) but can be sharp rather than blunt. It can also be thrown, doing **d6 + [half strength]** damage. Most improvised weapons are broken after one use. A common use for an improvised weapon is to get the effect of the *area attack* boon or to reach a target that would otherwise be out of reach.

Characters can take the power *weapon (improvised)*, which means they can always find a suitable weapon when they need one.

## Superweapons

One-shot *superweapons* can be created by characters with the *technician*, *academic (scientist)*, or *magician* background, once a weakness of the target has been deduced, researched, or otherwise identified. This requires a *mind*-based background roll (the GM should assign a suitable penalty based on the weapon the characters want to create) and should generally take at least a day, unless the character has the boon *jury-rig* or is willing to take a penalty for hurrying. If you fail, you can try again, but each subsequent attempt takes an extra -1 penalty.

The resulting device acts as a ranged *weapon* with rank equal to the *mind* attribute of the maker, with a boon of the creator's choice added on a mighty success. Because it exploits a weakness of the target, it ignores any *armour* that the target has (even if the target does not have the *vulnerability* flaw). However, such a weapon can normally only be used once before failing. A character with the boon *jury-rig* might be able to coax a few extra shots out.

Characters with the boons *fabulously wealthy* or *contacts* may also be able to get hold of a *superweapon*. The GM should use the character's *appeal* attribute as the rank of the *superweapon*, representing their power to find suitable staff to work on such a device.

## Money

Money typically does not play a large part in a game of LoH. Characters with the *fabulously wealthy* boon may occasionally be able to solve problems by throwing money at them, and those with the *always broke* flaw may be unable to travel long distances at short notice without their own movement *power*, but generally characters have enough to get by without having an excess.

## Generic boons and flaws

Some boons and flaws are appropriate to almost any character concept, and are therefore available to all characters.

### Boons:

- *Ally*: You have a non-superpowered ally or mentor you can call on at need for advice and assistance.
- *Area attack*: One of your powers can affect everyone (friend and foe) adjacent to your target. You still need to make an attack roll, but only *range* and multiple-action penalties apply. You do half damage (round fractions down).
- *Born leader*: Once per session, you can coordinate the actions of a group working on the same objective. Each gets a boon for that task only.
- *Crack shot*: You are an expert shot with ranged weapons. When attacking with ranged weapons, you do a base of **1d6** damage even with normal firearms, and roll an extra dice when attacking.
- *Double attack*: You may choose to make two attacks in a round, but take a flaw on *all* rolls for that round. Attacks can also include *dodge* or extra blocks with the *shield* power.
- *Expert (background)*: You are a true master of (one of) your background(s). Roll an extra dice when using the named background. You must take this separately for each background.
- *Finesse*: You have learned to use one of your *powers* in subtle ways. You still need to make a power check, probably using your *mind* attribute.
- *Good reputation*: You are widely recognised as a great hero (whether justified or not). Roll an extra dice when trying to get people to cooperate with you.
- *Lightning reflexes*: You react with incredible speed. When rolling for initiative, roll an extra dice.
- *Melee expert*: You are an expert with melee weapons. When attacking with melee weapons, you do a base of **1d6** damage even with improvised weapons and normal knives and clubs, and roll an extra dice when attacking.
- *Mighty fists*: Your fists and feet are lethal weapons. When brawling, you do a base of **1d6** damage rather than **1d3**, and roll an extra dice when attacking. This could represent martial training or physical prowess.
- *Minions*: You have an army of minions – loyal normals, who will help to the best of their limited power.
- *Share and enjoy*: You can extend (some of) your defences to protect those next to you. Typically this applies to *control*, but the GM may allow it to apply to *armour* depending on the effects (such as a force-field).
- *Sticks to the walls*: You can walk on walls and even ceilings with no risk of falling.
- *Strong willed*: You are particularly strong-willed. Roll an extra dice on anything involving will power, including resisting temptation or interrogation, using the *psychic* power, and breaking free of mind control.
- *Tough*: Even by super standards, you are tough. You have an extra 2 *lifeblood*.
- *Truly heroic*: At times of great need, you can call on hidden depths. You have an extra hero point.

### Flaws:

- *Always broke*: You are permanently short of money, and cannot even afford basic equipment like a phone or home computer
- *Arch enemy*: You are constantly being hunted and/or harassed by a single powerful enemy (or rogue's gallery).
- *Berserk fury*: If you take damage in combat, you need to make a *mind* check (with penalty equal to the damage taken) to avoid going into a blind rage. If enraged, you focus all your attacks on the person who last damaged you, ignoring anyone and anything else.
- *Code of honour*: You live by your code; it is as much a part of you as breathing. Should you violate it, you take a flaw on *all* rolls until you atone.
- *Components*: One or more of your powers requires something to function; without it, that power will not function (or functions at less effectiveness, at the GM's discretion).
- *Egotistical*: You always have to be in charge and the centre of attention. You must make a *mind* roll to let someone else take the lead, however qualified they are; the GM should set the difficulty based on the situation.
- *Fixed size*: A character with *growth* or *shrinking* is permanently stuck at this size, and cannot resume normal size. An *alternate form* cannot take this flaw unless the main form also does.
- *Fragile*: By super standards, you are fragile. You have 2 fewer *lifeblood*.
- *Naïve*: You think the best of everyone and trust them to keep their word. You think that everyone will do good, if only they are given the chance. Roll an extra dice to resist a sob-story; the GM should set the difficulty based on the situation.
- *Normal identity*: You maintain a non-powered alternate identity. You need to spend significant time in this identity. Changing to your powered form takes at least one round.
- *Overconfident*: You are sure you can handle any threat. You must make a *mind* check to retreat from a confrontation; the GM should set the difficulty based on the situation.
- *Poor reflexes*: You are slow to react. When rolling for initiative, roll an extra dice.
- *Poor reputation*: You are widely recognised and feared or hated – perhaps justly, perhaps not. Roll an extra dice when trying to get other people to cooperate or help you.
- *Protective*: Your top priority is always to protect others; you will always risk yourself to save an innocent. Roll an extra dice to resist being manipulated by a hostage-taker or threat to a bystander; the GM should set the difficulty based on the situation.
- *Restricted power*: One of your powers only works in a limited way. This should significantly limit the power, such as light powers that only work in direct sunlight.
- *Weak willed*: You are particularly weak-willed. Roll an extra dice on anything involving will power, including resisting temptation or interrogation, using the *psychic* power, and breaking free of mind control.

## Origins

*I don't care how many times he's saved the city. He's not getting his tentacles on my daughter.*

*From "Just whose planet is it anyway?"*

Origins do not grant any particular powers, but are there to give some “flavour” to your character concept as well as offering a selection of boons and flaws. A suitable origin is likely to suggest a set of powers or traits, and may come with equipment or contacts. With the GM’s permission, you can adapt an origin to better suit a concept.

Each origin also lets you move up to half the size of a pool either *from* or *to* a single category. For example, a *trained normal* in a *National Guardian* campaign has 6 points per pool, and can transfer up to 3 points to her *combat abilities*.

### Android

You are a highly-sophisticated robot with an advanced AI. Your origin may be terrestrial, or it may be from another planet. Perhaps you were sent as an advance scout, or you are the guardian of the remaining knowledge from your former home – or perhaps your creator wanted a butler and went a bit over the top.

#### Boons:

- *Self-contained:* You do not need food, water, or oxygen to survive.
- *Long-lived:* Your kind lives for a very long time (perhaps you are even immortal). You are immune to attacks based on aging, and can afford to take a long view of time. You have a good knowledge of history.
- *Onboard computer:* You have access to computer power and storage. You can perform calculations rapidly and replay scenes perfectly. In addition, roll an extra dice when dealing with security systems or computers.
- *Different mind:* Your mind is so different that you are immune to psychic powers.
- *Knowledge not of this planet:* You have a working knowledge of science, technology, and cultures not of this world. When trying to understand alien technology or alien culture and motivation, roll an extra dice.

#### Flaws:

- *Unearthly background:* You are unfamiliar with Earth culture and history. Roll an extra die in social interactions or when knowledge of Earth culture or history is directly relevant.
- *What is that thing?* Your form is clearly not that of a human. Roll an extra dice when trying to disguise yourself or appeal to non-super-powered people.
- *Standard protocols:* Your programming is based around standard software protocols, which makes you potentially vulnerable to computer hacking. Treat these as psychic attacks using the attacker’s *mind* attribute.



## Channeler

Somehow you channel a source of power from outside yourself. Often this first manifests at a time of great danger, though it could equally be the result of a bargain with a being of great power. While this often relates to a magical origin, unlike *Sorcerer* it does not necessarily imply any great control or finesse – just raw power.

### Boons:

- *Many forms*: You can assume one of many *alternate forms*. Specify a broad category of possible forms (for example, *elementals*, *animals*, *Greek gods*). Each form is built using the standard rules for *alternate form*, but you are not restricted to a single form. To speed up play, design a few possible forms before play starts.
- *Legendary weapon*: You wield a legendary weapon, perhaps *Excalibur* or *Mjolnir*. Roll an extra die when attacking with your weapon. In addition, you can specify a minor power or enchantment (such as “cannot be held by anyone else” or “returns to hand if thrown”).
- *Translator*: You can speak and understand any language.

### Flaws:

- *Comes great responsibility*: Your powers come with a set of restrictions – perhaps you may not strike an innocent. Violating these restrictions will remove (some of) your powers until you somehow atone.

## Empowered human

You are a normal human being – but one who wields power. Perhaps a visitor granted you a mighty weapon, or you found a legendary artefact. You bring a down-to-earth attitude to out-of-this-world power. Unlike a *modified human* (see below), you retain a basically human attitude.

### Boons:

- *Legendary weapon*: You wield a legendary weapon, perhaps *Excalibur* or *Mjolnir*. Roll an extra die when attacking with your weapon. In addition, you can specify a minor power or enchantment (such as “cannot be held by anyone else” or “returns to hand if thrown”).
- *Membership has its perks*: You belong to an organisation, which is widely recognised and respected. Roll an extra dice when dealing with people who belong to, or respect, the organisation.
- *Translator*: You can speak and understand any language.

### Flaws:

- *Only human*: You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Powers keyed to object*: Your powers all come through a single object; without this, you lose most of your powers until you can regain it.
- *Curious*: You always want to learn more – and one day this could be your undoing. You need to make a *mind* check to avoid getting distracted by a new piece of science or engineering.
- *Comes great responsibility*: Your powers come with a set of restrictions – perhaps you may not strike an innocent. Violating these restrictions will remove (some of) your powers until you somehow atone.

## Gadgeteer

Like the trained normal, you are a normal human being. You, however, carry a wide range of tools designed to deal with any threat. A set of low-power *utility* gadgets are almost obligatory, but many other powers are also appropriate. Note that these could be technological, biological, or even magical.

### Boons:

- *Jury-rig*: You can take a broken machine and get it (temporarily) working again – or make something useful from the parts. Roll an extra dice when modifying technology.
- *Onboard computer*: You have access to computer power and storage. You can perform calculations rapidly and replay scenes perfectly. In addition, roll an extra dice when dealing with security systems or computers.
- *Fabulously wealthy*: You are seriously wealthy and can afford to throw money at problems.
- *Gadgets*: You have a wide range of minor non-combat gadgets, which can be used for tasks such as opening locks, bypassing alarms, or creating light. The GM may require a *mind* check to use some effects correctly.

### Flaws:

- *Only human*: You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Powers keyed to object*: Your powers all come through one or more objects; without these, you lose most of your powers until you can regain them.

## Lost in time

You are a visitor from another time, either the distant past or the unknown future. You may have been sent on a one-way trip, or still possess the means to travel in time; you may be seeking to avoid a great cataclysm without causing too much of a temporal paradox. You may even be constrained in what actions you can and cannot take. Whether from the past or the future, the world you find yourself in will seem strange.

### Boons:

- *Knowledge not of this time*: You have a working knowledge of culture and technology (or magic) from a different time (or times). This may include knowing at least one way to travel in time reasonably safely and how to act when doing so, as well as some navigation skills.

### Flaws:

- *Comes great responsibility*: Your powers come with a set of restrictions – perhaps you may not strike an innocent. Violating these restrictions will remove (some of) your powers until you somehow atone.
- *Only human*: You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Curious*: You always want to learn more – and one day this could be your undoing. You need to make a *mind* check to avoid getting distracted by a new piece of lore.

### Modified human

You *were* human... once. Then, something changed you. Perhaps there was an accident in a lab, or aliens experimented on you. Perhaps your spaceship had insufficient shielding, or you touched the wrong kind of mystic amulet. Whatever the cause, it left you... different. Many powers are appropriate to this origin. Unlike an *empowered human* (see above), you are fundamentally no longer human.

#### Boons:

- *Different mind*: Your mind is so different that you are immune to psychic powers.
- *Translator*: You can speak and understand any language.

#### Flaws:

- *Thinks with your fists*: Your instinctive reaction to a threat is to pound it with your strongest attack, and if that doesn't work, pound it again. Roll an extra dice when trying to come up with alternatives to a straightforward frontal assault.
- *What is that thing?* Your form is clearly not that of a human. Roll an extra dice when trying to disguise yourself or appeal to non-super-powered people.

### Natural mutant

You were born different. Your powers developed as you did, and have always been a part of you. Some might see you as a threat, others as the next logical step in evolution, and still others as an opportunity to be exploited.

#### Boons:

- *Membership has its perks*: You belong to an organisation, which is widely recognised and respected. Roll an extra dice when dealing with people who belong to, or respect, the organisation.

#### Flaws:

- *Vulnerability*: Your defences have an Achilles heel: you are vulnerable to one form of matter or energy. Regardless of your powers, you have *no* protection against this particular type of attack. It's going to hurt.
- *What is that thing?* Your form is clearly not that of a human. Roll an extra dice when trying to disguise yourself or appeal to non-super-powered people.

### Non-human race

Though not supernatural, your race has shared the Earth with humanity for countless years. Perhaps they were human once, but that was many, many generations ago. Now you have come to dwell among the humans – perhaps because your people are dead, or you are an outcast, or even an ambassador. Your priorities may not be those of your fellow dwellers on this planet.

#### Boons:

- *Different mind*: Your mind is so different that you are immune to psychic powers.
- *Long-lived*: Your kind lives for a very long time (perhaps you are even immortal). You are immune to attacks based on aging, and can afford to take a long view of time. You have a good knowledge of history.

#### Flaws:

- *What is that thing?* Your form is clearly not that of a human. Roll an extra dice when trying to disguise yourself or appeal to non-super-powered people.

## Power suit

You wear a suit of powered armour, which provides you with protection and other powers from built-in equipment. A suit of powered armour always grants *armour*. Other common powers include *supersenses*, *flight*, and *weapon (blaster)*.

### Boons:

- *Fabulously wealthy*: You are seriously wealthy and can afford to throw money at problems.
- *Burnout*: You can overload one of your armour's systems. Spend a Hero point instead of making a roll in order to achieve an automatic **Legendary** success. However, that armour system is now burnt out and cannot be used again without major repair or replacement – typically not until the next scenario.
- *Onboard computer*: You have access to computer power and storage. You can perform calculations rapidly and replay scenes perfectly. In addition, roll an extra dice when dealing with security systems or computers.

### Flaws:

- *Only human*: You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Curious*: You always want to learn more – and one day this could be your undoing. You need to make a *mind* check to avoid getting distracted by a new piece of science or engineering.
- *Powers keyed to object*: Your powers all come through one or more objects; without these, you lose most of your powers until you can regain or replace the objects.

## Psychic

Through long years of practice, or a traumatic event, you have developed psychic powers: the innate power of the mind, which cannot be removed from you. Psychics almost always have the power *psychic*, which covers telepathy and mind-control; other options include some *supersenses* or powers derived from *telekinesis* such as *armour* or *shield*. However, psychics often have trouble affecting creatures with very different minds, such as some aliens and androids.

### Boons:

- *Flexible mind*: You can control, or read, the minds of several supers at once, up to your rank in *psychic*. You must make a separate attack roll, on a separate action, for each target.
- *Translator*: You can speak and understand any language.

### Flaws:

- *Only human*: You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Curious*: You always want to learn more – and one day this could be your undoing. You need to make a *mind* check to avoid getting distracted by a new piece of lore.
- *Obsession*: You are obsessed with something – perhaps a particular enemy, or an abstract ideal – and this can be used against you. When faced with your obsession, you must make a *mind* roll to avoid being distracted. The GM should assign the difficulty based on circumstances.

## Sorcerer

Through long study or raw talent, you have learned to harness the power of magic for lesser or greater tasks. Sorcerers tend to have a wide variety of powers, rather than a single potent one; it is through versatility that they triumph. *Control (magic)* grants combat spells but *utility (magic)* would grant a broader range of minor effects, and many other powers are also appropriate.

### Boons:

- *Knowledge not of this plane:* You have a working knowledge of magic, beings, and cultures of different magical planes. When interacting with beings from other dimensions, roll an extra dice. This includes a working knowledge of navigation and geography (given suitable means of transport).
- *Sanctum:* You have a small home base that you have spent many hours fortifying. When you are on your home ground, roll an extra dice.
- *Translator:* You can speak and understand any language.
- *Minor arcana:* You know a wide range of minor magics. These are mostly non-combat effects but can imitate some other powers at rank 0. The GM may require a *mind* check to use some effects correctly.

### Flaws:

- *Only human:* You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Curious:* You always want to learn more – and one day this could be your undoing. You need to make a *mind* check to avoid getting distracted by a new piece of mystic lore.
- *Comes great responsibility:* Your powers come with a set of restrictions – perhaps you may not strike an innocent. Violating these restrictions will remove (some of) your powers until you somehow atone.
- *Obsession:* You are obsessed with something – perhaps a particular enemy, or an abstract ideal – and this can be used against you. When faced with your obsession, you must make a *mind* roll to avoid being distracted. The GM should assign the difficulty based on circumstances.

## Supernatural

You are a member of a supernatural species, such as Alfar, earth elemental, or werewolf. Your kind has lived, hidden amongst humans, for millennia. Now, something has drawn you out into the daylight – perhaps you are an ambassador for your species, the last of your kind, or a rebellious teenager out to prove yourself.

### Boons:

- *Knowledge not of this plane:* You have a working knowledge of magic, beings, and cultures of different magical planes. When interacting with beings from other dimensions, roll an extra dice. This includes a working knowledge of navigation and geography (given suitable means of transport).
- *Legendary weapon:* You wield a legendary weapon, perhaps *Excalibur* or *Mjolnir*. Roll an extra die when attacking with your weapon. In addition, you can specify a minor power or enchantment (such as “cannot be held by anyone else” or “returns to hand if thrown”).
- *Long-lived:* Your kind lives for a very long time (perhaps you are even immortal). You are immune to attacks based on aging, and can afford to take a long view of time. You have a good knowledge of history.
- *Translator:* You can speak and understand any language.

### Flaws:

- *Unearthly background:* You are unfamiliar with Earth culture and history. Roll an extra die in social interactions or when knowledge of Earth culture or history is directly relevant.

- *Vulnerability*: Your defences have an Achilles heel: you are vulnerable to one form of matter or energy. Regardless of your powers, you have *no* protection against this particular type of attack. It's going to hurt.
- *Strange diet*: You require something unusual every day as part of your diet. Failure to get it results in you steadily losing lifeblood (1/day), which cannot be regained until you resupply.
- *What is that thing?* Your form is clearly not that of a human. Roll an extra dice when trying to disguise yourself or appeal to non-super-powered people.

### **Trained normal**

You are a highly dedicated and focussed (some would say obsessed) individual. You have trained yourself and honed your skills to bring you on the same level as your opponents, and perhaps trained with weapons as well. You have access to training facilities to keep improving your skills.

#### *Boons:*

- *Fabulously wealthy*: You are seriously wealthy and can afford to throw money at problems.
- *Membership has its perks*: You belong to a (national) organisation, which is widely recognised and respected (on Earth). Roll an extra dice when dealing with people who belong to, or respect, the organisation.
- *Contacts*: You have extensive contacts within a certain community (such as the military, police, academia, or industry). You can call on these contacts for advice and supplies.
- *Safe houses*: You have a network of safe houses and backup facilities. These are supplied with basic facilities and supplies.
- *Gadgets*: You have a wide range of minor non-combat gadgets, which can be used for tasks such as opening locks, bypassing alarms, or creating light. The GM may require a *mind* check to use some effects correctly.

#### *Flaws:*

- *Only human*: You are a normal human with superlative training and some equipment. Your powers, attributes and combat abilities are limited to 3 initially and 4 maximum.
- *Obsession*: You are obsessed with something – a particular enemy, or an abstract ideal – and this can be used against you. When faced with your obsession, you must make a *mind* roll to avoid being distracted. The GM should assign the difficulty based on circumstances.

### **Visitor from another plane**

You came here from another dimension, perhaps through powerful magic or simply a natural rift. Your kind may have a natural affinity for enchantment, or you might have a deep knowledge of the underlying theory of magic. You might have knowledge far different from that of Earth, and a different perspective, but little understanding of Earth culture.

#### *Boons:*

- *Knowledge not of this plane*: You have a working knowledge of magic, beings, and cultures of different magical planes. When interacting with beings from other dimensions, roll an extra dice. This includes a working knowledge of navigation and geography (given suitable means of transport).
- *Long-lived*: Your kind lives for a very long time (perhaps you are even immortal). You are immune to attacks based on aging, and can afford to take a long view of time. You have a good knowledge of history.

#### *Flaws:*

- *Unearthly background*: You are unfamiliar with Earth culture and history. Roll an extra die in social interactions or when knowledge of Earth culture or history is directly relevant.

- *Vulnerability:* Your defences have an Achilles heel: you are vulnerable to one form of matter or energy. Regardless of your powers, you have *no* protection against this particular type of attack. It's going to hurt.
- *What is that thing?* Your form is clearly not that of a human. Roll an extra dice when trying to disguise yourself or appeal to non-super-powered people.

### **Visitor from another world**

You arrived here from another world. Powers that seem strange to humans may simply be normal where you are from, and you may know far more about science or galactic culture than other characters. Virtually any set of powers is possible.

#### *Boons:*

- *Knowledge not of this planet:* You have a working knowledge of science, technology, and cultures not of this world. When trying to understand alien technology, politics, culture or motivation, roll an extra dice. This includes a working knowledge of navigation and geography (given a suitable means of transport).
- *Membership has its perks:* You belong to an (interstellar) organisation, which is widely recognised and respected (off-Earth). Roll an extra dice when dealing with people who belong to, or respect, the organisation.
- *Different mind:* Your mind is so different that you are immune to psychic powers.
- *Long-lived:* Your kind lives for a very long time (perhaps you are even immortal). You are immune to attacks based on aging, and can afford to take a long view of time. You have a good knowledge of history.

#### *Flaws:*

- *Unearthly background:* You are unfamiliar with Earth culture and history. Roll an extra die in social interactions or when knowledge of Earth culture or history is directly relevant.
- *Vulnerability:* Your defences have an Achilles heel: you are vulnerable to one form of matter or energy. Regardless of your powers, you have *no* protection against this particular type of attack. It's going to hurt.
- *Strange diet:* You require something unusual every day as part of your diet. Failure to get it results in you steadily losing lifeblood (1/day) until you resupply.

## Which origin is right for my character?

*Look, Captain – may I call you Captain? You might know how to explain dark magnetism, or the best place to get a blaster in the sector, but I know my readers. They are not going to buy that one, trust me. Let's go with the Alien Visitor story, OK?*  
*From "Don't believe everything you read"*

Suppose you want to play a character wielding a sword as their attack. Which origin should you use?

- If your character is a normal human with great skill in fencing, she is a *trained normal*
- If your character is a modern-day knight in a high-tech battlesuit, she has a *powered suit*
- If your character uses a sword as one amongst many items, she is a *gadgeteer*
- If your character was sent here from the age of chivalry by a terrible curse, she is *lost in time*
- If your character is an alien from another star-system, trained in exotic energy blades, it is a *visitor from another planet*
- If your character is a Japanese spirit, a metal elemental, she is a *supernatural*
- If your character is now the living embodiment of the spirit of chivalry, she is a *channeler*
- If your character is an Alfar from another realm, a graceful mistress of the rapier, she is a *visitor from another plane*
- If your character was born with the power to control ice and form icicle blades in her hands, she is probably a *natural mutant*
- If your character found Excalibur, and the blade grants her strength and skill while wielded, she is an *empowered human*
- If your character was permanently transformed by a mystic amulet into a living metal statue, she is a *modified human*
- If your character learned enough magic to forge a magical athame and use it to channel spells, she might be a *sorcerer*
- If your character started out as a sophisticated robot sparring partner, it is an *android*
- If your character belongs to an inhuman race and has spent hundreds of years studying swordplay, she is a member of a *non-human race*
- If your character is telepathic and manifests a telekinetic blade of force, she is a *psychic*

With a bit of imagination, many origins and powers can be combined to produce interesting characters. Of course, you might come up with something entirely different – an alien wizard who used magic-based technology to craft a suit of armour, say – in which case, work with your GM to pick the appropriate sets of available boons and flaws.



## Notes on boons

*Area attack*: Depending on the special effects, a character might (or might not) be able to use his power without this boon (it's possible to fine-tune a blast of fire, but not a grenade). The power affects a target and *everyone* (friend or foe) adjacent to them. You still need to make an attack roll, but only the *range* penalty applies – the target does not get to apply their *defence* skill.

*Double attack*: This could be the result of a pair of weapons, or being innately faster than most people. You can make two attacks, or make one attack and dodge, or make one attack and use the *shield* power to block. However, *all* rolls you make on that round suffer from a flaw.

*Gadgets* and *minor arcana* can both imitate other powers under certain circumstances, but are not as good as even rank 1 in that power. For example, using them to imitate *telekinesis* would only move light objects (up to 100lb, which can be picked up with *strength 0*) and can't be used to attack.

## Using powers

The idea of having broad powers is to encourage innovative use. Players are encouraged to think of new ways to apply their powers to resolve situations. For example: The League (*Qiang*, *Pantheon*, *Jackrabbit*, *Kestrel*, *Flare*) and *Mr Elastic*, having just fought a pitched battle on a space-station, are hurtling towards Earth in a damaged escape pod.

*Qiang* uses his great *strength* to hold the escape pod together, while *Flare* expands her *armour* (an aura of power) to seal the tears in the hull. Meanwhile *Kestrel* uses her *control (magic)* and *finesse* to strengthen the pod, and *Pantheon* takes the form of Apollo and uses *control (heat)* to dampen down the heat of re-entry. *Jackrabbit* takes the controls, his *superspeed* and *expert pilot* letting him react to the turbulence and keep them on course.

Once down into atmosphere, *Mr Elastic* pours himself through one of the rips and uses his *elastic body* power to form a parachute. At the same time *Flare* uses her *flight* to slow their descent.

The GM rules that re-entry is a *tough* challenge (-4) and requires all of the contributing characters to make a *tough* check. The League needs to get 4 successes to get through unsinged. They only manage 3, so a tongue of fire lashes through a rip in the hull before it can be sealed, doing **1d6+4** fire damage to everyone.

Landing within atmosphere is easier, but only two of the characters are actively contributing. Both need to make *tough* (-4) rolls. *Mr Elastic* gets a Mighty success, and his parachute is able to slow them down for a safe landing.

## The League

The League are a beginning-level team of superheroes; they generally tackle city-level threats. They are Local characters, built with pools of 5 points.

### Qiang (“Strength”)

David Qiang was a technician working at a new fusion power plant. The plant was supposed to be stable and safe, producing an endless supply of clean power – and would have, had it not been sabotaged during construction. As the plasma intensity built up and the containment field failed, David ordered his staff to get clear while he fought to shut the system down. The blast was contained within the building, saving countless lives. Somehow, David staggered from the wreckage, a changed man. He has no idea how he survived.

Origin: modified human  
Background: technician  
Strength 5, agility 0, mind 1, appeal 0  
Brawl 2, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2  
Armour 4, regeneration 1  
Boons: mighty fists, tough, born leader  
Flaws: overconfident, code of honour  
Lifeblood: 18

Qiang has strength beyond that of a normal human, doing **d6+5** damage with his fists, and is physically very tough. Ordinary bullets bounce off his skin, and any damage done to him quickly mends itself. He is perhaps a little too confident in his ability to take damage and almost always takes point, attacking the toughest-looking opponent. As his powers mature, his *strength* and *armour* will increase even more; he may also acquire a signature *weapon*.

### Jackrabbit

Jack Walker is a freelance pilot, and a good one, noted for his reflexes and instincts – he’s been described as a born aviator. What few people know is that he is a mutant, born with incredible speed and agility – he can hit 200 mph even in the heart of the city.

Origin: natural mutant  
Background: pilot  
Strength 0, agility 5, mind 0, appeal 0  
Brawl 2, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2  
Superspeed 4, superjump 2  
Boons: expert pilot, double attack  
Flaws: overconfidence  
Lifeblood: 11

Jackrabbit is fast and agile, seldom slowing down for a moment. His attacks and (especially) defences are low compared to other heroes, but he makes the most of speed and agility in battle. With more experience he is likely to lose the overconfidence, learn some martial arts (*mighty fists*), and build some protection (*armour*) into his outfit.

## Flare

Sarah Jones realised she was more than human when she was nearly caught in a flash flood. A young writer out for an evening walk, she saw a wall of water pouring down towards her and the town behind her. Instinctively she raised her arms to ward off the water – and a great protective dome sprang up around her. A natural mutant able to manipulate light and even form solid objects out of it, she is slowly coming to terms with her powers.

Origin: natural mutant  
Background: social (writer)  
Strength 0, agility 2, mind 0, appeal 0  
Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 2, defence 2  
Control (light) 3, flight 2, invisibility (sight and infra-red sight) 2, armour (aura) 2  
Boons: share and enjoy, area attack, finesse  
Flaws: protective, naive  
Lifeblood: 11

Flare is still new and a bit unsure of her powers. She can use her powers to fly at up to 100 mph, and can surround herself with a protective aura. She deals **1d6+3** damage with her light blast, but often uses it to dazzle opponents to set them up for her teammates. As she matures she has the potential to become a potent heroine, boosting her flight, light blasts and aura.

## Kestrel

Kestrel is a private detective, Kate Jones, from a long line of Welsh druids. The blood of her ancestry is unusually strong in her, granting her the power to assume the form of her chosen namesake as well as a nose for the supernatural.

Origin: sorceress  
Background: streetwise detective, magician  
Strength 0, agility 0, mind 3, appeal 3  
Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 3  
Alternate form (kestrel) 4, supersense (sense magic, sixth sense) 2  
Boons: expert (detective), minor arcana  
Flaws: only human  
Lifeblood: 11

### *Kestrel form:*

Strength -1, agility 1, mind 3, appeal 0  
Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 3  
Shrinking 3, flight 1, supersense (sense magic, sixth sense) 2  
Boons: lightning reflexes  
Flaws: fragile  
Lifeblood: 8

Kestrel is not a front-line fighter and knows it, preferring to stay out of fights and leave them to her teammates. She is, however, superb at reconnaissance in animal form, with a working knowledge of minor magics to deal with security systems or briefly distract guards. With more experience her knowledge of magics will broaden and diversify into more combat abilities (*control magic* and *armour*.)

## Pantheon

Richard Hunter was a student in the wrong place at the wrong time, kidnapped by cultists determined to sacrifice him in a twisted ceremony at midwinter. Desperate to escape, he cried out pleas to anyone, or anything, which could hear him. Somehow, he tapped into a reservoir of power. Now, Rick can channel a fraction of the power of any of the gods in the Greek pantheon. Even in his normal form, the power grants him a measure of protection, but he has the flexibility to choose his powers to suit the situation.

Origin: channeler  
Background: academic  
Strength 0, agility 0, mind 2, appeal 2  
Brawl 1, melee 0, ranged 1, defence 3  
Alternate form (Greek gods) 4, armour 2  
Boons: many forms (Greek gods)

### *Sample forms: Apollo*

Strength 0, agility 0, mind 0, appeal 2  
Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 2, defence 3  
Control (fire) 3, armour 2

### *Sample forms: Poseidon*

Strength 2, agility 0, mind 0, appeal 0  
Brawl 0, melee 2, ranged 0, defence 3  
Control (water) 2, weapon (trident) 1, armour 2

### *Sample forms: Zeus*

Strength 6, agility 0, mind 0, appeal 0  
Brawl 2, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 0  
Control (storms) 2, armour 2

Though his alternate forms, individually, are not as powerful as Flare or Qiang, Pantheon makes up for this with versatility. He gauges the opposition or situation, and chooses his form appropriately. With more experience he will channel more power, increasing his *alternate form* power primarily. All his *alternate forms* have *armour 2* as one of their powers.

## Streets-level characters

These characters are built to the streets level: 4 points per pool, with a maximum of 4 in each attribute, ability or power to start.

### The Pulveriser

Everyone could see that crime was getting out of control. Ordinary police were doing their best, often at terrible cost, but they were hampered by red tape, sharp lawyers, and intimidated juries. Time and again crimelords and super-powered villains pulled off spectacular attacks, leaving hospitals at full stretch; time and again they shrugged off the law from the safety of their fortified mansions. Something had to be done. One answer was the top-secret Pulveriser Program: highly trained military operatives equipped with heavy firepower and deniability. The first Pulveriser, a former special forces operative named Max Irons, is just beginning his mission.

Origin: trained normal

Background: military

Strength 2, agility 2, mind 0, appeal 0

Brawl 0, melee 1, ranged 1, defence 2

Armour (flak jacket) 1, combat expert 2, supersense (telescopic vision) 1

Boons: crack shot, melee expert, contacts (military)

Flaws: only human, code of honour

The Pulveriser is a highly trained fighter with a stock of ordinary guns and knives. He easily outclasses normal foes, with +3 to hit and doing **d6+2** damage in melee (with a knife) and **d6** at long range (with a sniper rifle). Against normals, he uses his combat expert power to boost his *defence* skill, but bitter experience has taught him that even Streets-level supers often have armour, and he usually opts to increase his damage against them, preferring to snipe from ambush. With more experience, he will improve his combat abilities and *armour*, become more of a *combat expert*, and acquire various minor *gadgets*.

## The Martian Artist

Martin Constable was once a quiet academic. An archaeologist, he spent his days translating old scrolls and tablets for better-known experts. He always dreamed of making a great discovery and finally getting the recognition he feels he deserves. One day, he was translating an ancient Oriental scroll. To mounting excitement, he realised that it was a treatise on martial arts, with a story that suggested the first trainers came from Mars. Proudly he published his theory – to general derision. To prove his theory, he trained himself from the scroll. Now, he seeks to demonstrate the superiority of his style and raise funds for a proper archaeological trip to Mars.

Origin: trained normal

Background: archaeologist, academic

Strength 1, agility 2, mind 1, appeal 0

Brawl 0, melee 2, ranged 0, defence 2

Weapon (staff) 1, shield (staff blocks) 1, combat expert 2

Boons: melee expert, double attack

Flaws: only human, obsessive

The Martian Artist is a low-powered martial artist wielding a staff. He is obsessed with proving his theory, and a clever villain who could get him and his team to Mars could use this to manipulate him. He uses his *weapon* in combat, often using *double attack* to make two attacks while still able to make a *block* against his opponent.

With more experience he will boost his *attributes* and *combat abilities*, as well as increasing his skills and *combat expertise*, and getting some utility *gadgets*.

## Local-level characters

These characters are built to the local level: 5 point pools, with a maximum of 5 to start.

### Dr. Wyrd

It all started so innocently. An academic interest in folklore and mythology lead Dr Robert Ward into musty libraries and old book collections. One day, when puzzling through a reported spell he accidentally read it aloud - and discovered his innate talent for magic. He started out with the purest of motives – a quest for knowledge and an urge to use it for the greater good. Gradually, though, the quest became all-consuming, and he turned down darker paths. Now, he stands at a crossroads: will he fully embrace the darker passions and open forbidden doors, or will he stand instead as the guardian against the things that lurk in the shadows?

Origin: sorcerer  
Background: magician  
Strength 0, agility 0, mind 3, appeal 1  
Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 2, defence 2  
Control (magic) 3, armour 2, call ally (elementals) 2  
Boons: expert (magician), knowledge not of this plane, finesse  
Flaws: obsession (learn more), only human  
Lifeblood: 11

Dr Wyrd generally calls fire elementals to his aid, backing them up with mystic blasts and summoning more to replace casualties. A smart fighter, he looks to exploit vulnerabilities and always has an escape plan (normally with *finessed* magic spell) prepared. He sometimes prepares one-shot talismans as superweapons against specific opponents. With more experience his power (*control magic*) will increase and he will gain more minor magics (*minor arcana* boon).

### Mr Elastic

Origin: ????  
Background: ????  
Strength ?, agility ?, mind ?, appeal ?  
Brawl ?, melee ?, ranged ?, defence ?  
Elastic body 3  
Boons: ????  
Flaws: ????

### Deep Freeze

Origin: ????  
Background: ????  
Strength ?, agility ?, mind ?, appeal ?  
Brawl ?, melee ?, ranged ?, defence ?  
Control ice 2, armour (ice armour) 2  
Boons:  
Flaws:

## Cavalier (and Yeoman)

Mary Dulac was put in charge of part of her father's business empire at the age of 21, her father wanting her to show she was the person to take over when he retired. Although a capable administrator, Mary found it stifling; she found a kindred spirit in a young technician, Luke Summers, now working for her. Together they designed and built a suit of modern armour, with twin built-in blasters, and a souped-up motorbike (Steed). Cavalier's early runs were only moderately successful; she lacked the flexibility to deal with many situations. Over her protests, Luke started to come with her on her missions, taking the name of Yeoman.

### Cavalier:

Origin: powered armour

Background: business

Strength 0, agility 2, mind 1, appeal 1

Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 2, defence 2

Armour 2, weapon (blaster) 1, vehicle (Steed) 2, sidekick (Yeoman) 2

Boons: onboard computer, double attack

Flaws: powers keyed to object

Lifeflood: 11

### Yeoman:

Origin: gadgeteer

Background: technician

Strength 0, agility 0, mind 2, appeal 0

Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2

Armour 1, weapon (blaster) 1

Boons: gadgets, jury-rig

Flaws: only human, overconfident

Lifeflood: 11

### Steed:

Strength 0, agility 2, mind 0, appeal 0

Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2

Superspeed 2

Boons:

Flaws:

Lifeflood: 11

Neither Cavalier nor Yeoman is, as yet, particularly powerful; Mary knows this, however, and tries to fight smart (rather than fair – she has no truck with chivalric ideas in battle). As she gains experience, they will develop more powerful armour (more *armour* and *weapon*) as well as toughening up Yeoman and improving Steed.



## National-level characters

These characters are built to the National level: 6 point pools, with a maximum of 6 to start.

### Maxima

Maxine Martin was born over 150 years ago, in a quiet town. She grew up to be a likeable, friendly young woman. Unknown to her, though, she is actually a member of a supernatural race of humanoids; left as a baby with a childless couple in a desperate attempt to protect her. Her body stopped aging in her early twenties. Once she realised this and got over the shock, she learned to keep a low profile and move every decade or so. With no family of her own, she has adopted and raised many an unwanted youth; this gives her an extensive network of contacts. After seeing one of her adopted children (an FBI agent) almost killed facing a monster, she has taken up an active role to protect her home – and the people who live in it.

Origin: supernatural

Background: society

Strength 5, agility 5, mind 0, appeal 0

Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2

Superspeed 2, armour (innate invulnerability) 2, control (magic) 2

Boons: mighty fists, long-lived, contacts, tough

Flaws: protective, ???, ???

Lifeflood: 19

Thought nowhere near as tough as The Hunk, Maxima is a more rounded character with strength and agility both beyond human norms. She prefers hand-to-hand combat (strengthened by the magic she has absorbed over the years); her control over magic is currently limited to flight and direct blasts. With more experience, she is likely to grow even stronger and faster, improve her *combat abilities*, and perhaps learn to manifest a *weapon* with her magic.

## Planetary-level characters

These characters are built to the planetary level: 7 point pools, with a maximum of 7 to start.

### The Hunk

He didn't want to be special. While others went to university, he took a job as lifeguard and was content in his job. One autumn evening, though, he saw something bright fall from the sky out in the ocean. Unsure what it was but fearing there was someone in it, he swam out to help. Reaching the impact site, he found a glowing sphere. Hesitantly, he reached out to it – and the energy flared around him. Daniel Hoffman swam into the ocean; The Hunk swam out.

Origin: modified human  
Background: athlete  
Strength 7, agility 0, mind 0, appeal 3  
Brawl 3, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2  
Growth 1, armour 5  
Boons: mighty fists, tough  
Flaws: thinks with his fists  
Lifeblood: 23

The Hunk is incredibly strong, doing **d6+8** damage with his fists. He excels in hand-to-hand combat, though his lack of movement powers and ranged attacks leave him ill-suited to a mobile battle. He is no genius and knows it, so trusts to any companions for tactics; alone, he tends to seek out the toughest opponent and start brawling. As he matures, his agility and combat abilities will improve.

### Gaia

Jahia Okeke was a quiet child, who grew up in a rural Africa. As a child she helped her family plant crops; as teenager she spent more and more time in the fields or in the forests, trying to live in harmony with nature. When the crops failed, she did all that she could to save her people... to no avail. Desperate to save them before hunger forced them to leave, she worked until she collapsed. As she slept, she dreamed that a great spirit spoke to her, saying that the land had been poisoned and granting her the means to cure it. Now known as Gaia, Jahia is a tireless champion of the environment, seeking to mitigate Man's excesses and bring Man and Nature together in harmony.

Origin: channeler  
Background: athlete  
Strength 1, agility 6, mind 0, appeal 0  
Brawl 0, melee 3, ranged 0, defence 4  
Control (nature) 3, weapon (spear) 4  
Boons: finesse, legendary weapon  
Flaws: comes great responsibility  
Lifeblood: 14

Gaia is incredibly agile and accurate with her spear, whether in melee or in ranged combat, though she has as yet little training at fighting. Nature itself responds to her call, sometimes for fighting but more often to avoid combat. Her spear seems to be of normal wood, but one that no known force can bend or break; it returns to her hand when she wills it. As she gains more experience, she will develop more skills at fighting and, perhaps, learn to call allies to her aid.

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## Galactic-level characters

These characters are built to the galactic level: 8 point pools, with a maximum of 8 to start.

## Cosmic-level characters

These characters are built to the cosmic level: 9 point pools, with a maximum of 9 to start.

### Cosmos

A scientist seeking to understand and harness the power of the cosmic background radiation, Peri Astra had no idea that her experiments, crude though they were, had drawn attention from aliens far more advanced than ourselves. Intrigued by her fumbling search for the truth, they imbued her with the power to wield cosmic power directly and charged her with continuing her quest for understanding. Still a keen scientist, she has taken up the mantle of Cosmos and now patrols throughout the local stellar neighbourhood.

Origin: empowered human  
Background: academic (scientist)  
Strength 0, agility 3, mind 3, appeal 0  
Brawl 0, melee 0, ranged 4, defence 3  
Control (cosmic energy) 5, flight 5, armour (force field) 4  
Boons: ultra speed, share and enjoy, translator, expert (scientist)  
Flaws: curious, protective, comes great responsibility  
Lifeflood: 15

Cosmos is one of the most versatile beings in the cosmos, yet retains a down-to-earth attitude. She takes her new role very seriously and loves to explore, but remains very protective towards those weaker than herself. She can use her powers to fly and surround herself with a protective aura, and deals **1d6+5** damage with her cosmic blast. Thanks to *ultra speed* she can fly many times faster than light, covering 5 lightyears per hour. As she matures she will gain more power, but also develop more *combat abilities*, control (*cosmic mastery*) and versatility (*telekinesis*, *area attack*, *finesse*).

### Titan

Born on a distant world, Titan comes from a powerful heritage, but his size and strength dwarfs even that of his compatriots. Rejected by his species, he took to wandering the galaxy in a small scout ship until he got caught in the middle of an energy surge that left him stranded. He would have remained stranded between the stars had Cosmos not found him. She offered to take him home, but honour compelled him to travel with her instead. The two are now firm, if unlikely, friends and allies.

Origin: visitor from another world  
Background: explorer  
Strength 8, agility 0, mind 0, appeal 0  
Brawling 3, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2  
Growth 7, armour 7  
Boons: mighty fists, tough, area attack, knowledge from another planet  
Flaws: code of honour, what is that thing, unearthly background  
Lifeflood 32

Titan is a straightforward, unsubtle combatant: his fists are his greatest weapon, and he uses them. When fully grown his fists do **1d6+15** damage, but seldom uses this against living creatures; his greatest weakness is the difficulty he has hitting small targets, so he often uses an *area attack* instead. His wanderings gave him a good knowledge of the local stellar neighbourhood, but he

remains confused about many Earth customs. With more experience, he will gain more skill at using his powers (*brawling* and *defence*) and *finesse*.

## Villains

### Pack

Padraig Connell was a young mutant. Gifted with the power to split into 5 separate bodies, but no great fighting skill, he shunned the costumed antics of his fellow mutants and lived more quietly. He uses his multiple forms to keep up with studying and a job while enjoying an active social life. Things took a dark turn one evening when he was attacked by a great beast. Now, when the moon is bright, each of his bodies becomes a wolf, and he goes for a hunt. He's starting to enjoy it.

Level: local villain

Origin: natural mutant / modified human

Background: academic, animal

Strength 2, agility 2, mind 0, appeal -1

Brawling 2, melee 0, ranged 0, defence 2

Armour 2, regeneration 2, replication 4

Boons: mighty fists, tough

Flaws: vulnerability (silver), what is that thing?

Lifeblood 15

What's worse than fighting a werewolf? Fighting a whole pack of them, all under the control of a single mind. Pack fight as a pack, harassing a target from all sides. Any of his bodies that is attacked immediately switches to defence (dodging), leaving the other members to launch attacks unscathed. He will often leave one body out of the fight entirely, to allow it to flee. With more experience, Pack will grow stronger, faster, and more cunning (*combat expertise*) - until he is stopped.

### Psycho

### The Serpent

## Hell's Belles

### Harpy

### Brimstone

## Banshee

Moiri Lea grew up learning how to pull con jobs. With her innocent child's face, it was easy for her to distract adults while her parents quietly relieved them off their belongings. She always knew her parents kept secrets, and kept moving on, always afraid that they would be caught. She thought they meant the police. She was wrong. One terrible stormy night she dreamed of a great howling spirit from Celtic folklore, and in her dream she struck a bargain with the spirit: its power in exchange for her help fulfilling its missions. Now, Moiri is the Banshee, and she splits her times between working with the rest of the Belles and solo missions of terror for the spirit within her.

Level: national menace

Origin: channeler

Background: criminal

Strength 0, agility 2, mind 0, appeal 3

Brawling 0, melee 0, ranged 2, defence 2

Control (sound) 4, intangibility 2, Invisibility (normal and IR sight) 2, supersense (locate specific prey) 1

Boons: elemental mastery (sound), area attack, minions

Flaws: vulnerability (cold iron), code of honour

Lifeblood 12

Banshee is now an avatar for an ancient Celtic spirit with a grudge against the modern world. She can drift through walls as if they were not there, and fade out when she wants to hide – only a chill in the air revealing her presence. Her scream is a devastating attack doing **1d6+4** damage. The spirit directs her to hunt down those who seek to hold back chaos and darkness, striving to bring about a return to an age of myth and superstition. To help with this, it will give direct her towards the named prey (her *supersense*). Banshee likes to toy with her targets and stretch the hunt out, letting them think they have escaped. However, by ancient compact (*code of honour*) she may only hunt a target for 1 week: if they survive that long, she must let them go free. With more experience, Banshee will develop more combat abilities (*ranged* and *defence*) and *finesse*.

## Master list of backgrounds

Academic (or Scientist)  
Animal  
Archaeologist  
Athlete  
Business  
Criminal  
Exotic  
Explorer (or Astronaut)  
Magician  
Medic  
Military (or Agent)  
Pilot  
Reporter  
Society  
Streetwise detective  
Technician

## Master list of origins

Android  
Channeler  
Empowered human  
Gadgeteer  
Modified human  
Natural mutant  
Non-human race  
Power suit  
Psychic  
Sorcerer  
Supernatural  
Trained normal  
Visitor from another plane  
Visitor from another world

## Master list of boons

Ally  
Area attack  
Born leader  
Burnout  
Contacts  
Crack shot  
Different mind  
Elemental mastery  
Expert  
Double attack  
Fabulously wealthy  
Finesse  
Flexible mind  
Gadgets  
Good reputation  
Imitation  
Jury-rig  
Knowledge not of this plane  
Knowledge not of this planet  
Legendary weapon  
Lightning reflexes  
Long-lived  
Many forms  
Melee expert  
Membership has its perks  
Mighty fists  
Minions  
Minor arcana  
Onboard computer  
Portal  
Ranged block  
Safe houses  
Sanctum  
Self-contained  
Share and enjoy  
Sticks to the walls  
Strong willed  
Tough  
Translator  
Truly heroic  
Ultra speed



## Master list of flaws

Always broke  
Arch enemy  
Attacks only  
Berserk fury  
Comes great responsibility  
Curious  
Egotistical  
Fixed size  
Fragile  
Gliding  
Naïve  
Normal identity  
Obsession  
Only human  
Overconfident  
Poor reflexes  
Poor reputation  
Powers linked to object  
Standard protocols  
Strange diet  
Thinks with your fists  
Unearthly background  
Vulnerability  
Weak willed  
What is that thing?

## Master list of powers

Alternate form  
Armour  
Call ally  
Combat expert  
Control (portfolio)  
Elastic body  
Flight  
Growth  
Intangibility  
Invisibility  
Psychic  
Regeneration  
Replication  
Shield  
Shrinking  
Sidekick  
Superjump  
Supersenses  
Superspeed  
Telekinesis  
Teleport  
Vehicle  
Weaken  
Weapon