

# DIGITAL HERO

# #35

MAR 2006



In this issue:

- Indians
- Eskimos



- Zombies
- Witches
- Madmen



- Impacts
- Blasts
- Destroyers



# Table of Contents

## HERO HIGHWAY

### WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – Take a slow boat to China with the *Asian Bestiary 1 and 2*. 2

### HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – More options for Entangle. 3

### YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

The terrorist Veerappan became known among his supporters as the “Robin Hood of India.” 5

### LEFTOVER HERO

Some of the villains from *Masterminds and Madmen* escaped from the very book itself, and ended up here. 13

## DEMOLITION DERBY

### ADVANCED VELOCITY RULES

Move Bys, Move Throughs, Falling, and Knockback are reworked, with a more unified damage structure. 33

### SUPERHERO MARTIAL ARTS

Advanced fighting techniques aren't just for the guys with black belts. Energy blasters and VIPER agents get in on the act. 36

## CHARACTER CORNER

### YOU GOTTA HAVE CULTURE: MOKEN

The Sea Gypsies of the Andaman Sea are a nomadic tribe skilled in diving and fighting with the spear. 38

### MYTHIC HERO

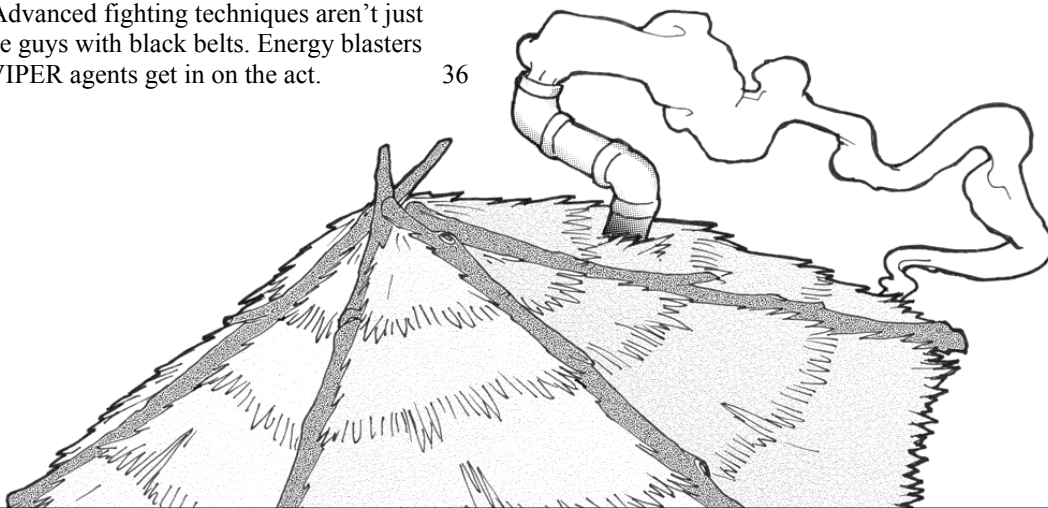
Baba Yaga is a very powerful witch from Russian folklore, with or without her chicken-legged hut. 41

### NEHKOJIN

It's flying, blasting cat-people from space! And they brought Kayli the Destroyer with them! 47

### ZOMBIE HERO

Hordes of walking corpses need love, too. Now they can terrorize your players in any time and genre. 57



HERO System™ is DOJ, Inc.'s trademark for its roleplaying system.

HERO System Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

Champions Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

Justice Inc., Danger International, Dark Champions, Fantasy Hero, and Star Hero Copyright © 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

No part of this electronic magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or computerization, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher: DOJ, Inc., 1 Haight Street, Suite A, San Francisco, California 94102.

Issue #35 (March 2006)

## DIGITAL HERO

### Publisher

Hero Games

### Editor

Dave Mattingly

### Authors

Rob Hudson

John R. Ivicsek, Jr.

Joshua Keezer

Steven S. Long

Gary Mei

Justin Mitchell

Michael Surbrook

Stanley Teriaca

Jason Walters

### Artists

Bradley Bleeker

Michael Surbrook

### Cover

Mark Sztaba

### Online

[herogames.com](http://herogames.com)

### To Subscribe

[herogames.com/digitalhero](http://herogames.com/digitalhero)

[digitalhero](http://herogames.com/digitalhero)



# When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

If all goes well, February should see the release of two related books: *the Asian Bestiaries!*

## OUT OF ASIA!

Oceangoing centipedes, dragon-hunting centipedes a hundred feet long, dragons with the heads of tigers, tiger-headed elephants, lion-bodied elephants, crow-headed beings with swordfighting skills to rival the best human warriors, fish-tailed elephants, an eel-fish 700 miles in length.... Asian folklore and mythology has plenty of strange and unusual creatures that make excellent encounters for characters in just about any type of campaign – be it *Fantasy Hero*, *Ninja Hero*, or even *Pulp Hero*. Up until now, finding information on the different monsters of Asian myth has been difficult. It's not hard to learn about the best-know Asian monsters, such as Chinese dragons, Indian *rakshasa*, and Japanese *oni*. But it takes a lot more effort to dig up the details on the Korean *tokkaebi*, the Mongolian *olgol-khorkhol*, the creatures of Thailand's mythical Himmaman Forest, or the Filipino *tikbalang* – and in many cases information about them in English is hard to come by.

To fill this gap, *The Asian Bestiary, Vol. I* (due out early February) and *Vol. II* (due out late February) contain dozens of character sheets for a wide variety of animals, monsters, supernatural entities, and other beings from the folklore and myths of the countries and regions of Asia. When author Michael Surbrook approached me with a proposal about doing an Asian Bestiary, I told him Hero was only interested if he could research, write, and create the most thorough, detailed book on the subject ever created for gaming – the book that would make all other books unnecessary. And he did it. In fact, he did it so well there was too much material to fit into one book – we had to split it into two volumes. Volume I covers China, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Volume II covers Japan, the Philippines, Burma, Korea, Malaysia, and Tibet. The beings described in these books range from intelligent beings, to monsters far more “bestial” in nature, to a few unique creatures. Many of the character sheets contain lists of optional powers and abilities, or even variations of the creatures themselves, allowing you to create a creature to fit nearly any character or scenario.

Since many Westerners have little (if any) familiarity with many of the creatures presented in this book, *The Asian Bestiaries* include culture- and location-specific information and

suggestions so you can understand them in their proper context. The “Campaign Use” sections of the character sheets often includes capsule descriptions of well-known folktales dealing with the creature in question to show you how it might appear or be used in your game. But don't let this stop you from using the creature however you want to. As always, the comments given with each entry are there to illustrate the creature's habits and to define its motivations, not to force you into using it in one specific fashion – you can (and should) make whatever changes you want to suit your game and campaign setting.

As “monster books,” *The Asian Bestiaries* have strong appeal for GMs, but they've got lots of information that's useful for players as well. First, many of the creatures and monsters they cover are ideal for Summon-based spells and powers, or as shapes to Multiform into – having the full character sheet at your fingertips makes the process of creating the spell or power you want easy. Second, the intelligent humanoid creatures described in the book often include Package Deals so you can use them as PC races. If you're looking for something that's really different for your next character, try making him a *Changbimin*, a *Heiren*, or a *Zagwi* instead of an Elf, Dwarf, or Goblin! Last but not least, many of the creatures have magical powers you can convert into spells, while others have magical weapons you can use as the basis for similar objects in your own campaign.

So get ready to step outside the usual realms of Fantasy adventure and try something different – the exotic monsters and creatures of Asia!

— Steven S. Long  
HERO System Line Developer



# HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

## All Tied Up and No Place to Go

### MORE OPTIONS FOR ENTANGLE

Entangle's one of the most flexible and useful powers in the book, so I'm often thinking about interesting uses for it, or answering questions about specific aspects of it. Here's a hodge-podge of additional rules, options, and ideas for Entangle.

### Taking No Damage

The *Takes No Damage From Attacks* Advantage usually suffices to protect an Entangle from outside attacks. However, it still allows characters to target an Entangle specifically at -3 OCV. That doesn't work as well for Entangles whose special effect involves no physical manifestation at all. The classic example is a paralysis poison or spell – there are no ropes, chains, mystic bonds of force, or any other (quasi-)physical object confining the victim. It might also apply to some particularly strong forms of Mental Paralysis.

To represent this, expand the concept of the *Takes No Damage From Attacks* Advantage to the +1 level: for a +1 Advantage, the Entangle cannot be attacked, damaged, or affected by outside attackers at all – only the victim can apply his STR (or other forms of attack, as appropriate) to break out. However, a character buying such an Entangle must specify one reasonably common way to remove the Entangle; this does not qualify for any sort of Limitation (such as Susceptible). Examples include the antidote for paralysis poison, or various counterspells for a “Hold Person in Place” spell. Applying this method takes a Full Phase and removes the Entangle entirely, without the need for any breakout rolls or the like. (Depending on special effects and the circumstances, the GM might require the character applying the method to succeed with an Attack Roll or the like to “touch” the victim with the “cure.”)

This form of the Advantage should be considered a “Caution Sign” power, if not even “Stop Sign”; it could cause significant game balance problems. The GM should increase the value of the Advantage if necessary.

## Entangles and Large Targets

Typically, a character using Entangle attacks a roughly human-sized target. However, some issues might arise if a character uses an Entangle to attack a target that's significantly larger than human size – such as a destroyer (or other large vehicle), some types of giants, or a Ravening Star-Beast from Altair. For some GMs, that may create questions about how effective an Entangle can be against such a target. As the rules stand, there isn't any restriction on Entangle based on size – a character can stop a halfling, a human, a 10-foot tall Denebian native, and a gigantic starship with the same Entangle. The odds are that large characters and vehicles will be strong enough to break out with just Casual STR, but by a strict reading of the rules the target could still be reduced to DCV 0 until it can perform a Zero Phase Action to break out.

If you consider this a problem in your game, here's a rule to end it, based on the Size Templates on page 575 of *The HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Revised* rulebook:

- an ordinary Entangle can affect a Large target, Human-sized target, or any target smaller than Human size normally.
- to affect a larger target, the Entangle must be at least as wide as half the Reach (Stretching) bonus listed in the Size Template (*e.g.*, at least 1” wide to affect an Enormous target, at least 8” wide to affect a Gargantuan target). This width can come from the *Area Of Effect* Advantage, being Spread, or the like. If the Entangle's smaller than that, one of two things can happen:

1. The target receives a STR bonus equal to the PRE bonus listed in its Size Template to break free from it (*e.g.*, +15 STR for a Huge target)
2. At the GM's option, based on special effects, the situation, and other considerations, the Entangle may not affect the target at all (alternately, the target immediately gets a Casual STR roll to break free; this is an Action that takes no time).

Making an Entangle larger than the minimum listed size has no effect (*i.e.*, it doesn't make the Entangle harder to break out of).



## **THE *AFFECTS LARGE TARGETS* ADVANTAGE**

Alternately or in addition, the GM can establish an *Affects Large Targets* Advantage that allows an Entangle to affect a large target normally even if the Entangle isn't sufficiently "wide." This would be appropriate for, e.g., a Paralysis Spell that only affects a single target but works equally well against titans and sprites.

For a +¼ Advantage, an Entangle can affect Large and Enormous targets normally. In game terms, it negates up to +10 bonus STR to break out under the system described above; it does not prevent the target from using his regular STR, Pushing that STR if appropriate, or the like. For example, an Enormous target hit with an *Affects Large Targets* (+¼) Entangle doesn't get his normal +10 STR bonus to break out; the Advantage negates that and restricts him to using his just ordinary STR.

For a +½ Advantage, the Entangle can affect Huge and Gigantic targets normally. The Advantage negates up to +20 STR bonus under the system described above.

For a +1 Advantage, the Entangle can affect Gargantuan or larger targets normally. The Advantage negates any STR bonus under the system described above.

### **Reactive Entangle**

The *Backlash* Advantage causes a character trapped in an Entangle to also take any damage he inflicts on the Entangle in an attempt to break free from it. At the GM's option, a character can define an Entangle's Backlash as *Reactive*. This means that instead of reflecting damage at the victim, the Advantage causes the Entangle to get stronger – the classic "Don't squirm, you'll just make it tighter" effect. For each 2 DCs of damage done to the Entangle, increase its BODY by 1 (this may in effect "heal" the damage the attack does). The GM can alter the damage-to-extra-BODY ratio, rule that any successful attack automatically does 1 BODY damage regardless of Reactive, or make any other changes he sees fit to maintain game balance.



# You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“Defeat the Defeat before the Defeat  
Defeats you.” – Ancient Tamil Proverb

The Sathyamangalam forest was simply the most menacing place Gopal had ever seen – and coming from a reporter who had covered the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, that was saying something. The trees towered above the muddy road his army jeep bounded down, leaning against one another overhead in a desperate attempt to block out the sun. It was considerably cooler and dryer than the young journalist had expected as well. The Sathyamangalam wasn't your stereotypical Indian jungle with monkeys and bright green palmetto bushes brushing under your armpits, either. It was filled with brambles, dense scrub, and an eerie silence that was almost its own kind of sound.

Gopal had been to countries smaller than the Sathyamangalam.

The people who inhabited this land were hard, distrustful, and quarrelsome. The hand of India's regional government had lain heavily upon them for generations, ruthlessly crushing numerous attempts at rebellion. And here he was, foolishly seeking out the most dangerous and rebellious jungle inhabitant of them all. In some ways, Gopal mused, the man he sought wasn't so much an *aberration* as a *purification* of a way of looking at the world that was centuries old when the first wave's of Islam's followers swooped down upon the subcontinent. He was simply better at being a Sathyamangalam Tamil than anyone else had been in generations.

“This is one of the most dangerous places in all of southern India,” shouted Chief Harikrishna as he fought valiantly with the steering wheel in a desperate attempt to keep his jeep on the rutted road. “We have a saying in this country: if the elephants don't get you, Veerappan most certainly will!”

Two Special Task Force commandoes clung to the vehicles roll bar directly behind Gopal, their expressions grim and wary. Veerappan had agreed to grant him an interview but the authorities weren't exactly taking the bandit at his word. Lies,

deception, betrayal, and ambush had been practiced by constable and dacoit alike in the dirty little undeclared war that had raged for decades across the state forest, with neither trusting the other even the slightest amount. The STF men had agreed to take him as far as the prearranged rendezvous point but no farther. They had also only agreed to take Gopal a day earlier than he had arranged with Veerappan.

At last the jeep came to a halt at a small clearing near a stream. The reporter unloaded his backpack, and then turned to thank the STF commander. The tough looking man waved his hand as if to say, “it is nothing.”

“Listen,” began Harikrishna, “there are a few things I should tell you about Veerappan before we...”

He never got to finish his sentence. Three shots rang out Bang! Bang! Bang! The three men spilled out of the jeep to the ground, their eyes wide and lifeless with surprise. Each had been shot through the forehead with an almost surgical precision. Gopal's mouth dropped open in horror. He screamed in a voice that sounded to his ears like it came from someone else's mouth: high pitched, feminine, and terrified. He threw himself to the ground and waited for his own end to come.

But it didn't.

A moment later he looked up to a grim face glaring down at him. It belonged to a man dressed in green camouflage, an enormous hunting rifle cradled in his arms with all the gentleness a young mother might show her newborn. He was not a large man, yet he filled up the reporter's worldview utterly. A pair of black eyes burned above an imposing mustachio that cascaded down the man's face like a waterfall. He offered Gopal his hand. Still in shock, the reporter took it and stood up.

Three other men who looked a great deal like the first were stripping his former hosts of their weapons, wallets, and watches. The jeep was being emptied of anything of

## VEERAPPAN QUOTES

“He lies low and hits as and when he gets an opportunity. In the jungle [there is but one] rule: might is right. Veerappan understands the language of force and can be dealt only with [using] it”

— Major General MP Bhagat, the inspector general of the National Security Guard

“Every measure should be taken to bring Veerappan to book. No one can be allowed to play with the people's life.”

— Uday Bhaskar, deputy director IDSA

“You can go where you choose [in the forest]. If the elephants don't get you, Veerappan certainly will.”

— STF chief T. Harikrishna

“As a criminal apprentice, he [Veerappan] did not feel the need to be demonstrative with his moustache. As crime grew on him, he turned up his moustache. A weak man is trying to appear strong. His [final] disheveled moustache is the sign of a man who has become unmindful with age.”

— Dr. B.N.

Chattoraji, renowned expert upon criminals, deviants, and psychopaths



“Veerappan should not have been allowed to live so long. I am relieved to know that he has been killed at last. It is surprising that he survived ’til now. God has ultimately given the verdict.”

— film star “Dr. Raj”  
Rajkumar

conceivable value. His own backpack was also being methodically rifled through.

“I... I was promised safe passage,” stuttered Gopal. “An interview with Veerappan...”

The man with the burning eyes chuckled. It was a mirthless laugh.

“I am Veerappan.” He said. “And you have not been harmed. Your companions, however, had no such agreement with me. As they well knew, I might add.”

He motioned at the dead STF commander lying on the ground.

“I expected better of Harikrishna.” Veerappan almost sighed, sounding genuinely mournful. “He was doing so much better than his three predecessors. They were thick. He was not. I had hoped that he would realize that I would realize that he would realize that I was laying a trap for him. He should have known that I would know that he would drop you off a day earlier to avoid it.

Veerappan sniffed.

“So I came three days ago. He should have known that and dropped you off at least six days ago with a weeks worth of supplies. Oh, well, maybe the next one will be smarter.”

“So... so,” Gopal stammered. “This whole interview was just a trap so that you could kill the head of the STF?”

“Oh, no!” laughed Veerappan. “That is just a bonus! I really *am* going to give you an interview. Ask any question you like. Then, when we are done, we’ll find out exactly how many rupee you’re actually worth to your editor at the *Hindustan Times*...”

Considered by many to be the most dangerous man in India, Koose Muniswamy Veerappan rose from obscure poverty to become the most infamous bandit in that nation’s modern history. During his 20-year reign as the uncontested outlaw king of the massive Sathyamangalam forest, he murdered some 124 people, poached an estimated 200 elephants, smuggled ivory worth some 2.5 million American dollars, and illegally harvested 10,000 tons of endangered sandalwood valued at 22 million dollars. At the height of his fame a bounty of 1.1 million dollars was placed upon his head by the government. The state government of Tamil Nadu even created a special task force, the STF, whose only purpose was the capture or killing of Veerappan and his minions.

With his gang’s help Veerappan pulled off several infamous kidnappings. His abduction of South Indian film star “Dr. Raj” Rajkumar ended well, with the actor released after some 109 days in captivity. Unfortunately for all concerned, the capture of former state minister H. Nagappa ended in tragedy when the politician was found dead in the forest after three months. These high profile activities lead to an intensifying of efforts by the STF. Veerappan was allegedly killed in a carefully laid ambush along with two of his associates on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004.... although photographic evidence of his remains seems to support his wife’s contention that the infamous brigand was tortured and killed in captivity by corrupt provincial police.



**Veerappan**



**Veerappan**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
14	STR	4	12-	175 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
13	COM	2	12-	
14	PD	5		Total: 14 PD (6 rPD)
13	ED	3		Total: 13 ED (6 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	4		
38	END	1		
39	STUN	8		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 106**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Leaping: 2½"/5"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Perks**

- 9 Contact: Working People's Party (Useful, Limited by Identity, Good Relationship, Organization) 11-
- 9 Contact: various Tamil extremist groups (Contacts, Useful, Limited by Identity, Good Relationship, Organization x3) 8-
- 5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military Equipment
- 7 Favors: Various Corrupt Politicians and Police
- 35 Followers: Approximately 50 skilled normal members of his gang
- 5 Money: Well Off
- 15 Reputation: "Robin Hood" of India (A large group) 14-, +5/+5d6

**Talents**

- 12 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)

**Resource Points**

- 20 Equipment Points: 200
- 0 Vehicle/Base Points: 0
- 0 Follower/Contact Points: 0
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

**Skills**

- 24 +3 with All Combat
- 9 +3 vs. Hit Location Modifiers with All Attacks
- 9 +3 vs. Range Modifier with All Attacks
- 3 AK: Karnataka Province 12-
- 3 AK: Sathyamangalam Forest 12-
- 3 AK: Tamil Nadu Province 12-
- 3 Breakfall 12-
- 3 Bribery 13-
- 3 Climbing 12-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 3 Demolitions 12-
- 3 Interrogation 13-
- 0 Language: Tamil (Basic, Literate)
- 2 Navigation (Land) 12-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 6 PS: Kidnapper 15-
- 6 PS: Poacher 15-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 7 Stealth 14-
- 10 Survival (Mountain, Temperate/Subtropical Forests, Tropical Forests) 15-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 5 Tracking 13-
- 3 Trading 13-
- 3 Ventriloquism 12-
- 4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 244**

**Total Cost: 350**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 25 DNPC: Wife and Children 11- (Normal, Group x4 DNPCs)
- 20 Hunted: BSF 8- (Mo Pow, Public ID, Harshly Punish)
- 25 Hunted: STF 11- (Mo Pow, Public ID, Harshly Punish)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Dacoit Code of Honor (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: Most Dangerous Man in India, 11- (Extreme)
- 50 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 150**

**EQUIPMENT**

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dmg	STUNx	Shots	Notes
Galil Hunter	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	5	13 STR Min, 2H
AK-47	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	14 STR Min, 2H
CZ100	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	10	9 STR Min
F. Grenades	+0	+0	1d6+1X	1d6-1	1	RBS
Machete	+0	—	1d6	0	—	10 STR Min

**Gear**

Camouflage clothing, large backpack, binoculars



## Veerappan

**Background/History:** Koose Muniswamy Veerappan was born in the village of Gopinatham in the Indian providence of Karnataka on January 18<sup>th</sup> of 1952. Although born poor, Veerappan was a member of the Tamil-speaking Vanniar (or Kshatriyas) caste that traditionally provided the Hindu world with its warriors and noblemen. Memories of past ancestral glory must have haunted the young Tamil as he herded the family cattle along the edges of the massive forests near his village; he deeply resented his humble place in the world. His family's poverty also brought him into direct contact with the local police force, which was both corrupt as well as particularly brutal.

As a boy, young Koose often accompanied older family members into the Sathyamangalam forest, a vast wilderness that he found a natural affinity for. At the age of ten he brought down his first antelope, which brought him to the attention of Sevia Gounder, an accomplished hunter, poacher, and bandit that specialized in the illegal ivory trade. Koose joined the older man's gang. He shot his first tusker (a male elephant) at the age of ten, becoming a full member after he killed a rival poacher at the age of 17. Soon after, he was captured by the police and tortured, but escaped under suspicious circumstances after presumably paying his jailors a bribe. This was a pattern that was to reoccur several times in the bandit's life as he manipulated the corrupt police officials of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka providences.

Koose also began to go under the singular moniker of Veerappan, the only name that he would use for the rest of his life. He grew a distinctive handlebar mustache known as a *kattabomman* that became his trademark and grew to be the "uniform" of his outlaw followers. He slowly began to assume command of Gounder's poaching operation, brining in his own family to help him with his work and allowing the older man a sort of fugitive retirement. He also began to deliberately display the frightening, casual brutality that would cause his name to be whispered in fear throughout the world's most populous democracy. He called truces with rival gang leaders, then got them drunk, shot them, and assumed control of their operations. He routinely killed forestry officials, government rangers, and any policeman foolish enough to pursue him into the wilderness. He habitually murdered villagers who informed on him, decapitating them and hanging their heads from a pole in the village center or chopping up their bodies for fishing bait.

All of these horrific activities had a point. Raised in obscure poverty but born of noble blood, Veerappan wanted to be feared and

respected not only by the poor Tamils of his native providence, but all of Indian society as well. It also had the beneficial effect of keeping the authorities at a distance as he ran his profitable poaching and smuggling operations in the national forests of the southwest. Veerappan is reputed to have harvested and smuggled an amazing 24 million American dollars worth of ivory and sandalwood in his life! He also developed a profitable sideline in kidnapping local businessmen for ransom. Yet not everything the outlaw did was evil or violent. He distributed a sizable amount of his illegal wealth to the starving, rural poor of the regions he haunted, earning him the cooperation of many of them. His murdering of local law enforcement, and the subsequent fear that he inspired in them, likewise served to make him a hero to hundreds of thousands of desperate people, kept in line by a police force that used bribery, torture, murder, and rape as tools in their daily work.

After several decades of low-level conflict, things began to heat up between Veerappan and the police in 1990. He shot and beheaded the deputy conservator of forests as revenge for his sister's death, killed two police officers in retaliation for the killings of two members of his gang, and killed another four officials for straying into his territory in the Sathyamangalam. In retaliation the government of Karnataka organized an elite unit, the Special Task Force (or STF), whose only job was to bring in Veerappan – dead or alive.

Then the killing really got started.

The STF harassed, arrested, allegedly tortured, and killed numerous members of the bandit's family in their ceaseless campaign to lure him out of the wilderness. In retaliation he launched well-planned attacks on regional police stations, killing numerous policemen, and making off with arms and ammunition. Using fake informants he lured the STF leader and 25 of his men into an ambush, then killed him along with six of his men using hand grenades. The police retaliated by killing four members of his gang, so Veerappan blew up a bus containing 22 passengers (many of whom were police). At this point the Tamil Nadu regional government formed its own elite unit, the Border Security Force (or BSF). Working with the STF the two units managed to kill six and arrest 19 members of Veerappan's group. He retaliated by killing six more officers.

By 1993 both sides began to weary of the constant killing. It was becoming increasingly difficult for the authorities to find men brave (or foolish) enough to confront Veerappan. The bandit likewise had suffered greatly. His profitable poaching and smuggling operations had been severely impacted, many of his men arrested or killed, and his family decimated. Even

## VEERAPPAN PLOT SEEDS

*Kidnapped!:* Tired of having their members ransomed by the infamous bandit of Sathyamangalam, a cartel of Karnataka businessmen hire the mercenary PCs to take care of him once and for all. Once in the forest, however, the hunters quickly become the hunted....

*The Occupier:* The year is 2003. With neither the army nor the Superhero Division seemingly able to stop Dr. Destroyer's conquest of Southern India, it is left to legendary criminal Veerappan organize a resistance out of the areas dacoits, fugitive policemen, army veterans, forest rangers, and a few low-powered vigilantes and villains (the PCs). Can this ragtag opposition hope to stand up to the mighty War-Walker combat robots and superpowered minions?

*The STF:* The PCs are well-trained, honest Indian policemen from the northern provinces, recently assigned to the infamous STF for the specific purpose of brining Veerappan to justice – alive. Expecting to be greeted warmly by the local people, they find instead that they are viewed as hated



occupiers. They also discover that STF is corrupt, brutal, and has no intention of letting the legendary bandit live. Can they bring him to justice in the face of overwhelming opposition from within and without their own organization?

Muthulakshmi, his 20-year-old wife and mother of his two daughters, had been arrested (then presumably tortured) on unspecified charges. Having taught himself to read and write using old copies of newspapers, Veerappan had learned of Phoolan Devi, the infamous “Bandit Queen” of Uttar Pradesh who had been pardoned and entered politics as member of the Samajwadi Party. He agreed to an interview by a journalist working for *The Independent*, where he made clear his desire to surrender and lay down his arms in return for amnesty. While being extremely frank about his violent past, the middle-aged dacoit revealed his desire to found an orphanage and seek a career in politics.

Although the families of Veerappan’s victims vehemently and publicly opposed any discussion of amnesty, it was most likely the frightening specter of the outlaw poacher entering politics that frightened the government into refusal. Already viewed as a modern “Robin Hood” figure by an increasingly politically active lower class and embraced as a symbol by various Tamil and Vanniar political parties, the authorities were undoubtedly concerned not with whether he *could* enter politics, but just *how far* he could go once he did. For his part, Veerappan was 45 and desperately dreamed of coming out of the wilderness to enjoy his middle age with some sort of dignity. With his offer refused, he embarked upon a series of high profile kidnappings designed to generate publicity, sympathy, and perhaps a bit of cold hard cash. He 1997 he kidnapped and later released wildlife Indian photographers Krupakar and Senani. He kidnapped and held nine forestry service officials for 44 days, offering to surrender directly to the president of India in exchange for a two-year sentence and a five million-rupee compensation for the families of his victims. The offer was refused, although the kidnappings generated a great deal of publicity.

Still, the noose was tightening around Veerappan’s operation. After voluntarily surrendering to the authorities, his brother Arjunan “committed suicide” during an interrogation. His lieutenant Rangaswamy also died in custody after surrendering. With it becoming increasingly apparent that neither he nor any member of his organization was going to be allowed to live to stand trial, Veerappan decided to pull off the most famous kidnapping in Indian history. He abducted “Dr. Raj” Rajkumar, the most famous movie star in the providence of Karnataka, and held him for 109 days for a ransom equivalent to five million American dollars. His extremely political ransom note, which highlighted the suffering of the Tamil people, set off a wave of race riots in which Karnataka people damaged almost three million

American dollars worth of Tamil people’s property.

Even more audaciously, Veerappan then offered to allow former Karnataka governor H. Nagappa, a moderately popular ex-politician, to skip over the “captivity” part of kidnapping in exchange for paying his ransom in advance. Nagappa refused, surrounding himself with an army of security personnel, almost all of who were killed when Veerappan abducted him as promised a month later. This seizure didn’t go as smoothly as the last, unfortunately, when the body of the former minister was found in the woods three months later. Although the authorities announced to an enraged public that the dacoit leader had murdered the former governor, several police sources claim that the bullet found in his body was fired from a rifle belonging to the STF.

With a bounty of 1.1 million American dollars on his head and much of the public turned against him, Veerappan found it increasingly difficult to evade capture. Through slow, patient attrition the authorities had reduced the strength of his once mighty gang from 150 to 8. STF and BSF undercover agents were everywhere, posing as waiters, bus drivers, and paramedics in villages bordering the Sathyamangalam forest. To make matters worse he was also beginning to have eye problems. Desperate to see an optometrist, the aging bandit agreed to be taken in the back of an ambulance to see a sympathetic Tamil doctor on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Unfortunately for Veerappan, the driver was a member of the STF. At a prearranged location some 75 miles southeast of Bangalore the driver leapt from the seat of his vehicle, allowing the STF a Bonnie and Clyde style “shootout” in which the ambulance was riddled with hundreds of bullets, killing Veerappan and two of his followers.

Yet allegations about the nature of the infamous bandit’s death remain. His wife claims that her husband had been captured by the police several days before his supposed death, then presumably tortured and executed. Certainly the only postmortem photo of Veerappan released by the Indian government, which shows him unharmed except for a single bullet wound above his left eye, seems to support this claim, as does the fact that the STF insisted on his remains immediate cremation for “security reasons.” It’s certainly a fact that Veerappan had told journalists in interviews that he had bribed politicians as well as the police, and would reveal every corrupt deal if he was ever brought to trial. What remains sure is that, although his passing was widely mourned by the poor of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu provinces, almost everyone else in India breathed a sigh of relief when they learned that Koose Muniswamy Veerappan lay dead.

**Personality/Motivation:** It would be extremely easy for an American to misunderstand Veerappan, to either consider him a ruthless villain, a romantic hero, or a tragic political figure. In truth he is all three: a paradoxical, violent man shaped by an impoverished upbringing in an extremely rigid, class-based society. Which is not to say that the bandit leader isn't a depraved killer (he is), that he doesn't take a stand against corrupt and brutal authority figures (he does), and that he didn't have informed (if self-serving) political views. His actions *cannot* be excused but, unlike those of a random serial killer, they can be understood.

Whether Veerappan is a principled villain, a morally compromised hero, or something in between very much depends on your culture, ethical views, and background. He has surprisingly refined tastes for a forest bandit, with a great love of the classical music of India and an appreciation for well-made American films (he has reputedly watched *The Godfather* over 100 times). He regularly obtains and reads Tamil language newspapers to keep himself politically informed. Veerappan is also religious, praying every day, and quite faithful to his young wife. Allegations of his marital infidelity have been proven to be rumors started by the STF to discredit him. He also supposedly murdered several of his own children and followers, although these may too be rumors deliberately spread to reduce his popularity. We will probably never know.

Veerappan is a brutal killer, although to be fair he doesn't slay people indiscriminately. He kills for revenge, self defense, or to make a point. His typical targets are law enforcement, the STF, forestry officials, and police informers. As a general rule he tries to keep collateral damage to a minimum, although he will sacrifice innocents under certain circumstances. By definition a terrorist with a grudge against the regional Indian government, his murders often involve some sort of grisly theater, such as leaving decapitated heads in public places as a warning.

Whether anyone likes it or not, Veerappan is also a Tamil political figure with ties to legitimate political organizations, illegitimate terror groups, and radical media figures. He routinely gives money to the poor, defies a corrupt and widely hated police force, and seems genuine in his desire to improve the lot of his people, his fallen caste, and poor Indians in general. He is also a poacher guilty of what can only be considered ecocide against the very wilderness he calls home.

**Quote:** "Many fear me, but they also love me. I strive to be always just, never misuse my power, help out the poor in their times of need, and to mete out instant justice to wrongdoers."

**Powers/Tactics:** Veerappan is a man perfectly adapted to his environment. Suspicious and alert, he can find move silently the forest without leaving a trace and survive indefinitely off its hidden bounty. A master of camouflage, ambush, and guerilla warfare, he has successfully evaded the law, including special commando troops armed with everything from helicopters to night-vision goggles, for decades. His knowledge of the Sathyamangalam Forest, and the provinces adjoining it, when combined with his understanding of tactics, allows him to carefully plan and execute his chosen crafts – elephant poaching, sandalwood harvesting, and kidnapping – with little fear of the authorities. The combination of terror, awe, and admiration he inspires amongst the villagers who inhabit the edges of the vast wilderness he reigns over ensures that there will be little interference in his schemes.

Veerappan's gang has dozens of camps, compounds, and bases hidden throughout the forest's thousands of square kilometers. He has numerous caches of money, weapons, and food buried near each for easy access. These are generally protected by extensive series of tripwires attached to hand grenades or sticks of dynamite (Veerappan is a master at creating these sorts of booby traps). Veerappan's gang ranges from between 30 and 70 skilled and deadly men and women. A good number of them also belong to Tamil terrorist groups, with whom the bandit occasionally coordinates attacks upon the police or shares information. He also has ties to the Working People's Party, a legitimate Indian political party with strong ties to his Kshatriyas caste.

The dacoit king doesn't put himself into harms way unnecessarily or sacrifice his men without a good reason. Years of waging a private war against the STF, BSF, and forestry rangers has taught him the value of the surprise ambush, the sniper rifle, and the well placed IED (improvised explosive device). Naturally dexterous and handy with nearly any weapon, he is particularly fond of using hand grenades in his ambushes, throwing dozens of them down upon opponents from the high ground as his men cover him with automatic fire. An experienced hunter, he is able to strike an opponent with a rifle from abnormally long distances using only iron sights.

Veerappan's ability to acquire military weapons, ammunition, and explosives is the stuff of legend. He executes regular – and regularly successful – attacks police stations to gather supplies. He also uses his contacts with terrorist groups and corrupt government officers to purchase additional equipment with money he has made poaching.

**Campaign Use:** America isn't the only place where interesting things happen. The subcontinent of India, which also includes the nations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and parts of China, is nearly as large as the United States as well as much, much more ethnically and culturally varied. Its terrain includes huge cities, vast forests, teeming jungles, trackless deserts, immeasurable farmlands, and incredible mountain ranges, all of which teem with life human, domestic, and wild. Compared to India, our North American histories, religions, and cultures – whether Canadian, American, or Mexican – are as bland and homogenous as low fat milk.

Also compared to India, our cities are as safe as your living room and our wildernesses as tame as your backyard. Its vast urban centers, such as Bombay, Calcutta, and Karachi, were legendary abysses of crime, corruption, and depravity before any European set foot in North America. Tigers, elephants, and bandits still routinely exterminate unwanted human intruders in its immense, semi-explored wild places. In short, real life India is more exotic than most pretend fantasy settings. Its languages are certainly more unpronounceable than any described by Steve Long in the *Turakian Age*.

Veerappan is *Dark Champions* character intended for use in a game set in India. This isn't a particularly new idea. Darren Watts and Steve Long detail the background for a West Asian superhero campaign on pages 62-70 and 173-182 of *Champions Worldwide*. While a slightly modified Veerappan could certainly be used in such a campaign, his true purpose is to serve as an opponent in a Special Ops/Military Action game in which the PCs have to root him and his gang out of the Sathyamangalam wilderness.

To make Veerappan more powerful (and thus suitable for a *Champions* game), increase his SPD to 5 and his STUN to 49. Then equip him with equipment from *Gadgets and Gear* so that he can better stand up in battle against superheroic characters. The Camouflage Suit (page 93), the Vari-Blaster (page 17), and a Basic Bulletproof Costume (page 124) will all help to make him simultaneously less deadly and more formidable for dealing with that genre's characters.

**Genre By Genre:** There are very few PRG campaigns that do not at some point need a bandit or outlaw, either to help move the plot along by providing assistance, present a "random" wilderness encounter, or give the PCs a criminal bounty to collect. To transform Veerappan into a *Fantasy Hero* character, simply replace his modern weapons and weapon proficiencies with ancient ones. It would be a nice touch to use ancient Indian

weapons such as the katar and pendjepit (see *Ultimate Martial Artist*).

A lot of interesting scofflaws from throughout the world, including Chinese, Japanese, and Arabs, found themselves in the American Old West. Why not a Tamil? With a simple change of AK's Veerappan could easily become a *Western Hero* bandit or bloodthirsty renegade "Indian" sympathizer. A desperate yet wealthy fan of "Dr. Raj" Rajkumar might be willing to hire a group of *Ninja Hero* martial artists to rescue his or her matinee idol from the infamous criminal. Who says that it will be Americans or Russians who claim the high frontier? On some far away forest planet in the distant future, a descendant of the modern Veerappan could easily haunt the wild places in a *Star Hero* campaign.

As South Asia was a popular setting for many adventure stories written in the 1930s, Steve Long's *Pulp Hero* dedicates pages 203-210 of his book to discussing that region. With only minor changes in equipment, Veerappan makes a fine villain for any *Pulp Hero* campaign set in that area: cunning, capable, and mysteriously foreign.

**Appearance:** Koose Muniswamy Veerappan is a small, dark-skinned man of indeterminate age with straight, short hair and a truly magnificent handlebar moustache. He takes great pride in his *kattabomman*, attending to its maintenance as his first routine of the day: even before praying, eating, and brushing his teeth! Veerappan has an otherwise handsome but inexpressive face that is offset by a pair of frightening "dead" eyes that seem to stare directly through whomever he is speaking to. He always dresses in military jungle fatigues, carries a battered but much loved hunting rifle, a machete, and a backpack filled with hand grenades and improvised explosives.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Newspaper Articles

*I'm Alive, Says Veerappan*, Meenakshi Iyer, Hindustan Times, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2004

*India's Most Famous Bandit Gunned Down*, Harbaksh Singh Nanda, Washington Times, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004

*Is Veerappan within Army's Reach?*, Vijay Soni, Hindustan Times, 2002

*The Rise and Rise of Veerappan*, Nandini Guha, Hindustan Times, 2002

*Veerappan: Death of a Bandit*, Narendra Modi, India Today, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2004

### Websites

<http://www.rotten.com/library/bio/crime/criminals/veerappan>

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veerappan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veerappan)



# Leftover Hero

by Rob Hudson

## Dragon Crown

**Background/History:** Little is known of the history of the beautiful artwork known as the Dragon Crown. In the opinion of those scholars privileged to examine it, the Crown represents the artistic flowering of some unknown proto-Germanic culture's goldsmithing skills. Few of these learned men could agree on its origins.

Its true history is far more strange and sinister than those scholars suspect. The Dragon Crown hails from the legendary Hoard of the Nibelungs and, like all such relics, bears a form of that dreadful curse. It graced the brow of the great dragon Fafnir himself. Whether by accident or design, the Crown developed a dreadful sentience of its own, together with a hatred and contempt for the greedy usurping humans who slew its master and squabbled over the Hoard. Through the centuries to the present day, the Crown has watched for humans suitable to its purpose and slowly bent them to its will.

**Personality/Motivation:** The Crown is driven by its hatred and disdain for humanity. It draws the more susceptible to it, convinces them to steal it from wherever it lies, and slowly enslaves them. The slaves of the Crown are made to steal valuable items, especially those made of gold, and hide them away from the world. Its ultimate goal, pursued with inhuman patience, is to completely remove all golden implements from the ken of humanity. Thus the Crown punishes the vile masses of worthless humans by removing from their sight the most beautiful objects of nearly sacred metal which they possess. When its current possessor has gone completely mad, the Crown will slowly drain its living essence, waiting until its slave is in the presence of others before it finishes its wearer. In this fashion, it is assured that soon another wearer will come under its influence. The Crown is completely implacable in its abhorrence for humanity; nothing can change its entrenched opinions.

**Quote:** (in the mind of a potential wearer) "I'm yours, all yours. Steal me!"

**Powers/Tactics:** The Crown's Mind Control only functions on people of low moral fiber, who are already influenced by greed. It prefers to be left in a crowd of people, so that it is easier to find a new victim. Even if found by someone honest and immune to its power, it will generally find its way to a museum or collection of some sort. Sooner or later, another wearer will come within its reach.

The Crown prefers wearers with some physical ability, which it can enhance to near-superhuman levels. If it gains such a wearer, it may delay his destruction in order to have a more effective slave and gather more gold. A new wearer will use the techniques and tactics he or she is most familiar with to acquire gold — a thug will rob and smash without finesse, but an accomplished burglar becomes more effective with his increased dexterity and speed. As the Crown continues the Transformation, the wearer's approach becomes more basic and desperate. When the wearer has been driven completely mad, he may adopt the simplest form of smash, grab, and run.

**Campaign Use:** The Crown works best as a continuing plot thread, stretched out over several adventures. It may even serve as a red herring for other episodes. If the PCs get too close before this thread is ready, the GM can always cloud the issue by having the current wearer drop dead while robbing a museum. A continuing series of robberies, always involving gold objects, should gain the characters attention as the crimes become more and more bold and potentially lethal.

To strengthen the Crown, have it add more power to its wearer: some Damage Reduction, better physical enhancements, and perhaps some added skills or the *Ultimate Climbing* Heroic Talent. One might also add *Penetrating* to its Mental Powers. To make the Crown weaker, reduce the increased Characteristics it gives the wearer.

The Dragon Crown is extremely unlikely to Hunt anyone. Its motivations preclude it caring about any single person; additionally, it cannot communicate something that complex to its wearer. However, the wearer might hunt a character that repeatedly thwarted his thefts.

**Appearance:** The Crown is a golden circlet in the form of a sleeping dragon. One eye is open, represented by a small, flawless cabochon ruby. The dragon's wings are extended to form the band of the circlet; they do not join at the back, allowing the Crown to be slightly adjusted to fit the wearer's head. Depending on the wearer, it may often be concealed by hair except when viewed from the front.

**Editor's Note:** I cut this particular "character" in part because the Hero Universe already has an artifact — a pretty powerful one, in fact — called the Dragon Crown. If you're running a campaign set in some part of the Hero Universe (such as the Champions Universe), you may want to change its name to avoid confusion.

## LINE DEVELOPER'S NOTE

As often happens with large books like *Masterminds and Madmen*, I ended up cutting a few characters — not necessarily because they were bad or I didn't like them, but to save space, make room for more important/useful characters, or the like. But that's no reason you can't see 'em here in the pages of *Digital Hero!* As usual with *Leftover Hero*, I haven't in edited, reviewed, or math-checked this material, though, so it may conflict with the contents of those books or have other problems. *Caveat luditor.*

## DRAGON CROWN PLOT SEEDS

The Crown gains a new bearer, a talented cat burglar. Suddenly he is incredibly fast, agile, and far stronger than most people — a veritable superhuman. As his crimes grow increasingly violent, can the characters manage to stop him before he kills someone?

A rash of gold thefts has the city's gossips abuzz. Up to three separate male PCs are approached by Nordic-looking women who ask for their help in recovering a family heirloom. They are

gorgeous, wealthy, and a little old-fashioned — and quite willing to reward their hero for his help. (Yes, the Rhine Daughters are in town. They want their artifact back, and to add a little spice, are having a contest to see which one can claim it first.)

The Dragon Crown's wearer steals a new collection of gold artifacts from the Metropolitan Museum. It includes an ancient piece, which turns out to be another enchanted item from the Nibelung Hoard. With the added power of this ring (no, not *that* ring), who knows what deeds the wearer can now perform? Or will it give him the power to bend the Crown to his will, a feat unheard of through the centuries?

**Dragon Crown**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0	STR	-10	9-	Lift 0 kg; 0d6 HTH [0]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
0	CON	-20	1x-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
0	PD	0		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
0	ED	0		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	2		Phases: 6, 12
0	REC	0		
0	END	0		
0	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 9**

**Movement:** Running: 0"/0"

Cost	Powers	END
39	Mind Control, 7d6 (0 END (+½); Only Versus Limited Group (venal humans; -1), Set Effect ("Steal me"; -½) <b>plus</b> Mind Control +6d6; Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Versus Limited Group (venal humans; -1); Only To Achieve +20 'Target Cannot Detect Mind Control' Modifier (-½) [0]	
18	Mental Transform 1d6 (Normal Person into one with 20 point Psychological Limitation: Lust for Gold), Partial Transform (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Based on ECV (+1), Works vs. EGO not BODY (+¼), Delayed Recovery (5 points per year; +2¾); Limited Target (wearer only; -1); 1 Charge (Once Per Month; -3) [0]	
27	Armor (6 PD/6 ED); Useable Simultaneously (self and wearer)(+½) [0]	
15	<i>Construct Body:</i> Does Not Bleed	0
10	<i>Construct Body:</i> No Hit Location	0
45	<i>Construct Body:</i> Takes No Stun	0
45	<i>Construct Body:</i> Total Life Support	0
-12	No Running	0
-4	No Leaping	0
-4	No Swimming	0
27	Detect Appropriate Wearer (360°, Ranged, Sense, Targeting) [0]	
8	+10 STR, Useable By One Other (+¼); No Figured Characteristics (-½)	0
7	+3 DEX, Useable By One Other (+¼); No Figured Characteristics (-½)	0
8	+5 CON, Useable By One Other (+¼); No Figured Characteristics (-½)	0
8	+1 SPD, Useable By One Other (+¼); No Figured Characteristics (-½)	0

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 237**

**Total Cost: 246**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Hunted by Siegfried Wagner 8- (Less Pow, Imprison)
- 10 Hunted by Rhine Maidens 8- (As Pow, Destroy)
- 25 Physical Limitation: Inability To Move (Always, fully)
- 20 Physical Limitation: No Manipulation (Always, Greatly)
- 20 Physical Limitation: Slowly Kills Wearer (Always, Greatly)
- 25 Physical Limitation: Blind (Always, Fully)
- 25 Physical Limitation: Deaf (Always, Fully)
- 5 Reputation: Relic of Ancient Culture 11- (to the Archaeological World)
- 5 Reputation: Cursed Mystic Artifact 11- (Extreme; to the Mystic World)
- 31 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 246**



## Ned Drury, Master of Ghost Cay

**Background/History:** The original Ned Drury was transported from England to Queensland, Australia in the early 1820s. Convicted of theft, he endured the long voyage to a penal colony near Brisbane and almost as soon as he arrived bolted into the wilderness. Australia was very different from England, not only in the terrain, but also in the animals. The kangaroo, the platypus, the wombat — all were as foreign and bizarre as anything he thought would ever see. However, Ned’s strangest animal encounter was with the water spiders of Ghost Cay.

Ned took up with a tribe of Aborigines who taught him to survive in the strange and hostile land. He married one of the tribe’s women and established a family. Several years after Ned had been living with his adopted tribe, he was out fishing off the islands near the Great Barrier Reef with a group of the men when they were attacked by the huge water skimming spiders native to Ghost Cay. Poisoned and dragged under the water, he thought he was going to die. However, he awakened several hours later in their nest, wrapped in a web. He broke free of the web and freed his wife’s brother, the only other survivor from his party. They escaped and made their way back to the mainland.

Fascinated by the giant arachnids, Ned made several forays to Ghost Cay. Careful to avoid being bitten, he finally coaxed them into accepting his presence. Then, with offerings of food, he persuaded them to accept his touch. After several months, they became more pets than adversaries, and seemed to eagerly await Ned’s return. Watching them skate over the top of the water, Ned theorized that the same principle might work for him. Through trial and error, and with much experimentation, he designed makeshift water skis and trained his spider companions to tow him across the water.

When Drury discovered bodies wrapped in the spiders’ webs, he realized they’d attacked one of the merchant ships headed toward Brisbane and carried off several, if not all, of the crew. When he found a seaman’s watch and several other items of value, he reasoned that, if the spiders could be trained to attack certain ships, they could serve as a source of increased income. Patterning themselves on the Wreckers of the southern coasts of England, through the years, Drury, his sons, and his grandsons have lured numerous ships onto the treacherous reefs off Ghost Cay.

The current leader of the Ghost Cay Wreckers is also named Ned Drury, the great-grandson of the original Ned Drury. Raised in the “family business,” he is following in the tradition of wrecking ships off the reefs and looting them, and the family is doing quite well.

As a sideline business, however, Ned is also the local constable. The current Ned, however, is also beginning to branch out. Because of the mysterious disappearances (after killing the crew and any passengers, the Wreckers always scuttle the ships) off Ghost Cay, many ships are now avoiding the area. Ned has decided that, since the spiders can live in any temperate climate, perhaps he should go international. Louisiana bayous, remote coves in Massachusetts and California, the Florida everglades, small Caribbean islands? No place is safe from Drury and his spiders.

**Personality/Motivation:** Unless you have the bad luck to be aboard one of his targets, Ned Drury is as likeable a person as anyone would want to meet. Charming, funny, polite, generous to a fault, he never met a stranger. He loves his wife and children, and is popular in the community. However, if you are aboard one of the unfortunate ships lured onto Ghost Cay, Ned is all business, and his business is death. Nothing personal, you understand?

**Quote:** “It’s not the fog coming in on little cat feet that you need to fear, mate — it’s what it brings on a different kind of feet.”

**Powers/Tactics:** When advised by their contact in the Maritime office of a potentially lucrative victim, Ned and his Wreckers lure the ship into the waters near Ghost Cay and send their spiders out to attack the ship. Advance guard skate across the water and sneak aboard, biting everyone they meet and injecting their narcotic toxin. Then Ned and his men, ferried out to the ship by other spiders, climb aboard and take whatever they want. The ship is then sailed to Ghost Cay, where the spiders are allowed to carry off a certain number of victims. A “prize crew” then sails the ship out into open water, the remaining crew and passengers are killed, and the ship is scuttled. The “prize crew” is ferried back to the cay, either in small boats or by the spiders.

In his role as local constable, Ned carries a Webley revolver, and sometimes an Enfield rifle if expecting bigger problems. On his forays with his pets, he carries a .45 revolver and a sawed off 12 gauge shotgun. Should anyone come to investigate the mysterious disappearances, Ned will happily mislead them with tales of native monsters, bright lights in the sky, and ghost ships.

**Campaign Use:** Ned isn’t really a mastermind, just a man with a family business that involves training giant water spiders to eat people and then robbing their corpses. He and his spiders can make for a nice one-shot horrific-themed adventure, an interesting occasional opponent

## NED DRURY PLOT SEEDS

Ned decides that he needs a change of scenery, and takes a colonization party of spiders off to seed them in other places, using a captured freighter crewed by men destined to serve as rations for their cargo. When the ship is found floating aimlessly outside the Sargasso Sea, the remaining crew all drained and shriveled husks, the characters are called in to investigate. Miles of all-encompassing seaweed, rotting and rusting ships trapped in it (some since the days of the Spanish Main), the menace of Ned’s spiders, and possibly, just possibly something older and more frightening than any spider, no matter the size — what group of adventurers could ask for more?

An acquaintance of the characters vanishes while investigating a sunken wreck off the Great Barrier Reef. When he characters investigate, the local constable, a pleasant and helpful fellow, tells them about treacherous currents and warns them to be careful of the strange lights people report in the area. The characters sail out, locating a quiet, peaceful and beautiful cay to anchor in for the night before they

start their search. In the middle of the night, however, a crew man goes missing. Then another. Then another. The then faint sound of scuttling feet fills the hallways of their ship and a glimpse into the hallway reveals eyes looking back at them... too many eyes.

Ned takes one ship too many, and brings the wrath of Li-Ming Jade down on his operation for seizing one of her vessels loaded with plunder on the way for sale in the shadow market of Sydney. With her junks cruising along the coast, and the fear that they might locate Ghost Cay and destroy his means of livelihood, he does what any desperate man would do when his livelihood is threatened — he calls in someone who works outside the law to stop the pirates — the characters. Ned hopes to pin the blame on the vanished ships on his convenient scapegoat and plants some swag to make the accusations look authentic. Will the characters see through the scam and find the truth?

when they turn up along some stretch of coastline that the characters least expect, or the spiders alone can make for an interesting opponent if one, say, stows away on a ship and begins to nest under the docks along the Hudson City waterfront.

To make Ned a more dangerous opponent, give him some maneuvers from *Dirty Infighting* and the *Pearl Diver's Lungs* power from page ??? of *Pulp Hero*. To weaken him, reduce his STR to 10, his DEX to 15, and remove his *Arachnophile* power.

Drury isn't particularly interested in Hunting anyone unless they threaten his livelihood, in which case they simply have to go, mate. He won't leave his geographic range unless he's transporting a colony of spiders, or he's certain that someone knows entirely too much about his operations, but in either case he'll try to ruthlessly track his opponents down and eliminate them in the most expedient manner possible, whether that's a gunshot in the night, a frame-up for assaulting a local girl followed by a good old fashioned townsfolk lynching, or a visit by some of his "little friends."

**Appearance:** Ned Drury is a stocky fellow, 5'9" tall and about 200 pounds, with dark hair and eyes that hint at his Aboriginal antecedents. He's a handsome enough guy, and generally well albeit casually dressed. At home in Queensland, he wears rather casual clothes, appropriate for his small sheep ranch; if encountered in the city, he'll be dressed in a well-made but not excessively expensive suit. For his maritime forays he wears a loincloth with a waterproof bag slung over his shoulder for his gun. His face and body are painted with Aboriginal designs in luminescent paint so that, on the off chance anyone should escape him, their story will be even less plausible.

## The Spiders of Ghost Cay

**Ecology:** The spiders of Ghost Cay act in most ways like their smaller cousins in the streams of Australia: they build underwater nests and lairs, construct tunnels from air bubble to air bubble, run across the surface of the water and dive beneath it. The difference, of course, is that they are the size of Rottweilers, and also swarm over the sides of ships and onto small islands and attack and drag off humans to store wrapped in webbing in their underwater lairs as food. Their venom paralyzes rather than kills, and prey is killed slowly as they return time after time to drain blood and vital fluids from it with their fangs. In times when humans are not available, they hunt birds and fish.

Their underwater lairs are built with webbing that is watertight and sturdy enough to support the weight of all but the largest individuals. Characters will need to crawl through the tunnels, but the air-bubble lairs are roomy enough to stand and move about in normally. Exertions of greater than a 15 STR while in a tunnel or near a wall in a bubble will rupture the webbing, as will attacks that do greater than the DEF of the webbing structure. In such a case, flooding is inevitable, with the suddenness and severity being based on the size of the rupture. The spiders will break off attacks to try to stop leaks instinctually.

Air is maintained in the tunnels and bubbles by connections to the surface that feed it into the underwater portions. The webbing is translucent, allowing some light to penetrate, and shapes to be made out through it, but the deeper tunnels and lairs will be quite dark. The deepest tunnels are as much as 10 meters down, although most are within 5 meters of the surface. From above, they appear to be tubes of slivery, solid water that zig-zag under the surface.

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations.

**Powers/Tactics:** As hunting spiders, the spiders of Ghost Cay chase, pursue and ambush prey, using their fangs to inject their soporific venom, then webbing up their victims and dragging them down to their underwater lairs. Ned has trained them well enough that they will attack, stop attacking, guard him, retrieve items, and tow items and prisoners at his direction. He sometimes uses makeshift water skis and has a pack of spiders tow him behind them on the surface using special leashes his grandfather designed.

**Appearance:** The Ghost Cay spiders appear as normal spiders in all ways save their size. They are a grey color with darker grey banding and stripes on their legs.

## DIGITAL HERO #35

### Ned Drury, Master of Ghost Cay

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [3]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	16	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	0		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
32	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 86**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Swimming: 5"/10"

Cost	Powers	END
3	<i>Strong Swimmer: +3" Swimming</i>	1

#### Perks

- 20 Base (Ghost Cay, a small, uninhabited island off the Great Barrier Reef)
- 2 Contact: Fence 11-
- 2 Contact: Maritime Office Worker 11-
- 50 Followers: 125 Ghost Cay Spiders (each built on 75 Base Points)
- 2 Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Passport
- 5 Money: Wealthy

#### Talents

- 3 Bump Of Direction

#### Skills

- 3 Acrobatics 13-
- 8 Animal Handler (Spiders) 16-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 3 Disguise 12-
- 3 AK: Australia 12-
- 3 AK: Great Barrier Reef 12-
- 3 KS: Arachnids 12-
- 3 KS: Native Australian Mythology 12-
- 4 Language: Aborigine Tribal Language (idiomatic; English is Native)
- 3 Mechanics 12-
- 3 Navigation (Land, Marine) 12-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 1 PS: Constable 8-
- 3 PS: Sheep Rancher 12-
- 3 Riding 13-
- 3 SS: Veterinary Medicine 12-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 3 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Coasts) 12-

- 5 TF: Equines, Small Motorized Ground Vehicles; Small Rowed Boats; Small Wind Powered Boats, Spider Skis
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Blades

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 191**

**Total Cost: 274**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Age: 40+
- 25 DNPC: Family (wife and three children)
- 20 Hunted: The Police 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Imprison)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Loves his family (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Ruthless (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Ned Drury) (Frequently, Major)
- 104 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 274**

**WATERTIGHT**

Watertight is a +10-point Adder that is applied to Entangles to allow them to be used to hold back water and prevent it from seeping through. Its cost is based on the Affects Porous adder of the same cost on page 10 of the *UNTIL Superpowers Database*.

**The Spiders of Ghost Cay**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
-5	STR	-15	9-	Lift 12 kg; 0d6 HTH [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 7
10	CON	0	11-	
7	BODY	-6	10-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll: 11-
5	EGO	-10	10-	ECV: 1
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
4	PD	4		Total: 5 PD (1 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (1 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	4		
20	END	0		
15	STUN	3		

**Total Characteristics Cost: -4**

**Movement:**

Running:	7"/14"
Leaping:	3"/6"
Swimming:	5"/10"
Flight:	7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA ½d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; + ½), No STR Bonus (-0)	0
46	<i>Venomous Bite:</i> Drain STUN 5d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1), NND (defense is appropriate LS [Immunity]; +1); 4 Charges (-1), Fangs Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 1 Segment after victim is bitten; -½), Gradual Effect (5 segments, 1d6/1 Segment, -¼)	[4]
65	<i>Webs:</i> Multipower, 130-point reserve, 4 Charges for the entire Multipower (-1)	[4]
3u	1) <i>Web Weaving:</i> Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Watertight, Area Of Effect 7" Radius; +1, Continuous (+1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Extra Time (takes about 1 Hour per hex to weave webbing into tunnels and bubbles, -1½), Only to Form Walls/Barriers/Tunnels (-1)	
1u	2) <i>Wrapping Up Prey:</i> Entangle 3d6, DEF 3, Watertight; Extra Time (1 Turn, -1¼), No Range (-½)	
3	<i>Exoskeleton:</i> Armor (1 PD/1 ED)	0
2	<i>Underwater Adaptation:</i> Life support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Minute)	0
3	<i>Spider Legs:</i> Leaping +3" (3" Total)	1
2	<i>Spider Legs:</i> Running +1" (7" Total)	1
3	<i>Water Spider Legs:</i> Swimming +3" (5" Total)	1
9	<i>Water Spider Legs:</i> Flight 7"; Only In Contact with the Surface Of Reasonably Calm Water (-½)	1

6	<i>Eight Legs:</i> Extra Limbs; Inherent (+¼)	0
8	<i>Spider Legs:</i> Clinging (normal STR); Cannot Resist Knockback (-¼)	0
1	<i>Battle Trained:</i> +3 PRE; Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1)	

**Skills**

10	<i>Hard to Hit:</i> +2 DCV
4	<i>Hard to Perceive:</i> +2 with Stealth
3	Concealment 13-; Self Only (-½)
2	PS: Attack 11-
2	PS: Guard 11-
2	PS: Retrieve/Fetch 11-
2	PS: Stop Attacking 11-
2	PS: Tow Individual/Object 11-
5	Stealth 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 194**

**Total Cost: 190**

**75+ Disadvantages**

15	Physical Limitation: Animal Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Small (No Larger Than About 1m; +3" KB) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
75	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 190**

## The Maestro

**Background/History:** At the age of six, Harvey Mays was discovered to be a musical prodigy. His parents, Leopold and Matilda Mays, were proud as could be and spared no effort to find the finest tutors in Philadelphia for their boy. Harvey was an acceptable scholar in most subjects, but he soaked up musical knowledge like a sponge. He was struck by a car while riding his bicycle at age ten, damaging his right leg. Fortunately, he later outgrew most of the effects, but he always retained a slight limp.

When Harvey reached his eighteenth birthday, his father had a wonderful surprise for him: he had arranged for his son to study music at the Sorbonne in Paris! Harvey was thrilled. Fortunately, he was already fluent in French; he had studied several languages to read the writings of the great composers as originally written.

Harvey excelled at the Sorbonne. He was the admiration and envy of most of his fellow students, graduating at the top of his class. He also suffered his first great failure. Minouette du Champs, the only girl he would ever love, turned from him and fell in love with a lowly jazz pianist playing in nightclubs. She preferred the degenerate purveyor of a twisted perversion of true music to him, who played the music beloved of the angels! Returning to the States, Harvey swore that true music would henceforth be his only love.

His standing at the Sorbonne gained Harvey a coveted position in the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra. He was particularly welcome because he could play several instruments. Shortly after joining the orchestra, Harvey suffered the loss of his parents in an airplane crash. His sorrow at losing the two people he loved most in the world led to his composing, in a blur of energy, his *Fugue in E Minor*. When he played it at their funeral, every person there gave way to tears — even the ushers. While gratified at the congregation's response, Harvey also became curious. He had always known that music had the power to touch the heart — what other effects might it have?

Harvey renewed his in-depth study of the classics, particularly the works of the great Beethoven. His parents' deaths had not left him wealthy, but he did have their home and a little income. This saved him from penury when he lost his job with the Philharmonic. A furious argument with the conductor, who insisted on including jazz compositions in their spring concert, led to him striking the obstinate man and being expelled from the orchestra. Fortunately, he had become sufficiently well-known in the city to make a living playing for private gatherings and small concerts.

As he continued his attempts to find a basis for people's emotional reaction to music, he discovered an odd reaction in his subjects when he began improvising on the final passages of Beethoven's Unfinished Symphony — it drove them to violence. No one realized he was responsible, since he quickly stopped playing in apparent response to the abrupt fisticuffs in the audience. Harvey repeated the experiment three times in small bars, resulting in some truly spectacular brawls.

Further experiments showed him that he could, with certain adjustments in the melody, produce an effect that literally rooted his audience in their seats. They were unable to leave, or scarcely even move, so long as he kept playing. Then, after intense months of study and frenzied rewriting, came his greatest discovery. The long-rumored secret hidden in the Unfinished Symphony — the Murder Melody — was his and his alone! Now, with the power of music, Harvey would punish all those who had ever disdained his talents or insulted the true spirit of music. His former conductor was his first victim; Harvey robbed the dead man's house and set out for New York City, to become the Maestro he was always meant to be.

**Personality/Motivation:** Harvey Mays no longer loves anything but music — and really only that which he considers to be true music (that is, classical music). Any other musical forms are pitiful at best, a blasphemy at worst. He reserves his worst hatred for jazz music. His arrogance as a musician often makes him irritating company, even when he is attempting to be sociable. He has decided to use his power over music to make his fortune and to ensure that true music is accorded the respect it deserves.

**Quote:** "Jazz? How can you dignify that cacophony with the name music?"

"Since you have insulted my music, it is time for you to hear your own final melody!"

**Powers/Tactics:** The Maestro is an extremely accomplished musician. However, his narrow focus in life means that he really isn't very skilled at anything which doesn't involve music. When he plans to rob a gathering or a location where several victims might be found, he hires some disposable thugs to help collect the loot. Since he needs both hands to keep playing, he can avoid excessive use of the Murder Melody RKA simply to weaken his victims. It will take an extremely strong-willed character to break free of the Entangle in less than a couple of Phases. If the Maestro is attacking those who have offended the true spirit of music, he will have no qualms about punishing them with the Murder Melody. One of his hired thugs will usually be a driver, to enable faster getaways.

## MAESTRO PLOT SEEDS

Several promising young jazz musicians have been turning up dead in the alleys of Harlem. Their bodies bear no visible wounds. Oddly enough, three of them were known to have had copies of a new jazz piece by Jelly Roll Morton with them which were not found on their bodies. The sheet music might, however, have been the source of the ashes drifted on the musicians' faces...

A wealthy socialite (one of the characters', if possible) calls the characters for assistance. Dissatisfied with their winter program, she has withdrawn her financial support from the New York Philharmonic. She would like the characters to find out who has been sending her these alarming death threats...

The characters are attending the exhibit, *Jazz in Bloom*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art by the noted Parisian artist, Minouette du Champs. Suddenly a haunting music begins to play and several large burly men with buckets of paint and switchblades enter the room. The characters, like the rest of the crowd, are rooted to the spot (with horror?) as the thugs

begin destroying the paintings and the artist screams for them to stop...

**Campaign Use:** The Maestro serves as an outré but somewhat limited theme villain. He can seriously thwart the characters efforts the first few times they encounter him, but sooner or later one of them will counter with the Odysseus/Sirens gambit. The GM will want to increase the number and quality of thugs used in his crimes as time goes on. The Maestro is still a serious threat to crowds of normals (whom the characters must protect, of course), and if the characters aren't careful they could have a multitude of deaths by causes unknown on their hands.

To strengthen the Maestro, increase his Entangle effect and buy him a few Followers. Increasing the Murder Melody's effectiveness should be done *very* carefully, or he will kill normal people far too quickly. To weaken the Maestro, reduce his skill levels with music and drop his Speed to a 3.

It's quite possible that the Maestro will Hunt a hero if his musical ability has been insulted. Another possible reason would be if the character is a noted jazz musician or a notable patron of same. In any case, a character hunted by the Maestro can expect plenty of unexpected (and painful) serenades.

**Appearance:** Harvey Mays is a sturdily-built white man in his early thirties with piercing blue eyes. His collar-length hair is a dark chocolate brown and he wears a crisply-trimmed mustache. He's 5'8" tall and weighs about 175 pounds, but he walks as if he were 10 feet tall. He's unusually pale due to spending so much time indoors, and his fingers are longer than usual. As himself he dresses well, but not extravagantly; as the Maestro he wears a tailored tuxedo and carries one or more instruments (usually flute or violin).

## DIGITAL HERO #35

### The Maestro

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
12	STR	2	11-	Lift 133 kg; 2d6 HTH [2]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
16	CON	8	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	4		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	2		
32	END	0		
26	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 83**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/9"  
Leaping: 2"/4"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Powers** **END**

- 34 *Murder Melody:* Entangle 2d6, 2 DEF; Based on ECV (Mental Defense applies, +1), No Damage from Physical Attacks (+1/4), Works against EGO, not STR (+1/4); Area Of Effect (vocal range, +1), Personal Immunity (+1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); Requires PS: Musician Skill Roll at -8 (-1 per 10 Active Points, -1/4), OIF (-1/2), Gestures (User Must Pay Instrument with Both Hands, -1/2), Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4) 0
- 21 *Murder Melody:* RKA 1/2d6, NND (Defense is hearing protection or deafness, +1), Does BODY (+1), Based on ECV (+1), Area Of Effect (vocal range, +1), Personal Immunity (+1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); Requires PS: Musician to Activate (-1/4), OIF (Musical Instrument, -1/2), Gestures (User Must Pay Instrument with Both Hands, -1/2), Linked to Entangle (-1/2) 0

#### Skills

- 6 +3 with Murder Melody  
20 +4 with Musical Skills
- 7 Analyze Musical Composition 14-  
7 Analyze Musical Instrument 14-  
2 Language: French (Fluent)  
3 Language: German (Idiomatic)  
2 Language: Italian (Fluent)  
2 SS: Psychology 12-
- 3 Jack of All Trades  
3 PS: Composer 13-  
3 PS: Flautist 13-  
5 PS: Musician 15-

- 3 PS: Organist 13-  
3 PS: Pianist 13-  
3 PS: Researcher 13-  
3 PS: Violinist 13-
- 3 Scholar  
2 KS: Classical Composers 12-  
2 KS: Classical Music 12-  
5 KS: Life and Works of Beethoven 13-  
2 KS: Occult Lore 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 143**

**Total Cost: 226**

#### 100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Physical Limitation: Limp (reduces non-combat move to x1 1/2; infrequent, slight)  
15 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant (Common, Strong)  
20 Psychological Limitation: Devoted to Music (Complete, Total)  
15 Psychological Limitation: Hates Jazz Music and Musicians (Common, Strong)  
10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful when Musical Ability is Belittled (Uncommon, Strong)  
61 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 226**

## MISTRESS OF THE HUNT PLOT SEEDS

The City Council, worried about the potential problems with strays in the lower-income parts of Hudson City has determined to round up as many of them as they can and dispose of them. Outraged, Alison plans to stop this by striking at the heart of the problem — the city council — and begins a series of break-ins at their homes to find evidence to blackmail them into stopping. What will she find, and who will not want her to have that knowledge?

The social season is in full swing, and during a costume party, the Mistress makes an appearance with her pack of hounds to take up some donations for the poor. Along with the necklaces, rings, cash, and other valuables she takes up, she also dishes out a little humiliation to a dour old man who delivers a cuff to one of her dogs. What she wasn't prepared for was him to hire a group of mobsters to track her down and make her pay for the public humiliation. Now she has the police after her, plus these hired killers, and she still needs to pull at least two more robberies to finance a new soup kitchen near

## Mistress of the Hunt

**Background/History:** Alison Renata Lodge was born the second daughter of a socially prominent New York family. She was a bright and independent child, loving the outdoors more than the schoolroom. At the age of nine years, she wandered away from the family's Adirondack cabin where they were spending the summer. Accompanied only by her year-old Dalmatian, she became lost and fell over the side of a ravine, breaking her leg. Alison survived the night, warmed by her dog and a scruffy stray that huddled beside her. The next morning, her father and three of the servants were led to her by the Dalmatian. She was in excellent spirits, considering her ordeal; "...brave as a lioness!" her father declared proudly, and allowed her to keep the stray despite its lack of gentility. She promptly named the dog Hero, and bore her difficult recovery with remarkable grace for her age. She never told her doctors or parents the incredible secret she had discovered during that long night: she could talk to dogs, and they not only understood her, they would do what she asked them to!

As she grew older, most people came to consider Alison a little odd. Her occasional practice of carrying on conversations with dogs caused a little talk in her parent's set. Her mother said, only half-jokingly, that she preferred dogs to people. Alison still enjoyed the outdoors and sports; she had taken up a regimen of tumbling exercises, at the behest of one of her doctors, to strengthen her injured leg, and continued it even after recovering her full health. She always seemed to have two or three dogs with her, either her own or some she was keeping for friends while they were away.

After her return from her French finishing school, Alison spent six months touring Europe with her older sister. She returned with three breeding pairs of purebred dogs not often seen in the States, and informed her parents that she was going to open an exclusive kennel. After several weeks of argument and discussion, her parents allowed her to have her way. With an inheritance from an aunt, Alison bought a large house and 50 acres of fenced-in land a few miles outside Hudson City. Hiring a housekeeper, maid and several experienced dog handlers, she founded her kennel, The Elizabeth and Essex Kennel.

With her special talent, Alison found it easy to train dogs to perform complicated tricks. She ran her dogs through their paces at a number of prestigious shows and gained valuable publicity for her kennel. She became well-known among professional breeders and dog fanciers as a highly talented trainer and regularly had dogs that placed highly in the Westminster Kennel Club's annual Dog Show, but after several years

she grew bored with attending the shows as a handler where the restrictive rules prevented her from truly demonstrating her dog-handling abilities and delegated that duty to her assistant, shifting that portion of her attentions to the endowment and administration of the Saint Hubert of Liège Animal Shelter in Hudson City.

The administration of the shelter brought her into contact with the lower range of Hudson City society for the first time in any extended fashion, and she found herself saddened by the conditions the people in the poorer sections of the city were forced to live in. Troubled by her inability to make any of her friends understand the need to help the poorer people of Hudson City as she provided for the dogs of Hudson City, she felt trapped and unable to do anything; she lacked the finances to set up a foundation to assist them, the majority of her inheritance now being tied up in trust funds and other arrangements that precluded her spending it on the scale she felt would be necessary. Even the company of her beloved dogs could not lift her spirits for long.

Walking three of her dogs by a neighbor's house late one afternoon, Alison noticed that the French doors have been left open. She approached the veranda to close the doors before the dark clouds overhead fulfilled their promise of rain, but noticed an appalling little faun statuette her neighbor had displayed at last week's cocktail party, explaining that it was worth many thousands of dollars. On a whim, she ordered her Alsatian, Heinrich, to steal it. To her surprise, she found it quite entertaining to guide the dog through entering the house and taking the statuette. In fact, it was the most fun she'd had in weeks, and, as she looked at the ugly little faun, she suddenly realized that she had found the way to relieve her own listlessness and help the poor of Hudson City at the same time. Drawing her inspiration from Robin Hood movies (by Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and others), she designed a costume and mask to go with her new identity as Mistress of the Hunt.

**Personality/Motivation:** Alison is actually a rather nice girl who loves dogs and relates to them better than she does most everyone that she knows, in or out of her social circle. She always has one or two with her wherever she goes, and seems to attract them like a magnet. Even the worst-behaved, spoiled animal or wild stray will sit politely for its turn at her attention. She tends to talk to dogs — both her own and others — as though they were people and could understand her, a trait that many of her acquaintances find amusing. Any conversation with her will, sooner or later, come back to dogs, or have dogs brought up in it through sometimes amusing connections.

She chafes at the restrictions society places



## DIGITAL HERO #35

on her due to her sex and social status, and finds the lack of social consciousness and concern for both the poor of Hudson City — canine and human alike — among her circle of friends to be both depressing and appalling. If more people, she reasons, were willing to take responsibility for helping those less fortunate than themselves, then the world would be a better place for everyone.

As the Mistress of the Hunt, she flaunts the societal rules she feels constrained by, and steals objects of value and commits pranks because she relishes the thrill of doing things she isn't supposed to do, even more so when it's done for a good cause. She steals from the rich because she knows them, and because they have the money needed to help the poorer elements of society. It's particularly enjoyable if her capers involve the humiliation of a society snob, or someone who abuses their dogs. She does not steal from anyone who makes an effort to help provide for the poor on their own, but finds this to be a depressingly number of people.

**Quote:** “Bad dog! No biscuit!”

**Powers/Tactics:** The Mistress has the physical coordination and stamina of a well-trained athlete, but absolutely no combat skills or training whatsoever. If confronted by physical violence she will attempt to either flee or bluff her attackers into ceasing hostilities, whichever she thinks will be more successful. If accompanied by her dogs -a likely event — it is possible that they will come to her defense without even being ordered to if she becomes agitated, scared, or is actually injured. A single dog might not be a threat, but four or five, or potentially more, can easily overwhelm most individuals. She would not normally order one of her dogs to attack someone unless her — or their — life was in danger.

Her ability to exert control and influence over canines is almost, but not literally, magical to outside eyes. She can befriend a dog in seconds — they seem to naturally adore her and want to be near her — and can get even untrained animals to obey reasonably complex instructions with little trouble, so great is her rapport with the species. She can exert her influence over any canine within hearing range of her voice, although complex instructions may require them to see her as well. With her own dogs, the things she can direct them to do are simply astounding, reflected by purchasing the “Smart” template from *The Hero System Bestiary* for them. Some of them will have the “Battle-Trained” template as well, reflecting their training as guard dogs.

Alison normally trains her dogs to respond to several sets of commands to handle different situations; some commands actually trigger a set

of actions, to reduce the time required to give individual commands. The dogs are trained to operate silently during thefts or similar missions. Some of the dogs will locate any guards, and some will listen for movement on floors above or below the floor where the target is located. Depending on the situation, either a dog trained for the job or the Mistress herself will perform the theft.

She keeps none of the money from the crimes she commits, converting her stolen gains into charitable works for the poor of Hudson City in the form of cash donations to soup kitchens, orphanages, poorhouses, and the like. Such donations are delivered by a nondescript dog with a note explaining the purpose of the money.

**Campaign Use:** The Mistress of the Hunt is an opportunity to remind characters that there's more to fighting the good fight than stopping Dr. Fang's latest scheme, or brawling with mobsters at the Blue Parrot down on the waterfront. Her crimes and the ways she uses the profits from them should point to the thousands of people in Hudson City that need help on a more immediate and personal level that the characters may overlook in their focus on the bigger picture. If desired, she might be recast in a darker mold, and use her abilities to terrorize and kill those who refuse to accept their responsibility to help others, as opposed to stealing from and embarrassing them. She might make a good romantic opportunity for a socially-conscious hero, as long as he liked dogs.

To make her more powerful, increase her DEX to 18 and give her a bow or light crossbow and several Combat Skill Levels with it, or possibly some maneuvers from Kyujutsu to reinforce her Robin Hood theme. You might also increase the number of her canine followers. To weaken her, remove her *She Speaks And They Understand* and *She Speaks And They Obey* powers and simply make her an excellent animal trainer.

The Mistress of the Hunt is willing to, as her name suggests, Hunt characters she feels fail to live up to their obligations to use their wealth and/or position to help those less fortunate than themselves, and those that mistreat dogs. She will spy on them, follow them, and then steal from and humiliate them when she can identify a good opportunity. Were someone to hurt or kill one of her animals, she would be angered and grief-stricken enough that she would consider Hunting them with more harmful intent.

**Appearance:** Alison Lodge stands 5'7" tall and weighs 120 pounds. Her wavy hair is auburn and worn shoulder-length in somewhat restrained styles, and her trim, athletic figure is normally dressed in plain, though still expensive, fashions.

the docks. What's a girl to do?

The characters find themselves in conflict with a werewolf — but silver bullets seem as ineffectual against it as ordinary lead ones. The Mistress' ability to command canines might allow her to calm and control the beast, and if approached properly she is willing to make the attempt — but can she be trusted with control of the beast if the attempt succeeds? What will she want in return for making the attempt, regardless of whether or not it succeeds?

As the Mistress of the Hunt, she wears a green and brown Robin Hood-looking outfit with ankle boots, tight breeches, dagged tunic with a metal-studded, tight-fitting leather vest over it, gloves, a green half-mask which leaves her lower face exposed, and a rakish hat with a feather. She has a wig pinned on securely to hide her auburn hair under a fall of black locks.

**Mistress of the Hunt**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]
15	DEX	10	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6/5d6
18	COM	4	13-	
5	PD	3		Total: 8 PD (3 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 6 ED (3 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
26	END	0		
23	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 44**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 2"/4"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Powers** **END**

- 18 *She Speaks and They Understand:* Telepathy 5d6 (Animal Class of Minds) Area Of Affect (Voice Range [see *Fantasy Hero*, pp. 133-34], +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); No Range (-1/2), Communication Only (-1/4), Incantations (Throughout, -1/2), Canines Only (-1), Visible (-1/4) 0
- 29 *She Speaks and They Obey:* Mind Control 8d6 (Animal Class of Minds) Area Of Affect (Voice Range [see *Fantasy Hero*, pp. 133-34], +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); No Range (-1/2), Communication Only (-1/4), Incantations (Throughout, -1/2), Canines Only (-1), Visible (-1/4) 0
- 7 *A Dog's Best Friend:* +10 PRE, +10 COM; Only Versus Canines (-1) 0

**Perks**

- 10 Money: Wealthy
- 6 Assorted Contacts Among Hudson City Society and Dog Breeding World
- 30 Followers: 8 Specially Trained Dogs, built on 75 base points

**Talents**

- 6 Combat Luck

**Skills**

- 5 Acrobatics 13-
- 8 Animal Handler (Canines) 17-
- 5 Breakfall 13-
- 3 CK: Hudson City 11-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 5 Disguise 13-
- 5 High Society 13-
- 3 KS: Art History 12-
- 3 KS: British History 12-
- 3 KS: Canine Bloodlines 12-
- 3 KS: Dog Breeding World 12-
- 2 KS: Fashion 11-
- 1 Language: English (Imitate Dialects)
- 2 Language: French (Conversational)
- 5 Lockpicking 13-
- 3 PS: Dog Breeder 12-
- 3 PS: Socialite 12-
- 3 Stealth 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 166**

**Total Cost: 210**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Feature: Talks to Dogs (Easily Concealed, Noticed)
- 20 Hunted: Hudson City Police (More Powerful, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Imprison)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Canophile (Uncommon, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Sees Self As A Modern Robin Hood (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Thrillseeker (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Alison Lodge) (Frequently, Major)
- 5 Social Limitation: Woman
- 48 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 210**

## Benevolent Master Ravi Singh

**Background/History:** Ravi Singh, the Benevolent Master, was born Ravi Charan in the ancient city of Delhi, to middle-class parents of the merchant caste. He was an intelligent child, but his schoolmaster found him an indifferent scholar. “It is just demmed laziness,” said the schoolmaster, a humorless Bengali with what he fondly imagined to be a British accent. More to Ravi’s taste were the old tales of gods, demons and heroes such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Despite his family’s relative affluence, Ravi was a spindly, long-limbed child. After a few arguments with other children resulted in violent scuffles, he wisely concluded he had no skill in personal combat and concentrated instead on a more innate talent. He learned to run, and run rapidly and well. Ravi also struck up a friendship with an old fakir who taught him the care and handling of serpents, some interesting snippets of philosophy and the basics of the Nepalese language.

At the age of fifteen, Ravi’s family sent him to a prestigious boarding academy in Bombay. The students were a rather eclectic lot, including children of many of the less prosperous European families working in India. Ravi discovered a facility for languages, learning French and Italian in addition to the English used in the school. He joined the student debating society, where he developed a fine, melodious speaking voice and began learning the fine art of persuading others to his point of view. These were perhaps the best years of his life.

Ravi had just graduated from his academy, placing high in his class ranking, when Fate dealt him a harsh blow. His entire family was preparing to welcome him home to Delhi, when all were stricken in the great influenza epidemic and died. His favorite professor and the headmaster of his academy also perished as the epidemic rampaged through Bombay. With their influence lost to him, his more promising opportunities withered away and he was only able to secure a lowly clerk’s post in an accounting firm. All that was left to him was a small inheritance (his family’s finances had been strained with his schooling and that of his two younger brothers) and a last gift from his old friend the fakir: Guptra, the twenty-five foot long Reticulated Python.

Ravi had always loved the old man’s magnificent python, and he accepted him now as a glad reminder of vanished home and family. It is never easy for a young bachelor of limited means to find — or keep — lodgings when his roommate is a huge snake, but Ravi refused to part with his friend. After some months of difficulties, compounded by extreme aggravation with his employment, Ravi collected a few

hundred pounds by way of unofficial severance pay and left Bombay for the greener pastures of Europe. There, he felt, would be better opportunities for a young man and his snake.

Ravi has had a checkered career since arriving in London. He traveled with a circus for a time (“Master Charan and the Monster Serpent”), but the wages were nothing to get excited about and the additional duties required of a sideshow performer were a trial to him. He did improve and hone his ability to hold an audience, however. A chance encounter in Liverpool led him to his ultimate profession: a middle-aged, respectable Englishwoman gained his attention after a performance and made an unusual request. “Please, Master Charan, I’d like to use your truly impressive python as a psychic conduit to make contact with the Great Nagas of the Upper Spirit World. I’m willing to pay for the inconvenience, of course — after all, mere money is only dross compared to true spiritual value.” Within two years, Ravi had created his identity as the Benevolent Master and used his knowledge of ancient legends and Indian religions to perfect a sophisticated swindle. By setting up and fleecing his various Circles of Five, he has been able to finally achieve the swank lifestyle he has always wanted.

**Personality/Motivation:** The events of Ravi’s life have made him thoroughly cynical. His morality is primarily defined by those things he won’t do, such as murder or rape; even such negatives are guided more by pragmatism or squeamishness than by moral conviction. He can be a charming companion and a sparkling conversationalist, but he is essentially self-centered.

Although he never refers to it, Ravi has also become an agnostic. He is convinced that if any god or gods do exist, they are completely unconcerned with the problems of the human race. A benevolent deity, he reasons, would never have allowed so many calamities to befall him.

With these attitudes, it is hardly surprising that Ravi has no qualms about using his spiritual con games to fleece the rich and foolish. If prospective patrons are intelligent enough to see through his scams, he bears them no ill will but rather accords them a certain grudging respect.

**Quote:** “Remember, my dear pupils. You must not allow the ignorant scorn of those less spiritually aware to sway you from the path of enlightenment. For as the Hidden Masters remind in their wisdom, the celestial eagle pays no heed to the carping chatter of the foolish monkeys or the boastful trumpeting of the complacent elephant.”

## BENEVOLENT MASTER RAVI SINGH PLOT SEEDS

One of the characters’ female relatives or a romantic partner begins to act strangely. She spends less and less time at home, doesn’t want to talk about where she has been, makes up vague excuses when questioned about her absences, seems to have less and less money to spend on things like new clothing, and even begins to quietly sell or pawn family heirlooms and small gifts she has received. When the characters investigate, she makes deliberate attempts to lose tails, but finally can be traced to an unassuming brownstone where she spends long hours performing rituals to hold back the evil threatening the world as part of a Circle of Five that Ravi has established in the characters’ home city.

One of the characters receives a panicked telephone call from Ravi, who begs for their assistance, claiming that Guptra has been kidnapped by a group of men that claimed to be members of some snake-worshipping cult called the Unholy Order of the Reptile. He says that he overheard them planning to use Guptra in some sort of

sacrificial ritual that will involve feeding an innocent child to him before they kill the great snake. He promises that he will tell them everything that he knows and even help them fight the cultists if they will stop Guptra's murder and allow him to leave with his snake when everything is over. Can he be trusted, or is this some bizarre con game?

Ravi sets up one of his "Circle of Five" groups in Paris and snares a prize that he was not expecting: a wealthy Contessa who embraces the beliefs of the group wholeheartedly and lavishly donates to the cause. It is only after many thousands of Francs have been funneled through his accounts that he discovers that the Contessa is the beloved sister of a wealthy French industrialist with many ties to the underworld, and that her brother is not amused that his sister has been bilked. Seeing their names in the paper, Ravi tells the industrialist's men that the characters are the real masterminds, and that he only funnels the money he makes to them to finance their adventures to divert attention away from him while he escapes.

**Powers/Tactics:** The Benevolent Master operates on the fringes of society. He does not wish to attract attention from the authorities, or from powerful individuals who might object to his activities. His usual victim is someone who has become disenchanted with conventional religion, has considerable wealth but is not extremely rich, and isn't terribly intelligent. Many of them are wealthy older women with too much time on their hands. The *nouveau riche* are particularly common targets, especially those who find that wealth has not solved all their problems. Ravi is so skilled that he has even lured followers of Theosophy and Spiritualism into his fold.

On arriving in a new city, Ravi will set up a modest but comfortable lair in a non-descript part of town and then begins moving through the occult circles of his new locale. He seeks out those with an interest in the occult, draws them into conversation and letting slip hints that he himself has considerable "hidden knowledge". On occasion, he may first disguise himself and spread rumors of an occult master newly arrived in town. His skills are such that it is fairly simple to make it appear that he can read minds. He screens those interested until he has enough to create his new "Circle of Five," a mystic group of pupils whom he will lead to new heights of mystic knowledge and spiritual enlightenment — while they provide him with his desired lifestyle. His pupils are told that their contributions go to fund the program of the Hidden Masters and to assist various charities. Ravi seldom operates more than one Circle of Five. His pupils are chosen from among several applicants (which makes them feel special), and one qualification is the ability to properly support him.

**Campaign Use:** Ravi makes a change from sanity-threatening occult adventures, world-spanning hunts for treasure, and brutal gangland crimes to investigate. His crimes are purely non-violent and for financial gain, despite their somewhat outré trappings. While he can easily be played seriously, he can also be played with a more humorous bent, with groups of women standing around with their right hand pressed to their forehead, palm out and fingers spread, intoning mantras of support for the Hidden Masters and leaping to interpose themselves between the characters and Ravi while they urge the "Benevolent Master" to escape from the minions of darkness while they buy time for him. To make Ravi more dangerous, give him a power to augment his mystic portrayals, like a Vanishing Teleport or actual hypnotic ability. To weaken him, remove his skill levels with Conversation and Interaction skills.

Ravi only Hunts money, not people. He might try to lure a persistent opponent's relative

or DNPC into a Circle of Five to gain a bit of revenge along with their cash, but hat's about the extent of his interest in that sort of thing. Were someone to harm Guptra, however, he might be willing to turn his skills o darker uses and make the offender pay for harming his only friend.

**Appearance:** Ravi Singh is 5'8" tall and weighs about 150 pounds. His straight blue-black hair is worn nape length and always carefully combed and pomaded. He generally wears tailored Western suits or other appropriate clothing. In his role as the Benevolent Master, Ravi dresses in simple Hindu garb with a plain turban and no jewelry or other adornments.

## DIGITAL HERO #35

### Benevolent Master Ravi Singh

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
12	STR	2	11-	Lift 133 kg; 2d6 HTH [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll: 12-/14-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
5	PD	3		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	2		
26	END	0		
25	STUN	2		

#### Total Characteristics Cost: 53

<b>Movement:</b>	Running:	9"/18"
	Leaping:	2"/4"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
6	<i>Contortionist's Feet:</i> Extra Limbs (feet usable as hands), Inherent (+¼)	0
6	<i>Sprinter:</i> +3" Running (9" Total)	1
4	<i>Observant:</i> +2 PER with Sight Group	0

#### Perks

15	Follower: Guptra
1	Fringe Benefit: Passport
2	Money: Well Off

#### Talents

6	Simulate Death (+3 to Roll)
---	-----------------------------

#### Skills

10	+2 to Interaction Skills
3	Acting 12-
6	Animal Handler (Reptiles & Amphibians) 15-
3	Breakfall 12-
3	Bribery 13-
3	Climbing 12-
5	Concealment 13-
5	Contortionist 13-
9	Conversation 16-
3	Disguise 12-
3	High Society 13-
3	KS: Asian Mysticism 12-
3	KS: Asian Religion 12-
3	KS: Confidence Schemes 12-
3	KS: The Grifter World 12-
3	KS: Occult Lore 12-
3	KS: Theosophy
5	Lipreading 13-
3	Lockpicking 12-
3	Mimicry 12-
5	Oratory 14-
5	Persuasion 14-
5	PS: Con Artist 14-

3	Riding 12-
3	SS: Psychology 12-
5	Sleight Of Hand 13-
3	Stealth 12-
3	Streetwise 13-
4	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Riding Animals
15	Traveler and 12-Points worth of Assorted Area and City Knowledge Skills
5	Ventriloquism 13-
3	Linguist
2	Language: English (Conversational, Hindustani is Native)
1	Language: French (Conversational)
1	Language: Italian (Conversational)
1	Language: Nepalese (Conversational)
1	Language: Punjabi (Conversational)

#### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 187

#### Total Cost: 240

#### 75+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Feature: Hindustani (Concealable)
20	Hunted: Crooked French Industrialist 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Believes a Fool with Money Doesn't Deserve It (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Extravagant Tastes (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Fear of Physical Violence (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Protective of Guptra (Common, Strong)
15	Social Limitation: Minor (Very Frequently, Minor [character suffers prejudice from most of society])
60	Experience Points

#### Total Disadvantage Points: 240

**Guptra**

**Ecology:** Like all constrictors of his size, Gupta moves slowly and eats infrequently. Ravi normally solves the question of what to feed Gupta by purchasing a goat or pig in a small town some distance from his current base of operations, drugging it to make transportation easier, and allowing the drug to wear off before feeding the animal to Gupta. He has not yet needed to dispose of a human being, but he does understand that Gupta is capable of such a feat if it becomes necessary.

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations, with the addition of Ravi's training.

**Powers/Tactics:** Left to his own devices, Gupta will rarely attack unless hungry. He has been well trained, however, and under Ravi's handling will move to, and drape himself on designated targets without constricting — unless ordered to.

**Appearance:** Gupta is an enormous reticulated python, 30" long, 31" in girth at his widest, and weighing over four hundred pounds. He has pale cream-colored skin, with stark white markings.

**Guptra**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH [2]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4(0)
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll: 9-/11-/14-
5	EGO	-10	10-	ECV: 2
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
5	PD	1		Total: 5 PD (1 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 4 ED (1 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
32	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 31**

**Movement:** Running: 3"/6"  
Leaping: 0"/0"  
Swimming: 4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
7	<i>Bite:</i> HKA ½d6 (½d6 with STR); No STR Bonus (-½)	1
7	<i>Coils Of Death:</i> +15 STR; Only With Grab And Squeeze (-1)	1
2	<i>Good Swimmer:</i> +2" Swimming (4" total)	1
5	<i>Heat-Sensitive Pits:</i> Infrared Perception (Touch Group)	0
6	<i>Heavy Coils:</i> Knockback Resistance -3"	0

2	<i>Not Much Appetite:</i> Life Support (Diminished Eating: only needs to eat once every few months)	0
1	<i>Scaly Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)	0
6	<i>Serpent's Tongue:</i> +3 PER with Smell/Taste Group	0
-6	<i>Slow:</i> Running -3" (3" total)	1

**Skills**

8	+4 OCV with Grab
3	Climbing 12-
3	Concealment 11-; Self Only (-½)
3	PS: Attack 11-
3	PS: Coil On Designated Person or Object 11-
3	PS: Move To Designated Point 11-
3	PS: Stop Attacking 11-
3	Stealth 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 59**

**Total Cost: 90**

**75+ Disadvantages**

10	Distinctive Features: Albino (Concealable)
15	Physical Limitation: Animal Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
15	Physical limitation: Cold-Blooded (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
10	Physical Limitation: Enormous (10m long; -4 DCV, +4 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Poor Eyesight, suffers -2 to all Sight PER Rolls (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, Cannot Leap (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 160**

## The Smoky Mountain Bandits

### Walter Faris

**Background/History:** Walter Faris was born and raised in the hill country of eastern Tennessee. Oldest of seven children of a poor farmer, Walter worked hard all his life. From the time he was old enough to walk, he was helping in the fields from sunup to sundown, with other chores before and after. In the winter, he attended school as often as he could, learning to read and write and do some “cyphering” — just enough to get by. And the chores were still there, before and after.

His only respite was Sunday, when the family would load into the wagon and head to church. He loved the soothing sounds of the hymns, the droning voice of the preacher (never mind what he was saying), and dinner on the ground after.... And it was there that he met the love of his young life — Liza Jane Bankson. Two years younger than he, Liza Jane was the daughter of the local banker, a pretty girl with sun gold hair and eyes the color of the fields in spring. At the age of thirteen, Walter fell in love — hard.

As the years passed, Walter and Liza Jane grew closer and, when she turned sixteen, began to talk of marriage. By then, Mr. Faris’s farm had grown more profitable, and he was able to purchase, on credit of course, first a tractor, and then a radio. The big city was coming to the mountains.

In the evenings, the family would gather around the radio and listen to news of the outside world. Walter was fascinated with the news reports of gangsters, particularly the robbery spree of Bonnie and Clyde. He reasoned that if he and Liza Jane could duplicate the other couple’s deeds, they could get enough money to get away from Tennessee, that he could give her anything she wanted. They could live like the people on the radio, the ones in the magazines he saw at the general store, or in the talking picture he had seen on his only trip to “the big city” of Knoxville.

Late one evening, he made his getaway. Taking the only thing of value Mr. Faris had brought back from the Great War — a Thompson submachine gun — he made off with Liza Jane, all the cash in the house, and Mr. Bankson’s automobile.

The couple started off small — a store here, a bank there — working their way across the small town south, building up both their reservoir of cash and their reputation. They have since added confidence games, extortion, and kidnapping to their repertoire.

**Personality/Motivation:** Walter is a personable fellow, outwardly friendly and easy going. His is

quite musical, and loves to serenade Liza Jane on his harmonica. However, his years on the road have made him hard, and he would “just as soon shoot you as look at you.” His only soft spot is for his “Little Liza Jane,” and he will do anything for her.

**Quote:** “Now, Liza Jane, you know you can have anything you want — you just have to tell me.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Walter is a fair hand with any gun, but he really shines with his daddy’s Thompson. He prefers to commit his crimes without injuring anyone, but will not hesitate to fire if necessary. If he has to, he generally fires to disable rather than to kill.

He’s learned a lot on the road, from robbery to extortion to confidence games, and he’s a fair hand at those as well. He plans his jobs carefully, but with an eye to the theatric, and always wants to let anyone he robs know who did it. He only preserves his anonymity while running a con.

**Appearance:** Walter Faris is a thin fellow, 5’5” and about 135 pounds, with brown eyes, slicked back brown hair, and a small mustache. His dress depends on what his current game is — a well-worn suit for the pious Bible salesman, a snappy pinstripe one for robbing banks. He generally carries a Smith & Wesson Model 27 that he picked up in a store robbery, and always accessorizes his bank-robbing suit with his father’s Thompson.

### SMOKY MOUNTAIN BANDITS PLOT SEEDS

There has been a rash of robberies in town, all committed by the same couple. First the Lincoln States Insurance Company, then the International Bank & Trust, and now Zimmerman’s Diamond Exchange. Could there be a pattern? Liza’s birthday is coming up, and Walter likes to do something special for her every year. This year, he’s spelling out Liza Jane’s name with robberies.

Liza Jane wants a baby, more than anything else. Too bad she can’t have one of her own. Walter will just have to get her one. A rich person’s baby, of course, one with good-looking young parents so that it will be beautiful and won’t be sickly, or weak... and so they can always ransom it back to someone if (when) she grows tired of it.

Walter and Liza Jane are sitting in a theatre, watching a movie, when Liza Jane realizes that she’s not only better-looking than anyone in the film, but she’s a better actress, too. And movie stars have such glamorous lives... The next day, after a stop to pick up some traveling money from

a local bank, she and Walter are off to Hollywood to get her a job in the movies. Is Hollywood ready for them? Are they ready for it?

**Walter Faris**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [3]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
18	COM	4	13-	
				Total: 8 PD (3 rPD)
				Total: 6 ED (3 rED)
				Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	PD	2		
3	ED	0		
3	SPD	7		
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 63**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 2½"/5"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Powers** **END**

10 *Tommy Gunner from Hell*: +4 OCV with Autofire Firearms; Only Apply When Character Uses Autofire against a Single Target (-¼), Must Use Maximum Number of Autofire Shots (-¼), Not While Targeting (-½) 0

**Perks**

1 Reputation: Robber and Con Man (Police, Underworld) 11-, +1/+1d6

**Talents**

6 Combat Luck

**Skills**

10 Autofire: Concentrated Rapid Sprayfire

3 Breakfall 12-  
 3 Combat Driving 12-  
 3 Criminology 12-  
 3 Demolitions 12-  
 3 Fast Draw (Small Arms) 12-  
 2 Gambling (Card Games) 12-  
 3 Mechanics 12-  
 3 PS: Bank Robber 12-  
 3 PS: Harmonica Player 12-  
 3 Shadowing 12-  
 3 Stealth 12-  
 3 Streetwise 12-  
 3 Tracking 12-  
 2 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles  
 2 WF: Small Arms

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 69**

**Total Cost: 172**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Feature: Southern Accent (Easily Concealable)
- 15 Enraged: Liza Jane Bankson threatened (Uncommon, Go 8-, Recover 14-)
- 20 Enraged: Another Man Flirts with Liza Jane Bankson (Common, Go 11-, Recover 11-)
- 20 Hunted: The Police (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Imprison)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with Liza Jane Bankson (Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: Criminal 8-
- 17 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 172**



## Elizabeth Jane Bankson

**Background/History:** Liza Jane Bankson, the only child of a prosperous banker, was born in a small town in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. Spoiled from the day of her birth, she always got everything she wanted — including Walter Faris, the son of a hardworking local farmer.

She first met Walter when she was eleven, at church on Sunday. He was two years older than she, handsome, and obviously infatuated with her. As they grew older, there was nothing he wouldn't do for her, from sneaking a kiss behind a gravestone after church to stealing candy from the local general store.

When Liza Jane was sixteen, Walter started talking about getting married. While Liza Jane cared for him, in her own way, she was more interested in getting out of their one horse town than in settling down, and saw the young man as her ticket out.

The night he arrived to pick her up, she helped herself to her mother's jewelry and her father's car, and left without a backward glance.

**Personality/Motivation:** The world revolves around Liza Jane Bankson — just ask her. She has always been indulged in her every whim, first by her parents and then by Walter, and she definitely has a “whim of iron”. She is selfish and unfeeling, and has no use for anyone who can't do something or get something for her. The only person other than herself that she cares anything for is Walter, and her feelings there are more for a faithful hound than a husband. She reads movie star magazines constantly, and tries to look like the women she sees in them.

**Quote:** “Walter...? Get me a...”

**Powers/Tactics:** Liza Jane avoids hand-to-hand combat at almost all costs, but will jump in with a bottle to the back of someone's head if Walter needs her help. After all, he is a valuable tool. She is a fair hand with a pistol or rifle, but does not use Walter's tommy gun. Her most powerful weapons are her *Getta Load'a HER!* and *Sexy Distraction* powers, but she has to use them very carefully to prevent Walter from becoming enraged, unless, of course, that was the whole point of her using them.

Liza Jane has twelve unspent points to reflect the fact that she can learn skills quickly and easily if need be.

**Appearance:** Liza Jane Bankson is a beautiful girl, with golden blonde hair and green eyes. Small but voluptuous (4'8", 98 pounds), she is indeed a pocket Venus. While her years on the road have hardened her somewhat, it doesn't show on her face. She takes great care of her appearance and always wears fine clothes. The

only exception to this is if she has to take a part in one of the pair's confidence games, and even then she still insists that her clothes be of good quality, no matter how worn.

**Campaign Use:** Walter and Liza Jane are designed for more low-key conventional crime adventures revolving around bank robberies, confidence games, and so forth. They're dangerous (especially if a character tries to flirt with Liza Jane) but not outright killers, although they could easily be cast in that role if the campaign requires it. In any case, they will seldom, if ever, be encountered apart, as the dynamic of their relationship is part of what makes them work. Liza Jane might seem an interesting choice for a romantic interest, but her inability to see beyond herself and her own needs and wants — as well as the need to kill Walter to get anywhere with the relationship — will likely doom it before it really begins.

To make them more powerful, give Walter a few Range Skill Levels to reflect increased gun handling skills and alter Liza Jane's *Sexy Distraction* power so that it works on all appropriate targets in 3-4" radius. You could also add additional gang members to make them more of a challenge. To weaken them, remove Walter's *Tommy Gunner From Hell* and Liza Jane's *Sexy Distraction* abilities.

Walter and Liza Jane aren't really the Hunting type in general, unless someone makes it a point to start Hunting *them*. In that case, they'd first try to set up a “sting” to take the individual for a lot of money and humiliate them, and only after that proved ineffective would they consider something more drastic. If something happened to Liza Jane, Walter would never stop trying to get the person or persons responsible and kill them. If something happened to Walter, however, a character might find themselves Hunted by Liza Jane in a manner that wouldn't necessarily prove painful... except to their wallet.

**Elizabeth Jane Bankson**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes	
8	STR	-2	10-	75 kg; 1½d6 HTH [2]	
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5	
10	CON	0	11-		
10	BODY	0	11-		
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-	
18	EGO	18	13-	ECV: 6	
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6	
18	COM	4	13-		
4 PD				2	Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
2 ED				0	Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
3 SPD				5	Phases: 4, 8, 12
4 REC				0	
20 END				0	
20 STUN				1	

**Total Characteristics Cost: 61**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 1½"/3"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
18	<i>Getta Load'a HER!</i> : +2 with Interaction Skills	0
11	<i>Sexy Distraction</i> : Mind Control 8d6; Effect Ends Immediately If Anyone Directly Threatens Target (-½), No Range (-½), Only Works on Persons of Appropriate Sexual Orientation (-¼), Set Effect (pay attention only to me, ignore other non-threatening activity going on around you, -1), Requires a Seduction Roll (-½).	4

**Perks**

1 Reputation: Robber and Con Man (Police, Underworld) 11-, +1/+1d6

**Skills**

- 3 Acting 12-
- 3 Combat Driving 12-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 3 Disguise 13-
- 2 Gambling (Card Games) 13-
- 3 KS: Movie Stars 13-
- 3 Lockpicking 12-
- 3 Mimicry 13-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 3 PS: Gun Moll 13-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 2 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles
- 2 WF: Small Arms

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 67**

**Total Cost: 128**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Feature: Southern Accent (Easily Concealable)
- 20 Hunted: The Police (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Imprison)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Self-centered (Very Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: Criminal 8-

**Total Disadvantage Points: 140**



# Advanced Velocity Rules

by Gary Mei

## Advanced Movement, Falling, and Knockback Rules

One of the oddities in the *HERO System* is the way that the falling, knockback, and movement rules work. Most of the *HERO System* seems to use exponential damage rules; every doubling of kinetic energy adds +1 DC to an attack. Falling, Knockback, and movement damages are generally linear. Falling damage is +1 DC per inch of velocity. Move Through damage is +1 DC per 3" velocity and Move By damage is +1 DC per 5" velocity. Knockback is +1 DC per 1" velocity.

This leads to some strange results. A 120 mm tank cannon does about 8d6 RKA or 24 DCs of damage to a target. An object falling at terminal velocity does 30 DCs of damage to itself and anything it hits (up to its DEF + BODY, of course). Realistically, a man sized object being hit by a tank shell would take far more damage than if it fell at terminal velocity.

If we want to convert velocity to exponential damage, we must understand the underlying mathematics. Kinetic Energy =  $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ . So every doubling of velocity would mean four times the kinetic energy when impact occurs. Four times the impact would thus equate to +2 DC damage if exponential damage were in effect.

## New Falling Damage Table

Since terminal velocity is 30", it would do 11d6 damage. This may seem to be fairly low, but it's actually the equivalent of a punch from someone who can lift 50 tons!

Velocity	DC
<1"	1
1-2"	3
3-4"	5
5-8"	7
9-16"	9
17-32"	11
33-64"	13
65-128"	15
129-256"	17
257-512"	19

If you want a little more lethality to falls, there are a few options.

- Since velocity damage is at 30", which is very close to the top end of its bucket, you can simply add a few inches to terminal velocity and declare that it is 35" or so. This will lead to 13d6 damage, which is a trifle more lethal versus Normals. This would be the equivalent of a punch from someone who can lift 200 tons.

- Use the current falling rules for Normals and the new falling rules versus exceptional or powered characters.
- Handwave the results so that unimportant and/or unexceptional characters die instantly unless the PCs can save them.

It is simple to have a more fine-tuned table where the top half of any bucket takes 1 DC less damage. So 17-24" would take 10d6 damage and 25-32" would take 11d6 damage.

## Advanced Move Through and Move By Rules

It is easy to extrapolate the above table for Move Throughs and Move Bys. We'll go by the theory that a normal person who moves at 6" can add +2d6 damage with a Move Through and +1d6 damage with a Move By.

Velocity	V/3 DC	V/5 DC
5-8"	2	1
9-16"	4	2
17-32"	6	3
33-64"	8	4
65-128"	10	5
129-256"	12	6
257-512"	14	7

The OCV penalty would be 2 less than the DC bonus for Move Throughs (minimum -1 OCV penalty) and 1 less than the DC bonus for Move Bys (minimum -1 OCV penalty). Using this table, there is no need to halve strength damage for Move Bys to keep game balance. DCV penalties would remain -3 for Move Throughs and -2 for Move Bys.

Any martial arts maneuver that adds +v/3 would use the Move Through table, and any that adds +v/5 would use the Move By table for added damage.

## EXAMPLE

Speed Demon runs at 25". If he does a Move Through at full speed, he does +6d6 damage and takes a -4 OCV and -3 DCV penalty. If he does a Move By at full speed, he does +3d6 damage and takes a -2 OCV and -2 DCV penalty. Multiple Move Bys will take the same penalties as the current system (an additional -2 OCV per extra target).

Sir Paragon has polished his jousting skills to the peak of perfection. He has purchased Passing Strike with lances. If he hits another knight moving at 25" relative velocity, he will add +3 DC to his attack. He will have +1 OCV +0 DCV modifiers due to Passing Strike.

## DESIGN NOTES

These rules are not meant to be combined with the Megascale Knockback and Throwing rules from TUB.

Exponential Knockback and Double Exponential Knockback with low base dice are not appreciably more effective than regular Knockback rules. It's at the higher, more epic power levels that these Advantages come into their own. This is how it should be.

Be wary of Killing Attacks with Exponential Knockback. While they do subtract an extra 1d6 from Knockback, the variance of rolling fewer dice can be extremely dangerous. IOW, it's very unlikely that a 9d6 EB will roll too much higher than 9 Body, but it's fairly common for 3d6 RKA to roll 15+. With the Exponential scale, this could result in truly gigantic amounts of Knockback. I've left the option in because certain types of comics and Anime have killing attacks with epic levels of Knockback, but it may prove to be unbalancing in game terms.

Another source of danger would be a low base cost power such as Dispel which purchases Does Knockback,

Exponential Knockback. This would make the power too effective for the points cost.

### Advanced Knockback Rules

Knockback will be modified to be consistent with the above rules. Any Knockback will simply use the falling table for damage, subject to the DEF + BODY of the object that the target is knocked into. Thus if a character gets knocked back 12" into a wall, he will take 9d6 damage, assuming the wall has at least 9 DEF + BODY.

The 1½ and Double Knockback Advantages will have to be replaced, since they would be very overpriced with the above approach.

#### NEW ADVANTAGES

##### Double Knockback (+¼)

This Advantage works exactly the same as the current Double Knockback rules except that damage follows the Falling Damage chart. On average, it will merely add +2d6 damage to most attacks, but it does keep opponents at a distance.

##### Exponential Knockback (+½) ▲

This Advantage can also be called "Cinematic Knockback" or "Comic Book" Knockback. A power with this Advantage would do Knockback according to the following table:

<u>Raw Knockback</u>	<u>Net Knockback</u>
1-2"	2"
3-4"	4"
5-6"	8"
7-8"	16"
9-10"	32"
11-12"	64"
13-14"	128"
15-16"	256"
17-18"	512"
19-20"	1024"

#### EXAMPLE

Grond has a brick trick with Exponential Knockback on his STR. He punches Nighthawk and rolls 18 Body and 62 Stun. He rolls 5 for knockback dice and gets 13" raw Knockback. Looking at the chart, poor Nighthawk goes flying 128" away. He takes 15d6 damage (according to the falling chart) assuming he hits an object that has at least 15 DEF + BODY.

Note that you can fine-tune the above chart so that 7" raw Knockback equates to 12" Net Knockback or 9" raw equates to 24" Net for example. If you fine-tune the above chart, Grond would actually do 96" of Knockback to Nighthawk and 14d6 damage.

##### Double Exponential Knockback (+1) ▲

This Advantage is the same as the above advantage, but uses the following table:

<u>Raw Knockback</u>	<u>Net Knockback</u>
1"	1"
2"	2"
3"	4"
4"	8"
5"	16"
6"	32"
7"	64"
8"	128"
9"	256"
10"	512"

These 2 Advantages must be watched very carefully. They do fit many examples of comic book knockback by very powerful characters, but they could easily take opponents out of combat for a very long period of time as they may be hundreds or thousands of inches away. If Double Knockback is purchased along with Exponential Knockback, the Exponential part is determined before doubling the BODY of the attack. The Double Knockback piece will determine how many extra inches are added to the distance.

For both of the Exponential Advantages, Knockback Resistance is taken away from the Raw Knockback, **not** the Net Knockback.

##### Reduced Knockback Dice (+¼ or +½) ▲

This Advantage reduces the dice of Knockback subtracted from one of the Exponential Knockback Advantages. Exponential Knockback costs +¼ per Level, and Double Exponential Knockback costs +½ per Level.

#### EXAMPLE

Boom Shaka Laka has an EB 8d6 with Double Knockback (+¼), Exponential Knockback (+½) for 70 Active Points. He hits Butterfly Boy with this attack while he's in the air and rolls 9 BODY, 32 STUN, and a 1 on the Knockback die. The Exponential piece would be 8" Raw Knockback which is 16" Net Knockback. The Double Knockback piece would add 9" to the distance, for a total of 25". This would cause 11d6 damage if BB hits a hard object. If he instead attacked Lead Boy on the ground with 10" total (Knockback Resistance + Knockback dice roll), the Exponential piece would be 0", and the Double Knockback piece would be 18"-10" = 8" total distance. This translates to 7d6 damage if he hits a hard object.

Boom Shaka Laka purchases EB 7d6, Exponential Knockback (+½), Reduced Knockback Dice (2x, +½) for 70 Active Points. If he rolls 7 BODY, 25 STUN on his attack, the 7" Raw Knockback translates into 16" Net Knockback. This will result in 9d6 damage if the target hits a hard object. If he hits a target underwater, he subtracts 1d6 from the Raw Knockback instead of the normal 3d6.

## DIGITAL HERO #35

For either of the Exponential Knockback options, objects with DEF + BODY < ½ the Knockback damage will reduce the distance by its DEF + BODY. DEF + BODY at least ½ but less than the full Knockback Damage will reduce the distance by half. DEF + BODY at least equal to the Knockback Damage will stop the character dead in his tracks.

If there were no objects of at least DEF + BODY equal to the Knockback damage, the damage equals the largest DEF + BODY of any target struck, or ½ of the base Knockback damage, whichever is larger. The Knocked backed character does not take damage from every single object struck!

### EXAMPLE

In our earlier example, Grond does 128" Knockback on Nighthawk. The falling chart says 15d6 damage. Any objects with DEF + BODY ≤ 7 would only take DEF + BODY off the knockback. So a 3 DEF 3 BODY piece of wood would take 6" off the Knockback distance. Any objects with DEF + BODY of 8-14 would take off 64" distance. Any objects with DEF + BODY of at least 15 would stop Nighthawk entirely.

Suppose there are a series of office buildings with 2 DEF 2 BODY windows spaced 4" apart. Since these windows don't even total ½ of the 15d6 damage that 128" Knockback would produce, each set of windows would break and slow him down 4". Adding in the 4" separation between windows, Nighthawk would crash through 16 sets of windows before finally being stopped by the 17" set. He does not take 16 separate 4d6 attacks; he merely takes 7½d6 damage. That's comics for you.

Now let's add a 5 DEF 5 BODY door right at the beginning of his path. It would take 64" off the total Knockback. The net result would be Seeker crashing through the door, and 8 sets of windows before stopping, for 10d6. If it were a 16 DEF 9 BODY vault door, Nighthawk would be immediately stopped and would take 15d6.

## Advanced Throwing Rules

A character can throw an object as far as his excess STR indicates on the following table. No character may have greater excess STR than his personal STR + 20 (a character can't throw a penny further than a baseball). Thus a STR 20 character throwing another character of normal mass throw him a total of 2" since he has 10 excess STR. Grond (with 90 STR) throwing Nighthawk would have 80 excess STR and could throw him roughly 8000" or 16 km (if you extend the table logically). A 15 STR baseball player could throw a baseball with 35 excess STR (the maximum possible) for a total of 64", or a little more than 400 feet.

A character throwing another character does his STR in damage upon impact, *not* damage according to the falling chart. So Grond can't do more than 18d6 damage to Nighthawk by throwing him, no matter how far he threw him.

<u>Excess Strength</u>	<u>Throwing Distance</u>
0	0"
5	1"
10	2"
15	4"
20	8"
25	16"
30	32"
35	64"
40	128"
45	256"

As seen from the above chart, a character lifting an object that is the heaviest that he can lift, can only drop it in his own hex. A character who Pushes can add +1" Throwing distance per 5 points of extra excess STR added. So a 15 STR character cannot throw a baseball 256" by Pushing, but only 66" assuming he did a full Push. He would still do only 3d6 damage to any target hit or 5d6 at maximum Push.

### EXAMPLE

Flying Mammal Man has 25 STR. He Pushes and manages to lift a small car (1.6 tons) off the ground. Under normal circumstances, he can only drop the car in hex. However if he Pushes, he can throw it up to 1" away. If he picks up another 100 kg character, he can throw him 4" normally, and up to 6" with a full Push. No matter what or who he throws, he can do a maximum of 5d6 damage normally, or 7d6 with a full Push.

A character may only throw another unwilling character this full distance if his Casual STR is enough to hold the other character in a STR versus STR roll. Otherwise the other character struggles too much to allow a good throw. Any unwilling characters would be automatically both Unbalanced and Unaerodynamic. An unwilling character that beats the thrower's Casual STR can only be thrown a maximum of 1" per 5 excess STR.

### EXAMPLE

Nighthawk tries to wriggle free before Grond throws him. Grond's Casual STR is 45. Nighthawk's Martial Escape gives him a total of 40 STR. If Nighthawk doesn't roll more BODY on 8d6 than Grond can on 9d6, he'll go flying 8000" away instead of 16" (80 excess STR).



Nighthawk was on his weekly patrol in Millennium City when he spotted some VIPER agents harassing a gruff looking man in a trenchcoat. Swinging down from a nearby fire escape, Nighthawk made his presence known to the agents.

“Well, well,” Nighthawk pondered, “Five VIPER agents versus one person. Those odds are not fair. Allow me to even them up.” He faced agents of VIPER before, sometimes ten at a time, and he figured that facing five agents wouldn’t even make him sweat.

He opened up with a swift kick to the closest agent’s chin, and was surprised that not only did the agent block the kick, but also grab his foot. Unable to hold his balance, he was quickly brought to the ground, where the other agents pulled out green colored clubs and started beating him.

Meanwhile, the trenchcoated stranger opened his trenchcoat, revealing a red costume with a black and white “target” mark on his chest. He pulled out a white colored gun-like device, and began shooting the VIPER agents with beams of pure sonic energy.

Soon, the agents started to flee, picking

# Superhero Martial Arts by Stanley Teriaca

## Energy Blaster Combat Arts

This martial art style is not a true “martial art.” Instead, it is a combat style, which Energy Blasters tend to pick up after years of experience with their powers.

Energy Blaster Combat Art is meant to be used with one power (usually Energy Blast or Killing Attack – Ranged). A kind GM can allow the “one power” to be defined as a Multipower.

Energy Blaster Combat Arts has no Style Disadvantage.

**Optional Rules:** Powered Blast is meant to be used only with Energy Blast and Killing Attack-Ranged. If the GM allows, he might allow that maneuver to be used for other powers. See the accompanying table for how many Damage Classes go into what.

All blast attacks take a 3d6 location roll, except for Disarming Blast, which usually targets the hands, and Tripping Blast, which usually targets the legs.

**Special Abilities:** None.

### POWERED BLAST CONVERSION CHART

+4d6:	Dispel, Energy Blast, Flash, Suppress, Cosmetic Transform, Hand-To-Hand Attack with the Range Advantage
+2d6:	Entangle, Minor Transform
+1d6+1:	Killing Attack – Ranged, Killing Attack – Hand-To-Hand with the Ranged Advantage, Major Transform

### ENERGY BLASTER COMBAT ART

Use Art With One Power; One Power Element is Free

Maneuver	Phase	Points	OCV	DCV	RMod	Damage/Effect
Blast On The Run	½	3	+0	+0	+0	Power Strike; FMove
Defensive Blast	½	3	+0	+2	+1	Power Strike
Disarming Blast	½	5	+0	+0	-1	Disarm, +20 STR to Disarm
Offensive Blast	½	3	+2	+0	+1	Power Strike
Powered Blast	1+	3	-2	+0	+0	Power +4DC Strike
Sniper Blast	1+	3	-2	-2	+8	Power Strike
Tripping Blast	½	3	+0	+0	+1	Power Strike, Target Falls

#### Skills

- Penalty Skill Levels (Hit Location)
- Penalty Skill Levels (Range)
- Absolute Range Sense

#### Elements

- +1 Use Art with Dispel
- +1 Use Art with Energy Blast
- +1 Use Art with Entangle
- +1 Use Art with Flash
- +1 Use Art with Killing Attack – Ranged
- +1 Use Art with Multipower
- +1 Use Art with Suppress
- +1 Use Art with Telekinesis
- +1 Use Art with Transformation

### VIPER Combat Art

The nest leader by the name of Black Racer created VIPER Combat Art for use by VIPER agents. It shares many similarities with both Commando Training and Dirty Infighting. Unlike those two styles, VIPER Combat Art's goals are not to quickly take down the target, but instead to hurt the target badly.

VIPER Combat Art can only be taught at certain VIPER nests, and even then, only to certain agents. Rumor has it that the Supreme Serpent keeps close tabs on who knows this art, and only he can approve who gets taught. The truth of this rumor is unknown, but nobody has ever heard of any ex-VIPER agents who knew this style.

VIPER Combat Art has no Style Disadvantage.

**Optional Rules:** Adder Fang automatically hits the vitals, but does no extra damage based on location. Black Racer's Fang takes a 2d6+1 location roll. Cobra Fang strikes the arm, but does no extra damage based on location. Python Choke strikes the neck, but takes no extra damage based on location. Spitting Cobra Strike targets the eyes. And, finally, Python Crush does general damage.

**Special Abilities:** None.

up their wounded as they did so. The trenchcoated man helped Nighthawk to his feat. "You did good, kid," he said, "for someone who's just starting in this business. But take it from a pro... you have much to learn before you can take out VIPER's special hit squads."

VIPER COMBAT ART					
Maneuver	Phase	Points	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Adder Fang	½	4	+1	+1	2d6 NND(1)
Anaconda Wrap	½	3	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR for Holding On
Black Racer's Fang	½	5	+1	+0	STR +v/5;Fmove
Cobra Fang	½	5	-1	-2	Grab One Limb; HKA ½d6, Disable
Grass Snake Escape	var.	4	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
Python Block	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Python Crush	½	3	-2	+0	HKA ½d6, Must Follow Grab
Spitting Cobra Strike	½	4	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 4d6
<b>Skills</b>					
	Acrobatics				
	Breakfall				
	Contortion				
	Fast Draw				
	KS: VIPER *				
	WF: Blades				
	WF: Small Arms				
<b>Elements</b>					
	+1 Use Art with Blades				
	+1 Use Art with Clubs				



**MOKEN SEA  
GYPSY PLOT  
SEEDS**

Before the Moken will trade a McGuffin with the players, they insist that the players rescue a member of their people recently kidnapped by pirates. Can the players rescue the abducted Moken?

While trading general supplies with the Moken people, a female of the tribe asks one of the male players to hunt dinner for her. Unbeknownst to the player, he spears a sea turtle requiring that he now marry one of the tribe. How will the player get himself out of his predicament?

A valuable clue forces the players to find the location of the Moken Sea Turtle cave. The cave is considered extremely sacred to the Moken people. How will the players convince the Moken shaman to reveal the location to them?

## You Gotta Have Culture by Joshua Keezer

### The Moken Sea Gypsies

Within the waters of the Andaman Sea exists the nomadic tribe of the Moken. The origins of the Moken are mostly unknown. Even the origin of their unique language remains a mystery. It is believed, but has yet to be confirmed that Moken ancestors are responsible for cave paintings found throughout the Mergui Archipelago.

For nine to ten months out of the year, the Moken travel the Andaman Sea, trading with villages and cities along the coast as well as other traders on the water. During the remaining time, the Moken stay on one of several island villages to wait out the winter weather. Moken characters should have *AK: Mergui Archipelago* and *Marine Navigation* to represent their extreme life style.

The Moken travel the seas on large, handcrafted boats called Kabangs. Moken families live out of their Kabangs during the times they travel the coastline. New Kabangs are only made when it becomes necessary to replace a decrepit boat or if a younger member has started his own family. All Moken participate with the making of this boat and as a result all Moken possess the skill *PS: Kabang Building* as a full background skill or greater. Kabangs vary in size but should be treated as DEF 3 and BODY 11.

The Moken are expert traders and should possess *Trading* to represent their excellent haggling skills. Despite their nomadic nature, the Moken live a fairly modern lifestyle. Aboard a Kabang, a Moken would have an assortment of Recent technology level equipment and even possibly a Rare item or two [Pulp Hero page 299].

The Moken actively resist outside religions, holding preference to their shamanistic ways. In particular, the sea turtle is extremely symbolic in their culture. Sea turtles are captured live and the Moken eat the turtle in a group. When a diver spears a sea turtle, it means he is now required to marry. Players and GMs should feel free to create other symbolic elements to the sea turtle. For example, a man and a woman sharing the meat of a sea turtle could be the Moken wedding ceremony. When building a shaman character, they should have at least 6 points in appropriate knowledge skills related to the shamanistic elements of the sea gypsies.

The Moken are extremely proficient swimmers. The sea gypsies are so adaptive in the water, that they can see better underwater than your average person. This can be represented with *Accustomed Diver: +2 PER with Sight*

Group (4 Active Points); Only while underwater (-1). "Total Cost: 2 points." The Moken wear diving goggles to improve their vision further. Most divers in the tribe will possess a pair of homemade goggles. Characters built as divers from the tribe should consider the skill *PS: Spear Fishing* and bonuses to *Swimming*. Some of the more expert swimmers could possess *LS: (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Turn)*.

The Moken are a very flexible group of people to use in a Pulp campaign. As traders, they could come into possession of something rare or useful to the players in a campaign. Their travels make them experts of the Andaman Sea and they could help players find a particular place within the Archipelago. Or the players could simply come to the Moken to seek out one of the shamans.



### Gatcha of the Moken

**Background/History:** When he was a child, it was recognized early on that Gatcha would grow up to become a very energetic young boy. He was diving earlier than people his own age and by the time he was twelve Gatcha could dive deeper and longer than anyone in the tribe. On more than one occasion, he made his family worry that something had happened to him on his dive.

Gatcha lost his father when he was fourteen. His father had surfaced too quickly and succumbed to the bends. As Gatcha was the eldest son, it became his responsibility to take over the trading for his family. Gatcha had never dealt with outsiders before and treated them as he would his own members of his people. This blinding trust, unfortunately, caused Gatcha to make several poor trading deals. Gatcha eventually learned how to trade despite his shortcomings.

When Gatcha was seventeen he threw a spear at a fish he hoped to bring home for that night's dinner. It should have been a simple catch for him, but for some reason the spear missed his intended target. When Gatcha went to recover the spear, he discovered it had caught and killed a sea turtle. Under the laws of his people, Gatcha was required to take a wife. The sea gypsies held a ceremony the following night. During that ceremony Gatcha picked and married his wife.

Gatcha is happily married and now has three children. He is afraid he will follow his father's footsteps and die early in his life. Because of the fear, Gatcha has recently stopped diving as deep as he can. Although he is still young, he still takes him with him when he trades in the cities. He hopes that his son will surpass his trading ability. There are also signs that the middle child possesses Gatcha's very own endless reserve of energy and enthusiasm.

**Personality/Motivation:** Gatcha is a family man. Everything he does is for his family first and for his people second. As long as his actions will not put his family or the sea gypsies in danger, he is willing to try anything. Gatcha is the happiest when he dives beneath the sea for that next hunt.

After a near run in with some Burmese Pirates, Gatcha realized that had they attacked his people, he would not have had a way to protect his family. On his last trading excursion, he picked up a revolver. He keeps it hidden in a hollow section of his family's Kabang. He hopes he will never have to use it but will do so if necessary.

**Quote:** "Your asking price is a little too low, yes? I had a gentleman not ten minutes ago who offered twice that for the very same thing."

**Powers/Tactics:** He may blindly trust outsiders, but he is not a complete fool. In his dealings with outsiders he has learned several things that he will keep in mind. He knows how to recognize an experienced trader when he sees one. He also knows that an experienced trader will never offer a deal that is too good to be true. Gatcha will always be weary whenever one of these deals comes his way.

Gatcha will resort to force as a last resort or if his family should be in peril. He will try to make the best of his abilities to deal with that. He will try to knock an enemy into the water where he will have an advantage over him. If things are very bad, Gatcha will get his revolver he has hidden away and use that to resolve the issue.

**Campaign Use:** Because of his trust of outsiders, Gatcha makes a good contact between players and the Moken people. Gatcha could be the representative of the sea gypsies with the players if they are in need of information. Or the players could encounter Gatcha along the Moken trade route in Burma.

**Appearance:** Gatcha is usually seen wearing a pair of diving shorts he picked up during a trade in Tanpane. It is also quite rare to see him without a pair of diving goggles on his face. Countless hours in the sun have left Gatcha with well-tanned skin.

**Gatcha of the Moken**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [2]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
14	CON	8	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-/13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
2	PD	0		Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
28	END	0		
23	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 29**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 2"/4"  
 Swimming: 5"/10"

Cost	Powers	END
1	<i>Accustomed Diver:</i> Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Turn)	0
3	<i>Accustomed Diver:</i> Swimming +3" (5" Total)	1
2	<i>Accustomed Diver:</i> +2 PER with Sight Group; Only while Underwater (-1)	0

**Skills**

- 5 AK: Mergui Archipelago 13-
- 2 KS: Free-Diving 11-
- 2 Language: Thai (Conversational, Burmese is Native)
- 1 Mechanics 8-
- 2 Navigation (Marine) 11-
- 2 PS: Kabang Crafting 11-
- 3 PS: Spear Fishing 12-
- 2 Survival (Marine) 11-
- 1 TF: Large Rowed Boats
- 3 Trading 12-
- 1 WF: Polearms and Spears

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 30****Total Cost: 59****75+ Disadvantages**

- 25 DNPC: Wife and Three Children 8-  
(Incompetent, Group 4x DNPCs)
- 0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Moken Way of Life (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Social Limitation: Sea Gypsy (Occasionally, Major [Some People Refuse to Trade and Mistrust the Moken])

**Total Disadvantage Points: 59**

# Mythic Hero

by John R. Ivicsek Jr.

## Ladies' Night Out

Being a Mythic Hero isn't a job exclusively reserved for the gentlemen. In this issue of Mythic Hero, we'll give some equal time to one of the ladies of legend. Why only one? Well, arguably she could hold off Achilles while simultaneously spanking Heracles, so she's going to take up a bit of space. To start off, we're heading east for a while to the steppes of Russia. Mind your way and when you meet the nice lady with the funny teeth, don't make her angry...

Baba Yaga is the iron toothed witch of Russian folklore. She is a confusing character however as she is presented as a witch that eats children, and a mystic who helps out those who are pure of heart. What she is most famous for however is her mode of transport and her house. Baba Yaga's Hut with its chicken legs and fearsome demeanor has been a staple of RPG games ever since it made its first appearance in AD&D nigh on 25 years ago. Her mortar and pestle are similarly famous as perhaps one of the more bizarre methods of transport in mythology. So how do we present the nature spirit, darn near demi-goddess? Well in this case, the high end and low end are going to vary drastically... roughly a thousand points of dramatically. At the high end, she should be a suitable opponent for super teams. At the low end, she's a very famous local witch with interesting dentures and hut that's completely normal, but has a rep. In either case, she does have real quantifiable magic skill and a gift for foresight. In the more fantastic myths, Baba Yaga is a wizened crone of impressive height but almost skeletal build. She is far stronger than she has any right to be, verging on the supernatural. She is wise and smart, and possesses an indomitable will. She also seems untiring as she chases down her enemies. On top of this, she can control the elements, create magic items that can make a river from a towel or a forest from a comb, and she can see the future with startling accuracy. She is ageless and unchanging.

## Baba Yaga

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	1600 kg; 6d6 HTH [3]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5 /DCV: 5
30	CON	40	15-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
28	INT	18	15-	PER Roll: 15-
28	EGO	36	15-	ECV: 9
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
10	PD	4		Total: 10 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	4		Total: 10 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
12	REC	0		
60	END	0		
45	STUN	0		

### Total Characteristics Cost: 179

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Leaping:	2"/4"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
360	<i>Command of the Essential Magics:</i> Variable Power Pool, 180-point Reserve, Cosmic (+2); Spells Will Not Work on the Pure of Heart (-½)	var.
30	<i>Iron Teeth:</i> HKA 1d6+1 (2½d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½)	0
31	<i>It's Hard to Kill a Witch:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED/20 Mental/10 Power), Hardened (+¼)	0
60	<i>It's Hard to Kill a Witch:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
20	<i>Beyond Human Frailty:</i> Lack Of Weakness -5 for Normal Defense, -5 Resistant Defense, and -10 for Mental Defense	0
35	<i>Beyond Human Frailty:</i> Life Support (Only Has to Eat Once per Week, Only Has to Sleep 8 Hours per Week, Extended Breathing: 1 END per 20 Minutes; Immune to All Biological Agents, Chemicals, Diseases, and Poisons, Immortality; Safe in Intense Cold and Heat)	0
14	<i>Indomitable Will:</i> Mental Defense (20 points Total)	0
10	<i>Immune to Lesser Enchantments:</i> Power Defense (10 points)	0

**Equipment**

- 160 *Magic Toys*: Variable Power Pool, 125-Point Reserve; Only Changeable at Hut (-½), Only Magical Items (-¼) var.

**Talents**

- 12 Combat Spellcasting
- 20 Magesight, Discriminatory, Analyze, Range
- 5 Rapid Healing
- 6 Resistance (6 points)
- 20 Universal Translator

**Perks**

- 18 Reputation: Most Powerful Witch Ever (Any Russian) 14-, +6/+6d6
- 53 *Baba Yaga's Fearsome Hut*: 265-point Vehicle (See Below)
- 47 *Hut Interior*: 247-point Base (See Below)
- 70 *Chicken Brain*: Follower: 350-point AI of the Hut (See Below)

**Skills**

- 40 +5 with All Combat
- 15 +5 with Magic
- 3 AK: Russia 15-
- 5 Animal Handler (Birds, Canines, Felines, Ursines) 15-
- 3 Conversation 15-
- 3 Interrogation 15-
- 3 Inventor 15-
- 3 Mimicry 15-
- 3 Navigation (Air, Land) 15-
- 3 Oratory 15-
- 3 Paramedics 15-
- 3 Persuasion 15-
- 3 Riding 12-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 6 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Temperate/Subtropical, Mountain) 15-
- 3 Tracking 15-
- 3 TF: Riding Animals, Mortar and Pestle
- 3 Ventriloquism 15-
- 3 Scholar
- 2 KS: Alchemy 15-
- 2 KS: Arcane Magic 15-
- 2 KS: Arcane and Occult Lore 15-
- 2 KS: Astrology 15-
- 2 KS: Divination 15-
- 2 KS: Flora and Fauna 15-
- 2 KS: Herbalism 15-
- 2 KS: History 15-
- 2 KS: Legends And Lore 15-
- 2 KS: Magic Item Crafting 15-
- 2 KS: The Magic World 15-
- 2 KS: Magical Diseases and Curses 15-
- 2 KS: Magical Research 15-
- 2 KS: Places of Mystery 15-
- 2 KS: Ritual Magic 15-
- 2 KS: Witchcraft 15-

- 3 Linguist
- 4 Language: Byelorussian (Idiomatic, Literate, Russian is Native)
- 4 Language: Lithuanian (Idiomatic, Literate)
- 4 Language: Ukranian (Idiomatic, Literate)
- 3 Jack of All Trades
- 2 PS: Blacksmith 15-
- 2 PS: Brew Poison 15-
- 4 PS: Witch/Wise Woman 17-

**Total Skills & Powers: 1140**

**Total Cost: 1332**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 20 Distinctive Features: Iron Toothed, Rail Thin, 7-foot Tall Witch (Concealable, Extreme)
- 15 Hunted: Misguided Russian Heroes 8- (As Pow, Public ID)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Must Eat Children (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Reclusive (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Short-tempered (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Compelled to Help the Pure of Heart and Seekers of Knowledge (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Many Enemies) (Frequently, Severe)
- 20 Reputation: Child-eating Witch of the Steppes, 14- (Extreme)
  - 5 Vulnerability: 1½x STUN from Holy Attacks (Uncommon)
- 1002 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantages: 1332**

**SAMPLE SPELLS**

- 40 *Shield of the Winds*: Force Field (20 PD/20 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Spells Will Not Work on the Pure of Heart (-½) 0
- 50 *Elemental Fury*: EB 10d6, Indirect (Same origin, any direction, +½); Spells Will Not Work on the Pure of Heart (-½) 7
- 27 *Nature's Grasp*: Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF; Spells Will Not Work on the Pure of Heart (-½) 4

**SAMPLE TOYS**

- 16 *Mortar and Pestle*: Flight 15", Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼); OAF (-1), Requires Multiple Foci or Functions at Reduced Effectiveness (+¼), Gestures (½ DCV Throughout, -½) 1

Baba Yaga



## Baba Yaga's Fearsome Hut

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
7	SIZE	35	5"x2½", -7" KB
65	STR	20	13d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 2
4	SPD	12	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
14	DEF	36	
21	BODY	4	

**Total Characteristics Cost: 131**

Movement:	Ground:	12"/24"
	Water:	2"/4"
	Leaping:	2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
27	<i>Come Inside, Dearie:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (Single Dimension), 16x Mass; Only for People Crossing through the Doorway, Only to Enter Baba Yaga's Hut Interior, -½)	0
10	<i>Mystically Enhanced:</i> Hardened (+¼) applied to DEF	0
12	<i>Mystically Enhanced:</i> Power Defense (10 points), Hardened (+¼)	0
14	<i>You Can't Hurt the Hut for Long:</i> Regeneration (2 BODY per Turn)	0
15	<i>Big Chicken Legs:</i> HA +3d6 (16d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	0
32	<i>Never Tires:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) on STR	0
12	<i>Long Chicken Legs:</i> Running +6" (12" Total)	0
<b>Perks</b>		
12	Reputation: The Infamous Chicken-Legged Hut of Baba Yaga (Large Group) 14-, +4/+4d6	

**Total Skills & Powers: 134**

**Total Cost: 265**

## Hut Interior

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
20	BODY	18	
20	DEF	54	
14	SIZE	28	100"x50"

**Total Characteristics Cost: 100**

Cost	Attributes/Powers	END
50	Location: Distant; Easily-Defended, Another Dimension	0
27	<i>Doorway:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (Single Dimension), 16x Mass; Only to Transport Occupants Back to the Chicken Hut Exterior (-½)	0
30	<i>Materials Not from This World:</i> Hardened (2x, +½) on DEF	0
7	<i>Mystically Enhanced:</i> Power Defense (10 points); Does Not Protect Occupants (-½)	0

### Skills/Labs

- 5 KS: Alchemy 11-
- 5 KS: Arcane and Occult Lore 11-
- 5 KS: Herbalism 11-
- 5 KS: Magic Item Crafting 11-
- 5 KS: Magical Research 11-

**Total Skills & Powers: 139**

**Total Cost: 239**

## Chicken Brain

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12

**Total Characteristics Cost: 66**

Cost	Powers	END
51	<i>Pure Magical Intellect:</i> Life Support (Full, including Immortality and Safe in Zero-G)	0
26	<i>Only One May Command Me:</i> Mental Defense (24 points Total), Hardened (+¼)	0
25	<i>Mystically Enhanced:</i> Power Defense (20 points), Hardened (+¼)	0
20	<i>My Mistress Commands Me:</i> Mind Link to Baba Yaga, One Specific Mind, Any Dimension, Psychic Bond	0
105	<i>The Hut Knows All:</i> Clairvoyance (Hearing And Sight Groups), 16x Range (6,000"), 16 Perception Points, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½)	0

### Programs

- 1 Diagnose Malfunctions
- 1 Monitor Base Security, Report Anomalies
- 1 Operate Sensors, Report Anomalies
- 1 Move from Point A to B: Custom Power
- 1 Attack designated targets: Custom Power
- 8 Other programs as needed

### Talents

- 3 Bump Of Direction
- 10 Follow-Through Attack

### Skills

- 15 +3 with Hand-to-Hand Combat
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 7 Combat Driving 15- (to "steer" the Hut)
- 2 Navigation (Land) 13-

**Total Skills & Powers: 287**

**Total Cost: 353**

### 313+ Disadvantages

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Must Obey Anyone Who Invokes True Name (Uncommon, Total)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Must Obey Baba Yaga (Very Common, Total)

**Total Disadvantages: 353**

# Baba Yaga's Fearsome Hut



## Baba Yaga – Low End

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 800kg; 4d6 HTH [2]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4 /DCV: 4
20	CON	20	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll: 14-
23	EGO	26	14-	ECV: 8
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
5	PD	1		Total: 5 PD (3 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 5 ED (3 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
32	STUN	0		

### Total Characteristics Cost: 98

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Leaping:	2"/4"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

### Cost Powers END

- 67 *Command of the Essential Magics:*  
Variable Power Pool, 45-point Reserve,  
Half-Phase Change (+½); Spells Will  
Not Work on the Pure of Heart (-½) var.
- 7 *Iron Teeth:* HKA 1 pip (½d6 with STR),  
Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) 0
- 12 *It's Hard to Kill a Witch:* Damage  
Resistance (3 PD/3 ED/10 Mental /5  
Power), Hardened (+¼) 0
- 5 *Beyond Human Frailty:* Lack Of  
Weakness (-5) for Mental Defense 0
- 1 *Beyond Human Frailty:* Life Support  
(Longevity: 200 Years) 0
- 10 *Indomitable Will:* Mental Defense (15  
points Total) 0
- 5 *Immune to Lesser Enchantments:*  
Power Defense (5 points) 0

### Equipment

- 45 *Magic Toys:* Variable Power Pool, 35-  
Point Reserve; Only Changeable at Hut  
(-½), Only Magical Items (-¼) var.

### Talents

- 12 Combat Spellcasting
- 3 Resistance (3 points)

### Perks

- 15 Reputation: Most Powerful Witch Ever  
(Any Russian) 14-, +5/+5d6

### Skills

- 8 +1 with All Combat
- 9 +3 with Magic
- 3 AK: Russia 14-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 2 Language: Ukranian (Conversation,  
Russian is Native)
- 3 Paramedics 14-
- 3 Persuasion 13-

- 3 Riding 12-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 4 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Mountain) 14-
- 3 TF: Riding Animals, Chariots
- 3 Scholar
- 2 KS: Alchemy 14-
- 2 KS: Arcane and Occult Lore 14-
- 2 KS: Astrology 14-
- 2 KS: Flora and Fauna 14-
- 2 KS: Herbalism 14-
- 2 KS: History 14-
- 2 KS: Legends And Lore 14-
- 2 KS: Magic Item Crafting 14-
- 2 KS: The Magic World 14-
- 2 KS: Magical Diseases and Curses 14-
- 2 KS: Magical Research 14-
- 2 KS: Ritual Magic 14-
- 2 KS: Witchcraft 14-
- 3 Jack of All Trades
- 2 PS: Blacksmith 14-
- 2 PS: Brew Poison 14-
- 3 PS: Witch/Wise Woman 15-

### Total Skills & Powers: 265

### Total Cost: 363

### 200+ Disadvantages

- 20 Distinctive Features: Iron Toothed, Rail  
Thin, 6 foot Tall Witch (Concealable,  
Extreme)
- 15 Hunted: Misguided Russian Heroes 8-  
(As Pow, Public ID)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Compelled to  
Help the Pure of Heart and Seekers of  
Knowledge (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Reclusive  
(Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Short-tempered  
(Common, Moderate)
- 20 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Many  
Enemies) (Frequently, Severe)
- 20 Reputation: Child-eating Witch of the  
Steppes, 14- (Extreme)
- 48 Experience Points

### Total Disadvantages: 363

### SAMPLE SPELLS

- 13 *Nature's Grasp:* Entangle 2d6, 2 DEF;  
Pure of Heart (-½) 2
- 12 *Shield of the Winds:* Force Field (6  
PD/6 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END,  
+½); Pure of Heart (-½) 0
- 25 *Elemental Fury:* EB 5d6, Indirect  
(Same origin, any direction, +½); Pure  
of Heart (-½) 4

### SAMPLE TOYS

- 11 *Mortar and Pestle:* Flight 10",  
Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) (25;  
OAF (-1), Multiple Foci (+¼), Gestures  
(½ DCV Throughout, -½)



# Nehkojin

by Michael Surbrook

## History

A long time ago, before the arrival of the Xenovores, there was another race that inspired equal amounts of fear and awe all across the galaxy. They were the Nehkojin, a physically powerful race of sentients capable of impressive feats of energy manipulation whose prowess in battle was the stuff of legend. Even today, thousands of years after the height of Nehkojin power, they have a well-known reputation for violence and aggression, and are still found scattered in small numbers across the galaxy working as mercenaries, soldiers, bounty hunters, and privateers/pirates.

The Nehkojin were first encountered some 75,000 years ago by Malvan explorers searching for new slave-bearing planets. Finding a race of (to them) near-primitives, whose technology was barely beyond the Stone Age (the Nehkojin having only just begun to work in metal), the Malvans figured they would have no trouble in conquering such a backwards world. And if the Nehkojin proved to be useless and untrainable as slaves, then their planet would make a nice vacation spot. Landing on one of the larger landmasses, the Malvans decided that a simple show of force would quickly overawe the natives and allow the Malvans to be treated as virtual gods, and thus get down to the business of taking over.

Once the dust had settled, the few remaining Malvan fled back to their ship. Their initial show of force had gone well enough – they destroyed a few large, official-looking buildings, and then walked into the center of town to await the cowed and trembling masses. What they got was a barrage of energy blasts, followed by a flying horde of armed and armored warriors, who fought with a ferocity unmatched in all of the Malvans' experiences among the stars. To make matters worse, these primitives were stronger, faster, and tougher than any of the Malvans, even with their advanced weapons and armor. Sure, each time a Malvan fired his weapon a native was killed, but two seemed to take the slain warrior's place! It was all the Malvans could do to flee for their lives and make for the (hoped) safety of their ship. In fact, the only thing that kept the expedition from being wiped out to the last man was the ship's guns, which provided covering fire as the few survivors straggled back.

When the Phazor, ruler of Malva, was informed of this debacle he was both enraged and intrigued. It was virtually unheard of for Malvans to lose in battle (even outnumbered as the scouting party was) and to be forced to flee in near-terror? Unthinkable! For a time he

debated having the planet simply destroyed, thus eliminating the source of shame in an instant, but then the captain of his guard presented him with a better idea.

The next time the Malvans landed on the Nehkojin planet, the ship carried only one man – the captain of the Phazor's personal guard. Disembarking, he stood outside of his ship and waited. In due time, his patience was rewarded, as a Nehkojin native approached him. The man was armed and armored, but didn't attack, waiting to hear the Malvan out before deciding on a course of action. The Malvan then announced a challenge, to be carried to every part of the globe, that he, the Captain of the Phazor's personal guard, would fight the best of the Nehkojin had to offer for the fate of their world. The Nehkojin, upon hearing this, accepted instantly.

A short time later the Captain found himself standing in a natural arena, formed from a shallow valley surrounded by low hills. Thousands of Nehkojin lined those hills, while before him stood their champion, a tall, powerfully built gray-skinned warrior who showed no fear of his alien opponent, even when the Captain revealed himself to be one of the near-mythical Malvan Firewing. In turn, the Nehkojin activated his own energy powers – and the battle for the fate of the Nehkojin world was on!

To this day the story of that battle is still told, on Malva and Nehk alike. The two warriors were evenly matched, and the battle lasted for what seemed hours. The arena ended up a ruin, scoured by flame and cratered by impacts. The two champions fought on land, in the air, and even in the water, trading punches, kicks, and energy bolts with equal intensity. Legend has it the battle was even visible from orbit, witnessed by members of the Phazor's guard who had accompanied their Captain to the deceptively peaceful world.

Finally, exhausted and battered, dressed in the tattered rags of their fighting harness, the two warriors stopped fighting, neither having gained the upper hand. The Malvan found himself impressed by his so-called "primitive" foe, while the Nehkojin realized his opponent was no soft outsider, but a warrior worthy of respect. As the two sat in the smoking ruin of their battlefield, they began to talk, and the Malvan made an offer the Nehkojin found impossible to refuse – instead of fighting the Malvans, fight *for* them.

Thus began millennia of service to the Phazor of Malva. No longer did the Nehkojin

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I think it's almost required that every superhero universe have at least one alien race consisting almost entirely of super-powered beings. Marvel, for example has the Skrull, while DC has the Durlins, and several universes feature races where the royal families have superpowers, such as Marvel's Shi'ar, DC's Tamaranians, and the Jurai from the anime *Tenchi Muyo!*. And then we have DC Comic's Daxamites -- if exposed to the rays of a yellow sun, each and every one of them can become a virtual duplicate of Superman!

Following in this tradition, I present the Nehkojin, who were first described in the pages of *Ninja Hero* (they are Kayli the Destroyer's race). I have set them in the official Champions Universe, and have specifically designed them for a *Galactic Champions* setting, but they should be easily adaptable to any campaign you desire. Please note, although I have attempted to retain much of what was in Kayli's original character sheet, there may be discrepancies between what was presented in *Ninja Hero* and this article, as my view of the race may have changed between then

and now. If this is the case, simply use the elements you like best and work from there.

fight each other (much), but instead were able to unleash their ferocity on the armies and warriors of the galaxy. They stood at the forefront of any Malvan campaign, often forming the vanguard of any invasion force, and in return received fame and riches befitting the mightiest warriors in the known universe. And while the constant battles caused the death of thousands of Nehkojin, those that survived became that much stronger and tougher, making the next battle that much more destructive for their foes. But as the Nehkojin power rose, the Malvan's slowly fell. As time passed, the Malvan Empire began to shrink, and the Malvans themselves became, for the most part, weak and decadent. Gladiatorial games grew to be far more interesting than conquest and battle, and while a few Nehkojin fought in the games, most considered it beneath them, instead looking for opportunities to fight in unrestrained open-warfare, where they could truly test their skills. Thus began the Nehkojin tradition of mercenary service, fighting for anyone who could pay them. But even the Nehkojin had their limits, and as the magic slowly slipped away, so did their power. Technology could more than make up for the Nehkojin powers of energy projection, and over time they were driven back to their homeworld, to eventually be left alone and ignored. As for the Nehkojin themselves, they reverted back to their former lifestyle, fighting each other, waiting for the time when they would once again be able to dominate the battlefields and arenas of the galaxy.

## Biology

Nehkojin (the name is both singular and plural) are humanoid in shape and form and tend to have athletic, well-muscled physiques. Skin color ranges from light to dark gray, with some having nearly black (or more rarely, white) skin. Hair is almost universally black, with some variations (typically a shade of gray). Occasionally, a Nehkojin "sport" will be born, with either white or golden hair. Such Nehkojin are thought to be marked for greatness, and in past such pale-haired Nehkojin were looked upon as children of the gods and treated as such (often ending up as tribal priests and shaman). As they are descended from a feline ancestor, the Nehkojin retain tall catlike ears atop their heads as well as long, short-furred tails. A thick strip of hair runs along their spines, growing down from the head and along the back of the neck and torso to connect with the tail. Nehkojin eyes tend to be greenish or yellow, their teeth pointed, and short black claws adorn their fingertips.

Primarily carnivores, Nehkojin can, and will, eat nearly anything if needed, and are quite capable of consuming large amounts of food at a single sitting. They also tend to eat nearly all of

their prey, including viscera, bones (for the marrow), skin, and muscle mass. To this is usually added some basic spices, vegetables and fruits, and large quantities of strong drink. A "native-style" Nehkojin feast in an experience few will soon forget.

The Nehkojin have two sexes and are noted for almost an utter lack of sexual dimorphism. Nehkojin females are just as tall and strong as Nehkojin males, albeit with a somewhat more slender build and slightly less body mass. As both sexes tend to have long hair, husky voices, and tend to wear similar unisex garments, telling a Nehkojin male from a female at first glance isn't always the easiest thing to do. Fortunately, as female Nehkojin possess fairly obvious secondary sexual characteristics, cases of mistaken sexual identity can be easily avoided. Although the Nehkojin tend not to care if one confuses their gender, they also tend to look down on those who can't tell them apart.

Nehkojin reproduce in the normal manner and bear live offspring. The young develop rapidly, and are considered adults once they reach "fighting age," which is roughly 14.

The Nehkojin seem to be unique in the universe in that each and every member of the species is capable of incredible levels of energy manipulation. These powers allow them to perform such feats as unaided flight, projecting lethal energy beams, forming hand-held "energy blades," moving at great speed, lifting heavy weights, and so on. A single Nehkojin is often more than a match for a small squad of well-equipped soldiers, while a mere dozen or so acting in concert can hold off a small army.

## Nehk, the Nehkojin Homeworld

Nehk, the Nehkojin homeworld, is planet slightly larger than Earth with a gravity equal to 1.2 standard G. It is also slightly cooler than the Earth norm, and thus wetter. Covered with an equal mix of land and water, most of the land mass is broken up into small to medium-sized islands. These islands tend to be covered in lush grasslands and thick forests. The population of Nehk is incredibly sparse, with an estimated 10 million Nehkojin to be found there (and there is some evidence that this number is slowly dropping). In addition, there are (or were at one time) a small scattering of Nehkojin to be found on planets across the galaxy (including Malva), but these individuals may have all died out in the millennia since they left their homeworld.

## Nehkojin Society and Culture

The Nehkojin society is a curious one. They have no central government, and, in fact, seem to have no government at all. Instead, the Nehkojin are broken up into a large number of clans, each with its own clan leader, who tends to be the sole

source of authority and law (for that clan). A clan usually rules over an easily identifiable area of territory, such as a single island, although some are large enough, and strong enough, to control an entire island chain. Interaction between clans tends to be violent, as the clans constantly struggle with each other for territory, cattle, potential mates, and bragging rights over who is tougher in a fight. The closest analogy Terran scientists have found to this lifestyle is Celtic Ireland and England from before the arrival of the Romans, and the Dakota Sioux circa the early 1800s.

Nehkojin culture is also extremely old, and has seems to have remained virtually unchanged across the millennia since the Malvans first discovered them (and before that). Their innate powers, when coupled with their constant infighting, apparently led to a technological plateau, where the Nehkojin didn't feel the need (or pressure) to continue to advance technologically beyond such developments as plate armor, swords and axes, cattle-drawn wagons, and wind-powered ships. Even the introduction of the Malvans technology didn't affect them much. While Nehkojin warriors were more than happy to arm themselves with advanced Malvan weapons, wear Malvan armor, and use Malvan ships to travel the galaxy, they didn't feel the need to develop such things themselves, and once they were gone didn't really mourn their loss. In truth, some actually felt better for it, for instead of having to deal with commanders, troop placement, battle plans, and supply lines, they could go back to a far simpler life, where a single warrior could command respect through his own actions and deeds and not to have to worry about "rules of engagement."

The homogeneous nature of Nehkojin society is believed to be the result of the Nehkojin powers of energy manipulation. These powers are thought to be the result of a long-ago mutation, a mutation capable of being passed on to future generations. This allowed the Nehkojin clan in question to utterly dominate their enemies until they were virtually wiped out. Naturally, the combative nature of the Nehkojin meant the prevailing clan eventually split apart into separate factions, eventually leading towards the present situation. Thus, the Nehkojin language is practically the same (with minor region differences) across the entire planet, as are many social customs and religious beliefs.

Because of their innate powers, the Nehkojin tend to look down on most other species. As a rule they value physical ability over all other traits, with excellence in personal combat at the top of the scale. On Nehk, clan leaders maintain their position by virtue of their skill at arms and competition for the position can

be fierce once a leader starts to age or is killed in battle. However, as clans view outside threats as the more immediate danger, clan members are known to set aside such internal conflicts in order to meet a possible takeover attempt head on. When dealing with others, Nehkojin usually do so with an arrogance brought upon by virtue of their fairly unique gifts. As they require very little from the outside universe as whole, often they can be enticed into military operations simply with the promise for a chance to earn great glory in combat.

### Technology

For those who don't know their history, the Nehkojin lack of technological development can come as quite a surprise. When the Malvans first encountered them, they were an ATRI 2 society with some ATRI 3 elements. Even now, some 75,000 years later, they are for the most part, still firmly rooted in ATRI 3 with only scattered ATRI 4 developments. What Malvan technology there was, has (for the most part) finally broken down, and the old Malvan "spaceports" (little more than flat expanses of exposed bedrock) have long since been overgrown. However, as the Nehkojin reemerge into galactic society, this situation has begun to change, albeit slowly. The Nehkojin have begun importing such items as high-quality melee weapons made from nigh-unbreakable materials, composite ceramic body armor, synthetic wear-resistant fabrics, and the like. At the same time, the Nehkojin, aside from exporting themselves (they are in great demand as shock troops), send out animal hides, timber, minerals, and their own art, usually in the form of hand-crafted weapons and armor. Those Nehkojin who have spent most of their lives off planet are currently a great rarity, but are making their influence known back home. It is perhaps only a matter of time before a Nehkojin returns with just a single starship and starts a campaign to subjugate the rest of his race. If/when this occurs, it might see the end of the Nehkojin as a racial group, an event many other races will probably greet with a sigh of relief.

### Adapting the Nehkojin to Your Campaign

Although presented as part of the official Hero Games Universe, the Nehkojin should be usable in just about any *Champions* setting, especially those featuring space travel, and/or extensive alien interaction. You could even put them in a *Star Hero* campaign if you work with the history and powers a bit. And, of course, they're naturals for use in a *Galactic Champions* setting, especially since the "average" Nehkojin (as seen in the character of Asperas, below) is around 450 points.

Placing the Nehkojin in a non-Hero Games setting will require some alteration to the race and their history – namely the removal of the Malvans. Either that, or rename them to something else, and make it part of the Nehkojin mythology – untold centuries ago, a warrior from the stars fought with a Nehkojin champion, and afterwards, the Nehkojin so impressed the gods they were taken among the stars to fight for (and against) the gods.

For those who do wish to use the Nehkojin in the official Hero Games Universe (or some variant thereof), here are some suggestions on mixing things up:

*Galactic Champions* mentions the Malvans ruling much of the galaxy “hundreds of thousands of years ago,” as well as waging war on the Elder Worm and its ilk. This sounds like a perfect time for the initial introduction of the Nehkojin. Instead of a slaving expedition, the first Malvans to land on Nehk knew exactly what they were getting themselves into, but then, they had come looking for warriors. In this version of Nehkojin history, the Phazor recruits them to be his shock troops in the campaign against the Elder Worm. And since this is a time when magic was rich in the universe, the Nehkojin have more than enough raw power to make up for the foul magics of the Worm and their kin. This also explains the relative lack of development of the Nehkojin over the years – their losses were great fighting the Worms, and since most of them were off fighting in a galactic-wide war, there was little technological advancement at home. You can also use this situation to explain why such powerful warriors have continued their existence virtually unnoticed by the rest of the galaxy – once the war was over, the Malvans returned the survivors to Nehk and then placed a series of watch stations around the entire system, with the sole purpose of keeping everyone else out (but also making the Nehkojin available again if the Phazor would ever need them).

Of course, the ambient magic level also has a lot to do with Nehkojin fortunes on a galactic scale. In times of high magic they are powerful warriors, nigh-unstoppable by all but the best armed troops and military units. In times of low magic they are merely very tough and capable, but not all-powerful (but where’s the fun in that?). In either case, the Nehkojin have a built-in rationale for why they don’t try and take over the universe – they really don’t care to. The Nehkojin are (or should be) set in their ways, and see nothing wrong with living their lives as they have for millennia – fighting and raiding each other’s lands for cattle and potential husbands/wives. Even in the year 3000, with magic rich in the galaxy and their powers reaching mythical proportions, the Nehkojin are

more interested in testing their prowess against new enemies than actually conquering anyone.

When it comes to placing Nehk, you can sit the world just about anywhere you please. But even with the possible presence of Malvan watch stations keeping out prying alien eyes, you probably don’t want to place Nehk anywhere near the Terran Empire. The best choice is somewhere near Malva, possibly on side bordering the Velarian Federation. This keeps them away from Terrans, and far away from the Xenovores, who would have overwhelmed the Nehkojin if they ever encountered them (unless you go with the superhumans during the *Alien Wars* option, in which case the Nehkojin would have been known as “food that’s not worth the trouble”).

One final note, in the Hero Games Universe, the Nehkojin can interbreed with any mammalian humanoid alien. The result will tend to favor the Nehkojin side of the mix and will retain most of the energy manipulation abilities. Interestingly, the Nehkojin don’t mix well with the Fex, but are highly compatible with the Kalshari, mixing the two race’s physical characteristics in a manner most other races find exotically attractive.

## Characters

This section will present a basic Nehkojin package deal tailored to the power-level of the *Terran Empire* period (for those who wish to use a non-powered Nehkojin in their games). This will be followed by a template for a fully-powered Nehkojin warrior, a 480-point Nehkojin NPC, and a 1,000+ point *Galactic Champions*-era version of Kayli the Destroyer.

### NEHKOJIN PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
9	+3 DEX
10	+5 CON
4	+2 BODY
8	<i>Nehkojin Claws</i> : HKA ½d6 (up to 1d6+1 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)
6	<i>Nehkojin Ears</i> : +2 PER with Hearing
5	<i>Nehkojin Tail</i> : Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)
4	+2 to Climbing

#### Disadvantages

None

**Total Cost of Package: 51**

### Basic Nehkojin Warrior

**Description:** This character sheet represents a typical competent Nehkojin the PCs might encounter in a situation where you might need a character sheet (*i.e.* combat or the like). You can customize it by applying the various templates found on pages 116-118 of *Monsters, Minions, and Marauders*. A lesser Nehkojin – the very young, or the very old, and the like – would have slightly lower characteristics and the like.

This type of Nehkojin should only be used in campaigns set in times of high magic and/or extensive superhero activity. In the Hero Games Universe, that means either in the distant past (*i.e.* the Turakian and Atlantean Ages), the modern Twentieth Century superhero period, or the *Galactic Champions* era. The armor listed is presumed to be made from advanced materials, while the martial arts style is meant to be a generic example of Nehkojin fighting arts. In truth, the Nehkojin have hundreds of styles, both armed and unarmed, but for simplicities sake, they've been reduced to a set of standard maneuvers for this character sheet. Finally, it's a simple matter to expand on the multipower – just about any *ch'i*-based power listed in the pages of *Ninja Hero* is acceptable. In addition, the following two character sheets should provide some direct examples.

### Basic Nehkojin Warrior

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-/13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	3		Total: 18 PD (10 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 18 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 4, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	0		
40	END	0		
40	STUN	2		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 98**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Flight: 20"/40"  
 Leaping: 10"/20"

Cost	Powers	END
60	<i>Nehkojin Energy Manipulation:</i> Multipower, 60-point Reserve	0
12m	1) <i>Energy Blast (Standard):</i> EB 12d6	6
6m	2) <i>Energy Blade:</i> HKA 2d6 (3½d6 with STR)	3
8m	3) <i>Energy-Assisted Flight:</i> Flight 20"	4
8	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼), Restrained (-½)	1
6	<i>Enhanced Leaping:</i> Leaping +5" (10" Total)	2
6	<i>Nehkojin Ears:</i> +2 PER with Hearing	0
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	0

#### Equipment

15	<i>Nehkojin Battle Harness:</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED); Activation Roll 12- or Locations 6-7, 9-14, 16-18 (-¾), OIF (-½)	0
----	---	---

#### Skills

Martial Arts: Nehkojin Combat Training (a.k.a. The Way of the Warrior)			
Maneuver OCVDCV Notes			
4	Block	+2 +2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	— +5	Dodge, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1	9d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0 +2	7d6 Strike
3	Use Art with Blades, Claws, Clubs		
8	+1 with All Combat		
5	+1 with Hand-To-Hand Combat		
3	Acrobatics	13-	
3	Breakfall	13-	
3	Climbing	13-	
3	Stealth	13-	
2	Survival (varies)	11-	
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons		

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 187**

**Total Cost: 275**

#### 150+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Nehkojin, Gray Skin, Catlike Ears and Tail (Concealable, Noticed and Recognizable)
15	Psychological Limitation: Racial Arrogance (Common, Strong)
10	Reputation: Nehkojin Warrior, Violent and Destructive, 11-
90	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 275**

## Captain Asperas

**Background/History:** A captain of a Nehkojin mercenary company, Asperas has found the perfect outlet for his strong streak of wanderlust. He has always been fascinated with new people, places, and experiences, and as a young Nehkojin spent much of his time sailing alone among the islands of his clan's archipelago, dealing *mano a mano* with the elements, the native sea life (which on Nehk can get quite large), and anyone foolish to test the clan boundaries. As he grew older, he led raiding parties into the territories of other clans, learning something of tactics as well as command. In time, however, Asperas felt limited by what clan life had to offer and decided to set his sights higher, leaving Nehk behind to test his skill and mettle among the stars. Signing up with an outgoing mercenary unit (and recruiting a number of like-minded Nehkojin to accompany him), Asperas soon found himself embroiled in a wide variety of conflicts ranging from quick-and-dirty raids on backwater planets to out-and-out full scale wars on worlds that were centerpieces of technical advancement. Along the way, Asperas was able to visit innumerable alien worlds, each with new inhabitants, life forms, food, drink, customs, and (best of all), fighting styles. He couldn't be happier.

**Personality/Motivation:** Unlike most Nehkojin, Asperas doesn't automatically look down his nose at other sentient. While he does retain more than a little Nehkojin racial arrogance, he's not so full of himself as to think the other sentient races have nothing to offer. For example, he loves to watch demonstrations of native fighting arts and weapons styles, although he is also a canny enough fighter to quickly disregard anything he sees that is obviously done only for show or is fundamentally impractical. On the other hand, he will be highly interested in anything useful he sees, and will certainly try to spend some time learning a new technique if possible. The same goes for weapons, and Asperas is slowly accumulating a growing collection of weapons (both ancient and modern) from all over his section of the galaxy. As his reputation grows, smart potential employers have learned to gift the Nehkojin with a new "toy," a surefire way to get him to at least listen their offer, if not accept it.

**Quote:** "We're going to go in, hit hard, hit them fast, and never give them a chance to think, much less shoot back. Understood?"

**Powers/Tactics:** Like most Nehkojin, Asperas's tactics (both for himself and his company) are fairly simple – hit them hard and fast. Opening volleys of energy blasts (especially in autofire or Rapidfire bursts, or explosive ones) are typical.

Asperas himself has seen the power of modern weaponry, and has encouraged his fellow Nehkojin to carry various support weapons (such as grenade or rocket launchers, heavy blasters, or autofire lasers) to augment their own inherent abilities. As for himself, Asperas carries a broad Ackálian fighting knife (taken from a slain foe), and has a laser cutter mounted to the armor covering his right forearm. The former weapon is a good all-around tool, while the latter is mainly used cut through walls, bars, robots, and vehicles.

In keeping with his "hit them hard and fast" philosophy, Asperas likes to keep moving; running, leaping, or flying from cover to cover, firing constantly at the enemy. Once in close, he will draw his knife and fight hand-to-hand, using every trick and tactic he knows, even if it means fighting "dirty." Asperas knows honor has no place on the battlefield (unlike one-on-one duels) and the only thing that matters is who is standing when it's all over.

**Campaign Use:** Captain Asperas should be used as part of a larger group – specifically the rest of the Nehkojin mercenaries under his command. As with the Sword of Ackál, this company isn't "evil" per se, but simply working under different rules and requirements. Of course, since the Nehkojin don't really care who they are fighting for or against, and will accept just about any mission, odds are they will be opposed to the PCs in most encounters.

The rest of the Asperas's company should consist of 300-350 point Nehkojin, with at least one 400-425 point Lieutenant. Each should be built using the Basic Nehkojin Warrior template, with different martial arts specialties and energy powers.

Asperas doesn't Hunt heroes. He's a mercenary, not some vengeance-obsessed supervillain. He will, however, remember anyone who gave him a good fight before, and will look for a rematch.

To make Asperas more powerful, start by giving him the Supreme Warrior Aura from page 30 of *Ninja Hero*. Then add in more martial arts maneuvers (concentrating on Flash and NND attacks), and give him more Energy Blast variations. To decrease his power level, remove his Cutting Laser and Fighting Blade, and cut back the Multipower to a 60-point reserve.

**Appearance:** Asperas is of average height for a Nehkojin, standing roughly 6' tall with a lean but muscular build. He wears his hair long and tends to braid portions in lieu of cutting it. As with most Nehkojin mercenaries, Asperas wears the standard battle harness of full-body black jumpsuit, white sectional armor, white fingerless gloves, and white boots. As a symbol of his rank, gold highlights mark his armor, and he wears a brilliant scarlet baldric and sash.

## DIGITAL HERO #35

### Captain Asperas

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	1600 kg; 6d6 HTH [3]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-/14-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
25	PRE	10	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
12	COM	1	11-	
12	PD	6		Total: 22 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	5		Total: 20 ED (10 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
11	REC	0		
50	END	0		
43	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 155**

Movement:	Running:	9"/18"
	Flight:	30"/60"
	Leaping:	11"/22"

Cost	Powers	END
75	<i>Nehkojin Energy Manipulation:</i> Multipower, 75-point Reserve	0
7u	1) <i>Energy Blast (Standard):</i> EB 15d6	7
7u	2) <i>Energy Blast (High-Intensity):</i> EB 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½)	7
7u	3) <i>Energy Blast (Explosive):</i> EB 10d6, Explosion (+½)	7
6m	4) <i>Energy Blade:</i> HKA 2d6 (3½d6 with STR)	3
6m	5) <i>Energy-Assisted Flight:</i> Flight 30"	6
8	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	1
6	<i>Enhanced Leaping:</i> Leaping +5" (11" Total)	2
6	<i>Fast On His Feet:</i> Running +3" (9" total)	2
6	<i>Nehkojin Ears:</i> +2 PER with Normal Hearing	0
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	0

#### Equipment

60	<i>Roin'esh Cutting Laser:</i> RKA 3d6, Armor-Piercing (+½), 20 Boostable Charges (+½); OIF (+½)	[20]
11	<i>Ackálian Fighting Blade:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1)	0
15	<i>Nehkojin Battle Harness:</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED); Activation Roll 12- or Locations 6-7, 9-14, 16-18 (-¾), OIF (-½)	0

#### Skills

	Martial Arts: Nehkojin Combat Training Maneuver OCV/DCV Notes	
4	Block +2 +2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge — +5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick -2 +1	12d6 Strike
4	Knee/Elbow +2 +0	10d6 Strike Strike
4	Punch +0 +2	10d6 Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)	
2	Use Art with Blades, Claws	
16	+2 with All Combat	
10	+2 with Hand-To-Hand Combat	
3	Acrobatics 14-	
3	Breakfall 14-	
5	Climbing 15-	
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	
3	Navigation (Land, Marine) 11-	
3	Paramedic 11-	
2	PS: Mercenary 11-	
3	Oratory 14-	
3	Stealth 14-	
3	Streetwise 13-	
2	Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 11-	
7	Tactics 14-	
2	TF: Nehkojin Small Rowed-Boats, Nehkojin Small Wind-Powered Boats	
8	WF: Nehkojin Common Melee Weapons, Nehkojin Common Missile Weapons, [choice] Small Arms, [choice] Advanced Small Arms	

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 331**

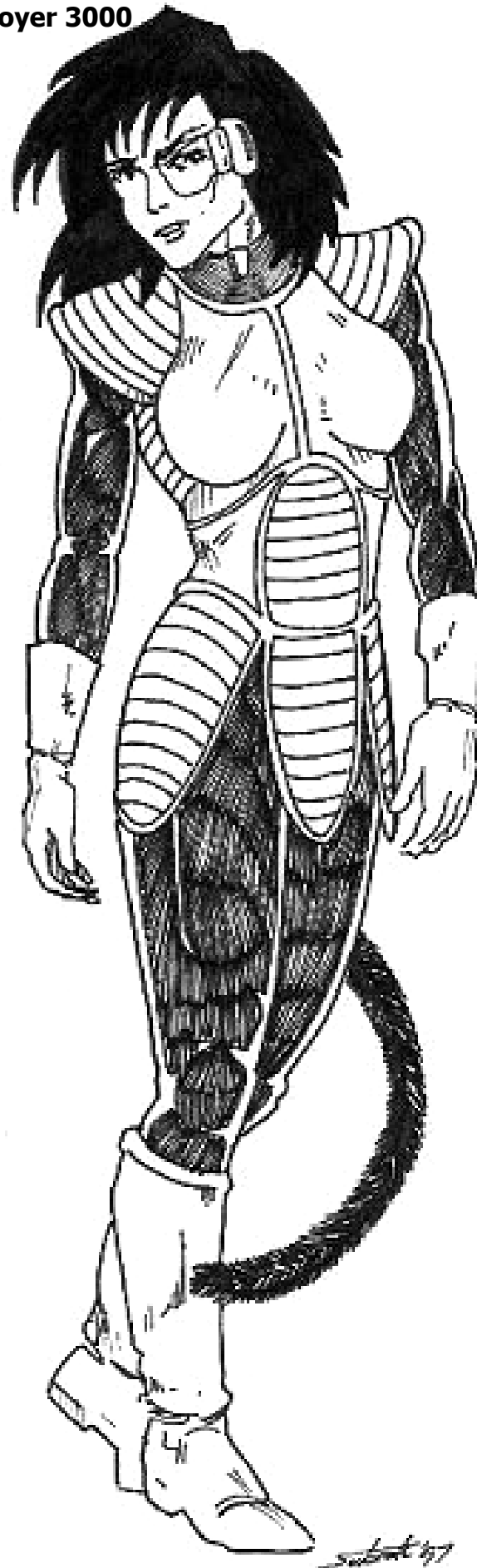
**Total Cost: 486**

#### 200+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Nehkojin, Gray Skin, Catlike Ears, and Tail (Concealable)
10	Hunted: Federation Security Patrol 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Can't Resist a Good Fight (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Fascinated With New People, Places, Lifeforms, Worlds, and Weapons (Common, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Racial Arrogance (Common, Strong)
10	Reputation: Nehkojin Warrior, Violent and Destructive, 11-
5	Rivalry: Other Mercenary Units and Warriors (Professional)
20	Social Limitation: Subject to (Employer's) Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
191	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 486**

Kayli the Destroyer 3000





### Kayli the Destroyer 3000

**Description:** This character sheet represents the “true” *Galactic Champions* form of Kayli the Destroyer. While the 735-point Kayli found in *Ninja Hero* is frightening enough (especially to 350-point standard superheroes), this version should make even the Champions of the 30th Century pause. And it doesn’t stop there, for even as powerful as she is, Kayli feels she is not yet on par with the Nehkojin of legend and trains constantly, seeking to one day be the equal of the ancient warriors (and possibly surpass them).

Kayli is best used as a form of living weapon, much in the same manner as Fracas (*Galactic Champions* page 97). She is sent to devastate armies, and if the tech level is low enough, entire worlds. At full power, with her Nehkojin Battle Aura burning bright around her, her physical skills are second to none, and her *Ultimate Warrior’s Fist* is capable of punching clean through a starship. Fortunately, she’s not really interested in Hunting heroes, but prefers more profitable enterprises (which usually involves things being blown up). However, she does keep grudges, and doesn’t forget a defeat easily.

If, for some reason, you need to make Kayli even more powerful, start by giving her 45 points of Life Support and Faster-Than-Light Travel. Then give her a variety of STR-based Advantages (or, flat out Naked Advantages) allowing her to perform such stunts as Autofire and Area Of Effect punches. You could also increase her Multipower to a 120-point reserve and add some form of Force Field or Force Wall slot to it. To reduce her power level, simply strike a happy medium between this version and the one in *Ninja Hero*.

### Kayli the Destroyer 3000

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
45	STR	35	18-	12 tons; 9d6 HTH [4]
30	DEX	60	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
30	CON	40	15-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-/14-
20	EGO	20	3-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
14	COM	2	12-	
20	PD	11		Total: 35 PD (21 rPD)
20	ED	14		Total: 35 ED (21 rED)
6	SPD	20		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
15	REC	0		
70	END	5		
60	STUN	4		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 250**

**Movement:**

Flight:	30”/480”
Leaping:	24”/36”
Running:	12”/18”
Swimming:	6”/6”
Teleport:	24”/24”

Cost	Powers	END
100	<i>Burning Soul Of The Pure Warrior:</i> Multipower, 100-point reserve	
10u	1) <i>Warrior’s Fist I:</i> EB 20d6	10
10u	2) <i>Warrior’s Fist II:</i> EB 16d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
10u	3) <i>Warrior’s Fist III:</i> EB 13d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
7u	4) <i>Warrior’s Crushing Fist:</i> EB 16d6, Armor Piercing (+½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½)	10
7u	5) <i>Warrior’s Arrows:</i> EB 16d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½)	40
7u	6) <i>Warrior’s Inferno:</i> EB 16d6, Explosion (+½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½)	10
7u	7) <i>Blade Of The Warrior:</i> HKA 3d6 (6d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
9u	8) <i>Burning Warrior’s Fist:</i> RKA 6d6	9
6u	9) <i>Burning Warrior’s Cutting Fist:</i> RKA 4d6, Armor Piercing (+½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½)	9
6u	10) <i>Burning Warrior’s Arrow Storm:</i> RKA 4d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½)	9
117	<i>Improved Nehkojin Battle Aura:</i> Aid STR, DEX, CON, PD, ED, SPD, END, STUN, and all <i>Burning Soul</i> Powers 6d6, Can Add Maximum Of 40 Points, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 Per 20 Minutes; +¾), Variable Effect (+2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Self Only (-½), Visible (brilliant burst of yellowish flame surrounds Kayli, easily detected with any <i>ch’i</i> sense; -¼)	0
15	<i>Ultimate Warrior’s Fist:</i> EB +10d6 to Warrior’s Fist I; Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾), Increased Endurance (x4 END; -1 ½)	+20
11	<i>Strength Of The Nehkojin:</i> Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) on 45 STR	2
12	<i>Nehkojin Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	0
26	<i>Nehkojin Toughness:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction 50%; STUN Only (-½)	0
33	<i>Ch’i Blocking:</i> Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks), Ranged (+1); Ranged Deflections Cost END (-½)	5

- 75 *Warrior's Wings*: Flight 30", 16x Noncombat 7
- 15 *Enhanced Leaping*: Leaping +15" (24" Total) 5
- 12 *Fast On Her Feet*: Running +6" (12" Total) 2
- 4 *Strong Swimmer*: Swimming +4" (6" Total) 1
- 27 *The Pure Warrior Moves Like the Wind*: Teleport 24"; Must Be Able to Cross Distance Normally (-1/2), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4) 4
- 28 *Ch'i Sense*: Detect *Ch'i* 14- (Mental Sense Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc Of Perception (360-Degrees), Ranged, Sense, Telescopic (+8 versus Range Modifier) 4
- 6 *Nehkojin Ears*: +2 PER with Normal Hearing 0
- 5 *Nehkojin Tail*: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+1/4); Limited Manipulation (-1/4) 0
- Equipment**
- 20 *Nehkojin Battle Harness*: Armor (15 PD/15 ED); Activation Roll 12- or Locations 6-7, 9-14, 16-18 (-3/4), OIF (-1/2) 0
- Skills**
- Martial Arts: Nehkojin Combat Training
- Maneuver OCV DCV Notes
- 4 Block +2 +2 Block, Abort
- 4 Disarm -1 +1 Disarm, 75 STR
- 4 Dodge — +5 Dodge, Abort
- 4 Escape +0 +0 80 STR vs. Grabs
- 3 Joint Lock -1 -1 Grab Two Limbs, 75 STR to hold on
- 5 Kick -2 +1 17d6 Strike
- 4 Knee/Elbow Strike +2 +0 15d6 Strike
- 3 Legsweep +2 -1 14d6 Strike, Target Falls
- 4 Punch +0 +2 15d6 Strike
- 16 +4 Damage Classes (already added in)
- 3 Use Art with Blades, Claws, Clubs
- 32 +4 with Combat
- 8 +4 OCV with Missile Deflection
- 8 +4 vs. Range Modifiers with Multipower
- 3 +1 with Survival, Tactics, and Tracking
- 3 Acrobatics 15-
- 3 AK: Malvan/Nehkojin Space 12-
- 2 AK: The Milky Way 11-
- 7 Analyze Fighting Style 14-
- 3 Breakfall 15-
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 3 Demolitions 12-
- 6 Gambling (Cards, Dice) 13-

- 2 KS: Sentient Species of the Milky Way Galaxy 11-
- 2 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
- 3 KS: Various Fighting Styles and Techniques 12-
- 4 Language: Federation Standard (Idiomatic, Nehkojin is Native)
- 1 Mechanics 8-
- 1 Navigation 8-
- 3 Power (Taming the Burning Soul) 15-
- 2 PS: Mercenary/Pirate 11-
- 3 Stealth 15-
- 3 Streetwise 15-
- 8 Survival (Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Urban) 12-
- 1 Systems Operation 8-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 4 TF: Terran Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Terran Grav Vehicles/ Hovercraft, Terran Small Personal-Use Spacecraft
- 8 WF: Nehkojin Common Melee Weapons, Nehkojin Common Missile Weapons, Terran Small Arms, Terran Advanced Small Arms

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 775**

**Total Cost: 1025**

**550+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Hunted: Champions 8- (As Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 20 Hunted: Federation Security Patrol 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Capture)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Greedy; Likes Wealth and Luxuries, Usually to Excess (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hot Tempered and Irritable; Easy to Goad and Bait (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Likes to Fight, Prefers Violent Solutions to Problems (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Reckless, Tends to Act Without Thinking (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: Kayli the Destroyer, Mercenary and Pirate 11- (extreme)
- 15 Reputation: Nehkojin Warrior, Violent and Destructive 11- (extreme)
- 10 Rivalry: Other Mercenary and Warrior Types (Professional)
- 15 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Frequently, Major)
- 335 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 1025**



# Zombie Hero

by Justin Mitchell

## Introduction

Aidan was almost certain he was insane. The only reason he doubted it is that a crazy person would feel perfectly sane in this world. At the end of the hallway he listened at the door. He couldn't believe his ears – voices. He'd thought he'd imagined it all; the car with the still warm engine, the bodies, disposed of in the same manner he had taken to in dealing with them: sever the head or destroy the brain. And now voices

He could make out every other word. It sounded like they were looking for someone. He called out as he knocked on the door, "Hello, can you help me? I need help! Or maybe I could help you?" No answer, the voices had gone silent. Aidan counted to three slowly and opened the door. The room was completely empty. Had he imagined it all? Was he truly insane? As he stepped into the room, the door shut behind him. Aidan barely had time to notice the man before he sensed something swinging in a tight arc towards his head. As darkness filled his vision, he thought, "At least I'm not crazy."

The *HERO System* is well suited for simulating the trials and horrors of a zombie apocalypse, more so (in my opinion) than any RPG specifically designed for this setting. This article features tips, advice, and setting materials you can incorporate into your current zombie campaign or use to begin one. A zombie apocalypse is a world in which society has collapsed due to a massive horde of murderous, flesh eating, animated corpses. I'll be drawing a lot of inspiration from, and wish to give credit to, the following in no particular order: George Romero, Max Brooks, Robert Kirkman and his co-creators, Sam Raimi, Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg, and Capcom. I recommend you seek these materials out for reference.

## Period

Zombies fit well in any period, in fact, the more outlandish the time/locale, the more original and enjoyable zombies are. This section focuses on three broad periods to set your campaign in and briefly sketches several sub-periods for each.

### ZOMBIES IN HISTORY

Any zombie outbreak taking place before 1968 will (in this article) be considered a historical outbreak. Pick up a copy of Max Brooks' *Zombie Survival Handbook*, as it details some interesting first person accounts of outbreaks throughout history. Another good source for a medieval zombie game is *Bruce Campbell vs. The Army of Darkness*. Here are some "high concept" possibilities for *Zombies in History*:

Zombies versus Cavemen! Zombies versus Romans! Zombies versus King Arthur's Knights! Zombies in the Renaissance! Zombies versus Pirates! Zombies in Colonial America! Zombies in the Old West! Zombies in the Great War! Zombies versus Gangsters! Zombies in WWII! Zombies versus James Dean!

### Pros and Cons

The pros of setting a zombie outbreak in the past are you can easily find a period in history not already depicted (or at least not widely known) in some form of media. This allows you to enjoy comparably virgin territory and gives you an opportunity to really stretch your imagination in exploring new zombie killing methods. You'll also be afforded opportunities to answer questions like: "How would Leonardo da Vinci handle flesh eating ghouls breaking into his studio?"

The main con of such a setting is the research involved in creating a reasonably convincing atmosphere for your zombie apocalypse. A key element of an enjoyable zombie massacre is the suspension of disbelief and the feeling a real person actually has a chance fighting a slow, dim-witted zombie. In order to really capture this, you have to provide a three-dimensional setting in which to do battle against the undead hordes. But don't bog your players down with too much of a good thing; a brief sketch of the setting and some internal consistency will suffice as opposed to truly exhaustive research and intense preparation.

## ZOMBIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

This is the setting most familiar to the public at large and the era in which most zombie fiction takes place. For the purpose of this article, this era begins in 1968 and continues to within a generation of the outbreak (roughly 2027 if it occurred today). The basic concept is introducing a multitude of undead into today's reality, then stir and enjoy. The cause is often irrelevant to the story as it usually focuses more on survival than the proactive behavior typical of most action heroes. Though it focuses on survival, proactive behavior and suspense are both very important tertiary components of engaging zombie action.

For reference, search out any of George Romero's *Living Dead* films; my personal favorite is "Dawn of." Also quite good are Zack Snyder's remake *Dawn of the Dead*, Raimi's *Evil Dead* and the sequel *Evil Dead 2: Dead by Dawn*, Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* for a decidedly British take on zombies, Capcom's *Resident Evil* series and the movies it spawned starring Milla Jovovich, directed by some music video hacks. I offer my apologies to all the fans of music video hacks and to Uwe Boll for leaving him out. I cannot recommend Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* enough. It is an excellent and rare example of serial zombie adventure.

### Pros and Cons

The pros of a modern setting are readily apparent. It's realistic, it's easy, and you can use the knowledge you already possess as a canvas on which to paint your world. Your characters could begin in your own hometown and fight their way free to safe haven. Another pro is the sheer volume of excellent reference material available.

Cons are you may feel it's been done before and, pardon my pun, done to death. This may make it hard to come up with an original take or even an enjoyable reread of past themes such as establishing a safe house, escaping a dangerously overrun area, defending against a siege, searching for a new home, and surviving the night.

## ZOMBIES OF THE FUTURE!

This is the setting probably least explored in popular media, future zombies. In this article, I will consider all campaigns/adventures to be set in the future after the first generation raised in a zombie apocalypse is old enough to be considered an adult (by my estimate, 22 years after civilization collapses). This is a brave new world ruled by the dead, where humans are an endangered species and you have to fight tooth and nail for the barest existence considered to be survival. Player Characters will most likely only know *our* world through second hand accounts from acquaintances who knew an old codger

who saw a real movie once. A man of twenty in 2005 would be 42 by the beginning of this campaign. However, the mortality rate is so astronomically high by this point the odds of meeting someone over thirty are slim.

As far as reference, I've little to offer, but I'd suggest a logical extrapolation of the modern setting in any of the above references I listed. Everything is bleaker; there are more zombies and fewer amenities. One reasonable stand-in is *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson set approximately 22 years after the outbreak created the monsters the protagonist hunts. The monsters have more in common with vampires than zombies, but pretty much every zombie movie, book, or comic owes a lot to *I Am Legend* and the overall vibe is definitely zombie-ish and should give you some ideas. Another is the most recent in Romero's *Living Dead*, series, *Land of the Dead*. Set in an indeterminate point in the future of a world overrun by zombies, the film features a community of humans who have adapted to the new world and established a fortified settlement in the middle of their zombie world.

An alternative '*Zombies of the Future*' campaign is having the **outbreak** occur in the future. This allows for such interesting situations as 'Aliens versus Zombies!' and 'Space Marines versus Zombies!' and so on and so forth. Star Wars with Zombies! See, I can do this all day. Anyway, moving on... Star Trek with Zombies! Sorry, I'm done.

### Pros and Cons

A pro of a future zombie setting is the very originality of it. This gives you a lot of creative license and many opportunities to surprise the players. It also lets you explore the theme of survival to its fullest, is living enough or do you need some quality of life? In a world decades after the collapse, society will (hopefully) begin to rebuild itself. Having the outbreak occur in the far future allows you to incorporate your favorite sci-fi elements into your game.

Cons include the comparative lack of reference to draw inspiration from. Other cons include the lack of optimism inherent in a game set a generation or more after the collapse of society. A GM will have to work hard to provide achievable goals within the setting, not upset the balance completely, but keep Player Characters from becoming completely demoralized.

### Zombie Genre Conventions

#### Where They Come From

The source of the zombie menace is sometimes vague and often beyond the ability of the protagonists to stop, but not always. When you design a zombie campaign you don't necessarily *have* to define the source of the infestation, but there are several viable options.

*It must be SCIENCE:* The government/evil corporation/mad scientist has gone too far this time. Either in an attempt to create disposable soldiers, immortality, or a biological weapon, they've unleashed a plague of zombies onto the world. Radiating out from the underground lab, the horde has slowly swept over the country until all semblance of order has been lost. Chaos and mayhem sweep the streets along with the walking dead.

*I believe in ALIENS:* A strange meteor from outer space, alien invaders who use our dead to exterminate us, or cosmic space radiation piercing our atmosphere in a unique celestial event cause the world we know to collapse overnight. The undead wander aimlessly, searching for sustenance. Searching for warm flesh to rend and savor.

*Only the darkest MAGIC:* An evil cult has summoned a horrible, ancient evil, unwitting teens read a forbidden text aloud, or divine punishment brings forth an army of the dead to slaughter the living. Conventional forces are helpless against this juggernaut of rotting flesh that never tires, never sleeps, and never stops.

#### Always Outnumbered

Zombies are not very intimidating by themselves. One slow-moving, weak-minded, and vulnerable animated corpse is easy pickings for a human. This is why zombies prefer to travel in hordes. Also, they get lonely by themselves. This is why they moan, because they're lonely. Humans often have a hard time organizing a unified defense. First they fail to do so at a community level, leading outbreaks to spread quickly from one town to the next. Then the government fails to respond quickly and decisively, ensuring the collapse of infrastructure and cessation of organized emergency operations. Finally, even in small tribes, friction and dissent often make cooperation difficult. All this contributes to zombies taking an early and significant advantage in numbers. The other contributing factor is whatever caused the dead to rise is often contagious, swelling the ranks of undead with every victim they claim.

#### Your Own Worst Enemy

As discussed above, humans have a hard time working together when faced with a common threat as great as cannibal hordes of undead. Often, in zombie fiction and particularly

in Romero's work, the human protagonists face a greater threat from within with internal conflict and without from other humans seeking to exploit their resources than from the zombies. It is not unusual for bands meeting in a zombie wasteland to come to blows and even kill each other with little or no provocation. The stress of continual battle with rotting, bloated ghouls is more than adequate strain to break even the most steadfast.

#### Your Days Are Numbered

Most zombie fiction has a very pessimistic and fatalist outlook. The protagonists are rarely afforded opportunities to better their situation, only opportunities to survive and carry on. Actually ending a zombie apocalypse and returning civilization to its status quo is laughable. Most survivors will die never knowing what exactly caused the dead to rise. Survival becomes a mantra, a religion, and a better quality of life a distant dream.

#### Zombie/Survivor Creation

Creating unique, realistic survivors and terrifying, brain-gobbling zombies is a must for an enjoyable and involving campaign. A good ensemble cast playing off each other's strengths (and more importantly) weaknesses can make a more enjoyable experience for everyone. It's okay in a one-off or a short campaign to throw some paper heroes with big guns and chainsaws against the undead masses, but for a long-term engagement, it's important to have some depth to mine for subplots and intrigue. Likewise, a zombie should be played with a bestial cunning in order to be a continual challenge to the players. Some people believe zombies can learn and become even more formidable.

#### The Human Condition

Survivors come in all shapes and sizes; the only trait in common between two survivors is the will to survive. Skilled Normal to Standard Hero are good starting point totals for your average survivor. Character builds should emphasize characteristics and noncombat skills over combat skills and perks that don't work well in the genre like contacts and wealth. For an even greater challenge, you could use a Standard Normal point total and liberally award experience to simulate a real everyman learning how to survive in a dangerous world. Powerful and Very Powerful starting point totals are a bit too powerful for most zombies to pose a challenge to. If you do want to have a higher-powered campaign, I would suggest creating characters as professional combatants, mercenaries, or Special Forces. I'd also recommend making your zombies tougher or more numerous than in a Skilled to Standard power level.

## Aidan Rogers

**Background/History:** Aidan is nineteen years old. He went to the local community college and worked at the neighborhood convenience store. He moved back in with his parents after his first semester on his own to save money for a car.

Aidan's never been very motivated – he went to school out of habit; he worked at a convenience store because it's a block from his house; and the real reason he moved back in with his parents is because his mom does his laundry. Aidan was working when it started. The first three hours he didn't really understand what was going on. He could see people running and screaming outside his store, but he couldn't figure out why. Then one of them shambled into the store. Aidan just stared at him, not believing his eyes. The thing moaned as it stumbled towards him, arms outstretched. Something inside of Aidan stirred. Some primal instinct that moved him to action, without taking his eyes off the creature, he felt underneath the counter for the .38 revolver the old man had showed him. The old man said it was for shooting hoodlums. He pulled it out, pointed it, and fired. The thing kept coming. Aidan squeezed the trigger four more times. The monster staggered, but didn't fall, and amazingly, crept closer. Aidan screamed as it fell over the counter, grasping at his shirt wildly. From the floor, it grabbed his leg. It was pulling closer. Its gaping mouth was inches from his foot. He put the .38 against its temple, and prayed quietly...

**Personality/Motivation:** Aidan is running scared wherever he goes. He doesn't trust people anymore. He feels that anyone he gets close to is eventually going to turn into one of **them**. Then he'll have to kill them. Or they're going to kill him. Ultimately, Aidan wants to get out of town and find somewhere safe to hide until this all blows over. Secretly, he wants to find people he can trust. He'll always check out other people, if as quietly as possible and he checks his friends' and neighbors' houses as he makes his way north.

**Quote:** “‘Stabbing My Heart’ is so amazing. Sucks they're zombies now.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Aidan is quick and more athletic than he realized. Or maybe it just seems that way in comparison to zombies. He also has a knack for finding safe havens and getting into buildings, represented with the *Survival (Urban)*, *Stealth*, and *Lockpicking* skills. Aidan's first response to danger is to run away, second he tries to run the other way, and if he's pressed he tries to avoid physical contact. He prefers to use ranged weapons, and he currently packs a scavenged 9mm automatic. Aidan has the Talent *Bump of Direction*. All his life, he's found it exceedingly difficult to get lost, no matter how hard he tried.

**Campaign Use:** Aidan is an Everyman. He has no exceptional skills and doesn't excel at combat. He is a likeable kind of guy and would make an excellent scavenger in a group. He's also a pretty boy and would make an excellent romantic foil as an NPC. To reduce Aidan's effectiveness, lose his Bump of Direction, and reduce his Dexterity and Running. To make him more powerful, increase his Speed and give him some CSLs with pistols.

**Appearance:** Aidan is a skinny teenager with unruly brown hair and dark green eyes. He's totally “emo” and still wears eyeliner. His nails are lacquered black, but it's chipping off. He wears tight black jeans and his convenience store shirt under an Adidas windbreaker. The convenience store shirt is purple with gold trim, his name is embroidered on the pocket, and the store logo is emblazoned on the back. The logo is a bright yellow smiley face. The old man swears he's going to sue Wal-Mart one of these days.

## DIGITAL HERO #35

### Aidan Rogers

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	75 kg; 1½d6 HTH [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
12	CON	4	11-	
9	BODY	-2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
8	PRE	-2	11-	PRE Attack: 1½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
24	END	0		
19	STUN	0		

#### Total Characteristics Cost: 24

Movement: Running: 7"/14"  
Leaping: 1½"/3"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

#### Cost Talents

3 Bump Of Direction

#### Skills

3 AK: Hometown 12-  
3 KS: Emo Bands 12-  
2 KS: Emo 11-  
3 Lockpicking 12-  
1 PS: Cashier 8-  
3 Stealth 12-  
2 Survival (Urban) 12-  
1 WF: Handguns

#### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 21

#### Total Cost: 45

#### 25+ Disadvantages

0 Normal Characteristic Maxima  
15 Psychological Limitation: Coward  
(Common, Strong)  
5 Unluck: 1d6

#### Total Disadvantage Points: 45

## Darius Carmichael

**Background/History:** Darius Carmichael is 36, and a fifteen-year veteran on the PD. Before that, he lied about his age to spend four years in the USMC. Darius' hometown isn't large enough to support a proper SWAT team, but Darius spent six months training with the DC Metro Emergency Response. His friends and neighbors held fundraisers to get together the money to finance Darius' training. Partly so they could feel safer knowing they had a tactical expert leading their departments (part-time) SWAT team and partly because Darius is a good guy and everyone knew he wanted this. Two months ago Darius went on administrative leave following a hostage situation. Jerry Feathers killed his wife in a drunken rage, then shot and killed his neighbor, Ed Rice, when the poor guy came over to see what the fuss was about. Carol Rice called the police as she watched her husband crumple from her living room. Feathers holed up with his twelve-year-old daughter and his infant son as hostages. After negotiations failed, Darius ordered his sniper, Red Jeffries, to take the shot. Red's a good shot, but he sneezed or got some dust in his eye that day, because the bullet missed Feathers and went right through the dry wall and into the little girl's room, through the mattress, box springs, under the bed where she was hiding, and finally her fragile little heart.

Darius doesn't remember what happened next. The reports his men filed say Darius screamed something unintelligible and charged the front door. Somewhere from his position behind the tactical van and the porch he dropped his weapon. He didn't kick the door down so much as run straight through it. After that, reports vary: there was a gunshot, a scream, some amount of time passed, and then Darius emerged cradling little Joshua Feathers in one arm and poor Eliza Feathers' body in the other. He was covered in blood, not all of it was Eliza's. Reports say that Jerry Feathers' body was unrecognizable. Two months later, Darius was sitting on his porch, getting drunk when he saw Cathy Ross running down the street screaming. He called her over to see what the matter was. Sobbing, she explained how her son had died. Darius' face darkened. She explained that he had gotten back up and attacked her and killed her husband. Cathy told him she watched her son eat her husband's eyes and now she was sure he was following her. She begged Darius to kill her son, but he wasn't convinced. He did grab his shotgun before he went to check Ross' house.

**Personality/Motivation:** Sgt. Carmichael is good-natured, commands respect, and is always sure and decisive. Darius still thinks of himself as a cop and as such, he's dedicated himself to safeguarding the people of his hometown. He

roams the streets, trying to avoid the zombies as best he can, searching for survivors to shepherd to safe haven. Darius is also seeking redemption, to save enough lives to atone for the one he lost. Fortunately for him and those who depend on him for protection, Darius quickly developed a distinction in his mind between live children and zombie children. Shooting zombie children does not trigger his berserk; in fact he considers it a kindness. Darius believes order will be restored, he believes he need only hold out a little longer until help arrives. If this turns out untrue...

**Quote:** "You come with me, I'll keep you safe. Or I'll die trying."

**Powers/Tactics:** Darius is an extremely well trained police officer. He prefers to evaluate dangerous situations from afar before moving in, but will not hesitate to leap into danger to preserve life. There is a strong chance that Darius would sacrifice himself to save others, only a truly hopeless situation would stay his hand. In combat, he'll eliminate zombies posing the greatest threat first. The ones attacking civilians, the ones attacking him, and the ones nearby fall down in that order. His priority is rescue and he will not stand and fight if there are bystanders that need to be led to safety. He carries a pump-action 12 gauge, 9mm automatic, and a claw hammer. He's found the hammer useful for penetrating skulls at close range and preserving ammo for larger groups. Darius also keeps a cache of rifles and ammo in his safe house, though he can't always easily access them as the hordes of zombies dictate his movement.

**Campaign Use:** Darius is a hero and would make an excellent source of aid in dire situations as he will willingly lend his help to whoever is in need. He's well suited for combat and to act as a leader to a party of survivors. His berserk also makes him a source of tension and could serve as a nasty surprise in the heat of battle, especially if the group has grown to trust him and is unaware of it. To make Darius less formidable, reduce his Speed and Martial Arts. To make him more powerful, increase his Strength, Body, and Stun, and give him some DCs with his Martial Arts.

**Appearance:** Darius Carmichael is a tall, athletic black man. He is deceptively quick and nimble despite his well-muscled physique. He wears jeans, stout hiking boots, whatever T-shirt is handy and not too stained with zombie gore, and a flak vest with SWAT stamped across the chest. He also tends to wear shades during the day and a knit cap at night. Darius is a little ragged as he hasn't shaved or gotten a haircut since he went on leave. His eyes are sharp and piercing. Very perceptive people will see the sadness in them, despite it being nearly overwhelmed by his hunter's gaze.



## DIGITAL HERO #35

### Darius Carmichael

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
14	STR	4	12-	175 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
16	INT	6	12-	PER Roll: 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
16	PRE	6	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	3		

#### Total Characteristics Cost: 81

Movement:	Running:	7"/14"
	Leaping:	2½"/5"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
2	Running +1" (7" Total)	1

#### Perks

- 2 Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers

#### Talents

- 3 Lightning Reflexes: +2 DEX to act first with All Actions

#### Skills

- Martial Arts: Basic Self Defense
- Maneuver OCVDCV Notes
- 4 Block +2 +2 Block, Abort
- 4 Escape +0 +0 +15 STR Escape
- 3 Grab -1 -1 2 Limbs, +10 STR
- 5 Offensive -2 +1 +4d6 Strike
- 4 Strike +0 +2 +2d6 Strike
  
- 8 +1 with All Combat
- 5 +1 with Ranged Combat
- 5 +1 with HTH Combat
  
- 3 Combat Driving 12-
- 3 Deduction 12-
- 3 Interrogation 12-
- 2 KS: Criminal Organizations 11-
- 2 KS: Local Law Enforcement 11-
- 3 KS: SWAT Protocol/Tactics 12-
- 2 KS: US History 11-
- 3 Lockpicking 12-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Teamwork 12-
- 3 Security Systems 12-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 WF: Grenade Launchers, Small Arms

#### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 80

#### Total Cost: 161

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 5 DNPC: Cathy Ross 11- (Slightly Less Pow, Useful)
- 20 Enraged: Children Killed (Uncommon, Go 8-, Recover 11-, Berserk)
- 10 Hunted: City PD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 15 Psychological Limitation: In Love with Cathy Ross (Uncommon, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Selfless (Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Frequently, Minor)

#### Total Disadvantage Points: 161

## Life After Death

The undead hordes come in various shapes and sizes and I could spend all day trying to accurately stat out every version I've seen. Instead I'll give you an example of your standard model, slow zombie. Other options are the fast zombie, the smart zombie, the not-really-a-zombie zombie, and the unkillable zombie.

### Slow Zombie

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	75 kg; 1½d6 HTH [0]
6	DEX	-12	10-	OCV: 2/DCV: 2
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
3	INT	-7	10-	PER Roll: 10-
0	EGO	0	9-	ECV: 0
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
2	COM	-4	9-	
2	PD	3		Total: 2 PD (2 rPD)
1	ED	0		Total: 1 ED (1 rED)
1	SPD	0		Phases: 7
4	REC	0		
20	END	0		

#### Total Characteristics Cost: -19

Movement:	Running:	5"/10"
	Leaping:	0"/0"
	Swimming:	0"/0"

#### Cost Powers END

17	<i>Bite</i> : HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Must Follow Grab (-½)	0
45	<i>Corpse</i> : Automaton (Takes No STUN)	0
3	<i>Corpse</i> : Damage Resistance (2 PD/1 ED)	0
15	<i>Corpse</i> : Does Not Bleed	0
45	<i>Corpse</i> : Life Support (Total plus Longevity: 200 years)	0
10	<i>Corpse</i> : No Hit Locations	0
72	<i>Corpse</i> : Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Not versus Headshots/Decapitation (-¼)	0
4	<i>Tireless</i> : Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) for STR	0
5	<i>Tireless</i> : Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) for Running	0
-4	<i>Slow</i> : Running -1", Swimming -2"	0

#### Skills

3	+1 with Grab, Bite, and Moan
---	------------------------------

#### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 215

#### Total Cost: 196

#### 75+ Disadvantages

25	Physical Limitation: Animal Intelligence (All the Time, Fully Impairing)
10	Physical Limitation: Mute (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: No Leap (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Body "Dies" when Decapitated (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
25	Psychological Limitation: Must Eat Living Flesh (Very Common, Total)
10	Vulnerability: 2x BODY from Headshots (Uncommon)
26	Experience Points

#### Total Disadvantage Points: 196

### Slow Zombie

**Background/History:** The humble zombie has plagued humanity throughout history. There are many different accounts of the source and cause of zombies, but none can be verified for certain. All that is known for sure is that the zombie is nature's people-eater.

**Quote:** (moan)

**Powers/Tactics:** The zombie has many amazing and supernatural abilities. They are extremely resistant to damage and the only truly effective methods of dispatching the living dead are to sever the head or destroy the brain. Even decapitation doesn't completely destroy the creature, as its severed head will continue to moan and gnash its teeth as it rolls about the ground. There are rumors that a zombie's bite is deadly, and the victim will return as a zombie. In battle the zombies will swarm over warm flesh and attempt to grab. The first wave or two of zombies will almost certainly be ineffectual, but being tireless, they will hound their target until he is too exerted to mount an effective defense.

**Campaign Use:** Zombies are the perfect fodder: endless hordes of slow-moving targets. However, they are more effectively utilized as an environmental hazard than an antagonist. A campaign completely dedicated to exterminating zombies will grow stale quickly. To increase their deadliness, give them a major transform linked to their bite to turn humans to zombies. To make them less scary, reduce their defenses and use them more sparingly.

**Appearance:** Zombies look like dead people walking. It may be due to the fact that they are indeed, dead people walking.

