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THE *New!* MARVEL®-PHILE

THE SECRET DEFENDERS



PLUS...

THE DEMONIC

SLORIOTH!

**DEAD
AND
GONE!**

THE SECRET DEFENDERS

Welcome to the October issue of The New Marvel-Phile! This month, we present some lesser known members of the Secret Defenders. Originally organized by Dr. Strange, he recruited whichever heroes he thought was necessary for a given mission, making the team rotate membership quite often.

When Dr. Strange would foresee dangers, he would use tarot cards to determine who would be best suited to help him battle the coming evil. If necessary, Strange would also teleport the team to the location they were needed. At times there seems to be a subtle pattern among those who choose to serve, such as War Machine and Thunderstrike, Ant Man and Iceman etc.

Strange later forced Doctor Druid to take over for him while he was dealing with Salome and the War of the Seven Spheres. Druid and Shadowwoman were asked to protect the Moebius

Stone from evil forces. The Stone ended up empowering Cadaver, and the three became a regular team of sorts, based out of Doctor Druid's Sanctum in Boston.

However, Druid grew tired of leading the group. Summoning the demon Slorloth, he faked his death and the team disbanded, although Cadaver, Shadowwoman and Joshua Pryce agreed to help each other if needed.

Let us know if you like what we are doing here, or if you want to see something different. Requests are also welcome, but please bear in mind, that we cannot possibly accommodate all requests. Feel free to send requests, feedback, and submissions (especially submissions!) to themarvelphile@gmail.com!

Please enjoy and feel free to give us feedback!

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STATISTICS

F RM (30)
 A RM (30)
 S IN (40)
 E AM (50)
 R TY (6)
 I EX (20)
 P IN (40)

Health: 150

Karma: 66

Resources: N/A

Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND:

Real Name: Cody Fleischer

Occupation: Former student,
 Champion of Agamotto

Identity: Secret

Legal Status: Citizen of the United States, with no criminal record, believed to be dead

Place of Birth: Seattle, Washington

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: None

Base of Operations: Mobile; formerly Dr. Druid's townhouse, Boston, Massachusetts

Past Group Affiliations: Secret Defenders

Present Group Affiliations: None

KNOWN POWERS:

Regeneration: Cadaver can regain 10 health points every 2 minutes while holding the Sword of Bone, through the use of the mystic blue flame that inhabits his body. He is capable of regenerating lost body parts almost instantly as well. Being dead, he is immune to disease, aging, and does not need to breathe, eat or drink to survive.

EQUIPMENT:

Sword of Bone: Cadaver possesses the Sword of Bone, an extremely powerful weapon capable of harming even the likes of the Hulk. Made of Sh-Z material, it can inflict Unearthly Edged damage, and can even injure those unaffected by normal weapons (i.e., magical and supernatural). Cadaver retrieves the weapon by drawing one of his ribs from his chest. The sword can also create tunnels through the earth by being struck against the ground, providing Typical rank Digging.



Talents: Swordsmanship, Mystic Background, Occult Lore **ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Contacts: Dr. Strange, Sepulcre

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES:

Cody Fleischer was an introverted, bored teenager, and during non-stressful periods, Cadaver conveys the same personality. As stress rises, though, Cadaver increasingly takes on the Horseman's personality, becoming highly determined and inclined towards heroic acts.

HISTORY:

Cody Fleischer led a very ordinary life until the day he died. Fleischer was hanging out with his friends at a graveyard when the evil sorceress Malachi appeared. She was searching for the final fragments of a time-controlling magic object known as Moebius Stone and she was in need of life energy, so she kissed Cody, taking his life-face into herself and killing him instantly, then set off to find the last fragment of the Moebius Stone. Cody was restored to life by the mystic principality Agamoto, to serve as the guardian of the fragment, and was reborn as Agarnotto's avatar, the Pale Horseman, Cadaver. Cadaver drew a bone from within his own body and it was transformed into the powerful magic weapon, the Sword of Bone. Though Malachi managed to obtain the final fragment, Cadaver and the Secret Defenders eventually defeated her.

Though the evil sorceress had been defeated, the mystical pseudo-clone of Dr. Stephen Strange, a creature known only as Strange, attempted to claim the Moebius Stone. When Cadaver opposed him, Strange, who was attempting to gather magic weapons for his master, Dr. Stephen Strange, tried to claim the Sword of Bone as well, but the Sword resisted Strange and when Dr. Druid destroyed the Moebius Stone, Strange lost interest and left.

Cadaver longed to reconnect to his mortal life in Seattle, but all his attempts ended in disaster. Resigned to his new lonely existence, Cadaver returned to his role as a Secret Defender and went to San Francisco when Dr. Druid summoned him to help defeat the evil flesh-warping magician, Slaymaker.

Though he had been a hero and the leader of the Secret Defenders, Dr. Druid had recently been corrupted by his own lust for power and the influence of a demonic entity known as Slorloth.

Using the Secret Defenders to defeat the guardian and gain entrance to Slorloth's realm, Dr. Druid attempted to claim Slorloth's power be his own, but was overwhelmed and found himself instead possessed by the powerful demon. Cadaver and his teammate Sepulcre (Shadowwoman) joined the newly arrived heroes, the Cognoscenti, in attempting to free Druid from Slorloth's influence. In the ensuing struggle Cadaver's body was destroyed, but his Cognoscenti ally, Joshua Pryce, picked up the Sword of Bone and continued to battle with it. The demon Slorloth was finally defeated by the arrival of the Vishanti themselves and the Living Tribunal. Before departing, Agamoto restored Cadaver to life (or unlife), explaining that the Fist of the Vishanti would be needed until the end of the War of the Seven Spheres - which would take another five thousand years. Cadaver was angered to learn he would be forced to serve for so long. Dr. Stephen Strange was also drafted into five thousand years of service.

However, time exists differently for the different planes of existence, so even though the War lasted for five thousand years in the Realms of Magic, it was over on Earth's dimensional plane in a few months. Since Cadaver has not been seen or heard from since the end of the War of the Seven Spheres, it is possible that the Vishanti awarded him with the final rest he desired.

GROUP HISTORY

The origins of the Cognoscenti are unrevealed. On they are born with the knowledge and the desire to protect humanity. They are apparently chosen by the Elder Goddess Gaea to act as her servants, protecting the Earth and its inhabitants. Apparently, the eldest of the Cognoscenti, the man known only as Al, exists as a disembodied head. His exact age is unknown, as is the reason that he is lacking a proper body, but he presumably survives via magic. He remains within a canister filled with preservative, which prevents him from decomposing. He can levitate through the air, cast a number of spells, sense objects and beings of power, and project mystic blasts, through removal from his preservative canister apparently robs him of these abilities. He is clairvoyant and, to some degree, precogniscent, and he speaks telepathically. He is rather jaded, caring solely for the mission to protect Earth and the vast sea of humanity, while becoming insensitive to individual human lives. He serves as a mentor to Joshua; by combining his powers with Joshua, he can achieve feats such as summoning beings through time. When his and Joshua's powers are further combined with a third Cognoscenti, such as with the newborn Rose Steadbaur, their abilities are magnified geometrically. Working under Al's mentorship, Joshua Pryce appears to be a relatively young man. In spite of his immature mannerisms, he is wise in the ways of magic and is attuned to every life on Earth. Though Al is the more experienced member, Joshua is the one who provides leadership to the group. In addition to his telepathic powers, Joshua can magically perform many feats, such as damaging or repairing magical devices, handling Cadaver's Sword of Bone, projecting force blasts, opening dimensional portals and pulling others through them, and restoring injured magical beings such as Shadowwoman. The third member of the Cognoscenti, Rose Steadbaur, was recruited as a newborn infant; she arrived in the world and immediately became an integral member of the team. Already in possession of potent psychic abilities, Rose was able to link her mind with her fellow Cognoscenti and lend her strength to them.



Al and Joshua would need that strength to fight Dr. Druid and his new demonic master Slorioth. From across the country in California, the Cognoscenti sensed the darkness growing inside of Druid and headed to Boston hoping to prevent the hero's total corruption, but Druid was intent on following his dark goal of merging with Slorioth. When Druid's new power proved to be too much for the Cognoscenti, Joshua summoned Cadaver and Sepulcre to fight against their former leader: Joshua only brought these two as their partially dead natures protected them from Slorioth's netherverse, which would drain the souls and sap the lives of all things living. As the group confronted Druid, Druid shattered. Still, their combined efforts were not enough to stop Druid with the power of Slorioth coursing through him, and Druid shattered Al's canister, causing him to crash helplessly to the ground, then destroyed both Cadaver and Sepulcre. At that moment though an expectant mother whose life Joshua had saved on the Cognoscenti's cross-country trek went into labor. The woman's last name was Steadbaur and she was giving birth to the previously unrevealed third member of the group. Joshua combined his will with that of Al's and the infant Steadbaur and used the newly formed trinity to turn Dr. Druid's own powers against him. Druid was greatly weakened, so he drew even more on the extradimensional energies of Slorioth to reinforce his own power. The demonic energy became so intense that the Vishanti themselves were alerted to the danger and materialized to investigate. Realizing that a direct battle between themselves and Slorioth would destroy Earth, the Vishanti submitted to binding arbitration, summoning the Living Tribunal.

Joshua appeared before the Tribunal and argued that Slorioth's actions had unnaturally accelerated the War of the Seven Spheres, and that the temporal discontinuity this caused would prove cataclysmic to Eternity itself. Despite Druid's arguments to the contrary, the Tribunal banished Slorioth from the Earthly plane. The past-Defenders returned to their own time, Agamoto restored Cadaver, and Joshua restored Sepulchre, despite her desire to end her existence, turning her

back into Shadowwoman. Joshua then explained to Al, back in a restored jar, about the Steadbaur infant.

Joshua later joined S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Howling Commandos monster force, and was one of several mystics who participated in the final assault on Merlin's forces.

GROUP POWER

Augmentation: The Cognoscenti are magically linked so that any two of them may combine their power to raise their magical abilities by +1CS. If all three of them are present, magical abilities may be raised by +2CS.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Joshua Pryce

F GD (10)
A GD (10)
S TY (6)
E GD (10)
R GD (10)
I TY (6)
P IN (40)

Health: 36
Karma: 56
Resources: PR
Popularity: 2

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Joshua Pryce
Occupation: Adventurer, former SHIELD agent
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unknown (U.S.)
Marital Status: Single
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Mobile
Past Group Affiliations: Howling Commandos
Present Group Affiliation: Cognoscenti

KNOWN POWERS

Joshua can magically perform many feats. Below are ones that he had demonstrated, but he may possess additional abilities:

- *Damaging or repairing magical devices:* RM ability. With this power, Joshua can reduce a magical object's material strength by 30

points, or increase it by 30 up to its original maximum. A Red FEAT roll means that the object has either been destroyed completely, or may add 30 points to current material strength regardless of its original maximum.

- *Eldritch Blast:* RM intensity
- *Dimensional Portal:* TY ability
- *Magical Healing:* EX ability. Joshua may only use this power on magical beings.

TALENTS: Occult Lore, Scholar of Antiquities, Mystic Background, Streetsmart, Martial Arts E

CONTACTS: Cognoscenti, Howling Commandos, Secret Defenders

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Working under Al's mentorship, Joshua is a relatively young man (though it could be that he is centuries old and just magically assumes this appearance). Despite his mannerisms being that of a teen, he is wise in the ways of magic and is attuned to every life on Earth.

AI

F FB (2)
A SH0 (0)
S FB (2)
E FB (2)
R EX (20)
I RM (30)
P IN (40)

Health: 6
Karma: 90
Resources: FB
Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Sidrat-AI-Muntah
Occupation: Mentor
Legal Status: Unknown
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unknown
Marital Status: Single
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Mobile
Past Group Affiliations: None
Present Group Affiliation:
Cognoscenti

KNOWN POWERS

AI can magically perform several spells. Below are abilities that he had demonstrated, but he may possess additional ones:

- *Levitation:* GD ability
- *Magic detection:* AI can sense objects and beings of power at MN ability.
- *Eldritch Blast:* RM intensity
- *Clairvoyance:* RM rank
- *Precognition:* EX rank
- *Telepathy:* This is how AI communicates, at AM ability.

LIMITATIONS

Preservative Cannister: Removal from his preservative canister robs AI of his powers.

Disembodied Head: Being a disembodied head, AI's physical abilities are limited.

TALENTS: Mystic Background, Occult Lore

CONTACTS: Cognoscenti, Secret Defenders

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

The eldest of the Cognoscenti, AI is a disembodied head within a canister filled with preservative. How old he is, and how he got that way, is unknown. He is rather jaded, caring solely for the mission to protect Earth and humanity. He serves as mentor to Joshua Pryce.

Rose Steadbaur

F A S E R I P
Fb Fb Fb Fb Fb Pr Ty

Health: 8 **Karma:** 12
Resources: PR **Popularity:** 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Rose Steadbaur
Occupation: Infant
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: No dual identity
Other Known Aliases: Baby Rose
Place of Birth: Massachusetts, U.S.
Marital Status: Single
Known Relatives: Unnamed mother and father
Base of Operations: Massachusetts, U.S.
Past Group Affiliations: None
Present Group Affiliation:
Cognoscenti

KNOWN POWERS

Augmentation: See below

TALENTS: None

CONTACTS: Cognoscenti

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Although merely an infant, Rose Steadbaur is the next generation of the Cognoscenti. Her parents were nearly killed by a falling girder at a truckstop on the Massachusetts turnpike, but Joshua foresaw this possible future and got in their way, saving them. His actions bore fruit as her birth granted the additional power Joshua needed to foil Druid and Slorioth.

One would assume that she has some advanced degree of awareness and some inherent affinity for magic, and that AI and/or Joshua will seek her out someday.

STATISTICS

F GD (10)
A GD (10)
S EX (20)
E EX (20)
R EX (20)
I RM (30)
P IN (40)

Health: 60
Karma: 90
Resources: GD
Popularity: 4

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Jillian Marie Woods

Occupation: Former security contractor, adventurer, and occultist. Presently unknown.

Legal Status: U.S. citizen with criminal record

Identity: Secret

Other Known Aliases: Shadowwoman

Place of Birth: San Francisco, California

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: None

Base of Operations: Mobile, formerly San Francisco, formerly Boston

Past Group Affiliations: Shock Troop, Secret Defenders, Roxxon

Present Group Affiliation: None

KNOWN POWERS

Darkforce: Woods can manipulate dark energy to fly, create dark areas, become insubstantial, and hide in shadows. As Sepulcre, Jillian's powers seem stronger and more offense-oriented than before: when in shadow form she can turn her hands into giant claws, elongate her arms, and has a degree of super-strength. Her overall power output and resilience are noticeably higher.

- *Flight:* GD airspeed (8 areas/round)
- *Darkforce Generation:* RM ability; allows the creation of areas of darkness as well as creating tangible constructs.
- *Intangibility:* While in shadow form, Sepulcre can phase at RM ability.
- *Stealth:* Sepulcre can blend into shadows at AM ability.
- *Plasticity:* Sepulcre can use her darkforce ability to extend her arms, legs, etc. up to 3 areas away, including attacks.
- *Darkforce Tendrils:* Capable of RM strength grappling, up to 3 areas away.



- *Claws:* Capable of RM edged damage.

Limited Invulnerability: Woods is immune to some attacks that would kill an ordinary person. Treat as True Invulnerability at Excellent rank.

EQUIPMENT:

Shadowkey: Shadowwoman possesses the Shadowkey, a foot-long gold key that allows her to create a keyhole shaped portal into other dimensions with Incredible ability, then close the

portal when needed. See the rules for Dimensional travel.

TALENTS: Occult Lore, Alchemy, Martial Arts A and D

CONTACTS: Shock Troop, Secret Defenders, Roxxon, Steel Spider, American Eagle, Linday McCabe, Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew), Madame Web (Julia Carpenter)

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Mummy and Skull the Slayer. On their first mission, they and Quasar encountered an Anti-Body from the New Universe (Earth-148611). It split into several smaller Anti-Bodies. Woods drew them into her shadow self and forced them to recombine so that Glom of the Imperial Guard could dispose of them. On their second and final mission, they went to the Nexus of All Realities at the behest of Doctor Strange, but they found that Quasar had already dealt with the problem.

Druid put together another team, the Secret Defenders, and Woods joined this one as well. Druid picked Luke Cage and Deadpool to round out the team, and they went after Malachi, who was trying to gather the scattered parts of the Moebius Stone. At the Chicago Museum of Art, Malachi diverted the team by apparently bringing paintings to life; because these apparitions depended on light, Woods easily destroyed them. Malachi found the next, and final, part of the Moebius Stone and used its power to snare Druid and Woods. By turning to shadow, Woods escaped. Malachi inflicted what should have been a killing stroke, but when Woods survived, she began to wonder about her powers.

Woods's shadow ability again came in handy when the team faced Swarm, since he could not affect her. She bought the team enough time to negotiate with Swarm and defuse his threat.

Woods confronted Druid with her questions about her powers. For the answer, Druid sent her into the "Bride of Slorioth," where she met Druid's dark side and finally learned (most of) the truth. Back outside the statue, she confronted Druid again, only to realize that he had had no choice but to do what he did. To mollify her, however, he promised to help her free herself from the Darkforce. Still hurt, but aware of her true nature, she changed her code name from Shadowwoman to Sepulcre.

Woods, Druid, and the other team members went to the Gates of Perdition to find Slorioth, a demon. When the first Defenders appeared, Woods actually held her own against the Silver Surfer. She then learned Druid's final secret: out of love and desperation, he had sold his soul to Slorioth to save her life. The demon took control of Druid to try to return himself to Earth. Another

mage, Joshua Pryce, joined the battle and saved Woods from final dissolution.

Lindsay McCabe asked Woods for help when her detective partner, Jessica Drew, disappeared. The second Spider-Woman also joined the investigation. Woods took them all to another dimension, where a creature called the Void-Eater had taken Drew. Woods helped rescue Drew, and she sealed the portal to that dimension.

Although Woods took no direct part in the Civil War, her name appeared on a list of suspected anti-Registration super-powered beings. Jillian remained off the grid as a civilian to avoid the hassles of the Registration Act, but she was unable to secure meaningful employment on her own. Agents of the Brand Corporation offered her a job in private security overseas. After a chance encounter with the Thunderbolts alongside Steel Spider and American Eagle, Sepulcre took the company's offer immediately and fled the country to avoid further hassle by the Initiative.

She was one of the many applicants for nanny to Luke Cage and Jessica Jones' daughter, Danielle Cage. Having seen what happened to unregistered crime-fighters and now being a prominent one after fighting the Thunderbolts, Jillian rushed to the Roxxon office where the interview was to take place. She told them that she was taking whatever the job was as long as they got her out of the US as soon as possible. Sepulcre apparently worked abroad for several years, but was back by 2010 after the fall of the Osborn regime.

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

During her initial hours as Sepulcre she was tough, aggressive and angry. But that was almost entirely a reaction to Druid's betrayals and manipulations.

Jillian seems mostly concerned with building herself a normal life despite her curses. She continues to pick guys up in bars and to try to hold a job, without much success. She no longer seems to be a super-heroine. Yet she wants to do the right thing and will certainly leap into action if she sees people in danger.

HISTORY

Woods's father abandoned his family. As soon as she could, Woods left home and became a student at the University of San Francisco. Her interest in the occult drew her to a lecture by Doctor Druid, after which she felt compelled to approach him. Druid soon learned that her attraction held over from a past life in King Arthur's time, when Druid was a princess and Woods an alchemist. The two soon became lovers, as well as mentor and student. During an assay of mystic items, Woods accidentally released a demon, which slew her. Druid used a statue called the "Bride of Slorioth" to resurrect her, but the process left her linked to the Darkforce. To avoid causing anxiety (and possibly to assuage his own guilt), Druid told her that the demon had caused her new powers and not that she had died.

When Druid formed the Shock Troop, Woods joined the team as Shadowwoman, along with the Living

STATISTICS

F RM (30)
A TY (6)
S ShY (250)
E ShX (150)
R RM (30)
I RM (30)
P ShZ (500)

Health: 436
Karma: 560
Resources: UN
Popularity: -4

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Slorioth
Occupation: Would-be conqueror
Legal Status: Old One
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: Omnivorous One, Slorioth the Omnivorous
Place of Birth: Unrevealed
Marital Status: Single
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Unrevealed; formerly the Netherverse
Past Group Affiliations: None
Present Group Affiliation: Great Old Ones

KNOWN POWERS

Virtual Immortality: As one of the Great Old Ones, Slorioth is un-ageing and has lived for millions, if not billions, of years.

Influence Minds and Souls: Slorioth can corrupt the souls of his enemies; treat as MN strength mind control.

Regeneration: Dozens of tentacles will grow to replace a severed tentacle if one is cut off; treat as EX regeneration.

Lifeforce Draining: The touch of Slorioth's tentacles can drain the life of any living opponent. Target temporarily loses 1 column of Endurance each round he/she is entangled by Slorioth's tentacles.

Acid Touch: Slorioth's tentacles have an acidic touch capable of burning even the Hulk. The acid does UN damage per round.

Time Disruption: Slorioth can disrupt time, creating a universal cataclysm capable of threatening even Eternity. Treat as SH-Z time travel; multiple



disruptions are sure to get the attention of the cosmic entities.

Body Resistance: AM protection vs. physical attacks.

Reality Manipulation: UN ability.

Enchantment: Slorioth can bestow mystic abilities to his agents at IN rank.

EQUIPMENT:

Temple on Earth: A pan-dimensional gateway in Starksboro, Maine, leads to his nether-realm tabernacle

Idol: The Bride of Slorioth (statuette): Slorioth is able to incrementally store and corrupt a person's soul within this idol. Each time the idol is used on an individual, the target must make a successful Psyche FEAT roll or have his/her Psyche reduced by one column. When reduced to 0 Psyche, the individual becomes a complete pawn of Slorioth at full Psyche. The effects are

reversed if the idol is destroyed (AM material strength).



WEAKNESSES: Although immensely powerful, Slorioth can be banished from the earthly dimension or imprisoned, with the use of the right magic spells.

TALENTS: None

CONTACTS: Great Old Ones

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Slorioth usually manifests at about 84 feet tall, weighing 1 million pounds.

extranormal activity throughout the United States.

Despite having the assistance of Namor, the Hulk, and the Silver Surfer, the Secret Defenders were unable to contain much less defeat Slorioth. What they were battling was merely the tiniest corporal manifestation of the pan-dimensional entity. It was rendering reality and disrupting temporal continuity, threatening Eternity itself with a universe-wide cataclysm. The Vishanti noticed but took no direct action, as a battle between them and Slorioth would devastate the universe. Therefore they summoned the Living Tribunal who judged Slorioth a threat to this reality as it was its nature to continually expand and banished him.

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Slorioth is essentially a Lovecraftian horror that wishes to walk the earth and terrorize the human race. It is canny at bargaining with people's souls, and is possessed of an unquenchable desire to consume and expand.

HISTORY

Fifteen thousand years ago, Slorioth the Omnivorous ravaged the earthly plane. A cabal of ancient sorcerers bound Slorioth, body and soul, to the land that is today the Township of Starkesboro.

In an attempt to save a dying Jillian Woods, Anthony Druid bargained with Slorioth to save her in exchange of his soul. In time, this bargain would allow Slorioth to take Druid as his vassal and free him, so that he may walk the earth again. The Druid was tricked/ manipulated by Slorioth into releasing him from his mystical prison. Its rise from the Earth resulted in sub-harmonic tremors throughout the Earth, the minds of all being disturbed at the subconscious level, and the growth of

GROUP MEMBERS: Decimator (Lachlan Carroll), Dreadlox (Estelle Hawkins), Macabre (Maggie Langella), Stasis (Lester Selkirk), Tokamak (Willie Tamm)

BASE OF OPERATIONS: Second Chance Institute, Phoenix, Arizona

GROUP HISTORY

When the demonic Lilith and her Lilin offspring came to Earth, they weakened the barriers between dimensions, allowing the Zusommin, a viral swarm that had already consumed all life in its home dimension, Zusom, to follow her. The swarm arrived in a basement in Phoenix, Arizona, and possessed five of the homeless squatters living there, mutating them into superhumans to serve its needs. Lachlan Carroll was transformed into the superhumanly strong and durable Decimator. Unemployed power plant worker Willie Tamm became Tokamak, capable of generating electric and nuclear fusion blasts and emitting a blinding light from his body. Estelle Hawkins was transformed into

Dreadlox, who could tap into a target's brain and make them believe their most dreaded nightmare had come true. Lester Selkirk became Stasis, able to absorb any force used against him and turn it back on his opponent. The youngest of the five, Maggie Langella drew the swarm's attention with her hatred for the world and became the swarm's leader Macabre, capable of draining or restoring life force. They restored several other elderly transients to youthfulness and sent them out to steal money for them; the transients were unaware their youth would last only a few days before their aging reaccelerated and killed them. The Zusommin eventually established the Second Chance Institute, an adult education center that allowed them to recruit more pawns. They intended to eventually consume every living thing on Earth.

Sensing the danger posed by the Zusommin, Dr. Stephen Strange summoned a team of Secret Defenders chosen by his tarot cards to Phoenix; Darkhawk (Chris Powell), Nomad (Jack Monroe), Spider-Woman (Julia

Carpenter) and Wolverine (Logan/James Howlett). Due to his ongoing battle with the demonic Nightmare, Strange was largely unable to aid his allies. After stopping one of the Zusommin's de-aged pawns' robberies, Wolverine and Spider-Woman encountered Tokamak and Decimator while canvassing the city; Spider-Woman trapped Tokamak in her psi-webs, and Wolverine brought down a wall on Decimator, but Dreadlox arrived and tortured the two heroes with her powers, incapacitating them. Regrouping, the heroes enabled one of the youthful thieves, Wilhelmina Canton, to escape and followed her to the Second Chance Institute. Darkhawk infiltrated the building in his human form, but Macabre discovered him and Stasis knocked him out. Holding Canton and Powell hostage, the Zusommin compelled the Secret Defenders to surrender and explained their origins to them. As Macabre's power wore off, Canton aged and died; enraged, Powell transformed into Darkhawk and escaped. Meanwhile, his battle with Nightmare completed,



Strange disguised himself as an old woman and turned Dreadlox's power back on her, paralyzing her. Now aware of their enemies' capabilities, the heroes overwhelmed the remaining Zusommin; Spider-Woman entangled Stasis with her psi-webbing, Nomad knocked Decimator into the electrified Tokamaks, draining Tokamak's charge and allowing Darkhawk to attack him, and Wolverine tore Macabre to shreds. Their imminent defeat prompted the swarm to consume their human hosts and return to their true form, a swam of viral corpuscles. Strange's magic drew his comrades' combined strengths into himself, beating back the swarm and exiling them back into Zusom. Its strength sapped, the swarm was unable to breach the dimensional barriers again.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Decimator

F GD (10)
A GD (10)
S IN (40)
E IN (40)
R TY (6)
I TY (6)
P PR (4)

Health: 100
Karma: 16
Resources: FE
Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Lachlan Carroll
Occupation: Agent of the Zusommin, formerly homeless
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unrevealed
Marital Status: Unrevealed
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Second Chance Institute, Phoenix, Arizona
Past Group Affiliations: The Zusommin
Present Group Affiliation:

KNOWN POWERS

Armor Skin: Excellent protection from physical and energy attacks.

TALENTS: Unrevealed

CONTACTS: None

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Little is known about Decimator's background, but he does seem quite bloodthirsty and willing to kill if necessary. It is unknown if that is a result of being empowered and/or influenced by the Zusommin.

Dreadlox

F PR (2)
A TY (6)
S TY (6)
E TY (6)
R GD (10)
I GD (10)
P RM (30)

Health: 20
Karma: 50
Resources: FB
Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Estelle Hawkins
Occupation: Agent of the Zusommin, formerly homeless
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unrevealed
Marital Status: Unrevealed
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Second Chance Institute, Phoenix, Arizona
Past Group Affiliations: The Zusommin
Present Group Affiliation:

KNOWN POWERS

Mental Probe: Able to identify the victim's weaknesses/vulnerabilities in order to use them in creating hallucinations with Amazing ability.

Hallucinations: Dreadlox is able to induce mental hallucinations in her victims, usually creating images of loved ones being hurt or killed in order to distract the victim. She is able to do this with Amazing ability. Victims must make a successful Red Psyche FEAT in order to resist being incapacitated by these hallucinations.

TALENTS: Unrevealed

CONTACTS: None

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Little is known about Dreadlox's background, but she does seem quite bloodthirsty and willing to kill if necessary. It is unknown if that is a result of being empowered and/or influenced by the Zusommin.

Macabre

F TY (6)
A TY (6)
S TY (6)
E GD (10)
R TY (6)
I TY (6)
P IN (40)

Health: 28
Karma: 52
Resources: FE
Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Maggie Langella
Occupation: Agent of the Zusommin, formerly homeless
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unrevealed
Marital Status: Unrevealed
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Second Chance Institute, Phoenix, Arizona
Past Group Affiliations: The Zusommin
Present Group Affiliation:

KNOWN POWERS

Bio-Physical Control - Aging: Macabre is able to reverse the aging process in victims. In essence, she can imbue the recipient with additional "life-energy" to reverse their current age, but is also able to absorb that energy to age them. She has this power at Amazing rank.

TALENTS: English Literature

CONTACTS: None

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Little is known about Macabre's background. Before her transformation, she was extremely bitter about her situation to the point she expressed hatred for the entire human race. As Macabre, she was the point-woman for the Zusommin, and appeared to be the primary focus for their powers/abilities.

Statis

F GD (10)
A GD (10)
S TY (6)
E GD (10)
R TY (6)
I TY (6)
P PR (4)

Health: 36
Karma: 16
Resources: FE
Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Lester Selkirk
Occupation: Agent of the Zusommin, formerly homeless
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unrevealed
Marital Status: Unrevealed
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Second Chance Institute, Phoenix, Arizona
Past Group Affiliations: The Zusommin
Present Group Affiliation:

KNOWN POWERS

Kinetic Control: Statis is able to absorb up to Incredible amount of physical force per round (i.e., punches, physical objects striking him, etc.), and return the exact amount back. Any kinetic energy he absorbs does not damage him. He can absorb maintain up to 75 points of damage before needing to release it.

TALENTS: Unrevealed

CONTACTS: None

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Little is known about Stasis's background, but he does seem quite bloodthirsty and willing to kill if necessary. It is unknown if that is a result of being empowered and/or influenced by the Zusommin.

Tokamak

F TY (6)
A GD (10)
S TY (6)
E GD (10)
R GD (10)
I TY (6)
P TY (6)

Health: 32
Karma: 22
Resources: FE
Popularity: 0

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Willie Tamm
Occupation: Agent of the Zusommin, former power plant worker, formerly homeless
Legal Status: U.S. citizen with no criminal record
Identity: Secret
Other Known Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unrevealed
Marital Status: Unrevealed
Known Relatives: None
Base of Operations: Second Chance Institute, Phoenix, Arizona
Past Group Affiliations: The Zusommin
Present Group Affiliation:

KNOWN POWERS

Light Generation: Incredible rank. He has demonstrated the ability to create a blinding light.

Electrical Generation: Incredible rank. He is able to generate electrical blasts at a range of 2 Areas, and he typically surrounds himself with an electrical field of Incredible strength.

TALENTS: Unrevealed

CONTACTS: None

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Little is known about Tokamak's background, but he does seem quite bloodthirsty and willing to kill if necessary. It is unknown if that is a result of being empowered and/or influenced by the Zusommin.

Zusommin

F	N/A
A	N/A
S	N/A
E	EX (20)
R	EX (20)
I	GD (10)
P	AM (50)

Health: 20*

Karma: 80

Resources: N/A

Popularity: 0

KNOWN POWERS

The Zusommin are a viral swarm with a collective intelligence. They have exhibited the following collective abilities:

Energy Drain: Monstrous rank (likely higher when at full swarm strength).

Power Creation: Able to imbue recipients with abilities up to Monstrous rank.

WEAKNESS

Energy Vampire: They require life energy to sustain themselves. Collectively, they have drained all life from their home dimension, and became dormant. They require a large amount of energy to maintain themselves, the amount depending on how many of the Zusommin are present.

TALENTS: None

CONTACTS: None

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

The beings known as the Zusommin are relentless in their pursuit of more life energy, but are capable and willing to come up with a strategy to best accomplish their goals.

