

GURPS[®] Supers[™]

SUPERTEMPS[™]

The Employment Agency for Metahumans

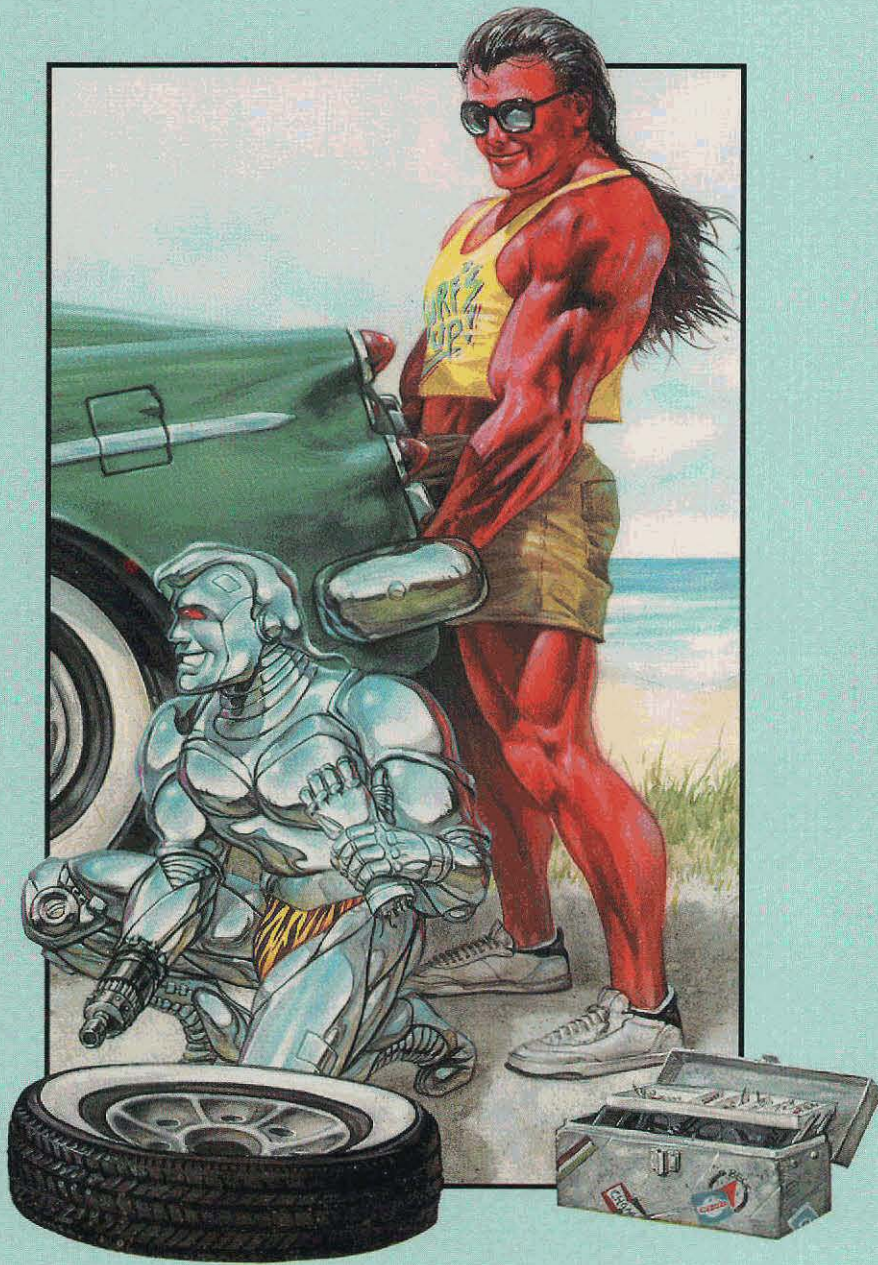


*By Mark Johnson
and Sean T. DeLap*

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Who Ya Gonna Call NOW?



When a pipe breaks, you call a plumber. When your roof leaks, you call a roofer. When your car breaks down, you get a mechanic. But what do you do when a gigantic lizard is destroying your high-rise in downtown New York?

Simple. Call Supertemps, the world's only metahuman employment agency!

Inside this book you'll find:

Detailed descriptions of 29 new supers-for-hire, with powers running from the meek and mundane to the mystical and magical. Each comes with a fully-described character background, personality, philosophy and goals! Point totals range from 500 up, with details on raising or lowering the point value of some of the important heroes.

The complete background and history of Supertemps — the company's goals, organization and hiring practices.

Adventure seeds and advice on how to involve players in a *Supertemps* campaign, including information on how PCs can become employees of the company.

A Supertemps employment application.

And much, much more . . .

Written by Mark Johnson and Sean T. DeLap
Edited by Creede Lambard
Additional material by Ron Bailey, Loyd Blankenship
and Creede Lambard
Cover by David Dorman
Interior art by Dan Panosian

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly newsletter includes new rules, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us, but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have home computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours per day at 512-447-4449, at 300 or 1200 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any reference that begins with an SU refers to *GURPS Supers*, and an SS signifies *Super Scum*.

Supertemps was started in 1981 by Martin Huffner and Chris Albert, classmates in the MBA program at Columbia University. Neither one was a metahuman — or even knew any metahumans — but they recognized there was money to be made in finding “unusual people for unusual jobs.” Many industries could profit by hiring metahumans whose powers could reduce costs, increase output or make otherwise impossible jobs possible.

Within three months, Supertemps was turning a profit. Huffner and Albert were quick to capitalize on their company's already impressive reputation by offering Supertemps franchises in major cities. In their second year, Supertemps added civil protection to their services. Several large American cities had metahero teams of some sort (usually private or IST), but the distribution of metaheroes in the country's interior was too sparse to support organized, full-time teams. Though the meta-villain concentration was also lower, any fiend who moved in was generally unopposed (as was driven home when Livewire took Helena, Montana hostage in 1980 and held it for a week before a rescue team could be gathered). Supertemps' Board of Directors saw the company as a vehicle for bringing organized metahuman teams to under-defended portions of the country.

After a shaky start, this new venture proved even more successful than the original one. The Metahuman Services branch was soon split into Industrial and Guardian Divisions, and in 1987 an Entertainment Division was created.

Supertemps has been a classic American success story. In 1984, the company went public on the New York Stock Exchange; trading was so heavy and the prices rose so fast that trading had to be suspended six hours after it was first traded. There are now Supertemps offices in Europe, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Hong Kong and most of the larger cities of the United States. In 1988, Huffner and Albert sold much of their interest in Supertemps and retired; neither could be reached for comment for this book.

SUPERTEMPS

Policy

There are two primary differences between Supertemps Defense Squads and regular super-teams. First, Defense Squads do not always have a constant membership; individual supers are recruited and dispatched to the scene of a crime, depending on the situation.

Second, Supertemps' services are not free. Whoever called for them, usually a municipality or other government body, but occasionally a private citizen, is expected to pay. Fortunately, most municipal insurance policies specifically cover Supertemps activity.

The management of Supertemps considers public goodwill one of its greatest assets, and therefore has a large PR staff which does its best to let the public know that, while Supertemps *does* strive to turn a profit, it also does its share of charitable work. Financial records are available on request which detail everything except the salaries of contracted supers.

No super is required to reveal his or her secret identity; all that is required is some reliable way by which the super can be contacted.

Organization

Administration Branch

This is the largest division of Supertemps. It includes all of the non-super support personnel such as administrators, researchers, dispatchers, secretaries and public relations personnel.

There is usually an administrative office for each Defense Squad. This office is not necessarily a base per se, but a central location where teammates may meet when the need arises. A few offices are fairly extensive, and some contain other facilities as well (the New York office is on a ten-acre tract on Long Island and includes an extensive training facility).

Metahuman Services Branch

Industrial Division: The oldest service offered by Supertemps is the matching of metahuman talents with industries that can use them. Of course, some talents are especially useful, while others are harder to place. Bricks and telekinetics are always in demand for lifting and hauling. Supers with enhanced senses are often employed for quality control and other inspection assignments. Temperature-control abilities are useful in several manufacturing processes, as is power over metal, water and other substances. The demand for these super-powers is relatively constant, and a super can make a good living meeting that demand.

In theory, none of the positions in the Industrial Division are permanent jobs. However, some of Supertemps' contracts are for long-term jobs, renewed every year, and any super can request payroll deductions for medical insurance, savings and retirement plans.

There is no character point cost to be employed by Supertemps' Industrial Division. It requires only an employable super-ability, and pays \$2,500 a month. (The job roll is made versus super-skill level or IQ, LJ/8d, LJ.)

Guardian Division: The most visible, and most glamorous, division of Supertemps, the Guardian Division is contracted by cities or other governmental agencies (occasionally private citizens will hire Guardian Division employees as bodyguards) on a continual or as-needed basis to provide metahuman civil services — anything from rescuing stranded pets to opposing meta-villain attacks.

Responsibility for accidental damage (see p. SU80) is usually covered by the client's insurance and is not a direct concern of the hero. However, Supertemps will drop any super who repeatedly causes unnecessary damage.

Guardian Division employees generally have no more legal authority than any other private citizen. That is, they may make citizen's arrests and are expected to defer to police. Unless they are actually deputized law officers, they do not get the Legal Enforcement Powers advantage. Defense Squads' relationships with the local police vary from competitive to cooperative.

If a city contracts with Supertemps to provide round-the-clock services, often with regular patrols, full-time employment can be available to capable supers. Otherwise, metaheroes will usually sign contracts to be on call when they are needed. In either case, the metahero "group" that reacts to the situation at hand is termed a Defense Squad. In an area with a large pool of metahuman resources, the Squad will be optimized for the task at hand; in other areas, the same three or four heroes may be assigned every time.

Guardian Division employees enjoy a powerful Patron, at the expense of a Duty to the company. Full-time employees must take the 30-point Patron: Supertemps on 9 or less, and a -10-point Duty: Supertemps on 12 or less. For on-call employees the frequency numbers become 6 or less and 9 or less, respectively, costing 15 and -5 points. The Guardian Division requires a usable super-skill or ability and pays \$3,000 a month (minimum), and the job roll is made versus IQ (-4i, 8d/15d, LJ)

About the Authors

Sean T. DeLap and Mark Johnson are both students, studying English and Aerospace Engineering at UC Irvine and UT Austin, respectively. They started gaming together about ten years ago, and have been enjoying *GURPS* since *Man to Man* was released. With *Supertemps* behind them they're now enjoying other genres, namely cyberpunk and science fiction.

The Character Descriptions

Skills: The TL of skills is assumed to be 7 unless noted otherwise.

Super Equipment: Supers without substantial natural defenses may be assumed to utilize Kevlar fabric in their costume. That provides PD 2, DR 14 (against impaling attacks only PD 1, DR 2). Attacks completely absorbed by a Kevlar-reinforced costume may still inflict some damage on the wearer (see p. B211).

Campaign Role: This section presents an idea or two how to interweave the character's life with that of PCs. The character's non-super identity is especially interesting, since it is often overlooked.

Power Variations: Most of the characters in this book are built using 500 points. However, if your campaign would make better use of a mightier or less powerful hero, check this section. Many of the descriptions detail how to upgrade or downgrade the hero to a different point level.

However, some concepts simply won't work at widely differing point values. At the low end they become practically useless, while at the high end they tend toward the superfluous. *Utility* characters, rather than combat-ready ones, tend to experience this. In these cases, no Power Variation has been provided.

Where Power Variations are given, it is assumed that all skills drop or raise in level with the appropriate attribute. Enhancements and limitations are unchanged unless specifically stated (most often simply the Power level is altered).

LUMINAR

ST 13 (30 points) IQ 12 (20 points)
DX 14 (45 points) HT 15 (60 points)
Speed: 7.25 Move: 9

Damage: Laser 6d-2 imp; Punch 1d-1/3d-1; Thrust 1d/3d;
Swing 1d+3/5d+2

Appearance: Male human, Amerindian, age 25, 8' 2", 320 lbs., slick black hair falls loose on his shoulders, brown eyes, dark, ruddy skin (turns *bright red* in sunlight).

Point Total: 500

Advantages:

Absolute Direction (5 points)
Acute Vision +3 (6 points)
Attractive (5 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Comfortable Wealth (10 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Patron: Supertemps on 9 or less (30 points)

Disadvantages:

Bad Temper (-10 points)
Code of Honor: Never strikes the first blow, never attacks from behind (-10 points)
Compulsive Behavior: Gambling (-10 points)
Duty: Supertemps on 12 or less (-10 points)
Gigantism (-10 points)
Pacifism: Cannot harm innocents (-10 points)
Sense of Duty: To friends and teammates (-5 points)
Unluckiness (-10 points)

Super Advantages:

Damage Resistance +5 (Only in sunlight -3; 18 points)
Enhanced ST +17 (Only in sunlight -3; 67 points)

Super Disadvantages:

Dependency: Sunlight, daily (-15 points)
Vulnerability: 1d vs. Light attacks (-10 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

Darkness Power 4 (28 points)
Blind-14 (12 points)
Create Darkness-14 (Increased Area×2 +8; Variable light level +1; 48 points)
Light Power 8 (64 points)
Flash-13 (8 points)
Illuminate-14 (Increased Area +4; Variable light level +1; 32 points)
Laser-16 (No Concentration +2; 28 points)
* Light Power +7 (Laser, 42 points)

Skills:

Bow-13 (2 points); Brawling-15 (2 points); Carousing-15 (2 points); Driving (Car)-12 (1/2 point); Gambling-12 (2 points); Guns (Pistol)-18 (2 points); Performance-10 (1/2 point); Running-14 (2 points); Sex Appeal-15 (2 points); Shadowing-12 (2 points); Sport (Surfing)-13 (1 point); Stealth-14 (2 points); Survival (Urban)-12 (2 points)



Quirks:

Calls Alpha-7 "Alphonse" — helps him find flashy clothes
Likes horse racing but never bets more than \$2 on a race
Visits Disneyland every chance he gets
Goes surfing every Saturday
Fast food junkie (especially likes Taco Bell™)

Story

William Raintree grew up on the wrong side of town. In a culturally and racially diverse section of southeast Los Angeles, he learned more lessons on the street than in the classroom.

Under the best of conditions Billy was an indifferent student. He was never well, though; he always seemed to have a cough, or a cold, or both. The clinics his mother reluctantly took him to just gave him a few pills. The medicine helped while it lasted, but that was never long enough.

Billy skipped a lot of school due to his illness. His mother was indifferent; she had only gone to school through the sixth grade and felt that education had never done anything for anyone she knew. When he went to school, he was so far behind that he was constantly embarrassed. He was growing much faster than his peers, and the other kids constantly called him a big, ugly idiot. Finally, one day when a teacher took him to task for not knowing what "parallel" meant, he left the school and never went back.

He started roaming the streets, eventually joining a gang called the Talons. He was out in the fresh air and his health improved greatly. And he started to change; his skin became tough and red, and when he was out in the sun it *glowed*.

Billy also became stronger. When his skin started glowing, he found he was stronger than any of the members of the gang — even Guillermo (who was seven years older, six inches taller and weighed 100 pounds more than he did).

Eddie, the Talons' leader, sensed that Billy wanted to take control of the Talons. One day when the gang was meeting indoors, Eddie made his move. He said Billy was a metahuman, a freak, and there were gangs in L.A. that would take freaks but the Talons weren't one of them. As he said this, four of Eddie's supporters pulled knives and turned them on Billy.

Suddenly the room went dark. When the lights went up again, Billy was nowhere to be seen. He had dimmed the light in the room and escaped.

Billy went back to wandering the street. The next day, quite by accident, he stumbled upon a film crew packing up to leave. He asked a bystander what was going on; the bystander replied that he wasn't sure, but had heard something about the lighting being too bright. Billy found the director and asked if the scene needed to be darker. When the director didn't reply Billy used his power to darken the area and asked again.

The director looked up at Raintree, then at the dimmed area, and watched as the light returned and then dimmed again, his gaze finally settling on Billy's smile. Then he picked up a megaphone and ordered the crew back to work, and told his assistant to start the paperwork to hire the guy with the red skin.

Raintree knew nothing about filming, but learned quickly as the director explained the moods and lighting he wanted. At the end of the day Billy had a substantial amount of money in his pocket and a firm job offer with the director.

Billy took an apartment near the studio and sent some money to his mother (thus confirming her estimate of the value of education). The director did most of his lighting the old-fashioned way, using Billy for special shots. This left him with a lot of time on his hands, so to alleviate boredom he would often help the crew hands move equipment. As long as he was careful to stay in the sunlight he could lift a ton or more.

He enjoyed his work and the money, but felt that with his talents he could do more. In particular, he thought he'd like to be a stunt man but didn't know who to talk to. He didn't know how to find a good agent, and didn't think a traditional agent would be able to manage a metahuman client. Over a round of beers one evening, a friend suggested he contact Supertemps. Billy had only heard of the company's Defense Squads, but his friend assured him that they also specialized in finding "normal" work for metahumans.

Sure enough, Supertemps was interested in him. As soon as his original contract with the studio expired he signed on, took the trade name of "Luminar" and went to work.

As part of his evaluation, Luminar underwent the standard battery of tests and discovered that he had an ability he had not known about — he could focus light into a powerful laser. Supertemps offered to train him in the use of this weapon in return for occasional Guardian Division jobs. He readily agreed.

Luminar is currently on leave from the Industrial Division; he was sent to form a new Defense Squad in San Diego with Alpha-7 (see p. 8). The big Indian and the shiny robot are an unlikely pair, though they've become good friends and effective teammates.

Campaign Role

Since Luminar grew up in a crime-torn section of town, PCs with similar backgrounds may have crossed paths with him. Former police officers and heroes with long careers may have patrolled the neighborhoods Luminar frequented.

Virtually everyone in the motion picture industry knows of his involvement there. He served as a stunt man in several movies and even had a bit part in a forgettable film.

Personality

Raintree is more like an average citizen than an average hero. He looks out for number one, and treats his duty like a job. Of course, the responsibilities of that job include risking his life.

He can become violently angry when frustrated, but would never lift a finger to harm an innocent person. He also possesses a self-sacrificing sense of honor; he will always wait for his opponent to strike first, and never attacks from behind.

Abilities

Luminar controls and manipulates light. Within his area of effect he can raise or lower the ambient light level, from pitch darkness all the way to painfully bright. Each level of the Increased Area enhancement (+4 levels) doubles the Area Affected radius; thus, Luminar commands an 8-hex radius area with his powers.

Instead of gradually altering the light level, Luminar may "pulse" a large quantity of light, producing a blinding flash. Also, he may remove all light from a particular location, such as the area about an opponent's head, rendering that opponent temporarily blind.

Luminar's most direct use of his powers is to channel light into a tightly focused beam — a laser. For aiming purposes he usually creates the beam from the tip of his left index finger.

In the presence of sunlight, Luminar's skin becomes bright red. More important, he also gains resistance to damage and great strength. Without exposure to the sun's rays, Luminar will weaken, become sick, and eventually die. The relationship between his powers and sunlight dependency is not yet understood.

Battle Tactics

Luminar will wear his costume (reinforced with Kevlar) when on patrol or when called to the scene of a crime. In a battle he will move toward any available sunlight, probably bringing the ruckus with him.

In most instances, Luminar has relied on his fingertip laser beam, blasting opponents while dodging their return fire. However, his teammate Alpha-7 has suggested using the illumination powers to confuse their foes. Luminar does this occasionally but he can't see through the darkness either, so he uses it sparingly.

Power Variations

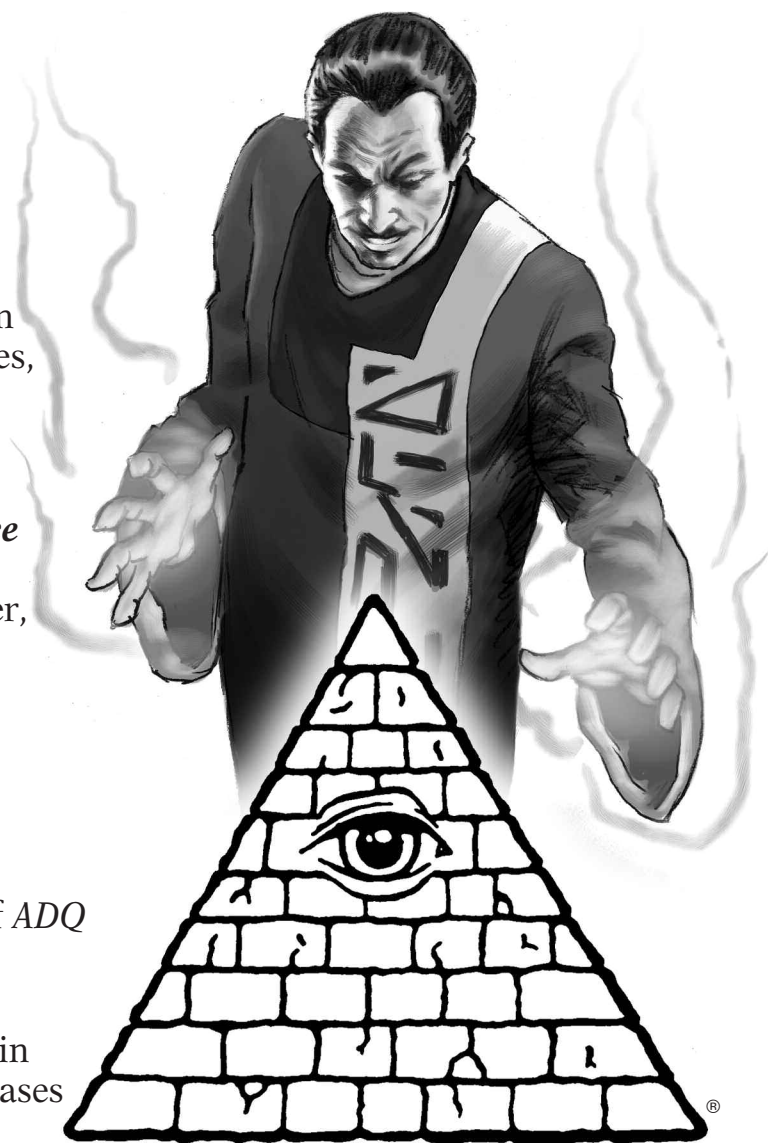
250-point version: Lower ST to 11; lower DX to 12; lower HT to 13; drop Combat Reflexes; drop Comfortable Wealth; drop Enhanced ST; drop one Increased Area enhancement from Create Darkness and Illuminate skills; drop No Concentration enhancement from Laser skill; lower Laser skill level to 14; drop additional Laser Power; lower Driving (Car) skill level to 11; lower Running skill level to 10; drop Shadowing skill.

750-point version: Add Night Vision; raise Enhanced ST to +37; drop Vulnerability; raise Darkness Power to 8; add two Increased Area enhancements to Create Darkness and three to Illuminate skill; raise * Light Power (Laser) to +18; raise Brawling skill level to 16; raise Carousing skill level to 16.

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