

Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks is a villain book for the Champions line, detailing ninety villains from low powered thugs to world conquering master villains. The book is broken down into three sections, Master Villains, Team Villains, and Solo Villains.

Chapter One - Master Villains. World Conquering being of immense power, these villains aren't just tough themselves, they often have vast resources at their disposal, entire armies at times. While anyone can aspire to conquer the world, these villains actually have a chance to succeed. Six villains are presented that can be the focus of an entire campaign of the Player's trying to finally bring them to justice.

Dr. Destroyer is the Villains Villain, cold, calculating, brilliant, and ruthless he commands technology above and beyond everyone else. He has thousands of people in his employ as either soldiers in his army or support. Personally he's designed to beat entire teams of PCs. Of course he suffers from Megalomania and isn't just content to conquer part of the world, he wants it all at once. His two lieutenants are Gigaton and Rakashasa, both of which serve as combat and espionage leaders respectively. In many ways Dr. Destroyer is the premiere Master Villain of the Champions Universe.

Gravitar has no armies, or resources beyond money. She is a much more strait forward Conquer It All Personally kind of villain. She also has power to rival an entire team of Characters, and is good for groups that want a more stand up fight against a powerful foe.

Istvatha V'han is a Dimensional Conqueror. In many ways similar to Dr. Destroyer only on a much much larger scale. She's best used in a campaign of very high level Supers and where the group wants to explore not just saving Nations or Earth, but entire dimensions.

Menton, the most powerful Psionic on the planet, like Gravitar he also does not use armies to conquer. But his methods are much more subtle, able to control even the most resistant of minds Menton provides a Master Villain with a great deal of subtlety behind his plots, the Players may not even know Menton is involved in a plot until the very last moment.

Takofanes is an ancient horror, an undead lord bent on conquering the planet like other Master Villains. Only he doesn't care if the world is full of living people or the undead. Takofanes is a good equivalent to Dr. Destroyer for a Mystic based campaign, able to call on armies of zombies and other undead instead of soldiers and tanks.

Warlord isn't just a Master Villain, he is an entire army, complete with his own supervillain team. Warlord provides another not so subtle villain to focus a campaign, or story arc, on. With his own team of War-themed Supervillains (Warbird, Warcry, Warhead, Warmonger, and Warpath) the Player's can fight their way through the ranks with each level getting a little tougher (first goons, then well armed and trained soldiers, then the superteam and finally Warlord).

Each of these Master Villains can be used either along or in the same game, and each comes with their own unique ways to threaten the peace and stability of the world. All in all a good creative grouping of ultimate enemies.

Chapter Two - Team Villains. Five teams of villains with different power levels and motivations are provided. Individually each team member is a decent opponent for a single Superhero, needing most or all of the team to provide a good threat to the Hero's.

The Crowns Of Krim is a high powered team, the leader Dark Seraph is close to a Master Villain in his own right, and can easily operate independent of the rest of the team. The team is centered around a set of mystic crowns that imbue each member with a specific power theme blood manipulation (Bloodstone), shadows and darkness (Eclipse), telekinesis (Force), fire (Phoenix), and earth powers (Tremblor). Unlike many teams the villains only come together when Dark Seraph orders it, each has their own agenda and often operates independently.

Eurostar is a group of ruthless terrorists operating almost exclusively in Europe. Nominally the leader (Fiacho) wishes to unite all of Europe under his own rule. A versatile team that works well with coordinated attacks and an agenda. They can pose a serious threat to the Heroes.

Grab is not a combatant team. In fact they aren't even all that evil. A group of thieves out to get rich and live the easy life, they introduce a bit of moral ambiguity as they also perform acts of community service, go out of their way to not hurt anyone, and are generally likeable people - except that their all thieves. Unlike many villains, this group has a sympathy card to play.

Psi, on the other hand, wants nothing short of world domination. This is a mentalist based group of individuals, actually nearly a complete organization, who use various Mental Powers to get what they want.

The Ultimates are a mix of Grab and Eurostar. Mostly they're thieves out for all they can get, but are more ruthless about it, and don't pull any punches. This is a good group to match up against a team of Superheroes on a regular basis. Not as cold blooded as Eurostar, but not very likeable either.

Chapter Three - Solo Villains. The rest of the book is dedicated to individuals that are not part of a permanent group. They run the gamut from low powered to near Master Villain level. Some are as powerful as any Master Villain, but without aspirations to rule the world, some have the aspirations but not the power to back it up. All manner of moral situations arise from those with a Robin Hood complex (Lady Blue) to near mindless brutes who don't have the capacity to really grasp "evil" (Grond), and a few Good Guys that have taken things a bit too far (Thunderbird, Nebula). Many are strictly solo acts, many are good to fit into a makeshift team or used to fill out the ranks of the teams from Chapter Two. Overall there's a really good mix of personalities and power levels to make the Supervillains in your campaign more than just target practice.

There are a few items beyond just the characters in the book. At the end is a section titled Adapting Villains To Your Game, which covers how you can take a pre-written villain from the book and change things about to better fit your needs. From altering special effects, increasing powers, and changing

backgrounds. Second are two tables, one lists each villain by Archetype, the other provides a very quick look at this Characteristics, Defenses and main Attack powers.

Peppered throughout the book is a nice little touch, short text blocks with comments from other Superheroes and Supervillains.

The Downside:

Either you need a big collection of Supervillains, or you don't.

The Otherside:

Aside from a big collection of Supervillains and Adversaries for your campaign the book can be used in a few other ways. First, you can turn a few personalities around and provide some more Superheroes for your campaign, and second you can use it as a guide to creating your own Characters, nothing beats seeing a completed character to help in design.

Of all the villain books put out by Hero Games this one is the largest and has the broadest selection of villain types to work with. I highly recommend it for any Champions game, especially if you're a GM strapped for time and can't dedicate hours to creating Supervillains.

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