

PROTECTOR

 I screamed. Why not? I'd already established no one was around to hear me. He immediately released my hand and apologized, said he'd only been trying to protect me. I asked him from what and he gestured to the burned man, still lying motionless in his bed, chanting his nonsense phrases. Sparing a glance at his own wrapped form, he said that touching the man would have been a "bad idea." He seemed to be in tremendous pain as he spoke, but did his best to hide it.

—MAG 12: "First Aid"

The world is full of danger. More than most people even know. Someone's got to shine a light on the darkness, but someone else needs to have that person's back. You're the Protector.

Individual Role: Protectors are physical, action-oriented people. They're more likely to overcome a challenge using force than by other means, and they often take the most straightforward path toward their goals.

Group Role: Protectors usually take and deal the most punishment in a dangerous situation. Often it falls on them to protect the other group members from threats. This sometimes means that Protectors take on leadership roles as well, at least in combat and other times of danger.

Societal Role: Protectors in the world may be (or have been) soldiers, mercenaries, guards, watchmen, police officers, sailors, or people in other roles or professions who know how to defend themselves with skill.

Advanced Protectors: As Protectors advance, their skill in battle—whether defending themselves or dishing out damage—increases to

impressive levels. At higher tiers, they can often take on groups of foes by themselves or stand toe to toe with anyone.

Supernatural Protectors: Protectors who gain paranormal abilities can use their powers to enhance their combat skills or affect supernatural foes in ways that a normal person could not. Such abilities are marked with .

PROTECTOR STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	10
Speed	10
Intellect	8

The player has 6 additional points to assign to the stat Pools as they wish.

FIRST-TIER PROTECTOR

First-tier Protectors have the following abilities:

Effort: Your Effort is 1.

Fit: You have a Might Edge of 1, a Speed Edge of 1, and an Intellect Edge of 0.

Protector Knowledge: You are trained in one noncombat Protector-related area of knowledge in which you are not already trained. Choose one of the following: discerning motive, forensics, intimidation, perception, stealth, or tracking. Enabler.

Cypher Use: You can have two cyphers at a time.

Weapons: You're practiced with light, medium, and heavy weapons and suffer no penalty when using any kind of weapon. Enabler.

Protective Abilities: You're a physical person, and no stranger to a fight. Your main aim is to use these abilities to protect your friends and allies. Some of your abilities are constant, providing ongoing effects, and others are specific actions that usually cost points from one of your stat Pools.

Choose two of the abilities described below. You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise.

Combat Prowess: You add 1 additional point of damage to one type of attack of your choice: melee attacks or ranged attacks. You can choose this up to two times, once for melee and once for ranged. Enabler.

No Need for Weapons: When you make an unarmed attack (such as a punch or kick), you deal 2 additional points of damage. Enabler.

One Against Many (1+ Speed points): Sometimes you've got to deal with a group of enemies, or even a swarm of enemies (rats, spiders, or worse). When this happens, perhaps the best you can do by yourself is control where everyone in the fight can or cannot go. You attempt an attack against the highest-level enemy, and if successful, in lieu of inflicting damage, you affect all the foes within an immediate distance in one of two ways: either they must move within an immediate area as you direct, or they are prevented from moving into a space in immediate range that you choose. You can use the latter option to keep them away from allies (as long as the allies don't move), but you can't keep them away from you in this way.

The foes affected must be level 1, although you can spend additional points from your Speed Pool to affect higher levels, with each point increasing the affected creature level by 1. You must always affect the highest-level foe, so if you face a level 3 cultist and his thirty level 1 rats, you must spend 3 Speed points. Action.

Other Knowledge: You aren't just a brute—you have other areas of interest as well. You are trained in one non-physical skill of your choosing in which you don't already have training. Enabler.

Overwatch (1 Intellect point): You use a ranged weapon to target a limited area (such as a doorway, a hallway, or the eastern side of a clearing) and make an attack against the next viable target to enter that area, acting just before they act. You also negate any benefit the target would have from cover, position, range, or visibility. Further, you inflict 1 additional point of damage with the attack. You can remain on overwatch as long as you wish, within reason. Action.

Physical Skills: You are trained in endurance or gymnastics. If you are already trained in one or both, this does not improve them. Enabler.

Protector: You designate a single character to be your charge. You can change this freely every round, but you can have only one charge at a time. As long as that charge is within immediate range, they gain an asset for Speed defense tasks because you have their back. Enabler.

Slow Them Down (1 Might or 1 Speed point): This is a pummeling melee attack or a covering-fire ranged attack. Your attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal, but it dazes your target for one round, during which time their tasks are hindered and they move only half as fast as normal. Action.

Take the Hit (2 Might points): If someone you are close enough to touch is struck and will suffer damage, you can take the hit instead. The other person suffers no damage, and you gain 3 points of Stress regardless of the damage that would have been originally dealt.

SECOND-TIER PROTECTOR

Choose two of the protective abilities described below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.



Bodyguard: If you're standing next to an ally, that ally's initiative tasks are eased. Enabler.

Coping With the Impossible (2 Intellect points): When faced with something supernatural and difficult (or impossible) to harm by any normal means, you improvise a way to use the environment or the situation to cause the target to lose its next turn if you succeed at an Intellect-based task. Once you affect a target with this ability, further attempts to use this ability on the same target are hindered. Action.

Intimidating Demeanor: You gain an asset when attempting to intimidate someone that can see you while you display a threat of violence. Enabler.

Quick Recovery: Your ten-minute recovery roll is only a single action. Enabler.

Scarred and Hardened: You reduce the Stress you suffer from physical injury by 1. You still suffer Stress from mental shock or despair normally. Enabler.

Skill With Attacks: Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of attack. Enabler.

Skill With Defense: Choose one type of defense task in which you are not already trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are trained in defense tasks of that type. Enabler.

Stand Watch (2 Might points): While standing watch (mostly remaining in place for an extended period of time), you unfailingly remain awake and alert for up to eight hours. During this time, you are trained in perception tasks as well as stealth tasks to conceal yourself from those who might approach. Action to initiate.

Support the Team (2 Might points):

While you stand watch and take no other actions, allies within a short distance gain an asset to their perception tasks, as they know you've got their backs. Enabler.

THIRD-TIER PROTECTOR

Third-tier Protectors have the following abilities:

Expert Cypher Use: You can have three cyphers at a time.

Protective Abilities: Choose two of the abilities described below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

Combat Medic: You are trained in healing. Further, if a person has moved to the dead step of the damage track and you can reach them within one round, you can use your action to keep them from dying. They remain debilitated and are most likely unconscious. They will need more formal medical attention (such as in a lengthy hospital stay) to recover. Action.

Deadly Aim (3 Speed points): For the next minute, all ranged attacks you make inflict 2 additional points of damage. Action to initiate.

Lunge (2 Might points): You extend yourself for a powerful stab or smash. The awkward lunge hinders the attack roll. If your attack is successful, it inflicts 4 additional points of damage. Action.

Reaction: If a creature you attacked on your last turn with a melee attack uses its action to move out of immediate range, you gain an action to attack the creature as a parting blow, even if you have already taken a turn in the round. Enabler.

Seen Some . . . Stuff: You reduce the Stress you suffer from mental shock or despair by 1. You still suffer Stress from physical injury normally. Enabler.

Spray (2 Speed points): If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as a submachine gun), you can spray multiple shots around your target to increase the chance of hitting. This ability uses $1d6 + 1$ rounds of ammo (or all the ammo in the weapon, if it has less than the number rolled). If the attack is successful, it deals 1 less point of damage than normal. You can also use this ability on multiple thrown weapons (stones, shuriken, daggers, and so on) if you're carrying them on your person or they are all within reach. Action.

Tactical Plan (3 Intellect points): You put in the time to develop a strategy for an upcoming trip to a location you can study records and/or anecdotes about. If you visit afterward, you and up to five allies who accompany you—to whom you explain your plan—gain three of the following benefits (your choice) for that particular visit:

- Ease their first initiative roll during the visit
- Ignore the first point of Stress that would otherwise be gained during the visit
- Ease their first perception roll made during the visit
- Ease their first interaction roll made during the visit
- Ease their first defense roll made during the visit
- Ease any task to flee and/or escape the location

Action to initiate; one hour to devise plan.

Tough: You can take punishment beyond what others can. You gain an additional step in your **damage track** between hale and impaired called hurt. Other than being one step closer to impaired, hurt imposes no changes to your character. Basically, you're sore and bruised, but it's nothing serious. Walk it off. Enabler.

Damage track, page 132

 **Vigilance (2 Intellect points):** You take a cautious approach to combat, focusing more on protecting yourself than on hurting your opponents. While this ability is active, you gain an asset on Speed defense rolls, and your attacks are hindered. This effect lasts for as long as you wish, but it ends if no combat is taking place within range of your senses. Action to initiate.

 **Impossible Strength (3 Might points and 3 Stress):** For the next minute, you possess inhuman strength. You gain an asset on any noncombat action requiring physical strength, and +2 to your Might Edge. You could lift a small car. You could toss a full file cabinet across the room. In melee combat, you inflict 4 additional points of damage. Action to initiate.

FOURTH-TIER PROTECTOR

Choose two of the protective abilities described below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless the description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **Amazing Effort:** Choose either Might Effort or Speed Effort. When you apply at least one level of that kind of Effort to a noncombat task, you get a free level of Effort on that task. Enabler.

 **Bury the Bodies:** You gain an asset to any action involved in covering up a crime scene, a scene of violence, a break-in, or something similar. This includes speaking with the authorities. Enabler.

 **Capable Fighter:** Your attacks deal 1 additional point of damage. Enabler.

 **Expert Bodyguard:** Once per turn, choose one ally that's next to you; their defense tasks are eased. Enabler.

 **Free From Danger (4 Might points):** If you do nothing else as your action, you can grab up to two allies (conscious or otherwise, and even if they are held fast by something) and move them a short distance. For the remainder of that round, you and they have an asset on defense rolls. Action.

 **Momentum:** If you use an action to move, your next attack made using a melee weapon before the end of the next round inflicts 2 additional points of damage. Enabler.

 **Size Them Up (3 Intellect points):** You use an action to study a creature you can see. For the next 24 hours, all your attacks against them, and your defense rolls against their attacks, are eased. Action to study.

 **Snipe (2 Speed points):** If you spend one action aiming, in the next round you can make a precise ranged attack. You have an asset on this attack. If your attack is successful, it inflicts 4 additional points of damage. Action.

 **Touch the Untouchable (4 Might points and 3 Stress):** For one minute, you can physically interact with something that normally could not be interacted with normally or safely, like an intangible ghost or liquid magma. Action to initiate.

FIFTH-TIER PROTECTOR

Fifth-tier Protectors have the following abilities:

Adroit Cypher Use: You can bear four cyphers at a time.

Protective Abilities: Choose two of the abilities described below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless the description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **Arc Spray (3 Speed points):** If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as a submachine gun), you can fire your weapon at up to three adjacent targets at once. Make a separate hindered attack roll against each target. Action.

 **Got Your Back (4 Speed points):** You're constantly giving your friends a quick helping hand. If an ally within immediate distance of you fails at a physical task, including an attack or defense roll, you can immediately allow that player to reroll. If the second roll also fails, you gain 1 point of Stress. Enabler.

 **Improved Success:** When you roll a 17 or higher on an attack roll that deals damage, you deal 1 additional point of damage. For instance, if you roll a natural 18, which normally deals 2 extra points of damage, you instead deal 3 extra points. If you roll a natural 20 and choose to deal damage rather than achieve a special **major effect**, you deal 5 extra points of damage rather than 4. Enabler.

 **Mastery With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are specialized in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler. (If you aren't trained in an attack, select **Skill With Attacks** to become trained in that attack.)

 **Mastery With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are specialized in defense tasks of that type. You can select this ability up to three times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of defense task. Enabler.

 **Parry (5 Speed points):** You can deflect incoming attacks quickly. When you activate this ability, for the next ten rounds you ease all Speed defense rolls. Enabler.

 **Shrug It Off:** You ignore the negative effects of your first Stress level. Enabler.

  **Savagery (5 Might points and 3 Stress):** You call upon some of the most visceral, primal fears and draw power to change into a savage, inhuman beast for an hour. In this new form, you gain +8 to your Might Pool, +2 to your Might Edge, +4 to your Speed Pool, and +2 to your Speed Edge. While in beast form, you can't spend Intellect points for any reason other than to try to change to your normal form before the one-hour duration is over (a difficulty 2 task). In addition, you attack any and every living creature within short range. After you revert to your normal form, you take a -1 penalty to all rolls for one hour. If you did not kill and eat at least one substantial creature while in beast form, the penalty increases to -2 and affects all your rolls for the next 24 hours. Eating an intelligent creature gives you 3 points of Stress. Action to change or change back.

Major effect, page 119

SIXTH-TIER PROTECTOR

Choose two of the protective abilities described below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless the description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **Again and Again (8 Speed points):** You can take an additional action in a round in which you have already acted. Enabler.

Skill With Attacks, page 38

 **Beacon of Hope:** If you make a successful attack roll, you can choose one ally within a short distance that can see you. They are inspired by your success and their next task is eased. Enabler.

 **Fight On:** You do not suffer the normal penalties for being impaired on the **damage track**. If debilitated, instead of suffering the normal penalty of being unable to take most actions, you can continue to act; however, all tasks are hindered. Enabler.

Damage track, page 132

 **Finishing Blow (5 Might points):** If your foe is prone, stunned, or somehow helpless or incapacitated when you strike, you inflict 7 additional points of damage on a successful hit. Enabler.

Tracking, page 18

 **Spin Attack (5+ Speed points):** You stand still and make attacks against up to five foes, all as part of the same action in one round. All of the attacks have to be the same sort of attack (melee or ranged). Make a separate attack roll for each foe. You remain limited by the amount of Effort you can apply on one action. Anything that modifies your attack or damage applies to all of these attacks. In addition to the normal options for using Effort, you can use Effort to increase the number of foes you can attack with this ability (one additional foe per level of Effort used in this way). Action.

 **Self-Sacrifice (6 Might points and 5 Stress):** You take no action other than to stand and defend for one round. During this round, all foes within long range will choose to attack you rather than your allies, drawn to you irresistibly (no roll needed). During this round, you ignore minor injuries (Stress, other than the cost of this ability) and you ignore the first serious injury (damage track move) you suffer. Action.

Descriptor, page 19

Quick, page 24

Perception, page 17

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Works the Back Alleys, page 86

Lockpicking, page 17

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Character Arcs, page 141

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For weapons, he equips his character with a machete (a medium weapon) that inflicts 4 points of damage and a medium pistol that inflicts 4 points of damage within long range.

Oliver has Protector Knowledge, which grants a noncombat skill; he goes for *tracking* so he can follow those who run away instead of telling him what he wants to know.

For his next type ability, Oliver chooses *Combat Prowess*, so he deals 1 additional point of damage with his machete (and other melee attacks). He also selects *One Against Many* to leverage his protection against several foes at once.

A first-tier Protector can have two cyphers. The GM decides that Oliver's first cypher is a *hard shoulder* that allows him to avoid an attack, and his second is a *flee The Hunt!* that allows him to get out of a dangerous situation quickly.

Oliver considers his *descriptor* next, choosing *Quick*, which increases his Speed Pool to 17. A big Speed Pool provides more opportunity for him to use Effort to aim at foes when throwing a knife or evade attacks made by others. He also opts for a second—or, in his case, first—descriptor skill and takes *perception* (rather than the suggested skill of endurance or gymnastics). Opting for an additional skill also means choosing an inability, and this time he goes with the suggested one: *deception*.

For his *focus*, Oliver chooses *Works the Back Alleys*. This gives him a choice of two skills. He chooses *lockpicking* and *stealth*, which seem like great options for getting into and out of a place, even one that's secured, and without drawing too much attention. Oliver's character is a serious combatant, but he is also good at avoiding a fight by staying out of sight, and at helping his allies get into places they're interested in searching.

For his *character arc*, Oliver chooses *Defeat a Foe*. That foe, he decides, is someone from his old military company who was once a friend but went rogue after encountering something "unusual."