

THIRD STRINGERS.....

A Backstory Cards Setting Grid for use with your favorite RPG
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Being a hero is easy if you have laser vision, invulnerability, or super-strength. It's a lot harder if you're a bunch of nobodies with crappy powers, and you make up for that with a lot of heart—because by golly, you're heroes too.

Dennington—an up-and-coming suburb of your local Big City—is the new home of the Guardian Squad, America's darling superhero team. That's not you, though. You're third-stringers, barely respected by the super community and society overall. You hero-aspirants have your hearts in the right place, but your powers are, shall we say, underdeveloped. But you keep on heroing, because it's the right thing to do. Who knows, maybe tonight will be your chance to shine!

INSPIRATIONS

Third Stringers takes its cues from ragtag superhero stories focused on interpersonal drama and the team's failures as found in movies like *Mystery Men* and *The Specialists*. Comic inspirations include *The Tick!*, *Great Lakes Avengers*, *Justice League Antarctica*, *Section Eight*, *The Champions*, *Inferior Five*, *Nextwave*, the Legion of Substitute Heroes from *Legion of Super-Heroes*.

INDIVIDUALS

- 1 Hoarfrost, Hiring Manager for the Guardian Squad**
An irritable old superhero whose heyday was maybe fifty years ago. Hoarfrost is one of the original members of the Guardian Squad and is now the primary gatekeeper to joining.
- 2 City Alderman Richard Lopez**
A local politician who has publicly come out in support of independent vigilante crimefighting. This hasn't won him any friends with the local police, but the occasional photo-op with the Guardian Squad goes a long way.
- 3 A Villain who Trowned You**
As a sub-par superhero, you're frequently fighting above your weight-class, which is part of why you're part of a team. *[When first selected, write in the name of the villain who trounced you and describe the fiendish plot you were trying to stop.]*

GROUPS

- 1 The Guardian Squad**
The Big Leagues. The for-serious heroes who actually do this full-time. Originally founded thirty years ago by Night Tremors and her partner Drivetrain. Hoarfrost joined up soon after, as did Portallus before he turned evil. They've got political clout, benefits, stipends, and a badass base. Jerks.
- 2 The Neighborhood Watch**
The mundane, non-super, crime-fighting bureaucracy. They're distinctly anti-vigilante in temperament, but poorly organized. They're always getting in the way, and are most unhelpful even when you've just saved their bacon.
- 3 Parent-Teacher-Hero Association**
The PTHA is not technically the political arm of the Guardian Squad, but sometimes it feels like it. There are definitely double-standards when it comes to vigilantism, even when you're contributing to the safety of the city.

PLACES

- 1 Dennington Dam**
A hydroelectric power station on the edge of town always seems like it should be too obvious, but oldies are goodies and supervillains and superheroes alike love clichés. Maybe it's someone's current lair or maybe it's a constant target for villainous activity.
- 2 Night Tremors' Now-Abandoned Secret Lair**
Night Tremors was the original founder of the Guardian Squad, and has not been seen in a long time. No one knows whether that's because she's retired, dead, or caught in one of Portallus' cosmic portal traps.
- 3 A Superhero Hangout**
Big league supers have their lairs or their bases for kicking back, relaxing, and spending their downtime. What is it you have? A diner, bar, VFW hall, a co-working space? Who else hangs out there?

EVENTS

- 1 Dennington's Sesquicentennial Celebration**
Existing for 150 years was a major milestone for any city. Something happened at the celebration that marked that date as having some further significance. *[When selected, talk about how long ago this was, what happened, and what change in the city occurred as a result.]*
- 2 "The Day of Darkness"**
Portallus, villain extraordinaire, once tried to create a portal that siphoned all light from a given area. He succeeded, not without cost, but he succeeded. The Guardian Squad eventually knocked him silly, but much more happened that day.
- 3 Your Origin Story**
Your story may involve exposure to radioactive mosquitos, haunting by an ancestor spirit, or a factor of self-discovery. The key is that what happened changed you and brought you a new degree of power. And you decided to use that power to help people. *[When selected, briefly tell the key information about your own origin story before answering the prompt on the card. If the prompt doesn't make sense for your character, choose another character and involve them.]*



THIRD STRINGERS

	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP	PLACE	EVENT
1	<i>Hoarfrost, Hiring Manager for the Guardian Squad</i>	<i>The Guardian Squad</i>	<i>Dennington Dam</i>	<i>Dennington's Sesquicentennial Celebration</i>
2	<i>City Alderman Richard Lopez</i>	<i>The Neighborhood Watch</i>	<i>Night Tremors' Now-Abandoned Secret Lair</i>	<i>"The Day of Darkness"</i>
3	<i>A Villain who Trowned You</i>	<i>The Parent-Teacher-Hero Association</i>	<i>A Superhero Hangout</i>	<i>Your Origin Story</i>