

SIMULATION IN PROGRESS



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MULTIVERSE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

WEB EXCLUSIVE

AVENGERS ACADEMY

BY MARTY FORBECK

WHILE THE AVENGERS HAVE OCCASIONALLY ALLOWED heroes to join the team on a trial basis, they have rarely had any formal schooling or training programs. Other groups like the X-Men have had dozens of hero schools throughout the years, all varied in nature, but the Avengers have only ever had one school, and it's a relatively recent addition to their organization.

Today, the Avengers Academy serves as both a home and a place of learning for many of the most promising young heroes on the planet, but that's not how things started out. In fact, the school was never meant to exist in the first place.

HISTORY

As part of the Fifty-State Initiative, S.H.I.E.L.D. started a training program for young heroes at Camp Hammond in Stamford, Connecticut, the site of the disaster that launched the superhuman civil war.

Registrants were brought there to take part in a brief military-style boot camp, where they could learn how to control their powers and prepare to take part in the larger Initiative program. This was done under the guidance of drill instructor Gauntlet (Joe Green) and program director Hank Pym—who had been secretly replaced by the Skrull agent Criti Noll.

Though this program didn't last long, it provided vital early training to a number of important up-and-coming heroes, including Stature (Cassie Lang), Reptil (Humberto Lopez) and Hardball (Roger Brokeridge).

Then came the global Skrull invasion, and several key Avengers, including Hank Pym, were suddenly outed as Skrull spies. Norman Osborn—who was, at that point,

temporarily not the Green Goblin—used his knowledge of anti-Skrull tactics to discredit the Avengers and claim their government-backed resources as his own, effectively putting him in charge of the entire Initiative program.

Osborn's primary goal during his brief reign as Director of National Security and the S.H.I.E.L.D. replacement H.A.M.M.E.R. was to wipe the Avengers out for good, and as part of his scorched-earth strategy, he shuttered many of the programs that had been formed in the aftermath of the superhuman civil war, including the Initiative trainees program. However, in secret, he began work on a trainee program of his own.

In hopes of fomenting the next generation of super villains, Osborn used data from the Avengers Initiative project to kidnap super-powered teenagers from around the globe—mostly teens who the Avengers had not had a chance to contact or train—and bring them to a secret government compound. A few of the more promising candidates were allowed free rein within the facility as Osborn plied them with money and drugs, aiming to teach them the benefits of a lavish criminal lifestyle. The rest were subjected to excruciating experiments—torturous procedures designed to unlock their full potential and destroy their minds.

After the end of Osborn's reign, the Avengers discovered and liberated his compound. That much was easy, but the hard part was figuring out what to do with the captured kids. The team couldn't simply send them home, as many of them were already on the verge of mental and physical breakdowns, but the Avengers weren't about to lock up a bunch of innocent teens either. The kids had to be brought somewhere safe, to a place where they would voluntarily stay but could also be monitored and treated.

The real Hank Pym took a page out of the book of his Skrull replacement and suggested that the team turn their old headquarters in the Infinite Avengers Mansion into a sort of reformatory school with himself as the director. Osborn's subjects were invited in as the "potential next generation of Avengers" and taught the basics of heroism, while Pym and a few other teachers secretly worked to ensure that at least they'd never become the next generation of the Masters of Evil. If all went well, Pym hoped to open the school to other young prospects.

The Pilot Program

The rest of the Avengers gave the project the green light, so Pym began organizing the freshmen agenda. He selected six Avengers—most of them former super villains—as tutors for Osborn's six most damaged subjects.

First Class

Teachers:

- Jocasta
- Justice (Vance Astrovik)
- Quicksilver (Pietro Maximoff)
- Speedball (Robert Baldwin)
- Tigra (Greer Nelson)
- Wasp (Hank Pym)

Students:

- Finesse (Jeanne Foucault)
- Hazmat (Jennifer Takeda)
- Mettle (Ken Mack)
- Reptil (Humberto Lopez)
- Striker (Brandon Sharpe)
- Veil (Maddy Berry)

The students almost immediately discovered the true purpose behind the school, but out of a combination of respect for and fear of their teachers, they continued their training.

The first real test for the class came during a field trip to the Raft, the prison where Osborn was being kept. Though the instructors did their best to keep the students contained to other parts of the facility, Mettle, Hazmat and Veil managed to sneak off and infiltrate Osborn's cell. They planned on killing him but got cold feet at the last moment, in part because Osborn insinuated that he was the only one who could fix the damage he had done to them.

Osborn was, of course, lying, but the team never had another chance to confront him about it. Pym punished those involved in the break-in and appointed Reptil as the class leader, with the understanding that he would keep the team on a tight leash.

Events around the school calmed down for a while after that. The class had their first few bouts with real villains in the field—not all successful, but good experience nonetheless.

Members of the team began to form strong relationships with each other. Finesse began an on-and-off romance with Reptil. Mettle, as the only person capable of safely touching Hazmat, naturally fell into her arms. Veil forged valuable

new friendships, while Striker learned to tamp down his bravado and become an effective member of the team.

There were some hiccups along the way, such as when Striker, Hazmat and Veil tried to impress Tigra by beating her old ally turned foe Shroud to within an inch of his life—or when the team was nearly talked into leaving the academy by another of Osborn's old subjects: the subtly villainous Alchemist (Jeremy Briggs). But on the whole, things around the school were looking up.

Then the Asgardian Serpent invaded Earth, using eight enchanted hammers to let his servants possess some of the strongest people on the planet. Two of those possessed—Titania and the Absorbing Man—invaded Avengers Academy and attempted to destroy New York City by growing the Infinite Avengers Mansion to life-size.

Working together, the students and faculty succeeded in evacuating and atomizing the facility before it could crush New York. The day was saved, but the school was gone. Out of fear for their own safety, Justice and Speedball retired from teaching, while Veil abandoned the class to take a job with Jeremy Briggs.

Despite these setbacks, Pym was determined to keep the academy alive. He had seen the place work, and he knew that it could work again. All they needed was a fresh start.

Moving West

After a brief break, Pym refashioned the old West Coast Avengers headquarters into the academy's new campus and reopened the school in Los Angeles, with enrollment now open to any young heroes interested in becoming Avengers. Dozens of new students flooded into the school, though only a few became deeply involved in the Pilot Program's ongoing adventures, while the rest were relegated to classes in other parts of the facility.

Important Additions

Teacher:

- Hawkeye (Clint Barton)

Students:

- Juston Seyfert and his pet Sentinel
- Lightspeed (Julie Power)
- White Tiger (Ava Ayala)
- X-23 (Laura Kinney)

Skeptical about the prospect of the academy's resurgence, Jocasta faked her own death and left the school to consult with Briggs. Shortly after that, Reptil was replaced by an evil version of himself from an alternate timeline. Hoping to preserve the sanctity of his own timeline, the evil Reptil worked with the shape-shifting, psychic alien-human Hybrid to kill select students and push Earth-616 into alignment with his own universe.

Just as the Pilot Program was beginning to root out this nefarious plot, Jocasta returned, backed by Veil and Briggs. Hybrid's presence was all the proof she needed to conclude that Avengers Academy was unsafe. After helping the program annihilate Hybrid and bring the original Reptil back home, Jocasta demanded that Pym shut down the school.

After a brief fight, Pym talked Jocasta into just removing her own systems from the facility. Still, the incident struck a mortal blow to the entire academy, and a number of the newer students abandoned the school for Briggs' organization.

The Runaways paid a brief visit to the academy after that, and at first, the teachers considered shoring up their lost numbers by forcibly enrolling the endangered teens into the school. However, after learning more about the Runaways and their tragic past, the faculty settled for letting them run away, while extending an open invitation for them to return later.

Members of the Pilot Program and the Runaways would meet again, though in not nearly so peaceful a locale as the academy. In the meantime, the students had other challenges to deal with.

The battle between the Avengers and the X-Men over the return of the Phoenix Force destabilized life around the globe, and the academy was no exception. At the dawn of the conflict, Wolverine (Logan) dropped all his students from the Jean Grey School for Higher Learning—as well as a seemingly amnesiac Sebastian Shaw—off at the academy in hopes that the Avengers could keep his mentees out of the growing conflict.

Shaw was less amnesiac than he seemed, and the villain almost immediately mounted an effort to free Wolverine's mutant students from the facility. Both the Pilot Program and the faculty tried to put a stop to this, but after seeing how determined Wolverine's students were to join the war, they decided to let the kids go.



Soon after, five key mutants gained the power of the Phoenix Force. During this time, a Phoenix-empowered Emma Frost visited the academy to inspect it for weapons, and though she left after destroying Juston Seyfert's pet Sentinel—an act that was easily undone—the teachers nonetheless decided that the academy was no longer safe and closed the school until the ongoing conflict ended.

Briggs took advantage of this opportunity and invited the unsupervised students to his corporation so he could pitch them on his organization one last time. Once they were on the premises, Briggs revealed his latest great invention: aerosolized nanobots capable of suppressing most super-powers. When paired with additional treatments, these bots could fix all the damage that Osborn had done to the members of the Pilot Program. They could give Mettle back his skin, detoxify Hazmat and keep Veil from disintegrating. The team could have everything they ever wanted. All they had to do was help him depower the rest of the world.

Though a few of the more desperate students initially accepted Briggs' offer, after they witnessed the full extent of his plans for world domination, they all turned on him. Veil and Jocasta reunited with their old allies and worked to disable the nanobots, while Finesse and X-23 confronted Briggs directly.

Briggs defeated X-23 and would have defeated Finesse too had she not used the unconscious X-23's claws to deal him a fatal stab wound. Finesse considered saving Briggs' life, but after hearing him brag about how he would come back to do it all again, she quietly allowed him to bleed out.

The reunited Pilot Program returned home, and as a reward for the students' heroism, the faculty unanimously decided to graduate them and their allies to the next class. Though Veil decided to stay depowered and return to civilian life, the rest of the team accepted the promotion and went on winter break to prepare for the next school year.

Although none of them knew it at the time, there wouldn't be a next school year.

Avengers Arena

After years of being mocked for his overly elaborate trap-filled Murderworlds and his inability to kill any of the super heroes he was regularly hired to hunt, the villainous

mercenary Arcade decided he must do something to make the world fear him again.

So he kidnapped young heroes from around the world—replacing them with cleverly constructed decoys—and took them to an isolated island where he forced them to engage in a *Battle Royale*-style killing game, to be broadcast internationally after the fact. Though the contestants in this twisted game were drawn from all over, the largest proportion came from two schools: the Avengers Academy and the new Braddock Academy founded by Captain Britain (Brian Braddock).



Art by Mike Perkins & Andy Troy

The Contestants

Avengers Academy:

- Hazmat (Jennifer Takeda)
- Juston Seyfert and his Sentinel
- Mettle (Ken Mack)
- Reptil (Humberto Lopez)
- X-23 (Laura Kinney)

Braddock Academy:

- Anachronism (Aiden Gillespie)
- Apex (Katy/Tim Bashir)
- Bloodstone (Cullen Bloodstone)
- Kid Briton (Brian Braddock (Earth-13022))
- Nara

Runaways:

- Chase Stein
- Nico Minoru

Others:

- Cammi (Camille Benally)
- Darkhawk (Chris Powell)
- Death Locket (Rebecca Ryker)
- Red Raven (Dania)

All of these young heroes immediately attempted to attack Arcade and end the game, but he was too well equipped for them to handle. As punishment for their insubordination, Arcade threatened to annihilate Hazmat, but at the last second, Mettle took her place and seemingly became the game's first casualty.

Mettle didn't actually die—Arcade teleported him into confinement to later be sold as food to the psychic vampire Emplate—but the rest of the contestants didn't know that, so the killing began.

Red Raven lost her life to the island's defense systems while attempting to escape. The others formed into cliques and began lying low, exploring the island while looking for a way out.

Of all the young heroes, only one—Apex—began actively trying to kill her competitors. She used her technopathic powers to force Death Locket to stealthily attack several other contestants, injuring Nara and seemingly killing Darkhawk. Nara later returned for revenge, and to keep Apex's boyfriend, Kid Briton, from killing Nara, Anachronism chopped his head off.

Injured, Apex and Death Locket fled from the conflict into the custody of a group of Avengers students and Runaways, where the exhausted Apex reverted to the form of her more heroic brother, Tim Bashir. Tim revealed that he and his sister shared a body, but as the stronger of the two, Katy kept control of it most of the time.

Tim begged Death Locket to kill him, but out of love for his gentle spirit, she hesitated. That was all the chance Katy needed to reassert control over Apex's body and escape. On the way out, she killed Juston Seyfert and took control of his Sentinel. With the Sentinel in hand, she razed half the island and nearly killed Nico Minoru, though through sheer force

of will Minoru came back and defeated Katy, inadvertently pounding both her and Death Locket through the surface of the island into Arcade's secret underground base.

The rest of the contestants tried to investigate, but before they could, one of Arcade's traps sprayed X-23 with an old trigger scent, turning her into a mindless killing machine. To stop her, Bloodstone transformed into a mindless monster, and Nara, in turn, died stopping him.

Further infighting followed. In the meantime, Apex and Death Locket infiltrated Arcade's inner fortress and discovered Darkhawk alive and well in a stasis pod. Together, the three of them got the drop on Arcade and took control of the facility.

At Arcade's prompting, Apex turned on her fellow contestants and attempted to conceal her own crimes by destroying the island and everyone on it. Faced with the prospect of becoming a mass murderer, Tim pushed himself to the surface of the shared body just long enough to allow Death Locket to kill Apex.

With Arcade gone and Apex dead, the game ended. Hazmat, Minoru and several of the other survivors later tracked down Arcade and brought him to justice, but their revenge didn't matter much. With Mettle and Seyfert seemingly dead and Reptil heavily injured, the instructors at Avengers Academy decided that it was too dangerous to keep the school running. The academy permanently closed its doors, and everyone involved in the project returned to their regular lives.

The New Avengers Academy

In spite of the original Avengers Academy's messy ending, the idea of such a school stuck around in the minds of those who had seen it, and several years later, Captain Marvel (Carol Danvers) took it upon herself to restart the school in a mobile, extradimensional location with better safety protocols.

The new school's first class was filled with promising young heroes handpicked by the Avengers. In addition to their regular hero training, the students had to attend standard academic classes and receive legitimate high-school diplomas. Classes were taught by a rotating cast of guest lecturers and personal mentors selected in collaboration with the students themselves.

The New Class

Teacher:

- Captain Marvel (Carol Danvers)

Students:

- Bloodline (Brielle Brooks)
- Captain America of the Railways (Aaron Fischer)
- Escapade (Shela Sexton)
- Kid Juggernaut (Justin Jin)
- Moon Girl (Lunella Lafayette) and Devil Dinosaur
- Red Goblin (Normie Osborn and Rascal symbiote)

To Captain Marvel's delight, this new academy immediately proved to be a brighter and more hopeful place than its predecessor. Swarm (Fritz Von Meyer) managed to infiltrate the institution on the first day, but the students immediately formed into a cohesive fighting unit and defeated him without so much as a single casualty.

To say that the members of the new class became fast friends would be understating it. Romantic overtures flourished between Bloodline and Escapade. Moon Girl and Red Goblin, though far too young for romance, found kindred spirits in each other. Fischer and Jin developed crushes on one another, though ultimately both ended up partnering with other people—with Jin dating *Daily Bugle* reporter Marcus Wetherell and Fischer seeing the independent vigilante Mysteriant (Qaari Beck).

Soon enough, the team faced its first real challenge. Backed by a new incarnation of the Sinister Six, Moon Girl's self-declared rival Squid Kid beat up Red Goblin and kidnapped his younger brother, Stanley, hoping to use the young Osborn as leverage against their grandfather, Norman Osborn, and his company, Oscorp. Red Goblin and his allies also hated Oscorp, but they couldn't condone harming an innocent child—and despite being a member of the Six, neither could Mysteriant. He led the class to Squid Kid's secret compound, where they rescued Stanley and broke up the Sinister team.

Later Additions

- Blackheart
- Hazmat (Jennifer Takeda)
- Mettle (Ken Mack)
- Teen Immortus (Nathaniel Richards)

This victory further bolstered Captain Marvel's faith in the new academy, so she began looking into expanding the institution. She invited Hazmat to return to the school as a resident advisor, and despite her traumatic past with the previous incarnation of the academy, Hazmat agreed.

Shortly after that, Emplate kidnapped Escapade, hoping to use her switching powers to free himself from his vampiric nature. To rescue her, Bloodline and Hazmat tracked Emplate back to his extradimensional lair, where they discovered Mettle alive in the psychic vampire's custody. Together, the three of them freed Escapade from Emplate's control and escaped back to the academy, where Captain Marvel offered Mettle the position of resident advisor for the boys' wing of the school, putting him right back alongside Hazmat, his long-lost love.

Mere days later, time-displaced pre-reincarnation versions of Billy Maximoff (Wiccan) and Tommy Maximoff (Speed) appeared in the academy's mysterious Midnight Chapel, seeking refuge from Mephisto, who sought to claim their souls. Mephisto sent his son Blackheart to retrieve the pair, but the students successfully fought him off and returned the two boys to their rightful place in the timestream. As punishment, Mephisto robbed his son of his demonic essence, turning him into a human.

With nowhere else to go, Blackheart turned to the students of Avengers Academy, who reluctantly took him in. At around the same time, the shard of the M'kraan Crystal that powered the school's dimensional drive pulled Iron Lad out of his own lost place in the timestream and deposited him in the Midnight Chapel, where he rebranded himself Teen Immortus and became the school's chaplain.

Much of the story of this new Avengers Academy has yet to be written, but if the first few weeks are any indication, the future of the Avengers looks bright indeed.

LOCATIONS

The Avengers Academy has only ever been situated in one of three locations.

The Infinite Avengers Mansion

Initially created as a submicroscopic base for a team of Avengers led by Hank Pym, the Infinite Avengers Mansion is not actually infinite, but from the perspective of a person in Underspace, it is so unfathomably vast as to dwarf any real-life building. Pym and Jocasta built the whole place themselves, so when they came up with the idea for Avengers Academy, it was already at the top of their minds.

Though the central areas of the building were constructed to resemble the original Avengers Mansion, the side wings contained countless all-purpose spaces, bedchambers, laboratories and training rooms, making it an ideal spot to host a super-hero school.

The West Coast Avengers Academy

The West Coast Avengers headquarters was never meant to house an academy, but after the destruction of the Infinite Avengers Mansion, it was the only building the Avengers had with enough space to host all the students. The faculty retrofitted some bedrooms to better serve as student dormitories but made few other changes to the facility as a whole. In place of a dedicated training room, students participated in physical drills outside, sparring with their teachers on the grass.

For more on the original West Coast Avengers headquarters, see page see *Avengers Expansion*, page 45.

The New Avengers Academy

As opposed to the first two campuses, the home of the new Avengers Academy was built from the ground up to function as a boarding school. Its central building resembles the Avengers Mansion but with the addition of separate dormitory wings for boys and girls. Other connecting wings serve as classrooms, labs and training grounds.

Though the academy's exact location is a secret, the facility's M'kraan Crystal shard—known as the Parallax Stone—allows it to effectively exist in several locations at once and instantly travel to any place at any time. If the teachers want to take students on a field trip to the Savage Land, they can be there in a moment, and many of the locations that the academy frequents have stationary structures—gymnasiums and the like—that supplement the school's regular facilities.

Behind the main school (in its true location) sits the Midnight Chapel, and beyond that stands a lighthouse floating in the void. No one knows where either building came from, but strange things seem to emanate from their halls.

Upon the grounds, the walls between the realms are particularly thin. Glimpses of other times, places and dimensions flit in and out of the buildings' shadows, and sometimes, when the stars are right, things can cross over. Many of the deadliest attacks on the Academy have begun in the Midnight Chapel. The faculty keep a close eye on the place, and students visit at their own risk.





Second Floor



Ground Floor



- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Entry Hall | 15. Bloodline's Room |
| 2. Gymnasium | 16. Escapade's Room |
| 3. Locker Room | 17. Server Room |
| 4. Cafeteria | 18. Captain Marvel's Room |
| 5. Kitchen | 19. Mettle's Room |
| 6. Water & Power Room | 20. Hazmat's Room |
| 7. Clock Tower | 21. Laundry Room |
| 8. Labs | 22. Student Dayroom |
| 9. Path to Dinosaur Paddock | B. Bathroom |
| 10. Captain Marvel's Office | CL. Classroom |
| 11. Medical | CL. Closet |
| 12. Library | E. Elevator |
| 13. Captain America of the Railways' Room | P. Pantry & Freezer |
| 14. Kid Juggernaut's Room | R. Restroom |
| | S. Storage |

One Square Equals 5 ft.

OPPONENTS

Though the students of Avengers Academy have fought with dozens of super villains, three have had far more impact on the institution than any others.

Norman Osborn

The students of Avengers Academy have never directly fought Norman Osborn, but his villainous activities cast a long shadow over the whole organization. He is the reason that the original academy exists in the first place. He also created the Alchemist, the school's first major villain. On top of that, his corporation also served as the impetus for the creation of their latest great opponent, the Sinister Six—and he is Red Goblin's grandfather.

Though the students of the current academy aren't trying to harm Osborn or dismantle Oscorp, they despise both and wouldn't hesitate to take a shot at either, should the chance arise. Ironically, Osborn's nature has taken a turn for the better in recent months.

The Alchemist

Jeremy Briggs took to Norman Osborn's tutelage like a sponge takes to water. In fact, it wouldn't be wrong to say that the Alchemist based his entire life around Osborn's example. Like Osborn, he used his powers to make himself into a ruthless and destructive business magnate. Furthermore, he was an intelligent planner and a persuasive pragmatist, capable of sounding reasonable even while explaining his plans for complete global domination.

Briggs tries to get other young heroes on his side by pointing out that a world full of super-powered adults has created endless chaos and that the current generation has, in many ways, failed to provide a better world for the next one.

This message contains some truth, and it appeals directly to the young, disenfranchised heroes that Briggs most likes to recruit. However, his solution to this generational problem—the part that he doesn't mention until he has recruited fully on his side—is not to empower young heroes, but to seize all the power in the world for himself and distribute it piecemeal to a select group of his own handpicked teenage cronies.

Briggs is currently believed to be deceased, though with his molecular manipulation powers, it wouldn't have been hard for him to fake his demise. There's always the possibility that he's still out there somewhere, lying low while he plots his next nefarious scheme.

Arcade

Osborn may have started the original Avengers Academy, but Arcade got it shut down. He is the only villain who has ever come close to killing a member of the school, and his island Murderworld dealt lasting harm to everyone involved.

Arcade has yet to show his face at the new Avengers Academy. However, the Avengers Arena was arguably the greatest success of his mercenary career, and if he can find a way to re-create that achievement, there's no doubt that he'll try.

PLAYING AT SCHOOL

Though schools have always played a large part in the lives of teams like the X-Men, they are a relatively new addition to the wider world of the Avengers. Nonetheless, many of the same principles apply. Avengers Academy is where students learn not only to control their powers and defend themselves, but also to work together as a team so they can do the most good. It is a place where young heroes can mature and learn to become their best selves.



Art by Mike McKone & Jeremy Cox

Theme

Founding a school is an inherently optimistic act. To do so, one has to believe that they can help bring about a future worth fighting for and that the students can find a place in that world.

A school-based team should focus on that, whether the heroes are faculty, students or some combination of the two. While the students can certainly have adventures outside the school, there can be plenty of intrigue on campus as well. That can come from rivalries between students, troubled students who struggle to fit in and even assaults from outside the school's grounds.

Beyond that, most of the students at any such academy hope to be called up to the big leagues someday. If they master their powers and prove they can be an invaluable asset, they can find themselves a member of one of the most powerful and influential super-hero teams on the planet. Some students might only want to get through school, find a way to integrate into society and have a regular life, but others are shooting for the fame and influence that comes with being part of a marquee operation.

Style

A school-based game usually focuses on the experience of the students, and it often starts with the day that they first arrive. With many schools, this can be at the time of its founding or when it reopens after having been destroyed. These moments offer fresh starts for students, much like showing up for the first day at any new high school or college.

Each student often has a secret that they would prefer the other students didn't discover—at least not until they know each other better. This might have to do with their powers or the way that people treated them back home. Maybe their parents are gone or dead, or maybe they're simply no longer welcome at home. Perhaps they're a clone of someone else. Or it could be they hurt someone with their powers and are in the school as a means of avoiding prison.

In many schools—especially larger ones—factions or cliques form among the students. Friendships and enmities can develop fast, and students who stick to themselves can be shut out from alliances or lobbied hard to join.

In smaller schools, the students all have to work together, and they don't always get along. When you have to spend every waking moment with the same group of people, even small differences can grow. If the students are competing for grades, romance or other kinds of attention, these rivalries can spill over into the rest of their lives.

Still, most student teams can find ways to stick together when it counts most. It's one thing to be someone's rival at the school and another thing entirely to put them in danger in the field.

If the school doesn't offer enough direct adventure by sending the students on missions, the kids often take that issue into their own hands. They might sneak out to find some fun, or they might discover that someone they've been hiding from has finally found them.

Alternatively, the characters can be members of the faculty. Then they have to deal with the students and all the trouble they can be in, attract or cause. Many heroes are incredibly competent when pointed at something and told to break it, but shaping minds and helping build young lives is a whole different kind of challenge.

Purpose

On a student team, the characters have clear goals:

- ▶ Learn how to control their powers.
- ▶ Learn how to work with others.
- ▶ Come back intact and alive.

That last part is vital. If a student gets hurt, they can be confined to the school for their own safety. In severe cases, they can be sent home or pulled out by their parents or guardians.

Headquarters

There are two ways that schools can serve as headquarters. Every Avengers Academy thus far has been a private boarding school in which the students both study and live. This keeps things simple, as the students don't have to worry about keeping their escapades secret from those around them. They can focus entirely on their training—at least until danger comes knocking.

In this case, the headquarters should be a school building or campus. This is often kept isolated from its surroundings, both for the privacy of the students and the safety of anyone who might live near them. It's not unheard of for training exercises to spill outside the school, and it almost seems inevitable that the place could someday be attacked.

In the second option, the students attend a regular school—perhaps not even the same school as their teammates—and meet up with each other outside school hours for training in their powers and teamwork. In this way, they're more like a sports club.

For schools like this, the headquarters is usually a single building or space, like a dojo. The students might live there when not in school—in which case they need a dormitory and dining facility, at least—but they also could live at their respective homes instead.

Transportation

Student teams don't always have the same kind of transportation demands as an adult team. Often, the adventures come to them rather than the other way around. When the students do need to travel long distances, it helps if they have access to a jet or someone with teleportation powers, but such problems are usually for the faculty to solve. In some cases, such as with the newest Avengers Academy, the school itself may serve as transportation.

For shorter distances, it's not uncommon for the students to use a van or even a bus—as long as they have someone with them who knows how to drive.

REGISTRATION

With a regular team, the characters have to join, but with a student team, they usually have to be admitted. For the sake of the game, the Narrator should work with each player to make sure that their character has a good reason for being part of the school.

Requirements

All a student needs to qualify for Avengers Academy is powers. They don't have to have interesting powers or even know how to handle them yet. This is an ideal place for a Rank 1 character to start.

If the character is part of the faculty, the requirements can be a bit looser. Regular folks without any powers at all can be excellent teachers, though if they're going to be teaching young heroes, they probably should have some experience in dealing with super-powered people.

Getting In

For a brief time while the school was on the West Coast, anyone could apply to Avengers Academy, and as long as they had powers, they were likely to get in. However, throughout most of its history, the students of the academy have been handicapped by the Avengers themselves.

Despite that, getting admitted shouldn't be that hard. Schools want to have students, and the faculty does what it can to make sure things like tuition aren't a barrier to entry.

All the characters have to do is be part of an incident that the Avengers might have heard of. They could be independent heroes who have already made a bit of a name for themselves, like most of the newest class. Or they could be newly empowered heroes in need of extra help, like the original class.

Once a character has joined the school, staying in is another question. If they prove to be a danger to other students, the faculty might be forced to expel them. This is usually done as a last resort, as shoving a dangerous student back out into society rarely makes anyone safer.

Character Alterations

A student at the school should take Student as their occupation. A teacher should take the Educator occupation—at least if they're committed to the school. Some teachers at

such schools don't consider it a vocation as much as a duty they handle among their other obligations, so they might have a different occupation instead.

If the school's nature is secret, those involved may want to take the Secret Identity tag. If its mission is common knowledge, they might want to take the Public Identity tag instead.

Powers and Roles

Schools are a great place for characters with unusual powers. They can learn how to use them creatively and well in such a setting, and they often don't have to worry much about performing in combat.

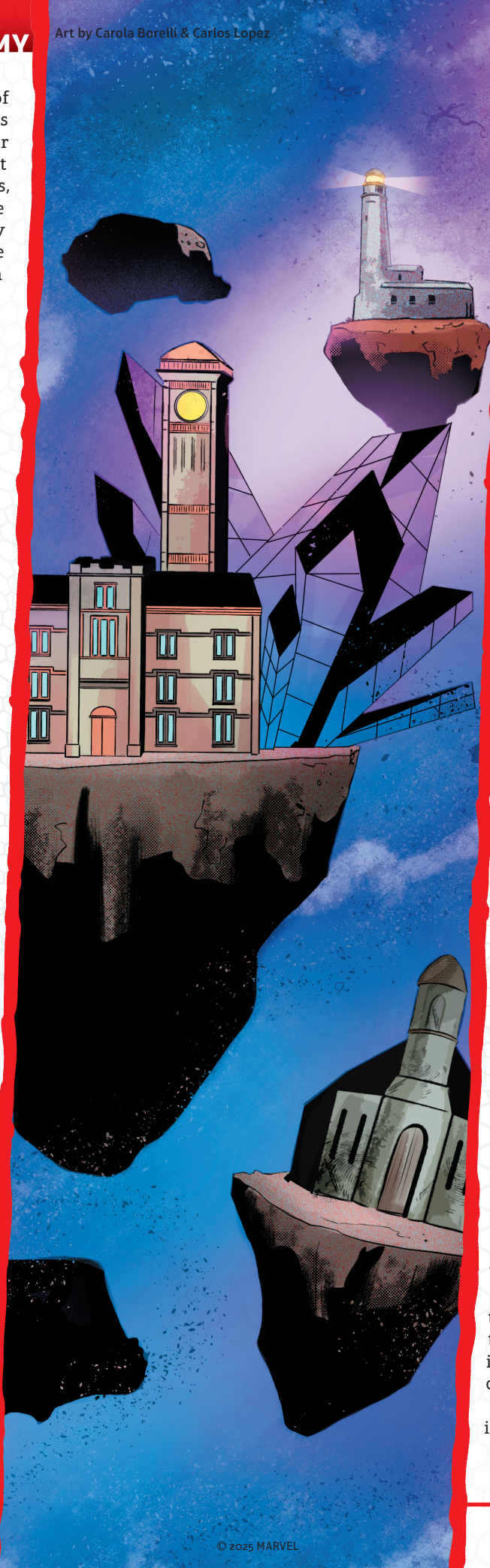
If the characters are all students, that keeps the game simple. The Narrator plays the members of the faculty and staff and can keep the characters on their toes directly. If the characters are part of the faculty and staff, they have far more autonomy, and the Narrator should keep this in mind when concocting adventures for the game.

If there's a mix of students and faculty on the team, make sure the players understand how to deal with this imbalance in authority. While students don't always listen to their teachers, they can be punished if they fail to do so. Faculty characters should be careful not to abuse such authority, or they can quickly have a revolt on their hands—or perhaps even be fired.

Graduating

Student characters can rank up while studying at the school. In fact, they can work their way up in a more granular way, as described in Chapter 9: New Rules. The moment they hit their rank cap is an excellent time for them to graduate. The school has taught them everything it can, and now it's time for such students to head out on their own.

The Narrator should keep this in mind when running an ongoing



series. If the players would like to keep the game going in the school, the Narrator can establish a temporary rank cap for the characters while they're in school. They can then set a higher one after the characters graduate.

Of course, the students aren't always forced to leave once they graduate. If they don't have other plans, they could become part of the faculty instead.

Duties

Student characters are expected to attend school—or at least training sessions—and to listen to the orders the faculty gives them. If they cannot abide by this, they might make a poor fit at the school.

Teacher characters are expected to train the students and lead them on missions. If they are too busy saving the world in other ways, perhaps they should stick to being a guest lecturer or coach instead.

Public Perception

If the school's nature is a secret, the public likely thinks the students are just regular kids, albeit at an isolated, private school. Most people probably regard the kids as snooty prep students rather than super heroes.

If the school is open about its students and objectives, the students may be subject to public scrutiny, but the Avengers are a widely known and respected organization, so the kids are unlikely to encounter the kind of public protests that so often plague mutant schools. In fact, most people would give Avengers Academy a wide berth for fear of being caught up in some sort of super-powered attack or even a training exercise. Villains, however, might see the school as a potential target.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Even the best students can sometimes use prompts to help them get started, including when it comes to adventure. Here are a number of adventure hooks the Narrator can use for inspiration.

Players might want to skip this section, but peeking isn't really cheating. After all, these hooks are only prompts. The adventures can go anywhere from here.

School Adventure Hooks

Here are five adventure hooks for students at Avengers Academy:

- ▶ The students discover a new room in the school, a small office with a desk and chair and a sign on the door marked "J-3." Nobody knows how the room got there, and the teachers and staff don't seem capable of even perceiving it. The space seems innocuous enough, but it must have a greater purpose. Has someone breached the school's defenses? If so, why haven't they revealed themselves? Are they looking to join the academy or destroy it?
- ▶ After a dangerous mission, a student's parents appear on campus, demanding to take their child home. The student doesn't want to leave, but the faculty are obligated to work with the parents. Can the other students convince the parents to change their minds? Or can they find some other way to circumvent the issue?

- ▶ An anonymous villain kidnaps the students and drops them into a scenario eerily similar to the Avengers Arena incident but with strange differences. Traps constantly malfunction, and features of the island seem to disappear and reappear at random. Is this Arcade trying to re-create the successes of his past? Or has someone else taken advantage of the mercenary's reputation to stage a twisted kind of test? Is the island even real?
- ▶ Kang and Ultron merge to form a creature called Ultrag-5 that lays waste to the Avengers. Can the students come together and succeed where their teachers have failed? What reluctant allies might they call on to face a threat of this magnitude?
- ▶ The Red Skull's daughter Sin (Sinthea Shmidt)—once again posing as the trad-wife influencer Cherry Crane—organizes a bigoted attack against a mutant school. Due to an ongoing conflict with the X-Men, the faculty at Avengers Academy forbid their students from interfering. Can the students find a way to help their mutant friends without their teachers finding out? Or will the kids have to sneak or fight their way past their tutors?