

A Beginner's Guide to Sentinels of the Multiverse: Definitive Edition

Introduction

Hello! I'm Churro, and if you couldn't tell already, I'm a big fan of Sentinels of the Multiverse. I'm creating this guide along with other members of The Letters Page Discord server as a starter guide for newer players who may be struggling with the game. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive guide, or introduce you to a character for the first time, but instead, as a stepping-off point to help understand some of the nuances of each character and deepen your understanding. Certain characters may have interactions that are not immediately obvious, and the goal of this guide is to point out things you might have missed to help increase your enjoyment of a deck.

This guide is structured by box, with the core game decks coming first, and will be updated as new expansions are released. For each deck, you will find general strategy points, interesting interactions, and common pitfalls that may be giving you trouble.

Each hero section details how to play using the base character card, which I generally find to be the most straightforward way to learn a deck. Variants are listed below the base character guide, and detail how the variant changes the dynamic of the deck. Additionally, expansions may add content to the core game, so if you find a variant name you are unfamiliar with, it may be from an expansion, and all variants will be marked as such using the following symbols.

 : **Sentinels of the Multiverse: Definitive Edition Core Game**

 : **Rook City Renegades Expansion**

Disclaimer: I am by no means an expert, and the content presented in this guide reflects my own experiences, along with those of other collaborators. If you find that after multiple games, you still just can't get the hang of the deck, it may just be that you have a different playstyle, and it may help you to do the exact opposite of what you read here. The main thing I've learned is that everyone approaches the same cards in a slightly different way, and you may find your own novel approach to the deck.

With that being said, let's dive in!

General Tips

- **Changes in Pace:** Definitive Edition plays very quickly when compared to the original Sentinels of the Multiverse. This is noteworthy because many heroes have one distinct finishing card that rewards a long setup. For Tachyon, it's Lightspeed Barrage. For Wraith, it's Inventory Barrage. I've found that many players struggle because they hold on to these moves too long. By the time you've built up 35 cards in your trash, Lightspeed Barrage often ends up being overkill, or worse, your allies defeat the villain

before you get to use it. People tend to have much greater success with cards like Lightspeed Barrage when they use them mid-game, dealing ~15 damage to deal with a nasty spaceship or minion, and often have time to charge up for a second one, dealing another 15+ damage in the final round. This may not always be the case, but especially against villains like Voss, a well-timed medium sized hit to a troublesome minion often gives more breathing room than a massive attack at the end of the game.

- HP as a Resource: An important detail of Sentinels: your character does not get weaker as they lose HP. I've played with many players over the years who are terrified of losing HP, and often forgo strong cards in the name of keeping their health high. In my experience, people tend to have more success when they think of HP like a bank account. You never want to let that number hit zero, but spending some HP to get further ahead can often improve your situation greatly, especially if you have ways to earn some of it back. Pushing the Limits, for example, deals 2 fire damage to the user, but in return, you receive an extra card play, and extra draws to support yourself. This means that in conjunction with the right One-Shots, Tachyon with Pushing the Limits can often hit 5+ card plays a turn, which is a great return on your HP investment. This applies even more to characters like Fanatic who center themselves around getting to low HP. Of course, don't be reckless, but if you feel like you're never quite up to speed with other players, you may want to consider using those cards or putting out a Reaction and taking a hit from the villain to accelerate yourself.

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Core Game

Heroes

Legacy

General Strategy: Legacy. The man himself. As a representation of the all-American hero archetype, Legacy serves as the team leader and motivator for all those by his side. He's capable of using cards like Thokk! and Flying Smash to take matters into his own hands, but he's much more comfortable as the wind in his team's sails, handing out damage increases and protecting his teammates from harm. He's also not terribly complicated, but the little complexity he has comes mostly from the fact that he's generally only able to play one card a turn, meaning that each decision has to be intentional.

Luckily, each of Legacy's cards is extremely effective, and once Legacy gets going, you have an indomitable wall, taking massive hits from the enemy using Bulletproof Skin or Dauntless Durability. Meanwhile, your allies are at max capacity, reaping the benefits of Inspiring Presence and your base power Galvanize. If things get really out of hand, cards like Heroic Interception or Take Down (especially in conjunction with your defensive cards) give your allies some breathing room to get back on their feet.

Legacy's major drawback is that he can't react quickly to situations or support himself. Most of his card effects exclude him, and many times, he can't afford to use the powers on Motivational Charge, Keen Vision, or Danger Sense to do the things he wants to do because his allies appreciate Galvanize so much. This is where The Legacy Ring may be useful, to give Legacy some versatility, by allowing him to use an extra power. All in all, Legacy has enough force to be a powerful last man standing, but if you play your cards right, Legacy serves as a potent protector and motivational force for the other heroes, who will always appreciate having him around.

▽ First Appearance Variant

Much like base Legacy, FA Legacy's innate power affects allies rather than himself, meaning that he plays at roughly the same pace with both variants. However, this doesn't mean your gameplay won't change. Galvanize is one of the most effective powers in the game, and seeing as you're not handing out that blanket buff to your allies, you may find that enemy targets stick around a little longer. This slows down the pace of the game a little, and if you plan on playing as a tank, you may have to deal with more incoming attacks than usual. However, once your allies get the field under control, they may not need as much protection, which frees FA Legacy up to do other things. With base Legacy, you often find yourself constrained by the fact that Galvanize is almost always the most effective thing you can do, whereas Protector shines as an early game stall, letting your allies get up and running. Afterwards, you're free to fall into a more active support role, using your other powers at your leisure.

The Wraith

General Strategy: Options, options, options. That's the name of the game with Wraith. Wraith brings to the fight her trusty Utility Belt, filled with tools for almost any situation. As a "jack-of-all-trades" character, Wraith is able to adapt her playstyle on the fly to fit whatever role her team needs at the moment, provided she has the right cards. Her deck contains a multitude of Items, most of which supply her with new powers with a variety of useful effects. Even when the luck of the draw isn't in your favor and you can't find the card you're looking for, she'll still almost always have at least *something* to do.

With all that preamble about how much she can do, let's take a look at exactly what her options are. Most straightforward are her damage dealing powers. Razor Ordnance and Throwing Knives can provide some respectable damage for a non-dedicated attacking hero, especially when provided with boosts from her Micro-Targeting Computer and allies like Legacy and Fanatic. However, it's often better to lean into her more utilitarian powers to help the team as a whole. If your team is taking too much damage, her Stun Bolt and Smoke Bombs can help soften the blow. Sonic Neutralizer and Infrared Eyepiece are fantastic tools to help control the Environment or the Villain, respectively. And don't discount her base power, Stealth, either. By slipping into the shadows, Wraith can reduce the damage she takes - a consistently useful ability in the early game when she might not have the powers she wants yet, and able to help her survive a tough barrage or even act as a semi-decent tank should she end up as the hero with the highest HP. With all these options, one of her biggest restrictions is the fact that she can only choose a single power each turn. Luckily, her Utility Belt is here to help. While it does provide another solid fallback power, its most important role is granting Wraith an extra power usage, dramatically increasing her possibilities.

Of course, all these powers are useless if she can't get them out of her deck, but that's hardly an issue if she has Impromptu Invention or Leverage in her hand. Impromptu Invention gets a random Item onto the field without sacrificing momentum, while Leverage provides an absurd 5 cards in hand. With the ability to draw several cards quickly, compounded by Impromptu

Invention, Infrared Eyepiece, and Utility Belt also giving extra cards, she's able to build up an arsenal in her hand quite quickly. It may seem pointless to build up a large hand like this when she can still only play a single card per turn, but that's where the final important piece of her set comes into play: Inventory Barrage. By discarding Items from hand, Wraith can deal some pretty major damage - a great mid-to-late game play when you have an opening or need to get rid of an annoyingly tanky target.

▽ First Appearance Variant

FA Wraith's Haunt the Shadows is a power whose utility changes depending on the villain she's facing. Feeling somewhat like a combination of Infrared Eyepiece and Impromptu Invention, it sacrifices the tankiness that Stealth provides in exchange for both accelerated setup and, more importantly, an easy way to provide reconnaissance for her team in the early game. If you're willing to take some heavier hits, this is a great early game boost for not only yourself, but your whole team.

🕵️ Detective Wraith

Detective Wraith, being able to look at the top card of a deck and play, bury, or replace it, provides a strong degree of versatility in that she can affect any deck and gives you multiple options to deal with that card. She trades a couple HP for the ability to control and scout the villain deck and the ability to hand out free card plays to any deck on the field. Thus, the way to use Detective Wraith heavily depends on the scenario. If your allies are struggling, help them set up. If the villain is overwhelming, try to intercept their problem cards. This power is much more likely to be used late game than the other two, as its versatility isn't diminished by your other powers, so get searching! You have a lot of detective work to do.

Bunker

General Strategy: Bunker is designed to evoke the feeling of driving a massive, complex, weaponized tank. To operate this tank effectively, you'll have to keep your head on a swivel, checking ammo levels, installing new Ordnances, and scanning your surroundings for threats. You're able to play a guns-blazing, devil-may-care, shoot-anything-that-moves style, but as a military tactician, making tough choices and having a precise touch is the key to really making Bunker shine. With a little skill, Bunker is able to lay down a massive amount of cover fire, taking out threats to the team and quickly disposing of problems in ways other heroes simply can't, and if a target becomes too oppressive, a well-loaded Omni-Cannon can wipe away that problem in an instant. So the question is, how do you reach this point?

The first key point to realize with Bunker is that you need to prioritize. Your Ordnance cards are your main weapons, which are fueled by cards from the top of your deck. The challenge of Bunker's deck is that Ordnances load automatically, but very slowly, at 1 card per turn. This means that you need to use your other cards to accelerate that rate, but you don't have enough acceleration cards to give equal attention to every gun, and will have to decide which ones to give your attention to. Additionally, not every Ordnance is useful against every Villain, which adds another layer of choice. For example, Mounted AP Gun deals irreducible, single-target

damage, which is excellent for punching through Voss's minions, but may not be able to fire rapidly enough to deal with the Matriarch's endless flood of Fowl the same way that Gatling Gun would be able to. Your guns also require reload time, and firing too recklessly can leave you low on ammo in crucial moments. This is where Bunker's non-Ordnance cards come in, keeping the machine well-oiled and ready to go. LIDAR Intel is an excellent maintenance card against target-heavy villains, allowing you to draw the cards you need before they get trapped under your Ordinances where you can't reach them. Expendable Power Bank also provides a steady income of ammo, as well as giving you a one-time boost if you need a gun loaded immediately. If you get in a sticky situation, Adhesive Foam Grenade or Tactical Command can often create breathing room while you reload, or Emergency Shielding can give you a little cover.

Finally we reach Bunker's central framework, his Mode cards. Modes are single-round Ongoing that give Bunker the speed he needs to get online, or to recover after a big turn. Recharge Mode and Upgrade Mode are the two early-game Modes, both restricting Bunker from firing weapons for a turn in exchange for allowing him to install and load his Ordinances much more quickly than usual. Recharge Mode allows you to place any number of cards from your hands under your Ordinances, which can be extremely powerful in conjunction with LIDAR Intel. Once you have all of your weapons loaded, Turret Mode allows you to fire a whopping three guns in a single turn, and boosts the damage dealt by each. In summary, Bunker's deck very much rewards observant, tactical play, and the key to making him shine is thinking ahead.

First Appearance Variant

FA Bunker trades out Bunker's ability to load his guns quickly and a little bit of health in exchange for some more consistency. His base power lets him choose one of two options: 1) he can deal a target some melee damage, letting him come out swinging as he waits for his guns, or 2) Salvage an Item, which helps him recover from his stuff being blown up, or lets him get Items that were put under Ordnance cards into his hand afterwards.

Stealth Suit Bunker

Stealth Suit Bunker is Bunker's fastest variant, trading off 5 HP for a massive amount of acceleration and versatility. With both a Collect and a play, you can pull any Mode card from your deck and put it into play immediately, or just Collect it and then play something else. This means that Stealth Suit Bunker can set up and stay running much faster and more reliably than the other variants, and start contributing earlier. This does come at the cost of 5 HP, which is notable, because Bunker is not particularly tanky to begin with, so you'll need to keep an eye out for Emergency Shielding to keep yourself in good shape, but when you can pull Recharge Mode and LIDAR Intel at will, this shouldn't be too hard.

Tachyon

General Strategy: With Tachyon, speed is the game. You're good at drawing cards - both through your base power and through your deck, and more importantly, you're the best at playing loads of cards - alongside multiple One-Shots (Fleet of Foot and Expedited Efficiency)

letting you chain together plays. Tachyon has two key limited cards that define her engine. Her HUD Goggles give her an extra play per turn, alongside making her damage irreducible (helpful because she has very few high-damage cards). Additionally, her key Ongoing, Pushing the Limits, allows to get an extra play *and* an extra draw, at the cost of dealing herself damage every turn while it's out. More often than not, the benefits of Pushing the Limits outweigh the drawbacks. If you get into trouble, Hypersonic Dash (especially in conjunction with HUD Goggles) gives you a round of breathing room to get back on your feet.

As far as Tachyon's base power goes, you have a choice to make, draw or discard? Drawing can potentially be used to keep your engine going, but you have lots of other ways to draw, and the discards fuel your powerful One-Shots, so it's important to think about this decision carefully. The typical tactic is that since you have multiple copies of most of your cards, if the card isn't immediately useful, discard it, and you'll likely either draw a replacement or have your trash reshuffled within a couple rounds. If the card gives you more card plays or discards, like Expedited Efficiency, Quick Insight, or Fleet of Foot, draw it, as those cards allow for chains that will fill up your trash quicker than discarding them.

Don't be afraid to discard in general - some of her best drawing abilities require discarding some cards afterwards, and two of her most powerful cards - Sonic Vortex and Lightspeed Barrage - are fueled by her discard pile. Sonic Vortex, the simpler of the two, merely hits as many targets as cards in your discard pile - while early on it's just a nice damage card, once you get far enough in the fight, it can do serious damage to a lot of targets. Lightspeed Barrage, meanwhile, hits one target for damage equal to your trash size, shuffling your trash back into your deck afterwards. While saving it up for one big hit to take down a villain is always an option - and rarely a bad one, at that - don't be afraid to use it multiple times throughout the game, as even a 5 - 7 damage burst is a good amount of damage, and it shuffles your acceleration cards back into your deck.

▽ First Appearance Variant

While Tachyon's base power is to look at the top card of her deck and either draw or discard it, sometimes you want to be a bit more supportive to the team. If that's the case, you can play FA Tachyon. FA Tachyon lets one hero draw a card, and if that hero is someone other than Tachyon, Tachyon may then play a card - which of course, may chain into multiple cards, depending on what you play. You lose the ability to fill your trash directly that the base power provides, but you move much faster, and help your teammates in the process. The downside of this is that you may get greedy for extra plays and find yourself with precious few options left in hand. This means that you may have to take the draw for yourself occasionally to avoid burning yourself out.

Absolute Zero

General Strategy: Absolute Zero is the master of dealing himself damage for fun and profit. The key to his game plan is his array of equipment that changes how he reacts to and deals fire and cold damage. A lot of his high complexity ranking comes from the fact that he has to pay

close attention to damage types to be effective, and the mental math needed to avoid blowing yourself up.

Your two most important cards as Absolute Zero are Isothermic Transducer and Null-Point Calibration Unit. These two cards allow Absolute Zero to deal cold damage whenever he takes fire damage, and to heal whenever he would take cold damage. Absolute Zero's base power is to deal himself fire or cold damage, so without one of these two cards you won't really be able to make use of it. With it, you can use the power to either deal damage or heal yourself to tank damage for your team.

Notably, both of these cards let you play a new card when they come into play, so they are essentially free plays. If your team has to destroy Item cards, it's often worth destroying yours if you have extra copies (or Item searching cards) in your hand to save your team the pain.

You have two primary cards for finding your Items - Conductive Installation and Desperate Deployment, and one card that gets them back out of your trash - Modular Repair. If you use these to play Isothermic Transducer or Null-Point Calibration Unit, they still give you an extra card play afterwards. The fire and cold damage you deal yourself on Desperate Deployment and Modular Repair only come after your Item card comes into play, and this includes any extra plays from playing Isothermic/Null-Point. This means you could play Desperate Deployment, find Isothermic, use it to play another Desperate Deployment, find Null-Point, and then gain the benefits of both Items when dealt the fire and cold damage!

If you have both Isothermic Transducer and Null-Point Calibration Unit in play, you'll want to use your Item searching cards to find Focused Apertures, which increases your cold damage by 1. In addition to the outgoing damage bonus, this also means all your cards that deal AZ 1 fire and 1 cold damage will actually heal you for 1! This is the key to Absolute Zero, to try to get ahead on your transactions. Usually, fire to cold is an even exchange, but Focused Apertures allows you to get ahead.

This is a good time to talk about +1 damage bonuses. AZ thrives off of +1s. Because you usually deal yourself damage, +1s often get to "double dip" their effects. For example, if Legacy gives you +1 damage dealt, and you deal yourself 1 fire damage, you actually deal yourself 2 fire damage. If you have Isothermic Transducer out you get to deal one enemy that much cold damage. When you deal that cold damage, you benefit from Legacy's +1 damage again, so you actually deal 3 damage! It's always a good idea to keep an eye on effects increasing damage you take or deal, since they will greatly increase your damage output.

Once you've got Isothermic, Null-Point, and Focused Apertures in play (which could be as early as turn 1!) it's up to you whether you want to play cards for more damage or do additional setup for more/stronger powers. It really depends whether you need the damage now or to ramp up for later. Neither decision is necessarily right or wrong and just depends on what you need at the moment.

▽ First Appearance Variant

First Appearance Absolute Zero deals damage to both heroes and non-heroes with his power. Note that for non-heroes you can hit *up* to 2, but for heroes you **must** hit 2. One of them will often be yourself (since you'll heal via Null Point), but the other will be a hero that will actually take damage. It's best to mitigate this by hitting beefy heroes with damage reduction (like Haka), heroes that want to take damage (like Fanatic), or to spread the love out so no one is feeling picked on.

Unity

General Strategy: Unity is a minion maker, building up a swarm of Mechanical Golems to do her bidding. She can be a bit slow to start, but once she gets going, she can output ridiculous levels of damage. As an intern rather than a full-fledged member of the Freedom Five, she greatly appreciates any support the other heroes can offer her. Her base power requires that she destroy Item cards in order to play her Mechanical Golem cards, which means that she pairs well with heroes who have a lot of Items and can afford to take the hit, like Bunker, The Wraith, or The Argent Adept. Even in the absence of these support allies however, her deck still has enough Items to remain self-sustaining. Her Supply Crates are a simple but versatile option which can be destroyed by your power to play more Golems or on your Start Phase to draw more cards. Volatile Parts provides backlash damage whenever one of her Golems is destroyed, but can also be used as Golem fuel in a pinch. Additionally, some of her Items let her play bots without the need to destroy other Items, like her Modular Workbench or her Construction Pylon. Since Unity thrives on having a solid foundation, it's often ideal to spend your first turn or two using Modular Workbench or Flash Forge to get more Items out, rather than immediately playing a Golem which will likely be destroyed if undefended.

You can't really talk about all of this framework without highlighting the centerpiece of her deck, which is those Mechanical Golems. They're each extremely powerful, but can't be played on her Play Phase, so she has to plan her turns carefully to get them out on her other four phases. She has a set of five powerful Golems based on the Freedom Five, and a host of generic Golems to round out her kit. They're mostly split into two categories: damaging bots such as Platform Bot and Raptor Bot, and structural/support bots such as Champion Bot and Swift Bot, who increase the effectiveness and staying power of Unity's field. Your plan is normally to swarm the enemy with bots, protecting them with your structural cards. Stealth Bot can soak hits for your other Golems, Swift Bot keeps your important setup cards cycling through your hand and onto the field, and Scrap Metal/Inspired Repair keep your existing Golems healthy.

Once you have a solid support network of defensive Golems and Ongoing, your finishing move will generally be deploying the Raptor Bots. The Raptor Bots are weak early game, but if you can get them out late-game, their damage scales with the number of Golems on the field, meaning that a Raptor Bot can easily deal upwards of 7 damage, and that damage is multiplicative with the number of Raptor Bots in play, if you can keep them alive. They also require no direct maintenance, so you're receiving a huge amount of passive damage without

really putting in much effort. You can also sweep the field with Powered Shock Wave, which will similarly scale off of the number of Golems in play.

Overall, Unity is a bot-tastic hero who rewards planning and patience in order to be effective. Your end goal is to build up a large swarm, which means you need to play defensively and plan against enemies who like to beat up weaker targets or have a lot of spread damage, as they have a tendency to beat up her bots and break her momentum.

▼ First Appearance Variant

FA Unity changes up her gameplan by taking away reliability and adding acceleration. While you won't have a guarantee of getting out bots fast, you do get a bit of damage to chip away at targets and will always get out something at the very least, making you more effective against villains who strip your hand. The key with FA Unity is to be adaptable. You're accepting randomness in exchange for getting your Items and Golems out faster, so it's harder to develop a consistent strategy, but you'll often be able to get online earlier, even if it's not exactly in the way you were planning. Sometimes you may get an early game Raptor Bot you weren't looking for, or a card like Powered Shock Wave that would normally be used after you're set up, but just be flexible, and it'll work out in the end.

🗑 Scavenger Unity

Scavenger Unity plays a lot more fast and loose than her other variants, allowing her to be more aggressive with her low HP Golems. Normally, Unity has to set up a framework to keep her weaker Golems alive, but here, she can afford to throw out lower HP bots, knowing that she has a reliable way to recycle them without Robot Reclamation. This means that she is also less susceptible to early discards from the villain, as she can stash Golems and Items in her trash to play later, and use her energy to get other key cards in play, rather than lamenting that Stealth Bot is in her trash where she can't access it. She can also cycle Bee Bot as a pseudo One-Shot, cycling it in as needed to remove Ongoing. With all of this cycling, Volatile Parts becomes extremely valuable, especially with Champion Bot to boost Unity's damage.

The Argent Adept

General Strategy: The Argent Adept is the highest complexity hero in the set, and as such, writing a "beginner's guide" can seem a little contradictory. However, like most things, Argent isn't as complicated as he first seems, and my hope is that this guide will lower the barrier of entry to a very rewarding character.

The first step to understanding the Argent Adept is to recognize his limitations. Argent is the most support-focused hero in the game, with very few cards that deal damage directly (other than to yourself.) You will want a good understanding of how your allies decks work so you know how to help them. Your deck is also composed largely of Ongoing cards that have no immediate benefit when played, so a bit of planning is required. However, your Melody, Harmony, and

Rhythm cards, when played correctly, will coalesce into a symphony that bolsters all of your allies, and you will see your teammates operating at a level of effectiveness that they could only dream of reaching on their own, spurred on by your music.

So how do you become a Virtuoso? Taking a look at Argent's Ongoing, you'll immediately notice his special effects: ♪ **Perform** and ♪ **Accompany**. These are not powers, meaning that they cannot be activated without help from the powers on Argent's Instrument cards. However, they also do not have the same rules restrictions as a power, so you can use them multiple times per turn. This means that, given the right Instruments, you can give the same effect to multiple heroes on your turn. To get the right Instruments, you'll want to pay attention to which Ongoing you have in play, since the powers listed on the Instruments often have restrictions on what you can activate. For example, Akupunku's Drum, unsurprisingly, is entirely used for activating Rhythm cards, and many Instruments have similar restrictions. Cards like Instrumental Conjunction, Silver Shadow, and Polyphonic Flare can go a long way towards helping you get your Instruments into play. In addition, Arcane Cadence runs double duty, letting you search for your Instruments, or helping play more Ongoing if you already have the Instruments out.

If you want to get a little fancier, Alacritous Subdominant's wording allows for a sneaky interaction that helps Argent squeeze a little more out of his turn. The ♪ **Accompany** effect on this card is phrased, "You may use 1 power. If you do, put this card on the top of your deck." The trick here is that any consequences of the first sentence must resolve completely before the card returns to the deck. What this means is that if you target yourself, you are immediately allowed to use a power, and if you can use an Instrument's power to activate the ♪ **Accompany** on Alacritous Subdominant again, you can potentially create long chains where you use 3-4 powers before finally being forced to put Alacritous Subdominant away. You'll have to dedicate an ♪ **Accompany** activation on each of your powers to keeping the chain going, but you're able to use the ♪ **Perform** sections to greatly support your allies in the process.

It can be tempting to get Argent fully set up before you start contributing to the game, but the ideal way I've found to play Argent is to get out a couple Instruments, a few Ongoing cards, and then just work with what you have. Argent's role is to bolster his teammates, not be a one-man band. If you're spending a turn or two giving everyone extra cards, healing, or card plays, your teammates will appreciate that significantly more than you spending four turns getting set up and then a turn or two pulling ridiculous combos by yourself. Argent can draw a ton of cards, heal himself, and give himself a bunch extra card plays/powers, but by doing that, you're typically not moving the game state forward much, and you're forcing other players to sit and watch a long, unwieldy turn. Also, don't be afraid to lose your Instruments. They're great fodder for Item destruction, and you have a lot of ways to bring them back. Cards like Instrumental Conjunction and Vernal Sonata can pull from your trash, so if you lose an Instrument, don't worry. You'll see it again sooner than you think.

▽ First Appearance Variant

FA Argent Adept sacrifices consistency for speed. You get to play the top card of your deck, which will allow you to set up twice as fast, but you lose early access to ♪ **Perform** effects, which will leave you at the mercy of your draw until you can find a proper Instrument. As the power name *Improvise* suggests, this version of Argent leans even more into the “work with what’s available” mentality. Strategically, your gameplan doesn’t change very much, but you may have to switch your specific strategy mid-game to make your plans work.

Fanatic

General Strategy: Fanatic is an avenging angel of the Lord. Her primary role is a damage dealer, smiting the villains with her holy power. Her main gimmick is that once she gets to 10 or fewer HP, she becomes much more powerful, making playing Fanatic a balancing act: keep your HP high enough to stay alive, but low enough to maximize your power. Her main tools for this are two of her Relic cards: her Aegis of Resurrection, allowing her to get hit mostly without consequence as it brings her back from the brink, and her Rosary of the Mysteries, which serves the dual purpose of cycling your deck faster to help you find useful cards like the Aegis, and giving you an HP buffer if you haven’t managed to find it yet. The Aegis does have the drawback of healing her whenever it’s destroyed, meaning early on it can undo your hard work if it gets destroyed by spontaneous Item destruction, but it is still an instrumental card in allowing you to take risks with Fanatic.

Fanatic’s main role on a team is applying consistent offensive pressure, using her arsenal of One-Shots and weapons to spread holy retribution around the field. Her signature weapon is her sword Absolution. Absolution (at 10 or fewer HP) deals 3 instances of damage, meaning that she appreciates damage buffs more than other characters, as even a single +1 earns you an extra 3 damage. Sacrosanct Martyr, which lets her trade health for damage, allows her to get to the red zone faster (worth noting, this is not fixed, meaning damage buffs will affect it as well). Finally, you have her flashiest card, Wrathful Retribution, a card that deals damage on Start Phase equal to her missing HP. This is a tricky card to get off, but if you can, it can very quickly be a game-ender.

Additionally, Fanatic plays as an effective tank and support, due to her defensive options, healing, and general disregard for death. Brutal Censure can essentially remove a target from play by erasing its game text, useful against villains like Blade and Dawn, though it should be noted this does not remove keywords. Anoint Allies is one of her best support cards, giving her allies a damage buff, and her as well if she’s near death. It’s worth mentioning that these cards deal damage to her on her Start Phase, which is a double-edged sword. This can help her reach the danger zone, but can kill you if you’re not careful. Undaunted will give her some durability, as will Holy Nova whilst also healing your allies.

The complexity of Fanatic lies in the opportunity cost of your cards. Your cards have second effects when you’re below 10 HP, but there may be times when you’re not there yet, and you need to decide what cards to play. Is Prayer of Desperation still worth it if you’re not getting the

two card plays it can provide? Should you attack the enemy, or hit yourself to get closer to your maximum potential? These are questions that you'll be asking yourself constantly, and the correct answer may vary depending on the board state. You're at your most powerful in the late-game, but you need to make sure the game doesn't get out of control, or you may never get there.

Lastly, a special note about End of Days. This card is a full reset, wiping the whole board with the exception of Relics and character cards, so it's not a card that can be played on a whim. It is useful as a desperation play to level the field, which can pull tougher villains like Voss away from their alternate loss conditions and give you a chance to get back in the game. However, it can lead to some bad feelings if you destroy everyone's setup, so always communicate with your team and use your judgment when deciding whether this powerful card is necessary for victory. In addition, End of Days takes a full round to go off, and can often be a cloud over your team's head during that round. While you're waiting for End of Days to offer relief, your teammates will be extremely hesitant to play any meaningful cards, so be aware that End of Days has a tendency to slow the tempo of the game to a crawl. Villains will have no such qualms, however, and will use the heroes' reluctance as an opening to strike, so be careful.

First Appearance Variant

FA Fanatic takes away her innate damage output and replaces it with guaranteed Relics as well as higher self damage. Combined with a lower max HP, this means that Fanatic can get below 10 HP faster, sharply boosting her mid-game effectiveness. However, Discover can also be unreliable, meaning that you may not get the Relics you need when you need them, and you may find yourself below 10 HP with no Aegis in sight. This means that to be effective (and keep yourself alive), you'll need to be very mindful of what Relics you have, and what your plan is if you don't have your Aegis on hand by the time you hit your danger zone.

Haunted Fanatic

So, you pick up Haunted Fanatic, and your eyes drift to the bottom right corner of her card. Congratulations. You have Discovered the silliest variant in the history of Sentinels. Long gone are the days of trying to get yourself down to the danger zone. Now, you start there and stay there.

This means that if you're fortunate enough to draw Absolution in your starting hand, you can deal 7 damage on turn 1. If not, you can either use your base power to Summon it, or take advantage of one of your other cards that give you special effects when you're under 10 HP. If you ever feel threatened, Summon your Aegis of Resurrection and rest assured that you won't be going down anytime soon. Remember, Summon pulls from your trash too. You shouldn't have to Summon it every turn, as most villains don't heavily target the lowest HP. This leaves your power phase free for other shenanigans, making you a terrifying damage dealer. In addition, you pair extremely well with Captain Cosmic, who can give you a Reaction letting you use a power, which means you don't have to waste your own time pulling the Aegis.

Overall, Haunted Fanatic is aggressive and durable to the point of near-absurdity, and you shouldn't have too much trouble getting her to shine. She makes Wrathful Retribution much less useful, but compensates with a ton of power in the early game, which goes a long way to getting the villain under control. If she does somehow manage to fall...don't worry. Just flip her over and read her incapacitated ability. Yes, that one. You'll know it when you see it.

Captain Cosmic

General Strategy: Captain Cosmic is a support hero, dedicated to augmenting the abilities of his allies rather than engaging in direct conflict. About half of his deck consists of 4 HP Constructs that he can attach to his allies in order to increase their effectiveness, whether that be by defending and healing them, or allowing them to do extra damage and use more powers. His base power allows him to play cards faster, which is helpful as his cards don't tend to give him extra plays. He also gains acceleration from his signature Construct, Cosmic Crest, in addition to providing him with protection.

Captain Cosmic's Constructs are potent, but frail, suffering especially against villains who attack the target with the lowest HP. For this reason, the other half of Captain Cosmic's deck is dedicated to interacting with the Constructs. Cards like Unflagging Animation increase the staying power of your Constructs by granting them DR, and Conservation of Energy and Destructive Response lessen the blow of losing a Construct by rewarding Cosmic with card draw and damage respectively. Conservation of Energy also allows you to play a Construct from your trash as a one-time boost, allowing you to get a key Construct back in play. He can trigger these cards himself by using his One-Shots Potent Disruption and Construct Cataclysm, both of which allow him to convert underperforming Constructs into a damage source, in addition to loading his trash with Construct cards for the second half of Construct Cataclysm.

His Constructs are quite simple, and you won't be playing many of them in a single turn. So why is his complexity as high as it is? The inherent complexity of Captain Cosmic comes from the fact that he rewards a good awareness of the game. The key skill to learn is figuring out who will make the best use of a given Construct. For example, Autonomous Blade is much more useful on a damage dealer like Ra than a support hero who deals barely any damage like Argent Adept. Using your judgment to figure out who wants what at a given time is key to mastering Captain Cosmic. In addition, having the majority of your Constructs in other play areas means that you'll need to be aware of where your Constructs are, their current HP, which ones require maintenance, and which ones can be destroyed to fuel cards like Potent Disruption.

▽ First Appearance Variant

FA Captain Cosmic trades his acceleration and reliability for damage and more durable Constructs. This means that he can help push through villains with large HP pools, like Akash or Mocktriarch. However, his Constructs are the ones dealing the damage, meaning that you need at least one Construct in play to use the power, and that any damage boosts that Captain Cosmic has will not affect the damage dealt. This may mean that you have more trouble

recovering from a villain destroying your cards, so you'll have to rely on cards like Conservation of Energy and Heart of Gold much more frequently to keep your engine running.

Tempest

General Strategy: Tempest is a weather-controlling alien, and that theme comes across loud and clear in his playstyle. The most basic strategy for Tempest is to build up a massive storm, battering your enemies turn after turn. He excels at controlling minion-heavy villains, as most of his Weather cards hit multiple targets, and he's also able to play as a pretty solid support character using cards like Reclaim from the Deep or Displaced Ambassador, in addition to healing with Gift of Val'Maera. He also receives numerous benefits for having more Weather cards in play, so you'll want to get as many out as possible to take advantage of damaging One-Shots that scale with Weather in play, or Shielding Winds, one of the best defensive cards in the game. However, a massive storm is difficult to maintain, and most of his Weather cards come with a cost, either discarding cards or damaging your teammates.

So how do you bring the storm? His quickest setup comes from his card Alien Weather Patterns. This lets you Discover a whopping three cards from your deck, and return your trash to your deck in the process, setting you up in case your Weather cards get destroyed. However, Alien Weather Patterns won't always be available to you, in which case you need another plan. Cards like Lightning Slash and Chain Lightning also Discover a Weather card and reward you for any Weather already in play. Maerynian Aquaculturist will passively reward you for playing Weather cards and assist you in paying for your existing Weather cards, in addition to providing you with a useful power which gives you control over the environment *and* additional draws. Rolling Fog is also useful against target-heavy villains, and will often pay for itself in draws. This is the trick to Tempest, to find a consistent draw engine that allows you to do everything you want to do.

But what if you can't do that? Maybe you can't get your draw engine up and running, or the villain doesn't have an endless supply of minions for you to pelt with hailstones and lightning to keep Rolling Fog going?

In these cases, Tempest comes prepared, slashing targets with his Atlantean Stormblade. The Stormblade allows you to keep a smaller selection of Weather cards in play without sacrificing effectiveness. It destroys your Weather cards and deals damage as a result, allowing you to use the Weather cards for a shorter amount of time and destroy them once they no longer benefit you, or they get too expensive to keep around. This can be a viable strategy if you can't hold a big storm together, or if you're playing against single-target villains where Tempest's widespread damage isn't as valuable. Combine this with Electrical Storm and you'll have a respectable 5 damage per turn, in addition to any other cards you have. Thunderclap pairs particularly well with Electrical Storm, and you can use cards like Reclaim from the Deep to recycle your useful Weather to feed the sword.

▽ First Appearance Variant

FA Tempest has a playstyle similar to that of the Stormblade, with a little bit of random acceleration sprinkled in. He sacrifices reliability and consistent spread damage for speed and mobility. You'll be constantly destroying your own cards and being rewarded with plays off of the top of your deck. This creates an interesting dynamic when played with the Stormblade, where you can either destroy a Weather card using the blade itself, or using your innate power to accelerate your own plays. You'll be harder-pressed to keep the same massive storms that base Tempest produces, but you're rewarded with a constant cycle of cards and a much more dynamic, flowing playstyle.

Haka

General Strategy: Haka is an immortal Maori warrior, and as one may expect, he hits hard and shrugs off big hits like they're nothing. He is also a wise and experienced combatant, which appears mechanically in his ability to draw lots of cards, giving him a wide range of options - but this wisdom and experience also hinders him, as it makes him slower than many other heroes.

Haka's most notable cards are his titular Hakas - an Ongoing that gives a small boost for a turn when played, before self-destructing to let Haka discard cards for great effect. Haka of Battle increases his damage and lets him hit someone hard, perfect for taking out a tanky target or knocking a sizable chunk out of the villain's HP. Haka of Frenzy makes his damage irreducible, and lets him punch a lot of targets hard - the perfect way to clear the field of pesky Citizens or Gene-Bound hiding behind tougher allies. Finally, there's Haka of Recovery, which decreases the damage Haka takes, and then lets him regenerate high amounts of HP - a powerful effect on its own, but it truly shines when you combine it with two other cards: Tā Moko decreases the damage Haka takes and allows him to draw cards, which is great for fueling your Haka. Tiaki Defender lets Haka redirect damage from his allies to himself for a turn. When these three cards are played together, Haka can take hits that would decimate his allies and only take a few scratches in return, before regenerating all the HP he lost (and then some) afterwards.

But of course, Haka is more than just his Hakas. His Ongoing, Dance in the Fray and Taonga Mana - serve a crucial role in keeping him up to speed. Dance in the Fray lets Haka hit people whenever his Ongoing is destroyed, letting you get an extra bonus out of a Haka breaking or retaliating against villains destroying your stuff; as well as giving you the power to draw and play 1 card, helping him keep pace with faster heroes. Taonga Mana, meanwhile, lets you draw a card whenever you destroy a target, and can be destroyed in its Start Phase to draw 3 cards (and hit someone, if Dance in the Fray is out). The other major parts of his kit are his two Items - his Mere lets him hit someone for 3 damage and draw a card, while his Taiaha lets him hit 2 people for 3 damage, and can be broken in the Start Phase to destroy an Ongoing. The key to Haka is to establish a good draw engine early on using these cards, and quickly remove threats that would slow you down.

Finally, there is one more card that deserves a special mention: Rampage. Rampage is a One-Shot that lets Haka deal 5 damage to every non-hero target and draw a card whenever he

destroys something, but at the cost of also dealing 2 damage to all heroes - damage that he can not redirect with Tiaki Defender. Rampage is a powerful way to clear the field and fill up Haka's hand, but it can also be a great hindrance for other heroes, especially if a minion maker such as Unity or Captain Cosmic is in play. That said, if you're fighting a minion-heavy villain, Rampage combined with Taonga Mana means that you draw *two* cards for each target you destroy, which can allow you to fuel a massive Haka on subsequent turns.

▽ First Appearance Variant

FA Haka trades off the consistent damage from his base card to instead be able to destroy a target with 3 or fewer HP, as well as regain 3 HP - notably, the HP regeneration is not dependent on the success of the first effect, something that's easy to miss on a first read-through. FA Haka won't be hitting as hard or consistently as base Haka, however, he trades this out for a stronger defense, which allows you to lean harder into cards like Tiaki Defender, and play a little more fast and loose with your aggressive cards.

☞ Werewolf Haka

Werewolf Haka takes a completely different route from the other variants, focusing on his HP total. He has two different effects for his base power, depending on where his HP stands in relation to other Hero targets on the field. If he has the highest HP, he draws 3 cards, loading his hand up for a big move in the future. If he gets lower than other heroes, he Summons a Haka card, releasing all of the cards he built while he was at a higher HP. This means that, depending on how hard you want to lean into his base power, you'll want to pay careful attention to your own HP, and where you stand in relation to your allies.

If you're planning to take heavy advantage of your base power, you may want to use cards like Tiaki Defender or Tā Moko to adjust your HP, either by intentionally drawing fire or reducing the damage you take. Plan well, and you should be able to swing back to almost full HP from the brink of death, and still have enough fuel for a Haka of Battle the following turn.

Ra

General Strategy: Ra is a blazing sun god, and as you might expect, he likes to burn things. Ra is designed to give new players the option to play a simple 'burn anything that moves' style, taking advantage of high-output One-Shots like Fire Blast to get the job done. His classic combo is Fire Blast + Staff of Ra for a clean 12 damage hit. This works perfectly fine, but if you want to go deeper, Ra has a ton of interesting little interactions that can push his already high damage to absolutely absurd heights.

The first component of unlocking Ra's full potential is Solar Flare. Be mindful, as 5 fixed damage per turn is a hefty toll to pay, but in conjunction with the Staff, Ra's output becomes absolutely ridiculous. For example, without any boosts, playing Fire Blast and activating your base power with Fiery Tornado in play will output a total of 11 damage over the course of a round. Add in your Staff and Solar Flare before playing this, and a full round with the same plays will net you a

staggering total of 29 *damage*, even without the doubling effect. Excavation can help you set up for these silly amounts of damage by cycling Environment cards back into the deck in exchange for Discovering Ra's useful cards, and Scorched Earth can assist you in destroying enough Environment cards to take full advantage of Excavation. You can also be remarkably cavalier about destroying your Staff for the doubling effect. Considering that you have three copies of the Staff and four copies of the card that allows you to Summon the Staff (remember, Summon can also pull from the trash), your favorite weapon is never far away.

▼ First Appearance Variant

FA Ra, fitting for one of the simplest heroes, has a similar playstyle to his base variant - instead of doing 2 damage with his base power, he only deals 1 damage, but can Salvage an Ongoing or play a card. This tends to mean you can do more on your turns - set up faster and use more One-Shots - but you can also find yourself a bit starved for cards, limiting your options and making it harder to fuel Fiery Tornado, so you may need to use Consuming Flame and Living Conflagration to fill up your hand in a pinch.

🏠 Backdraft Ra

Backdraft Ra can be an absolute powerhouse, allowing Ra to play a supportive game and deal with minions more easily. However, reading the power carefully will reveal a little hiccup in the plan. "Ra deals 4 targets 1 fire damage each." Not *up to* 4. If there are only two villain targets on the field, you have to hit two heroes as well to be able to use this power. Normally, a little collateral damage isn't the worst thing in the world, but with Solar Flare and the Staff on the field, you're dealing 16 damage total, so you have to be careful to make sure there's enough villain and environment targets on the field to be able to use this power at all. In some games, this won't be an issue, but if you're fighting Spite in the Wagner Mars Base, you may have to search your deck for a different power. If Captain Cosmic or Argent Adept is in the game, you may be able to combo your power with Flesh of the Sun God, or otherwise, Absolute Zero always appreciates fire damage. If you can use this power successfully, your allies will greatly appreciate the extra cards, all while watching the minions in front of them burn to a crisp.

Villains

Baron Blade

General Strategy: Baron Blade is the intended tutorial villain, and as such, is rarely overwhelming. However, this doesn't mean he doesn't have a few tricks up his sleeve, and the wrong approach to the Baron can spell doom for the heroes. Baron Blade's main draw is that he introduces an alternate loss condition in the form of a limit to his trash size. If, at the start of his turn, he ever has 15 cards in his trash while on his front side, **you lose**.

So, what's the trick? Baron Blade has a lot of attributes that make him a good first game. He has multiple keywords that interact in interesting ways, damage immunity, and a few threatening cards that can force you into a corner. However, the most valuable aspect of Baron Blade is that

he teaches you to prioritize. You can't just cut loose and destroy every card he puts out, because every card you destroy brings Baron Blade one card closer to pulling the moon into the Earth, which is generally inconvenient for the heroes. To succeed against Blade, you have to decide which cards are unproblematic enough that they can be left in play, and only destroy the ones that are too problematic to be left alive. For example, the damage dealt by his Blade Battalions scales with the HP of the card, so it is generally better to leave them alive at 1 or 2 HP than to destroy them completely. Conversely, Mobile Defense Platform and Backlash Field Generator are strong defensive cards, and will whittle your HP and stall out your game until the heroes either lose, or the countdown is complete. Mobile Defense Platform in particular is crucial. In addition to making Blade immune to damage, it also plays and discards cards, swarming the field with Minions or filling his trash, bringing you closer to losing via HP loss or by his alternate loss condition. Your experience with individual cards may vary, but the point about carefully deciding which cards need to go is imperative to success. In addition, be wary of cards like Hasten Doom which accelerate the rate at which he plays cards, as chains of One-Shots can fill his trash much faster than a new player may have anticipated.

His reverse side is fairly simple, beating down the heroes directly. If you survive the front side, Baron Blade doesn't wreck your setup when he flips, so you will usually be prepared for a damage race, and the 15-card limit no longer exists on the back side.

Critical Event

Mad Bomber Blade is the Baron's Critical Event. He's been defeated, ruined, presumed dead - now, he's here to burn the whole place to the ground.

Mad Bomber Blade operates by shuffling cards into the Environment deck - any targets (so Minions and Devices) he plays go into the Environment, and he puts a card under it at the end of his turn. This, by itself, does not sound scary. However, whenever the top card of the Environment is one of Blade's cards, he deals 2 projectile and 2 fire damage to all non-Villains, before putting that card under himself, winning the game when he has 12 - H cards under him. And of course, he also discards the top card of the Environment deck in his start phase, increasing the odds you'll find his bombs. Damage reduction can be helpful here, but stall too much, and you risk meeting his alternate loss condition.

So, how do you beat him? Well, this is a version of Blade that's down on his luck and out of tricks - simply put, you punch him. This fight is a straightforward damage race - the potential for a defeat due to enough bombs being detonated is scary, but odds are, you're gonna get incapacitated before that happens, especially in a hostile environment. Given that he won't be playing Devices, he's relatively undefended with the exception of Living Forcefield, so being fast and aggressive is the key to victory here.

Citizen Dawn

General Strategy: Citizen Dawn is the leader of an army of superpowered Citizens, and makes heavy use of her Citizen underlings to ruin your day. She plays a lot of relatively low HP targets very quickly, which are themed in groups with matching nicknames. She supports them with a series of nasty Ongoing which keep her Citizens healthy and numerous. Like Baron Blade, Dawn is an exercise in prioritization. Her Citizens are generally fairly manageable on their own, but can be overwhelming once multiple members of a group are in play. In addition, Dawn is completely immune to damage on her back side, which she reaches once you destroy too many Citizens. She'll flip back to her normal state once enough Citizens are on the board. Note that Dawn counts as a Citizen, so don't forget to add her to the count for her flip condition!

With this in mind, there are two general approaches that players will use. Either focus fire on her and don't let her flip, or flip her as fast as possible, then flip her back. This generally depends on her starting lineup. If they have any synergies or effects you can't ignore, you'll most likely need to take them out in order to survive. In order to help you make that decision, let's go over the various Citizen groups! These are roughly sorted by how important it is to take them out.

- Citizens Truth/Dare: These two guys hate each other. If one is played, the other will bury itself. Of the two, Citizen Truth is much more likely to ruin your game by making all other Citizens immune to damage in addition to a blanket 1 DR to himself. Taking him out is a very high priority. Dare is less important as he won't stop you from winning the game, but +1 damage to Hero targets is going to hurt a lot, especially to minion masters like Captain Cosmic and Unity.
- Citizens Hammer/Anvil: Anvil is going to annoy you a lot. Partially because he gives everyone DR 1, partially because he keeps bringing back his arsonist friend and giving him *extra* DR. That being said, fire damage isn't *always* bad...
 - Note: If both Anvil and Truth are out, you're going to have a really rough time. If you have any deck manipulation, it might be time to fish for Dare to get rid of Truth.
- Citizens Blood/Sweat/Tears: This trio starts off pretty benign, but their effects scale pretty scarily once more of them are played. One of the hidden things to note about this trio is that all of their effects are during the End Phase. This means if a member exists from a previous round and another one is played, their boosted effects will trigger almost immediately. They'll sneak up on you and ruin your entire hand and play area. A good target of opportunity if they're sitting with no defenses.
- Citizens Spring/Summer/Autumn/Winter: If you leave multiple members of this quartet around, they'll do extra things during the Start Phase. Spring heals more, Summer deals more damage, but Autumn and Winter both destroy setup, which may be more important for you depending on the Heroes you're playing with. Not a huge deal if you leave two standing, but more than that and you might be facing more than you can handle.
- Citizens Assault and Battery: These two are all about damage, damage, damage. They don't provide any defensive buffs, they just cause large amounts of damage. If you think you can survive them, excellent. Otherwise, to save Unity's poor bots, you may need to prioritize them.

Dawn's Ongoing's mostly help her and her Citizens stay alive or return after they're destroyed. If you're clever, you may be able to use cards like Return With The Dawn to get her out of her immune state faster. But there's one more card that will most likely define your play experience with Dawn:

Devastating Aurora.

No two words in the Sentinels community inspire quite as much fear. There's probably not a single Villain card in the game that can ruin a hero's day as quickly as this one. It completely wrecks your setup (unless you're a target heavy deck), no questions asked. If you have any deck manipulation on your team, you will most likely try to avoid this card as much as possible. That being said, if it is played, **don't panic**. Definitive Edition lets heroes build back up quickly with the amount of Discover/Summon effects there are. You started from zero, you can build back up from zero. The trick is to use your immediate tools from your hand such as damaging One-Shots to create an opening to get your slower heroes back in the game.

Critical Event

Sunrise Citizen Dawn is likely the most difficult Critical Event in the core box. She starts the game with a handful of Citizens and one Ongoing, Channel the Eclipse. In addition, all of her Ongoing's are indestructible. Channel the Eclipse gives Dawn widespread damage and acceleration, and if the wrong Citizens come into play, Dawn can become overwhelming very quickly, since you need to destroy Citizens to remove the Ongoing's from the field.

Thankfully, the same notes apply for the most part as her standard counterpart. The same Citizens are dangerous, with a special note to watch out for Citizen Truth, since he removes your only avenue to remove the Ongoing's from play by making Citizens immune to damage. A major difference from standard Dawn, however, is that she doesn't have a flip condition. You are free to destroy Citizens at your leisure, especially since her End Phase scales with the number of Citizens in play. However, being too cavalier about this may mean that you find yourself with a board full of Ongoing's with no avenue to remove them. Here, the key to victory is moderation and pacing, making sure that you have an escape avenue if you're taking too much damage or if you have an Ongoing that's giving you too much grief. If you lose once or twice, don't feel discouraged, Sunrise Dawn is a very challenging fight, and there are combinations of cards that may spell disaster for certain heroes if they come out early.

Grand Warlord Voss

General Strategy: Grand Warlord Voss is the hardest fight in the core box. However, he's difficult in a very simple way with relatively little nuance compared to other villains. He's going to play a lot of minions very quickly, gaining -2 damage reduction for each Gene-Bound in play. He's going to hammer you with his giant spaceships and Thorathians, overwhelming you with a

tide of foes while he sits safely behind them, evoking his theme as a military commander. At the start of his turn, if there are more than 10 villain targets in play, **you lose**.

With all of this in mind, a clear strategy emerges. If a target shows up, take it out quickly and prepare for the next wave. If you give Voss breathing room, he'll gladly take it. Cards like Forced Deployment and Protective Detail will quickly flood the field. Gene Doctor Kronz and the Thorathian Conquering Fleet will destroy your setup. Vyktor and Tamar will deal damage, scaling with Devices and Gene-Bounds respectively. Meanwhile, his Quark Drive Translocator will continue spawning targets, helping Voss to overwhelm the planet. Also keep in mind that each of Voss's Gene-Bound minions has a unique damage immunity, so you may need to rely on your teammates to handle a tricky minion that you can't deal with. For example, Haka exclusively deals melee damage, meaning that he cannot destroy the Grunt Guards. Voss isn't complicated, but what he lacks in nuance, he makes up for in consistency and damage output, making him a very tough fight. However, he is very momentum-based, and therein lies his weakness. He relies exclusively on Gene Doctor Kronz and his Conquering Fleet to destroy your setup enough to become unstoppable, so if you can take them out, he becomes much easier to deal with. On the flipside, if you can't get an early lead, he may spiral out of control very quickly. Keep an eye on what's affecting the pace of the battle, and Voss becomes much more manageable. A tricky environment like the Ruins of Atlantis may give Voss the edge at the wrong moment, so be careful when playing in an environment that buffs the villain.

If you manage to wade your way through all of the Gene-Bounds, Voss flips and gets involved personally. On his backside, Voss deals significant damage to both the highest and lowest HP heroes, but loses his massive defense. He also Discovers a Device, ranging from one of his spaceships to his Translocator. Depending on your team composition, flipping Voss may be necessary, but there is an alternative strategy, leaving Voss on his front side and destroying all but one Gene-Bound target. This does mean that you'll generally have to punch through a -2 damage reduction, so if you choose to take this route, a source of irreducible damage can be helpful.

Critical Event

Censor replaces Voss as the Critical Event for the deck, losing access to Voss's Gene-Bound army in favor of a damage race. Censor only has 30 HP, but has an innate -1 to all damage taken, and reactive healing if he manages to pull a non-Thorathian target in response to your damage. He also deals damage whenever a Gene-Bound would be played, meaning that burst cards like Protective Detail and Forced Deployment can convert into large amounts of damage. In addition, he starts with a Thorathian and a Device in play, which can make it hard to get going. Censor can be a decent threat, but he is much easier than Grand Warlord Voss, and will usually fall if you burn down his HP fast enough. Censor's DR/healing can be a nightmare for heroes who love chip damage, so the trick with Censor is to stay patient and wait until you are able to take him down in a few good blows.

Omnitron

General Strategy: Omnitron is the most systematic, evenly paced villain in the box. Unsurprising, considering it's a robot. On one turn, it will **Fabricate**, building a massive army of lethal drones and weapons. On the next turn, it will **Exterminate**, blasting apart any heroes unfortunate to be standing in its path. This cycle is repeated until the heroes are all destroyed.

Omnitron has a few quirks that affect the way the heroes approach the fight. First, it only deals damage to the heroes every other turn. This is a double-edged sword, because it means that you get a reliable reprieve from the damage, but Omnitron typically deals far more damage in a single turn than the average villain when it does enter Exterminate mode, to compensate for that reprieve. Second, Omnitron has zero One-Shots. Every card is a Device or Ongoing, which means that immediate boosts in acceleration are very rare. The only time that you will get a surprise burst from Omnitron is if it manages to play Protomatter Converter or S-84 Automaton Drones on its front side, and then immediately activates the Fabricate effect. It is also notable that Omnitron destroys its own Ongoing. Granted, there are negative consequences to this, but if you plan ahead, you may be able to get a pesky Ongoing out of play before it can harm you, without wasting your own resources.

In general, the trick to beating Omnitron is to plan ahead. Since you have a general idea of what's coming a turn before it happens, Omnitron rewards good awareness of the board state, and the ability to prioritize threats. Most of Omnitron's Ongoing cards are dedicated to destroying Hero setup or otherwise stalling out the game long enough to batter you down with an army of robots. Adaptive Plating Subroutine can be annoying for heroes like Captain Cosmic or Haka which only have one or two damage types at their disposal. Many of the Devices can be a pressing threat. However, certain cards may only be particularly dangerous on one side, so if Omnitron is about to Fabricate, you may not want to waste an Ongoing destruction card on Electromagnetic Railgun, which does almost nothing on the Fabricate side, especially if there are other Devices that have a nasty Fabricate effect.

In short, be patient, plan well, and don't leave a single Device standing. Omnitron is a fairly straightforward fight, as long as you're careful.

Critical Event

Cosmic Omnitron is a difficult fight. It replaces the predictability of base Omnitron with a much faster, more erratic experience, where it will rapidly heal, then deal large amounts of damage in the same turn. You don't have to deal with Devices on the field, but since a Device will heal Cosmic Omnitron and then play the top card of the Villain deck, you can end up with massive chains of Devices loading up under Omnitron's character card, followed by a huge burst of damage to the highest HP during the End Phase. In addition, the Exterminate and Fabricate effects now happen every turn, meaning that Omnitron's Ongoing are twice as lethal as usual.

As such, this game usually turns into a pretty straightforward damage race, where all of the Heroes are trying to rush down Omnitron faster than it can heal, but there are some niche

strategies that may help in a pinch. If you have deck control, it may help to discard Ongoing from the top of Omnitron's deck, keeping them out of play and lessening the pain of the Start and End Phases. You also want to try to anticipate when Omnitron's pile of stored cards hits its peak, and plan your defensive cards around it. Keep your damage output high, keep an eye on your HP, destroy Ongoing whenever you can, and Cosmic Omnitron shouldn't give you too much trouble.

The Matriarch

General Strategy: The Matriarch is a simple villain to understand, but that doesn't make her any less deadly. The Matriarch's goal is to swarm you with her army of birds, often getting many card plays in a row due to the fact that each of her Fowl cards play the top card of her deck, and her Mask of the Matriarch plays the top card when she plays a non-Fowl card the first time each turn. While the Fowls have only 1 HP each, the rate at which they enter play can very quickly overwhelm you. This is a villain with a lot of spread damage in her End Phase, but also a villain who spread damage is very effective against. Heroes like Tempest can very quickly clean her field, but don't get too comfortable. Between quickly cycling through her deck and Darken the Sky, the Fowl quickly get put back in rotation and come back into play equally as fast. This means you need to keep on top of getting rid of them, but be cautious about this. Her magical Cohorts, Huginn and Muninn, are bigger targets, and much more threatening. Huginn provides The Matriarch, himself, and his companion with damage resistance, while Muninn punches you for destroying Fowl and provides himself, his companion, and The Matriarch with a damage bonus. Carrion Fields also makes them more effective by having them both hit every hero target.

For the most part, you want to flip the Matriarch, accomplished by destroying her Mask. Matriarch will start dealing more damage, but without the Mask, she gets fewer card plays; and since she hits the highest HP target, your low-HP targets (such as Unity's bots or squishy heroes like Argent Adept) will be safer.

Critical Event

The Mocktriarch is Matriarch's Critical Event. This version changes her gameplay in some key ways, but she's still trying to swarm you with birds. The biggest change is that the cohorts are helping you, but only after you get rid of the Mask of the Matriarch. When playing against the Mocktriarch, you may only deal 1 damage at a time to the mask, but once it's defeated, it's removed from the game. This means that any heroes who are able to deal multiple instances of damage will be valuable. The Mask also removes the Cohorts' game texts until it is destroyed. When it's gone, the Cohorts will redirect their damage to Mocktriarch and their support effects will go to the lowest HP hero character.

In addition to these big changes, this version of the Matriarch will hit the heroes harder, doing mass damage in the Start Phase and hitting the highest HP target in the End Phase. This means she can beat you down faster than base Matriarch unless you have characters who can

take a lot of hits, like Legacy or Haka. She is still a damage race at the end of the day, and a solid team should be able to dispatch her without too much hassle.

Akash'Bhuta

General Strategy: Akash'Bhuta is a gargantuan spirit of the Earth, with an equally gargantuan 200 HP. Her goal is to overwhelm the heroes with a barrage of her Primeval Limbs, which serve to ruin a hero's day by damaging the heroes, preventing them from counterattacking, or breaking the tools that the heroes bring to the fight. Interposing Stalagmites and Ensnaring Brambles provide Akash with an effective shield against attacking heroes, while her other limbs beat the heroes down and prevent them from setting up further. Meanwhile, Akash is discarding an Environment card with each Limb she spawns, setting her up to flip once the Environment trash is reshuffled. Her One-Shots are mostly centered around putting more Limbs into play or accelerating her flip by playing or discarding Environment cards. On her flip side, Akash starts dealing damage directly in the form of 2 fire damage to everything on the field. This makes Captain Cosmic and Unity miserable, in addition to potentially destroying helpful Environment targets.

Akash'Bhuta has one of the most consistent openings in the game, and you will very rarely see her have an off turn. She will almost always put out multiple limbs on her turn, and there is very rarely a turn where she will not be dealing damage. Through all this, there is one detail that allows the heroes to fight back. Akash is fighting with her own body, putting her own essence on the line to take the heroes down. In gameplay terms, this means that if you destroy her Limb, it hurts her for fixed damage equal to that Limb's maximum HP. The biggest trap in this fight is attacking Akash directly. Oftentimes, she will have Interposing Stalagmites in play, meaning that you're punching through -1 or -2 damage reduction to land a blow. Even if she doesn't, by choosing to target Akash instead of Primeval Limbs, you're allowing her to set up further, until there are so many targets on the field that the heroes simply drown, and it's very unlikely that you will be able to rush down 200 HP before the Primeval Limbs destroy you.

In short, the strategy of defeating Akash'Bhuta is to keep her Limbs in check. Unlike most of the villains in this set, there is no penalty for destroying her targets, so keep hacking away and letting her deal herself fixed damage as backlash.

Critical Event

Akash'Mecha is a fusion of nature and technology, with the two halves of her at odds with each other. This changes the flow of the fight considerably, as the Limbs become uneasy allies in your quest to take her down.

The first thing you'll notice is that the Primeval Limbs no longer are destroyed, instead, they go under Akash's character card. This means that your largest incentive to destroy the Limbs, the fixed damage that they deal to Akash upon destruction, is completely removed. The destroyed Limbs also fuel her Start Phase attack, which further disincentivizes you from trying to take them out. As a final kicker, the Limbs (along with any environment targets) will also attack Akash for

you on her End Phase, meaning that Akash'Mecha serves as a difficult lesson in priorities, which is a stark counterpart to Akash'Bhuta, where you want to destroy as many Limbs as possible.

The difficulty of Akash'Mecha is that the Limbs aren't much good to you when they're destroyed, but they're just as lethal as usual to the heroes when they're in play. This means that you may have to take out Interposing Stalagmites or another disruptive Limb just to land a hit, but removing them from play will come back to bite you. She still has a multitude of Limbs that disrupt the heroes and deal a hefty amount of damage. This makes any defensive play valuable, as it means you can keep the Limbs out and have them attack Akash for you, without taking the negative drawbacks. Irreducible damage is also helpful here, letting you take the fight to Akash even when her defensive Limbs are in play. Also note that once the Limbs go under Akash, they can't come back out, so think carefully before deciding to remove a Limb from the field. The key to defeating Akash'Mecha is to strike the balance between too many and too few Limbs on the field, which may vary depending on your team composition. If you're having trouble, you may be focusing too much or too little on Akash herself, and may have to shift that balance in one direction or another.

Environments

Megalopolis

General Strategy: Megalopolis is a fast-paced, hectic city, and a lot can happen in a few turns. The highlight of Megalopolis is the Emergency cards, which will be your biggest distraction from taking down the villains. They all follow the same general structure, where they present you a problem, and give you a full round to deal with the issue. If you choose not to (or forget to) handle the emergencies, bad things happen. You'll have to spend your valuable resources to protect your city, or find yourself taking large amounts of fixed damage if you fail. To make things worse, the Emergency cards are not Ongoing, so you'll have to interact directly with them to get anything done.

Megalopolis does have a bright side though. The law is generally on your side, and the Police Backup is always happy to shoot the villain for you. Local Legal Expert helps you replenish your hand. Just watch out for those Persistent Paparazzi, watch out for Collateral Damage destroying Ongoing, and be careful of the bursts of speed that Bustling City can provide, both to you and the villain.

Freedom Tower

General Strategy: Freedom Tower is the friendliest environment to the players. It has various rooms which mostly provide a boon to the heroes, such as Dr. Stinson's Secondary Lab providing card selection and allowing a limited sculpting of your top deck, or Mission Control, which can give you free setup. However, this doesn't mean the deck is without peril. If the enemy finds an Entry Point, it will destroy one of your rooms and make your enemy hit you harder, which can be devastating at the wrong moment. Training Simulator can cause you to be

overwhelmed with foes if you're not careful, even with the free power use. Frost's Cryo Chamber will help you get back on track if your setup gets destroyed, but will slowly kill anyone who isn't Absolute Zero in the meantime. At the end of the day though, this is the home base of the heroes, which means it's a place they want to protect, and getting the Room you need can make defeating the villain all the easier.

Insula Primalis

General Strategy: Insula Primalis is the most hostile environment, and can seriously lay into both Heroes and Villains if not managed properly. Dinosaurs run rampant, targeting Heroes, Villains, and other Dinosaurs indiscriminately. If you can manipulate the circumstances, you're sometimes able to create an environment that is incredibly hostile to the villain. Many of the dinosaurs target high or low HP targets rather than doing spread damage, which can take out annoying minions or chip away at the villain without you having to lift a finger. However, the Dinosaurs are equally happy to eat heroes, and can seriously put a dent in your defenses, or eat your Golems and Constructs. Watch out for that T-Rex! Its 5 melee damage is nothing to sneeze at. However, it's not all bad. Again, the dinosaurs will attack villains occasionally, and some Dinosaurs will even let you draw cards.

Insula Primalis is also prone to sudden swings in acceleration, with Dinosaur Stampedes hitting everything on the board with fixed damage, and River of Lava dealing 2 fire damage to everything on the board, and then Summoning Imminent Eruption. Imminent Eruption is the signature card of Insula Primalis, and it can be very manageable if handled properly, and absolutely devastating if not. No other card in the game has the potential to deal each target 9 damage without any outside help, so tread lightly. If you plan on damaging Imminent Eruption, make sure you finish the job. Of course, if you have substantial damage reduction, damage immunity, or if Ra has Flesh of the Sun God active, you may be able to use the eruption to your advantage. Also, Absolute Zero loves fire damage. Do with that what you will.

Magmaria

General Strategy: Magmaria is a fairly passive environment. The Magmarians can be a nuisance depending on your team composition, but if you have any damage reduction at all, they usually won't be too much of a bother.

The core gameplay of this environment is destroying Magma Crystals, which go to your hand, and then trading them to the Magmarians for extra power. If you can put out a bunch of passive damage, you may collect a few Magma Crystals and trade them for some rewards, like extra power uses, extra defense, or recruiting them to attack the villain for you. Fiery Crystallization can also let you convert a large hand of your unused Items into Magma Crystals, which may allow you to engage with the environment more frequently. The main cards of note to be prepared for are Magmarian Throng, which can do a pretty decent chunk of spread damage if you get too complacent with leaving Magmarians around, and Crystalloid Behemoth, which hits the heroes hard if they're at higher HP than the villain.

Overall, Magmaria shouldn't be too much of an issue, but if you're having trouble, make sure you're at least keeping an eye on what targets come out, and whether taking the time to collect a Magma Crystal would improve your position. Also, the Magmarians deal primarily fire damage, meaning that Absolute Zero gets a heavy damage boost in this environment.

The Ruins of Atlantis

General Strategy: High risk, high reward. That's the name of the game in the Ruins of Atlantis. No other Environment offers you this much acceleration, but the villains will also be more than happy to take advantage of this newfound power. Cards like Atlantean Font of Power and Pillars of Hercules will give you tons of extra plays, as long as you're willing to let the villains have some too. My personal recommendation is to use these cards to get set up, then get rid of them, but some people love to ride the lightning as long as possible. Leaking Room and Phosphorescent Chamber can both be situationally bad or good, depending on your current position. If you have the cards to spare, leaving Leaking Room out for a few turns can dampen the villain's damage enough for you to get into a more comfortable position. Phosphorescent Chamber boosts healing, but also boosts damage dealt, so it's a double-edged blade as well. The Crucible can also throw a wrench in your game, either by blowing up your minions, or playing a card at an inconvenient time. Most of the time, it's helpful, but every once in a while, it'll play a villain card, or worse, play End of Days when you can't stop it. Tread lightly.

Finally, keep an eye on the Kraken. Both the Maw and Limbs can be situationally useful, sometimes dealing 6 damage per turn to the villain and 5 per turn to the minions, but make sure you're keeping track of when you're about to become the highest or lowest HP target. The Kraken is equally happy to eat you.

Wagner Mars Base

General Strategy: Wagner Mars Base places the heroes inside Domes, secure spaces where the heroes can safely fight the villains, often providing helpful effects in the process. However, the weather on Mars is weird, and sometimes, Domes get destroyed. Wagner Mars Base is an Environment where Heroes who can view coming Environment cards will thrive, because a Red Dust Storm or Meteor Strike can be a serious disruption to progress. In addition to destroying your precious Domes, they also ruin your Items or destroy your Ongoing.

Decompression Protocol is a card that presents a significant risk to the Heroes if approached incorrectly. Being immune to damage can be a huge sigh of relief, but it's dangerous. Difficult villains like Voss will use this free time to spiral out of control, often to a point where the Heroes can't keep pace, and if you don't have Ongoing destruction handy, skipping half of your turn may cause even more issues. Similarly, Self Destruct Sequence adds an extra loss condition to the game, and requires active attention and resources to prevent that condition from coming true, so when you're in the Wagner Mars Base, make sure to reserve some cards to deal with the threats.

Credits

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