

# The MARVEL<sup>®</sup> -Phile

by Jeff Grubb



## Defenders<sup>™</sup> Ensemble!

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For the 100th issue of DRAGON<sup>®</sup> Magazine, let's correct an old oversight and deal with one of the groups most requested by the readers of this column, the Defenders<sup>™</sup>. We have, in other products, described the Fantastic Four<sup>™</sup>, the X-Men<sup>™</sup>, Alpha Flight<sup>™</sup>, and the Avengers<sup>™</sup> (both coasts). But the

Defenders have eluded us to date.

The current team of Angel<sup>™</sup>, Iceman<sup>™</sup>, Beast<sup>™</sup>, leader Candy Southern<sup>™</sup>, Moondragon<sup>™</sup>, Gargoyle<sup>™</sup>, Cloud<sup>™</sup> and Valkyrie<sup>™</sup> have only been mentioned in bits and pieces. The first four listed take their bows in MHAC-5, Project *Wideawake*, while Beast and

Moondragon appear in MHAC-2, *Avengers Assembled!*. But, to date, we haven't talked about Cloud, Gargoyle, and Valkyrie. This is a serious oversight and, of course, our purpose in these columns is to correct oversights (heh, heh, heh). So set your sights on these sites, the rest of the Defenders!

### GARGOYLE<sup>™</sup>

#### Isaac Christians

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)  
Agility: POOR (4)  
Strength: REMARKABLE (30)  
Endurance: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)  
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 94  
Karma: 26  
Resources: POOR  
Popularity: 4

#### Known powers:

**BODY ARMOR.** Isaac's thick hide gives him Excellent protection from physical damage.

**FLIGHT.** While the small wings on his back are not powerful enough to grant him true flight, Gargoyle can still fly by manipulating bio-mystical energies, letting him move 3 areas per round.

**REGENERATION.** The same bio-mystical

force that powers his flight lets Gargoyle regenerate damage at an Amazing rate. In addition, he may regain lost body parts through regeneration, and he is immune to the effects of disease and normal aging.

**BIO-MYSTICAL LIFE FORCE CONTROL.** Gargoyle can manipulate the bio-mystical life force of others, allowing him to remove up to an Incredible amount of Health from a target on touch. This loss of Health lasts only 2 rounds, being quickly regenerated, but if a victim's Health drops below 0 as a result of such an attack, the victim will die (with resultant Karma losses for Gargoyle). Gargoyle can control how much Health he will take from a victim, but must announce before the attack the amount of Health to be taken (e.g., a Typical attack would remove 6 points of Health).

**FORCE BOLTS.** Gargoyle can also redirect his own bio-mystical life force into force bolts that can do up to Incredible damage, but as many points will be

removed from his Health as were used in the bolt attack. This loss of Health will last for 2 rounds.

**ANTIMAGICAL FORCE FIELD.** Isaac may also manipulate his personal life force to project a force field giving him protection from magical energies and attacks. This force field functions at the Monstrous level and costs 10 of Isaac's Health points for each round of operation. Health lost by using the force field may only be healed in the normal manner.

**Gargoyle's story:** Isaac Christians was the mayor of the small Virginia town of Christiansboro, a town founded by his family. Distressed by the decline of his town and the rise of local poverty, Christians began to seriously explore the dark arts he had encountered in his travels following the First World War. Christians contacted the extra-dimensional creature known as Avarrish, and he offered the self-proclaimed demon his service in return for a solution to his town's ills. The demon agreed and traded Chris-

tians's life spirit with that of a gargoyle animated years before, one that had been captured and enslaved by Avarrish and his allies.

As the Gargoyle, Christians kidnapped Patsy (Hellcat™) Walker on orders from his master, but he rebelled when he learned that Walker and her fellow Defenders were marked for death by the demons. Gargoyle and the Defenders defeated the demonic alliance, but at a price: Christians was trapped in his gargoyle form.

Christians has remained with the Defenders since that time. He has helped save his home town from the revenge of his former demonic allies, had his demonic body controlled by a hostile mage, and has met and defeated the original Gargoyle, who was trapped in (and perished in) Christians's human form. As the oldest mortal member of the Defenders, Gargoyle is often the voice of patience and reason.

### **CLOUD™**

#### **Real name unrevealed**

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: GOOD (10)  
Strength: TYPICAL (6)  
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)  
Reason: TYPICAL (6)  
Intuition: GOOD (10)  
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 56  
Karma: 26  
Resources: POOR  
Popularity: 6

#### **Known powers:**

**ALTERNATE FORMS.** Cloud can take three forms: one as a young woman wrapped in mist, the second as a young man similarly wrapped in mist, and lastly as an amorphous, gaseous cloud. Which of these three incarnations are her/his true form is unknown at this writing. All of Cloud's powers are usable only in her/his cloud form.

**CLOUD FORM.** Cloud can become a small cloud about four feet in diameter. This cloud is made up of various gases excluding oxygen. In cloud form, she/he can surround a single air-breathing target and attempt to smother it (requiring an Endurance FEAT roll for the target, or it will be rendered unconscious for 1-10 rounds). Cloud may fly up to 3 areas per round while in cloud form and can move through narrow cracks and openings. She/he communicates telepathically to others when in this state.

**LIGHTNING.** When in cloud form, Cloud can fire lightning bolts of up to Remarkable damage, directed at targets up to 3 areas away.

**Cloud's story:** Very little is known about Cloud; at the time of this writing, mysteries are accumulating with regard to her/his true origins. The Defenders first encountered Cloud in female form as an operative for Professor Power™, a world-beating madman who had reorganized the Secret Empire™. Cloud and other operatives tried to capture the android Vision™ but were thwarted by the Defenders. Cloud left the Secret Empire after suddenly experiencing new memories that seemed to show that Power killed Cloud's parents. (These memories, however, may be false ones implanted by Power or another source.) Cloud fled to the Defenders, and after a battle between the team and the Secret Empire, Cloud joined the group as a full member.

Throughout this period, Cloud appeared to be either a cloud or a 17-year-old woman. Soon after joining the Defenders, Cloud fell in love with Moondragon. Unable to resolve these feelings toward the female telepath, Cloud changed sex to a young man. Since that time, Cloud has shifted between the two forms, but her/his true origins remain a mystery.

### **VALKYRIE™**

#### **Brunnhilda of the Valkyrior**

Fighting: MONSTROUS (75)  
Agility: REMARKABLE (30)  
Strength: AMAZING (50)  
Endurance: AMAZING (50)  
Reason: TYPICAL (6)  
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)  
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 205  
Karma: 36  
Resources: TYPICAL  
Popularity: 15

#### **Known powers:**

**BODY ARMOR.** Like all Asgardians, Valkyrie has Good protection from all physical attacks.

**WEAPON: DRAGONFANG.** Carved from the tooth of an extra-dimensional dragon by an Oriental wizard, Valkyrie's sword Dragonfang was given to her by Doctor Strange™. The blade is made of material with Unearthly strength, and when wielding it Valkyrie attacks on the Unearthly column. She can inflict Monstrous damage on the hack-&-slash table

or up to Amazing damage on the Slugfest column by using the flat of the blade. (She will use the latter attack to avoid slaying her opponents).

**WEAPON: IRON SPEAR.** Valkyrie also wields an iron spear which can inflict Amazing hack-&-slash damage and can be thrown up to 10 areas for Incredible damage.

**MOUNT ARAGORN.** Formerly the mount of the Black Knight™, this snow-white Pegasus was given by the Knight to Valkyrie and is faithful to his mistress. Aragorn can run at 5 areas per round, fly at 10 areas per round, and has the following stats:

F A S E Health  
GOOD EXCE REMA INCR 100

**Talents:** Valkyrie is skilled at martial arts, sharp weapons (swords), and thrown weapons.

**Valkyrie's story:** The Asgardian Brunnhilda was chosen by Odin™ to lead the Valkyrior, a group of nine goddesses who brought the souls of the honored dead from the battlefield to Valhalla. She performed well until Odin ceased all dealings with Earth around A.D. 1000. At that time, the Valkyrior were disbanded, and Brunnhilda roamed Asgard looking for adventure.

Brunnhilda finally encountered Amora the Enchantress™, but the life of adventure that Amora offered was dishonorable, and the leader of the Valkyrior rebelled. The Enchantress ensorcelled Brunnhilda, keeping her body in suspended animation while bestowing Brunnhilda's powers on herself or others. In this fashion, Amora led an all-female group of super-powered individuals against the Avengers, but she was defeated.

While serving as a temporary ally of the early Defenders, Amora granted the Valkyrie's powers and consciousness to a mortal madwoman named Barbara Norriss. Valkyrie fought beside the Defenders for several years in her mortal body before regaining her immortal form. She has decided to remain with the Defenders and was chosen by Odin to watch and guard Moondragon, in hopes of teaching the telepath humility and to guard humanity from the powers of Moondragon's darker side. Valkyrie bears some hard feelings toward Odin for disbanding the Valkyrior and for ignoring her plight as a captive of the Enchantress, and she would rather remain on Earth than return to Asgard.