



A SOURCEBOOK for

**CHAMPIONS**  
THE SUPER ROLE-PLAYING GAME

#419

# CHAMPIONS of the NORTH



By Jon Mattson

# CHAMPIONS OF THE NORTH™

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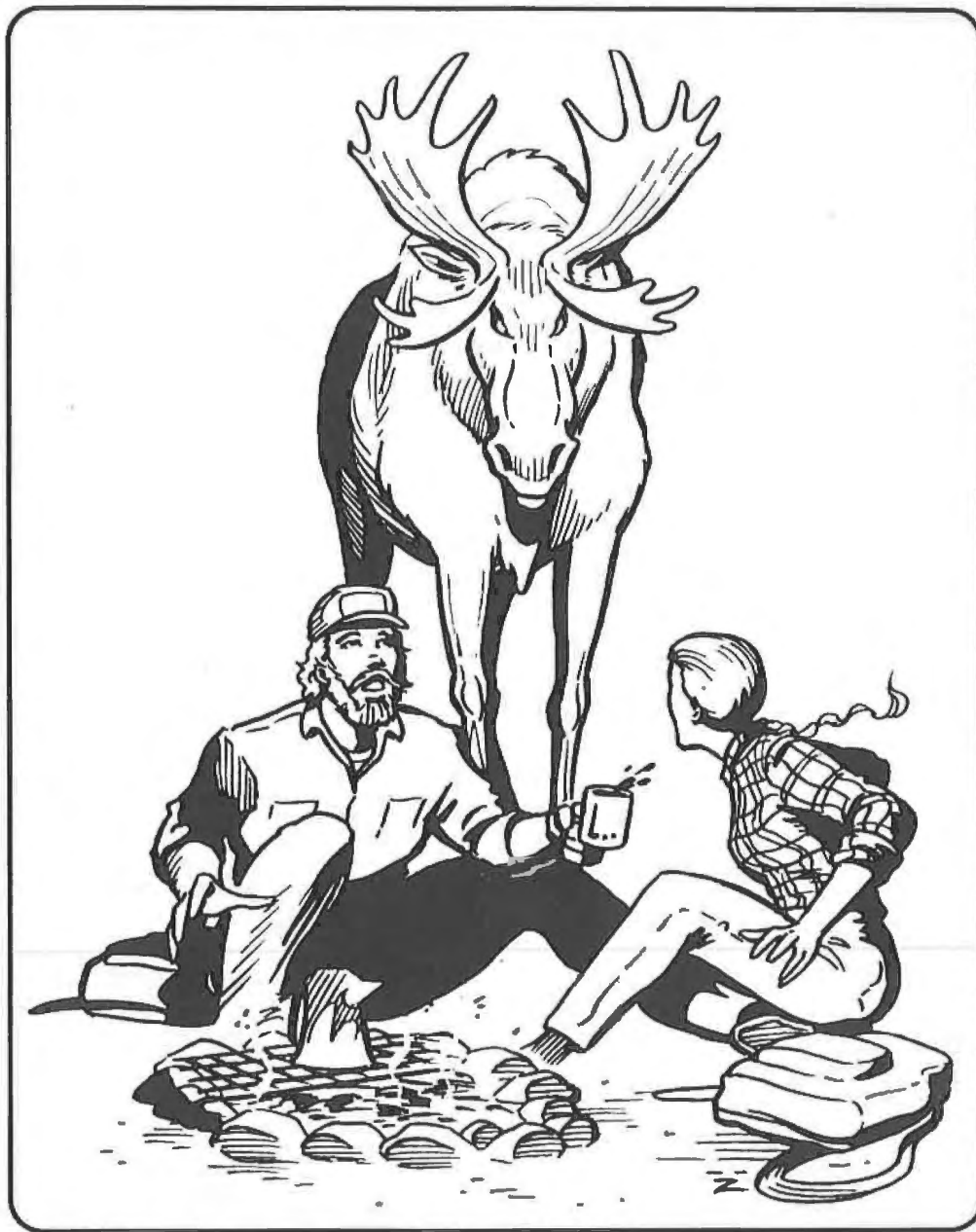
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## AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife, Diane, without whom it would never have gotten past the "binder full of notes" stage. It is customary for an author to thank his or her spouse for patience above and beyond the call of duty, but to this I add thanks for ideas, research, playtesting, pep talks and useful criticism. In many ways, this is as much her book as mine.

No author lives in a vacuum, and no GM should either. Much of the material presented herein has been amassed over years of playing, and some dates back to my earliest superheroic adventures. Keeping this in mind, it seems only fitting to thank those players who made my first campaign so memorable, the Heroes at Large: Jim Anderson, Ruth Ehman, Blaine Ellis, Grant Lindsey, Gerry Mattson, Janette Mulloy, Judy Mulloy, Andrew Spence and Stephen Spragge. Also worth mentioning are Joe Fuoco for getting me involved in this silly hobby in the first place, and Matt Kari for long chats about what makes a good game and a good gamemaster. Again, thanks to all of these people who have helped make this GM what he is today.

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## FOREWORD

*Champions of the North* is HERO Games' guide to adventuring in Canada. In here, you will find all the real-world facts and game ideas you'll usually need when your role-playing adventures head north of the border. This book was written by a Canadian author, so the content can be considered "from the source"—as well as from any Canadian, anyway. It was then edited by Americans, so it should cover what an outsider needs to know. We hope you'll agree.

Anyway, welcome to the Great White North (which actually isn't always as white as you think), where you will know the language (at least half of the time) and recognize the television shows (except on CBC). You may be in for some surprises from your northern neighbour that you thought you knew so well—may all of them be pleasant!

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

This book is both very old and very new, depending on how you look at it. Years ago (more than I care to remember), when I first got involved in *Champions*, I noticed that nearly all of the campaigns I had ever played in or heard of were American-based—even though the GMs and players involved were Canadian. Aside from the fact that this seemed a bit unpatriotic, it also made for an overly "cinematic" campaign world: most of the GMs had never even seen New York, except on television, and it showed. I decided that when I started GMing a superworld myself, I would stick to what I knew; thus, the roots of this book trace back to my own original campaign notes—not for American heroes visiting Canada, actually, but for Canadian heroes having adventures in their homeland.

Much later, I started putting together a portfolio of characters for an Enemies book and got in contact with Rob Bell concerning that. Rob was intrigued by the Canadian motif and decided to run with that: he had just finished working on *Kingdom of Champions*, a full-fledged U.K. sourcebook, and saw similar potential for this work. The thrust of the book would be changed to aim at the American hero visiting Canada, and the whole thing would be greatly expanded, drawing on both my own past campaign notes and the most up-to-date Canadian news.

How could I resist? Aside from the fame and riches involved, it gave me a chance to clarify Canada's image. I must admit that, to this day, I hold a petty grudge against Marvel for their treatment of *Alpha Flight* after John Byrne left. Phil Masters, in *KofC*, talks about the game the British play spotting the mistakes in American comics; we know that

game up here, all too well. It can be amusing in a comic, but it is very embarrassing for the GM if it happens in his own campaign. The chief goal of this book, then, is to help the referee avoid that problem. It is up to you to decide whether or not I have succeeded in that quest.

Writing this book has been a learning experience for me: for all my prior research, I was still surprised at the sheer bulk of information involved when I started putting an "official" sourcebook together. The result was a constant struggle to find a balance between what I thought was interesting and what would actually be used by the reader. On one hand, it never pays to take things for granted; on the other, I was still working with a relatively limited number of pages and couldn't afford to spend too much space on any one topic, no matter how interesting. Of course, in a country of this size, no one person is really an expert on all areas: if I have not devoted the warranted space to every unique area of this fascinating land, I can only offer this as an excuse and apology.

In any event, I hope that this book will fill your needs as a GM: it is a rewarding job, but also a trying one, and we can all use a hand now and then. Perhaps it will even trigger an idea that never occurred to you before, or tempt you into exploring a new site you previously avoided for lack of information. If so, then its purpose will have been served.

— Jon Mattson

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is for a lot of different people—for players and (especially) GMs. The GM is the best person to use the facts, ideas and NPC descriptions it contains; however, players and their characters sometimes need facts and ideas, too, so there's nothing wrong with players looking at this book. (It's all sales for us.) All we do suggest is that players refrain from using knowledge of which their characters would be ignorant and from looking at ideas that their GM might wish to use.

*Champions of the North* is written as a *Champions* supplement, but it's also designed for use with other Hero games. Any game with a contemporary (or near-future or recent-past) setting can involve trips to Canada, and we've tried to keep the "real world" and "Champions Universe" ideas somewhat distinct. The latter draw on the former, of course, but you should be able to see where cold hard reality ends and superhero fantasy begins. So, if your spies or detectives are Canada-bound, you'll find plenty to use in here.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

No book can cover everything: this book is purely about Canada and its interaction with other countries—particularly the United States. The first section of the book—which you're reading right now—is an introduction, not just to *Champions of the North*, but to international gaming in general. GMs should read through it and decide how to apply it to their own games: these are guidelines, not gospel.

After that comes the data on Canada, with a gradually narrowing focus from the country as a whole down to its individual inhabitants: the land, the cities, the culture and the people. This section closes with information for the visitor, so that, once you have a picture of the country, you will be able to authentically interact with it.

The rest of the book is about characters and scenarios—game data. There are villains and fight scenes, of course, but also Canadian heroes and opportunities for role-playing. GMs can explore all this as they choose, but players who don't want to spoil the game should refrain.

Finally, there are some notes and bibliographies, which should help readers pursue any ideas they like.

## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Throughout *Champions of the North*, we have used the Canadian form of spelling and syntax—generally closer to British than American, with a little French thrown in for good measure. This is not an oversight: it simply seemed suitable considering the subject matter.

# ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL

*"...That strange blend of the commercial traveller, the missionary, and the barbarian conqueror, which was the American abroad."*

— Olaf Stapledon, *First and Last Men*

So you are thinking of going abroad for your adventures? Fine. You should be in for a lot of fun, and a change is as good as a rest, right? You know about the place you are planning to go, or if you don't, your GM does, or if no-one does, well, that's why you've bought this supplement. You've packed travellers' cheques, clean underwear, and your towels.

There's just one question left.

## WHY?

Well, sometimes the answer's easy. Doctor Exterminator is threatening the world, and he operates out of a castle in some highly implausible Balkan state, so that's where you are needed. Your Secret ID has to go on a business trip, so you might as well fight crime while you're there. The authorities, who never have understood you, are getting too close, and you'd like a break somewhere without an extradition treaty. Your nearest and dearest have been kidnapped while on holiday, and have to be hauled out of some damp Transylvanian castle or mismanaged Central American gold mine. Maybe you have been kidnapped, and your kidnapper has dragged you somewhere without an extradition treaty.

That's "going where the action is," or "tourist-style" adventuring, and there's nothing wrong with it at all. A lot of great scenarios work that way, and any GM who wants to run a story set anywhere in the world—or off it—can use these ideas to get the PCs in place. The approach works perfectly well as a way of getting a party into, say, Canada for a game session or two. Canada isn't the Balkans, but it has its share of secluded and suitably majestic sites to set up a supervillain's retreat. Canada does plenty of importing and exporting—particularly to the United States. There are lots of mines—not to mention isolated oil rigs—and plenty of resources for rich characters to invest in. Canada does have an extradition treaty with other countries, but hey, some superbeings are stupid enough not to notice this, and anyway, there's more than enough room to hide out.

However, there is another approach.

## CONSCIOUS INTERNATIONALISM

This is what you get when player-characters, wherever based, take the whole world (or solar system, or galaxy) as their "home ground." This may be because of pure idealism; or politics, for those who are persuaded by their government to join a supra-national force that fights some international problem; or employment, for those who take a job that involves a lot of travel; or something else. Most often, it's a mixture of these. A simplified variation is to give the heroes a friend or acquaintance who can persuade them that there is an urgent reason for a trip. For example, a non-combatant but wise old witch who sometimes detects signs of demonic incursions might turn to the heroes as the only people who can defeat the demons. (But be careful: players resent their characters always being told what to do.)

So, you've battled Eurostar in Paris and thwarted Dr. Destroyer in the jungles of Peru. You've probably been to the moon or even beyond. And now you think you've seen it all.

Think again heroes! There's a land of mystery and adventure that you are probably overlooking. A land filled with heroes and villains all its own. This land, of course, is Canada, the realm of the...

# CHAMPIONS of the NORTH

*Champions of the North* is a sourcebook for *Champions*, completely describing America's northern neighbor and the heroes and villains that live there. Inside you will find dozens of new characters, three fully detailed adventures, and many more adventure ideas. For the GM, there are extensive notes on Canada, its peoples, its history, and detailed descriptions of the cities and locations for your northern adventures. Whether your heroes are just visiting or are settling in for a full scale Canadian campaign, *Champions of the North* is the sourcebook for you (eh?).



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