

James Graham



Much of the story has already been told. The truth of the matter is that it was not the death of his mentor -- and so many other people whom he respected and admired -- that made James Graham abandon the identity of Masque. It was not even any actual failure on his own part. What finally made him dump the long underwear was the fact that **his personal nemesis**, the man whose skills had driven him to seek out additional training from other fighters besides the Cowl, had managed to hand the Tong that employed him a more serious setback than the Cowl and Masque had managed in more than a decade.

So he became a private investigator, at first working independently and later employed by **the Carter Detective Agency**, putting the skills that he had developed to good use and trying to make some justice in an unjust world. When old friends sought him out, he would help them, but he never put doing that ahead of helping his actual clients. There was only so much that a man could do, and so he chose to focus on the small things instead of the big flashy ones that got headlines. And for a while he was happy, as his job took him all over the world, even to Africa a few times.

Then **Sarah Blade** came into his life, and everything changed. James tried to tell himself that he wanted to be a big brother to her -- she was sixteen years younger than he was, after all! -- but that was not the nature of the relationship that either of them really wanted. When their daughter **Leah** was born, he was a bit horrified to do the math and realize that by the time she was out of high school, he would be half-way through his sixties, assuming the best possible world -- which this clearly was not. He retired from the agency to focus on caring for her.

Unfortunately, the world would not let him be. In 1996, James was contacted by the people

who were forming **Argus**. They needed his help, specifically certain connections he had established in West Africa during his career as a detective, in order to prevent yet another madman from engaging in yet another villainous scheme. James wanted to say no, but what they showed him made him genuinely afraid for the first time in years, and the thought of something like this happening in the world his daughter would inherit finally made him agree. He expected to be back home in about a week with a story he was not supposed to share but would.

The mission was a disaster. Everything that could go wrong, did, and James was thought killed in action by those who managed to make it back to their headquarters. In fact, he had survived, but the bastard who took him prisoner did a great job of making him regret that fact. Enslaved, tortured physically and mentally, thinking that he would never see Sarah or Leah again, he took what comfort he could in the company of another prisoner, and ultimately found the strength to help her make an escape attempt.

He did not, does not, know that she succeeded. He does not know that he has **a second daughter**, born in Ghana.

Eventually, the monster who claimed to own him crossed the wrong people -- not *good* people, but more dangerous ones -- and wound up dead. James managed to escape in the confusion and made his way to Spain. He had lost all track of time during his captivity, and was stunned to learn that it was 2007, that a second age of superheroes was under way. He was considering how to return to the United States when he came upon a small item in one of the newspapers he was consulting, about the recent murder of one Sarah Blade.

Since then, James Graham has lived quietly in Barcelona, occasionally employed as a consultant by some local private investigators and doing everything in his power to avoid anything that reminds him of the innumerable failures of his life. He regards the fact that he has been spared senility with some additional regret. Eventually, something is going to let him know that the world is not done with him yet. What he will do then is impossible to say.

James Graham -- PL 8

Abilities:

STR 3 | STA 3 | AGL 3 | DEX 4 | FGT 6 | INT 4 | AWE 3 | PRE 6

Powers:

Fast on His Feet: Speed 1 (4 MPH) - 1 points

Striking Strength: Strength-based Damage 2 - 2 points

Advantages:

Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Close Attack 3, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll, Equipment 2, Evasion, Improved Critical (Unarmed) 2, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Startle, Takedown 2, Well-informed.

Equipment:

Car: Size Large; Strength 5; Speed 5 (ground); Defense 8; Toughness 8 - 10 points

Skills:

Acrobatics 5 (+8), Athletics 5 (+8), Expertise: Streetwise 9 (+13), Intimidation 6 (+12), Insight 8 (+11), Investigation 8 (+12), Perception 8 (+11), Persuasion 6 (+12), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+8), Stealth 8 (+11), Technology 5 (+9), Vehicles 6 (+10).

Offense:

Initiative +7

Unarmed +9 (Close Damage 5, Crit 18-20)

Defense:

Dodge 7, Parry 9, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5/3, Will 9

Totals:

Abilities 64 + Powers 3 + Advantages 17 + Skills 40 + Defenses 15 = 139 points

Offensive PL: 7

Defensive PL: 7

Resistance PL: 7

Skill PL: 8

Complications:

Justice--Motivation. Dislikes Using Guns. Family (Sarah and Leah Blade) **Temper.**

Note: For his current PL 4 incarnation, subtract 3 ranks from all physical abilities and Fighting, drop all powers, drop all Combat advantages and Equipment, drop Acrobatics, Athletics, Ranged Combat: Guns, and Vehicles from skills, reduce Expertise: Streetwise to 3 (+7), Stealth to 4 (+4), and Technology to 1 (+5), reduce all other skills by 5 ranks, and reduce Will to 6.

Update 2021: After seeing news reports about Amari and her role in the recent **Konan** assault, James recognized her as the daughter of Olaiya, his fellow prisoner, and realized the implications. He hesitantly sought her out and was somewhat made somewhat happy when she did not despise him, but rather embraced him as her long-lost father. Knowing that he may not

have time left, he is starting to consider how to approach his other daughter. Abidemi has offered to help him in this.

Update 2022: With her assistance, James has finally met his daughter and [her girlfriend](#). It was a more painful reunion than the one he had with Amari, but Leah eventually forgave him for not coming back sooner. James settled into a rented hotel suite in Portland, frequently visiting with his older daughter and her friends. He quietly passed away there towards the end of October.