

An Impossible Action? Version 1.2

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I really appreciate any user feedback. If you noticed any errors, or have questions or comments about these statistics, please let me know by sending a clearly labeled (i.e. - won't be mistaken for Spam) e-mail to: MSHAGLibrarian@wmconnect.com.

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For more information and game materials, please see the Marvel Superheroes Yahoo Group (<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/mshag/>) or my website (<http://h1.ripway.com/MSHAGLibrary/index.html>).

Summary & Description:

An *Impossible* action? Maybe not! As you will see, *Impossible* (Difficulty 40) doesn't always mean impossible (cannot be done). The upper echelon of your comic book world can sometimes pull off the *Impossible*. The rules are designed to allow it – just not often. Check out this actual scenario from one of my adventures. Remember that, though this may seem a little hypothetical, it *actually happened* during an adventure session I ran for the basis of a story.

Nightchylde wants to rearrange his friend's fingerprints with his Telekinesis. Is that even possible? The Narrator decides it isn't, so he secretly assigns the task an *Impossible* difficulty level¹. Now, Nightchylde needs to make up 40 points. Deciding that 40 just isn't impossible enough, the Narrator decides that since he didn't ask permission, we'll add on his friend's Willpower score, a 6, as opposition. Now the score he needs is a 46. Adding on his drawn card, a 3, the Narrator laughs: the total opposition score is a 9; added with the base difficulty rating of 40, that gives us a whopping difficulty rating of 49. That'll teach snot-nosed heroes to look before they leap, by God!

1: I, the Narrator, decided to let the game play out rather than just saying "you can't do that." This was discussed in the MSHAG Game Book on page 63 in the gray text box labeled "granting new stunts." I find this method preferable, unless the intended use is something that just cannot be done within any reasonable limits (like starting a fire with cold control or detecting mutants with absorption).

So a 49 sounds pretty frickin' impossible, right? Well, maybe not. Being something of a thinker, Nightchylde uses one of his two actions for the round to use his assessment skill to study his chances and learns that the action is of *Impossible* difficulty and that it will be opposed. He could warn his friend and remove those extra opposition points, but being a show-off and rather impulsive, he decides to go for the glory and declares the Telekinesis action as his second action² for the exchange. He has a rather average hand: a 3 and 5 of Willpower, a 5 of Intellect, and a 9 of Doom. He knows that the action is of *Impossible* difficulty (40) and that his friend's willpower (6) will be added as opposition, in addition to the Narrator's card (3). He also knows that his Energy Control skill will lower the difficulty by one level (-4). Doing the math, he figures he'll need at least 45 points to pull it off. Can he possibly make up the difference? He looks worried, but let's see:

Starting out with a 49 difficulty, minus One Level for the Energy Control skill = 45 difficulty. Just as he suspected, a 45 is the score to aim for. He starts out with a power intensity of 18; pretty good, but a long way to go to get to 45. You guessed it! He declares a push and plops down his 9 of Doom, raising his Telekinesis score to 27 and praying it will be enough to make up the difference.

He figures he needs to come up with 18 points in cards, and prays that that's all. He tosses down his 3 of Willpower (not above his edge) and 5 of Intellect (above his edge) and hopes for a good trump. 8 points in cards, plus his 27 pushed power intensity gives him 35 points - that's close, but still not quite there.

He needs 10 more points to make his action; good thing he has a trump draw left. He draws and gets the 6 of Intellect! He tacks that on and since it is still trump (Intellect), he draws again, getting the 4 of Willpower for a whopping total action score of 45. With utter shock, the narrator tells him that he makes his Impossible action. The player smiles, redraws 2 cards, and hopes that the 9 of Doom won't be causing trouble for him in the near future.

Okay, maybe your average telekinetic can't rearrange DNA or fingerprints, but apparently this guy can (and did). After all, fingerprints are just folds of skin and are subject to telekinesis just as much as anything else. It takes a great deal of fine control to manipulate matter on such a minuscule scale, but it isn't technically *impossible*. If he can repeat the performance a few more times at increased difficulty (or perhaps take the easy road and do some other qualifying action, like typing) Nightchylde will pick up the Manipulation stunt. That'll make those small-scale actions of Average (8) difficulty: no problem for a guy with Telekinesis 18.

As you can see, it is possible to pull off the impossible, with a little luck, a little extra effort, and all the right skills. That was a little too close for comfort, though. After all, he wouldn't have made it without that lucky draw. What if the Narrator had had some cards in the Doom Bank? That could have been trouble. And if the Narrator had set the numerical value for the *Impossible* difficulty at 42 or 44 instead of the standard 40, he would have come up just short. Perhaps next time he will play it safe and warn his friend. But then again, maybe he'll become even cockier than he was before. He did just pull off the impossible, after all, and that's got to do bad things to a guy's ego.

2: Nightchylde has a unique power that allows him to perform more than one action per exchange.