



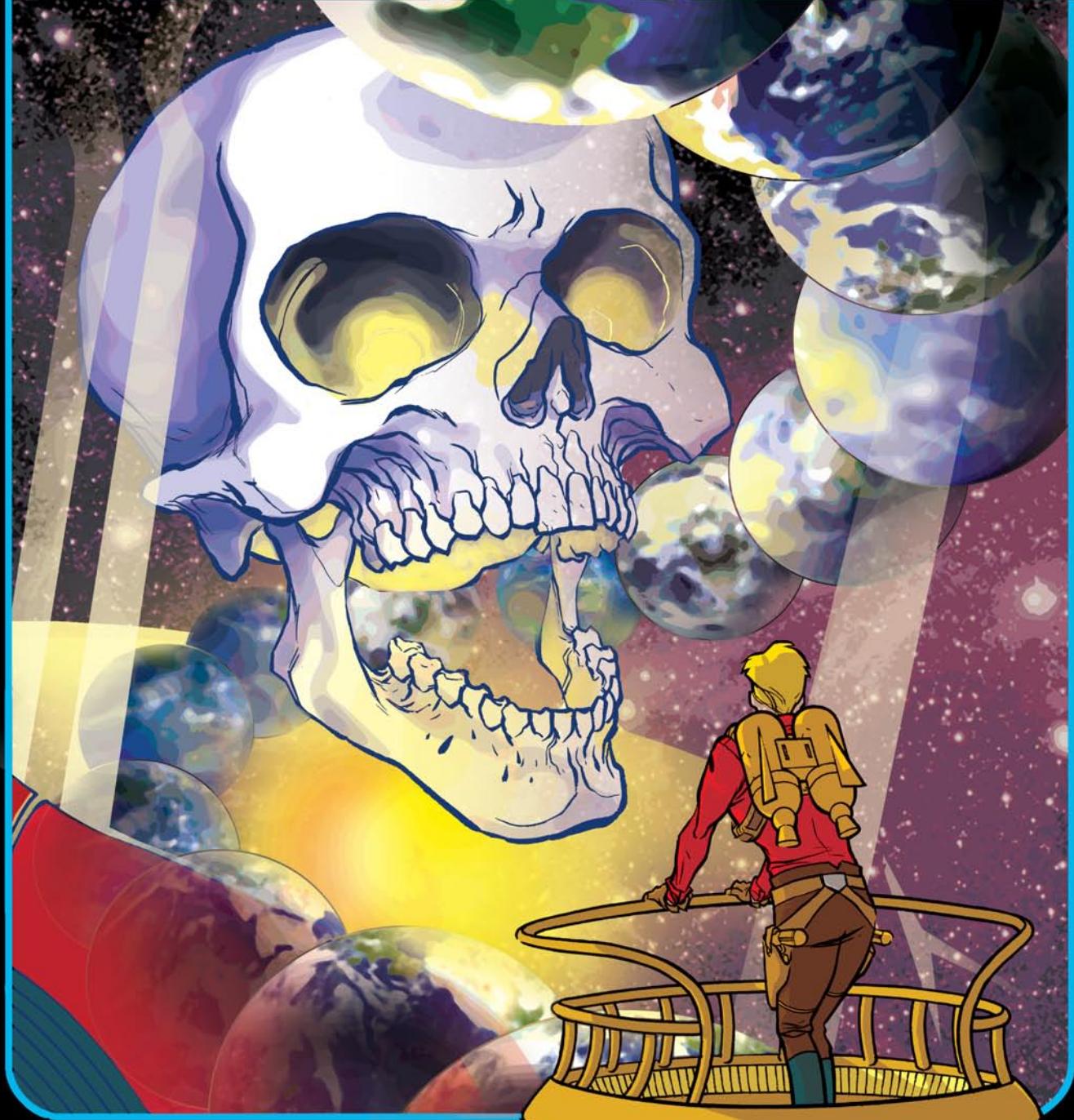
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WORLDS OF FREEDOM



SOURCEBOOK



WORLDS OF FREEDOM

A GREEN RONIN PRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

In the seminal story "Flash of Two Worlds" (*The Flash*, vol. 1, #123), writer Gardner Fox and editor Julius Schwartz firmly embedded the idea of "parallel worlds" in comic books: different Earths, occupying the same space, but with different "vibrational frequencies" and differences in history—some slight, others more significant. Since then, comic book "multiverses" have been commonplace. Entire series, like *What If?* from Marvel and massive crossovers like DC Comics' *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, as well as their more recent *Infinite Crisis* series, have focused on them.

Parallel worlds afford excellent story opportunities and the chance to play games of "what if?" with an existing world or setting. What if this particular hero hadn't died? What if aliens *did* conquer the world? What if there were no superheroes, only supervillains? The possibilities are virtually endless. More importantly, a parallel world is a kind of "safe zone" for experimentation. No matter what happens, the "real" (main-line) world remains essentially unaffected.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Worlds of Freedom provides information on parallel Earths and different time periods for the World of Freedom setting detailed in the *Freedom City* sourcebook. The concepts in this book can be applied to other superhero settings, using Freedom City as an example and, of course, Gamemasters should feel free, as always, to modify the material found in this book to suit their own individual games. After all, if the theory of the omniverse is true, each *Mutants & Masterminds* game occupies its own unique parallel world!

Chapter 1: Infinite Worlds looks at the concept of parallel worlds, the omniverse, and dimensional- and time-travel in general and in the Freedom Omniverse. It provides the context for the rest of the book and the tools for creating world-hopping adventures and even a whole series.

Chapter 2: Wars for Freedom goes back in time to the early years of Freedom, looking at the American Revolution and the American Civil War in the setting, including the unique events and characters involved. This chapter can form the basis of time-travel adventures to those eras, entire series set there, or even the start of alternate worlds where the outcome of those conflicts remains uncertain, and the actions of the heroes may decide the future!



Chapter 3: Freedom by Gaslight looks at the late 19th century World of Freedom, from the gas-lit streets of the city itself to what is happening across the ocean in Europe, on the Dark Continent of Africa, or among the mesas and frontier towns of the Wild West. It also describes some of the extraordinary ladies and gentlemen of the time.

Chapter 4: Paragons of Freedom goes "sideways," from the past into an alternate present for Freedom City. What if the World of Freedom was based, not on decades of four-color comics, but on post-modern comic book styles? This chapter provides an answer and an all-new way to use the *Freedom City* setting, as an alternate world for the *Paragons* setting sourcebook!

Chapter 5: Erde: The Fight for Freedom likewise takes us on a side-step in time to an alternate present day, where the Axis powers won World War II and a group of forgotten heroes from the Golden Age struggle to free the world from their tyranny.

Chapter 6: Future Freedom gives us a look at a Freedom City that might be, a generation or two in the future. Heroes still fight for justice in a city that seems to have forgotten the "golden age" of adventurers. Who will be the new heroes of a future Freedom?

Chapter 7: Galactic Freedom is set in the far future, when Freedom City is at the center of the peaceful Galactic Confederation. Still, even in the 26th century, there remain threats to peace, justice, and freedom across the known galaxy. Fortunately, the Confederation can call upon the aid of the legendary Freedom Legion!

Chapter 8: Worlds Beyond **Worlds** is a grab-bag of other realities known to the inhabitants of Freedom City's Earth, including the devastated After-Earth, the mirror world of Anti-Earth, the animal zaniness of Ani-Earth and Earth-Ape, and the swords and sorcery of both Fantasy Freedom and Freeport, the City of Adventure.

Chapter 9: The Terminus covers the ultimate threat to *all* worlds: The dimension-devouring domain of Omega, nihilistic cosmic overlord who seeks to destroy all creation so he can rule over the remains!

Gamemasters interested in taking their *Freedom City* series out into the omniverse should read through **Chapter 1** first, learning about the wider worlds of Freedom. Then look over the chapters you find most interesting and see what adventure hooks and ideas appeal to you.

You've taken your first step into the omniverse. Welcome, to the Worlds of Freedom!

CHAPTER 1: INFINITE WORLDS

Comic books have a long established tradition of parallel worlds, alternate dimensions, and strange new realities for heroes to visit, or that occasionally pose a threat to the world they inhabit. The *Freedom City* setting is no different, and **Chapter Four** of the *Freedom City* sourcebook provides a brief overview of the many different dimensions known to the superhuman inhabitants of the world of Freedom, which they call "Earth-Prime."

This chapter looks at the cosmology of the *Freedom City* setting in more detail, discussing the different kinds of dimensions, how they are arranged into a great structure, how characters visit them, and what sorts of forces are at work in and between them. It also looks at possibilities for a dimension-hopping series where the heroes travel (intentionally or accidentally) from one reality to another, experiencing a series of adventures on a virtual infinity of worlds.

AND THERE SHALL BE... AN OMNIVERSE!

As unimaginably vast as the universe may be—countless galaxies of billions of suns—it is only a part of a greater whole. The entire universe containing Freedom City and its inhabitants is part of a vast collection of different dimensions called the *omniverse*, encompassing all levels and aspects of reality.

It's unclear exactly how the omniverse came into being. The most common theory suggests it is simply the natural state of reality, that is, the Big Bang or creation of the universe actually formed *many* universes and alternate dimensions, all linked by common aspects of space or time, but separated from each other by different vibrational or quantum "frequencies." In essence, the omniverse is a higher level of existence, in much the same way the structure of galaxies mirrors that of solar systems, which reflects atomic structures at the smallest level.

Other theories suggest the omniverse is not a natural state of being, and the current structure of reality was created, accidentally or deliberately. In particular, some believe the existence of parallel universes is the result of some kind of quantum "fracture" in reality, that there should be only one universe containing an Earth and humanity, for example. They claim the splitting of the one true universe into an infinity of parallels has weakened it, making it prey to forces like the Terminus, which consumes whole universes.

Different sources cite different events as the cause of the split between universes, ranging from the formation of the Terminus to the sinking of Atlantis and Lemuria (possibly involving the intervention of the Unspeakable One, mad god of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign). On the other hand, there is considerable evidence the omniverse has existed in its current state since the beginning of time as we know it. Since changes in reality might be retroactive, however (altering the past as well as the present and future), this isn't necessarily conclusive.

TYPES OF DIMENSIONS

The known dimensions of the omniverse fall into essentially one of three major types, although the exact lines between these categories are sometimes blurry. Experts on the omniverse on Earth-Prime use these categories when dealing with other dimensions, although the scientific community focuses more on parallel dimensions, while the occult community deals primarily with mystic dimensions.

PARALLEL

A *parallel* dimension is one that is similar, but not necessarily identical, to the universe containing Earth-Prime. Some believe parallel dimensions are all different in *some* fashion, but that in many cases the differences

are too small to notice right away. A parallel dimension might contain an Earth where a particular person lived a different life, for example, but he had so small an impact on the world that it seems identical to Earth-Prime (or another parallel).

Most known parallels differ significantly from Earth-Prime in some way. How significantly varies from world to world. For example, on *Erde* (see **Chapter 5**), the Axis powers won World War II, and the modern history of the world is considerably different from Earth-Prime, whereas the two worlds' pre-war histories seem essentially the same. At the extreme end are worlds like *Ani-Earth* and *Earth-Ape*, where cartoon-like anthropomorphic animals or talking apes replace humanity! Still, these worlds bear uncanny similarities to Earth-Prime, far more than would be expected from such variant developments, right down to the existence of similar superheroes and villains!

The worlds described in **Chapters 4** through **8** of this book are parallel dimensions, while the historical settings from **Chapter 2** and **Chapter 3** *may* be parallel worlds as well, either in another dimension where time flows slower, and thus the world is in an earlier historical period, or in another world where those events occurred, if you decide not to include them in your own *Freedom City* setting.

MYSTIC

A *mystic* dimension is a reality where magic, not science, is the dominant force. While some mystic dimensions are vaguely similar to Earth (at least from different historical or mythic sources), many are quite alien, since they do not even obey the same physical laws as Earth's dimension. Mystic dimensions may feature gravity as a strictly local phenomenon, for example, limited to the plane or axis of a solid surface. Many have strange forms of life influenced by occult laws rather than those of biology or evolution.

In particular, mystic dimensions tend to differ in having powerful magic-workers as their most influential inhabitants, or even rulers. Each dimension has a Master Mage, its most powerful wielder of the mystic arts. In some, the Master Mage is a dedicated guardian of order, but in others, the Master Mage assumes control over the dimension itself, shaping it and its reality to suit. In time, the dimension becomes a *netherworld* and the Master Mage becomes a *Dark Lord*.

The mystic dimensions of the omniverse are discussed in detail in the *Book of Magic* sourcebook for *M&M*. They are beyond the scope of *Worlds of Freedom* and are included here only for comparison and completeness. Readers interested in more information on the mystic dimensions and their relationship to magic-wielders on Earth-Prime and other realities should consult the *Book of Magic*.

THE SECRET CRISES OF INFINITE WARS ... ON EARTHS

Astute readers of RPGs and comics should be well aware that the structure of the omniverse makes it ridiculously easy to include a variety of other parallel worlds based on your favorite comic book and roleplaying game settings and have your *M&M* characters visit those worlds.

While RPG publishers labor under certain legal restrictions, the only limit on your *Mutants & Masterminds* game is your imagination. So if you want to run an adventure wherein your heroes visit certain familiar fictional worlds your players might enjoy, well, we certainly aren't in any position to stop you...

INTERSTITIAL

An *interstitial* dimension, by definition, lies "between" or "around" other dimensions, acting as a kind of bridge, gulf, or medium for different planes of existence. Many experts liken interstitial dimensions to a medium like air, water, or even the void of space, wherein other dimensions "float" or move like solid bodies, either suspended or orbiting in various fashions.

Theories abound as to the purpose of interstitial dimensions. The most common theory is that they function as some sort of "insulator" between different realities, keeping them at a safe distance and preventing them from colliding, which would result in some detrimental consequence (from the two realities merging haphazardly to a chain reaction that would collapse the omniverse). Other ideas suggest the interstitial realities are "pathways" between dimensions (natural or artificial) or a natural dimensional "fluid" or medium, just as water surrounds the landmasses on Earth or the vacuum of space surrounds planets and stars.

The three main known interstitial dimensions in the omniverse each have different qualities to them. In particular, some have cited them as connected with the primal forces of creation, destruction, and stasis.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The Astral Plane is the mystical interstitial dimension, also known as the Silver Void, the Misty Vale, and the Lunar Sphere (for its mystic associations with the Moon). It touches upon the Earth and all mystic dimensions, connecting them and serving as a means for mystics with the knowledge and ability to travel, physically or in spirit form, from one dimension to another.

The astral plane is a primal force for creation, associated with the wellspring of human thought and imagination. Some believe ideas themselves come from the depths of the astral, which may or may not be the same thing as the Collective Unconscious of humanity (and all other thinking beings).

Additional information on the astral plane can be found on page 105 of *Freedom City*. The astral plane is discussed in greater detail in the *Book of Magic* sourcebook for *M&M*. Since it is generally not used as a means of accessing parallel worlds, it has little impact on the topics of this sourcebook.

THE TERMINUS

The Terminus is the parallel or quantum interstitial dimension, also known as the Final Orbit, the Black Pit, and the Ultimate End. It surrounds and touches upon all parallel dimensions, existing as a medium, but also as a slow corrosive. As universes break down, like stones worn away by an endless tide, their remaining contents spill into the Terminus, there to spiral down into the darkness at the very heart of the dimension, where they are consumed.

The Terminus is a primal manifestation of entropy, but there is still life of a sort there. The shattered remains of countless lost universes drift in the void of the Terminus, orbiting the black sun at its very heart until they are eventually consumed. Entire worlds are crushed beneath

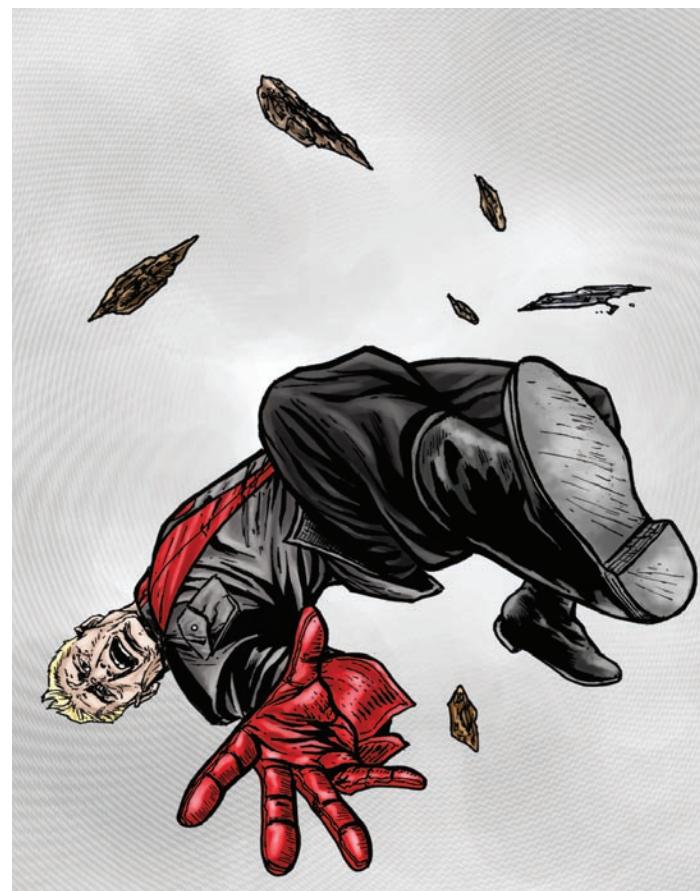
the heel of the dictator Lord Omega and his underlings. Omega plots to expand the reach of the Terminus until it consumes all existence, bringing everything under his rule.

Additional information on the Terminus can be found on page 108 of *Freedom City*. **Chapter 9** of this book describes the Terminus and its inhabitants in greater detail.

THE ZERO ZONE

The Zero Zone is an interstitial dimension apparently "outside" of normal space-time, alternately known as the Still Zone, the White Darkness, and the Endless Quiet. It is a realm of stasis and eternal stillness, forever unchanging.

The Zero Zone is an apparently endless void of white mist. Cosmic flotsam drifts through it, from small objects to entire planetoids, things that have found their way into the Zone, or have been sent there. The "mist" filling the Zero Zone isn't water vapor or any sort of gas, but actually a "cloud" of quantum probability: the further away something is in the Zone, the less fixed its location, obscuring it from detection. This property also makes it difficult, if not impossible, to leave the Zero Zone without outside aid.



NAMING WORLDS

What exactly to *call* an alternate Earth has no standard parlance in the World of Freedom. Generally speaking, parallel worlds end up named by those who discover them, usually tagged with some descriptive nickname involving their key difference from Earth-Prime, such as the various examples in this book: Erde (German for "Earth"), Earth-Ape, Anti-Earth, and so forth. The most commonly used nickname for a particular world is also used to describe it in this book.

Dr. Atom coined the term "Earth-Prime" to refer to the Earth described in the *Freedom City* sourcebook, and it has come into common use among the superhuman and even scientific community. Despite the term, Freedom City's Earth has no real "primacy" in the omniverse, although it does appear to be something of a nexus for interdimensional activity of various sorts, perhaps due to the arrival of the Centurion.

The Time-Keepers—and their agents like Dr. Tomorrow—use a number scheme for labeling parallel Earths (and their associated universes). In their system, Freedom City's Earth is "Earth-502" (the world of the *Paragons* setting is "Earth-517"). It's unknown exactly how the different numbers are assigned or how many parallel worlds the Time-Keepers have cataloged. It's entirely possible there are parallel Time-Keepers in *every* universe, or the mysterious beings are "trans-dimensional" in some fashion, existing simultaneously in all possible worlds in the Omniverse.

The qualities of the Zero Zone make it useful as a place of exile; various races and civilizations have used it over the eons as a cosmic prison and dumping ground. Countless lost or banished artifacts and beings exist here, including some super-criminals from Earth-Prime and other worlds.



Centurion discovered the Zero Zone through his own dimensional research and used the Zero Room in his Sanctum to banish dangerous foes like Superior (*Freedom City*, page 220). The Freedom League also trapped the Alpha-Centurion, Omega's imperfect duplicate of his old foe, in the Zero Zone. The nature of the Zone ensures those trapped here do not age or suffer from privation. They remain as they are, trapped forever unless they can find some means of escape.

Additional information about the Zero Zone can be found on page 109 of *Freedom City*.

TRAVEL BETWEEN DIMENSIONS

For characters to have adventures in different dimensions, they have to get to them, although, as the saying goes, sometimes "getting there is half the fun." In dimension travel adventures, it's often getting back home that's the difficult part.

INTERDIMENSIONAL PLOT DEVICES

A lot of dimensional travel in the comic books takes the form of plot devices: heroes end up in other dimensions through various accidents, from villainous plots to scientific gadgets gone wrong or messing around with arcane artifacts beyond human ken. Sometimes something (or someone) in the other reality pulls the heroes in, and it's up to them to figure out a way back, once they've dealt with the more immediate problems in the other dimension, of course.

There's no need to figure out how these dimension-travel plot devices work; they just do, and the same is the case for the ways the heroes find to get back home, provided they're not allowed to take them along for the ride and keep them afterwards. Perhaps the ritual or power stunt they use to get back depends on a very specific set of conditions it would be almost impossible to duplicate. At any rate, the process of dimension travel remains a plot device under the GM's control.

DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT

The ability to travel between dimensions is handled in *M&M* game terms using the Dimensional ability of the Super-Movement power, also known as Dimensional Movement.

The power structure is quite simple: with one rank in Dimensional Movement, you can travel between Earth (or whatever your home dimension might be) and one other. With two ranks in the power, you

can travel between a group of related dimensions (parallel Earths, for example), and with three ranks, you can travel to any dimension that exists in the setting and suits your power's descriptors; essentially any dimension in the setting except those the GM explicitly declares off-limits.

Dimensional Movement can also have power feats and modifiers, making it more or less useful for travel between worlds, including the following:

DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT FEATS

- **Dimensional:** This power feat applies to giving other effects the ability to reach different dimensions in much the same manner as Dimensional Movement allows characters to travel to them. It doesn't affect Dimensional Movement, but it may apply to other related powers, like ESP used to scan other dimensions, for example.
- **Extended Reach:** You can apply this power feat to Affects Others Dimensional Movement or a Dimensional Movement Attack, allowing you to use it at greater than touch range.
- **Progression:** This power feat increases the amount of mass you can carry with you when you use Dimensional Movement.

DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT EXTRAS

- **Affects Others:** This extra, applied to one or more of your movement modes, allows you to send others to other dimensions without going along with them, essentially granting them one use of your Super-Movement ability. Of course, if you don't go along, they may have a difficult time getting *back*. Note that unlike Attack (following), the subjects of Affects Others Dimensional Movement must be *willing*.
- **Area:** Applied to Affects Others Dimensional Movement, this extra allows you to transport everyone in the affected area. Apply the Selective power feat if you can choose who is and is not taken along on the jaunt; otherwise, you automatically take everyone in the area. You can choose to leave behind physical objects not in anyone's possession whether or not you have Selective (so you don't automatically teleport all the assorted junk in the area). For an Area Dimensional Movement Attack, use the Selective Attack extra instead.
- **Attack:** Dimensional and Temporal Movement can apply this modifier, allowing you to send an unwilling target into another dimension or time! Since both options have relatively fixed costs, the GM may allow additional ranks in Dimensional or Temporal Attack to increase the effect's saving throw DC: 2 power points per additional rank. Like other effects with the Attack extra, these Attacks are touch range by default; making them ranged is a +1 extra, and perception range is a +2 extra.
- **Portal (+2):** This modifier works like the Portal extra for Teleport (*M&M*, page 106): You open a portal or gateway between two dimensions as a free action. The portal is 5 feet-by-5 feet in size. Anyone stepping through (a move action) is transported. The portal remains open as long as you concentrate (concentration duration). You can apply Progression feats to increase the size of your portal.
- **Range:** This modifier allows Affects Others Dimensional Movement or a Dimensional Movement Attack to work at range, with a range increment of (rank x 10 ft.) and a maximum range of 10 increments.

The Progression feat can be applied to a Ranged Dimensional Movement effect to increase its range (separate from improving the amount of mass transported).

THE COSMIC COIL

Mystic adepts call it the Veiled Road, the Winding Way, and the Paths of the Magi. The Serpent People call it the Cosmic Coil, while to the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, it is the Maze of Madness, the path to the Unspeakable One, the all-devouring chaos at the center of existence. They all describe the mysterious pathways between dimensions, particularly to other worlds of magical power.

The Cosmic Coil winds its way between and around all the spheres of existence, a way of reaching other worlds for those who know how to walk its twisted paths. Such journeys may be short or long (sometimes varying from one journey to the next), but they are always risky, even for adepts of the mystic arts.

Dimensional travel along the Cosmic Coil can *seem* to take a certain amount of time, perhaps even quite a long time, but this is a subjective measurement from the traveler's perspective. In reality, outside the Coil, no time passes, and even a long subjective journey can take only a moment. The exception seems to be if travelers get lost, in which case they may wander into another world where time passes (perhaps even faster than it does on Earth) or never reappear, lost forever in the twisting passages between worlds.

The Cosmic Coil is primarily a mode of travel between mystic dimensions, although some mystics do find their way to parallel worlds where magic works from time to time. More information about the Winding Way and its use can be found in the *Book of Magic*.

TERMINUS TUNNELS

Terminus tunnels are passages connecting parallel worlds through the Terminus, permitting travel from one world to the other. The very nature of the Terminus makes such passages temporary in nature, so parallel world travel is often more difficult than wandering the paths of the Cosmic Coil, but also more direct.

Travel between parallel worlds via Terminus tunnels is effectively instantaneous, with just a moment of disorientation. In some cases, a "tunnel" is perceived between departure and destination. In others, the transition happens too fast to notice anything; you simply step through a portal or doorway and find yourself elsewhere on the other side.

OPTION: DIMENSIONAL NAVIGATION

The Dimensional- and Temporal-Movement powers in *Mutants & Masterminds* assume no transit time between departure and arrival (apart from the action needed to use the power) and no check or difficulty associated with travel between worlds as a default. However, this doesn't have to be the case, and with some realities in the omniverse, it isn't.

Travel between worlds and times can require a skill check, such as Concentration, Knowledge (arcane lore, physical sciences, technology, or even theology, when dealing with supernatural planes of existence), or Search (to find the right pathways). The GM sets the Difficulty Class of the check based on how involved the route is between departure and destination, from DC 10 for a routine trip to DC 30 or more for an extremely difficult and dangerous passage between worlds. A failed check may send travelers off course to a different destination, forcing them to try and find their way back (often after dealing with some challenges and difficulties *en route*).

FORCES IN THE OMNIVERSE

The omniverse is unimaginably vast, an infinity of universes. There are forces and beings at work there, existing between and beyond individual worlds, that travelers might encounter. Heroes often run into the agendas of trans-temporal and transdimensional beings, sometimes with the fate of all creation at stake.

Most of the forces in this section, both natural phenomena and transdimensional beings, are plot devices for the GM to use in dimensional adventures as challenges, allies, or antagonists as suits the story. Their game stats, if any, are left for the GM to decide, as most are essentially X-traits (*M&M*, page 211).

NATURAL FORCES

Much about the nature of the omniverse remains a mystery, including the assorted natural forces at work surrounding various worlds and the spaces between them. Dimensional and temporal travelers can encounter these forces, and they can also lead to interdimensional adventures when they show up on a particular world.

CHRONOZOIDS

Chronozoids, or "time-creatures," are living beings with a trans-temporal or trans-dimensional nature, essentially creatures with a natural Super-Movement ability that allows them to shift between different dimensions or times. Some chronozoids have modifiers on their Super-Movement, allowing others to move along with them or even follow them through the mysterious pathways between worlds. Affects Others is fairly common, while Affects Others with Area (typically Burst or Line) permits those who *want* to follow the creature to do so. Only a few chronozoids have Dimensional Attacks allowing them to "drag" others across the dimensions with them.

Chronozoids often show up in local folklore as "fey" or mystical beings, ranging from white stags to black hounds to white rabbits in waistcoats with pocket watches (although the latter qualify as intelligent forces of a sort). Some are nothing more than floating lights, leading travelers off roads and into strange other worlds.

DIMENSIONAL RIFTS

Dimensional rifts are natural portals or gateways between dimensions. They operate on their own, although some also respond to certain outside forces, including rituals or techniques people can use to control them.

Most rifts are actually areas where two or more alternate dimensions "overlap" to the point where they almost touch. In fact, when they do "touch" is when a rift forms, allowing movement between the dimensions. The physical locations of rifts, therefore, tend to earn reputations as haunted, eerie, or mystical because of strange goings-on there. The interface between the dimensions can create "ghosts" (typically, shadow-images of the other dimension or time period) or allow the forces of the other dimension to "leak," causing unusual phenomena.

Examples of dimensional rifts in the World of Freedom include Magic Mesa (*Freedom City*, page 94) and the stable dimensional "fold" where Utopia Isle is hidden (*Freedom City*, page 98). The Terminus Portal contained within the Nucleus of the Atom Family could also be considered a kind of dimensional rift, or it would be, if the portal weren't contained and regulated by Dr. Atom's technology.

TIME-STORMS

A "time-storm" is a kind of dimensional rift, taking the form of a violent atmospheric disturbance centered on a disruption in the fabric of the omniverse. Time-storms most often occur in places where the dimensional fabric is already frayed or weakened in some fashion, and they can convey people, vessels, and even whole areas of landscape to other worlds and times.

When a time-storm occurs, it is usually accompanied by a sudden mist, fog, or dark bank of clouds. Electronic and magnetic devices are often disrupted by the storm, cutting off outside communications and causing temporary power losses. The storm grows in intensity, although some time-storms remain little more than rolling fog banks accompanied by the failure of technological devices. When the storm passes, those inside its center find themselves elsewhere, in another time or dimension.

On some worlds, people have developed technology or arcane rituals capable of summoning and controlling time-storms, in order to use them as a means of transporting subjects to other places and times deliberately. This is a difficult and dangerous practice, but it can show up in the arsenal of a supervillain or other character in the series, if desired.

INTELLIGENT FORCES

There are a number of intelligent beings and forces at work in the omniverse, probably far more than the inhabitants of Earth-Prime have encountered as yet. The following is a sample of the known beings capable of spanning dimensions and involving themselves in the affairs of their inhabitants.

THE ASSOCIATES

The mysterious Associates first came to the attention of the superhuman community during the Malfidian Invasion of 1965. They are apparently a pair of time-travelers from the distant future, able to project their minds back in time to possess human host-bodies. Initially, the Associates were thought to be a man and a woman, but they have since shown no particular preference for the sex of their hosts, and it remains unclear what their true sex (if any) might be.

In fact, it's not entirely certain the Associates are always the same individuals, although they seem to be. They use the names of their hosts and speak a wide range of human languages (perhaps some sort of "universal translation" ability), but they offer no clues as to their real names or identities. All that is known is they appear to have humanity's best interests at heart and the preservation of the future as their primary goal. Of course, exactly which future that is (their own or another) remains unknown.

The Associates appear only rarely, typically to warn of impending disaster and to help avert it, although they prefer to work through intermediaries. They've had the most contact with the UNICORN division of UNISON and display a fondness for working with the international organization. Some speculate this is because they have a more "global" worldview in the future. For more on UNISON and its divisions, see the *Agents of Freedom* sourcebook.

The Associates are essentially roving plot devices for the Gamemaster to introduce temporal or dimensional adventures. Their powers, abilities, and motives are left for the GM to define, keeping in mind they are secretive and tend to play things close to the vest.

THE FUTUREKIN

The so-called "Futurekin"—so named because the Associates call them "our future-kin"—are the opposite-numbers of the Associates, the other side in a kind of "temporal cold war" involving the outcome of a number of historic events. Essentially, the Futurekin attempt to interfere to change history to suit their plans, while the Associates intervene in order to stop them and preserve history's "proper" shape. Just to confuse matters, however, there are times when it seems the Associates are the ones interfering (as they first did with the Malfidian Invasion) and it is the Futurekin trying to stop *them*.

Otherwise, the Futurekin are the same as the Associates in terms of their abilities: incorporeal beings from the future able to possess human host bodies. Those who have interacted with them say the Futurekin are "less human" than the Associates, cold and somewhat emotionless as well as cruel and disdainful of "primitives."

THE GUARDIANS OF TIME

The Guardians of Time are special operatives employed by godlike beings known as the Time-Keepers, said to dwell "at the end of time." The Time-Keepers choose certain individuals, providing them with the means to travel through time and assigning them various tasks intended to preserve the balance of the omniverse and keep history on its "proper" course (at least as the Time-Keepers define it).

Although their mysterious masters keep their own council, the common theory among the Guardians is the Time-Keepers want to preserve the history

that leads to their own creation, considering it the "proper" shape of the universe (which makes it as proper as any, they suppose).

Although the Guardians are capable of visiting parallel timelines, their responsibility is to the history of Earth-Prime (as if that weren't a large enough job). It may well be there are parallel Time-Keepers and Guardians in other universes; there's been at least one occasion that suggests this is the case.

Dr. Tomorrow (*Freedom City*, page 138) is the best-known Guardian of Time in Freedom City. His equipment is typical of other Guardians, and the Time-Keepers seem to favor agents with a good dose of self-reliance, rather than providing them with a lot of technology that could potentially pollute the timeline. This is probably why Guardians aren't advanced robots, super-beings, or armed with battlesuits like the Star Knights.

THE NAVIMATRICES

Untold eons ago, the navimatrices were made by a race now long-dead to chart and blaze the paths between worlds. What became of their makers is not recorded in their data-banks, although most suspect it was some type of cataclysm rather than a slow decline, given how many navimatrices were left inert and adrift, scattered across the omniverse.

Over time, a few have re-activated following contact with other worlds and beings. They have adapted form and function, retaining their original imperatives to travel between worlds and to serve a higher cause or purpose. Their creators long since gone, the surviving navimatrices find new masters to serve or people to aid to give their existence meaning.

Perhaps the most famous navimatrix is the friend and ally of the AlterniTeens, known as "the Navigatrix." Her involvement with the team



of time-tossed young heroes from different worlds is detailed in the *Hero High* sourcebook. Although her form is not typical of her kind (inasmuch as the navimatrices have a "typical" form any longer), her abilities are.

While most navimatrices are housed in robotic shells of some type, a few are known to act as the "brains" of omnivessels, dimension-traveling

ships sailing the gulfs between worlds. Their mental abilities, skills, and powers are similar, merely incorporated into the vessel they oversee. Possession of an omnivessel could be a means for a group of heroes to travel the omniverse in an ongoing series (see **The Omniversal Series** in this chapter).

THE NORN

The being called The Norn is an anthropomorphic avatar of fate, destiny, and universal or cosmic balance. She most often appears as a feminine figure made up of dark, starry space, in which can be seen nebulae, galaxies, and comets. By turns she seems young, mature, and old, usually dressed in a hooded robe, sometimes holding the tools of a weaver, such as a shuttle, spindle, or shears. She's commonly associated with mythological beings like the Greek Fates and the Norns of Norse mythology, which may be named for her, as well as various triple-goddess figures.

The Norn only appears in times of the greatest importance to the cosmos and even the omniverse as a whole. She acts only to preserve the cosmic balance and the existence of the universe in times when it comes under threat. For example, during the "Time of Crisis," when Omega attempted to collapse the omniverse, the Norn appeared to a group of heroes she saved from destruction so they might undo what Omega had wrought. She has intervened similarly to protect reality from outside threats.

The Norn is a true plot device character in *Mutants & Masterminds* game terms (see page 211 of *M&M*). Her powers are virtually limitless by the standards of mortal beings and even immortals like the "lesser" gods worshipped by humanity. Her primary use in a series is as a plot device and enabler: She can call upon the heroes to deal with some threat to the cosmic balance, giving them just enough information and assistance to get the job done. She can also act to enforce certain "cosmic laws," providing a means of relieving characters of problematic powers, devices, or plot devices they might have acquired, perhaps "exchanging" them for something costing the same power points to "maintain the balance."

See the "Agents of Fate" series framework for more ideas on using the Norn as a prime-mover in an omniversal *Worlds of Freedom* series.

ZEITGEIST

One of the greatest threats to time is Dr. Tomorrow's arch-foe, Zeitgeist. Once a Nazi scientist on Dr. Tomorrow's home world of *Erde*, Oberst Geistmann was seemingly vaporized in Tomas Morgen's first use of his stolen time-machine. In truth, Dr. Geistmann became a bodiless wraith, able to possess living hosts much like the Associates and the Futurekin.

During World War II on Earth-Prime, he inhabited the body of an albino ape and served as a scientist for the Nazi regime. By the war's end, the destruction of his host-body revealed the full extent of Geistmann's powers. Calling himself Zeitgeist ("spirit of time"), he has attempted to change history on a number of occasions, but he has been thwarted by Dr. Tomorrow, the Associates, and their allies.

Detailed information about Zeitgeist can be found in the *Golden Age* sourcebook for *Mutants & Masterminds*.

THE OMNIVERSAL SERIES

Most *M&M* series dip into the omniversal well only occasionally, sending heroes off to a parallel world for an adventure or two before bringing them back home, or having visitors from another world show up on the heroes' doorstep from time to time. It is also possible to run an entire series based around the ability to travel from world to world, with heroes experiencing countless different times and realities. Common set-ups for an omniversal series using *Worlds of Freedom* include the following.

NAVIMATRIX

POWER LEVEL 7

Str 24	Dex 12	Con 24	Int 17	Wis 15	Cha 13
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Skills: Computers 8 (+11), Concentration 10 (+12), Diplomacy 6 (+7), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+11), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+11), Notice 6 (+8), Profession (explorer) 10 (+12), Search 8 (+11), Sense Motive 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+5)

Feats: Eidetic Memory, Fearless

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Flight 2** (25 MPH), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Protection 1** (Impervious), **Super-Movement 3** (Dimensional, Any Dimension, Affects Others, Burst Area, Full Action), **Super-Senses 7** (Detect Dimension, Dimensional Awareness, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-Light Vision, Time Sense, Tracking [Dimensional Awareness]), **Super-Strength 3** (heavy load: 5,600 lbs.), **Teleport 5** (Affects Others, Burst Area)

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +16, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -4, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +8, Fortitude +7, Reflex +5, Will +6

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Super-Movement, must recharge between jumps, -1 point)

Abilities 45 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 79 + Combat 24 + Saves 8—Drawbacks 1 = Total 175



PARALLEL WORLDS SAVE TIME, RECYCLE!

One advantage offered by parallel Earths is many of the allies and enemies the heroes meet are quite similar to people on Earth-Prime (or their own, if they're not from Freedom City's Earth). While the names, costumes, and attitudes often differ, the game stats can be *remarkably* similar.

This allows you to reuse a lot of the game information in *Freedom City* and its supporting sourcebooks: take the heroes to Anti-Earth and every *hero* in *Freedom City* is now usable as a villain! Introduce some latter-day super-Nazis on *Erde*, and you can use some of the bad guys from the *Golden Age* sourcebook, saying they're descendants of the originals, and so forth and so on.

By mixing-and-matching different timelines, you can even use the player characters in supporting roles in your series! They can meet up with their parallel world selves, who might be good, evil, or indifferent, and all you need to do is slightly modify the existing characters. A carefully planned parallel world adventure (or even series of them) can save you lots of time when it comes to making characters.

AGENTS OF FATE

It all began on the day the heroes died, each of them in their own world and their own way. They found themselves adrift in an endless void and heard a voice speaking to them. The Norn offered them a second chance and an opportunity to continue making a difference. If they agreed to become "reality agents," traveling to other worlds to right wrongs, then eventually they could find new lives out among the infinite worlds.

Now, The Norn dispatches the heroes to realities in dire need, where things have gone awry, either due to outside interference or mysterious forces beyond understanding. All they have to do is get things back on the right track. Unfortunately, sometimes that requires some difficult decisions. On some worlds, the agents may have to save the life of a brutal dictator or notorious villain, or end the life of a hero or seeming innocent for the greater cosmic good. Their deeds may be remembered as infamous in some parts of the omniverse. They must be content with the knowledge they have done what was necessary to preserve all reality.

CROSS-TIME CAPERS

After encountering a time- or dimension-traveling villain, the heroes set off in pursuit, which takes them across other worlds and times. Perhaps they're initially pulled along in the bad-guys "wake" and then find their own mode of transportation, or maybe they're linked to their quarry somehow, allowing them to follow no matter where (or when) the villain goes.

The world-hopping bad-guy might have an agenda beyond trying to shake the heroes' pursuit, in which case they can also thwart different nefarious schemes along the way. The series can end once the heroes manage to catch their quarry, or it can morph into another type of series, perhaps with the heroes recruited to act as agents for another interdimensional faction.

GUARDIANS OF TIME

The Time-Keepers recruit "time agents" like Dr. Tomorrow to deal with what they consider problems in the omniverse. In this series, the heroes are one such team of agents, either working for the Time-Keepers them-

selves or for a senior agent like Dr. Tomorrow. They travel to different worlds and times to put right events thrown off-kilter by others.

The time agents might have access to their own ship like Dr. Tomorrow's or use some other means to travel across time and alternate dimensions, such as a team-member with innate Super-Movement powers. Adventures take the form of assignments from the heroes' higher-ups, with the additional complication that the time agents can't reveal too much to the locals or further interfere in the situation apart from fixing what's wrong with it.

TERMINAL VELOCITY

The heroes are all among the last survivors of their home-worlds, destroyed by Omega, Lord of the Terminus (see **Chapter 9**). Now, they've banded together, across worlds and times, to bring the fight to Omega himself and bring down the nihilistic overlord once and for all.

The team can work as freedom-fighters and insurgents in the Terminus itself, trying to protect other worlds from falling to Omega and his forces and seeking out information and legendary super-weapons they can use to defeat Omega once and for all. Of course, they must beware of cosmic legends claiming Omega *cannot* be defeated, at least not without those who do so taking his place as a force for cosmic destruction...

THE WANDERERS

Through various circumstances, the heroes are "unstuck" in time, randomly jumping from world to world, or even time to time. Sometimes, they find themselves showing up at just the right moment to help with a crisis, other times their appearance seems to *cause* a crisis! Whatever the case, the heroes are wanderers, vagabonds moving across space and time and having various adventures along the way.

The mechanism causing the heroes to world-jump could be almost anything: the after-effects of a scientific or magical accident, possession of a strange artifact, the actions of another character or cosmic power, and so forth. A navimatrix (see the **Navimatrixes** section, previously) can provide a good plot-device for world-jumps, especially if it is not entirely under the characters' control.



CHAPTER 2: WARS FOR FREEDOM



From its christening, the preservation of human liberty infused Freedom City to a degree matched by few other places. Having known only oppression elsewhere, the settlement's Puritan and Dutch founders conceived of it as a place where they might live and worship as they chose. This independent spirit abided through the American Revolution and the War Between the States. During those trying times, the people of Freedom willingly gave their lives and fortunes for liberty's sake.

Just as those two bloody struggles ultimately defined what freedom in America really meant, devout patriotism became synonymous with Freedom and its residents. These moments in history also gave rise to the city's other defining characteristic: larger than life heroes with extraordinary abilities. While the mists of time may have obscured their exploits, this chapter unveils the truth about their amazing deeds and outlines how your *Freedom City* games can take part in them.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

The people of Freedom found themselves drawn into the American Revolution and Civil War by events seemingly beyond their control. However, once destiny began its bloody course, Freedom and its colorful heroes didn't just live history—they made it.

This section provides some historical background on Freedom and its defenders during the Wars for Freedom. A lot of this information can't be found in history books, but they'd be a heckuva lot more entertaining if it could. It's up to you to decide if this information is found in the history books in Freedom City or is "secret history" or even a reflection of a parallel Earth where these events take place. Use them as you see fit.

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION

Like many of their fellow colonists, the people of Freedom weren't happy when the faraway King George III and the British Parliament began to limit the political and economic freedoms they'd gotten accustomed to. While some Freedonians just grumbled about it, others engaged in what would become a time-honored tradition of American political protest: they boozed up and rioted, beginning with the Kingston Tea Party in 1773.

Freedom's trade-dependent economy took a shot right to the breeches as a result, turning many of the impoverished from fence sitters into

active protesters against perceived British tyranny. In effect, by calling out the good-looking rebels who refused to play by the rules, arch-authority figure George III made them the coolest kids in class.

When simple drunken and disorderly morphed into the American Revolutionary War in 1775, most Freedonians were ready and eager to do their part to help the colonies win their independence. The only thing stopping them was the intimidating presence of a thousand-strong British garrison, backed by the guns of the Royal Navy squadron blockading the harbor. With the colonies now in open rebellion, the redcoats and their capable and ruthless commander, Governor Terrance Strype, were authorized to do whatever was necessary to keep Freedom pacified.

A thousand bayonets seemed more than enough to do the job, and thus, Governor Strype and his men could have hardly conceived their efforts would ultimately fail. In 1779, the beaten and broken redcoats withdrew from Freedom, never to return. Their humiliating rout was attributable to the sacrifices of many brave souls, but three stood out as particularly crucial. The first was Major Joseph Clark of the Continental Army, one of the most brilliant and unconventional military leaders ever to don a uniform. Much credit is also due the masked, mysterious Minuteman and Lady Liberty, the very first of Freedom City's colorfully costumed heroes.

MAJOR JOSEPH CLARK

Born an indentured servant's son in Lantern Hill, Joseph Clark would have quietly lived out his life on a tiny farm had the Revolution not come. Joseph's father treasured his hard-earned freedom above all, and he instilled this same value in his son. When the time came to fight for liberty, Joseph grabbed his musket and formed up with the nearest colonial militia without a second thought. Thus began one of the most remarkable military careers in American history.

Like his father, Clark was a trusted friend of the neighboring Happanuks, and he learned from them at an early age how to track, hide, and fight like an Indian. Using this knowledge, he transformed the ragtag Freedom militia—at the time, largely made up of men turned down for service in the Continental Army—into a fighting unit capable of besting many times its number.

During the next eight years, Clark's bravery, ingenuity, and integrity became legendary, as he outwitted and outfought the redcoats in one daring exploit after another. Freedom City schoolchildren still learn how he made a hundred Hessian mercenaries break and run by marching the same dozen men in a continuous procession behind a hill, with only a seemingly endless line of bayonets visible to the enemy. Similar trickery compelled a fully loaded British troop transport to surrender without firing a shot, only to discover it had capitulated to a mere score of Clark's men "aiming" blackened tree trunks instead of cannons.

Initially skeptical of the untrained and undersized Freedom militia, General Washington gradually assigned more and more men to Clark's command and eventually promoted him to Major. In time, the Happanuk warriors also joined Clark's command, his unbroken word winning them over despite the offer of substantial British bribes to attack the colonists.

By 1779, Clark was able to harness substantial numbers of troops to his incomparable guile. In the fall of that year, he executed a brilliant series of maneuvers that forced the British to surrender Freedom for good. Clark spent the remainder of the war on special missions for the Continental Army throughout North America, outfoxing the redcoats just as he'd done in Freedom.

After the Revolution, Clark returned to his farm, married, and raised eight children. He appeared in public only once more, wishing Godspeed

to the Freedom militia as it mobilized for the War of 1812. He died in his sleep a short while later on July 4th, the birthday of the nation he'd done much to bring into being.

LADY LIBERTY I

Freedom's first-ever costumed hero was a mysterious young woman known as Lady Liberty. During the American Revolution, she fought Tory spies and British soldiers wearing a distinctive red, white, and blue costume like the uniform of a Colonial soldier, complete with tri-cornered hat, blue cloak, and a domino mask to conceal her identity. Secretly one Elizabeth Forester, she became a rallying cry for Colonial forces, and stories of her saving doomed rebels spread like wildfire.

It was a far cry from the life Elizabeth intended to lead. She had settled into a happy, comfortable life as the wife of Freedom's appointed harbor master James Forester, and her natural charm and gregariousness made her a familiar, much beloved presence throughout town. The actions of an angry mob conspired to end this contented life in 1773, as a rowdy band of Kingston rebels showed their solidarity with Boston's Sons of Liberty by destroying a large shipment of tea. Having no one else to make an example of, Governor Terrance Strype accused James Forester of complicity in the act, and had him publicly hung after a show-trial.

MAJOR JOSEPH CLARK POWER LEVEL 6

Str 14	Dex 16	Con 16	Int 12	Wis 16	Cha 16
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Skills: Climb 4 (+6), Diplomacy 2 (+5), Intimidate 5 (+8), Knowledge (tactics) 11 (+12), Language 1 (Happanuk), Notice 6 (+9), Profession (farmer) 4 (+7), Profession (soldier) 5 (+8), Ride 6 (+9), Stealth 6 (+9), Survival 6 (+9), Swim 4 (+6)

Feats: Attack Specialization (musket), Benefit 5 (military rank, major), Endurance, Equipment 6, Improved Aim, Inspire, Leadership, Luck, Master Plan, Track

Equipment: Camo clothing, flintlock musket, heavy pistol, telescope, 2 tomahawks

Combat: Attack +5, +7 (musket), Grapple +7, Damage +5 (musket), +4 (heavy pistol, tomahawk), +2 (unarmed), Defense +5, Knockback -1, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +3, Fortitude +6, Reflex +6, Will +5

Abilities 30 + Skills 15 (60 ranks) + Feats 19 + Combat 20 + Saves 8 = Total 92

LADY LIBERTY I POWER LEVEL 5

Str 10	Dex 14	Con 14	Int 14	Wis 16	Cha 20
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Skills: Bluff 7 (+12), Diplomacy 7 (+12), Gather Information 7 (+12), Knowledge (current events) 7 (+9), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+8), Notice 7 (+10), Profession (house-keeper) 6 (+9), Ride 7 (+9), Search 7 (+9), Sense Motive 7 (+10), Sleight of Hand 8 (+10), Stealth 8 (+10)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Specialization (sword), Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 2, Equipment, Improved Block, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Inspire 5, Luck 3, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Taunt, Well Informed

Equipment: Sword

Combat: Attack +4, +6 (sword), Grapple +4, Damage +3 (sword), +0 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -2 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +4 (+2 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

Abilities 28 + Skills 21 (84 ranks) + Feats 25 + Combat 16 + Saves 5 = Total 95



For years after, Elizabeth was heartbroken, but she was also angry, and sought some way for a woman to join the fight against the British and their tyranny. She made herself a uniform patterned after the colors of the new American flag, and with every stitch she drew up her plans against the redcoats. Her greatest asset was knowing virtually everyone in Freedom, Tory or patriot, and being privy to all the comings and goings in Freedom Harbor. By day Elizabeth Forester used these connections to gather intelligence, and by night as Lady Liberty she made sure it was acted upon.

Lady Liberty was seemingly everywhere during the Revolution, but she developed a special relationship with Major Joseph Clark. Many who knew them wondered just how close their relationship really was, but Clark's commitment to duty and Elizabeth's still-broken heart made romance impractical. Nonetheless, the two were a formidable team, and their triumphs became legendary. Most famously, she swiftly informed Clark of Governor Strype's sudden, seemingly accidental demise, allowing the Major to initiate a series of battles while the redcoats were still leaderless, ultimately liberating Freedom from British control.

Lady Liberty was seemingly everywhere during the Revolution, but she developed a special relationship with Major Joseph Clark. Time and again, information she provided made his legendary triumphs possible, and on more than a few occasions, the Major owed his life to a last-minute rescue by his mysterious masked ally. Many who knew them wondered just how close their relationship really was, but Clark's commitment to duty and Elizabeth's still-broken heart made romance impractical.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth did not live to see the freedom she wanted for America. While riding to meet her contacts with stolen information on British troop movements, she was ambushed by Hessian mercenaries and gravely injured. Dying alone in the wilderness of western Massachusetts,

she prayed for guidance and felt a warm and glowing light enfold her. The Spirit of Liberty heard the pleas of her loyal daughter and carried Elizabeth home with her, reuniting her at last with her beloved husband.

MINUTEMAN I

Freedom's Lady Liberty was not the only famed costumed figure during the American Revolution. Throughout the New England colonies, people talked about Minuteman, a masked colonial soldier with the strength of ten men, who always seemed to arrive in the nick of time, vanishing just as quickly and mysteriously thereafter.

Minuteman was in reality Captain Isaiah Hawthorne of the Continental Army, a member of General George Washington's staff. During the French and Indian War, Isaiah spared an undefended Happanuk Indian village from being massacred. The tribe's ancient medicine man rewarded Isaiah for his act of mercy with the secrets of the rare manaka root. Properly prepared, an extract of manaka root grants minute-long bursts of superhuman strength and speed, and for many years afterward, Isaiah remained one of the few non-Indians privy to its wonders.

Throughout the Revolution, whenever a crisis arose, Capt. Hawthorne imbibed the manaka extract and then proceeded to battle the odds as well as the clock. Capt. Hawthorne spent the revolution on the edge of a court-martial due to his unexplained absences, which also restricted his costumed intervals. Despite these limitations, Minuteman proved to be the savior of Washington's army on a number of occasions.

Minuteman seemingly disappeared at the war's end, but stories about him inspired generations to come. As one of the very first costumed heroes, Minuteman proved just how much seconds count in a crisis, and the difference one valiant man can make.

MINUTEMAN I**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 25/12 | Dex 14 | Con 20/13 | Int 12 | Wis 14 | Cha 14

Skills: Bluff 5 (+7), Climb 5 (+12), Craft (chemical) 3 (+4), Diplomacy 5 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 5 (+6), Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+5), Language (Happanuk), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (farmer) 8 (+10), Profession (soldier) 5 (+7), Ride 5 (+7), Stealth 5 (+7), Survival 4 (+6), Swim 5 (+12)

Feats: Attractive, Benefit: Military Rank (captain) 4, Chokehold, Endurance, Equipment 4, Improved Escape, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Inspire 4, Leadership, Power Attack, Quick Change, Seize Initiative

Equipment: Camo clothing, flintlock musket, heavy pistol, telescope

Powers: **Device 6** (manaka root extract, easy to lose)

Manaka root extract: **Enhanced Constitution 7, Enhanced Feats 7**

(Evasion, Fast Overrun, Move-by Action, Improved Overrun, Quick Draw, Takedown Attack 2), **Enhanced Strength 13, Speed 3** (50 MPH)

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +12, Damage +7 (unarmed), +5 (flintlock musket), +4 (heavy pistol), Defense +6, Knockback -2, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +5, Fortitude +6, Reflex +3, Will +4

Drawbacks: Involuntary Transformation (one minute after ingesting extract, cannot resist change, -6 points), Normal Identity (1 hour, -5 points)

Abilities 19 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 22 + Powers 18 + Combat 22 + Saves 4–Drawbacks 11 = Total 90

THE VISCOUNTESS**POWER LEVEL 5**

Str 10 | Dex 14 | Con 12 | Int 14 | Wis 16 | Cha 16

Skills: Bluff 7 (+10), Diplomacy 7 (+10), Disguise 7 (+10), Gather Information 7 (+10), Knowledge (art) 7 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 9 (+11), Notice 7 (+10), Search 7 (+9), Sense Motive 7 (+10), Stealth 7 (+9)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Specialization 2 (whip), Attractive, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 2, Equipment 5, Fascinate (Bluff), Improved Block, Improved Critical (whip) 4, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Master Plan, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Sneak Attack, Taunt, Well Informed

Equipment: 2 Heavy pistols, holdout pistol, whip

Combat: Attack +4, +8 (whip), Grapple +4, Damage +4 (heavy pistol), +2 (hold-out pistol), +0 (unarmed, whip), Defense +7 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1 (-0 flat-footed), Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +3 (+1 flatfooted), Fortitude +3, Reflex +4, Will +4

Abilities 22 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 30 + Combat 18 + Saves 5 = Total 93

had killed, knowing full well consequences don't exist for rich, beautiful nobles like her.

During the war, she developed a special hatred for Joseph Clark, one of the rare men with the integrity and fortitude to resist her charms. She also waged a continuing war of secrets with Lady Liberty, with neither gaining the upper hand. Their conflict carried on throughout the colonies until Lady Liberty's demise in an ambush orchestrated by the Viscountess. Her triumph was short-lived however, as soon after, the "contemptible little peasants" in the colonies won their independence. At long last, the Viscountess found herself in a situation she couldn't manipulate to her liking.

Her first real defeat drove her to distraction, and soon after, she vanished from sight. Some say her many affairs caught up with her, and she lived out her days locked in a sanitarium suffering "the ailments of Venus." Others say she settled into a faithless marriage with a wealthy nobleman, carrying on innumerable affairs and raising a trio of daughters to follow in her vile footsteps.

THE LATE UNPLEASANTNESS

Minus the king hating that united them during the Revolution, Americans grew increasingly polarized in the following decades over how their liberties were to be defined. To Northern abolitionists, slavery was like a giant asterisk on all America's promises of freedom, while Southern slave-owners defended their right to own property, including other human beings. Some urged the federal government to help its needy citizens, while others fretted over who'd get stuck with the sizable bill. Despite all the debate, matters were ultimately settled with bullets during "the Late Unpleasantness," better known as the American Civil War.

True to its name and heritage, Freedom City was an abolitionist stronghold, even as the heavily agricultural western area of the state remained largely pro-slavery. The "peculiar institution" was officially banned in the city, and slave-owners learned quickly a visit to Freedom could cost them their teeth and their human property.

Despite its strongly abolitionist sentiment, Freedom's loyalties were divided when the War broke out. Half the city, outraged by the slaveholding South's treason, rushed to defend the Union. The other half questioned what the Union had done for Freedom lately, and what right it had to kill Southerners who'd democratically voted to leave it. The

anti-Unionists had no love for slavery, but the federal government's broken promises to dredge the silting Centery Narrows and resuscitate the city's economy made them mad-mean mad.

Support for the Union grew in Freedom over time, particularly after the Emancipation Proclamation transformed the War to Save the Union into the War to End Slavery. Despite this, smart city travelers knew how to sing "Dixie" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" with equal fervor, as well as what neighborhoods favored each tune, right up until the surrender at Appomattox.

THE PATRIOT REGIMENT

As the Civil War raged on a thousand bloody fields, a collection of strangely gifted individuals fought their own battles to save the Union. Brought together in the fall of 1861 by President Lincoln and the second Minuteman, the Patriot Regiment became one of the first (if not the first) teams of so-called "mystery men." Minuteman's insistence that the team carry out its missions in secret kept the Regiment's exploits largely out of the history books, but "tall tales" about their adventures have endured for generations.

The Patriot Regiment was present at nearly every crucial moment in the War, working in secret to stop any extraordinary threat to the Union war effort, be it Confederate mystery men, mad scientists, supernatural

menaces, or agents of meddling foreign powers. Concerns over the latter prompted the team's overseas covert missions during the War's quiet winter months, carrying them as far away as Mexico, Canada, and the great powers of Europe. Naturally, the team was a frequent visitor to Freedom City during the War.

Despite its invaluable contributions to the Union victory, the War took its toll on the regiment, and its surviving members disbanded after the Confederate surrender. In the end, the Patriot Regiment sacrificed much, including personal glory, for the sake of victory, and in doing so, it set the standard for all the costumed champions who followed.

MINUTEMAN II

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 25	Dex 14	Con 20	Int 10	Wis 14	Cha 12
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Skills: Climb 4 (+11), Diplomacy 4 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (farmer) 8 (+10), Ride 4 (+6)

Feats: Chokehold, Endurance, Evasion, Improved Escape, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Inspire 2, Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Seize Initiative

Powers: Speed 3 (50 MPH), **Super-Senses 12** (precognition [Extended 7, Radius])

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +12, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +5, Knockback -2, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +5, Fortitude +6, Reflex +3, Will +4

Abilities 35 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 15 + Combat 20 + Saves 4 = Total 93

GOLIATH

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 25	Dex 12	Con 25	Int 6	Wis 10	Cha 8
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Skills: Intimidate 8 (+9, includes +2 size)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 3, Chokehold, Endurance, Fast Overrun, Fearsome Presence 6, Improved Critical (punch) 6, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Startle, Takedown Attack 2

Powers: Growth 4 (large; Continuous, Permanent), **Leaping 6** (x100 distance), **Super-Strength 6** (heavy load: 50 tons)

Combat: Attack +5 (melee, includes -1 size), +2 (ranged, includes -1 size), Grapple +23, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +5 (includes -1 size, +2 flat-footed), Knockback -7, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +7, Fortitude +9, Reflex +3, Will +2

Abilities 14 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 25 + Powers 30 + Combat 18 + Saves 6 = Total 95

THE IRONCLAD

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 20/6	Dex 12	Con 6	Int 30	Wis 16	Cha 16
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Skills: Bluff 4 (+7), Craft (chemical) 9 (+19), Craft (mechanical) 9 (+19), Knowledge (art) 6 (+16), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+14), Knowledge (history) 6 (+16), Knowledge (physical sciences) 9 (+19), Knowledge (technology) 9 (+19), Language (French, German, Italian, Spanish) 4, Notice 8 (+11), Perform (singing) 8 (+11)

Feats: Eidetic Memory, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Taunt, Skill Mastery (Craft [chemical, mechanical], Knowledge [physical sciences, technology])

Powers: Device 9 (Armor, hard to lose)

Armor: **Blast 6** (cannon; Explosion Area; Full Action; Improved Range;

Alternate Power: **Blast 9**, Full Action; Improved Range), **Enhanced Strength 14, Protection 11, Super-Strength 3** [1.5 tons]

Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +11, Damage +6 (explosion), +9 (long-range Blast), +5 (unarmed), Defense +3 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-0 without Armor), Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +9 (-2 without Armor), Fortitude +1, Reflex +3, Will +4

Drawbacks: Normal Identity (5 minutes, -5 points)

Abilities 26 + Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 36 + Combat 12 + Saves 6—Drawbacks 5 = Total 99

MINUTEMAN II

The blessings of the manaka root ingested by Isaiah Hawthorne were passed on to his great-great grandson, Joseph, who grew strong enough to wrestle a bear and fast enough to outrace a horse. Even more miraculously, he had the "second sight," foreseeing dangers before they occurred. Joseph honored his forbearer's secret life as the patriotic Minuteman, and when President Lincoln's call for volunteers went out, he was among the first to answer.

On the eve of the First Battle of Manassas, Joseph's second sight showed him which of his friends and loved ones were doomed to die in the impending struggle. Despite his best efforts, the universe of battle proved too chaotic and immense for him to change their fates. Though he fended off the Confederate mystery man Achilles and saved the Union army from a total rout, constantly seeing the shadows of death falling on his comrades' faces eventually proved too much for him. On the verge of madness, Joseph was discharged and sent home.

Still wanting to serve his country, the ever-patriotic Joseph followed his visions and donned his grandfather's Minuteman costume. In this guise, he successfully sought an audience with President Lincoln, a man similarly haunted by the deaths around him. Their sense of kinship was immediate, and Lincoln offered his administration's support to the reborn national hero. This sanction later extended to the Patriot Regiment as a whole, resulting in Minuteman's commissioning as its leader.

While others on the team were older, smarter, and more ruthless, none commanded more respect than the living icon of the Revolution. He ultimately humbled even those who deduced his true nature as a melancholic boy of eighteen. Whenever anyone seriously challenged his authority, Minuteman used his knowledge of their futures and deepest secrets to put them in their place. It was an action seemingly out of character for the earnest young man, but it served to keep the team in line.

The second Minuteman's career ended in April 1865 when, despite his premonition and all-out effort, he was unable to prevent the assassination of his friend and mentor, President Lincoln. After the fallen president's funeral, Joseph returned to his farm, burned the Minuteman costume, and carried the secret of his family's heroic legacy to his grave.

GOLIATH

Nothing is known of the Union mystery man called Goliath before the fateful night Columbia saved him from a Maryland lynch mob looking to avenge an unspeakable crime he'd allegedly perpetrated. She sensed that inside his giant, misshapen body was the mind of a child, and she vowed to protect and educate him. Given his tremendous strength and the exigencies of the time, Columbia decided the best way of accomplishing these goals was to sponsor him for membership in the Patriot Regiment.

Despite Columbia's uncompromising support, Goliath's presence disconcerted his teammates, at best. Though Columbia endeavored



to teach him everything from Mozart to Methodism, Goliath remained dangerously unpredictable. Goliath was all the more volatile when Columbia wasn't around, as she alone seemed to have his trust. At any given moment, Goliath might forget his strength and do considerable damage or wander from a pitched battle to float flowers down a stream. He could go from sweet and childlike to angry and berserk at the slightest provocation.

Goliath met his fate during the fall of Richmond. In the chaos engulfing the burning, frightened city, Columbia discovered Goliath in the commission of an unspeakable act. As he walked toward her for a forgiving embrace, she snapped his neck, killing him instantly. Using the nearest burning building as his funeral pyre, she laid him to rest and wept inconsolably for days after.

THE IRONCLAD

Dr. Michael Dunn was among the most brilliant scientists and engineers of his time, as well as being a cultured raconteur and accomplished vocalist. He would have certainly gone down in history had it not been for his 3'10" stature, which rendered 19th century society incapable of regarding him seriously.

Undeterred, Dr. Dunn designed and built devices far beyond what was thought possible with the technology of that time. He eventually tired of creating his mechanical miracles in obscurity, and the onset of the Civil War seemed to be his long-sought opportunity for fame. In its time of peril, he believed the Union would have no choice but to recognize his genius and use his inventions to accomplish his other great goal: destroying the South. Dunn had long hated retrograde, discriminatory Southern culture, and now his wondrous technology

would crush the Confederacy straight into the modern enlightened scientific world.

Like other notable inventors, Dunn demonstrated his futuristic weaponry before the President himself. While Lincoln was impressed enough with Dunn's steam-powered iron suit and shoulder-mounted cannon to compare it favorably to an ironclad warship, he thought it impractical for mass production. Instead, the President offered to make the prototype and its pilot part of the new Patriot Regiment. The pilot, after some internal modifications, became Dr. Dunn himself, though he maintained the fiction an employee named "Kiel" was actually inside the suit.

As the Ironclad, Dunn gained the power and stature he'd always craved, compensating a bit for the indignity of serving under "that idiot child," Minuteman. Despite his occasional haughtiness, Dunn's cultured charm made the Ironclad one of the Regiment's better-regarded members. Dunn's fate after the war is unknown, but he is rumored to have headed west, where his research progressed along with his megalomania.

PATHFINDER

Steven Mullray, like all the Mullrays before him, suffered from a hereditary condition that made his sight, hearing, taste, and touch progressively hypersensitive. While learned men held the malady was natural, Steven remained steadfast the condition was divine retribution on his family for making its fortune in the slave trade. After completing his education, he left his family mansion in Maine, vowing to atone for his forefathers' sins.

He found absolution as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, using his heightened senses to guide runaway slaves to freedom, even in the blackest night. Steven had always been an abolitionist, but hear-

PATHFINDER**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 14	Dex 14	Con 10	Int 12	Wis 24	Cha 12
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Skills: Bluff 6 (+7), Climb 4 (+6), Diplomacy 6 (+7), Intimidate 6 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+5), Notice 11 (+18), Search 11 (+12), Sense Motive 11 (+18), Stealth 11 (+13), Survival 10 (+17)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Specialization (Strike), Connected, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 5, Dodge Focus 4, Improved Block, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Uncanny Dodge 3 (hearing, sight, smell)

Powers: **Device 1** (staff, easy to lose), **Super-Senses 16** (accurate hearing, accurate smell, acute touch, extended hearing, extended smell, extended sight, low-light vision, scent, tremorsense, ultra-hearing, visual tracking 2)

Staff: **Strike 2** (Accurate, Extended Reach, Mighty)

Combat: Attack +4, +8 (Strike), Grapple +6, Damage +4 (Strike), +2 (unarmed), Defense +7 (+2 flatfooted), Knockback -2 (-0 flatfooted), Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +5 (+0 flatfooted), Fortitude +2, Reflex +3, Will +8

Drawbacks: Vulnerable (Dazzle effects, major [x2 effect], -3 points)

Abilities 26 + Skills 20 (80 ranks) + Feats 21 + Powers 19 + Combat 14 + Saves 4-Drawbacks 3 = Total 101

THE SHARPSHOOTER**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 10	Dex 16	Con 14	Int 10	Wis 20	Cha 12
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Skills: Bluff 5 (+6), Climb 4 (+4), Concentration 11 (+16), Disguise 5 (+6), Intimidate 4 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+4), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+6), Notice 8 (+13), Profession (housewife) 6 (+11), Ride 4 (+7), Stealth 11 (+14)

Feats: Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Dodge Focus 3, Equipment 8, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (musket) 6, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Instant Up, Precise Shot 2, Prone Fighting, Quick Draw 2, Ultimate Aim, Uncanny Dodge (sight)

Equipment: Camo clothing, knife, 2 heavy pistols, 2 holdout pistols, black powder rifle

Combat: Attack +3 (melee), +7 (ranged), Grapple +3, Damage +5 (rifle musket), +4 (heavy pistol), +2 (hold-out pistol), +1 (knife), +0 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+2 flatfooted), Knockback -1, Initiative +7

Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +6

Abilities 22 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 35 + Combat 12 + Saves 4 = Total 90

THE LION-MAN**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 14	Dex 12	Con 22	Int 8	Wis 16	Cha 14
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Skills: Handle Animal 6 (+8), Intimidate 11 (+13), Notice 6 (+9), Sense Motive 6 (+9), Stealth 8 (+9), Survival 3 (+6)

Feats: All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Defensive Attack, Diehard, Elusive Target, Improved Block, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Prone Fighting, Startle, Takedown Attack 2

Powers: **Regeneration 6** (recovery bonus +1; injured, 1/5 minutes, ability damage, 1/5 hours; resurrection 1/day [not when beheaded]; Persistent, Regrowth), **Strike 4** (claws and teeth; Mighty), **Super-Senses 5** (accurate scent, low-light vision, tracking)

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +8, Damage +6 (Strike), Defense +6, Knockback -3, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +6, Fortitude +7, Reflex +3, Will +4

Abilities 26 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 18 + Combat 24 + Saves 4 = Total 94

ing firsthand tales of slave life made him utterly committed to the destruction of the "peculiar institution." With his abilities and unshakable resolve, he became "Pathfinder," a figure of whispered legend. By the time the War broke out, the whispers were loud enough to catch President Lincoln's ear.

Mullray resisted joining the Patriot Regiment, judging Lincoln too mild in abolishing slavery. The Emancipation Proclamation eventually changed his mind and solidified his place on the team. Though the Regiment respected Pathfinder's passion and dedication, his undisclosed illness made his behavior erratic, and his unexplained pleas for quiet and darkness made his teammates doubt his sanity.

After the war, Pathfinder continued fighting for the black man's freedom. He violently opposed the Ku Klux Klan and other Reconstruction-era scourges until his condition worsened and made him a prisoner in his family mansion. In 1873, he leapt from its roof in the midst of a particularly violent nor'easter, ill of mind and body but cleansed in spirit.

THE SHARPSHOOTER

Grief-stricken by her husband's death at the First Battle of Manassas, Nicole Winchester lost everything but her thirst for vengeance. Trading her widow's black for Union blue, the disguised "Nick" Winchester used the deadly aim she'd developed growing up in the wilds of Minnesota to become the North's most feared sharpshooter. Her vengefulness proved her undoing, as she refused to obey orders that interfered with her personal war against the Confederacy. Insubordination led to a court-martial and the end of the Sharpshooter's time in uniform.

The Union Army quickly buried all accounts of a superior markswoman in its ranks, but Minuteman learned of her skills and recruited Nicole into the Patriot Regiment. The Sharpshooter remained a defiant, fundamentally damaged soul, but Minuteman valued her prowess as a mistress of disguise and an executioner who could strike from a mile away. Moreover, he understood she'd carry out any order without fail, so long as the mission ended with someone who wore a gray uniform dead by her hands.

The Sharpshooter walked away from the team at the war's end without so much as a goodbye. Her fate is unknown, but she and her rifle were last seen headed south....

THE LION-MAN

Daniel rarely spoke of his days as a slave in Missouri, revealing only that people there sensed he was different, fearing and shunning him because of it. When Daniel's innate powers manifested, he repaid his master's beatings in blood and made his way to freedom with Pathfinder's help.

At the War's onset, Daniel was part of the Liberators, a team of former slaves possessed of extraordinary abilities, organized by Frederick Douglass to fight to set their brothers and sisters free. Daniel's ferocity and willingness to spill blood earned him the nickname "the Lion-Man," but it also put him at odds with his teammates who wanted to set a less threatening example. By the time President Lincoln finally enlisted the Liberators' aid, Daniel felt singled out, and he left to join his old benefactor, Pathfinder, in the Patriot Regiment.

The Lion-Man's combination of quiet menace, berserker fury, and eagerness to do the team's dirty work made him invaluable to the Regiment. Daniel coolly accepted inhumanity as a part of life, having known little else, and he carried out the often horrific duties of war without flinching. He was reliable under the toughest of circumstances, and in wartime, there's no better thing to be. This plus his grim integrity made him one of the most trusted and respected team members, despite not being likeable in any traditional sense. Like his closest associate, the Sharpshooter, the Lion-Man disappeared at war's end, going off in search of more battles to fight.



THE KNIGHTS OF THE CONFEDERACY

Though outnumbered by the Patriot Regiment, the Liberators, and other mystery men fighting for the Union, the Knights of the Confederacy were able to stave off their country's defeat for four long years. Courage and cunning were the team's greatest assets, and they served the Knights well in their shadowy war with the Union's super-agents. Though theirs was ultimately a Lost Cause, the Knights proved that glory, honor, and valor are not exclusively the victor's province.

ACHILLES

Michael was unsure about many things, including his name. His Tennessee neighbors gave it to him, based on what he was mumbling when they found him stumbling through the woods naked, injured, and amnesiac. They nursed him back to health and helped him build a life for himself. A grateful Mike lived among them in peace and happiness, until the coming of the Civil War placed all he knew in jeopardy. He enlisted as soon as was able, ready to fight to protect his home and neighbors.

His friends were well aware Mike was strong as an ox, but even they were shocked when he single-handedly turned the tide at the First Battle of Manassas by leaping a quarter-mile into the Union ranks. Neither minie ball nor bayonet could pierce his skin, and only the reappearance of the legendary Yankee hero, Minuteman, saved the Union army from a total rout.

Modest to a fault, Mike thought he'd done nothing special, and only a direct order from the War Department persuaded him to leave the ranks and join what became the Knights of the Confederacy. Dubbed "Achilles" for the similarly invulnerable hero of myth, Michael's home-spun values made him the team's anchor and acknowledged leader.

Powerful as he was, his most remarkable traits were his innate goodness and sense of mercy, even in a time of war.

His virtue faltered only once, when Lee's surrender at Appomattox and the atrocities of Sherman's March pushed him over the edge. Michael resolved to throw himself into the blue ranks just as he'd done at the war's beginning, only this time he'd drown the Yankee soldiers in their own blood. Before he could do so, however, Michael disappeared. Not long after that, some strangely clothed visitors told his friends "Mik-El" was one of them, lost in the outside world, and that he was now home among his people, leaving behind only a legend.

ACHILLES

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 22	Dex 16	Con 22	Int 10	Wis 16	Cha 18
Skills: Diplomacy 7 (+11), Notice 5 (+8), Profession (farmer) 4 (+7)					
Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 3, Diehard, Dodge Focus 3, Endurance, Inspire 4, Leadership, Power Attack, Takedown Attack 2					
Powers: Impervious Toughness 3, Leaping 5 (x50 distance), Regeneration 15 (bruised 1/round, injured 1/round, disabled 1/minute, resurrection 1/day; Persistent, Regrowth), Speed 4 (100 MPH), Super-Strength 6 (heavy load: 16.6 tons; Groundstrike, Shockwave, Super-Breath, Thunderclap)					
Combat: Attack +6 (melee), +3 (ranged), Grapple +20, Damage +6 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+1 flat-footed), Knockback -4, Initiative +3					
Saving Throws: Toughness +6, Fortitude +7, Reflex +4, Will +4					
Abilities 44 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 17 + Powers 47 + Combat 12 + Saves 3 = Total 127					

THE FOUGE MONSTER**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 18 | Dex 14 | Con 18 | Int 6 | Wis 18 | Cha 8

Skills: Intimidate 5 (+6, includes +2 size), Notice 5 (+9), Stealth 8 (+6, includes -4 size), Survival 6 (+10)**Feats:** Attack Focus (melee) 5, Dodge Focus 3, Fearsome Presence 5, Power Attack, Startle, Track**Powers:** **Growth 4** (large; Continuous, Permanent; Innate), **Nauseate 6** (odor; Continuous, Explosion Area; Permanent, Sicken), **Protection 4**, **Strike 2** (claws; Mighty), **Super-Senses 1** (ultravision), **Teleport 8** (access mystical gateways; Portal; Medium (swamps), Long-Range; Progression [10' x 10' portals])**Combat:** Attack +6 (melee, includes -1 size), +1 (ranged, includes -1 size), Grapple +17, Damage +6 (Strike), Defense +4 (includes -1 size, +0 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +2**Saving Throws:** Toughness +8, Fortitude +5, Reflex +4, Will +5**Drawback:** Disabled (can only grunt and gesture, very common, minor, -3)**Abilities 10 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 16 + Powers 62 + Combat 8 + Saves 4 = Total 106****THE MERMAID****POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 20 | Dex 16 | Con 16 | Int 10 | Wis 14 | Cha 16

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+11), Diplomacy 2 (+5), Handle Animal 6 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+2), Notice 4 (+6), Ride 6 (+9), Swim 8 (+13)**Feats:** Acrobatic Bluff, Animal Empathy, Attractive, Environmental Adaptation (aquatic), Favored Environment (aquatic) 4**Powers:** **Immunity 3** (cold, drowning, pressure), **Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision), **Super-Strength 2** (1,600 lbs.), **Swimming 5** (50 MPH), **Water Control 6** (Alternate Powers: **Blast 6**, **Blast 4** [dehydration; Fortitude Save], **Create Object 6**, **Snare 6** [Regenerating; Entangle], **Stun 6**, **Suffocate 6**, **Trip 6** [Knockback])**Combat:** Attack +3, Grapple +10, Damage +6 (Blast), +5 (unarmed), Defense +3 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +3**Saving Throws:** Toughness +3, Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4**Abilities 32 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 32 + Combat 12 + Saves 4 = Total 97****THE FOUGE MONSTER**

The so-called "skunk apes" of the Arkansas bayous were found to be more than mere myth when the Knights of the Confederacy rescued one of them from a frightened Union patrol near the town of Fouke, in 1862. While the creature could only communicate through grunts and crude gestures, its gratitude was obvious. For the remainder of the War, the Fouke Monster remained a strange but loyal member of the Knights, fighting at their side and leading them through the mystic gateways joining bayou to bayou whenever an escape route was needed. Left abandoned at the War's end, the Fouke Monster shed a final tear for his absent friends and returned to his swamps for good.

THE MERMAID

As an infant, Varina Beaulieu was rescued from the sea by her sailor father, who regarded her as a miraculous gift from God. She never learned of her Atlantean origins or the true nature of her fantastic aquatic abilities, but the War filled these voids with purpose. Determined to keep the Union Navy far away from her father's blockade-runner, she waged a one-girl war of sabotage, sinking Yankee warships seemingly at

THE NIGHT STALKER**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 22 | Dex 16 | Con - | Int 12 | Wis 16 | Cha 16

Skills: Bluff 5 (+8), Diplomacy 11 (+14), Intimidate 8 (+11), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+5), Notice 8 (+11), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 6 (+9), Stealth 8 (+11)**Feats:** Attack Focus (melee) 3, Dodge Focus 3, Fascinate (Diplomacy), Improved Pin, Power Attack, Startle**Powers:** **Drain Constitution 1** (blood drain), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude effects), **Insubstantial 2** (gaseous), **Protection 7** (Impervious; Limited: not against blessed, silver, or magical weapons), **Regeneration 5** (resurrection, 1/20 minutes, not when staked or beheaded), **Super-Movement 1** (wall-crawling)**Combat:** Attack +6 (melee), +3 (ranged), Grapple +12, Damage +6 (unarmed), Defense +5 (+1 flat-footed), Knockback -7 (-0 against blessed, silver, or magical weapons), Initiative +3**Saving Throws:** Toughness +7 (+0 against blessed, silver, or magical weapons), Fortitude -, Reflex +6, Will +6**Drawbacks:** Weakness (dependence on blood, minor [-1 to checks], -2 points), Weakness (holy symbols, dazed for a round by losing an opposed Charisma check, -3 points), Weakness (sunlight, per round, destroyed after 10 rounds, -9 points)**Abilities 22 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 55 + Combat 10 + Saves 6-Drawbacks 14 = Total 103**

will. Northern sailors came to fear the so-called "Mermaid of Charleston Harbor," and her reputation eventually led to her induction into the Knights of the Confederacy.

The Mermaid fought with a resolve that belied her years, all the more so when a young Confederate sailor won her affections. Their love endured until he drowned aboard the submarine *Hunley* despite her efforts to save him. Varina turned cold and bitter for the remainder of the War, until news of her father's death in a Northern prison broke her spirit entirely. She perished in her home during the destruction of Charleston in 1865, her broken heart killing her as surely as the flames that engulfed her.

THE NIGHT STALKER

Thomas Pembroke was a scion of the Virginia aristocracy, darling of the Richmond social scene, and proprietor of a fortune in farmland and slaves. Thanks to an unchaste kiss from a comely lass with alabaster skin, he was also a vampire, damned to survive on the blood of the living.

To his credit, Thomas never fully embraced vampirism, and he resolved he'd only drink the blood of the wicked. His nocturnal acts of vigilantism were spoken of in hushed tones in the Confederate capital, and the evildoers of Richmond grew to fear the legendary "Night Stalker," who dealt harsh and swift justice to criminals.

At Achilles's behest, Thomas joined the Knights of the Confederacy, and despite their often-bitter disagreements, the two became close confidants. Only Achilles truly understood Thomas's endless battle against his dark side, and he carried out his wishes when he ultimately lost it. After the fall of Richmond in 1865, Achilles found Thomas feral and blood-drenched in the ruins of his plantation, and he tearfully beheaded his friend, freeing him from his curse in the only way possible.

NUNNEHII

Like many Cherokee, Yartunnah Watie turned his back on the old ways to please the white man only to walk the Trail of Tears. Slowed by age

DIVIDED LIBERTIES

Whenever freedom is greatly threatened, the Spirit of Liberty has endowed young women with superhuman abilities to aid in the fight against tyranny. The Spirit is naturally intertwined with the free and democratic United States, and she was acutely traumatized when the country divided over competing notions of liberty during its Civil War.

Mirroring America's split, the Spirit fractured into warring halves, both of which imbued a champion with their power. On the Union side, her surrogate was called Columbia, after the female embodiment of America itself. Her Confederate counterpart was known simply as "The Southern Belle."

Columbia's spiritual host was seventeen-year-old college student Amelia Connover of New York, a dedicated suffragette, abolitionist, nativist, and temperance activist. These attitudes made her a perfect match for the Spirit's "Yankee" fraction, dedicated to liberating others from perceived vices (whether they wanted to be freed or not) by any means necessary.

While Columbia was one of the most powerful beings fighting for the Union, Amelia and her divided Spirit were of limited effectiveness. Though Columbia manifested as an adult, Amelia remained saddled with a young student's responsibilities, and she had to juggle her masked heroine life with exams, chaperones, student activities, and a bevy of young gentleman callers. Even as Columbia, she frequently busied herself with busting up saloons, hectoring immigrants to "become real Americans," and other activities unrelated to winning the war.

The Southern Belle was one Mary Prescott Hamner, wife of an Alabama Congressman. She embodied much of the good about the antebellum South with her cultured charm and grace, and she had a willingness to give all she had for states' rights to govern themselves as they saw fit. On the other hand, she was absolutely committed to maintaining the wealth and privilege of the Southern aristocracy, including the slavery it was built upon. Like Columbia, the Southern Belle was of limited benefit to her country's cause, as advancing herself on the Richmond social scene and overseeing her plantation remained higher priorities than waging war. Anything less would go against her—and her half of the Spirit's—conception of freedom as radical autonomy.

Despite nearly killing each other during the war, both Amelia and Mary survived and returned to their mundane states when the Spirit reunited in 1865. Unable to find a man who could cope with her crusading, Amelia died a spinster, succumbing to heart failure while protesting the Spanish-American War. Her claims of having once been the Spirit of Liberty itself blended seamlessly into her rhetoric during the remainder of her life. Mary lived out her days in the ruins of her plantation, unable to cope with the bitter life during Reconstruction. She died an indignant and eccentric widow, unmourned by the people whose Lost Cause she once embodied.

and a broken spirit, he had little left to believe in when the nunnehii—benevolent spirits of Cherokee legend—first spoke to him of the miracles made possible by the faith of good men. Yartunnah's faith was in short supply, and it remained so until his people cast their lot with the newborn Confederacy, which—much to his surprise—dealt with the Cherokee fairly and honorably.

To Yartunnah, something worth fighting for was like spring water to a thirsty man, and he set out to use the nunnehii to further the Confederate cause. The spirits led him to Achilles, who was impressed by the old man's powers but still more awed by his great wisdom. Achilles came to rely on Yartunnah's counsel as the War dragged on, as did the other Knights.

The spirits served Yartunnah so faithfully that their name became his, at least to most who knew him. After the war, he hoped to use the spirits to restore his defeated people's faith and lands, but it was not to be. Three days after his return to tribal lands, a Union cavalry officer shot Yartunnah in the back, wary of "some crazy old Indian preaching mumbo-jumbo." The nunnehii honored Yartunnah's dying request and allowed his spirit to join them.

COLUMBIA/SOUTHERN BELLE

PL 6

Str 20/12	Dex 12	Con 12	Int 10	Wis 12	Cha 14
Skills: Concentration 4 (+5), Diplomacy 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 5 (+5), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 3 (+3), Notice 3 (+4), Sense Motive 5 (+6)					
Feats: Defensive Attack, Endurance, Inspire, Quick Change					
Powers: Enhanced Strength 8, Flight 3 (50 MPH), Light Control 6 (Alternate Powers: Deflect 4 [all ranged attacks], Healing 6 , Nullify 6 [all binding and imprisoning effects at once]), Protection 5 , Super-Strength 7 (heavy load: 24 tons)					
Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +18, Damage +5 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -3, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +6, Fortitude +4, Reflex +3, Will +5					
Drawbacks: Power Loss (all powers, when bound or imprisoned, -5 points)					
Abilities 12 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 48 + Combat 24 + Saves 9—Drawbacks 5 = Total 98					

NUNNEHII

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 10	Dex 12	Con 10	Int 18	Wis 22	Cha 18
Skills: Concentration 8 (+14), Diplomacy 4 (+8), Knowledge (arcane lore) 9 (+13), Knowledge (history) 6 (+10), Language (English), Notice 8 (+14), Profession (farmer) 6 (+12), Ride 6 (+7), Search 6 (+10), Sense Motive 4 (+10), Stealth 8 (+9), Survival 6 (+12)					
Feats: Artificer, Assessment, Attack Focus (ranged) 3, Ritualist					
Powers: Force Field 6 (protection spell), Magic 6 (Spells: Blast 6 [flame], Dazzle 6 [visual, explosive flash], Illusion 6 [visual], Obscure 6 [visual, smoke cloud], Snare 6 , Telekinesis 6 , Teleport 6), Shield 3 (protection spell)					
Combat: Attack +3 (melee), +6 (ranged), Grapple +3, Damage +0 (unarmed), +6 (blast spell), Defense +3 (+2 flatfooted), Knockback -3 (-0 without Force Field), Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +6 (+0 without Force Field), Fortitude +2, Reflex +3, Will +7					
Abilities 30 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 27 + Combat 12 + Saves 5 = Total 98					

THE RANGER

Charles Napier was a Texas Ranger like few others, catching crooks with new-fangled techniques like searching crime scenes for evidence, as well as more traditional methods like his fists. One dark prairie night, his curiosity sent him after a strangely bright falling star that turned out to be a weird glowing rock. The stone's glow faded before morning, and Charles thought no more of it until he suddenly found he could outrun a Texas tornado.

The forthright Charles wanted to use his strange abilities for good, but he also didn't want to be branded a freak. Therefore, whenever his supernatural swiftness was needed, he donned a mask and a change of clothes and called himself simply, "The Ranger." While the War was of secondary concern to him as a lawman, his sense of duty to his beloved Texas led him to join the Knights of the Confederacy. Thanks to his tremendous speed, he successfully maintained both his identities throughout the War.

Charles's costumed adventuring came to an end in the closing days of the War. Frantically racing to warn of an impending Union attack at the critical juncture known as Five Forks, Charles tripped and fell, suffering compound fractures of both legs. The ensuing Yankee attack succeeded, prompting the fall of Richmond. Though barely able to walk, Charles nonetheless lived a long, happy life, raising eleven children on tall tales of a legendary Texas Ranger who could outrace the wind.

WARS FOR FREEDOM SERIES

In addition to being important historical milestones in the advancement of freedom, the American Revolution and Civil War make great *M&M* settings. This section provides guidelines and advice for Gamemasters who want to run games in the days of tri-corner hats and hoop skirts.

BACK IN GEORGE WASHINGTON'S DAY...

The flavor of Colonial-era Freedom is best imparted by how it greets the senses. It pleases the eyes with plenty of "old world charm" (back then, they just called it "charm," though): cobblestone streets, grand mansions, quaint cottages, tri-corner hats, and powdered wigs. Things are a little rougher on the nose since most everything is animal- or man-powered, so a healthy tolerance for the fragrances of nature is a must.

Mozart, Haydn, and hymns of all kinds soothe the ears as well as the soul, and the fiery church sermons try to literally scare the Hell out of people. Taste must make do with simpler fare like unadorned meats, potatoes, and porridge, livened up with the occasional beer, whiskey, or tobacco.

The most jarring differences from a modern perspective are societal. It was a time where slavery and cousin marriage were widely accepted practices, and the career choices for most were "farmer" or "laborer." Virtually everything was handmade (often by the user themselves), and the highlight of everyone's week was church. Bleeding diseased patients was literally the cutting edge of medicine, and the intellectual elite were the few who could actually read and write. More than anything else, these differences let the players know they've left the Age of Celebrity Gossip far behind, and a savvy Gamemaster is right to emphasize them.

BACK IN ABE LINCOLN'S DAY...

In the 1860s, much of 18th Century America remains more or less intact, especially in the South. The further North a person travels, the more aspects of 19th century life assert themselves. Around the Mason-

THE RANGER

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 12	Dex 16	Con 14	Int 12	Wis 16	Cha 14
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Skills: Climb 2 (+3), Diplomacy 3 (+5), Intimidate 2 (+4), Investigate 2 (+3), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+3), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 5 (+6), Language (Spanish), Notice 4 (+7), Profession (police officer) 4 (+7), Ride 2 (+5), Sense Motive 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+7), Survival 2 (+5), Swim 3 (+4)

Feats: Benefit: Texas Ranger, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 2, Elusive Target, Endurance, Evasion, Instant Up, Move-by Action, Quick Change

Powers: **Super-Speed 6** (500 MPH; Rapid Attack, Wall Run, *Alternate Powers:* **Air Control 6, Deflect 6** [slow and fast projectiles], **Nauseate 6** [spin attack], **Spinning 6, Strike 6, Stun 6**)

Combat: Attack +4, Grapple +5, Damage +6 (Strike), Defense +6 (+2 flat-footed, +4 spinning), Knockback -2 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +27

Saving Throws: Toughness +5 (+2 flat-footed, +8 spinning), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

Abilities 24 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 37 + Combat 16 + Saves 4 = Total 104

Dixon line, slavery and agriculture begin to give way to immigrants and industry, and railways point the way to the untamed American West.

Manners and customs change along with the geography. Traditional courtly Southern manners and archaic codes of honor vanish, replaced by less genteel folk coping with 14-hour workdays at the factory. Southerners continue to chat about the weather, crops, and chinch bugs, while Northerners discuss the stock market, the wonders of steam power, and radical new ideas like women's suffrage and the temperance movement.

In short, America is a country divided between past and future, as well as what the nation is and what it might become. These differences were so profound they led to war, and driving home the contrast is key in getting across the spirit of the age to the players.

FREEDOM CITY LIMITS

In the space of a century, Freedom went from a collection of coastal cow towns to a booming industrialized city. While that's great news for the chamber of commerce, it's a little tough on Gamemasters who've grown accustomed to hip, happening 21st century Freedom. To help out these modern folks, this section provides snapshots of what things were like back in the day. Sure, it's much tougher to get a latte in 1777, but Gamemasters can quickly come to appreciate an era where characters can't get out of jams with cell phones or solve mysteries with DNA testing.

YE OLDE FREEDOM

Colonial-era Freedom—not yet a City—was home to the rich, landed upper class descendants of its Puritan and Dutch founders and to a growing working class made up of more recent immigrants. The new arrivals hailed from all over Europe, but the majority traced their roots back to the British Isles. Nearby, in what is today the Wharton State Forest, lived the Happanuk Indians, geographically close but culturally distant from the Freedomians.

During the Revolutionary War, areas like Bayview, Hanover, and Kingston were independent settlements, and they remained so until Freedom City's formal incorporation in 1789. This separation is more a legality than anything else, inconvenient only to those in quick need of a physician, barrister, or some other rarified big-town trade. Much to the dismay of travelers to these outlying areas, a hard rain easily changed the prevalent dirt roads to mud bogs passable only by car-crushing monster trucks (which won't be invented for well over a century).

Most of the secular and leisure-time institutions described in the *Freedom City* Sourcebook have yet to appear in this era, as the lives of most people remain firmly focused on religion and chores. Exceptions related to the former are Happanuk Hill, St. Stephen's Church (*Freedom City*, page 53), and the diabolical CC&C law firm (*Freedom City*, page 38). All are perfect locations for injecting some mystical happenings into the series, whether a quest for wisdom held only by the great spirits or an encounter with the phantasmal Lantern Jack.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

By 1860, Freedom City had noticeably grown and expanded, but the modern Lincoln, Grenville, and Ashton neighborhoods still didn't exist. Hanover, Southside, and Bayview were present, only smaller and hugging the river more than today. Greenbank was relatively new and bustling, focused around the rail lines, which were also relatively new and bustling.

The Fens were also new, home to more mosquitoes than people. By contrast, the overcrowded West End housed the city's burgeoning immigrant population, mostly Germans, Italians, Greeks, and Jews. Despite the silted river channels and Centery Narrows, the Waterfront remained busy with steamship traffic. Port Regal and North Bay greeted incoming vessels with twin forts overlooking the Bay and the Narrows, relics of the War of 1812.

Some landmarks familiar to modern-day Freedonians were present, such as Freedom College, FCU, Liberty Park, and the *Freedom Ledger*. These can serve as touchstones for players more used to contemporary Freedom games or vital landmarks for time-traveling heroes hailing from that era.

As a major port city with sympathy for both sides, Freedom City remained a hotbed of intrigue throughout the War. Soldiers, spies, rabblerousers, runaway slaves, agitators, and abolitionists all found a home there, and they fought their particular battles with cunning, words, and fists. Because of all this strife, the people took little notice of other factions in their midst: costumed heroes, engaging in a twilight struggle all their own in the shadow of the great Civil War.

CREATING HISTORICAL CHARACTERS

Designing characters for the Wars for Freedom era is not much different than usual, especially after the players and Gamemaster agree on an appropriate starting power level. PL6 (the default start used in this chapter) allows heroes to perform amazing feats and still be entertainingly threatened by the dangers typical of the time. Higher power levels are certainly possible, but they increase the likelihood the characters are going to shrug off even regimental musket fire, fly off to the enemy capital, and end the war in a day. No worries if that's what the GM wants, but otherwise, it makes designing fun and challenging adventures difficult, if not impossible.

Another consideration is the type of character backgrounds allowed. During both Wars for Freedom, able-bodied men were expected to be in uniform or else be publicly scorned as cowards. This is why the characters in this chapter mostly consist of those considered unfit for military



service: women, blacks, the elderly, the disabled, and space aliens. This historical facet can result in the creation of some truly diverse characters and allow the GM to address the realities of life during these time periods. However, if the players would simply rather not deal with this limitation, feel free to disregard reality in the best comic-book tradition and go with whatever's most fun.

Lastly, the in-game value of certain skills changes drastically, even if their actual point cost doesn't. There's simply no use for Computers, while Investigate in the pre-fingerprinting age should be re-focused on putting together clues like a certain famous Consulting Detective. Medicine accomplishes much less when surgery is limited to amputations and no one knows how diseases are prevented. Drive means little to non-riverboat pilots. By the same token, Ride is nearly indispensable throughout this time period. In other words, forget about your laptop and learn to love your horse instead, and your characters will be all set for life in the Age of Sail and Steam.

POWDER, BALL, FLINTLOCK, & CAP

When a player mentions a setting's "technology," she is of course referring to guns. Firearms abound during the Wars for Freedom, but in a more primitive state than what the players are used to, unless they're Civil War re-enactors.

Pistols come in the same types and statistics listed in the *M&M* rulebook. During the Revolution, they're flintlocks, requiring six rounds to reload after firing their one shot (and no, the Quick Draw feat can't get around this limitation). Cap & ball revolvers replace them by the Civil War, and for game purposes, they function just like their modern counterparts in the *M&M* rulebook.

PERIOD WEAPONS

Archaic Weapons

	Damage	Critical	Descriptor	Range Increment	Size	Cost
Tomahawk	+2	20	Slashing	10 ft.	Med	4

Projectile Weapons (Firearms)

	Damage	Critical	Descriptor	Range Increment	Cost
Flintlock musket	+5	20	Ballistic	50 ft.	Large
Black powder rifle	+5	20	Ballistic	125 ft.	Large

Flintlock and rifle muskets also fire only once and then require six rounds to reload (and Quick Draw remains of no help). Rifle muskets became the weapon of choice during the Civil War, but some soldiers on both sides still carried flintlocks into early 1862. Flintlocks of all sizes suffer from an inability to fire in the rain, as the excess moisture prevents the sparks necessary to set off the gunpowder.

Even the best-made weapons of this era are unreliable compared to modern guns. Therefore, any roll of a natural 1 (1 or 2 for flintlocks) results in a harmless misfire. The GM is also free to declare a misfire occurs whenever it heightens the drama, regardless of the number rolled, as a setback (awarding the affected player(s) a hero point).

COMIC BOOK WARS

For such a critical event in history, the Civil War figures only in the background of actual comic books. Western heroes sometimes trace their

origins to it, and superheroes make an occasional appearance there in an "imaginary" or time-travel story, but there's nothing that amounts to any sort of established rules. This lack of guidelines may seem frustrating for Gamemasters planning a Blue & Gray series, but there's plenty of inspiration to be drawn from the material in this chapter and Revolutionary War-based comics.

Revolutionary War-related comic books shy away from costumed superheroes and concentrate on the more mundane (but no less heroic) men in uniform. *M&M* games featuring uniformed heroes instead of the costumed kind can be every bit as much fun. Such series are equal parts action-packed and gut wrenching, as all the excitement and horror of battle are on full display. This section gives some helpful hints on how the Gamemaster can bring the war to their gaming table.

DESIGNING MILITARY SERIES

Most of the rules and guidelines for creating enjoyable superhero series work just fine for military hero series with the occasional tweak here and there. For example, there's usually little to no continuity in war comics; the same group of soldiers can be part of the 1781 Battle of Yorktown in one issue, and then answer the minutemen's call to Lexington and Concord in 1775 in the next.

War comics have sidekicks galore, even more so than in superhero books. Typically, the sidekicks serve as part of the lead character's infantry company, cavalry troop, or the like. For better or worse, one of them is usually a bumbling comedy-relief type.

Military heroes can also take part in either postmodern or classic style series. The former focuses on the brutality and inhumanity of war, with battlefield atrocities and slaughtered innocents figuring prominently in stories. In postmodern style series, the greatest reward is staying alive. Classic comic-book series, by contrast, are all about the heroism of our fighting forces and their righteous flag-waving triumphs in the struggle for freedom. Stories in such series are about destroying these enemies before they rob us of any more of our precious liberties.

ADVENTURES FOR MILITARY HEROES

It's important for Gamemasters to always bear in mind that, in the absence of flashy superpowers, adventures for military heroes are first and foremost a matter of wits and courage, normally in that order.

The first step in a war-comic adventure is to present the player characters with a nigh-impossible objective: a well-defended hill must be taken, an important enemy general captured, a ship full of prisoners of war must be liberated, or a new enemy weapon with superior capabilities must somehow be bested. Next, the heroes must be challenged to discover the way to achieve their seemingly hopeless objective.

Perhaps they have to somehow win the friendship of the locals, be they Canadian, Tory, or Indians, and learn from them the secret path leading to the top of the enemy hill unnoticed. The characters' stealth



and acting abilities are put to the test as they sneak past enemy patrols to reach the enemy commander, or their running and ducking skills are called upon to keep them alive just long enough to discover the new enemy repeating rifle explodes if fired too rapidly. Possibilities, as they say, are limited only by the imagination, and you've got plenty of that, right?

The second step is no less difficult than the first for the players. They've gleaned the knowledge necessary to give themselves a fighting chance for success. In step two, it's time for the "fighting" part. Though surprised, the enemy force should still be at least an even match for the heroes, who can only hope to prevail by using their skills (and hero points) to the utmost.

For example, a character might be forced to charge an artillery piece armed only with a bayonet, in desperate hope of stopping the crew before they reload. Exploiting the new enemy repeater's weakness might mean the character has to dodge way more bullets than sanity allows. Whatever it is, the effort can't be easy. In the end, it may claim the lives of some (heretofore unseen) members of the unit, who painfully illustrate how wars are won through individual sacrifices.

CHANGING THE FORMULA

Gamemasters should never lose sight of the fact that in a roleplaying game, the types of stories they can tell are unlimited. This is true even in as hidebound a genre as the war comic. For instance, the player characters are going to get a furlough sooner or later. Whole adventures can be based around what they do with their time away from the front lines.

The heroes can interact with the local civilians and help them solve their problems, such as assisting a preacher in finding a new church bell in time for Christmas. The characters can also fall in love, get drunk and brawl, or scrounge up some presents for the war orphans, all without firing a shot. In the process, they may find themselves getting drawn into conflict with criminals, enemy sympathizers, or spies. This presents an interesting challenge for heroes who must fight, but without blazing away as they normally do.

THE HISTORICAL SUPERHERO SERIES

As noted above, superhero adventures in historical settings are practically virgin territory. Without tropes of its own, series design is largely a matter of deciding what elements to import from other genres.

KILL 'EM ALL

Wartime settings naturally place the issue of deliberate killing by the characters front and center. In traditional superhero comics, deliberate life taking by the good guys is frowned upon. Given a wartime setting, it's odd (if not downright laughable) for characters to go around knocking the enemy unconscious. However, as *The A-Team* proves, it's still quite possible to have enjoyable action-filled military stories where no one dies, if the audience accepts this conceit going in.

A series attitude on killing should also determine how much the very real horrors of war appear. The scalping and skinning common on the frontier during the Revolution, the prison camps of the Civil War, and atrocities like the razing of Lawrence, Kansas and Sherman's March are all powerful potential story elements, but they are also terrible even by the standards of war. As always, Gamemasters are encouraged to talk to their players about the preferred level of realism before the series begins.

REWRITING HISTORY

Perhaps the most intimidating thing about a historical setting is the unfamiliarity, and the seeming amount of research required to address that. The truth of the matter is historical comic book settings are largely the same elements from other genres transplanted and given a retro tweak.

Characters can still rant about the wickedness of their country's enemies just like in Golden Age books, substituting "redcoats" for "Nazis." Supervillains can gloat just like in the Silver Age, only their wonder weapons are steam powered rather than atomic. Bronze Age social consciousness can be present as well, with abolition and women's suffrage filling in for fair housing and the Equal Rights Amendment. Characters can engage in Iron Age black ops simply by handing them assignments like, "They Came to Kidnap Jefferson Davis!" Naturally, the Gamemaster can also adopt the Modern Age approach and take one from column A, another from column B, and so on.

As for strict historical accuracy, it's one element that's never been a strong suit of superhero comic books. While we're not ones to discourage reading (it *is* fundamental, you know), it's quite possible to get across the essence of an era without tremendous amounts of research, if you're not inclined towards it. The suggestions in this chapter can get Gamemasters off to a good start, and common sense can do the rest. Just don't describe Samuel Adams getting a beer out of his fridge, or have Thomas Jefferson tell the characters to call him by his rapper name "5 Cent" and things will be fine.



CHAPTER 3: FREEDOM BY GASLIGHT



This chapter serves as an introduction to the "refined" age of the late 19th century of the World of Freedom, covering the period from the end of the American Civil War to the *fin de siècle*. Though the rough-and-tumble gunslingers of the American western frontier are far removed from the genteel parlors of the English gentry or the carefully crafted sophistication of the streets of Auguste Dupin's Paris, they can ride shoulder to shoulder with the two-fisted explorers of the hidden corners of the world.

Fog-shrouded streets, eerie gas lit backdrops, sweltering jungles, and crowded urban labyrinths all contribute to the tales of the era. For the innumerable stories set here, the boundaries tend to smudge a bit with more than a century's distance; many of the themes and characters heavily influence the later pulp stories of the early 20th century (which in turn influence the first comic books). Indeed, the pulp magazine saw its recognized birth during this era, with the publication of *Argosy* magazine.

Later writers add to the "canon" of literary inhabitants accepted as part of the Gaslight era's population, and various famous characters come to be associated with the period regardless of accuracy, such as some adventures of Burroughs's Tarzan or McCulley's Zorro (though the former technically came after the period's conclusion and the latter pre-dated it). Added to this, many of the cosmetic elements of gothic fiction still remain popular during this time, detective fiction quickly becomes

widespread, and men like Poe and his successors introduce the macabre to their audience with varying success.

Tales of colorful figures and extraordinary exploits are hardly uncommon, though the more outré displays of full-blown superhumans are still several decades away (the outlandish is acceptable and successful in entertainment, the mythic far less so). Talents and skills that *border* on the supernatural (notably marksmanship) crop up with some frequency, however. With mysticism and its supporting beliefs at record popularity, and elements of the genre called steampunk (descended in part from the 19th century sub-genre called the "Edisonade") adding technical marvels far ahead of the era's norm, the milieu is still only as mundane as a Gamemaster and his set of players want it to be.

This chapter provides a general overview of the "gaslight" and "steampunk" sub-genre of *fin de siècle* storytelling, a mini-genre sourcebook of sorts, complete with hero archetypes and genre tropes. It also serves as a resource on the 19th century in Freedom City and a guide to the locale, its important characters, and events. You can use this chapter for a historical series set in Freedom in the 1800s, for a time-travel adventure where modern heroes visit the period, or as the basis for a parallel Earth where time moves a bit slower and its only the late 1800s and heroes can visit a Freedom City at once familiar and strange, populated by its own heroes and villains. In the latter case, you can even introduce "Victorianized" versions of existing *Freedom City* characters, perhaps including the heroes themselves!

A BRIEF HISTORY

The waning years of the 19th century present a study in contradictions. It is at once an era of both great progress and terrible brutality, where science is replacing the mysticism and superstition of earlier ages, and technical achievement births new wonders daily, but also where repressive political axioms struggle mightily against the tide of social and political evolution, and where spiritualism and belief in the supernatural linger on with surprising vigor and popularity. It is a world where the costly emancipation of an entire class of slaves in the United States is still fresh in memory, but where the ominous ambitions and demonstrable power of a new German state have already begun to make their mark, as the French can well attest after an embarrassing defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. On the one visible extreme, the world can see Great Britain, her empire literally stretching around the globe and her contributions in technology and industry rivaled on the world stage only by the French contributions to culture and fashion. On the other extreme are the anachronisms, the lumbering state of Russia, still toiling along as if the 17th century had never ended, or the tottering Ottoman Empire, "the Sick Man of Europe," a power in name only.

THE NEW WORLD

In the new world, the United States recovers from the Civil War to throw its strength to the western frontier, where Manifest Destiny says the nation's future lies. As is typical for the era around them, the American people find themselves growing into the strength of their industrial resources while slowly excising the artifacts of their past in the process. This is the era of the Wild West in full swing, where the bold frontier is washed away under the inexorable advance of "civilization." One day the cowboy is king, and the next he is little more than a relic left on the wayside of history. Native Americans see themselves penned into reservations, assimilated into the new America, or simply wiped off the face of the Earth, with nothing able to stand against the American drive to join East with West. To the north, Canada slowly follows suit along the course of nation building. Mexico briefly operates under French control, but like most foreign empire building in the Western hemisphere after the Monroe Doctrine, it is short-lived.

THE MYSTERIOUS EAST

The Far East remains, in Western eyes, a place of mystery and exotic intrigue. Colonialism has "opened" the area for many, but with equal cost as the progress seen elsewhere. The modernization of Japan begins amidst the end of her self-imposed isolation and the sometimes violent

transition from samurai to industrialist. China works to varying effectiveness hand-in-hand with her dominant partner Britain, with British influence and the aftermath of civil wars and rebellions having shaped matters there into a country with one face on her coasts while a different culture reigns inland, as it has been for centuries. Tales of India, the Near East, and Africa all populate dime novels as their time of colonial rule under British control continues to export stories and information out to the world. Britain and Russia race to expand their holdings, with Russia invading and seizing much of Central Asia, while Britain works to outstrip Belgian, French, and German interests in Africa as it has elsewhere in the world.

THE UNKNOWN WORLD

Humanity has a much greater understanding of geography than in years past, but in this era, there are still many areas of Africa and Asia Minor (as well as South America and the Pacific) where the maps are tantalizingly empty... at least for the moment. Exploration is more than just a hobby or an adventure; it's also a business—a thriving one. Even as science opens borders and brings the wonders of steam power, electromagnetic engines, electric lights, telephones, revolvers, and repeating rifles to the world, mankind still has not fully shaken off the unscientific; mysticism and belief in spiritualism abound. The cultured classes of the world hold to a world of reason and enlightenment, where science and progress are the highest aspirations and civilization is a gift to bring to those the givers view as absent its graces. And yet, bigotry based on race, gender, and nationality are the accepted rule, eugenics and social engineering are still spoken of in respectful and envious tones, and the great game of empire foments unrest and lays the groundwork for the violent turmoil of later World Wars.

AND A LOVELY CITY IT IS, TOO...

As with many other cities of the period, Freedom City experiences a great series of expansions, renovations, and general growth in the years following the Civil War. The United States is entering its industrial heyday in full swing and takes advantage of the burgeoning population, native and immigrant, to finally exploit the resources laid before it.

Downtown Freedom City sees the construction of the many civic structures that will form a nascent skyline before the widespread introduction of the elevator (still a new invention during this era) allows the first generation of "skyscrapers" to replace many of them. Mayor Henry Wading and city council strongman Richard Beaudrie champion this

October the 22nd, 1890

After so many months toiling about the globe, it is indeed good to be back on American soil.

I arrived at the port of Freedom City this morning by steamer, ahead of my compatriots, who stayed on the Continent to sew up a few remaining loose threads pertaining to the events of my previous letters to our good Mr. Warren. Miss Swift, Garret, and the others should arrive in the next day or so aboard her airship, and then this investigation of ours shall begin in earnest. I have procured for us spacious quarters at a local establishment of some repute and shall shortly make my way to the offices of the commissioner of police for this quite lovely city, which I dare say has already made a comforting impression on me.

I can only pray my friends and I will be able to bring a rapid and satisfying conclusion to this heinous string of murders that troubles an otherwise orderly environ. As Mr. Warren intimated in his cable, these crimes do bear the brutal mark we've come to associate with the elusive Doktor Raub, and perhaps this time, finally and after so many frustrations, we will behead the monster in its lair and bring the beast much-deserved justice.

TIMELINE

1865

American Civil War ends.

1866

The law firm of Cabot, Cunningham & Crowley moves its business from Freedom City to New York abruptly and without explanation.

Adam Prophet is ambushed and murdered near Magic Mesa, but he is miraculously resurrected by shaman Broken Crow and begins operating as the Pale Ranger.

1868

Alejandro Rojas dies and rises again as the elemental guardian of Magic Mesa known as Dust Devil.

1871

Dr. Charles Claremont founds the Claremont Academy, a prestigious private school in the Bayview community.

Broken Crow becomes Master Mage after the death of Order of Light leader Abraham Hildebrandt.

1874

Richard Beaudrie builds the Beaudrie Opera House, a Freedom City landmark still standing in the 21st century.

1875

The Sons of Merlin split from the Order of Light over philosophical differences in how to deal with the Order's many enemies.

1880

Freedom City celebrates its 250th anniversary with a gala parade and a month-long series of festivals.

Acting through proxies and shell businesses, Taurus seizes control of much of Freedom City's nascent business community.

1883

Garret Gaunt comes into possession of the cursed six-shooters "Hellfire" and "Brimstone."

1886

Hunts-With-Claws-Unseen arrives at the ruined home of Dr. Ripley Warren after using the doctor's stolen time machine.

Adam Prophet hangs up his mask and leaves the Pale Ranger identity behind him.

After acclimating to his new time period, Hunts-With-Claws-Unseen takes the name "Doktor Raub."

1888

Herbert Warren arrives in London, following Raub.

Jack the Ripper carves a path of terror through the Whitechapel area of London.

1889

Herbert Warren recruits Adam Prophet to help him hunt Dr. Raub. Prophet later gains allies, as his hunt continues around the globe.

1890

Jack-A-Knives terrorizes the red light districts of Freedom City.

The vampire lord Dracula terrorizes London.

1895

Sioux Shaman and Master Mage Broken Crow dies at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

Occult rituals enacted by the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign on Star Island are thwarted by images of the Order of Light.

1898

The Shepherdstown Penitentiary, outside Freedom City, burns to the ground. The fire is attributed to arson, but no definite cause is discovered. A number of inmates die during the blaze.

Lady Violet Pennyworth, Broken Crow's successor as Master Mage, dies thwarting the efforts of Kar'Kadas, Whisperer in the Shadows Between Worlds, to enter Earth's dimension.

1900

The Sons of Merlin destroy the Harbinger of the Seven Eyes of Edraas and then begin a self-destructive cycle of conflict with the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign.

Daedalus finally manages to collapse the elaborate shell companies used by Taurus in his eastern United States corporate dealings, resulting in the minotaur's control in Freedom City suffering serious damage.

Emerson Wading wins by a landslide in his mayoral campaign, defeating his father and ushering in an era of reform.

major cycle of civic face-lifting, expanding their existing fortunes tremendously, thanks to the layer of upon layer of graft and kickbacks the construction makes possible.

The western forested areas are slowly pushed back to accommodate the ever-expanding immigrant population, with many of the areas surrounding West End to the East and South seeing the consolidation along ethnic lines that will later form many of the colorful (and still resolutely divided) neighborhoods of later years such as Little Belfast and New Berlin. Originally home to a number of tiny townships, the area north of the Wading River, sloping eastward through North Bay, sees a period of shameless land grabs orchestrated by Mayor Wading (whose family already resided in the area and after whose family the river was itself

named). Pushing out many of the poorer residents, Wading proceeded to sell off much of the land for great profit to his fellow bluebloods, setting the character of that region for years to come as the home of money and power in the city. It was a broadly held belief at the time that one could see the division of true status in the city by examining who held homes in the North Bay and who were "forced to settle" for homes in the area surrounding Lantern Hill.

South of the city proper are a series of what will later be called shantytowns, putting flimsy roof and walls around the influx of cheap labor lured to the city by the construction boom. These "eyesores," as the Freedom Ledger's many scathing editorials of the period frequently referred to them, dot the landscape around and sometime in the Fens. Crime runs

October the 24th, 1890

I confess to no small amount of comfort at seeing Miss Swift again. Emily's presence settles my nerves in ways that I do not yet feel appropriate to share with my other associates. Though Garret would do little more than elide me, and Peake would practice his acerbic wit at my expense, I doubt either would think any the less of me for my affections, as both seem quite fond of Miss Swift themselves. As to Rostov, it would be difficult to judge his reaction, as the taciturn Cossack keeps his own counsel, letting none of us see any more of his thoughts today than when I first met him, testing his marksman's skills against mine in that sweltering summer in the Punjab.

And comfort was needed, as I have seen the handiwork of a fiend from hell this day. At his most monstrous, Raub has never been this wanton in his crimes. The closest I have seen in my blood-soaked travels is the imagery I carry from that day two years ago when I walked Whitechapel with the illustrious man from Baker Street. While similar enough to see the conclusions drawn by the local journalists, I find these scenes even baser and more savage. I also find that I carry too many such horrors in my memories, and I will ask Miss Swift to refrain from visiting future sites when Rostov and Peake apply their considerable talents to whatever can still be garnered from these impromptu abattoirs.

rampant, and police protection is never very much more than practically non-existent. In response to this climate, the influential Reverend Aloysius King pushed for the construction of a new and quite large penitentiary to replace the ramshackle and outdated small prisons that underserved the city. Built across the South River, where "the sinners and those that yet may be saved," as King was fond of calling those forced to eke out their living in the Fens, could all see it plainly every day, Shepherdstown Penitentiary was built in a relatively small amount of time—one more construction project funneling money back into city coffers.

Lonely Point and Star Island are mostly deserted during this time, making them ideal for smugglers and other less savory characters to ply their ambitions there. It won't be until right before the turn of the century that Henry Wading's son Emerson, a firebrand reformer who followed his father into office and proceeded to dismantle most of his father's more corrupt enterprises, will be able to pull enough strings in national and state capitols to get the existing poor man's docking and fueling station expanded into Lonely Point Naval Station.

At some point prior to those years, with different accounts of the dates contradicting each other, the Order of Light will also finish wiping out the sects of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign who had hidden lairs in and around Star Island.

NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED...

Historians sometimes try to pinpoint the exact timing and causes that saw the corrupt era of Mayor Wading, his partner Richard Beaudrie, and their right hand man, Police Commissioner Tobias Gregson (whose officers were often little more than the mayor's hired thugs), begin its violent downslide toward completion. It's unlikely that many of them will ever succeed in this quest, as much of the true drivers of the period's events are still as hidden today as they were then.

The immortal Taurus, ever a keen judge of potential, saw in young Henry Wading a very able tool and one easily molded by a master in his craft. The elder puppeteer had many times been told by oracular sources over the centuries that the settlement he watched grow into Freedom City would be of great importance some day, and that it would be of singular importance to him...though the reasons underlying that status were always vague. He had therefore taken an interest in the city's development, and when he saw the time was right, he began positioning his pawns and puppets in their proper places.

First, Taurus arranged for the leader of the Order of Light, Abraham Hildebrandt, to meet an "accidental" demise in Amsterdam. The Order had been monitoring the Minotaur's activities for years—covertly, they had mistakenly thought—and this act bought time enough to operate without their interference. Equally devious distractions waylaid his other potential opponents or obscured their attentions. All but one, that is. Subtle as he was, Taurus's machinations nonetheless came to the atten-

tion of his master's hated enemy, Daedalus. Daedalus had gone into one of his periods of seclusion, and Taurus made an uncharacteristic blunder in judgment, assuming that the tired old wanderer would be long gone away and lost in one of his periodic funks. It took years for the inventor to apply his genius to the problem at hand and finally begin to engineer the social dynamics, help develop the necessary proxies, and arrange the appropriate countersituations to ultimately foil Taurus's plans to control the city as its king-in-shadows. Most gratifying to Daedalus was the fact that his plan proved so sophisticated, so well-played, that it was decades before Taurus finally determined who it was that had actually snipped the carefully laid strands of his beautiful web. The Labyrinth would eventually rebuild its inroads into the city's governmental and financial structure, but only over time and at great expense—and never to the level to which Taurus originally wanted it.



LANGUAGE MAKES THE MAN

"Egads, sir! May Heaven and her many graces defend us from such a ghastly scoundrel!"

In an era where advanced education was seen more commonly as a privilege and a marker of social distinction than it is today, a person's vocabulary and diction said a great deal about them. A handful of suggestions to help capture this element in your games:

Try to avoid contractions unless necessary.

Complex and Compound-Complex sentences are prevalent; also, passive voice is more readily accepted.

Foreign (i.e., Non-English) words peppered here and there among your speech show a cosmopolitan demeanor, with French being the most recognized.

Judicious use of Latin words and phrases do much the same job in presenting one's educational background (it isn't uncommon for a well-educated adult to be grounded in both Classical Latin and Ancient Greek).

Formality is the norm, with discretion and impersonality expected: "Sir" and "Madam" are common forms of address, family names are almost always used in place of given names, and one doesn't pry into another's affairs without invitation (nor do people share same without dire provocation).

Profanity is a mark of low breeding—in polite society one would expect "Cad," "Bounder," "Scoundrel," or the like instead of gutter argot (a fancy way of saying "four-letter words"). Creative and colorful oaths delivered with operatic tempo, by the way, are excellent venues to display wit and sophistication—it might prove useful to have several written out ahead of time to be skillfully inserted into conversation as appropriate.

Note these suggestions only really apply to polite society—an illiterate British seaman in Bombay or a Utah Territory cowhand are likely to sound somewhat more familiar to modern ears in their cadence and word choice.

AND ALL THE WORLD OUTSIDE MY WINDOW

Though Freedom City grows quite large during this period, it and most of the United States are still considered a backwater in comparison to the known major powers of the day, all of which reside in Europe. This is the period of Britain's greatest achievement—an empire that can truly

be said to span the world. France, the newly merged Germany, and the other continental powers can only look upon Britain with thinly disguised envy. It is mostly British invention and cultural policies which set the pace around the world, and the cosmopolitan cultures of the continent, France notably, which determines most of the trappings associated with common definitions of class and style. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, the United States is still mostly just a boorish frontier country and, in some respects, an ongoing social experiment.

The hidden lands of legend and majesty known in the 21st century are exactly that in this time of expansion and empire building—hidden. Atlantis, the Aerie, Utopia Isle, and Ultima Thule will all remain only myth and story until their eventual reconnections with the rest of the world starting about the time of the Second World War.

Shambala Vale, Lemuria, Kaiju Island, and Sub-Terra have the same extremely limited number of visitors they've always had; that is, just enough to keep the stories about those places active in the right imaginations. This isn't to say that certain elements within various governments aren't aware of the existence of these places (or that they don't have extensive physical evidence of the same in some cases). However, public knowledge and acceptance is minimal. The citizens of Dakana use this ignorance to their advantage in keeping the prying eyes of the colonial powers from looking *too* far past Dakana's borders. M'Kallu, great-grandfather of the current day White Lion, uses a combination of advanced technology and ruthless efficiency to keep the borders of Dakana closed to outsiders; abortive attempts to press the issue by the militaries of Britain, France, and Germany met with humiliation, so the Western powers in question are only too happy to keep the rest of the world in the dark, rather than share information about how easily they were routed by "savages." Of course, this doesn't keep the occasional outsider from still causing a bit of trouble now and again, as Dakana's age old enemy, the immortal Ayesha, has been stirred to new viciousness in the region following her encounters with a certain enterprising English big game hunter of some repute.

Of these "magical" places introduced in the Freedom City core book, really only the Lost World and Magic Mesa receive any real attention.



The "Lost World," however, while discovered, recorded, and mapped by the famed Challenger expeditions during this very period of time, is dismissed as fabrication by most of the world, despite Professor Challenger's unending assertions to the contrary. And Magic Mesa,

though the subject of many frontier fables and dime novel plots, is generally treated with the same gentle tolerance as Loch Ness or the Bermuda Triangle—an interesting place to visit and chuckle over the local superstitions and other tourist attraction fodder.

"I MEET THE MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE IN THIS LINE OF WORK"

Even without the front-page spectacle of godlike men and women clad in garish costumes, this is hardly an age without extraordinary individuals.

There are the immortals, of course, active then as now and so many other eras as well. Already mentioned were the point and counterpoint of Daedalus and Taurus, but they are only two of those now known. Eos, thought by mortals a goddess, discovered her true heritage toward the beginning of the 19th century as the child of Ultima scientists thought destroyed in an out of control experiment millennia prior. Welcomed to Ultima Thule, she takes the opportunity to study the true depths of her abilities with knowledgeable teachers for the first time, a process she is still undergoing in the early years of the 21st century. The Thunderer remains trapped in a prison not of his making and won't see freedom again for more than a century. Medea, when not plotting her short-term victories over those she perceives as offending her, loses herself time and time again in sybaritic excess, becoming a mainstay among the Paris nightlights—much to the disgust of her only accepted peer, Taurus. Others that will later trouble mankind either remain slumbering and unaware for the moment, such as Malador, or limit themselves for whatever reason to an isolated section of the world, and therefore are out of contact with those that would take significant notice of them, such as Ayesha.

Mere mortals make their own mark as well, many of them in turn immortalized in dime novels and other sensationalistic literature of the

period (though the degree to which their exploits are exaggerated may be a point of later debate).

ADAM PROPHET

Adam Prophet was one of the most famous of the Wild West's heroes, though his fame at this time is the merest fraction of the scrutiny he will receive after his passing and the rise to fame of his son. Far better known in the two decades after the Civil War was his alter ego—the Pale Ranger. Resurrected by the shaman Broken Crow after Prophet's murder, he would spend years fighting the good fight from beneath a bone-white mask, using trickery and theatrics to convince his many enemies they fought a ghost instead of a man. Eventually, age worked its own magic, and as the years weighed down on him, Prophet put away his mask, though neither his morals nor his courage went into the darkness with his paraphernalia.

BROKEN CROW

Broken Crow was a modest and quiet Sioux shaman who was every bit as surprised as his detractors in the arcane community upon his elevation to the stature of Master Mage. He fought evil bravely, though often alone and isolated from many of the men and women who would have

THE RIDDLE OF THE MINOTAUR

Astute readers may look at the suggested guidelines for character creation included later in this chapter and compare them unfavorably to the established write-ups for a few of the immortal characters known to be active in this period. One look at Taurus's write-up in the Freedom City core book and the disparity in power level becomes immediately obvious, begging the question, "Why isn't [fill-in-the-blank] in charge?"

It's a reasonable question.

First, even powerful sorcerous types such as Medea don't actually operate in a vacuum. As powerful as she is, a dozen or so mages from the Order of Light can put her seriously at risk. They would definitely see her as warranting their intervention should she try something on a grand scale.

Second, world domination is involved and tedious; just because someone has the power to pull it off doesn't mean they have the inclination.

Third, longevity and power tend to breed enemies of equal stature. As addressed in the background presented here, Daedalus proved able to stymie his old acquaintances' occasional schemes when they became serious enough to garner his attention, and he's only one possible obstacle, with Eos, the Thunderer, and others equally willing over the long years to keep in line the bad guys that mere mortals couldn't handle. Having quite a few centuries to get attached to the whole "I like living" scene makes one risk-averse when the payoff is uncertain.

However, one last consideration trumps all of these: Taking a close look at the list of immortal characters so far presented in the source material shows most of them have some sort of attachment or association with religion or "mythology." Long ago on Freedom City's Earth, the various pantheons reached sensitive agreements for staying out of mortal affairs. Even someone of Taurus's power couldn't actually take over the world and never actually come out of the shadows in the effort. Zeus certainly wouldn't want the other pantheons to interpret Hades's agent's actions as a breach in their long-standing treaty, and he undoubtedly laid down the law to Hades, who in turn did the same with Taurus: Play in the shadows all you want, but step on the world's main stage and pay the price.

Taurus takes the long view, the businessman's view, and it would take him only a heartbeat to make the logical decision. Since Taurus would know many of the other "players" capable of similar action, and such actions would interfere with his own businesses and plans, it doesn't take much extrapolation to see *those* conversations:

"Ahhh... so you would set yourself on the throne I am not allowed to take. That's an *interesting* decision. Allow me to present the many consequences you do not want to see happen... ever."

Of course, following Centurion's arrival later on the scene, subsequent dismissal of things mythic and godly as nothing more than mutants and superhumans, and Hades's own invasion of Freedom City, this ban eventually disappears—though Taurus remains hidden for reasons of his own thereafter.

October the 26th, 1890

Though he is a monster, the butchery I've seen these last few days is not the handiwork of our long-time quarry, Doktor Raub. This, at least, I now know with certainty instead of mere suspicion.

Peake and our taciturn Cossack, as always, more than earned their berths aboard Miss Swift's *Silver Cloud*, and Mr. Warren's connections once again proved most efficacious, granting the group of us access this morning to the scene of last night's murder, despite the obvious and aggressive reluctance of the local constabulary to acquiesce in the matter. Rostov needed only a few moments of looking over the poor woman's body to determine that it was very different from the animalistic rending at which Raub excels. No, though the result was similarly grotesque and frenzied, this act was done with a knife, something akin to that used in a stockyards. Once we were well clear of our unwelcoming authoritarian "escorts," Oberon added that the signature he was looking for was wrong as well. Here there was no trace of the mental energies Peake has found lingering around the bodies of every one of Raub's victims. Oberon once attempted to explain the matter to me as something similar to the "Oril" energies described in the unfortunate Arthur Dym's writings we recovered from that mad ship's captain in Patagonia. I confess that I remain as mystified now as I was when Oberon explained it then—though I still have the occasional nightmare of that captain's face as he cried "Tekeli-Li" over and over—and so I simply accept our boisterous Mr. Peake and his expertise in the matter.

Returning to the airship, we were greeted with one of Garret's determined looks. One of his haunted looks would be equally accurate an appraisal. His "friends" were pointing him toward the smallish Star Island seen from the shores of Lonely Point, and we now leave to see what has them so disturbed as to inveigle from him an interruption in the midst of such trying work.

been his allies if his skin had been a different color or his origins had been outside a culture most of his erstwhile peers dismissed as savage. His mastery of the spirit world and its mysteries was virtually unmatched during his adult years, regardless of how his abilities were intentionally downplayed in the Order of Light's records.

OTHER HEROES

Aside from these worthies, the dime novel "reconstructions" published in the east introduced the adventures of a number of other heroes to the public:

EAGLE RIDER

Tuwahana Smith, son of an Apache woman and an army scout, gained fame as *Eagle Rider*, whose keen eyesight was every bit as uncanny as his unerring aim. Thanks to the interest and constant companionship of his biographer, Dr. Trent Palmer, Smith actually received compensation for the stories made about him, which is a better deal than most of his contemporaries ever saw.

EL GAUCHO AND LONESOME DOVE

Few people outside the Nevada and Utah territories ever saw *El Gaucho* or *Lonesome Dove*. The former was the son of Argentine immigrants who used the talents taught him by his grandfather in the Pampas to protect the Latino farmers of his territory from their many enemies, most notably with his expertise with the bola—a weapon strange and alien to the American west in those years. The latter, Lonesome Dove, operated exclusively in the shadows, her true face never known to the readers of her adventures, as it was ever a mystery to those she helped; her gifts at disguise and imitation were the cornerstone of her reputation. She made fools of many a snake oil salesman and confidence artist, as well as more than one enterprising land baron who thought to enrich himself from the gullibility of his fellow man.

MADAME COLT

Madeline Thibodeaux was quite another story, as she was her own best publicist and never let pass an opportunity to display her talents or her looks as she traveled through the West under the *nom de guerre* of *Madame Colt*. New Orleans born and bred, she was the daughter of a retired bounty hunter who taught his little girl everything he knew, including how to be a master of both the pistol and the bullwhip.

THE SILVER SHERIFF

Playing more to his audience's sense of humor, the *Silver Sheriff* was Harris Milne, a man who found himself owner of both a badge and a very lucrative silver mine, the winnings from one of the stranger poker games ever played. Keeping the citizens of his town amused and the criminals befuddled by his grandiose and garish displays of wealth, including silver-plating his badge and exclusively using silver bullets in his guns, Milne's foppish demeanor hid a keen mind and an honest heart that he put to equal and good use.

PROPHET'S CRUSADE

As with many of their European counterparts whose exploits were fictionalized by men as famous as Doyle and Haggard, most of these American stalwarts worked their storied careers without ever crossing each other's paths. One singular exception to this rule congregated around the aforementioned Adam Prophet, though their experiences would remain generally unknown to the world at large until AEGIS agents stumbled across Prophet's journal in the first years of the 21st century. Lured out of semi-retirement by a mysterious patron in the late 1880s to hunt the notorious globetrotting criminal *Doktor Raub*, Prophet encountered other illustrious adventurers who, for various reasons of their own, saw fit to join him in the hunt.

EMILY SWIFT

Once overshadowed by her more famous cousins in the Reade branch of the family, *Emily Swift* was blessed with her family's singular trait—an intellect decades ahead of her time. She was already pursuing Raub for his murder of one of her friends when she and Adam met up, and she would always afterwards tell Prophet that *he joined her crusade*.

GARRET GAUNT

Garret Gaunt was one of the fastest guns in the West and would likely have come to as ignoble an end as many others of his ilk if he hadn't come into possession of the cursed six-shooters "Hellfire" and "Brimstone." Doomed to wander the Earth redeeming the dark powers of his weapons in Heaven's cause, as his legend goes, he too lost friends to Raub's brutal touch and added the good Doktor's name to the tally of monsters he must destroy before he could free himself from his burden.



OBERON PEAKE

Oberon Peake, Fourth Earl of Tembroke, never fit in anywhere he attempted to stay, so it is little surprise he now makes nowhere his home. Found as an infant left abandoned on the estates of his adopted father, Peake grew into a fae presence, his outlandish taste in dress matched by his scandalous behavior and only outdone by his piercing mind and talents for the preternatural. Trained in deduction by Baker Street's most famous resident, he accompanies Prophet not for reasons of moral outrage, but rather in an egotist's attempt to prove himself the better of his teacher, who reluctantly declined Prophet's invitation. Still, Peake proved himself an invaluable—if sometimes aggravating—member of the team, his keen insights helping to lead them in the right direction and escape some fiendish traps to which they might have otherwise fallen prey.

ROSTOV

Silent reflection of Peake's vibrant presence, the ursine Cossack who insists on using the name Rostov, which his companions know to be an alias, also acts out of an interest other than justice. The Russian is a hunter to his core and apparently knows no greater pleasure; however, his travels and adventures have left him with little on this Earth that he has not already hunted...and he now seeks to use his "trademark" tartar war bow to bring down Raub, who has thus far met Rostov's every hope of being the most dangerous of game.

Together, this small but accomplished group spent several years chasing the Doktor around the globe, finding time to thwart the dangers presented by the devilish master of the Si-Fan assassin's cult, finish off the mad Sikh raised from his grave by foul Thuggee magic, destroying his terrible submersible presumably once and for all, and indulge so many other obstacles and "diversions" that have led them as far as the Carpathian Alps and the Arctic circle.

November the 4th, 1890

We leave tonight for the Continent. The killings have stopped, no thanks to our frustrated efforts, and Mr. Warren has communicated that the spree of terror is at an end here. As he has never proven wrong on such things in our acquaintance, I trust this to be true.

At the very least, we destroyed a nest of foul snake-worshipping cultists on Star Island. A small contribution to the safety of this city, but it will have to satisfy our consciences. We were aided in this endeavor by a small group of mysterious men Gaunt identified as the Sons of Merlin. Strangely tight-lipped, Gaunt refused to say anything else about them, except to thank them for their assistance.

The newspapers are strongly implying that the relative quiet and seeming end of the killings is due to the arrival in town of Peake's former mentor last week, which understandably has him incensed. His mood is hardly improved by our returning to Paris, that city being one of his three least favorite things on Earth, in his own words. Perhaps this time around we can spare him the other two: Sewers and Opera. However, someone is kidnapping the greatest minds in Europe, and that is where our trail begins, so he will have to suffer through as best, though loudly, as he can.

GASLIGHT GAME INFORMATION

There are a handful of things that players may want to keep in mind when creating characters for the era described in the chapter.

SKILLS

The skills Computers and Craft (electronic) may, at first blush, seem completely out of place in this time period. However, when dealing with the inclusion of steampunk-level science, Computers may be used to represent skill in using "Analytical Engines" in the finest Babbage and Lovelace tradition. Similarly, Craft (electronic) may reflect a facility for dealing with bulky Tesla-esque contraptions and Edisonian fancies. Pushed far enough along the technology curve, versions of vacuum tubes, transistors, or even more advanced inventions may be allowed by GMs, giving call for this skill just as in a more modern setting.

Pilot easily covers airships in this era, and Drive accommodates carriages and broughams without problem. Investigate and Medicine don't include many of the capabilities covered under modern forensics and 21st century medical advances, but more "primitive" applications are perfectly reasonable. Handle Animal and Ride, unsurprisingly, are far more common then than now.

Finally, one thing to note: Among the educated classes, there was commonly a more stringent Classical basis to that education. In game terms, this means a higher likelihood of characters possessing Language skill in either or both of Classical Latin and Greek, as well as ranks in Knowledge (theology and philosophy).

FEATS

The Benefit (status) feat is addressed in more depth later in this section. Using Benefit (wealth) requires a detail-oriented gaming table to keep in mind the simple fact that while pricing and economic levels of currency exchange have changed immensely in the intervening years, the abstract nature of the Wealth bonus circumvents this complication—the bonuses and compared DCs may represent different abstract levels of money in Victoria's England than in Elizabeth's, but the numbers themselves stay consistent with one another and the goods they purchase.

If *The Mastermind's Manual* is in use, the Renown feat is worthy of serious consideration, as individual fame and hero-worship thrive in the less cynical and less-informed age before the birth of the Information Society.

Outside of Asia and the isolated pockets of immigrants here and there, Martial Arts are extremely uncommon. Of the combat styles presented in the core rules, only Boxing, Wrestling, and Sword Fighting are generally available. If using *The Mastermind's Manual*, Fencing replaces Sword Fighting, Jujutsu is added to the list (though Westerners probably call it Bartitsu), and Karate minus the Stunning Attack feat is a workable substitute for the French art of Savate.

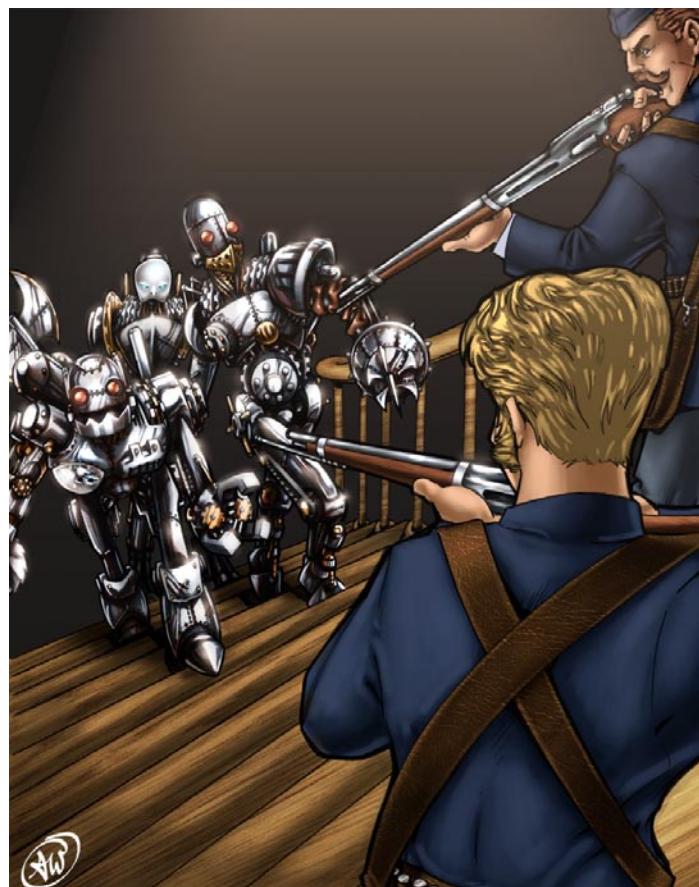
ON THE CARE AND FEEDING OF THE PASTICHE

"HELLO MY NAME IS WELLS AND THESE ARE MY ASSOCIATES, MISTERS HAGGARD AND VERNE. PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF US?"

The GM takes great care describing to the players how they spent the morning with their old friend, famed detective Hemlock Bones, who gave them all the advice they needed on dealing with the dread vampire Count Radu and his local associates, Dr. Meckel and Mr. Clyde (who, *incredibly*, it turns out are really one and the same person). At this point, the players unify their laments into one overwhelming groan, signifying Pastiche Overload. In simplest terms, a pastiche is supposed to be a respectful homage, either using an established fictional character (or place or item) in new adventures or, alternately, an adventure using a character whose inspiration is playfully obvious. Handled with care, a pastiche can add an element of depth and preparation to a story, cementing the players in the background color that drives a particular era or genre in a game. Unfortunately, such homages have limited shelf life, and if a game devolves into a contest of "Can you figure out what the Gamemaster read last week?" then chances are the players will rapidly lose that subtle appreciation of the experience.

A few words of advice:

- *Be sparing.* Placement should be carefully considered and never overused. One instance during a game where the player characters get to meet Nick Carter or Professor Challenger is quite sufficient, generally. Special "guest stars" should be exactly that, special.
- *Feel out the players' tastes in background characters.* Some people have great affection for camp, others don't. Some people are fond of particular eras, genres, and character types, while others are strict originalists (they don't even like to use published settings, little less see highly familiar characters from outside their home-brew settings). Before you determine what your players will appreciate, find out what things they *won't* enjoy.



- *Be familiar with the material before using it.* There's something to be said for the interesting twist or new perspective on a character ("Holmes' antipathy for women stems from his mother's attempt to poison him as a child for insurance money"). It's quite another when said twist comes from lack of knowledge or preparation on the part of the Gamemaster, and worse yet, the players call him on it ("Umm...Bob? You do know that Dr. Moreau wasn't a cockney longshoreman, right? You're getting mixed up there somewhere, dude.").

It doesn't take much prep time to use many of the famous figures from the Victorian lit of pretty much any country. Five minutes on the Internet is usually sufficient, especially since in most cases, the only real use for the characters in question will be as a bit of background color—basic details and personality are useful, but an encyclopedic knowledge of the character's appearances and a detailed breakdown of their published or cinematic experiences is probably a foray into overkill for game purposes... but compliments on the effort. Being a nerd is fun isn't it?

KNOWING YOUR PLACE

"IT'S A QUESTION OF BREEDING, YOU VULGAR LITTLE MAN..."

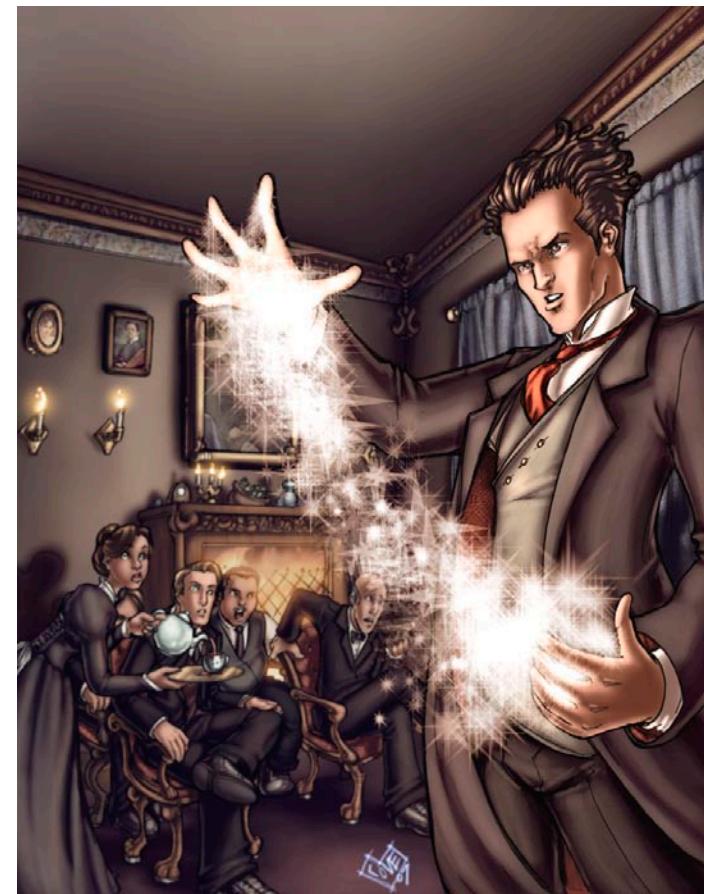
Contrary to some of the popular imagery of the time, ranging from the many rags-to-riches stories and Edisonades (very popular during this period) to any of the frequent British "common man" heroes of the lurid dime novels, and despite the unprecedented social mobility made possible during the industrial revolution, the 19th century is far from being egalitarian except as an abstract ideal. Social class is important. Scratch that. Social class is *vital*—and heavily stratified. It determines opportunities, upbringing, access to education (very disparate in the age before standardized public schools became a common development), probable behavior, and the all-important circle of contacts supporting characters throughout their lives. "Being a Gentleman" doesn't mean simply showing a bit of courtesy—it is a formal distinction that carries power, privileges, and, yes, expectations. With that in mind, the following represents a slight and optional rules addition:

SOCIAL CLASS BENEFIT BREAKDOWN

Lower or Working Class/Peasant	1-point Drawback
Middle or Merchant Class	Assumed as default (0 points)
High Class/Robber Baron/Aristocrat	Benefit (status, aristocrat)
Minor Nobility	Benefit 2 (status, nobility)
Ruling Class/Royalty	Benefit 3 (status, royalty)

Being lower class, which is to say, a member of the "unwashed masses," carries a certain stigma when dealing with anyone of higher social rank, incurring a -2 penalty to the use of Diplomacy or some cases of Bluff. Deference to your "bettters" is expected, and lacking in that area is considered *insolent*...an offense that can cause a character as many problems as the Gamemaster cares to apply. The aristocracy, conversely, enjoys any number of privileges, ranging from the aforementioned expected deference to an assumed network of family connections and the indulgence of society that gets them out of many difficulties.

Generally speaking, characters with this benefit get a +2 bonus to many social skill usages representing the "benefit of the doubt" they enjoy as a matter of course. America doesn't have aristocrats per se, but the power and prestige of the leading industrialists (also known



as "Robber Barons") rivals that of European bluebloods and should be treated as essentially the same mechanically, at least if playing in North America. Royalty gets it even better, with an assumed +5 to certain social skill usages (GM's discretion) and a level of deference from their social inferiors that can best be described as "fawning."

THE POWER OF SCIENCE

"BUT... IT FLIES! HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE!?"

The Victorian Age is early to mid-Tech Level 4 (Industrial Age) as described on page 94 of *The Mastermind's Manual*. At least, it is in the real world. In the wondrous media of comic book adventures, those boundaries become a great deal less rigidly defined. Even barring the more recent inception of a formal steampunk genre or contemporary fiction that uses the central conceit of a much more technologically advanced 19th century than was ever seen in reality (such as Gibson and Sterling's *The Difference Engine* or Phil and Kaja Foglio's *Girl Genius*), canon of the period still had Johnny Brainard and his Steam Man of the Prairies, Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*, Robur the Conqueror's *Albatross* airship, and even the Baltimore Gun Club shooting men into space with a giant cannon. Startling technical innovation is not a uniquely modern theme in science fiction.

As an option for the enterprising GM who actually wants the added detail, simply adapt the tech level rule present in *The Mastermind's Manual* to reflect closer horizons for scientific discovery. How difficult it becomes to move the boundaries of science forward depends on the nature of the advance. The following table presents some guidelines on the level of discovery and how great a penalty to checks on the appropriate Knowledge or Craft sub-skill should be applied.

TECH COMPARISON TABLE

DEGREE	EXAMPLES
"Cutting Edge" tech (+0 DC)	Automobiles, Electric Turbines
Minor Variation on existing tech (+5 DC)	Gatling Cannon, keg-sized Steam Engine
Small Leap [10-20 years ahead] (+10 DC)	Airships, Automatic Pistols
Major Leap [50-75 years ahead] (+15 DC)	Jet Engine, Electronic Computer
Astounding Leap [Doesn't even exist today] (+25 DC)	Thinking Robots, Teleportation

This table presumes that a Gamemaster even wants a game where electro-pistols and ornithopters are possible additions. Otherwise, simply ignore the table and reject inventions that push too great an envelope. As always, the individual GM is the final arbiter.

Assuming that such incredible advances are allowed, the following new feat should prove quite useful. If a GM decides not to include it in his game, it is suggested that the Steampunk Engineer archetype presented in this chapter also be ignored, as the archetype makes heavy use of the feat.

GENIUS

GENERAL, RANKED

You possess the spark of creation, an inventive acumen far beyond your peers, which drives you to routinely push the boundaries of mankind's knowledge forward in your preferred fields. For every rank you possess in this feat (to a maximum of three ranks), you can ignore 5 points in difficulty increase to skill check DCs normally applied due to differing tech levels (see page 95 in *The Mastermind's Manual* for a discussion of Skills and Tech Levels).

THINGS THAT GO BOOM

The equipment lists provided in the M&M core rules are general enough and extensive enough to cover most of the items a gaming group will probably need, which is to say, things used by characters to hurt each other. The following table presents some period weapons, the names of examples from the late 19th century, and the listings to which one can refer in the core rules to find game mechanic descriptions.

PERIOD WEAPONS

CATEGORY	PERIOD EXAMPLES	M&M EQUIVALENT
Large Knife	Bowie Knife, Arkansas Toothpick	Knife (+2 Damage)
Small Sword	Cavalry Saber	Sword
Hand Axe	Tomahawk	Knife
Revolvers, Small	Colt Army, Colt Navy	Light Pistol
Revolvers, Large	Colt Peacemaker, Colt Dragoon	Heavy Pistol
"Stingy" Pistols	Derringer, Knuckleduster	Hold-out Pistol
Rifle, Breech-Loading	Sharps Carbine, Sharps Big 50*	Shotgun
Rifle, Magazine	Henry .44, Winchester	Submachine Gun**
Rifle, Muzzle-Loading	Enfield, Kentucky Long Rifle	Assault Rifle**
Machine Gun	Gatling, Hotchkiss	Assault Rifle
Cannon	Napoleon 12 Pounder	Grenade Launcher

*Use the slug-based damage instead of the shot-based **In both cases, drop the Autofire modifier; for the first, add 1 rank of the Improved Range power feat, and for the second, GMs may want to add Full Round Action to Reload as a flaw, depending on the level of detail desired.

ARCHETYPES

As referenced at the beginning of the chapter, *Freedom by Gaslight* is essentially "proto-pulp." It can be run at varying power levels, depending on just how much a Gamemaster wants to divorce the characters from mortal frailties. The inspirational fiction from the period supports a broad range of characters and capabilities.

If Gamemasters are looking at a slightly more down-to-earth game along the lines of the adventures of C. Auguste Dupin or Broad Arrow Jack, then a starting Power Level of 6 more than accommodates protagonists who possess *some* exceptional abilities and tricks while remaining quite mortal (much as those luminaries featured in the inter-reliant super agent teams discussed in the *Agents of Freedom* sourcebook).

On the other hand, games reaching more to the pulp influences, such as those with characters along the lines of Nick Carter and his nemesis Dr. Quartz, can easily slide up the scale to a power level of 8 or 9 or even higher. At those heights, characters are used to dealing with extraordinary situations and dastardly adventures with nothing more than their own singular wits and luck...and succeeding anyway despite all odds to the contrary.

Following several of the archetypes is a list of minor tweaks or point reallocations sufficient to make them slightly different heroic and villainous representations that are essentially variations on the same themes. For example, the "theme" behind the Consulting Detective is a character that revolves around either knowing more than those around him, being more clever than those around him, or having access to special knowledge not available to those around him—a slight juggling of points and the same archetype easily fills the part of Fiendish Mastermind (Moriarty works so well as Holmes's nemesis at least partly from their similari-

ties). Juggle again, this time focusing on a more esoteric application of brainpower, and the result is an Occultist (a.k.a. a "Ghostbreaker") in the proud tradition of Carnacki. Each of the following archetypes is presented with this versatility in mind.

The archetypes in this section also serve double-duty in that they neatly represent many of Freedom City's 19th century heroes and villains described in this chapter, with perhaps a slight modification or two at most. Although the attributions are fairly clear, they're provided here for easy reference:

Consulting Detective: Oberon Peake (Ghostbreaker) along with his famous mentor.

Chrononaut: The Time Traveler. For Doktor Raub, see the Morlock Mutant archetype on page 96 of *Freedom City*.

Exemplar: Rostov, substituting some Equipment (like his trademark bow and arrows) for the Leaping, Speed, and Variable powers.

Gunslinger: Adam Prophet, Garret Gaunt, and most of the Western heroes like Eagle Rider and Madame Colt (although El Gaucho was a Masked Adventurer).

Intrepid Explorer: Although Prophet didn't include an Explorer in his band, such characters are common in Freedom City at this time.

Noble Savage: Zandar the Jungle the Lord's ancestor at the time, as well as the 19th Century White Lion (although the present White Lion's game stats can serve as well).

Steampunk Engineer: Emily Swift.

CONSULTING DETECTIVE

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+5	+5	+1
10	12	12	20	20	13
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+3/+1*	+5	+4	+8		

*flat-footed

Skills: Bluff 6 (+7), Concentration 6 (+11), Diplomacy 4 (+5), Disguise 4 (+5), Drive 4 (+5), Gather Information 10 (+11), Investigate 13 (+18), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 10 (+15), Knowledge (civics) 6 (+11), Knowledge (current events) 10 (+15), Knowledge (life sciences) 4 (+9), Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 (+9), Knowledge (streetwise) 6 (+11), Language 4 (French, German, Greek, Latin), Notice 10 (+15), Perform (stringed instruments) 4 (+5), Ride 4 (+5), Search 13 (+18), Sense Motive 13 (+18), Sleight of Hand 5 (+6), Stealth 4 (+5)

Feats: Benefit 2 (Alternate ID x 2), Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Jack-Of-All-Trades, Minions 3 (street urchins [as Bystander archetype], x 10), Sidekick 4 (as Butler archetype*), Skill Mastery (Concentration, Gather Information, Investigate, Search), Ultimate Skill 3 (Investigate, Search, Sense Motive), Well-Informed

Equipment: Hold-out pistol (+2 damage)

[*Substitute appropriate profession skill in place of profession (butler)]

Powers: Quickness 4 (Mental Only)

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +2 (pistol), +0 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback-2 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +5

Abilities 27 + Skills 36 (144 ranks) + Feats 23+ Powers 2+ Combat 22 + Saves 10 = Total 120

"THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE: OPEN YOUR EYES, AND THIS TIME, ACTUALLY EMPLOY THEM."



You are surrounded by oafs and blind men, each and every one of them refusing to see the most simple of things sitting right in front of their eyes. If only they would open those eyes and just *observe*. It's enough to drive one to seek comfort in the unhealthiest of distractions. At least they pay you well to enlighten them, and occasionally some talented soul actually provides you with a challenge... for a short time, anyway.

FIENDISH MASTERMIND

The flip side of the brilliant crime solver is, of course, the brilliant criminal, an erstwhile Napoleon or Genghis Khan that uses the underworld for his battlefield.

Drop the Sidekick and Benefit feats, as well as the Ultimate Skill for Investigate and Search. Move 5 of the salvaged points to the Minion feat, replacing street urchins with the Criminal archetype and boosting the number of minions to 100. With the remaining 3 points, add Intimidate 8 (+9) and increase Bluff to 10 (+11). The traditionalist may also want to move 4 ranks from Investigate and add them to Knowledge (physical science) to buff up that old mathematic's prowess.

To emulate a certain expatriate Walachian aristocrat looking to expand his hunting grounds outside his Carpathian domain, simply add the powers and weaknesses from the Vampire Lord archetype (*M&M*, page 225) to this variation; sticklers for the source material will probably want to delete the Weakness to Sunlight, however.

GHOSTBREAKER

You understand that it's probably for the best that the people around you actually remain clueless, and at times, you wish you lived in the same blissful ignorance of the truth of what's out there. The darkness waits, it hungers, and it never sleeps. Without your intervention, it would sate that hunger more often.

Drop the Sidekick, Minions, and Benefit feats. Add the Artificer and Ritualist feats and another rank of Equipment (for a light pistol and some ghost-hunting gear). Trade out Knowledge (current events) for Knowledge (arcane lore), add Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8 (+13) and increase Languages by 4 ranks (Coptic Egyptian, Enochian, Hebrew, Sumerian). Add the power **Super Senses 1** (magical awareness, mental) and increase Will Save to +10.

CHRONONAUT

POWER LEVEL 7

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+2	+2	+4	+2	+3
12	15	14	18	15	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+4/+2*	+5	+5	+6		

*flatfooted

Skills: Bluff 4 (+7), Computers 4 (+8), Concentration 6 (+8), Craft (electronic) 6 (+10), Craft (mechanical) 6 (+10), Diplomacy 6 (+9), Drive 4 (+6), Knowledge (history) 8 (+12), Knowledge (physical sciences) 12 (+16), Knowledge (technology) 11 (+15), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 5 (+9), Language 3 (French, Greek, Latin), Medicine 4 (+6), Notice 5 (+7), Pilot 4 (+6), Ride 6 (+8), Search 6 (+10), Sense Motive 6 (+8), Survival 2 (+4)

Feats: Beginner's Luck, Benefit 2 (status-Aristocrat, wealth), Connected, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 2, Genius, Improved Initiative, Inventor, Luck 2, Second Chance (Craft-mechanical checks)

Equipment: Time Machine (Strength -, Speed -, Defense 9, Toughness 8, Size Large, **Features:** **Super Movement 3** (Temporal Movement 3))

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -2 (-1 flatfooted), Initiative +6

Abilities 30 + Skills 27 (108 ranks) + Feats 14 + Combat 24 + Saves 10
= Total 105

"NOTHING LASTS FOREVER. TRUST ME, I'M IN A POSITION TO KNOW."



Let other men of exploration content themselves with steaming jungles and frozen wastelands—you claim all of history as your province, both recorded and yet to come. You have achieved that shining grail of scientific inquiry, the Time Machine. It's only proper now that you put it to good use. Geography alone is hardly the only expanse in need of a civilizing touch, after all.

SAILOR AMONG THE STARS

Whether it's a ballistic vessel on course with the lunar wastes or other, more exotic methods that get you to the sands of savage Mars, you are an explorer of the farthest contemporary territories, those separated from mankind by a sea of stars. While you may lack the uncanny scientific expertise of the time traveler, you more than compensate with the speed and skill to buckle swashes against any horizon.

Trade the totals under Dex and Int (note the change to Reflex Save), increase attack and defense bonus to +7 each (+8 melee, +10 with swords; +10 defense, +4 flatfooted), and substitute the following skills and feats entirely for those listed for the base archetype:

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+9), Bluff 6 (+9), Climb 5 (+6), Diplomacy 5 (+8), Handle Animal 5 (+8), Intimidate 7 (+10), Knowledge (tactics) 7 (+9), Language 1 (Appropriate Alien Tongue [e.g., Martian]), Notice 5 (+7), Pilot 5 (+9), Ride 6 (+10), Search 5 (+7), Sense Motive 7 (+9), Stealth 6 (+10), Survival 6 (+8), Swim 3 (+4)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (melee), Attack Specialization (swords), Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 3, Environmental Adaptation (low-gravity), Equipment, Improved Block, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Taunt

EXEMPLAR

POWER LEVEL 9

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+5	+4	+5	+5	+3	+4
10	12	12	20	20	13
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+6	+8	+8	+8		

Skills: Bluff 6 (+10), Diplomacy 8 (+12), Notice 7 (+10), Ride 4 (+8), Search 4 (+9), Sense Motive 7 (+10)

Feats: Ambidexterity, Attractive, Benefit 3 (Wealth 3, wealth bonus +20), Diehard, Eidetic Memory, Endurance, Fearless, Inspire, Leadership, Master Plan, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Notice, Search, Sense Motive), Ultimate Save 4 (Fortitude, Reflex, Toughness, Will)

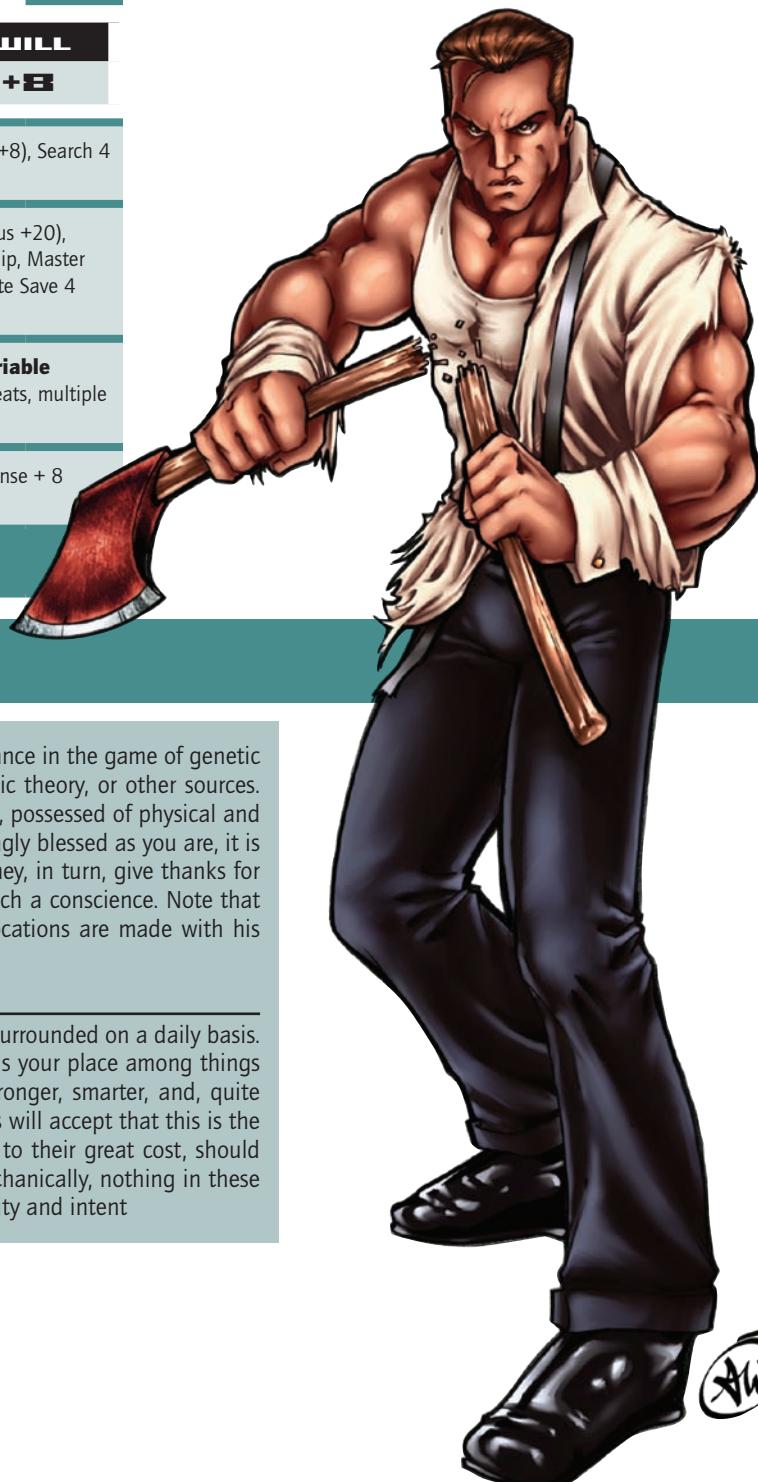
Powers: **Leaping 1 (x2), Protection 1, Speed 1 (10 MPH), Variable**

Power 1 (physical and mental polymath; 5 points, skills and feats, multiple at once; Continuous, Free Action to Change Allocation; Innate)

Combat: Attack + 8, Grapple +13, Damage + 5 (unarmed), Defense + 8 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -3 , Initiative +4

Abilities 52 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 17 + Powers 13 +
Combat 32+ Saves 12 = Total 135

"DIFFICULT FOR YOU, PERHAPS...
 CHILD'S PLAY FOR ME."



It doesn't matter whether your gifts are the results of chance in the game of genetic roulette, if they came through the application of eugenic theory, or other sources. What does matter is that you are a paragon among men, possessed of physical and mental talents far beyond those of ordinary men. Seemingly blessed as you are, it is your moral duty to aid those made of lesser stuff and they, in turn, give thanks for the good graces of a Heaven that saw fit to give you such a conscience. Note that meeting combat mechanics caps depends on what allocations are made with his Variable Power.

NIETZSCHEAN SCOURGE

Conscience is a trap for your inferiors, by whom you are surrounded on a daily basis. You are *Der Meister Mann*, and you admit no equals. It is your place among things to lord over those compared against whom you are stronger, smarter, and, quite frankly, better. One day the sullen and unwashed masses will accept that this is the natural order of things; you will make sure of that and to their great cost, should they prove overly quarrelsome. Oh, yes, yes you *will*. Mechanically, nothing in these stats really needs to change—it's all a matter of personality and intent

GUNSLINGER

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+5	+3	+1	+2	+2
14	20	16	13	15	14
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+6/+3*	+7	+10	+5		

*flatfooted

Skills: Bluff 8 (+10), Climb 5 (+7), Concentration 3 (+5), Handle Animal 5 (+7), Intimidate 9 (+11), Language 2 (Appropriate Native American Language [e.g., Navaho], Spanish), Notice 8 (+10), Ride 9 (+14), Sense Motive 8 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+9), Stealth 4 (+9), Survival 4 (+6), Swim 3 (+5)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Focus 2 (melee), Attack Specialization 3 (guns), Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 4, Endurance, Equipment 4, Fearless, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (guns), Improved Initiative 2, Improved Ranged Disarm, Move-By Action, Precise Shot, Quick Draw 2, Seize Initiative, Taunt, Track, Ultimate Aim, Uncanny Dodge 2 (hearing)
Equipment: Colt Peacemaker (x 2), Henry Rifle

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +6 (ranged), +12 (guns), Grapple +10, Damage +2 (unarmed), +3 (pistol), +4 (rifle), Defense +10 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback-3 (-2 flatfooted), Initiative +13

Abilities 32 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 34 + Combat 24 + Saves 12 = Total 120

You are the fastest draw and surest shot in the West. Anyone that doesn't believe that is welcome to come and test the claim, just like all those other dead men already have. You can survive off the land as needed, outride pretty much anyone you've ever met, and handle yourself well enough with your fists, but your other skills just don't compare to your absolutely frightening degree of proficiency with firearms.

DASHING HUSSAR

Whether you wield saber and pistol for queen and country or simply for gold and glory, you are the top of your game... a man-at-arms without equal, as you and your compatriots are only too happy to tell anyone willing to buy the next round.

Trade the Improved Ranged Disarm feat for Attack Specialization (Saber), drop one rank of Quick Draw and the skill ranks for Sleight of Hand so you can afford Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+9). Trade out the Language skills as appropriate for wherever in the world this incredible soldier has plied his trade, and the mechanical touches are done.

MASKED ADVENTURER

Sometimes justice must wear a mask to achieve its goals. You are the flag bearer of a proud tradition of masked vigilantes that dates back centuries, the hidden avenger righting wrongs in a land where it seems that the law has been bought and paid for by those who break it with impunity.

Drop the Survival and Language skills, as well as the Improved Critical feat; convert the salvaged points and ranks into Disguise 10 (+12). If the character is a master of some exotic weapon other than a firearm (such as a bullwhip, bolas, or whatever), trade out 2 ranks of Attack Specialization (guns) for Attack Specialization with whatever that weapon may be.

"COURSE I AIN'T NEVER LOST. STILL BREATHIN', AIN'T I?"



INTREPID EXPLORER

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+2	+4	+1	+3	+2
15	15	18	13	16	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+7/+4*	+8	+8	+6		

*flatfooted

Skills: Bluff 5 (+7), Climb 8 (+10), Diplomacy 5 (+7), Handle Animal 7 (+9), Knowledge (earth sciences) 6 (+7), Language 4 (choose 4), Notice 10 (+13), Ride 7 (+9), Search 7 (+8), Sense Motive 7 (+10), Stealth 7 (+9), Survival 13 (+16), Swim 6 (+8)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged), Attractive, Connected, Defensive Roll 3, Diehard, Dodge Focus 3, Equipment 4, Favored Environment 2 (jungles, mountains), Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Improvised Tools, Jack-of-all-Trades, Move-By Action, Quick Draw, Skill Mastery (Climb, Notice, Search, Survival), Track, Ultimate Skill (Survival), Uncanny Dodge (auditory)

Equipment: Sharps Big 50, Colt Dragoon

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +9 (ranged), Grapple +10, Damage +2 (unarmed), +4 (Colt Dragoon), +6 (rifle), Defense +8 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback-4 (-2 flatfooted), Initiative +6

Abilities 32+ Skills 23 (92 ranks) + Feats 26 + Combat 26 + Saves 13 = Total 120

"IMPRESSIVE. THE HIDDEN TOWERS OF PEDICULLAR WERE GRANDER, BUT THIS IS FASCINATING, TOO."



Your name is legend from the deepest reaches of the Congo to the sweltering hills of Sri Lanka. Your boots have mud on them from places most westerners have never even heard of, little less seen, and you have no intention of dying in a bed under a roof. No matter where you've gone or what you've done, there's always at least one more hill to see what's on the other side of, one more mountain to climb simply because it's there... and that's just the way you want it to remain.

THE GREAT HUNTER

You are the top of the food chain, and you live to prove it day after day. God put the savage beasts on this green and verdant Earth for only one reason—to test you. You don't plan on looking bad in front of the Almighty or anyone else, no matter how many carcasses you have to leave behind you in the process.

Drop the Favored Environment and Uncanny Dodge feats, shifting the points into Favored Opponent (animals) and Benefit 2 (wealth 2) feats.

NOBLE SAVAGE

POWER LEVEL 9

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+6	+4	+6	+1	+3	+3
22	18	22	12	16	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+7/+6*	+8	+8	+6		

* flat-footed

Skills: Acrobatics 10 (+14), Climb 10 (+16), Escape Artist 3 (+7), Handle Animal 5 (+8), Intimidate 10 (+13), Notice 12 (+15), Search 5 (+6), Sense Motive 3 (+6), Stealth 10 (+14), Survival 14 (+17), Swim 10 (+16)

Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, All-Out Attack, Animal Empathy, Attack Focus (melee), Attack Specialization 2 (unarmed), Benefit (status-Aristocrat), Blind-fight, Chokehold, Defensive Roll, Dodge Focus 3, Endurance, Environmental Adaptation (treetops), Equipment, Favored Environment (jungles), Fearless, Improved Defense 2, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Improved Throw, Instant Up, Power Attack, Prone Fighting, Startle, Track, Uncanny Dodge 2 (visual, auditory)

Equipment: knife (+2 damage)

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (animals; Sustained), **Leaping 1**

Combat: Attack + 7 (melee), + 6 (ranged), +11 (unarmed), Grapple +13, Damage + 6 (unarmed), +8 (knife), Defense +9 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback-4 (-3 flatfooted), Initiative +8

Abilities 46 + Skills 23 (92 ranks) + Feats 30 + Powers 3 + Combat 24 + Saves 9 = Total 135

"BROKEN SPIRITS AND A COLD, STERILE WORLD. WHY IS THIS SUPPOSED TO IMPRESS ME?"



Let the weak, soft, and pampered keep their arrogant "civilization." No matter your bloodline, you had none of its comforts growing up, and you don't need them now, especially after learning their cost to the planet and all things on it. You were raised far from traditional society, either by what those fools would dismiss as savages, or even worse in their eyes, the creatures of the wild itself. They will never understand you, but you, in turn, know a sense of freedom and confidence they will never possess either.

STEAMPUNK ENGINEER

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+2	+2	+6	+0	+1
11	14	14	22	10	12
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+5/+2*	+4	+5	+8		

*without coat

Skills: Computers 9 (+15), Craft (electronic) 10 (+16), Craft (mechanical) 10 (+16), Craft (structural) 10 (+16), Disable Device 10 (+16), Knowledge (physical sciences) 10 (+16), Knowledge (technology) 13 (+19), Medicine 6 (+6), Pilot 4 (+6), Search 4 (+10), Sense Motive 2 (+2)

Feats: Beginner's Luck, Equipment 15, Genius 3, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Luck 3, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical], Disable Device, Knowledge [technology]), Ultimate Skill 3 (Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical], Knowledge [technology])

Equipment: "Imperviate" constructed coat (**Protection 3**, Subtle), Airship (Strength 40, Speed 3, Defense 6, Toughness 11, Size Gargantuan*; Features Hidden Compartments, Infirmary, Laboratory, Living Space, Workshop; cost 14), Other allocations as limited only by imagination and the GM.

*This is the size of the "useable" space—the gas shell above it is closer to Colossal in size.

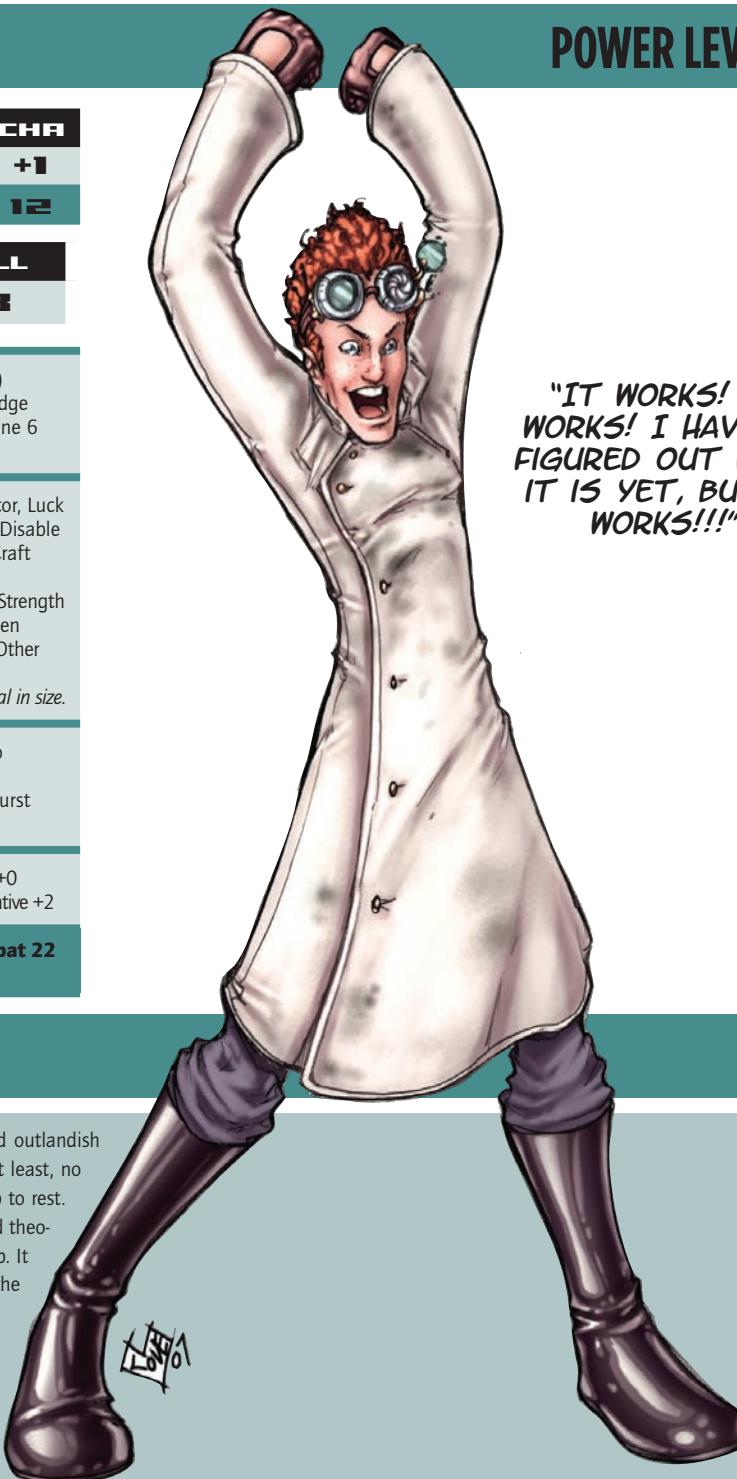
Powers: **Device 3** (Electro-Pistol, easy to lose), **Quickness 6** (Limited to mathematical calculations only)

Electro-Pistol: **Blast 6** (Accurate; *Alternate Powers: Dazzle 4* [visual; Burst Area], **Stun 4** [Ranged; Accurate])

Combat: Attack + 5, +7 (electro-pistol), Grapple +5, Damage +6 (electro-pistol), +0 (unarmed), Defense + 6 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -3 (-1 without coat), Initiative +2

Abilities 23 + Skills 22 (88 ranks) + Feats 29 + Powers 11 + Combat 22 + Saves 13 = Total 120

"IT WORKS! IT WORKS! I HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT WHAT IT IS YET, BUT IT WORKS!!!"



They say you redefine the boundaries of science with your theories and outlandish inventions. This is ludicrous, as you know science has no boundaries. At least, no boundaries other than where you're located on a project when you stop to rest. You have been blessed with a peerless intellect, able to see concepts and theories quite outside the abilities of others to even conceive, little less grasp. It makes you isolated and alone in some respects, but you have every faith the rest of mankind will catch up. Eventually.

HEIR TO FRANKENSTEIN

They called you mad. Mad! They were right, of course, but that's beside the point. Where the Steampunk Engineer is a veritable god among technologists, you eschew the muddled mess of gears and metals to hold instead the spark of life and complete mastery of the sciences of life in your heavily gloved hands. With your army of the once-dead, you will make all of them pay horribly for insulting your brilliance!

Halve ranks in Craft (electronic) and Craft (mechanical); drop Computers, Craft (structural), and Disable Device entirely. Shift these freed up ranks to Craft (chemical) 13 (+19), Intimidate 6 (+7), Knowledge (life sciences) 13 (+19), and increase Medicine to 13 (+13).

Drop the Beginner's Luck, Equipment 4, Luck, and Skill Mastery feats, and instead buy Minions 7 (Flesh Golem from *M&M*, page 234, Progression 3 [10 total]), with the remaining Equipment ranks traded out for a Castle HQ (Toughness 15, Size Huge, Features: Garage, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Power System, Workshop) and whatever other equipment the GM desires for the story at hand.

Switch out the skills under Ultimate Skill for (Craft [chemical], Knowledge [life sciences], Medicine). Trade out powers for **Device 3** (chemical projectile gun, easy to lose; **Nauseate 5** [Ranged]) and **Immunity 2** (chemical powers).

CHAPTER 4: PARAGONS OF FREEDOM



Freedom City: home to the world's greatest heroes since the dawn of the 20th century, with a rich and storied history of costumed crimefighters and their never-ending battle against the forces of evil. But what if it weren't that way, or at least, weren't that way yet? What if, rather than a long history of superheroes and villains, Freedom City was only now learning what it means to be at the epicenter of the superhuman world, discovering a heritage most never even knew.

This chapter looks at a Freedom City where the dawn of the 21st century, not the 20th, will be remembered as the start of the paranormal age—begun in tragedy, but with the potential for so much more. Whether or not Freedom City, and its new paragons, lives up to this potential is up to the heroes of your story and the decisions they make.

In particular, *Paragons of Freedom* makes the *Freedom City* setting more suitable for use as part of the *Paragons* setting, also from Green Ronin Publishing. It gives Freedom City and its characters a more “post-modern” spin, making them suitable for use alongside the characters and factions in *Paragons*, and it allows you to use Freedom City as a setting for your own *Paragons* series. To fully utilize the material in this chapter, both the *Freedom City* and *Paragons* setting sourcebooks are useful references.

In the Freedom omniverse, you can treat “Earth-Paragon” as another parallel world, where superhumans developed late, and somewhat differently, in Freedom City. So characters from Earth-Prime Freedom City could potentially visit here and meet their paranormal counterparts. The same is true for other versions of the paranormal world created using the material from the *Paragons* setting sourcebook: any of them could be worlds in the greater omniverse.

From the *Paragons* perspective, there are no “parallel” worlds as such, unless you choose to introduce them. Any variant Earths or other settings outside the physical world are part of the Imageria, the vast realm encompassing all thought and imagination (see **Chapter 3** of *Paragons* for details). The “Earth-Prime” Freedom City, in all its four-color glory, and the other settings in this book, could be realms in the Imageria, strange reflections of the reality of the paranormal world of Freedom City described in this chapter. It’s largely a matter of which cosmology you choose to focus on in your series. Of course, it’s also primarily an issue of perspective: the people from Earth-Prime may consider their world just as “real” and not care for the idea that they’re “imaginary” while those from Earth-Paragon are not, and who’s to say they’re wrong? This uncertainty is an important, and useful, part of the *Paragons* setting.

GOLDEN AGE PARAGONS

Project Centurion is intended to provide some context for a "golden age" secret history in the Paragons of Freedom setting. If you wish, you can expand on the project's successes, creating other paranormals in the 1940s who fought on either side of the war, using the golden age characters from *Freedom City* and the *Golden Age* sourcebook as inspiration. Plus, it's fairly easy to add in non-powered or "stealth" paranormal characters with few or no powers as secret government agents or super-soldiers.

In addition to seeding knowledge of the paranormal among various governments and factions in the world prior to the Breakout, Project Centurion and Projekt Übermensch also establish some "hidden history" for modern paranormals to dig up in the series, particularly one focused on "paranormal archeology" like the "Echoes of the Past" series framework in **Chapter 6** of *Paragons*. If you want, you can greatly expand on the "secret history" of paranormals in the world to give the characters in such a series mysteries to unravel. Alternately, you can easily ignore any prior history of the paranormal in the setting, focusing on the Breakout and subsequent events in the modern day.

The fates of the Centurion and Übermensch are left for you to decide. They may have both died on that fateful date in Berlin in 1945, or they could have survived in some fashion. Perhaps they both "ascended" into the Imageria to become primortals (see **Chapter 3** of *Paragons*), archetypes able to invest others with their power and potential, and now they feel the time has come for them to return. Likewise, the "unknown X-factor" of the Centurion Process might have been the latent paranormal potential of the men exposed to it, or it could have been the paranormal ability of its creator, or something else, as you see fit.

A NEW HISTORY OF FREEDOM

Freedom City existed much as described in the setting sourcebook for most of its history: founded during the Colonial period, a stronghold of liberty and independence during the American Revolution, a city torn between sides in the American Civil War, experiencing explosive growth and prosperity in the mid- to late-1800s and into the start of the 20th century, becoming a modern deco marvel of architecture and urban planning.

The major exception is Freedom City has no experience with the paranormal until the dark days of the Second World War, when the specter of fascism looms over the world. All mentions of costumed heroes in history before then are nothing more than tall tales and urban legends, unless you want to run a "secret history" series where the heroes delve into and discover the truth behind such "tall tales," in which case you can import historical details from this book and *Freedom City* as you see fit.

PROJECT CENTURION

In 1941, "Project Centurion" comes along, a top-secret US government experiment to tap into interdimensional forces to create a super-soldier. Unknown to the general public, it was a success and endowed volunteer Mark Leeds of Freedom City with powers far beyond those of mortal men. The success of Project Centurion comes as no great shock, however, since it is the work of Tomas Morgen, an expatriate German scientist smuggled out of Nazi Germany after he was forced to complete work on "Projekt Übermensch," which endowed a German soldier with abilities identical to those given Mark Leeds. Both sides of the conflict possessed their secret "super-men."

Because the so-called "Centurion Process" relies on an unknown X-factor, both sides choose to keep their advantage a secret, using the two men as agents behind the scenes (and, often, behind enemy lines). Centurion and Übermensch encounter each other several times during the war and, eventually, both are lost during their last encounter, in a massive explosion that levels part of Berlin. No remains are ever recovered, and the whole matter becomes a secret part of history, shut away in government vaults. Later efforts to duplicate the Centurion Process yield less than satisfactory results and create only more urban legends and conspiracy theories.

SHADOW OVER FREEDOM

On September 11, 2001, the Islamist terrorist organization *Al-Khayal* ("the Shadow") unleashed a hitherto unknown level of terror against Freedom City and the United States when it crashed two passenger airliners into the world-famous Pyramid Plaza. The crashes and the subsequent collapse of the triple towers caused not only thousands of deaths, but an even more profound transformation in the world.

Chaotic news reports talked about people displaying incredible powers in the face of the disaster, including a glowing young woman lifting tons of wreckage from people and healing their injuries, a young man zipping at superspeed through the streets, and even a mysterious cloaked "phantom" arising from the rubble where the Plaza stood, pulling survivors from the area and literally passing through concrete and steel like a ghost. The reports were first attributed to panic or mass hysteria, perhaps even some kind of chemical nerve agent or hallucinogen, but later they were confirmed as true: something incredible was happening.

What later became known as "the Breakout" spread from Freedom City like ripples on a pond, but the city remained its epicenter. In the succeeding days and weeks, paranormal incidents cropped up all across the world, but nowhere more frequently than in Freedom City. The US government eventually got a handle on the situation and, in addition to launching military strikes to root out *Al-Khayal* bases and training camps in the Middle East, unveiled America's newest defenses against terrorism: AEGIS and the Freedom League!

Since the Breakout, the world has become a different place. Things people once considered impossible are almost commonplace, or at least accepted, since there are now dozens, perhaps hundreds, of paranormals able to do the impossible on a regular basis. The United States has become the paranormal "superpower" of the world, with Freedom City at the summit, although paragons are known in all parts of the globe. More appear every day, with some wondering when, if ever, the process will end, and what the future of "normal" humanity will be in a world where gods and monsters walk the streets and soar through the skies. Given their association with a day of terrible death and disaster, more than a few wonder if paranormals are a blessing to the world, or a curse. Indeed, some paranormals wonder the same thing themselves.

A DIFFERENT FREEDOM

Most of the maps and information from the *Freedom City* sourcebook are usable in the *Paragons of Freedom* setting, with a few exceptions described in this section. Unless specified otherwise, assume the material in *Freedom City* is correct, barring the pre-existence of superhumans before the Breakout and the general “four-color” culture of the setting, which is replaced by a more realistic spin.

GEOGRAPHY

The layout and general geography of Freedom City is the same as presented in the sourcebook, including the neighborhoods and districts. You can use the maps on pages 26 and 31 of the *Freedom City* book with no real changes. Some specific details differ in *Paragons of Freedom*, described here.

RIVERSIDE

The Sentry Statue does exist in this setting as a memorial to the victims of the *Al-Khayal* attack on Pyramid Plaza, although most people don't know of the resemblance the statue bears to the Centurion from the 1940s. The statue and the Tomb of the Unknown Hero were ways to honor the Centurion's contributions without compromising the security or secrecy of Project Centurion. Conspiracy theorists may draw their own conclusions as to the reasons why the government would sponsor such memorials, but consider the importance of imagination and belief in the *Paragons* setting, for starters.



WADING WAY

Where Pyramid Plaza once stood is now home to the Freedom Tower, the tallest building in the city, created with the aid of Dr. Metropolis. The top five floors of the tower make up the headquarters of the Freedom League, similar in layout to Freedom Hall on Earth-Prime (see the following).

CITY CENTER

Freedom Hall doesn't exist, replaced by the Freedom Tower on nearby Wading Way. Federal Plaza is still the public headquarters of AEGIS, with the agency's secret base, the Iceberg, hidden below the building's foundations (as detailed in *Freedom City* and *Agents of Freedom*).

MIDTOWN

The Cape & Cowl Club either doesn't exist or is a local branch of the Paramount Club (from **Chapter 4** of *Paragons*), a private meeting-place for paranormals. It's still up to the GM what, if anything, the Midnight Society represents, and it's a possible front for any number of *Paragons* factions, from the Initiative to the Pact. The Super Museum doesn't exist, since there isn't nearly enough publicly known paranormal history, but the Champion's restaurant chain does, doing quite well cashing-in on the current popular craze for all things paranormal.

THE NORTH END

ASTRO Labs can exist as a rival for companies like Gordon Technologies Unlimited (**Chapter 4** of *Paragons*), or a company like GTU can replace it. The Hunter Museum of Natural History could be the basis for an “Echoes of the Past” series (*Paragons*, **Chapter 6**).

HANOVER

The Albright Institute may exist as an organization dedicated to investigating and researching the paranormal and is a possible patron for a group of characters. You can decide whether or not Langston Albright is a paragon himself or merely an interested normal, and if the Institute is independent or a front for another faction, such as PSI or the Initiative.

Master Lee's School of Self-Defense could be just another martial arts school or a front for a paranormal teacher, or at least one with a knack for sparking paranormal awakenings in his students.

LANTERN HILL

Assume local legends about Lantern Jack are just that, unless you want to have the forces of the Imageria bring that legend to life. Has Jack always existed and guarded Lantern Hill for centuries, or was he brought into being by the Breakout and the Freedonians' collective desire for security? You decide, although the truth may remain a mystery.

BAYVIEW

The primary change in the Bayview neighborhood depends on the fate of the Claremont Academy in the *Paragons of Freedom* setting. The assumption is the Academy still exists under the guidance of former US government agent Duncan Summers. See the **Powers and Principalities** section of this chapter for details.

LONELY POINT

The Lonely Point Naval Base has become an important military installation, following the *Al-Khayal* attack and the establishment of AEGIS in Freedom City. Blackstone Island has only just opened as a federal prison capable of containing paranormals, placed close to the city, over local objections, due to the presence of the Freedom League and other nearby resources, like AEGIS headquarters. The Star Island Space Control Center doesn't exist in the *Paragons of Freedom* setting. Star Island is left for the GM to develop for some other use, including as a secret base for any number of factions in the setting.

GOVERNMENT

Freedom City's local government, like all governments in the world, has had to adapt to the reality of paranormals and their powers. Michael O'Connor, Jr., the city's popular mayor, has done a great deal to make paragons an asset for Freedom rather than a detriment, and the city's growing reputation as a "place of wonders" has become a draw for tourism and investment.

STAR SQUAD

The Superhuman Tactics and Regulation, or STAR, Squad is the grand experiment of the city government and police force: an elite group of officers trained and equipped to deal with paranormal criminal threats. Some claim the STAR Squad is an expensive show for the media's benefit, not really capable of doing its intended job, while others believe the squad is a look at how future police departments will be structured in the paranormal world. The latter is certainly the opinion of Captain Bill "Bulldog" Maddicks, the STAR Squad's hard-bitten commander.

Other than the change of focus and a more realistic attitude towards paranormal criminals, along with more real-world equipment, you can use the information about the STAR Squad from *Freedom City* and *Agents of Freedom* for this version, as well.

AEGIS

Much to Capt. Maddicks's chagrin, STAR Squad is eclipsed (so to speak) by the presence of AEGIS: the American Elite Government Intervention Service. Established in response to the *Al-Khayal* attack on the city, and headquartered there as an act of hope and defiance, AEGIS exists to protect the nation against both terrorist and paranormal threats as part of the Department of Homeland Security. As with the STAR Squad, this version of AEGIS tends to be limited to more realistic equipment (no MAX suits, for example).

What the canny director of the agency, Harry Powers, hasn't revealed to anyone yet is he, too, is a paranormal, although his own talent is limited to detecting other paragons and avoiding detection by the same. His "knack" for finding potential paranormal agents and ferreting out threats has helped make AEGIS a success.

BLACKSTONE PRISON

The federal government's other experiment in Freedom City is the establishment of Blackstone Penitentiary as a facility to hold paranormal criminals and terror suspects. The newly opened prison raises a number of questions, not the least of which is why it is placed so close to a major population center. The government maintains the close presence of the Freedom League and AEGIS allows for a rapid response to any problems. Civil rights advocates also question the treatment of prisoners, who are often sedated or kept in artificial comas to restrain them, with rumors of illegal experimentation going on inside the prison's walls.

Gamemasters with access to the *Lockdown* sourcebook may also wish to use its namesake super-prison as a counterpoint to the "grand experiment" of Blackstone: corporate-run, isolated, and willing to use any means necessary to deal with prisoners. The true nature of Lockdown can be as detailed in the sourcebook (adding another faction to the setting) or linked to any of the various factions in *Paragons* or detailed in the **Powers and Principalities** section of this chapter.

THE UNITED NATIONS

Although Freedom City was the epicenter, the Breakout affected the entire world, and other nations have had to deal with paragons and their impact on nearly every aspect of life. In particular, the United Nations has—rather uncharacteristically—stepped up and taken action with the formation of the Paranormal Action Executive, or PAX, as it is known.

The agency is intended to gather information on paragons and formulate solutions to possible problems, but it is best known for sponsorship of a United Nations team of paranormals, the Vanguard, seen at home and abroad as popular rivals of the United States' Freedom League, all the more so since the Vanguard is headquartered near the UN building in New York, putting them too close for the comfort of many in the US administration.

CITY LIFE

Apart from the highlights described under **A Different Freedom**, life in this Freedom City is much like that in any other major American metropolis, with the exception that fantastic events have become more common and accepted, if not everyday occurrences. As the center of the Breakout, Freedom City is more used to dealing with the paranormal than just about anywhere else in the world, although the residents aren't yet completely blasé about seeing someone fly overhead or lift up a city bus.

Feel free to liberally mix setting elements from *Paragons* with those in *Freedom City*, editing out some of the more four-color aspects of Freedom to make way for the *Paragons* material.

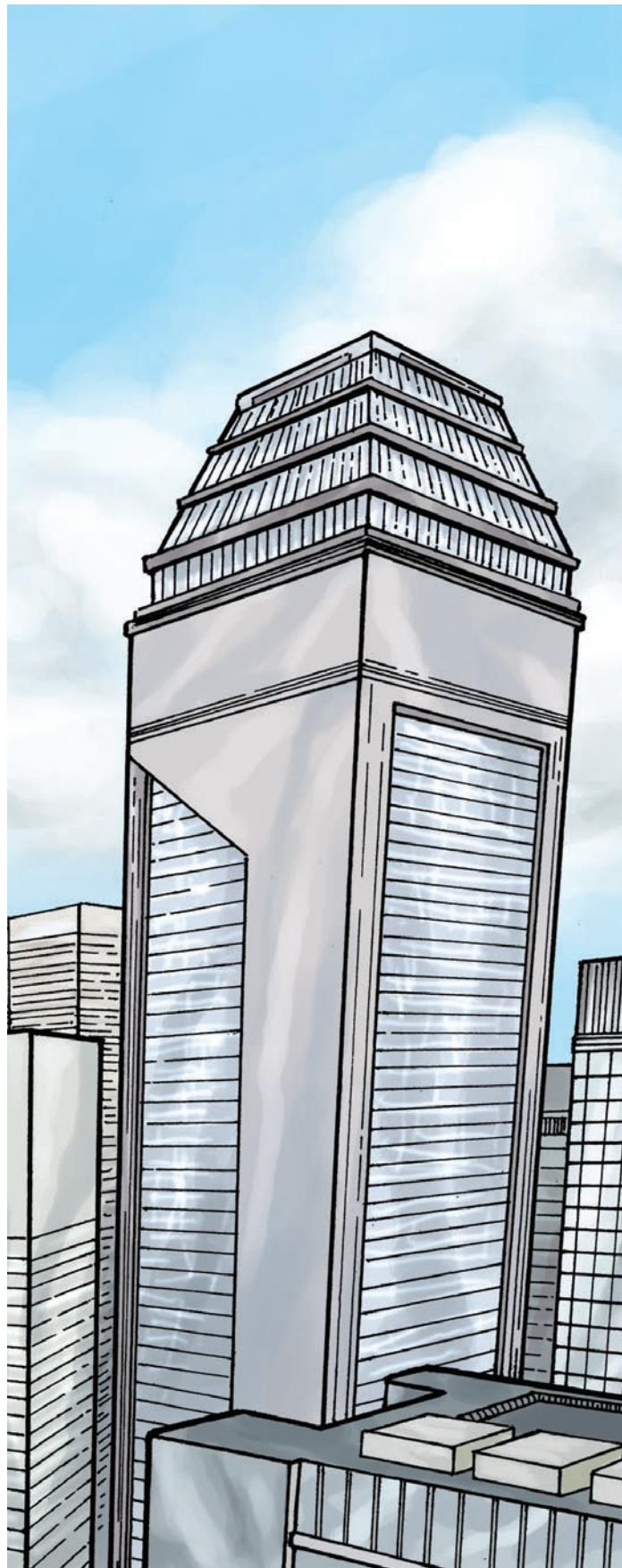
BUSINESS

Companies from *Paragons* like Gordon Technologies Unlimited and the Silber Agency almost certainly operate in Freedom City. By the same token, Freedom businesses have adapted to existing in the most paranormal city in the world. For example, New Horizon Media is the parent company of the Paragon Network, producers of *Prime Paragon!* "Voyeur" Royer and the *POV* series (*Freedom City*, page 48) fit right into the *Paragons of Freedom* setting. Similarly, Castle Comics is the number one publisher of "reality comics" based on real paranormals, with the license for the *Freedom League Adventures* series.

HEALTH CARE

The Rosemont Center from *Paragons* could be relocated to Freedom City, perhaps in the Kingston or Bayview neighborhood, with Dr. Rosemont providing her unique brand of care to paragons in need, and the Collected doing their level best to find and assist outcast paranormals like themselves. The Center's activities could draw the attention of groups like the Albright Institute, PSI, and various authorities, who might be inclined to assist or hinder Dr. Rosemont's well-meaning efforts.

In *Paragons of Freedom*, the Providence Asylum is unlikely to remain a place where mentally unstable paranormals are kept (given the potential threat). However, given the connection between mental state and the paranormal, it's possible a Providence patient might break-out and develop paranormal abilities!



PARKS & RECREATION

Heroes' Knoll in Liberty Park doesn't (yet) exist, unless you want to change it into a memorial to the victims of the *Al-Khayal* attack, with a low stone wall bearing their names, rising in the middle to a fourfoot bronze statue of the Pyramid Plaza towers. As mentioned previously, the famous Sentry Statue and the Tomb of the Unknown Hero *do* exist, both secretly in honor of the Centurion, who was far less well known in this version of Freedom City (see **Project Centurion** and **Golden Age Paragons** for details).

RELIGION

The Church of Jesus Christ, Paragon, is quite active in Freedom City. It can take the place of the Pinnacle Path (*Freedom City*, page 54), or the two faiths might (uneasily) co-exist, both claiming they are the true path to achieving the spiritual enlightenment necessary to become a paragon.

Voodoo remains a significant minority religion in Freedom City due to the presence of Siren in the Freedom League, although the question of whether or not she is truly a Voodoo loa is even more contentious, debated even among the followers of the faith.

Much to the chagrin of city officials, the Pantheon also has a decent sized following in Freedom City (see **The Pantheon**, later in this chapter). For the time being, freedom of religion permits the cult to operate openly in the city, so long as they aren't responsible for breaking any laws. Paragons associated with the Pantheon, on the other hand, don't consider themselves bound by "mortal law," so authorities believe some sort of confrontation is inevitable.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Gordon Technologies Unlimited or MERLIN from *Paragons* can replace ASTRO Labs, or you can have all three operating in the city, investigating the latest advances in technology and trying to sort the paranormal "ACME devices" from the true technical improvements capable of mass production.

Rising above them all at the pinnacle of the high-tech heap is Daedalus Industries, the conglomerate owned by Daniel Daedalus, famous inventor and member of the Freedom League. Daedalus splits his time between working at Freedom Tower and his office and lab at the DI building in Freedom. His current pet-project is an AI experiment code-named TALOS which, if successful, could create the world's first truly artificially intelligent robot.

The Legion (*Freedom City*, page 60) is just a front for the Tribe underground hackers described in **Chapter 3** of *Paragons*. More precisely, the Tribe developed from the Legion initially, but they have added members from outside the group and become an independent force operating secretly within the Legion's ranks. Some Legion members suspect the Tribe's existence, but they have no idea just how close it is to their operations.

SPORTS

The most popular sports craze in Freedom City is, of course, the XTREME! Action Combat Championships (*Paragons*, page 96). The franchise runs events at the Liberty Dome in the city to sold-out crowds, with Alpha-Male (*Paragons*, page 104) one of the most popular competitors. Rumors link XTREME! to criminal activity in the city, including illegal betting operations and even underground fight exhibitions (see the following).

THE UNDERWORLD

The shadowy Syndicate ultimately controls organized crime in Freedom City, as it does in many parts of the world. The crime-bosses described on pages 78-81 of *Freedom City* are middlemen for the Capoyabun's organization.

Unless you want them to be *very* unusual visitors from the Imageria, it's probably best to assume the Toon Gang (*Freedom City*, page 80) doesn't exist in this version of Freedom.

The Power-House does exist in *Paragons of Freedom*, but the augmentations it offers don't come from super-science or cybernetics. Instead, they're the work of a paragon known as "Max" who is apparently able to effect limited paranormal transformations. The catch is that Max's work is temporary, and clients need to keep paying if they want to retain their newfound paranormal abilities. Many do so by becoming mercenaries or cage-fighters for XTREME! or the Circuit-Maximus.

The Circuit-Maximus is an illegal underground counterpart to the XTREME! Action Combat Championships: violent arena combats between paranormals that end in bloody beatings or even death. The events are secret and invitation-only, with a guest-list of the jaded and wealthy interested in betting on blood sports for their own amusement. Rumor has it XTREME! founder and media mogul Joseph Richter is involved with Circuit-Maximus and even funnels some XTREME! competitors into the Circuit's ring. If not him, it may be one of his underlings who's involved.

It's up to the GM whether or not the designer drugs on pages 81-82 of *Freedom City* exist in the setting or not. The default assumption is they don't; the Syndicate makes more than enough on conventional drugs like cocaine, heroine, and methamphetamines, to name a few. On the other hand, you could assume one or more of the drugs like Max or Speed are actually the creations of a paragon with the ability to synthesize chemical compounds, sold on the streets by the Syndicate.

The Syndicate's "secret weapon" in controlling organized crime is the mysterious assassin called "the Silencer." He eliminates criminals who don't toe the line or refuse to bow to the Capoyabun's authority, always doing his work in complete silence and leaving the results for the criminal's associates to find as a warning of the price of defiance. The Silencer's abilities are otherwise as given on page 217 of *Freedom City*.

WORLDS OF THE WEIRD

As in the *Paragons* setting sourcebook, this version of *Freedom City* assumes there are no aliens, hidden civilizations, or dimensional conquerors, although there may be various beings who *think* they are aliens, from hidden civilizations, or from other dimensions. Thanks to the nature

of paranormal powers and the existence of the Imageria, they can even be right, in a sense (see **Chapter 3** of *Paragons* for details).

Thus, most of the material in **Chapter 4** of *Freedom City* doesn't exist exactly as described. It is, more likely, a look at the sort of things characters from a *Paragons of Freedom* series might discover delving into the Imageria or that could emerge from its mysterious depths as a prominence in the real world. In particular, Atlantis (related to Atlantis-Below-the-Waves in the Depths of the Imageria), Kaiju Island, Lemuria, and Shambala Vale could be Imagerial prominences, appearing and disappearing in the real world from time to time.

Likewise, Farside City and the different alien races from *Freedom City* are more likely to appear as Imagerial "figments" found in the Depths or emerging into the physical world through the powers of a paranormal. For example, a Star Knight character might exist in *Paragons of Freedom* and even believe she belongs to an interstellar order of peace-keepers who provided her wondrous armor, but the truth is more likely that she had an "abduction experience" as part of her breakout and interacted with forces in the Imageria that appeared like Mentor and the Order of Star Knights.

Information on other planes of existence in *Freedom City* maps most easily to the cosmology of *Paragons*: these places and things are found in the Imageria. The "Cosmic Coil" is just another name for the paths through the Imageria, while the Astral Plane and the Imagerial Border are one and the same. Places like Freeport and Guinee (home of the Voodoo loa) sit on the sea of the Depths, while Mount Olympus and other godshomes are found there as well. The Shattenwelt and the infernal dimensions are either manifestations of the Abyss or darker parts of the Depths, much the same with the Terminus and the Zero Zone.

You can choose to play down these fantastic elements and settings in a *Paragons of Freedom* series, confining most of the adventures to the physical world, which offers no lack of challenges. A more exploration-focused series might venture into the Imageria to uncover lost or hidden connections to other worlds and realms, particularly by exploring shallows and prominences in the physical world, which lead visitors past the Border without their knowing it.

POWERS AND PRINCIPALITIES

Combining the characters from *Freedom City* and *Paragons* provides an embarrassment of riches for populating a *Paragons of Freedom* series, but it can also make your setting feel crowded if you try to include every character from both books in some fashion. So while this section offers suggestions for nearly every character, don't think you need to use them all. In fact, as with the *Paragons* sourcebook, some of these suggestions may be mutually exclusive, requiring you to choose which ones you want in your series.

THE FREEDOM LEAGUE

Members: Captain Thunder (field leader), Bowman, Daedalus, Dr. Metropolis, Johnny Rocket, Lady Liberty, Patriot, Siren

What the *Paragons* Freedom League lacks in terms of the history of its Earth-Prime counterpart, it makes up for in enthusiasm and dedication. The League was formed in the wake of both a terrible attack on the United States of America and the Breakout that followed it. It is a symbol of both American resolve and the potential for paranormals to serve the public good. The League is also a none-too-subtle reminder to foreign powers, including the United Nations, that America intends to be the "super-power" of super-powers, as well as economic and military might. Thus, relations between the Freedom League and their UN counterparts in the Vanguard are cool, at best.

The Freedom League is based out of the top floors of Freedom Tower in downtown Freedom City, where Pyramid Plaza once stood. They have no orbiting satellite headquarters and no teleporters—such things are no more than notes and sketches in Daedalus's notebooks for the time being. They do use the *Pegasus*-class spaceplane as their primary mode of transport, as well as sky-bikes for inner-city transportation. Although, their sky-bikes are turbo-fan powered, rather than anti-gravity designs (although Daedalus hopes to adapt anti-gravity coils for the sky-bikes eventually).

The greatest difference from their Earth-Prime counterparts is the *Paragons* Freedom League is not an impendent organization; they are a division of AEGIS and answerable to the agency and the US government. Some members of the League are US military officers and retain their rank and position. Even the civilian members of the team are expected to observe military protocol and discipline.

Note that Pseudo, Raven, and Star Knight are not members of the *Paragons* Freedom League, although Raven does have a counterpart (see **The Claremont Academy** for details).

CAPTAIN THUNDER

Captain Ray Gardener was an Air Force pilot, rather than a corporate test pilot. He was part of a flight scrambled to Freedom City after the



Al-Khayal attack, when his plane was struck by lightning from a freak storm during the Breakout. Capt. Gardener survived the ensuing crash and demonstrated amazing physical strength and electrical generation powers to his superiors.

The *Paragons* Captain Thunder is slightly younger than his Earth-Prime counterpart, only recently married to Nancy Gardener (nee Dumont), and their son Ray Jr. is only five years old. Other than his Profession skill being soldier rather than test pilot, his game stats are the same as Captain Thunder's on page 114 of *Freedom City*.

BOWMAN

Fletcher Beaumont has the distinction of being the only member of the Freedom League without definitely paranormal abilities, although some suspect he might be a "stealth" paragon. Beaumont was an Olympic gold medalist in archery. After the Breakout, he, along with many idealistic young men, joined the military, where he was selected for Special Forces training and later worked with the CIA.

The *Paragons* Bowman still relies on his archery skills, but he uses primarily razor broadhead arrows (+5 lethal damage), wears micro-chainmail armor (+3 Toughness), and carries a heavy pistol as a back-up weapon (+4 lethal damage). He has one less rank in Defensive Roll, and his defense bonus is +12 rather than +14.

DAEDALUS

The head of Daedalus Industries was spared being at Pyramid Plaza on September the 11th only by chance. Since that fateful day, Daniel Daedalus had dedicated himself to the defense of his nation, and he has placed his considerable inventive genius at the disposal of AEGIS and the Freedom League. Many believe the Breakout unlocked something in Daedalus; since then, his inventions have leaped lightyears ahead of

where they once were. In particular, his custom battle-suit is a marvel of technology. His capacity for knowledge has also increased tremendously.

This Daedalus is *not* an ancient Greek immortal or, at least, if he is, he has managed to keep it a secret from everyone (and apparently intends to continue to do so). He lacks the Regeneration power but has all of the other traits listed for Daedalus on page 115 of *Freedom City*.

DR. METROPOLIS

One of the many strange sights of the Breakout was the tattooed figure arising from the rubble of Pyramid Plaza, proclaiming, "I am Metropolis." The mysterious paragon now known as Dr. Metropolis helped ensure the damage done to Freedom City in the *Al-Khayal* attack was only temporary, and his powers have helped to strengthen the city's infrastructure and safeguard it against further attack.

Although he appears as a tattooed bald man wearing goggles, with circuits and machinery integrated into his body, the *Paragons* Dr. Metropolis has the same traits as the Earth-Prime version on page 116 of *Freedom City*.

JOHNNY ROCKET

A bike messenger working in the Wading Way district when the *Al-Khayal* attack occurred, John Wade's first reaction was to *run*, except he ran faster than anyone, or anything, ever had. He was a blur of motion that day, seemingly everywhere, helping to rescue people all over the city. It wasn't long before the authorities tracked him down and offered him a chance to do some good for the city and the nation.

Although his traits are the same as the Johnny Rocket on page 117 of *Freedom City*, the *Paragons* version hasn't come out publicly, and he keeps his personal life secret out of concern for how the government higher-ups might react. The stress of leading a double-life has started to

get to him, making Johnny increasingly distracted, moody, and out-of-touch with his teammates.

LADY LIBERTY

Beth Walton gained her powers the moment her police officer fiancé was endangered helping people escape the destruction of Pyramid Plaza. In a flash of light, a vision of the Spirit of Liberty spoke to her: Freedom was in danger, and she was chosen to help save it. In the heroic form of Lady Liberty, Beth became a symbol of American determination and freedom.

Although she serves with distinction as part of the Freedom League, Lady Liberty is troubled by the direction of America, post-Breakout. She sees civil liberties threatened in the name of security and America's good name and reputation squandered, earning only the enmity of the community of nations. She tries to provide a positive example, but she fears that might not be enough to change what's happening. The *Paragons* Lady Liberty has the same traits given on page 118 of *Freedom City*.

PATRIOT

If Lady Liberty is troubled by the new America, Lt. Kyle Griffin, the Patriot, is a symbol of it. He's a poster-boy for American patriotism and loyalty, at least partly because his paranormal powers are fueled by the public's faith in him. Patriot is a good and faithful soldier, quick to obey orders, and an admirer of his commanding officer, Captain Thunder.

Patriot is as described on page 160 of *Paragons*, including whatever dark secret the GM chooses. Some of the Freedom League may be aware of the truth about Patriot and under orders to keep quiet about it, or the rest of the team may be just as ignorant as the public, leaving the question of what they might do, should they discover the truth.

SIREN

Psychologist Cassandra Vale escaped death at the hands of modern-day pirates when her paranormal powers manifested. Although some doubt her claim of "possession" by an actual Voodoo goddess, there's no questioning Siren's power over the seas and the weather, or the effectiveness of the silvery net that comes into being when Cassandra assumes her paranormal form. It appears made of an otherworldly material similar to the bodily substance of the paragon Proteus and other manifestations of ectoplasm.

Further complicating Dr. Vale's claim is the recent appearance of a mysterious crime-lord called "Baron Samedi" who likewise claims association with a Voodoo spirit and mystical powers. Siren's traits are the same as those given on page 121 of *Freedom City*, but the question of whether or not she is a true Voodoo loa or merely a figment of Dr. Vale's imagination (a walk-in from the Imageria, perhaps) is left for the GM to decide.

THE CLAREMONT ACADEMY

Students: Firepower, Maximus, Nereid, Seven, Sonic, Whoop-Ant

Adults were not the only ones to become paranormals following the Breakout. Some paragons are still minors, raising a number of legal questions about how to handle them and their extraordinary abilities.

After much discussion and debate, the US government and AEGIS decided to deal with the issue of young paranormals through education. Specifically, they bought a failing private school in Freedom City and refurbished it as a training center for underage paragons, under the supervision of retired government agent Duncan Summers, who became the headmaster of the new Claremont Academy.

The school's "secret weapon" is Gabriel Marquez, a paragon left paraplegic in the wake of the *Al-Khayal* attack, but with the power to nullify other paranormal abilities. He ensures the kids are kept in line and under Mr. Summers's strict guidance.

The Academy's first class of students has gelled into a fairly cohesive group, nicknamed "the Next-Gen" by Sonic. A number of them are potential future members of the Freedom League, working as paranormal agents for AEGIS. Others have their own ambitions, but responsible and productive use of their unique gifts has been drilled into them. Headmaster Summers considers them prime examples of the success of the Academy program and a hopeful sign of future peaceful co-existence between paranormals and normals.

You can use much of the information on the Claremont Academy from *Freedom City* and the *Hero High* sourcebook for the *Paragons* version, keeping in mind that paranormal faculty is largely limited to Mr. Marquez, and the paranormal student body doesn't include the AlterniTees or Bolt (as Captain Thunder's son is only a toddler).

This Claremont Academy is a bit more rigid than the *Freedom City* version. For one thing, students all wear variations on the standard school uniforms from *Hero High*, rather than having individual costumes. For another, Headmaster Summers isn't as tolerant about "extracurricular activities," so the Next-Gen aren't publicly known as a hero team, although they do sometimes find themselves in situations calling for the use of their powers, with some fast explanation to the authorities afterwards.

FIREPOWER

Nathan Collins acquired his paranormal control over fire during an accident involving some rusting canisters of flammable chemicals and a BB gun he shouldn't have been messing around with. AEGIS covered up the details of the incident, since no one was hurt and insurance handled all the property damage. Firepower enjoys his newfound abilities, but he also has a new sense of responsibility concerning them, since he's afraid of accidentally hurting anyone.

Use Firepower from the *Mutants & Masterminds Beginner's Guide* or *Hero High* for the *Paragons* version. If neither is available, use the Energy Controller archetype from *M&M*, reducing power ranks and combat bonuses by 2 to make him power level 8.

MAXIMUS

Maximus "Max" Adams has the paranormal power to increase his size, becoming a giant. Although a few years younger, he's much like Maximus Atom from *Freedom City* (page 126), except he either doesn't have the Insubstantial and Shrinking Alternate Powers, or he hasn't discovered them yet. Max does have three younger siblings: Tess, Vicky, and Chase, but none of them have demonstrated any paranormal abilities, as yet, although Tess is a highly intelligent young woman and a gifted student.

Use Maximus Atom from *Freedom City*, page 126, for Maximus, dropping the Super-Senses communication link and the Alternate Powers from his Growth (unless you decide the latter are latent abilities Maximus just hasn't tapped into yet). Replace his Pilot skill with Drive.

NEREID

Theresa Prentis was well on her way to becoming a world-class surfer when a chance encounter with a shark nearly ended her career—and her life. Fortunately, her paranormal awakening allowed her to transform into water to avoid the shark's teeth, and it gave her the tremendous strength to chase it off. Now she splits her time between Claremont classes and training out on the water. A professional sports career isn't looking too likely, but for a lovely young paragon who likes to show off for the cameras in a bikini, the world's her oyster.

Use Nereid from *Freedom City*, page 135, for this version, adding Profession (surfer) 5 (+7), dropping her Language skill, and increasing Swim to 9 ranks.



SEVEN

Serena Vervain originally got into witchcraft and Wicca to freak out her conservative and religious grandmother, who raised her after her parents died in a car accident. She didn't really think there was much to it, until one of her late-night full moon rituals opened a gateway into the Imageria! There, Serena learned from the Queen of Faerie that she was to be an important worker of the Craft of the Wise in the world, the seventh in a proud line. Mr. Summers and his superiors still aren't sure they buy the whole "witchcraft" thing, but there's no denying Serena's powers, focused through the various "spells" she casts.

Use Seven's game traits from page 136 of *Freedom City*; they are unchanged for this version.

SONIC

Lemar Phillips saw his musical talent as his way out of the poor Lincoln neighborhood where he was born, planning to become a famous and wealthy rap artist. The Breakout and the awakening of his powers cut those plans short, since whenever Lemar tried to sing, he created ultrasonic vibrations powerful enough to shatter concrete! AEGIS and Claremont provided Lemar with a new way out of the 'hood and the code-name "Sonic."

Use Sonic's game traits from page 137 of *Freedom City*, removing Knowledge (physical sciences) and adding Perform (singing) 6 (+7).

WHOOP-ANT

At first, Anthony Andrews used his paranormal power to shrink to escape his lousy home-life with an abusive, alcoholic father his only excuse for a parent. After spending some time sneaking money out of vending machines and meters and hiding out wherever he could,

Anthony slipped into Freedom Tower, with the idea of joining the Freedom League.

He got caught, but not before he impressed the League with his power and determination. Unfortunately, he was barely in high school, so they sent him to Claremont for some training and, they fervently hoped, discipline. Since then, Anthony, who adopted the code-name "Whoop-Ant," has learned a lot about how to use his powers. He's still, you know, "working" on the whole discipline part.

Use the Alterniteen Whoop-Ant from page 117 of *Hero High* for the *Paragons* version; game traits remain the same. It's assumed he is actually native to this world, rather than an interdimensional traveler, but it may be Whoop-Ant didn't tell the Freedom League the *entire* truth....

THE VANGUARD

Mission Team Alpha: Luminary (field leader), Prophet, Raindance, Valkyrie, Vector

The Vanguard exists essentially as described in **Chapter 4** of *Paragons*, with the exception that Major Jackson Cross is British rather than American, since both PAX and the Vanguard have limited popular support in the United States. Both the team and its supporting organization garnered some fame from the Evanston Incident and their clash with Rampage, but conspiracy theorists claim the whole thing was a set-up to put Vanguard in place, ignoring the fact that Prophet is precognitive, so naturally he "saw it coming" and could ensure his team was in the right place at the right time.

Presently, Vanguard operates out of New York under UN auspices, but with limited ability to act within the United States or its protectorates. Team relations with the Freedom League are cool and cordial, but they are always on the edge of turning to conflict. Fortunately, thus far, the League and Vanguard haven't come to blows over US interests abroad, although some fear it's only a matter of time before that happens. If Prophet has seen it coming, he's kept quiet about it, at least to other members of the team. With the schemes of paranormals like Mindbender and Mr. Zero, and factions like the Initiative, chances are good someone may try to pit the rival groups against each other eventually.

Use the individual character sheets from **Chapter 5** of *Paragons* for the members of Vanguard.

THE SILBER AGENCY

Augustus Silber's paranormal "talent agency" remains the most profitable and prominent of its kind in the world, and Mr. Silber one of the wealthiest people on Earth, thanks to his business acumen in putting paragons to work. The Silber Agency isn't overly popular with the American government for its role as a "clearinghouse for paranormal mercenaries" (as the talking points say) but, in truth, many governments keep the Agency on retainer for those occasions when they need a little extra paranormal assistance.

Jack Wolf (*Freedom City*, page 125) is Silber's right-hand man when it comes to field work. He's most often out on jobs overseeing Agency operations or, occasionally, recruiting new talent. Wolf's own background as a mercenary and soldier-of-fortune makes him well suited to the sometimes-dirty work he needs to do. He finds Mr. Silber a far more principled and generous employer than others he has known, and he is quite loyal, in spite of his mercenary reputation. Unlike his *Freedom City* counterpart, this Jack Wolf was never associated with a team of world-renowned explorers and adventurers, and he has *certainly* never considered himself a fit person to raise kids, even if his current lifestyle didn't make it a poor idea.

The Silber Agency walks the line between public service and amoral exploitation for profit. It can serve as a patron for a more mercenary *Paragons of Freedom* series, although its closest rival, *Foregone Conclusions* (*Paragons*, page 47), is better known for paramilitary operations.

AL-KHAYAL, THE SHADOW

The most feared and hated terrorist organization in the world of *Paragons of Freedom* is *Al-Khayal*, "the Shadow," led by the mysterious terror kingpin of the same name, sometimes also known as "the Overshadow" in English-speaking parts of the West. His true name and birthplace remain unknown, although rumor has it the Shadow comes from a wealthy and powerful family in the Middle East and used their connections and money to fund his initial forays into terror, his education at fine universities only feeding his hatred of the West.

The more outlandish rumors claim *Al-Khayal* considers himself the reincarnation of an ancient Egyptian sorcerer-priest, that a childhood experience in the desert became a lifelong obsession, leading him to study archeology and anthropology at university and fund secret expeditions into the deserts of the Middle East, in search of what, only he knows. They go on to say that he found something buried beneath the ancient sands, a tomb or even a lost city, with treasures within, such as arcane secrets from a previous existence.

What many governments know, but do not advertise, is the Overshadow is likely a paranormal himself, although whether he awakened before or after the Breakout is a matter of considerable speculation. So, too, is the exact nature of his powers. Captured *Al-Khayal* agents whisper of a "living darkness" but not for long before they convulse and die, in spite of all medical attempts to sustain them. Agencies like AEGIS and PAX eagerly search for any scraps of information, while watching the shadows for signs of *Al-Khayal*'s next move, fearing what the Overshadow might do next.

THE PACT

The mysterious Medea is a member of the Pact's Council of Elders, holder of the First Chair of Venus of the House of Copper. Most believe the seductive Greek sorceress uses her legendary name to conceal her true name from those who might act against her, but a few believe she might actually be the original Medea! Her appetite for luxuries is certainly legendary enough. Medea's abilities are as given on page 151 of *Freedom City*, although it's up to the GM whether or not she possesses the Immunity power.

Silas the Elder's greatest rival within the Pact is the mysterious Malador the Mystic, First Chair of Saturn of the House of Lead. The mage always goes heavily robed and masked when seeing anyone, even in the warded privacy of the Council meetings. Others speculate what lies beneath the jeweled golden mask and dark cloth wrappings, and if Malador has exceeded his natural span through some arcane means or transformed into something other than human. Use Malador's game traits from page 207 of *Freedom City*.

There was a time when Adrian Eldrich would have rivaled both Malador and Silas, but the holder of the First Chair of Jupiter of the House of Tin does nothing but sulk in his decaying manor house, attended only by his Egyptian manservant Sallah and systematically emptying his vast wine cellar. The sodden mage doesn't even appear at Council meetings except when he must, and there is talk of giving his seat to someone more worthy to hold it and relieving Adrian of the burden of his responsibilities (such as it is).

THE PANTHEON

The self-proclaimed "deities" of the Pantheon are some of the most serious threats to peaceful relations between paranormals and normal humans and their governments. Although worship of paragons is at least tolerated in many areas, due to laws governing religious freedoms, illegal or criminal actions by the objects of worship are not. Their declarations of being "beyond human law" make most of the Pantheon at least suspect, if not outright wanted criminals.



In addition to those described in **Chapter 4** of *Paragons*, the Pantheon's loosely organized ranks include Stratos (who has granted various "prayers" and petitions involving the weather he commands), the Factor Four (living embodiments of the four elements), the Green Man (often conflated with the neo-pagan mythic figure), and the self-proclaimed Voodoo loa, Baron Samedi. Their abilities are essentially as given in **Chapter 6** of *Freedom City*. The Crime League and similar "super-villain teams" don't exist in *Paragons of Freedom*.

Rumors and urban legends talk about a Pantheon-like figure that doesn't claim membership, or even divinity, but *does* answer prayers. Stories conflict as to how this "Mr. Infamy" is best contacted or summoned, but they say he sometimes appears to origin chasers and would-be suicides and offers to grant them their heart's desire, if they're really willing to take it.

THE ILLUMINATI

Possible Members: *Enigma, Doc Harbinger, Foreshadow, Raven*

What is the truth about the *Al-Khayal* terrorist attack, and why did the Breakout happen at the very same moment? Why was *Pyramid Plaza* specifically targeted? How is it AEGIS and PAX were up and running so quickly, and what about rumors of top-secret government files called "the Zero Protocols"? What did Jeremiah Prophet tell the UN Security Council in closed session before the vote to approve PAX? What is the government covering up in the incident involving an unassuming little town called Unity? These and many more questions form a complex map pointing towards even larger questions and signs of a massive conspiracy, if not several. The unravelers of such conspiracies, shedding light in the shadows, are the Illuminati.

To the outside world, the Illuminati are paranoid conspiracy theorists merely reinforcing each other's delusions, but they all know theirs is lonely work, and they're fortunate enough to have found each other.



The group exists to find answers to a great number of questions and to bring the truth to light where possible. In particular, the Illuminati are dedicated to the safety and future of humanity, a future that seems far less certain since the Breakout.

The following are *potential* members of the Illuminati, and they may not be the only ones... only the Gamemaster knows for sure.

ENIGMA

Uncovering the existence of the Initiative was actually only the first step in Enigma's quest for the truth. Once he was able to see the bigger picture, he realized the layers were almost like a fractal pattern, infinitely complex and yet simple at all levels. The only difference is fractals and puzzles don't try to have you killed when you find out too much.

Enigma realized he needed help if he was going to survive long enough to reach the truth and do something other than take it with him to the grave, so he recruited allies in his quest. To say he trusts them would be overstating the matter, but he knows enough about each to say with a degree of surety they won't easily betray him, and that's sufficient for the time being. It would likewise be overstating to say Enigma is the "leader" of the Illuminati, as the group is a gathering of independent operators. Still, he is a primary driving force, and his insights help keep the group going.

DOC HARBINGER

Doc Harbinger knows full well his associates consider him a crackpot, but he doesn't particularly care. Their association is useful for the time being, even if no one else chooses to acknowledge what he sees so clearly: the enemy they are after is not of earthly origin, and the Breakout is of their making. Doc doesn't yet know if the paragons are

THE LABYRINTH

The Illuminati's greatest foe isn't the Shadow, or any government, cult, or criminal syndicate, although they don't know it yet. It's the secret at a heart of a maze of conspiracies nearly as old as civilization itself, spoken of only as "the Labyrinth."

The Labyrinth has tendrils of influence all over the world. It is the conspiracy behind other conspiracies, which it uses as fronts to confuse and occupy those few who seek to find their way to the center of the maze. Exactly what lies there is for the Gamemaster to decide. It may be similar to the organization described on pages 162-170 of *Freedom City*, including Taurus and his cohorts, or it could be something entirely different.

If Taurus really does exist, he may well be the oldest living being in the world, unless there are other secret immortals to rival him. He could be a truly ageless paragon from the time of Mythic Greece or an archetypal being from the Imageria, manifest in the physical world or possessing a series of host bodies.

Investigating and unraveling the secrets of the Labyrinth and Taurus's plots can easily occupy an entire series, with the manipulative mastermind pulling strings behind the scenes to put any number of roadblocks in the heroes' path. The Labyrinth can secretly control *Al-Khayal*, the Initiative, or virtually any other faction of the setting. Even the Breakout might be a part of Taurus's greater schemes!

their willing servants or simply ignorant dupes, unaware of the true source of their unnatural powers. In the end, it doesn't matter; they'll have to be dealt with in order to get at the greater threat.

As in *Paragons*, it's up to you just how close Doc Harbinger is to the truth: *does* the paranormal have an alien origin? Are paragons "more than meets the eye"? Or is Harbinger a paranormal unbalanced by his own awakening so he sees an alien invasion where none exists? "The Changeling Conspiracy" described under **Series Frameworks** may play right into Doc Harbinger's expectations, and his worst fears.

FORESHADOW

David Sloane tried to ignore the terrible visions, and he paid with the lives of his family when he failed to warn them and prevent their fatal car accident. He learned the hard way that the price of his paranormal gift is the responsibility to use it to change the future and prevent those things he sees from coming to pass.

Two visions loom large in Foreshadow's waking and sleeping. The first is a spreading darkness he has come to associate with *Al-Khayal*, a shadow consuming the world like a cancer. The only ray of hope is a golden Egyptian sun beetle, shining with a light that seems to hold the living darkness at bay. Foreshadow hopes to find it or at least learn its meaning eventually.

His other vision is perhaps more disturbing, as it concerns Jeremiah Prophet (*Paragons*, page 169). Foreshadow has images of Prophet standing amidst the devastated ruins of a city, surrounded by burned bodies and a shattered landscape, proclaiming the disaster that has snuffed out all life is his fault. Is there something Prophet will do to bring about the end of life on Earth, or is it something he will *fail* to do? Foreshadow doesn't know yet and, until he does, he is not yet certain what to do about it.

Foreshadow's game abilities remain the same as on page 140 of *Freedom City*.

RAVEN

Kai Lei's entire life has been a quest for the truth: first, to discover who her true father was, an American agent who left her mother before Kai

Lei was born. Then, it was to find her mother's killer and avenge her, a quest that led her into the darkest corners of southeast Asia, to train with some of the most skilled thieves and assassins in that part of the world. Eventually, as the Raven, Kai Lei attained her goals and found her life without direction or meaning. Her father now cared for other children as he had never been able to care for her. Her mother's killer was dead, but the organization that employed him went on.

It was while investigating the Initiative that Raven encountered Enigma and found her way into the Illuminati. Hers has been the darkest path of any in their alliance, and she knows well the parts of the world—and of humanity—people most wish to forget. Enigma's quest for the truth has become her own, although she does not yet acknowledge feeling more than just professional respect for the mysterious investigator.

Use Raven's game traits on page 120 of *Freedom City*, allocating her Language ranks and Equipment points as you choose.

SERIES FRAMEWORKS

Any of the series frameworks described in **Chapter 6** of *Paragons* can work in conjunction with the *Paragons of Freedom* setting, basing the series in or around Freedom City and using the various characters described in this chapter for supporting and background roles as well as allies or antagonists.

THE SHADOW FALLS

Rather than having the *Al-Khayal* attack and the Breakout occur in the past, you can use them as the start of your *Paragons of Freedom* series, either by setting it several years ago, starting at the Breakout and advancing the timeline, or by moving the events described in **A History of Freedom** to the present day and using the other material in this chapter as a guideline for what happens next.

The characters can be charter members of the Freedom League, Vanguard, or a similar organization, or they might join another faction or create one of their own. The world is just dealing with the existence of paranormals, and the characters are just learning about themselves and their powers. All the guidelines for handling the Breakout and a post-Breakout series in *Paragons*—particularly “The Breakout” series framework—apply to this type of series as well.

Once the Breakout has occurred and the dust begins to settle, a “Shadow Falls” series can shift to another type of series, depending on the characters’ agendas and where you and the players want to take the story.

WORLD’S GREATEST HEROES

Both the Freedom League and the Vanguard offer ready-made teams for the characters to join, each with their own built-in agendas, teammates, and rivalries. You can enmesh the players’ characters in the subplots and interactions of the supporting characters as well as their own subplots, and add or subtract characters from the existing teams as you see fit. For example, characters could form Mission Team Beta of the Vanguard, or they could be Mission Team Alpha, with some or all of the existing Alpha characters shifted to a Beta or even Gamma Team. Similarly, the Freedom League could be organized into squads, with the heroes as the newest squad, perhaps mixed-in with one or more supporting characters to add some flavor.

The heroes face a variety of challenges, from organizations and rogue paragons breaking the law and posing threats to peace and security to the even trickier challenges of public relations and navigating government bureaucracies. You can garner story ideas from both the *Freedom City* and *Paragons* setting books, particularly the “On the Vanguard” series framework in *Paragons*.

CHOOSING SIDES

A *Paragons of Freedom* twist on the “The Law Is Paramount” series from **Chapter 6** of *Paragons* is for the Paranormal Registration Act to pass in the United States and cause a rift in the paranormal community, with Freedom City and the Freedom League at the epicenter. Stalwarts like Daedalus,

Captain Thunder, and Patriot wholeheartedly support the Registration Act, while paragons like Lady Liberty and Johnny Rocket have profound concerns, which turn into open defiance when the Act has to be enforced.

In short order, conflict erupts between paranormals in the United States, with everyone choosing sides. The pro-PRA paragons work to enforce the law and bring in the anti-PRA crowd, some of whom flee the country, perhaps seeking sanctuary with PAX and the Vanguard, which remains carefully neutral in what is an internal US matter. Others opposed to the PRA turn to civil disobedience, sabotage, or even terrorism to drive their point home. In the midst of it all, forces like *Al-Khayal* and the Pantheon advance their agendas and prepare to take action.

THE CHANGELING CONSPIRACY

The *Paragons* setting already has plenty of opportunities for conspiracies and skullduggery, so it’s a simple matter of setting up a series wherein the heroes are confronted with a world-spanning conspiracy. With the Initiative, the Pact, and paragons like Mindbender, Mr. Zero, and Proteus, you can easily set up a plot to control the world from behind the scenes, and then clue the characters in on it and see what they do.

Things get even more interesting when you introduce elements from *Freedom City*. What if aliens really *do* exist in the *Paragons of Freedom* world and what the characters believe is an earthly conspiracy turns out to be the work of alien invaders like the Grue Unity? Perhaps there’s even more than one conspiracy of shape-shifting, mind-controlling Illuminati, some of them allied, others at odds, with the characters caught in the middle!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY

Freedom City is an excellent setting for an “Echoes of the Past” *Paragons* series: use the world described in this chapter as the default modern day of the setting, but with details from the *Freedom City* sourcebook “buried” in different parts of the world for the characters to dig up and piece together. Why is there evidence of decades of costumed superheroes in a world where the Breakout occurred only recently? What was “Project Centurion,” and how was it tied to mysterious government experiments with time-travel and alternate dimensions? What about the strange ruins of a super-advanced fortress hidden beneath the Arctic ice, containing a virtual “city in a bottle” and records of things that never actually happened?

Perhaps the Breakout was more momentous than it seemed, a cosmic event that not only changed the future of the world, but changed the past as well! If so, can it be undone? The scattered shards of evidence pieced together by the characters may be the key to doing that, something they might want to use or keep safe so no one else can. There are certain to be factions interested in what the explorers find or keep them from learning the truth. What happens if, in their investigations, they discover a mysterious ship, apparently from outside normal space-time, with a man held inside in temporal stasis who claims his name is “Dr. Tomorrow,” and he’s from the previous iteration of reality?

CHAPTER 5: ERDE – THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM



Welcome to Erde. Welcome to our nightmare, our living Hell

FROM LILITH'S JOURNAL...

16 April 2007: So, after seven years as a gun-toting rebel, I'm back in front of a keyboard again, trying to make the "genius" come out. You can bet if anyone other than Tomas Morgen asked me to do this, I'd have remembered how to laugh. But you just don't say no to Morgen. He *is* the savior of the world, after all.

At least, he was supposed to be. I'm still not clear on all the details, but Morgen got kicked upstairs to "Dr. Tomorrow, Guardian of Time" (whatever that means) and disappeared. Again. Before he left this time, he promised he'd send help from somewhere, and he asked me to type up a sort of "tourist guide" to our blighted little planet, *Erde*, for their sake.

Well, here goes. This is for you, Tomas... and whoever our helpers turn out to be. I hope they get here soon.

DESCENT INTO THE DARKNESS

Erde is what it is because of the Second World War, which the state-approved history describes as the Axis powers' glorious triumph over the decadent democracies and Bolshevism. To us non-fascists, it was the end of human liberty and dignity in the world.

The textbooks also call the Axis victory "inevitable" because of lots of racist nonsense few outside the ruling classes actually believe. When I was working at the Propaganda Ministry, all happy and stupid, I got to see the unapproved truth. All the standard Nazi *scheiße* about Aryan superiority had nothing to do with it. The reality was the Axis powers had hope and inspiration, and their enemies didn't. When it counted the most, America just didn't believe in itself.

TRIUMPH OF THE WILL

In the entire world, only Germany, Italy, and Japan noticeably recovered from the Great Depression, and for most, that was proof enough that democracy had failed and fascism worked. When Axis super-beings made their public debut, they were celebrated as symbols of national might and superiority—more evidence that time and providence were on the fascists' side. The jack-booted thugs believed the world should be theirs and were more than ready to fight for it.

Meanwhile, other countries were busy destroying themselves. Tyrants like Stalin, Mao, and Chiang killed far too many of their own countrymen to earn any real devotion, and the democratically elected leaders who could inspire their people went down in hails of bullets. Franklin Roosevelt, for one, might've gotten America through the Depression, if he'd lived to take the Oath of Office instead of being gunned down in February 1933. He certainly couldn't have done much worse than his successors.

The Depression-wracked democracies grew increasingly unsure of themselves and what they stood for. They continued to appease the fascist powers and nervously disarm, terrified to risk a fight for any reason. Fear engulfed the free nations, so much so that they treated their own heroic costumed mystery men as dangerous freaks and hoaxes, denying their people the tremendous morale boost the Axis powers got from their super-agents.

When global war finally came in 1939, the Axis was anxious and ready for it, while their foes continued to question what all the fighting was about. By the time they realized how much they stood to lose, it was far too late.

THE AMERIKANISCH NIGHTMARE

The isolationist and nearly bankrupt United States stayed out of World War II until after the UK, the USSR, and the rest of Europe fell before the German onslaught. America's time of living in denial finally ended in 1945 when Japan, fresh from conquering China and Oceania, launched devastating surprise attacks throughout the Pacific. This forced the U.S. into a two-front war its atrophied military, economy, and national spirit just couldn't win.

Plans to liberate the British and Hawaiian Islands were still being devised when the American Dream officially died on August 29th, 1949, its passing marked by mushroom clouds over what used to be Washington, D.C. and New York City. Two German A-9 "Projekt Amerika" rocket planes, launched from Spain, carried the first-ever atomic weapons across the Atlantic, along with Hitler's implicit threat of more to come. Facing nuclear annihilation, what was left of the American government surrendered unconditionally, followed by the rest of the Western Hemisphere.

America's collapse secured the Axis conquest of *Erde* (the damn-near ubiquitous German name for our planet). The former U.S. was partitioned at the Mississippi River between Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. Japan absorbed the western portion into its Co-Prosperity Sphere, while the Nazis established a puppet regime in the east known as *die Nationalsozialistische Staaten von Amerika*: the National Socialist States of America or the NSSA.

Despite the official surrender, the American Resistance waged guerilla war against the occupation from day one. Though *Erde* remained in the grip of Axis tyranny, North America was its most troublesome conquest. The insurgency got even bigger when a Nazi-bred eugenic superman named Tomas Morgen turned against the Reich and became leader of the Resistance. Unfortunately for us, Morgen eventually disappeared, after using an experimental Nazi time machine in an attempt to change World War II's outcome.

ZEIT DER KRISE

Talk about a tough act to follow. I wound up taking over for Morgen after he vanished. I won't ever claim to be as good, but I did learn a lot while filling in for him. At any rate, the resistance kept up the fight and best of all, we eventually found Morgen and freed him from a Nazi prison. He claimed he'd returned from "another Earth" where history took a better path and the Axis powers lost. Morgen said he helped bring about their defeat and had with him the key to beating them on *Erde*.

Said key was noburpolene, a chemical formula Morgen developed while on Earth-Prime. Noburpolene provides a sort of telepathic boost, insufficient to affect another ordinary human being. However, the mental hike is more than enough to make puppets of the Nazis' cybernetic war machines, which are piloted by disembodied brains conditioned to obey orders.

Before disappearing again, Morgen passed the noburpolene formula on to the Resistance. Even with the limited quantities we've been able to manufacture, we've liberated most of North America. With almost no super-beings on our side, we're still winning, simply by turning the Axis's own weapons against it.

The Japanese are holding on tooth and nail to the Rocky Mountains and points west, while the Nazis cling to New England and roughly everything east of the Hudson River. We're told NSSA *Reichspräsident* Robert Inglis (better known as the super-powered *Übermensch*) is now holed up in Boston with his wives and the rest of his super-Nazi pals.

Yes indeed, the American Resistance is finally winning. And it seems our troubles are just getting started.

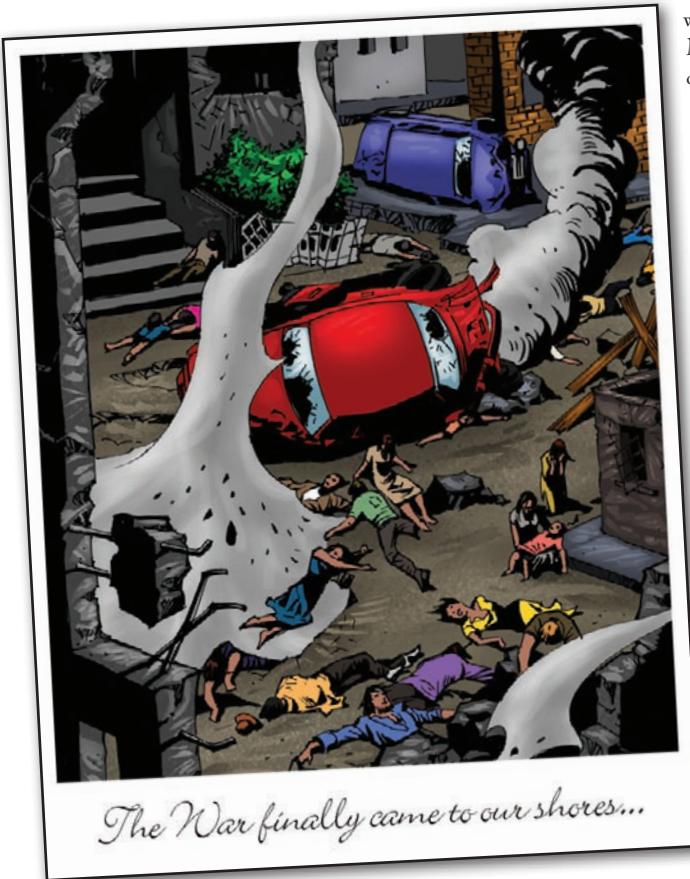
A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM

The fascists appear to be on the ropes, but they're really more like wounded animals backed into a corner. As their forces got closer to being pushed into the ocean, they mercilessly unleashed their chemical, biological, and super weapons on liberated cities. The worst such atrocity involved the Nazis' notorious super-squad *der Übermenschen* razing Philadelphia with their powers and untold amounts of nerve gas and anthrax.

Places outside the combat zones aren't much better off. The retreating fascists scorched the earth behind them, leaving anarchy, famine, and disease in their wake. At this point, the American Resistance isn't a functioning government, but becoming one is just as much a necessity as waging war. If we can't properly distribute our scant reserves of food, fuel, and medicine, there won't be anyone left to celebrate a victory after the next harsh winter.

Step one was establishing a new capital in my hometown *Arbeitstadt* ("City of Work"), now back to its original name, Freedom City. As the biggest surviving metropolis controlled by the resistance, it was a natural choice, and its name nicely sums up what we're fighting for. And what can I say? I'm proud of my town and its anti-fascist history.

Freedom City ignored the official surrender back in 1949 and offered fierce resistance to the invading Nazis. Only after flattening the entire metropolitan area did the Reich finally conquer it. I think everyone's seen the old newsreel footage of Freedom's costumed mystery men making their last desperate stand against their Nazi counterparts, or at least the part where *Überlegen* (Superior) rips Bowman's arms off. That footage makes me



The War finally came to our shores...

wish our super-beings had been allowed to form some sort of mutual defense league. Maybe together they'd have changed the war's outcome somehow, like Morgen did on Earth-Prime.

IN THE CITY

After the war, the Nazis rebuilt Freedom as *Arbeitstadt*, to glorify National Socialism. Despite what's been done to the place, Morgen told me its general layout still resembles the Freedom City on Earth-Prime. Since he indicated that's where our helpers are coming from, they shouldn't have too much trouble finding their way around.

What they see will shock them anyway: dirty, ragged people, easily outnumbered by the rats, struggling to find enough scraps to live on. Morgen warned me they'll ask what happened to all the Jews, blacks, Hispanics, and homosexuals, and I'm still debating whether to give them all the horrific details or not. I know the facts never rest easy on my mind, and I'm hesitant to share that burden.

I'll have to tell them about the leftover roentgens from the Axis atomic tests and the sooty industrial pollutants that make the air not fit to breathe. They'll figure out the globe is heating up and melting the ice caps on their own. I'll just have to explain how and why the Germans and Japanese continue to deny they're the cause of it. Maybe our visitors can tell me where the ozone layer went—me, I just try to make sure the zinc oxide is fairly distributed.

There are plenty of other reminders of the Nazis' presence here in Freedom: the mocking signs promising "*Arbeit macht frei*" ("Work makes you free"), the temples dedicated to Norse gods, and the Americans trying to converse in the four or five non-German words they've ever learned. Those will jar them a bit, but the Gestapo interrogation rooms and the SS euthanasia centers will shake them to the core.

And then I'll have to tell them this is what most of the world looks like. Better have them sit down first.

“THE FORGOTTEN BRIGADE”

7 July 2007: A lot's happened since I last worked on this guide. That'll teach Morgen not to give me a firm deadline, I guess. At any rate, I need to finish this quickly, because the help he promised has arrived. So far, Morgen really seems to have outdone himself.

I'm pretty sure the "Guardian of Time" broke a lot of rules doing it, but he went back to Earth-Prime and plucked a team of costumed mystery men called the Freedom Brigade from the midst of its Second World War. Morgen says they're "not needed there," which is enough for me, because they're sure needed here.

It's amazing how well the Brigadiers fit in on *Erde*. They're so full of patriotic fervor it's contagious, and that's been great for everyone's morale. Not even the grimmest situations seem to faze them—they just shrug them off and declare, "It'll get worse if we let those Ratzis win!"

Most surprisingly, even though there's a world of difference between us (literally), we've got a lot in common. The other day I was playing a *verboten* mp3 of a big-band swing number from the 1940s, back before the Nazis banned all music that didn't sound like Wagner. Before I knew it, the Sea Hawk—from another time and place—started *singing along*. She tells me it's one of her *current* favorite songs!

I'd never really thought about it, but the Axis robbed us of decades of uncensored, non-Aryan culture. All we've got left, from the music and movies I "borrowed" from the Propaganda Ministry vaults to the books people kept hidden all these years, is sixty years old. Time moved on for *Erde*, but the preserved bits of old America we cherish are fragments of the Freedom Brigade's everyday 1940s lives. Makes me wonder what the big-band tunes they've got on present-day Earth-Prime sound like.

THE ROAD TO VICTORY

16 August 2007: Not dead—yet—just really, really busy. The Second American Revolution has stalled, which in effect means we're losing. No one else seems to get this. They figure as long as the Nazis aren't pushing us back, then all is well. What they don't want to consider is how much time is on tyranny's side. The Nazis have the resources of three continents behind them—all we had was surprise, and that advantage is pretty much gone. Before too long, the Axis will have enough non-cybernetic forces marshaled to retake North America. Shortly thereafter, we'll lose everything, including hope. Maybe there'll be another revolution in another hundred years, but ours will be finished.

So we're down to our last shot, and it's my call where it's aimed. Thanks to the Invisible Agent and all the dirt he's dug up, I've got no shortage of targets. Still, if I pick the wrong one, it's at best the end of human freedom. Worst case, it's the end for all mankind.

But hey, no pressure, right?

KALTER KRIEG

Of the options we've got, by far the dirtiest is trying to cut a deal with the planet's other great oppressor, the Japanese Empire. Take the lesser of two evils, accept half a loaf rather than starve—believe me, I've been through all the usual clichés and more. None of them help me make a decision.

On the one hand, it would only be speeding up the inevitable. The Nazis and Japanese have been itching for a fight ever since World War II ended. Sooner or later, their sixty-year exchange of insults, “dirty tricks,” and propaganda—*Kalter Krieg* (“Cold War”), as the Nazis call it—is going to turn hot. Might as well make a deal now and guarantee America comes out of it okay, right?

The Empire has all the same weapon types the Reich does: atomic, chemical, biological, superhuman. It’s got fewer of them, but more than enough to destroy the planet several times over. That’s kept the peace for sixty years, but maybe we can convince the Japanese now’s the time to strike against the weakened Reich. All we’d have to do is agree to help them and make it worth their while somehow.

The Empire is certainly brutal when it’s after something it wants, but at least it leaves its subjects alone as long as they bow at the proper times and don’t make trouble. At least the men—no one’s sure what happens to the abducted “comfort women” once they’re done with them. That’s still better than the genocidal Nazis, right? I can hold my nose and make a deal with them. Can’t I?

But what do I offer the Empire? California? British Columbia? Both? Is it worth risking an east coast–west coast split in the American Resistance just to turn fascist against fascist? Because the westerners will say we gave away their homes and sold them down the road... and they’ll be right.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Cutting a deal with the Japanese looks best when you take into consideration all they’ve got going for them, particularly the resources they haven’t used against us yet. The germ weapons they’ve been perfecting in China all these years have been bad enough, thanks. We’re definitely not ready to face down the Empire’s living dinosaurs.

Oh yeah, I probably should append a section to my “tourist guide” explaining the little bonus the Empire got when it tested its first atomic weapon on November 3, 1954. Not only did the Japanese finally have the A-bomb, they awakened a colossal prehistoric creature called a “Gigantosaur,” which they somehow taught to obey orders. Gigantosaur led the Japanese to discovering Kaiju Island, a place crawling with Jurassic beasts that are now also under the Empire’s control.

Sure, the monsters would kill far less people than the Empire’s biological weapons, but it’s tough to beat an army of giant monsters for breaking an enemy’s morale. There’s very little the resistance can do to keep them from flattening, say, San Francisco, if it came to that.

THE HINOMARU

Unlike the Nazis, the Japanese don’t tolerate non-native supers. As untold Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, and other specially gifted people throughout Asia could attest, non-Japanese supers are killed and dissected, and not always in that order.

Luckily for the American Resistance, the Empire deploys most of its super-agents (called *Hinomaru*, “the Circle of the Sun”) against insurgents in China and Siberia. A few are still known to us *gaijin* in America, like the Crimson Katana, who’s slain more key resistance leaders than I care to remember. There’s also the celebrated young Dr. Otaku who (if the propaganda films are credible) is responsible for most of the beyond-state-of-the-art gadgets equipping Japanese forces.

I’m sure there’s much more to the *Hinomaru* than we’ve yet seen here in America. When they do come here in force, do I *really* not want them on our side?

BLACK HILLS

If I had more super-powered help, I’d check out why the Japanese utterly refuse to retreat from Mount Rushmore. While they give ground everywhere else, they continue to pour men and resources into that one isolated pocket of resistance. Even though the faces of Hitler, Hirohito, Mussolini, and Superior have been blasted clean off the mountain, the encircled Japanese desperately fight on.

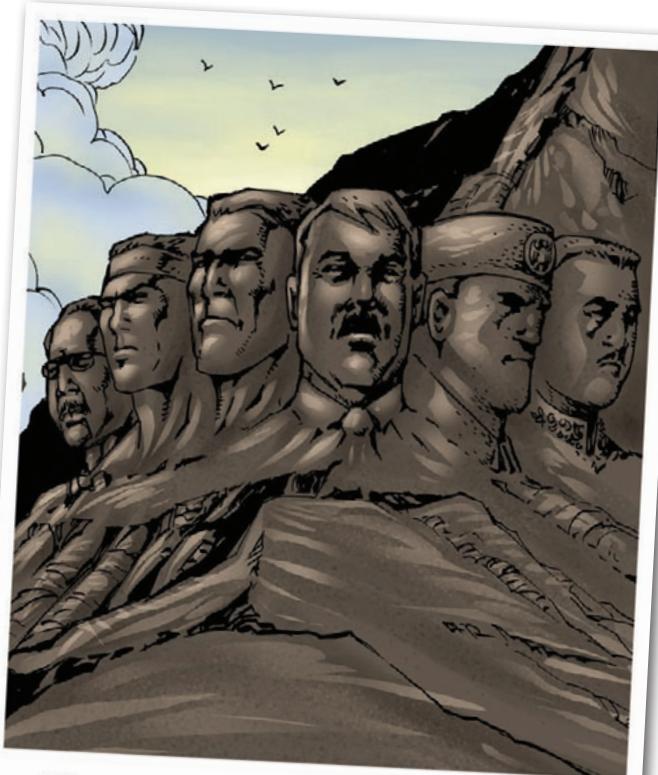
There’s got to be something at stake there for the Empire other than just samurai honor. If we could find out what it is, we might just get the bargaining chip we need. Probably not enough to broker an alliance or anything, but securing an armistice would be victory enough.

Right now, I don’t have enough resources to risk on a gamble that size, no matter how sweet the stakes might be. So, I have to hope the resistance will miraculously break through or Morgen brings us more mystery men before I have to make a much less favorable deal with the Empire.

THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR...

While my head says, “Make a deal with the Japanese,” my heart screams, “Kick their asses.” If I had more super-powered help, I’d definitely go with my heart. As it is, I’ve got way more that needs super-doing than even the Freedom Brigade can handle.

It’d be nice if Morgen showed up with a time-bus full of capes, but while I trust him to get us what we need to win, I can’t count on his timing—ironic for the “Guardian of Time,” to be sure. When the super-help does get here, I may be too dead or crazy to greet them, so here’s my “to-do” list for them, just in case.



The faces of fascism on Mt. Rushmore

THE TORCH HAS BEEN PASSED

Before my number's up, I really should try finding some superheroes already here on *Erde*. After all, I do have some leads.

Right before he went off to do his "Guardian of Time" thing, Morgen said I should "ask Lady Liberty for help." I have no idea what he could've meant, because the Statue of Liberty was ripped in two by an atom bomb back in 1949. I've seen pictures of its top half sticking out of the (probably radioactive) sand, and frankly, that's as close as I want to get to it. Was he just being metaphorical, or is there a hint in there I'm missing?

I'm wondering about Morgen's cryptic goodbye because there are some interesting accounts coming out of America's other great atomic wasteland, the former District of Columbia. We've got captured intelligence reports of a super-powered entity there dubbed "Columbia Shadow," and he seems to be giving the Nazis all they can handle. If I can round up enough people capable of standing the radioactive heat, I definitely want to check out the possibility that something good came from the Reich's atomic mass murder.

Closer to home, it looks like Freedom City may have its first resident superhero since Superior hunted down and killed Midnight back in the Fifties. We all grew up hearing stories about Freedom's ghostly guardian "Lantern Jack," but for the first time since the war people are actually claiming to have been helped by him. Contrary to the legend, he reportedly goes by the name "Lantern John," but if I can get him to cooperate with the resistance full time, I'll gladly call him whatever he likes. Not sure how to ask, but someone on this crazy world has to know how to perform a séance. All I have to do is find her.

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION

While my hypothetical heroes are skulking around in the ruins of DC, I hope they have time to do some digging. You see, somewhere underneath all that glowing rubble is a bombproof vault containing our birthright: the original U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

That may seem like a lot of work for two really old sheets of paper, but you're forgetting the need for inspiration. The simple act of retrieving them would surprise a lot of people and show just what the resistance is capable of. Not to mention the fact most Americans are only vaguely aware our Constitution used to have an honest to goodness Bill of Rights attached—bringing the original back would be a real eye opener for them.

The old-timers tell me the Declaration explains better than anything why freedom is the thing most worth fighting for. Those are words we surviving Americans need to hear, now more than ever. And that, my dear heroes, is why we dig—or will be digging. Soon.

DARKEST AFRICA

During one of their countless fruitless safaris looking for the Ark of the Covenant (or the Holy Grail, I forget which), the Nazis wandered into the African nation of Dakana. There they uncovered the source of the amazingly powerful daka crystals, and faster than they could say "white man's burden," the *Afrikakorps* was sent in to "civilize" the natives.

Turns out the Reich's "civilizing" efforts look an awful lot like forced-labor mining camps. Since then, Nazi super-science has benefited from an unsteady stream of daka crystals with which to power their gadgets.

I say "unsteady" because the Dakanans aren't taking things lying down. Led by their King M'Balla—known as the White Lion—the Dakanans have been fighting the Nazis as fiercely and effectively as anyone ever has. If we could send a team to help him, it might be all they need to liberate their homeland and stop the flow of crystals to our enemies.

That would be reward enough for me, but I certainly wouldn't turn down a gift of daka crystals for our side. You know, if they were to be offered in gratitude or something.

LIFE ON MARS?

Everybody alive in 1977 remembers *sternmann* Robert Grodin setting foot on Mars, but not all of them were overjoyed at seeing the Nazi flag planted on another world. Conventional wisdom holds it was all about beating the Japanese Empire there, but rumor has it there was much more to it. I'm not referring to the Japanese propaganda story about how the Nazis faked the Mars landing in a movie studio, either.

The story goes that despite all the official denials, the Reich knows how badly damaged *Erde*'s environment is. Moreover, the destruction is irreversible, and the planet's biosphere is doomed. Looking to save his precious self, Superior chose the so-called "Alternative 3" from a menu presented him by top Nazi scientists. This option calls for a secret gradual relocation of all the best and brightest Aryans to sustainable habitats on Mars. Once completed, the Reich will initiate the long-dreaded nuclear holocaust on *Erde*, just to make sure no one without blonde hair and blue eyes follows them to the Red Planet.

Sounds crazy, doesn't it? Even for the Nazis, it sounds incredible. But look into your heart of hearts and tell me there's zero chance of it being true. There was way too much unexplained activity at the Von Braun Island Space Control Center back in the day for me to be free of doubt. Even if it isn't true now, this tale could still give Superior a lot of big ideas, none of them any good.

So, I'd like to verify this story. Once I figure out how to put a man on Mars, I'm all set.

BLOODY SECRETS

If you're still in the mood for wacky stories, let me try another one, and it's a doozy. The Reich's very own *Fuehrer* Superior might not be a human being. I'm not quite sure what an "Ultiman" is, but it sure as heck isn't on the *Mein Kampf* list of approved races. What if Superior *didn't* get his superhuman abilities because of his "pure Aryan blood"?

It may seem like a trivial detail, but remember what I wrote earlier about the need to inspire people. There's no telling how much damage would be done to the Reich's very foundations if we could objectively prove that Aryan superiority is a lie, and the biggest fraud of all is *der Fuehrer* himself. This would totally turn the tables from the last war; this time it'd be the Reich fatally doubting what it stands for.

Maybe it's just me buying into some deliberate misinformation from the Gestapo, but even then, it's still valuable. We've suspected for years the Reich is an internally divided regime, and rumor mongering of this nature would confirm it. If so, maybe we can provoke a full-blown schism and then sit back and watch the Nazis exterminate themselves for a change.

OUTSHINED

There's only one insider who'd risk destroying the Reich like this, and that's *Überschatten* (Overshadow). Though the *Reichsführer-SS* is usually hiding out at his base, Nifelheim, Overshadow's never been able to disguise his seething anger over not becoming Hitler's successor. When Superior beat him out for the job, he went to the top of Overshadow's enemies list.

Unlike everyone else on that list, Superior is still alive, and evading Overshadow's number-one assassin, Nacht-Krieger, is no easy feat. Maybe exposing the *Führer's* "true" origin is Overshadow's last, best chance to take down his rival and seize power for himself. After all, who'd be better equipped to uncover this fact than the head of the SS, guardians of racial purity? And what better time for him to strike than now, when the American Resistance has brought Superior's reign to its lowest point?

Verifying Overshadow is the one leaking the information is a tall order. Just look at the nonexistent line of volunteer sleuths I have to go to Nifelheim hunting for proof. Still, this plus the prospect of getting firm evidence that Superior is the least Aryan guy on the planet makes it a job somebody needs to take on. Maybe it's time to break out the straws.

MAYHEM OF THE MOONINITES

While we're on the topic of secrets, we've learned the real reason the Nazis are so good at learning everyone else's. Everyone just assumes it's because they're cruel bastards who've had decades of practice at torturing people, and while that's true enough, there's more to it. Turns out the Nazis recovered a little something from the Lunar War of 1962.

We're all taught how the first moon landing supposedly ended with the *sternmenschen* all murdered by hostile Mooninites (or whatever Moon People are called). What we're not told is those "innocent" Nazi spacemen were in fact an armed scouting party, killed by the Moon People in self-defense. When the Nazis returned in force, the Moon People held their own against the best the Reich could throw at them. All we Earth people saw of the conflict was how it ended: a dozen H-bombs dropped from orbit onto the moon city. Thus, the Lunar War ended in another "glorious victory" for the Reich.

Afterwards, the Nazis crammed a few "sub-humans" into spacesuits and forced them to scavenge through the still-hot ruins for any useful alien technology. They recovered a strange glowing rock, simply dubbed the *Mondstein* (Moonstone). Its initial worth was as a tremendous source of energy, kind of like a nuclear reactor the size of a paperweight, but Overshadow eventually unlocked its full potential.

For decades, the SS had been forcibly extracting the secrets of mental telepathy from a Professor Artur Zion. Using this information, Overshadow learned the Moonstone is also a powerful telepathic booster, and in the hands of a trained individual, it can be used to mold another person's psyche like a lump of clay. So whenever simple torture fails, the SS moves stubborn prisoners to Nifelheim and tears whatever knowledge they want from their minds.

Sure, it'd be great to get this fancy moonrock away from the bad guys and stop the mayhem it's unleashed over the years, but that's thinking small. Just imagine what we could learn if Overshadow got a taste of what the Moonstone can do. Starting to see why this Nifelheim raid seems like a good idea to me now?

OPERATION STURZ

I began this entry saying the resistance was in a race against time, and I've been saving my scariest proof for last. From the bits and pieces we've gleaned from burned and shredded documents left behind by the fleeing Axis agents, the Nazis have something big and almost unimaginably horrible in store for us.

Trust me, I realize that's quite a statement, given it was the Nazis who coined the term "genocide," but indications are it is true. Signs point to something called Operation *Sturz* (Downfall), to be enacted in the event the Reich has to withdraw from North America. After hitting us with everything from sarin gas to smallpox, I'm frankly terrified of what else they've got up their black sleeves.

If Operation *Sturz* isn't the last phase of the supposed "Alternative 3," it won't be anything atomic—too big a chance of provoking the Empire into World War III—but what is it, then? We've asked every Nazi we can get our hands on, and frankly, we've done some things I'm not overly proud of to get them to talk. So far, all we have is that oh-so-ominous name.

Until we find out, we can't risk victory, if that makes any sense. If it's all a bluff by Overshadow, then I still need to confirm that before we finish off the fascists. But if *Sturz* is something real—and my gut tells me it is—then by God, we need to find out what it is, and how we can stop it.

Where is Morgen when I *really* need him?



One giant leap backwards for mankind...

DOWN TO ERDE

Now that Lilith's had a chance to make her case for more caped assistance, Gamemaster, it's time to talk about how to get your heroes to *Erde* and help win the fight for freedom. This section outlines some ways the characters can hop the dimensional barrier, as well as the secrets they can uncover once they arrive there.

THE MAN WHO FELL TO ERDE

Getting the heroes to *Erde* is easier if they've already successfully played through the adventure *Time of Crisis*. In that case, they're well aware of the dire situation there and have already impressed their good pals Dr. Tomorrow and Lilith with their super-heroics. During *Time of Crisis*, Dr. Tomorrow asks for the heroes' aid in defeating the Axis on *Erde*, just as he'd helped do on the characters' Earth. They get yanked away by the Norn before they can reply, so if they're real heroes, they should jump at the chance to finally help the Doctor and repay the debt Earth-Prime owes him.

It's quite easy for Dr. Tomorrow to pull up in his time ship and pick up *Time of Crisis* veterans who are ready and willing to take care of their unfinished business on *Erde*. If the characters haven't played through that adventure and made his acquaintance, all is not lost. Dr. Tomorrow is looking to recruit *someone* in a cape, and given the pinch his home world is currently in, he's as likely to ask a team of super-strangers as super-friends. Either way, the player characters can reasonably expect a house call from the good Doctor.

Of course, it's quite possible to have adventures on *Erde* without calling the Doctor first. Let's face it: superheroes encounter plenty of weird things, any one of which could plausibly (in comic-book terms) bounce them onto a parallel world. All it takes is, say, one experimental Nazi time travel device to dimension-jack the player characters smack-dab into the middle of the fight for freedom. An errant Aryan blood-magic ritual may conjure up the characters instead of Loge, or the heroes may get lost returning home from one of the other *outré* times and places outlined elsewhere in this book.

Real heroes won't pass up the opportunity to do some good once they're there, but even the most recalcitrant rediscover their higher principles if their only hope of getting home lies in smashing the Reich. Maybe the Nazis have the only other working prototype of the Way-Back Machine, or Dr. Tomorrow "just doesn't have the time" to give them a ride home until *Erde* is free. Either way, they won't be coming back 'til it's over "over there."

NOBURPOLENE

Dr. Tomorrow's wonder drug, noburpolene, is extremely potent in its purest form. The dose he took prior to leaving Earth-Prime lasted for months, and its telepathic boost allowed him to control cybernetic systems at line of sight range. Unfortunately for the resistance, none of its noburpolene measures up to these results.

The resistance has to manufacture the drug under far less than ideal circumstances, employing homemade labs, amateur pharmacists, and substandard (often substitute) chemicals. As a result, usable noburpolene remains scarce, and its effects are highly unpredictable when it is available.

In game terms, the drug is a true plot device, working as well and for as long as the Gamemaster wishes, with all shortcomings attributable to shoddy concoction. The GM is free to have any noburpolene ingested by player characters conk out at dramatic moments, work only at touch range, or make them violently ill as the story's needs dictate.

By the same token, the GM can have noburpolene work better than advertised if the characters need their bacon saved. The drug's faded effects can return at crucial moments, maybe even at an enhanced level. A particularly exotic version might even endow people with superpowers—perhaps permanently. If their abilities emulate noburpolene, these empowered people could very well be the Axis powers' downfall.

SECRETS OF ERDE

Once the characters are "over there," it falls on the Gamemaster to make their visit an entertaining one. That can seem daunting, especially if the GM has the misconception that *Erde* has to be about war stories. To be sure, there's plenty of fighting to be done (especially if that's what the players really want), but that's far from the best use of their talents.

Lilith knows this even if the heroes don't, as outlined in her diaries. Thanks to the noburpolene, the American Resistance can hold its own in a straight-ahead battle. The capes are needed behind enemy lines in places only superheroes can get in and out of, where the secrets for winning the war can be found.

This section reveals everything Lilith ever wanted to know plus a great deal more, so you'll want to keep it to yourself, Gamemaster. It only scratches the surface of *Erde*'s possibilities, but there should be plenty to get things going.

THE LOST CAUSE

On *Erde*, the Axis victory was made possible by many different misfortunes befalling its enemies, including FDR's assassination and the never-ending Great Depression. However, the key divergence from Earth-Prime was the absence of two individuals: Dr. Tomorrow and Centurion.

Dr. Tomorrow left *Erde*, hoping to use his knowledge of the future to change the past, and he succeeded... on Earth-Prime, where the stolen Nazi gadget unwittingly deposited him. Back on *Erde*, America didn't have access to the historical cheat sheets he would have provided and thus flunked the Second World War. As he later discovered, various magical barriers created by the Axis's Thule and Green Dragon Societies block Doc Morrow (or anyone else) from interfering in *Erde*'s history.

As for Centurion, the passage of his dimensional capsule through the Terminus, in addition to infusing him with the primal power for which he would become so famous, "refracted" his existence, creating numerous (perhaps countless) duplicates. Thus, from that one infant came Centurion on Earth-Prime, Praetor on Anti-Earth, and so forth. As per *Erde*'s usual hard luck, someone else got its Centurion, and its heroic mystery men, deprived of their most powerful and inspirational force, suffered fatally as a result.

There's some debate in the temporal community as to where exactly *Erde*'s Centurion wound up, but Dr. Tomorrow is convinced he wound up in Earth-Prime's future, in Freedom City AD 2525 to be precise. Dr. Tomorrow has made repeated attempts to convince this second

Centurion (who took the name Caias Ward) to leave the hero-filled 26th century and "fulfill his destiny" on 21st century *Erde*. Ward considered it, and he went so far as to semi-retire from the Freedom Legion in order to pave the way for his departure.

The only thing holding Ward back is his trusted ally, the Clockwatcher, who-to put it mildly-disagrees with Dr. Tomorrow's theory. Already upset over the Doctor's "reckless temporal gambit" involving the Freedom Brigade, the Clockwatcher is dead set against risking any further damage to the space-time continuum. So the new Centurion remains torn and in desperate need of advice from some player characters (preferably ones who've been to *Erde*) on whether to take a chance or play it safe.

THE FREEDOM BRIGADE

Formed on Earth-Prime in July 1941 to protect Lend-Lease shipments from Axis saboteurs, the Freedom Brigade became one of the earliest (if not best-known) teams of Freedom City "mystery men." Its most famous exploit was apparently its last, when the Brigade's outraged leader, Commander USA, publicly declared the team was on its way to Tokyo to take revenge for the Pearl Harbor attack.

The Freedom Brigade departed on December 8, 1941 to great fanfare, but they were never heard from again. Missing and presumed dead, the Brigade was honored as the first of America's costumed heroes to give their lives in World War II. As the war dragged on, memories of the team faded until even the Super Museum dubbed them "the Forgotten Brigade."

Unbeknownst to all, Dr. Tomorrow used his time ship to intercept the Sea Hawk's flying submarine over the Pacific and revealed the fate awaiting them. Their current mission would end with the team captured and mentally subjugated by Axis scientists. The Brigade would then return to Freedom City and murder scores of innocent people (including some fellow mystery men) before being killed themselves, their names forever disgraced.

Rather than inflicting serious damage on America's morale and war effort, Dr. Tomorrow offered to transport them to another Earth, one without heroic mystery men and in desperate need of help to free itself from the victorious Axis powers. Like true heroes, the Brigadiers opted to go where they could do the most good. On Earth-Prime the team may be "the Forgotten Brigade," but on *Erde*, it may yet save the world.

COMMANDER USA

Right after boot camp, young Army draftee James Hendricks was assigned guard duty at a top-secret government research lab. One night, Hendricks spotted some Nazi spies attempting to make off with an experimental chemical mixture. Outnumbered, Hendricks did the only thing he could to keep the concoction out of enemy hands: he drank it.

The spies left the seemingly poisoned Hendricks for dead. However, he later regained consciousness and was honorably discharged for medical reasons. In time, he not only regained his former vigor, but he also found his body elevated to near the peak of human physical perfection. Even more incredibly, he found the experimental alchemical solution he'd swallowed had given him the power to transmute elements by touch.

Still angry at the enemy saboteurs hiding in his beloved country, but unable to re-enlist, the patriotic Hendricks donned a red, white, and blue costume and dubbed himself Commander USA, the WWII era's first African-American "mystery man." To better wage war against home front subversion, the charismatic Hendricks put together the Freedom Brigade, and he served as its leader when not pursuing a career as a neophyte industrial chemist.

LILITH

In addition to her natural raven-haired beauty, Elissa Carey's considerable writing talent set her apart in her state-run school. At an early age, she was pegged for a position at the Propaganda Ministry. Despite being subjected to the best indoctrination available, Carey's faith in the Nazi regime quickly wavered. Her work made her witness to the Nazis' brutality, as well as the heroism of the Reich's greatest foe, Tomas Morgen.

Inspired by Morgen, Carey joined the American Resistance, taking her codename from the woman cast out of Eden. She quickly proved an adept leader, and eventually she became head of Arbeitstadt's resistance cells. After the omniversal "time of crisis," Morgen appointed her leader of the American Resistance and entrusted her to secure the final victory over Axis tyranny.

LILITH

PL 4

Str 10	Dex 12	Con 12	Int 12	Wis 12	Cha 16
Skills: Bluff 5 (+8), Computers 3 (+4), Diplomacy 5 (+8), Gather Information 4 (+7), Intimidate 4 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+5), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 3 (+4), Language (German), Notice 3 (+4), Profession (journalist) 6 (+7), Search 3 (+4), Sense Motive 3 (+4), Stealth 3 (+4), Swim 1 (+1)					
Feats: Attractive, Beginner's Luck, Connected, Contacts, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus, Equipment 3, Fascinate (Diplomacy), Hide in Plain Sight, Inspire 5, Leadership, Master Plan, Well-Informed					
Equipment: Binoculars, laptop computer, leather jacket (+1 Toughness), submachine gun (+4 damage)					
Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +3, Damage +0 (unarmed), +4 (submachine gun), Defense +3 (+1 flatfooted), Knockback -1, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +2 (+1 without leather jacket), Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +3					
Abilities 14 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 19 + Combat 10 + Saves 6 = Total 62					

On *Erde*, Commander USA's character, charisma, determination, and courage fulfill the hopes and dreams of millions. He embodies the sort of patriotism America once fatally lacked and provides the inspirational symbol its people need to see their way to victory.

COMMANDER USA

POWER LEVEL 8

Str 18	Dex 18	Con 20	Int 12	Wis 12	Cha 20
Skills: Bluff 6 (+11), Craft (chemical) 4 (+5), Diplomacy 6 (+11), Intimidate 6 (+11), Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+5), Profession (chemist) 4 (+5), Stealth 6 (+10)					
Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 4, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Elusive Target, Fascinate (Diplomacy), Improved Block, Inspire, Leadership, Power Attack, Takedown Attack					
Powers: Transform 8 (inanimate objects into other inanimate objects; Continuous; Touch Range)					
Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +4 (ranged), Grapple +12, Damage +4 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -4 (-2 flatfooted), Initiative +4					
Saving Throws: Toughness +8 (+5 flatfooted), Fortitude +6, Reflex +5, Will +3					
Abilities 40 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 19 + Powers 40 + Combat 18 + Saves 4 = Total 131					



DOCTOR X

Freedom City University professor Dr. Jerry Xavier was a leading expert on electromagnetism and one of many researchers looking into ways of improving radar systems, vital to America's defense network. One late night, a power surge triggered an overload in Xavier's experimental cavity magnetron, bombarding him with powerful electromagnetic rays.

When he regained consciousness, Dr. Xavier discovered his body generated those same rays, and he could manipulate the Earth's magnetic field and fly. At first, Xavier was unsure what to do with his newfound abilities, until he read of Commander USA's call for costumed heroes to join him in fighting enemy agents in Freedom City.

Seeing an opportunity to use his strange gifts for the greater good, Xavier created the identity of Doctor X, Master of Magnetism, and became one of the founding members of the Freedom Brigade.

On *Erde*, Doctor X's ability to disrupt the high-tech electronic gear carried by the *Wermacht* is invaluable. With the good Doctor's aid, the under-equipped resistance forces can battle even elite Nazi forces on equal terms.

THE INVISIBLE AGENT

Little is known about the man aptly known as the Invisible Agent. He claims his real name is Frank Raymond and his transparency comes from a secret chemical formula only he possesses. The invisibility solution works on contact, and Raymond wears a hooded cloak, mask, gloves, and other items of clothing saturated in the mysterious concoction.

Raymond is rarely visible, even around his teammates, but his mission is clear. The Invisible Agent is a true man of secrets, and that includes keeping America's confidential information safe at home and acquiring that of its enemies.

While the Freedom Brigade is never sure of his comings and goings, the Invisible Agent always seems to be around when he's most needed. It is speculated he spends at least some of his time operating behind enemy lines, because much of the information he passes along to his teammates could come from few other places.

The change of dimensions hasn't diminished the Agent's espionage mastery. On *Erde*, he's still providing the Brigade and the resistance with critical intelligence needed to carry on the fight. For example, Lilith's newly developed strategies for beating the Axis (see **The Road to Victory**, following) are based in large part on information supplied by the Agent.

THE MAGISTER

Assistant District Attorney James Carrott grew tired of watching Freedom City's most notorious mobsters beat the rap time and again due to their illicit power and influence, and in time, he resolved to do something about it. By night, Carrott became the costumed vigilante known as the Magister, and driven by his thirst for justice, he began to stalk the criminals the law could not touch.

In a short time, the lawless grew to fear the very sight of the Magister and his mighty Gavel of Justice. The police were soon busy finding once-untouchable criminals helpless in his Prison Bar snares, the evidence needed to convict them nearby. Eventually, lawmen became so grateful for the Magister's help that they more or less stopped chasing his trademark jet-black 1940-model roadster.

With the mob on the run, the Magister began to dedicate his efforts towards rounding up enemy saboteurs, and he accepted the invitation to join the Freedom Brigade. On *Erde*, the Magister continues his fight against Axis fifth columnists, only the stakes are raised by the enemy's attempted usage of weapons of mass destruction. In his civilian identity, his knowledge of a fair and impartial legal system—something unknown

DOCTOR X**POWER LEVEL 8**

Str 12 | Dex 12 | Con 16 | Int 24 | Wis 14 | Cha 12

Skills: Concentration 8 (+10), Craft (electronic) 8 (+15), Craft (mechanical) 8 (+15), Disable Device 8 (+15), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+15), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+15), Notice 8 (+10), Search 8 (+15)**Feats:** Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (ranged) 7, Dodge Focus 3, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Power Attack**Powers:** Flight 8 (2,500 MPH), Force Field 8 (Impervious; Limited: physical attacks), Magnetic Control 8 (Dynamic, Alternate Powers [all Dynamic]; Animate Objects 8 [Limited: machines], Blast 8, Blast 5 [metallic projectiles; Autofire; Accurate], Deflect 8 [slow and fast projectiles], Environmental Control 8 [flying metal objects, distraction, DC 10], Magnetic Control 8 [magnetic field; Burst Area; Touch Range], Nullify Electronics 8 [electromagnetic pulse, all effects; Nullifying Field, Toughness Save], Obscure 16 [radio], Snare 8 [metallic bonds], Transform 4 [reshape metal; Continuous])**Combat:** Attack +1 (melee), +8 (ranged), +10 (Autofire Blast), Grapple +2, Damage +8 (Blast), +5 (Autofire Blast), +1 (unarmed), Defense +5 (+1 flatfooted), Knockback -9 (-1 without Force Field), Initiative +1**Saving Throws:** Toughness +11 (+3 without Force Field), Fortitude +4, Reflex +3, Will +4**Abilities 30 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 61 + Combat 6 + Saves 5 = Total 132****THE INVISIBLE AGENT****POWER LEVEL 8**

Str 14 | Dex 14 | Con 14 | Int 24 | Wis 16 | Cha 16

Skills: Bluff 6 (+9), Craft (chemical) 10 (+17), Diplomacy 6 (+9), Disable Device 6 (+13), Drive 6 (+8), Escape Artist 6 (+8), Gather Information 6 (+9), Intimidate 6 (+9), Investigate 6 (+13), Knowledge (current events) 10 (+17), Knowledge (physical sciences) 10 (+17), Knowledge (technology) 10 (+17), Language (Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish) 8, Notice 8 (+11), Search 8 (+15), Sense Motive 6 (+9), Stealth 10 (+12)**Feats:** Attack Focus (melee) 4, Chokehold, Contacts, Defensive Roll 4, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 4, Equipment 4, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (punch) 2, Improved Disarm, Improved Throw, Improved Trip, Inventor, Power Attack, Sneak Attack 3, Takedown Attack, Well-Informed**Equipment:** Binoculars, caltrops, camera, concealable microphone, flashlight, gas mask, handcuffs, heavy pistol, knife, multi-tool**Powers:** Device 2 (Invisibility Suit, hard to lose)**Invisibility Suit:** **Invisibility** (all visual senses; Close Range, Selective)**Combat:** Attack +8 (melee), +4 (ranged), Grapple +10, Damage +4 (heavy pistol), +3 (knife), +2 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+2 flatfooted), Knockback -3 (-1 flatfooted), Initiative +2**Saving Throws:** Toughness +6 (+2 flatfooted), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4**Abilities 38 + Skills 32 (128 ranks) + Feats 32 + Powers 8 + Combat 16 + Saves 5 = Total 131**

on *Erde* for three generations—is a tremendous asset to the resistance as it attempts to restore law and order in America.

THE MYSTERIOUS MADAME RADIUM

Samantha Luck had it all: looks, brains—everything but a rewarding career. Tired of her dead-end, thankless secretarial job, Samantha accompanied a group of friends on a long shot, get-rich-quick hunt for radium deposits.

During the trip, a cave-in separated Samantha from her companions and left her trapped inside a chamber full of radium uncovered by the collapse. By the time the land's rightful owners showed up and rescued her, she'd been exposed to the rays of the wonder-element for several hours

THE MAGISTER**POWER LEVEL 8**

Str 16 | Dex 16 | Con 16 | Int 16 | Wis 24 | Cha 18

Skills: Diplomacy 9 (+13), Drive 6 (+9), Gather Information 8 (+12), Intimidate 9 (+13), Investigate 6 (+9), Knowledge (civics) 9 (+12), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+11), Notice 6 (+13), Profession (lawyer) 9 (+16), Sense Motive 8 (+15), Search 6 (+9), Stealth 8 (+11)**Feats:** All-out Attack, Attack Specialization (Strike), Connected, Contacts, Dodge Focus 3, Equipment 2, Fearsome Presence 3, Improved Block, Power Attack, Startle, Takedown Attack, Well-Informed**Equipment:** Roadster (Strength 25, Speed 5, Defense 9, Toughness 7, Large Size, Features: caltrops, oil slick, smokescreen)**Powers:** Device 6 (Magisterial Raiment, easy to lose), **Device 1** (Judge's Robes, hard to lose)**Gavel of Justice:** **Deflect 8** (slow projectiles), **Strike 3** (Extended Reach, Mighty, Thrown)**Prison Bars:** **Snare 8****Judge's Robes:** **Protection 5****Combat:** Attack +5, +7 (Strike), Grapple +8, Damage +6 (Strike), +3 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -4 (-1 without Robes), Initiative +3**Saving Throws:** Toughness +8 (+3 without Robes), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +8**Abilities 46 + Skills 23 (92 ranks) + Feats 17 + Powers 22 + Combat 20 + Saves 3 = Total 131****THE MYSTERIOUS MADAME RADIUM****PL 8**

Str 10 | Dex 18 | Con 18 | Int 14 | Wis 16 | Cha 18

Skills: Bluff 5 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 5 (+7), Notice 5 (+8), Profession (secretary) 5 (+8)**Feats:** Attack Focus (ranged) 3, Attractive, Beginner's Luck, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Taunt**Powers:** Flight 7 (1,000 MPH), **Immunity 10** (radiation effects), **Radiation Control 8** (Dynamic, Alternate Powers [all Dynamic]; **Dazzle 8** [visual], **Dazzle 4** [visual; Sustained Duration], **Drain Constitution 4** [radiation poisoning; Disease, Ranged], **Environmental Control 8** [light, eliminate concealment], **Nauseate 5** [radiation sickness; Ranged; Affects Insubstantial], **Nullify Genetic Powers 8** [genetic damage; Fortitude Save], **Obscure 16** [radio])**Combat:** Attack +5 (melee), +8 (ranged), Grapple +5, Damage +8 (Blast), +0 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -3 (-2 flatfooted), Initiative +4**Saving Throws:** Toughness +7 (+4 flatfooted), Fortitude +5, Reflex +5, Will +4**Abilities 34 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 55 + Combat 20 + Saves 3 = Total 132**

but showed no ill effects. It wasn't until she returned home to Freedom City that she discovered she now possessed the power of radium itself!

Though still stuck in her boring secretarial job, Samantha drew upon the examples of Freedom's other costumed heroes and became the Mysterious Madame Radium, the atom-powered crime-fighter. Sure enough, the life of a costumed adventurer was just the tonic for her formerly dull life, and it was only natural for her to take the next step and join the Freedom Brigade. From then on, boredom became the least of her worries, and Samantha wouldn't have it any other way.

On *Erde*, Madame Radium is the bane of Nazi supers, who are predominantly mutants. Thanks to her ability to switch off their genetically based powers, no fascist supersquad has ever bested the Freedom Brigade in a stand-up fight.

THE SEA HAWK

POWER LEVEL 8

Str 10	Dex 14	Con 14	Int 24	Wis 18	Cha 14
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Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Craft (electronic) 7 (+14), Craft (mechanical) 7 (+14), Disable Device 7 (+14), Drive 6 (+8), Knowledge (technology) 7 (+14), Notice 5 (+9), Pilot 6 (+8), Profession (businesswoman) 6 (+10), Search 5 (+12), Swim 8 (+8)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (ranged) 2, Attractive, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 3, Equipment 16, Grappling Finesse, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Inventor, Stunning Attack

Equipment: Flying Submarine (Strength 40, Speed 5 [50 MPH water and 250 MPH air], Defense 6, Toughness 11 [Impervious 2], Gargantuan Size, Features: hidden compartments, navigation system, remote control, **Blast 8** [torpedoes, Penetrating, Homing], **Blast 7** [machine guns, Autofire], **Concealment 1** [radar], **Immunity 9** [life support])

Powers: **Device 4** (equipment, easy to lose), **Device 3** (costume, hard to lose)

Ray Gun: **Blast 8** (Accurate, Improved Range)

Grappling Line: **Super-Movement 1** (swinging)

Costume: **Flight 4** (100 MPH; Gliding), **Immunity 9** (life support), **Protection 2**

Combat: Attack +4 (melee), +6 (ranged), +8 (Blast), Grapple +6, Damage +8 (Blast), +0 (unarmed), Defense +7 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +7 (+4 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +5

Abilities 34 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 35 + Powers 24 + Combat 16 + Saves 5 = Total 131

THE SEA HAWK

When Katherine Cline inherited her family's shipyards, she gained the financial security to do as she pleased. Running a boardroom didn't appeal to Katherine, who was a thinker and a builder by nature, so she left the day-to-day business deals to some trusted subordinates and went back to building her prototype wonder gadgets.

Watching German U-boats "accidentally" sink ships and take innocent lives angered her, and she vowed to use her great resources and technical gifts to put a stop to their cowardly acts of wanton murder and destruction. She donned her distinctive garb and boarded her experimental flying submarine, with the aim of making the marauding Nazi wolf packs the hunted.

Dubbed "the Sea Hawk" by the press, Katherine's costumed alter ego became the toast of Freedom City, hailed as a hero unafraid to take the fight to the Nazis lurking just off of America's shores. Despite all the positive ink, Katherine soon realized she'd taken on quite a responsibility and welcomed joining the Freedom Brigade for its much-needed assistance.

On *Erde*, the Sea Hawk's flying submarine provides the resistance with badly needed firepower as well as transportation for covert missions behind enemy lines. Her technical know-how is also proving critical in reestablishing America's industries.

DESTROY ALL MONSTERS!

As the *kaiju* fans in your group have already guessed, Gigantosaurus and his monster pals are being mind controlled. The Japanese Empire's control system involves an extensive satellite network and a ground station built in what once seemed like a secure location deep inside Mount Rushmore.

Lilith's instincts are right on the money: the Japanese are prepared to do almost anything to keep the center out of the resistance's hands.

The monster control center is not irreplaceable, but the likelihood of the Empire's scaly WMD's being turned against it makes it practically so. Otherwise, the site would've been nuked from orbit before now.

Heroes attempting to infiltrate the center face the best trained and equipped units the Empire can muster, all prepared to fight to the death. Once they've been dealt with, their reptilian reinforcements show up, in the angry form of Gigantosaurus himself. If nothing else, his presence adds a little extra impetus to the heroes' efforts to dope out what all the machinery around them is for.

If the characters figure it out in time, not only do they save themselves from being crushed into chunky salsa, they have in their hands quite a weapon. It may not be enough to topple the Empire by itself, but the big nuke-proof lizards are quite capable of pushing the Japanese out of North America. With the resistance able to focus on the Reich, *Erde* will be well on its way to freedom.

WE CAN BE HEROES

Dr. Tomorrow's enigmatic farewell to Lilith was in reference to his Earth-Prime ally Lady Liberty (Donna Mason), whose super-powers were bestowed on her by the mystical Spirit of Liberty herself. *Erde*'s Donna Mason was similarly empowered after proving her worthiness to the Spirit... only to be vaporized moments later by the Washington nuclear blast. Doc Morrow hopes the Spirit finds someone else worthy (Lilith, perhaps, or a player's new hero), and helping Lilith recover the original Constitution and Declaration would certainly earn her Liberty's blessing.

"Columbia Shadow" is *Erde*'s manifestation of the Earth-Prime villain Hiroshima Shadow. Its origins are just as mysterious, and it hates all things German as deeply as its counterpart loathes Americana. In the short term, Columbia Shadow would be a valuable and powerful ally for the resistance, but its psychotic ruthlessness is going to be an ever-increasing problem, particularly if the Nazis lose. The resistance wants to build a just world for everyone from the ashes of the old, but for Columbia Shadow it will always be about revenge, with no room for compromise. Nothing less than genocide can satisfy it.

Lantern John is not the Lantern Jack of old, nor is he a direct counterpart of the spirit who haunts Earth-Prime's Freedom City. He is, in fact, the specter of John Wade, briefly known on *Erde* as Johnny Rocket, now a ghost with a guilty conscience. Wade's guilt goes back half a century to the last stand made by Freedom City's mystery men, which ended with many of his colleagues killed and himself captured. Despite the fact he was barely acquainted with the other mystery men, the Nazis brutally tortured Wade for weeks, until he finally broke and told what little he knew about them.

Though he bore little ultimate responsibility for it, the last surviving costumed heroes were caught and killed shortly thereafter, Wade included. His restless spirit remained, bound to the mortal plane and tormented as a self-accused traitor. Only after the Resistance liberated Freedom City did he see a chance for redemption. Wade took on a burden he heard about many times as a child, that of Freedom's lantern-bearer, who must help others in need until his sins are redeemed—in his own eyes, if not God's.

INSIDE THE REICH

The old maxim holds that conquest is easy, but control is hard. Even as the Axis overran *Erde*, the planet's academics knew the fascists couldn't hold it for long, even as the Gestapo hauled them off to prison. They may have been right had it not been for Superior's rise to ultimate power in the Reich. Rather than having to maintain global hegemony under the failing health and sanity of Adolf Hitler, the Reich prospered under his supreme Ultiman intellect. Had it been otherwise, Superior's assassinating Hitler and other top Nazi officials would've been investigated much more closely.



Under Superior's guidance, the Nazi missile and atomic programs bore lethal fruit and secured the Axis victory. It was he who conceived of the cybernetic weapon systems that allow the comparatively small Nazi population to dominate billions without the globe-poisoning displays of atomic might that would otherwise be required. Any other solution the Reich has needed in the last sixty years, be it economic, political, cultural, or other, Superior has provided. Even more incredibly, he's maintained far more secrecy about himself and his activities than ever thought possible.

Even with the wealth of information provided by the Invisible Agent, only part of what the resistance suspects is true. Superior's non-Aryan origins and bitter rivalry with Overshadow are quite real, as are the potentially dire implications for the Reich should the resistance exploit them to their fullest. The so-called "Alternative 3," however, remains a hoax on any planet (unless the Gamemaster *wants* it to be otherwise, of course).

DOWNFALL

While "Alternative 3" is mere paranoid conspiracy theory, Operation *Sturz* is all too real. Conceived by Superior and instituted in the 1950s, *Sturz* is the ultimate "scorched earth" policy, intended to put down a major American rebellion and terrorize all who would emulate it into total submission.

Hovering above each of the 25 largest urban areas in Nazi-occupied North America (Freedom City included) is a 50-megaton hydrogen bomb, supported and concealed by the Thule Society's magic. When and if *Übermensch*'s puppet regime is finally driven off the continent, *Sturz* will be implemented, and the bombs will detonate on Superior's orders. Untold millions will die, large swaths of North America will be rendered uninhabitable for centuries, and the American Resistance will be annihilated.

Learning the full truth about *Sturz* is the most critical, difficult task facing the resistance. The number of people who remember it after half a

century is tiny and made smaller through deliberate assassination. Only a very dedicated group of heroes with the right combination of powers, deductive skills, and daring can hope to uncover the whole story in time. The trail may end far above the city or in the depths of Nifelheim.

The Gamemaster shouldn't make it easy for the players, but the rewards for success are great. Not only do triumphant heroes save countless lives, they wind up with two dozen of the most powerful weapons ever built. While they aren't enough to defeat the Axis powers outright, the bombs bring about a state of mutually assured destruction, nullifying the fascists' main advantage in the struggle. There will still be a war to be won, but at last the forces of freedom will have a fighting chance.

THE WERMACHT

The Nazis' fighting forces are collectively known as the *Wermacht*. Its conventional forces are represented in game terms using the modern military equipment and archetypes in the *M&M* rulebook (like the Soldier archetype, page 229). Statistics for their cybernetic weapons follow.

There are a large number of super-powered agents at the Reich's behest, and their powers run the comic-book gambit. On *Erde*, all those with superhuman abilities get conscripted by the Axis powers, and they are killed mercilessly if they resist. In addition to those developing paranormal abilities through mutations or accidents, the Nazis' advanced eugenics programs create a number of supermen by design. Regardless of their origin, all superhumans are rigorously trained and indoctrinated to fight and die for the Reich.

The Nazis organize superhumans into squad-level detachments and deploy them as needed like any other military asset. The Reich also realizes the propaganda value of such beings, and their exaggerated presence in state-run media is inescapable. This makes the captive populations of *Erde* regard them as even more god-like than they really are.

CYBERNETIC GROUND ATTACK FIGHTER PL 12

Str 34	Dex 14	Con –	Int 10	Wis 6	Cha –
Skills: Notice 16 (+14)					
Feats: Favored Environment (aerial) 12, Improved Initiative, Move-by Action					
Powers: Blast 12 (missiles; Explosion Area; Homing), Blast 6 (auto-cannons; Autofire 2), Communication 6 (radio, 20 mile range; Area; Subtle), Flight 6 (500 MPH), Growth 12 (gargantuan; Continuous; Permanent; Innate), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Protection 5 , Super-Senses 16 (blindsight [radar, extended 4, ranged], direction sense, distance sense, infravision [radius, extended 2], time sense)					
Combat: Attack +0 (includes -4 size), Grapple +24, Damage +12 (Blast), Defense -4 (includes -4 size), Knockback -17, Initiative +6					
Saving Throws: Toughness +11, Fortitude –, Reflex +5, Will –2					
Drawbacks: Disability (vehicular body, -3 points)					
Abilities -20 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 185 + Combat 8 + Saves 3–Drawbacks 3 = Total 181					

CYBERNETIC GROUND ATTACK FIGHTER

The cutting edge of tactical-support aircraft, cybernetic ground attack fighters like the German Messerschmitt Me 619 *Walküre* (Valkyrie) and the Japanese Mitsubishi Ki-2000 combine state-of-the-art vectored-thrust propulsion systems with a devastating array of weaponry capable of engaging both hard and soft ground targets. Against small bands of poorly armed resistance fighters, they are nearly invincible, and they provide considerable fire support in combined operations against more threatening opposition.

A disembodied human brain directly interfaced with all the vehicle's systems cybernetically pilots these craft. This allows a superhuman degree of control over the minutest functions. In addition to no longer requiring rest or nourishment, the disembodied brains are psychologically conditioned so they are incapable of acting out of fear, pity, or pain. While they can operate on their own initiative when required, the disembodied brains cannot disobey their superiors when given a direct order, no matter how foolhardy or suicidal it might be.

In combat, cybernetic fighters rely on strafing attacks with their auto-cannons, using missiles only when confronted with targets under hard cover or truly formidable foes (like superheroes). Their primary role in anti-resistance missions is to keep fleeing targets within range of the tanks, concentrating fire on any straying too far from the armor's path.

CYBERNETIC TANK

Cybernetic tanks like the German *Panzerkampfwagen XXVI Ausf. F "Löwe"* (Lion) and the Japanese Type 63 are designed with "bigger is better" firmly in mind. Literally the size of houses, these tanks

CYBERNETIC TANK

Str 30	Dex 14	Con –	Int 10	Wis 6	Cha –
Skills: Notice 16 (+14)					
Feats: Improved Initiative, Move-by Action					
Powers: Blast 10 (main gun, antipersonnel rounds; Explosion Area; <i>Alternate Power: Blast 10</i> [armor-piercing rounds; Penetrating]), Blast 6 (machineguns; Autofire), Communication 6 (radio, 20 mile range; Area; Subtle), Growth 8 (huge; Continuous; Permanent; Innate), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Obscure 6 (visual, smoke projectors), Protection 12 (Impervious 8), Speed 3 (50 MPH), Super-Senses 17 (darkvision [Extended 3], direction sense, distance sense, extended vision 3, infravision [extended 3], radius 2 [all visual], time sense)					
Combat: Attack +10 (includes -2 due to size), Grapple +28, Damage +10 (Blast, unarmed), Defense -2 (includes -2 due to size), Knockback -12, Initiative +6					
Saving Throws: Toughness +16, Fortitude –, Reflex +5, Will –2					
Drawbacks: Disability (vehicular body, -3 points)					
Abilities -16 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 169 + Combat 24 + Saves 3–Drawbacks 3 = Total 185					

mount massive 155mm main guns, in addition to an armory's worth of machine guns covering every firing arc. Only the most advanced anti-tank measures can breach their hulls, making them more than a match for resistance forces and their meager cache of heavy weapons.

These metal monsters are employed primarily as terror weapons, literally crushing the opposition before them. The machine guns are used as needed, and the main gun is saved for armored vehicles or other stubborn targets (like obvious superhumans).

Like the cybernetic ground attack fighter, disembodied brains specially conditioned for the task guide them. As a result, they possess all the same behavioral characteristics noted in the previous entry.

FURTHER READING

The adventure *Time of Crisis* (in addition to being the perfect introduction to *Erde*) contains game statistics for *der Übermenschen*, a ready-made Nazi super-squad. Its leader, *Übermensch*, is a major player in occupied America, having been named leader of the NSSA, the Reich's puppet regime.

In addition to *Time of Crisis*, the Earth-Prime versions of several *Erde* notables, including Dr. Tomorrow, Superior, Overshadow, Gigantosaur, Doc Otaku, and Crimson Katana, are given full game statistics in the *Freedom City* sourcebook. The numbers remain essentially unchanged across the dimensional divide, so feel free to use them as published for the *Erde* equivalents. This is also true for close copies such as Lantern John, Columbia Shadow, and *Erde*'s aborning Lady Liberty, as well.



CHAPTER 6: FUTURE FREEDOM

HANSON GASPED FOR AIR AS HE RUSHED DOWN THE STREET, HIS LUNGS BURNING WITH EXHAUSTION. BEHIND HIM, PAULIE FOLLOWED, HIS MASK STILL OVER HIS FACE. THE TWO QUICKLY SHOT INTO AN ALLEY OFF CYRUS, ATTEMPTING TO HIDE BEHIND A LARGE TRASH BIN. "H-HOW MUCH DID WE SCAM?" HANSON PANTED, HIS HEART POUNDING FROM THE RUNNING.

PAULIE LIFTED THE BAG AND PULLED OUT A HANDFUL OF CREDIT CARDS. HE GRINNED AT HANSON AND SAID, "THERE'S GOTTA BE AT LEAST TWENTY FLAKKIN' CARDS IN HERE MAN! THEY'RE AT LEAST TWO HUNDRED CREDOS EACH! THAT'S ..." HE STRAYED OFF FOR A SECOND, STRAINING HIS BRAIN TO CALCULATE. FINALLY, HE SAID, "WELL, I DUNNO, BUT THAT'S A LOTTA FLAKKIN' CREDOS!"

"THAT'S THE BUBBLE, MAN," HANSON SAID, HIS BREATH FINALLY CATCHING UP TO HIM. "MAN, THIS WAS A WAY SCHWAY JOB ... GOOD THING THERE WERE NO P.J.S."

"TELL ME ABOUT IT," PAULIE SIGHED. AS HE CHECKED OVER THE CARDS, THE CROOK SAW SOMETHING FLASH IN THE SHADOWS. "HEY! YOU SEE THAT?"

"SEE WHAT?"

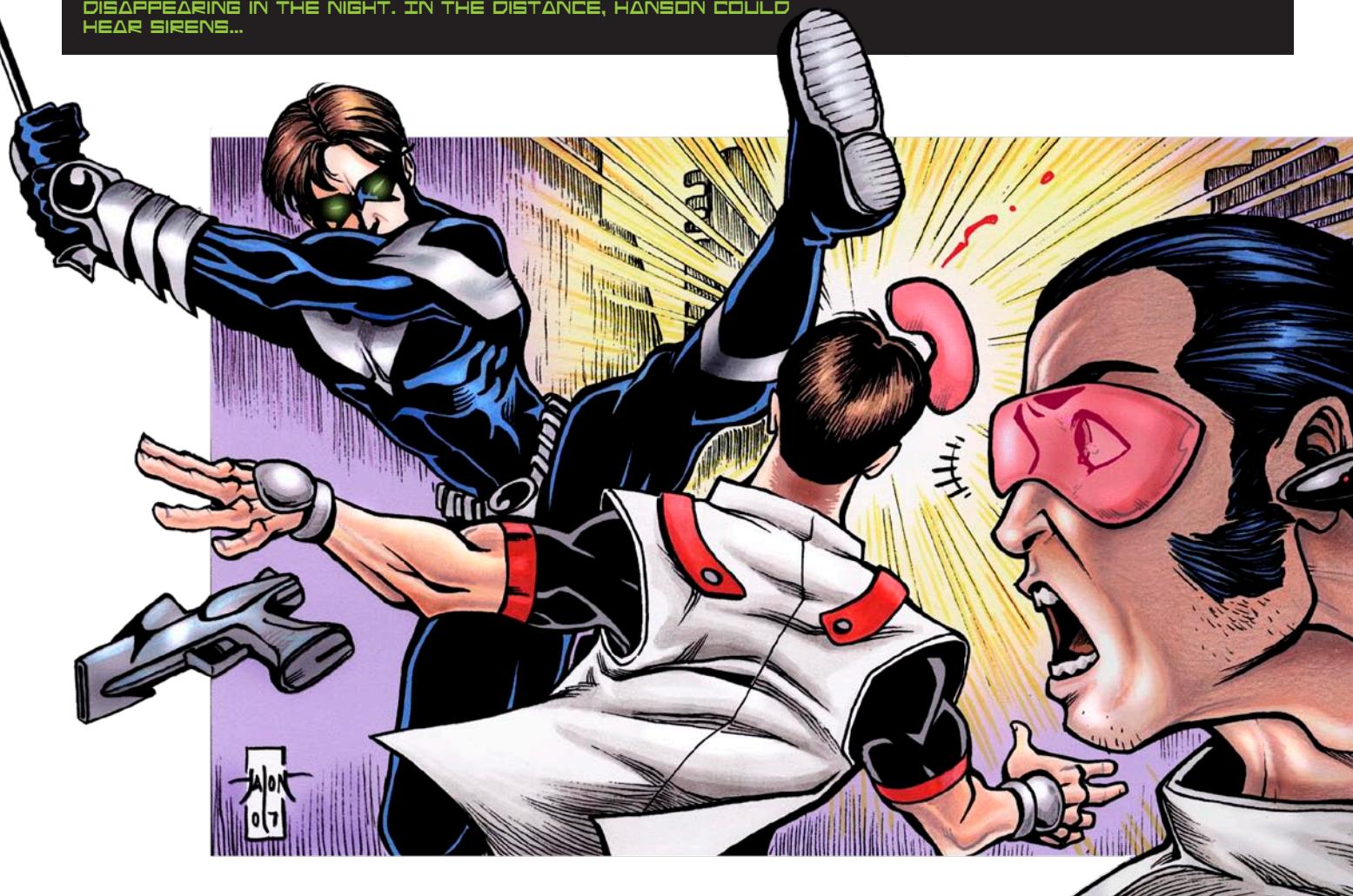
"LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING WAS MOVING BACK THERE."

"DIDN'T THINK THE BANKS DEALT CARDS THIS LATE AT NIGHT," SAID A VOICE FROM THE SHADOWS. HANSON PULLED HIS PISTOL OUT OF HIS POCKET.

"YO MAN ... DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT THIS IS NOT THE SPRAKKIN' TIME TO BE PLAYIN' PJ," HANSON SAID, RANDOMLY AIMING THE GUN INTO THE SHADOWS. WITH A QUIET "CAW" NOISE, THREE BLADED PROJECTILES FLEW OUT OF THE SHADOWS, CATCHING HANSON ACROSS THE HAND AND SHIRT, DISARMING AND PINNING HIM AT THE SAME TIME.

"SPRAK! IT'S THE RAVEN!" PAULIE YELLED, GRABBING THE LOOT AND RUNNING BACK TOWARDS THE STREET. AS HANSON LAID AGAINST THE WALL, THE PROJECTILES PINNING HIM, HE SAW A MAN DIVE FROM THE DARKNESS IN A BLACK AND SILVER COSTUME.

THE MAN STOPPED, BRIEFLY LOOKING AT THE CROOK. HANSON LOOKED AT THE STYLIZED SYMBOL ON HIS CHEST AND THEN UP TO HIS MASKED EYES AS THE HERO SAID, "YOU MUST BE NEW HERE... WELCOME TO FREEDOM CITY. THE COPS WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY." THE HERO THEN LEAPED INTO THE SKY, DISAPPEARING IN THE NIGHT. IN THE DISTANCE, HANSON COULD HEAR SIRENS...



BEYOND THE PRESENT

In the early 21st century, there was a new golden age of heroism, but those times were never meant to last. After Mayor O'Connor left office, former industrialist Jonathan Grant took the reins of the city and began making life difficult again for costumed heroes. In just a few short years, the heroes of Freedom City were on the verge of retirement; the laws regarding their roles had become too stringent for them to do their job. The Freedom League was forced to withdraw its earthbound base from the city, closing down Freedom Hall. The decision was hotly contested, and Raven chose to quit the team, saying the League had "abandoned" Freedom City by bowing to another corrupt administration.

Raven later founded the team known as the Renegades, comprised of Sonic, Seven, Mutator, Gloom, and Lodestone, which operated outside the law. Another group, calling itself the Redeemers, was made up of former criminals attempting to go straight; they were eventually revealed as frauds, a plot devised by Labyrinth to lull the city into a false sense of trust. On the Renegades' last mission, they revealed the hoax and stopped the villains. But, in the bloody aftermath, Raven disbanded the team and disappeared into the night.

The year is 2040, and Freedom City needs its heroes more than ever.

AEGIS & SHADOW

During 2010, suspicion had been raised about the "War on SHADOW" and the lack of effective methods of stopping them. During this time, newly christened director Elizabeth Hunter and her second in com-

mand, Stewart Bonham, suspected some of Overshadow's agents had infiltrated the government, but they lacked evidence. Throughout the year, they formed a special team of trusted investigators to ferret out SHADOW agents and bring them to justice. Unfortunately, all it brought them was up on charges. Knowing someone had turned the government against them, Hunter used the last of her pull to promote Bonham to director of AEGIS. Granting her this final request, a tribunal court-martialed her and forced her to resign.

In his time as director, Bonham found he was under constant observation by various agents, preventing him from investigating anything about the government. Meanwhile, outside of the agency, Hunter found an ally in the hero Foreshadow, who had had a vision about her. Together, they worked to uncover what they could and, by 2025, discovered four US senators were in league with SHADOW. Gathering the evidence they needed, they slipped the information to Bonham. Within three months, the senators were brought up on charges and imprisoned for treason. Shortly thereafter, Hunter was re-instituted as director of AEGIS, and Foreshadow came onboard as a freelance operative.

But this wasn't the end of SHADOW. While AEGIS reveled in their victory, Overshadow recouped his losses and planned a new major offensive. However, there was dissent within the ranks, and SHADOW split into two distinct camps: one following Overshadow, the other led by Dominic Ashe, both vying for control over all of SHADOW. During "The SHADOW War," the factions spent five years battling not only against each other, but AEGIS and UNISON as well. In the end, after the apparent death of both Overshadow and Ashe, Hilda Reinholdt took the leadership of both factions, bringing them together once again to form one unified SHADOW.

In late 2037, Hilda led SHADOW on a successful raid against Freedom City's AEGIS headquarters, causing massive damage and casualties. If it wasn't for the timely arrival of the Freedom League, the attack may have claimed many more victims. Even though they were victorious, celebrations were cut short when Overshadow returned to SHADOW. He had somehow managed to elude death once again and seized control of the organization.



DIRECTOR MALCOLM FILLION

PL 8

Str 15 | Dex 16 | Con 16 | Int 15 | Wis 15 | Cha 16

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+9), Bluff 6 (+9), Climb 4 (+6), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Drive 4 (+7), Gather Information 4 (+7), Intimidate 6 (+9), Investigate 8 (+10), Knowledge (civics) 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+10), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+10), Languages 6 (Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish), Medicine 2 (+4), Notice 6 (+8), Pilot 6 (+9), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 8 (+10), Stealth 6 (+9), Survival 4 (+6)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Benefit 6 (AEGIS Director), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 3, Diehard, Equipment 6, Favored Opponent (Agents of SHADOW), Fearless, Improved Critical (blaster pistol), Inspire, Leadership, Precise Shot, Quick Draw 2, Stunning Attack, Teamwork 2, Well-Informed
Equipment: Blaster pistol (+5 damage), body armor (+2 Toughness), handcuffs, commlink, multi-tool, investigator's kit, comp-board, additional equipment as needed.

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +10, Damage +2 (unarmed), +5 (blaster), Defense +8 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +8 (+6 without armor or flat-footed, +3 without both), Fortitude +6, Reflex +5, Will +6

Abilities 33 + Skills 26 (104 ranks) + Feats 32 + Powers 0 + Combat 32 + Saves 9 = Total 132

During the raid on the AEGIS office, Director Hunter, who had been working out of the Freedom City branch, was gravely injured, and a new director had to be recruited to take over her duties. After Bonham turned them down, they brought in a field commander named Malcolm Fillion to take the spot. A bit of a cowboy at heart, Fillion was a much more pro-active sort, assembling strike teams and hitting not only SHADOW bases, but any agency that was considered a threat to the United States. After learning that Hunter's injuries were serious enough to keep her out of active duty, Fillion was officially sworn in as the director and serves that role to this very day.

SHADOW, on the other hand, hasn't been laying low the last few years. Many people within law enforcement believe they're biding their time, waiting to strike when the moment is right. This lull in activity has made Director Fillion a bit antsy to get at SHADOW so he can put a stop to their operations once and for all.

THE CLAREMONT ACADEMY

All that's left of Claremont Academy is a degraded fraction of that prestigious school. During the mid-2020s, the Crime League targeted the school as a way to goad their heroic counterparts into battle, and it was subsequently demolished by the fracas that ensued. Since then, the school has been opened and closed several times, partially due to funding and partially due to a lack of staff. It seemed that the last time it closed, in 2045, it would be closed for good.

A few years later, however, the school reopened under the administration of Lemar Philips, formerly known as the hero Sonic. Tired of seeing kids with powers getting mixed up with the wrong people, Philips hounded the government, as well as a few old contacts, to give the former training grounds grants and funding for a better chance of survival. Within a few months, the school was ready to be reopened and began to recruit a new generation of heroes. A few months later, after hiring on some retired heroes to work as professors, the Academy was truly open for business once more.

Since that time, the school has gained additional publicity after two of its graduates, Spriggan and Sprite, were accepted into the new Freedom League. With this success at his back, Philips has started recruiting more kids from around the world, hoping one day that he might be the kind of mentor he looked up to in his youth.

THE FREEDOM LEAGUE

With every age there seems to be a new Freedom League, and the Freedom League of this age is no different. During the early decade of the 21st century, the League had seemed to reach a peak in both popularity and deeds. By the end of the second decade, the membership had changed, with many of the Claremont graduates replacing the old guard. The only members to stay on were Captain Thunder and Pseudo, both of whom took it upon them to forge a new League.

Recruiting heavily from Claremont graduates, the newer team was composed of Thunder, Pseudo, Megastar, Seven, and a newcomer called Pitch. Together, they continued the fight, and they managed to work well together as a team for a few years. However, unbeknownst to the rest of the team, Pitch was actually a mole for the Crime League and had powers given to him by Dr. Simian. Allowing Pitch to stay with the League for a few years, the criminals exposed their plan in the mid-2020s, laying siege to the Claremont Academy in hopes of luring the heroes out. During the battle, Stratos, tired of the Freedom League consistently beating them, worked with Dr. Simian to make their teammate, Hiroshima Shadow, into the ultimate weapon. As the two Leagues confronted each other, it became apparent what the villains' plans were and, in an act that almost echoed that of Centurion, Captain Thunder

FUTURE SLANG

Like any good age, there are various words here and there that sneak into everyday vocabulary, especially from the lingo of young people. Following is a small sampling of words that can be used to give your series a more futuristic feel:

bubble: A term of acceptance in reference to events. "Yeah, that club may be bubblin'"

flak: Profanity, used anywhere in a sentence. "What the flak are you doin'!"

juice: Cool, fast. "That spin is the juice!"

PJ: Superbeing, commonly used for superheroes. "Why you comin' down on me, PJ? Ain't my fault!"

razor: Cool, Exciting. "Yo, that show was razor tonight!"

schway: Cool, Mellow; often combined with "way". "I suppose that could be way schway."

sprak: A Term of dissatisfaction. "You gotta be sprakkin' me!"

twizzlin': Cool, Funny; Often combined with totally. "Tell him that joke you told me that was totally twizzlin'!"

vid: Video. Commonly used before a type of media. *Vid-Feed*, *Vid-Show*, *Vid-Rag*.

sacrificed himself to save those who were close to him. Beaten once again, the Crime League disbanded, figuring they were better off on their own. With the villains heading into every direction and reeling from the events that had happened, the Freedom League followed in suit, deciding the team had had their last adventure.

But, that wasn't the last the world heard of the Freedom League. In early 2031, an alien being known as the Overseer tried to destroy the Earth. Knowing he couldn't defeat this menace on his own, Bolt, now calling himself Captain Thunder, recruited a team of heroes to aid him. After a long battle, the heroes eventually thwarted the Overseer and saved the world. Seeing the good they did, Captain Thunder decided that the world needed a Freedom League and recruited some of the members from the gathering of heroes that had helped to save the world. Finally, by the summer of 2031, a new League had formed, composed of Captain Thunder, Star Knight, Pseudo, Bowman, Sonic, and Burnout. Together, the team reinstated Freedom Hall and redesigned it to give it a more modern look.

By the early 40s, many heroes had passed through the League's membership. Pseudo retired to space in the later 30s, while Sonic lost his powers in 2037 when battling an updated Argo. To replace Sonic and Pseudo, Moon-Son was recruited into the team, as well as a new Bowman and Arrow. After a space mission in 2041, the League returned to Earth without Bowman or Arrow, both of whom volunteered to stay and help an alien civilization rebuild after an attack by Blackstar. Shortly after their return, the Star Knight moved to reserve status, as his duties required him elsewhere, and Burnout retired, leaving only Captain Thunder and Moon-Son. For the next few years, the duo decided to have a rotating membership, offering on-call memberships to heroes that they came across. This lasted until a near-fatal encounter almost destroyed Captain Thunder. Racing to his rescue, Moon-Son was able to save the hero by placing him in a former suit of Star Knight armor that he redesigned as a containment suit.

After recovering from his injuries, Captain Thunder changed his name to Storm Knight and went on to form the Freedom League of today. Contacting Lemar Philips, he recruited a pair of young heroes named Spriggan and Sprite into the League, as well as a new Patriot, a clone of the original hero. With an open call, they attracted the legacy heroines Centuria and Jonni Rocket. To finalize the team, they enlisted the new Scarab as well. Since the team's reformation, they've successfully battled such threats as a new Crime League, a new Argo, and SHADOW.

DEREK GRANT**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 13	Dex 15	Con 14	Int 14	Wis 17	Cha 17
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Skills: Bluff 8 (+11), Diplomacy 8 (+11), Gather Information 8 (+11), Intimidate 4 (+7), Knowledge (business) 10 (+12), Knowledge (civics) 6 (+8), Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+6), Sense Motive 8 (+11)

Feats: Assessment, Attractive, Benefit 5 (wealth), Connected, Contacts, Distract (Bluff), Minions 8, Taunt, Well-Informed

Power: Emotion Control 6

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +8

Abilities 30 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 12 + Combat 24 + Saves 9 = 109

Then, in 2020, breakthroughs were made in genetics and chemistry, allowing advanced medical care to be offered to people with handicaps such as blindness and deafness. With this science, most genetic diseases and defects could be cured, permitting people to live normal lives. But, as with any breakthrough, there existed corporations that wanted to keep the treatments out of the hospitals and offer them only to paying customers. Thus began what would be called the "CorpWar of 2021." Many of the larger corporations fell in the next five years, losing money on investments during the war and being devoured by larger companies interested in their work. Coming to an uneasy truce in 2028, the CorpWar ended, leaving only a few handfuls of mega-companies with enough capital left to survive.

With the threat of consistent hostile takeovers in the past, the companies turned towards practical uses for their acquired ideas. In the early 2030s, various non-lethal weapons were tested in law-enforcement and security. Though stun batons and shock gloves were all the rave in the mid-30s, they quickly found their way to the commercial market and were considered not feasible for law enforcement. Instead, better firearms were developed with lighter technology and better ammo storage, leaving the non-lethal weapons for home security.

Work on a more effective vehicle also began, but rather than using gasoline, companies began using a fueling gel that allowed for cleaner engines and longer mileage between refueling. Eventually, ground vehicles would evolve into a low-hovering, repulsor-based carriage that allowed for safer travel and less road maintenance. By the late 2040s, there were a few companies that pushed the envelope even further, creating spin-tech that allows small vehicles equivalent to motorcycles to have a greater altitude, soaring several stories above the ground. Though many consider these bikes unsafe, they miraculously managed to pass vehicular regulations. Rumor has it that currency passed hands to make various officials look the other way, but no one's been able to prove that thus far.

Perhaps the most significant advancement would have to be in the computer field. Where monitors and bulky towers were once the mainstay of many an office, there now exists holo-screens and comp-boards. Tired of consistently having to replace monitors, various companies worked to create something that would produce its own monitor holographically, as well as be more portable than a laptop. After twenty years of testing, they released the first comp-board with holo-screen in 2041, and by 2047, every home and office was using them. In addition to the smaller systems, there were also advances in networking that allowed a higher bandwidth of wireless internet. So much so, actually, that the internet quickly became the worldnet, allowing users from all over the world to log in quickly and affordably.

GRANT INTERNATIONAL

Of all the corporations in the world, Grant International is considered one of the biggest. Originally known as Grant Conglomerates, the company was taken international by Sarah Grant, when she inherited the company from her father after his death. It was Sarah's vision that led Grant International through the CorpWar of 2021 and into the present day. Nevertheless, like her father before her, time has grown on her, and she's had to hand many of her former duties to her son, Derek, who seems to have a good grasp of the business and has taken on the Grant last name for consistency. Business knack isn't the only gift he's gained from his mother, though. Being a secondary mutant, he's also gained abilities similar to his mother.

However, unknown to his mother, Derek has studied up on his grandfather's practices and has taken them to heart. Away from his mother's watchful eye, the young man has begun his schemes of power and wealth, targeting many heroes in Freedom City. In his mind, it's the only way to carry on his grandfather's traditions.

FUTURE TECHNOLOGY

While Freedom City's super-population fluctuated over the years, so did their technology. Thanks to many alien and super-genius, Freedom City was one of the first cities to experience a technology boom in early 2011. Experiments began to make vehicles more reliable and environmentally safe, to allow computers to become even more interactive, and for small, scientific colonies to form on the surfaces of the Moon and Mars.

FUTURE FREEDOM EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS	DAMAGE	Critical	Descriptor	Size	Equipment Cost	
Shock Gloves	+3	19-20	Electricity	Small	5	
Stun Baton	Stun 8	None	Energy	Small	10	
VEHICLES	Strength	Speed	Defense	Toughness	Size	EP/PP Cost
Grav-Bike	15	5	10	10	Medium	12/3
Grav-Car	30	5	9	10	Large	11/3
Grav-Rail	50	5	8	12	Huge	16/4
Spin Cycle	15	5	10	10	Medium	12/3
COMPUTERS	Size	Cost				
Comp-Board	Tiny	1				

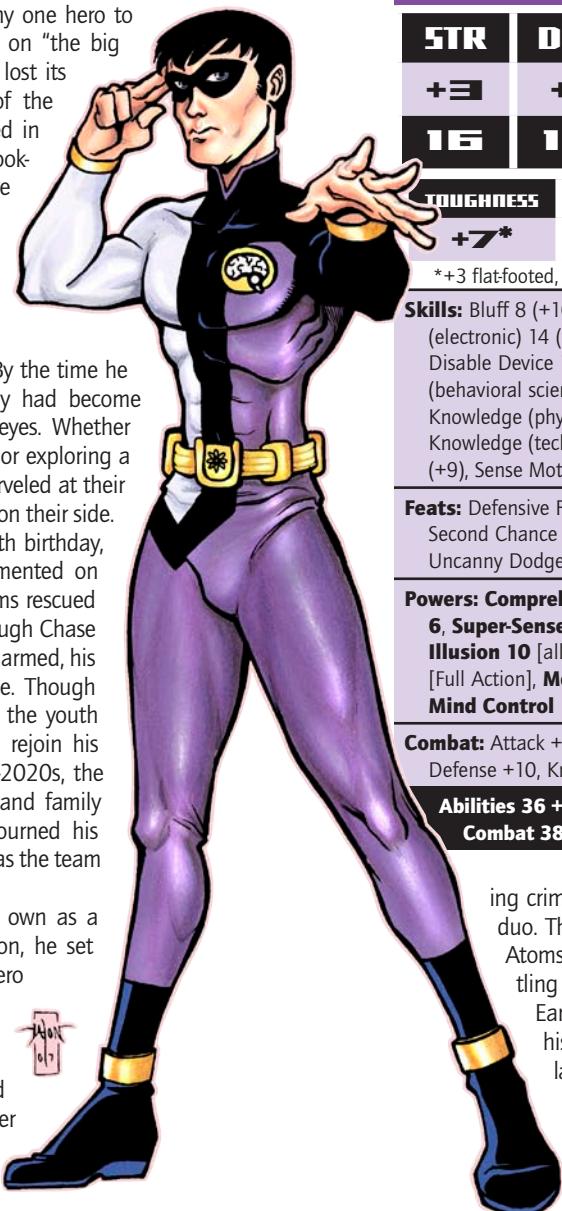
THE FUTURE FREEDOM LEAGUE

Although its roster has changed (many times), the mission of the Freedom League remains largely the same: safeguarding the world from threats too great for any one hero to handle. In the process of focusing on "the big picture," some say the League has lost its appreciation and understanding of the struggles of "the little guy," isolated in their orbital headquarters, always looking outward rather than inwards. The League might say, if they *don't* look at the big picture, who will?

MOON-SON

Chase Atom lived the life most kids dream of... the life of a superhero. By the time he hit his mid-teens, the Atom Family had become super-hero nobility in the media's eyes. Whether it was the latest supervillain battle or exploring a strange alien artifact, the world marveled at their adventures. But time wasn't always on their side. Within a few months of his sixteenth birthday, Chase was kidnapped and experimented on by Moon-Son I. The rest of the Atoms rescued the teen, but at a horrible cost. Though Chase was safe and seemed physically unharmed, his body was frozen at his current age. Though some would see this as a setback, the youth took it in stride and was quick to rejoin his family in their exploits. In the mid-2020s, the Atoms lost their longtime advisor and family member Dr. Atom. The planet mourned his death with the family and watched as the team slowly began to part.

Chase decided to go off on his own as a super-hero. Calling himself Moon-Son, he set out to prove that he could be a hero without his siblings. During his first outing, the youth encountered another hero that was about his age, former Next-Gen member and current Freedom Leaguer, Ray Gardner Jr., alias Bolt. The two formed a fast friendship and began fight-



MOON-SON

POWER LEVEL 15

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+3	+1	+3	+4	+4	+2
16	13	16	18	18	15
TOUGHNESS		FORTITUDE		REFLEX	
+7*		+7		+6	
+14**					

*+3 flat-footed, **+20 vs. mental attacks

Skills: Bluff 8 (+10), Computers 10 (+14), Concentration 14 (+18), Craft (electronic) 14 (+18), Craft (mechanical) 14 (+18), Diplomacy 8 (+10), Disable Device 10 (+14), Drive 4 (+5), Handle Animal 6 (+8), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 8 (+12), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+12), Knowledge (physical sciences) 12 (+16), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+10), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+16), Medicine 4 (+8), Notice 8 (+12), Pilot 8 (+9), Sense Motive 14 (+18), Stealth 8 (+9), Swim 4 (+7)

Feats: Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 2, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Inventor, Second Chance (Will saves vs. Mind Control), Taunt, Ultimate Will Save, Uncanny Dodge (mental)

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Immunity 1** (aging), **Mind Shield 6**, **Super-Senses 1** (mental awareness), **Telepathy 15** (Alternate Powers: **Illusion 10** [all senses, Phantasms], **Mental Blast 7**, **Mental Blast 10** [Full Action], **Mental Transform 10** [personality; Continuous; Will Save], **Mind Control 15**)

Combat: Attack +9, Grapple +12, Damage +3 (unarmed), +7 (Mental Blast), Defense +10, Knockback -3, Initiative +5

Abilities 36 + Skills 45 (180 ranks) + Feats 13 + Powers 47 +
Combat 38 + Saves 19 = Total 198

ing crime together, gaining a reputation for being a formidable duo. Then, Omega returned with a world-threatening plot. The Atoms joined together once again to take on their old foe, battling him on an experimental warp-gate platform above the Earth. In the end, Chase had to rewire the gate and, while his siblings kept Omega busy, sent the group of them into lands unknown, leaving Moon-Son by himself.

With that show of heroism, and a recommendation from Bolt, Moon-Son was inducted into the Freedom League, taking Pseudo's role when the alien retired to explore the stars. Since then, he's proved to be an invaluable

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE ATOMS?

While the actual fate of the remaining Atoms is left for the Gamemaster to decide. Possible outcomes are:

- After the gate activated, the remaining Atoms and their foe, Omega, were sent through space to an unknown quadrant of the galaxy (or perhaps a different one). Since then, they've been attempting to get home, while also battling their nemesis.
- With a burst of light, the remaining Atoms and their foe were transported to another Earth much like their own. Perhaps they're even in a mirror of our own world, battling evil versions of themselves.
- With a "pop," the Atoms were sent through time with no sign of their foe. Perhaps they were sent into the distant future, joining other heroes in a new era of justice (could be what the keepers of the Goodman Building are waiting for in the 26th century; see **Chapter 7**). Or perhaps, they were sent to the distant past and need to find their way home.

CENTURIA**POWER LEVEL 13**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+15	+2	+5	+2	+3	+3
40	15	20	15	16	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+15	+10	+5	+7		

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Computers 4 (+6), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Drive 2 (+4), Gather Information 4 (+7), Intimidate 4 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 6 (+8), Knowledge (pop culture) 4 (+6), Language 1 (Latin), Medicine 2 (+5), Notice 7 (+10), Pilot 2 (+4), Search 4 (+6)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Attractive, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Quick Change, Teamwork

Powers: Flight 10, Immunity 9 (life support), Protection 10 (Impervious), Super-

Senses 6 (ultravision, ultra-hearing, X-ray vision), **Super-Strength 10** (heavy load: 3,200 tons; Bracing*, Countering Punch*, Groundstrike, Shockwave, Super-Breath, Thunderclap) *from *Ultimate Power*

Combat: Attack +11 (melee), +9 (ranged), Grapple +36, Damage +1, Defense +11 (+6 flat-footed), Knockback -12, Initiative +2

Abilities 62 + Skills 12 (48 ranks) +

Feats 10 + Powers 81 + Combat 40 +
Saves 12 = Total 217

ally, saving various members of the team, including his friend Ray (see Storm Knight), and he has even been elected chairperson a few times (though he's turned it down every time).

Moon-Son has become a bit detached in his "older" years.

Between being stuck in a young body and losing his siblings, Chase throws himself into his work, often formulating plans or testing theorems rather than interacting with his fellow teammates. His only comfort these days is a small, robotic monkey that he's named COSMO-2 after his old friend that disappeared during one of their many adventures.

In combat, Moon-Son observes the playing field, often offering tactical advice via Telepathy to his teammates. If confronted, he either uses one of his many gadgets or attempts to mentally trick his opponent. Though he doesn't often find them, when confronting an opponent that he can match wits with, Chase will often concentrate his energies on them as if playing a super-powered chess game. This has gotten him some flak from his teammates in the past and has almost cost him his place on the team.

CENTURIA

Arriving in Freedom City during a freak lightning storm, the young woman who calls herself Centuria claimed to be Centurion's daughter from an alternate Earth. Taken in

by the Freedom League, she was examined both mentally and physically to ensure she was telling the truth. During her testing, she explained that her father, the Centurion of her world, had sent her across the dimensional rift because of something called the Terminus invading her home. Hoping that she may find help, the Leaguers explained what had happened when the Terminus invaded their world and offered what help they could.

Alas, it was too late. Using a dimensional viewer that Daedalus made, they peered into what was once her home dimension and found nothing but a void. Grieving, she found a home with Lady Liberty and was raised as her own daughter, attending school at the Claremont Academy and making friends with many students there.

Upon her graduation, Centuria took on the role that her father had filled, defending the world against whatever threatened it. For a time, she did much of her work solo, teaming only occasionally with Raven, with whom she'd formed a fast friendship. It was not long before she came to work more and more with the League. By the time many of the former Leaguers retired, she'd become a fairly permanent ally of the team, so it was no surprise when Storm Knight offered her full-time membership with the team.

Centuria is much like her father, often putting others' needs before her own. Because of this, she doesn't have much of a social life beyond her heroic persona, even though she does have a few secret identities set up. In many ways, she's attempting to fill the void that this world's Centurion left when he passed away, and she tries to inspire others to join her.

In combat, Centuria tends to take the defensive until she knows that innocents are cleared from the area. After that, she tries to wrap up the combat in as fast and least damaging a way as possible. She is usually the first person that Moon-Son directs tactics to, and she has often served as point when Storm Knight isn't able to.

JONNI ROCKET

Exasperated with Johnny Rocket's timely rescues, Dr. Simian decided it was time that he had his own speedster to run interference for him. Kidnapping some of the brightest geneticists, he began to hatch his scheme by luring Rocket into a trap. Knowing full well that the speedster would get away anyway, Simian held him just long enough to get a DNA sample and then "allowed" the hero to escape. Taking the DNA, he managed to clone a "child" of Johnny Rocket ... a young woman who would inherit his powers, much like Johnny had his grandfather's abilities. Mockingly naming her "Jonnii Rocket," Simian began devising a way that he could use her against the hero.

Fortunately, Johnny Rocket found out what Simian was up to and freed the clone before the villain could corrupt her. Not knowing what to do with the child, he decided to raise her himself. Keeping the name Jonni Rocket, she was eventually placed within the Claremont Academy and educated in the use of her powers as well as general studies. At age seventeen, she took on a similar costume to that of her "father" and decided to try and carry on the Rocket legacy, joining the Next-Gen and, eventually, The Freedom League.

Jonnii is a bit on the cocky side, opting many times to act rather than think. She enjoys time with her teammates, but she tends to be a bit of a grandstander. Often, she can be seen schmoozing with celebrities worldwide, and she doesn't miss a red carpet opening if



JONNI ROCKET**POWER LEVEL 10**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+4	+2	+0	+1	+3
11	18	15	11	12	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+6*	+5	+10	+5		

*+2 flat-footed

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Bluff 4 (+7), Computers 2 (+2), Disable Device 4 (+4), Drive 4 (+8), Gather Information 4 (+7), Knowledge (pop culture) 6 (+6), Notice 4 (+5), Search 4 (+4), Stealth 4 (+8)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 3, Attractive, Defensive Attack, Distract, Elusive Target, Fast Overrun, Grappling Finesse, Improved Disarm, Move-by Action, Quick Change 2, Redirect, Second Chance (Reflex Save vs. area attacks), Set-Up, Takedown Attack, Taunt, Uncanny Dodge 2 (visual)

Powers: Enhanced Defense 6, Enhanced Defensive Roll 4, **Regeneration 12** (Bruised/Unconscious, 1/round; Injured/Staggered, 1/round; Disabled, 1/hour), **Super-Speed 10** (10,000 MPH, *Alternate Powers:* Insubstantial 4, Rapid Attack, Sonic Boom, Spin Attack, Strike 10, Takeaway)

Combat: Attack +10 (melee), +7 (ranged), Grapple +10, Damage +10 (strike), Defense +14 (+7 flat-footed), Knockback -3, Initiative +44

Abilities 23 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 78 + Combat 30 + Saves 13 = Total 174

she can help it. It's this kind of attitude that's gotten her into trouble with both the team and her "father," Johnny Rocket.

In combat, she's usually the first one in and usually tries to unbalance her foe by taunting him. Though an effective combatant, she enjoys setting up her opponents for someone like Storm Knight or Spriggan to take down.

PATRIOT

Mark Simmons was a pretty normal kid. He grew up in Freedom City's north end and enjoyed a healthy social life. His parents were upper middle class and worked in accounting and home decorating. In high school, he played football and, upon graduation, he received a full scholarship to a school near Washington D.C. Unknown to Mark, this life that he knew was a sham.

In 2036, the hero known as Patriot suffered a massive setback when Talos succeeded in overriding his programming. Though the Freedom League managed to stop the rampaging android, the country decided that it needed to shut down the project and look at other options. That's when the idea of a clone was conceived. Hiring some of best scientists in the nation, Operation: Lazarus was instituted using DNA that the government had from the original Patriot. Within a year, they had a live clone of Jack

**PATRIOT****POWER LEVEL 10**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4/+7	+3	+3	+2	+3	+3
18/25	16	16	15	17	17
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+10*	+9	+9	+8		

*+3 Defensive Roll, +4 armored costume

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+11), Climb 8 (+15), Computers 4 (+6), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Disable Device 4 (+6), Drive 6 (+9), Gather Information 6 (+9), Intimidate 6 (+9), Investigate 8 (+10), Knowledge (civics) 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+10), Knowledge (history) 4 (+6), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+10), Languages 3 (French, Japanese, Spanish), Medicine 3 (+6), Notice 8 (+11), Pilot 4 (+7), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 6 (+9), Stealth 8 (+11), Survival 6 (+9), Swim 4 (+11)

Feats: All-out Attack, Assessment, Attack Focus (melee), Benefit (AEGIS rank) 3, Blind-Fight, Chokehold, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Diehard, Elusive Target, Endurance, Equipment 2, Favored Opponent (SHADOW), Fearless, Improved Block, Improved Critical (unarmed), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Power Attack, Sneak Attack, Takedown Attack 2, Teamwork 2, Weapon Bind

Equipment: Armored costume (+4 Toughness), billy club (+2 Damage), plus 4 points in other equipment as needed

Powers: Device 2 (Mask, hard to lose), Enhanced Strength 7, Immunity 2 (disease, poison), Leaping 2, Mind Shield 5, **Regeneration 12** (Bruised/Unconscious, 1 round; Injured/Staggered, 1/round; Disabled 1/hour), **Speed 1**, **Super-Senses 1** (danger sense), **Super-Strength 1** (heavy load: 1,600 lbs.)

Mask: **Sensory Shield 5** (visual), **Super-Senses 5** (communication link to AEGIS Command, infravision, low-light vision, radio, ultravision)

Combat: Attack +9 (melee), +8 (ranged), Grapple +17, Damage +7 (unarmed), +9 (billy club), Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -8, Initiative +7

Abilities 39 + Skills 31 (124 ranks) + Feats 33 + Powers 40 + Combat 34 + Saves 17 = Total 192

Simmons. Naming him Mark, AEGIS was put in charge of protecting the child until he was ready. They assigned two agents to play his parents and make sure that he had everything he'd need or want. By the time high school was over for him, the agency deemed him ready and brought him in for training.

The truth hurt at first for Mark, but it didn't last. During the training, it was explained that the ruse was necessary to keep him safe, so the world would have a Patriot. Finally understanding, he entered into a rigorous training program, testing both his mind and body. By the time that the new Freedom League was conceived, Mark was ready for action. Donning a modified costume, he joined the team and has been with them since, adopting many of them as a new family and working as deputy field leader.

SCARAB**POWER LEVEL 10**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+3	+3	+1	+5	+3
14	16	16	12	20	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+11	+6	+6	+8*		

*+14 vs. mental attacks

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+9), Bluff 4 (+7), Climb 4 (+6), Concentration 6 (+11), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+9), Search 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+7)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Defensive Attack, Elusive Target, Fearless, Jack-of-All-Trades, Takedown Attack, Taunt

Powers: Comprehend 2 (languages; Linked to Telepathy), Flight 3 (50 MPH), Mind Shield 6, Protection 8, Super-Senses 1 (mental awareness), Telekinesis 10 (Alternate Power: Blast 10), Telepathy 10 (Alternate Power: Mental Blast 5)

Combat: Attack +6 (melee), +10 (ranged), Grapple +8, Damage +2 (unarmed), +10 (blast), Defense +9, Knockback -5, Initiative +3

Abilities 34 + Skills 10 (40 ranks)

+ Feats 10 + Powers 67 +

Combat 30 + Saves 9 = Total 160

Mark is a nice guy. In his spare time, he's spent many days volunteering at hospitals or veterans' events, listening and telling stories. Though he's never served active duty in any of the armed forces, he is a member of AEGIS and often works on missions for them in-between working with the League.

In combat, Patriot listens for tactics and then attempts to execute any orders he's given. In the rare cases that Storm Knight isn't on the field, the team turns to Patriot for instructions, taking his role as deputy field leader to heart. His goals are simple when out on the field ... bring everyone home okay, and make sure the mission is complete.

SCARAB

Marvin Perez was a fairly normal teenager. He spent many days dreading homework and enjoying hanging with his friends. Well, he would have, if he'd had any. His parents had just moved to Freedom City and, unlike his former home, he'd not been able to make friends all that well. In fact, he'd made more enemies in the first week at Joseph Clark High than he'd ever had. The only things that he could find solace in were the comics he had and his pet dog, Snapes.



One day, after school, Marvin was walking home and stumbled into a group of jocks from his school. Attempting to pass by, he noticed that they were passing around some hypo-guns. Unfortunately, one of the athletes noticed him gawking and ratted him out. Beaten and barely able to move, he managed to make his way into an alley nearby and passed out against the wall.

After what seemed to be a few hours, Marvin awoke to see a man in a trench coat and hat standing across from him. He explained that he understood what the youth had been going through and offered him a chance to make things right. Marvin listened and watched as the man handed him a gold amulet that looked like some kind of beetle. Taking it, the youth joked that he could flash it and make everyone else like him. That's when he realized he was talking to himself.

Feeling a bit creeped out, and still sore, he went home and quickly fell asleep, placing the amulet on his nightstand. During the night, he had dreams of Ancient Egypt and a hero clad in red and gold. Waking, he discovered that he was wearing some kind of costume, almost like the one he had dreamed about. Realizing what this potentially meant, Marvin began testing his abilities in private and found that his costume could be restructured to suit his style. He discovered that the amulet bestowed other powers on him too.

Calling himself the Scarab, Marvin began fighting crime on the streets of Freedom City, targeting criminals that preyed on high school kids at first, and then quickly expanding into supervillains. Within a few months, the Scarab was all over the newsvids and telefeeds with blurry images of a figure in red and gold. The news even attracted the attention of the Freedom League, who were called in to investigate the new hero and, after seeing him in battle against a new and improved Dr. Otaku, offered him a spot in their esteemed organization. Scarab is the League's youngest member and, though he finds it a bit intimidating at times, he has joined them in a part-time capacity while he attends school and tries to keep something of a normal life.

Marvin is a fun-loving guy. He enjoys his role on the team, although he occasionally gets a bit overwhelmed with the idea of being in the League. While he's gained some popularity due to his current status, he hasn't forgotten where he's from or the people that he's been protecting since he got his abilities.

In combat, Scarab serves as the distraction for many a foe, often trading insults or barely getting out of harm's way. Though he's faced some pretty powerful foes in the past, he's never once been afraid to face them down and would gladly do it again... especially if it meant saving someone's life.

SPRITE

Some people are born with their powers, while others fall into them. That was the case with Rai Henry and her brother Jim (see Spriggen). Though they were twins, Jim and Rai fit into the television stereotype of being completely opposite. While her brother was a jock and excelled at VertCross, Rai was more of a bookworm and enjoyed spending her time in a chemistry lab. Working late one night at her science station, she heard a ruckus coming from the lab. Cautiously going to investigate, she bumped into her

SPRITE**POWER LEVEL 10**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+3	+2	+3	+2	+2
11	16	14	16	14	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+5/+2*	+4	+7	+5		

*flatfooted

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+11), Computers 6 (+9), Craft (chemical) 5 (+8), Craft (electronic) 3 (+6), Diplomacy 4 (+6), Disable Device 4 (+7), Drive 2 (+5), Knowledge (life sciences) 5 (+8), Knowledge (physical science) 5 (+8), Knowledge (popular culture) 3 (+6), Medicine 2 (+4), Notice 2 (+4), Search 2 (+5), Stealth 3 (+6), Survival 2 (+4)

Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, Attractive, Defensive Roll 3, Move-By Action, Redirect, Second Chance (Reflex vs. area effects), Set-Up, Taunt, Teamwork 2, Uncanny Dodge (visual)

Powers: Dazzle 10 (visual), Flight 3 (Linked to Shrinking), Shrinking 12 (diminutive; Growth Strike, Normal Strength)

Combat: Attack +8 (+12 at minimum size), Grapple +8 (-4 at minimum size), Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+15 at minimum size), Knockback -1, Initiative +3

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Flight, if wings are retracted, -1 p.)

Abilities 26 + Skills 14 (55 ranks) + Feats 13 + Powers 51 + Combat 38 + Saves 9—Drawbacks 1 = Total 150

brother, who was on his way to get her. Explaining what she'd heard, the duo crept into the room and noticed a man in a full-body costume sneaking about. Noticing the pair, the stranger tossed some beakers at the siblings, exposing them both to an odd mixture of chemicals that knocked them unconscious.

When they awoke, they were in a hospital with a police detective hovering over them. After a brief interrogation and examination, the twins were given a clean bill of health and sent home. For a few days they both felt strange, almost as if they were experiencing minor growing pains. Back at school, things had returned to normal for them. Their friends had quickly forgotten about the accident, and many of the faculty were fast to put it, and the lack of a law suit,

POWER LEVEL 10**SPRIGGAN**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4/+14	+2	+3/+8	+0	+2	+2
18/38	15	16/26	11	14	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+14/+8*	+12/+7*	+4	+4		

*normal size

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+4), Climb 4 (+8), Diplomacy 2 (+5), Drive 2 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+7), Knowledge (popular culture) 5 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 2 (+2), Medicine 3 (+5), Notice 2 (+4), Search 2 (+2), Survival 4 (+6)

Feats: Defensive Attack, Fearsome Presence, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Power Attack, Rage, Startle, Teamwork 2

Powers: Growth 10 (huge; Growth Strike), Protection 6 (Impervious), Super-Strength 3 (heavy load: 2,400 lbs., 76.8 tons at full size; Groundstrike, Thunderclap)

Combat: Attack +8 (+6 at full size), Grapple +15 (+31 at full size), Damage +4 (unarmed, +14 at full size), Defense +8 (+6 at full size), Knockback -10 (-13 at full size), Initiative +2

Abilities 29 + Skills 8 (30 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 51 + Combat 32 + Saves 8 = Total 138



behind them. That's when Rai overheard a few students talking about breaking into the chem lab to finish a steroid hybrid.

Informing her brother, the two went to confront them and ended up with more trouble than they expected. Not willing to listen to reason, the gang of kids slapped on some kind of chemical they called "Jump" and began to rough up the twins. Running to hide, Rai found that she could shrink down to the size of an action figure and quickly found cover behind a door. From inside, she heard a barrage of hits that almost sounded like thunder. Hoping that her brother was alright, she was relieved to find him well.

Shortly thereafter, the police showed up and took the gang of steroid users into custody. The detective in charge thanked the kids and also noticed the ripped clothing that Jim had. A few days after the incident, the twins were visited by Lemar Philips and asked to join the Claremont Academy. There, they met others like them and were tested in ways they could never imagine.

Taking on the codename Sprite, Rai was ecstatic when she and her brother, upon graduation, were recruited into the Freedom League. Since then, she's proven to be a valuable asset

STORM KNIGHT**POWER LEVEL 13**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
++S/-S	+2	+6	+2	+3	+2
20/-	15	22	15	16	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+16	+8	+6	+8		

Skills: Bluff 6 (+8), Computers 8 (+10), Concentration 10 (+13), Diplomacy 8 (+10), Disable Device 5 (+7), Intimidate 8 (+10), Investigate 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 10 (+12), Knowledge (popular culture) 3 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+10), Notice 6 (+9), Pilot 6 (+8), Search 6 (+8)

Feats: All-Out Attack, Assessment, Attack Focus (ranged), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Diehard, Fearless, Inspire, Interpose, Leadership, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Taunt, Teamwork

Powers: **Device 12** (containment armor, hard to lose), **Electrical Control 15** (Alternate Powers: **Confuse 15** [Fortitude save], **Datalink 15**, **Dazzle 15** [auditory], **Drain Electricity 10** [all effects], **Stun 10** [Ranged]), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Immunity 40** (electrical effects, Fortitude effects), **Super-Senses 3** (detect electricity, ranged, acute)

Containment Armor: **Enhanced Strength 30**, **Protection 10** (Impervious), **Super-Strength 5** (heavy load: 6 tons)

Combat: Attack +10 (melee), +11 (ranged), Grapple +20, Damage +5 (unarmed), +15 (Electrical Control), Defense +10 (+5 flatfooted), Knockback -13, Initiative +2

Drawbacks: Disability: Without his containment suit, Storm Knight is only a being of pure electricity and has problems interacting with the normal world. A damaging critical hit in combat causes an explosion of electrical energy equal to Storm Knight's Electrical Control and leaves him outside the armor in insubstantial electrical form (uncommon, major).

Abilities 23 + Skills 22 (88 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 138 + Combat 40 + Saves 11—Drawbacks 3 = Total 246

to the team with both her abilities and her knowledge of chemistry.

Rai is the bookworm of the team. While some of the others are scientists, she is more of a researcher with some scientific skills. In fact, she usually takes the role of researcher or assistant to Moon-Son when he needs help.

In combat, Sprite performs recon, using her size and speed to her advantage. Though she lacks some of the combat skills of the others, she consistently works to improve her abilities both on and off the field.

SPRIGGAN

Jim Henry was good at many things, but school wasn't one of them. Not exactly the student that his twin sister Rai (see Sprite) was, he instead was a natural athlete, particularly excelling in a sport called VertCross. There were high hopes for his post-high school athletics, but he needed to work more on his grades so he could stay in school. Knowing he'd find his sister working late in the science room, Jim sought her out and found her in the hallway. Following her lead,



the twins went to investigate a noise Rai had heard in the lab across the hall. The two attempted to sneak into the lab and discovered a man dressed in a full-body costume. While attempting to get closer to him, the stranger discovered the pair and tossed a few beakers at them, exposing them to an odd mixture of chemicals and knocking them unconscious.

Waking up in a hospital bed, Jim felt a bit embarrassed for letting his sister get hurt and letting the guy escape. After being interrogated by the police and getting a final exam, the two were released with a clean bill of health. Over the course of the next few days, Jim started experiencing something akin to grown pains, but he dismissed them as VertCross

bruises. Everything seemed to return to normal for him: his grades began sliding again, the team was heading for the championship, and the cheerleader captain was looking at him favorably. Life was good for Jim. Then Rai told him about some kids that were making a steroid hybrid in the lab.

Figuring they were jocks and potentially on his team, Jim joined her to confront them. Unfortunately, they weren't interested in listening and decided that the twins knew too much. Slapping on some drug named "Jump," the gang laid into Jim as his sister tried to stay out of the fight.

Thinking back to the prior lab incident, Jim wasn't about to give these guys a chance to hurt his sister again. With a healthy dose of adrenaline running through his veins, he began to feel stronger and grew a bit bigger, ripping his clothes in the process. Within minutes, Jim took down everyone in the gang with a few thunderous punches, and then he stacked them neatly in the center of the room.

Finding his sister was okay, they waited for the police and gave their statements as the officers took the other students into custody. A few days later, the twins were visited by Lemar Philips and offered a place at the Claremont Academy. Liking the idea of a challenge and possibly doing some good, they were among the first class at the newly reopened Claremont.

Taking the name Spriggan, Jim was surprised when the Freedom League asked Rai and him to join after graduation. Since then, he's tried his best to protect the world, his team, and especially his sister from harm.

Jim's a jock at heart. He likes to hear the roar of the crowd and the adulation of his fans. He's in the super-hero gig for the fun of it, and he enjoys bashing the bad guys, especially if the press is present. He's not the bashful sort, but he also understands that the needs of the team usually outweigh the needs of his fame.

In combat, Spriggan sees himself as an offensive guard, taking down anyone trying to get past him while he's protecting his team. His main problem is he gets lost in the combat from time to time, especially when his sister gets hurt. It's not usually too bad, but occasionally it takes one of the more powerhouse characters to calm him down.

STORM KNIGHT

Ray Gardner, Jr. had a good life. The son of Captain Thunder, at a young age, he'd started following in his father's footsteps, taking on the mantle of Bolt and training at the Claremont Academy. It was at the academy that he met some friends and joined the Next-Gen. As he

grew older, he eventually "graduated" to the Freedom League, fighting beside his father and some of the older members. By the late '20s, after the senior Thunder was killed, he took on his father's name and became chairman of the Freedom League.

In 2045, during a mission against the new Crime League, Ray encountered an aged Stratos, who enacted his final revenge scheme. While the Crime League was keeping the rest of the Freedom League busy, Ray was lured into a trap that was meant to overload him. But, in Stratos's current state, he'd made the trap a little too well and, instead of overloading the hero, it converted his body into electricity, with explosive effects. Finding Ray's body in this dangerous state, Moon-Son quickly worked up a containment device to help his friend out.

Days passed into months... or at least it seemed that way for Captain Thunder. Finally, Moon-Son reached out to the hero with his telepathy and told him that they had a plan. In a dazzling display of color, Ray actually felt as though he was cohesive again; he could see things and hear them, but he seemed to lack a sense of touch or smell, and his

voice sounded mechanical. Moon-Son explained that they had placed him in a sort of containment suit using an old Star Knight armor that was modified with his wavelength. His friend assured him that he'd do everything in his power to help him get his old body back, but it may take some time. Accepting his fate, Ray took on the name Storm Knight to match his current state and abilities, and he again took on his role as the Freedom League chairperson.

Storm Knight tries to live up to the legacy of his father, while also attempting to carry the torch for the Star Knights, which is why he changed his name. Unlike most heroes, Ray doesn't get the opportunity for true downtime. He can't take off his costume and live a fairly normal life. Many times, when most others rest, he volunteers for monitor duty or to help train some of the kids at the Claremont Academy as a guest lecturer.

In combat, he usually leaves tactical info up to Moon-Son, taking the point and making sure his team gets a good assessment before going into any mission. Once in the heat of battle, Storm Knight keeps an eye on his teammates, often providing support in any area they may need.

HEROES OF THE FUTURE

Not all the heroes in Freedom City work alongside the Freedom League. In most cases, the heroes work as solo heroes or in small duos, allowing them more anonymity than larger groups. One example is the newest hero to take on the name Raven. Though he seemed to appear out of nowhere, he's left quite a mark on the city, with both police and the underworld looking for further information on the hero.

However, some heroes don't travel in such small pairings. In the case of the Teen League, a group of young heroes has taken the mission of the Freedom League to heart and use battles crime like their idols. Led by the enigmatic hero called Trace, the team consists of the animal-like Lynx, the force manipulator Push, the mechanical gadgeteer Decker, the shape-shifting Proteen, and the alien mystic Starmage. Even though they do quite a bit of good, it's the Freedom League's hope that they can convince these young heroes to enroll in the Claremont Academy for further training.

RAVEN

Drake Ward was a troubled kid. Growing up in foster homes, he'd never met his parents, and honestly, he didn't want any new ones. This led to a string of potential adoptions and near miss families until his sixteenth birthday. Tired of dealing with his behavior, social services sent him to juvie to teach him a lesson. While there, he was conscripted into a prison service program that taught troubled teens to care for elderly inmates. While there, he listened to their stories and learned that each of them had something in common: a member of the Freedom League had beaten every one of them, at some point. Intrigued, Drake decided to further his studies of the League, learning all the history he could on them. Eventually, he became fixated on one member who he could relate to: The Raven. Enraptured with the tales of the heroes who wore the identity, he began to follow their example, both physically and mentally.

At age eighteen, Drake was deemed rehabilitated and freed into the public. Entering the police academy, he'd hoped to do some good from the inside. But, during a training exercise, he'd seen some of the other trainees taking "Jump." Taking the information to an official, he was accused of lying and, because of his record, ejected from the program. Deciding that the world needed a Raven now more than ever, Drake worked on a makeshift costume that



RAVEN**POWER LEVEL 10**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+7/+3	+5/+3	+3	+2	+2	+2
24/16	21/16	16	15	15	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+9*	+7	+9	+7		

*+7 flatfooted, +5 without cybersuit

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+11), Bluff 6 (+8), Computers 2 (+4), Disable Device 4 (+6), Drive 4 (+9), Gather Information 5 (+7), Intimidate 5 (+7), Investigate 3 (+5), Knowledge (civics) 2 (+4), Knowledge (streetwise) 2 (+4), Medicine 1 (+3), Notice 4 (+6), Pilot 2 (+7), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 5 (+7), Sleight of Hand 3 (+8), Stealth 6 (+11)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Blind-Fighting, Chokehold, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 3 (spin cycle), Fearsome Presence 2, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Ranged Pin, Sneak Attack, Startle, Taunt, Takedown Attack 2

Powers: **Device 6** (Raven CyberSuit, hard to lose), **Gadgets 8** (hard to lose, 40 points)

Raven CyberSuit: **Enhanced Dexterity 5, Enhanced Strength 8, Flight 3** (50 MPH), **Protection 4** (Impervious 4), **Super-Senses 3** (infrared vision, low-light vision, radio)

Combat: Attack +10, Grapple +17, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +11, Knockback -8, Initiative +9

Drawbacks: Normal Identity (full-action, -4 points)

Abilities 33 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 80 + Combat 42 + Saves 13—Drawbacks 4 = Total 200

resembled the older versions of the heroes' own outfits. Invading the school late one night, he confronted the trainees and, after a massive brawl, forced them to admit their guilt. Watching from afar, he was quite content with his victory... but he wasn't aware that he'd also been watched.

Over the course of a week, he spent the nights dressed as The Raven and battled in the underbelly of Freedom City, never suspecting that

WHO IS RAVEN'S BENEFACTOR?

The mystery of Raven's benefactor has been left for the Gamemaster to decide. Possibilities could include:

- Callie Summers, the last Raven. After she disappeared, she became a recluse until hearing about a new Raven. Amused by the prospect, and perhaps feeling a bit nostalgic, she's been providing the hero with equipment in hopes that he doesn't get himself killed.
- Overshadow. Finding a perfect puppet, the villain has been supplying the hero with gadgets and weaponry, allowing him to target some of the rabble and masterminds that could get in the way of his domination.
- AEGIS. After seeing someone make a difference on the streets of Freedom City, the agency has decided to help him out as long as he does good. Perhaps in a few years, they may even recruit him into AEGIS.

someone was keeping tabs on him. When he returned home to his apartment one night, there was a package waiting for him. Investigating further, he discovered a new costume that seemed to use some kind of bio-mimetic material for higher durability, a bevy of gadgets for him to use, and a note stating: "Do your best and there will be more." And indeed, there was. Every few weeks, his gadgets were replenished and new gadgets appeared. Eventually, on the six-month anniversary of his new costume's arrival, he received a suped-up spin cycle. Though naturally curious who his benefactor is, Drake is trying his best every day to live up to the legacy that he's chosen, hoping one day that people will remember him as The Raven, as well.

Drake is a driven man that wants to see justice done. He respects other heroes and considers them an asset, although, in his mind, they tend to lose focus on the real issues. Always on his guard, he rarely lets anyone into his life, partially for fear of losing them and partially because he feels he hasn't the time to devote to them.

He almost seems more comfortable and at home in his Raven identity. In combat, he often uses quips to rile his foes into making mistakes or uses the shadows to unsettle them. While he doesn't mind using his ranged attacks, he prefers going to hand to hand when he can, not wasting any more gadgets than he has to.

FUTURE VILLAINY

Along with the heroes, there have always been villains in Freedom City. Throughout the last few decades, there always seems to be a Crime League that battles the Freedom League with various members swapping in and out as needed. Originally re-organized by Dr. Stratos, the newest incarnation was formed by Taurus, formerly of the Labyrinth, and comprised of a floating team of villains that he handpicks for each encounter. In an effort to keep up his assessment of the heroes of Freedom City, Derek Grant has created a new Power Corps that he secretly funds with new equipment. It's his hope that the information he gathers from these armored villains will prove most useful when he makes an attempt for control of the city.

In the past, Chase Atom had his siblings' help when dealing with the Psions. Unfortunately, most of the Psions have been a headache for him consistently throughout the years since his family has disappeared, going as far as recruiting new members when old ones retire. Currently, the team is being lead by Empath and uses the Psipher Academy as a

front for recruiting new members. Perhaps the three most dangerous menaces that exist in this time, however, are Argo, Talos, and Tyrannus. Since his creation, Argo has met the Freedom League with great resistance and this continues to this day. Having adapted to a more modern look and the powers of the newest League, the android has encountered the various heroes of Freedom City on many occasions and, luckily for the city, they've managed to defeat him so far. Talos, on the other hand, is an entirely different threat these days. With the advent of the cyber-age, Talos is more powerful than ever, using cutting-edge technology to store his personality and imprint it on a variety of cybernetic bodies. This has led many of the more scientific-minded heroes to seek out a way to neutralize the mechanical menace once and for all, although, to this date, they've had little luck. Finally, there is the being that calls himself Tyrannus. No one knows where he came from or who he is, but he seems to carry vast knowledge of many of the older heroes and villains, as well as the city itself. Many have speculated that this villain could

WHO IS TYRANNUS?

Though it's been rumored Tyrannus was once a hero, the person behind the armor has been left for the Gamemaster to decide; ideally, he should have some tie to present-day Freedom City and should have access to some interesting inside information about its history and heroes. Some possibilities include ex-heroes, such as one of Chase Atom's missing siblings, a former student from the Claremont Academy, a missing supervillain, an exile from the Terminus or Farside City, and so forth.

If the wearer of the Tyrannus armor has powers, it's possible he (or even she...) may rely on the armor to disguise some or all of them. Feel free to alter Tyrannus's stats to your liking, adding what you need or whatever may be appropriate for the character and the adventure.

have once been a hero himself, but there is no evidence to support that at this time. All that is known is that he's a threat to the city and, more specifically, its heroes.

TYRANNUS

The armored figure of Tyrannus is an enigma to all, save himself. Appearing in mid-2055, the villain amassed an army of villains, assaulted Freedom Hall, and challenged the League to a duel, specifically calling out the older members. During the fight, Storm Knight heard him banter about the hero's past, specifically in terms of his original identity, Bolt. Stunned by what the villain knew, Storm Knight managed to join the rest of the team in a victory. However, before Tyrannus could be interrogated, he managed to teleport away.

His next appearance was against Scarab. While investigating some gunrunning, Scarab ran into the armored villain solo. Not sure what to do, the hero called for back up and then attempted to occupy his foe. Unfortunately for Scarab, Tyrannus wasn't interested, referring to the young hero as a "pretender to the legacy" and blasting him with some kind of force blast before he teleported away again. After the rest of the League arrived, they began a manhunt for this villain, turning over every nook and cranny to find some clue as to who he is and the motives behind his actions. So far, they've had little luck, and Tyrannus remains free to scheme his next move.

Tyrannus is a master villain with a twist. Somehow, he has ties to the older members of the current League and uses those ties to his advantage when needed. He has a vast amount of knowledge concerning Freedom City, as well as a seemingly endless arsenal at his disposal.

In combat, he likes to use minions when he has them,



TYRANNUS

POWER LEVEL 14

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+10/+3	+1	+3	+2	+4	+2
31/16	13	16	15	18	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+18	+10	+3	+12*		

*+18 mental attacks

Skills: Bluff 8 (+10), Computers 10 (+12), Diplomacy 8 (+10), Disable Device 8 (+10), Disguise 12 (+14), Escape Artist 8 (+9), Gather Information 10 (+12), Intimidate 8 (+10), Investigate 8 (+10), Knowledge (current events) 12 (+14), Knowledge (history) 10 (+12), Knowledge (tactics) 10 (+12), Medicine 4 (+8), Notice 4 (+8), Search 8 (+10), Sense Motive 8 (+12)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Chokehold, Connections, Contacts, Diehard, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 2, Improved Block, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Startle, Takedown Attack, Taunt, Well-Informed

Powers: Device 38 (Tyrannus armor, hard to lose)
Tyrannus Armor: Enhanced Strength 15, Flight 8 (2,500 MPH), Immunity 9 (life support), Mind

Shield 6, Nemesis 12, Protection 15 (Impervious 14), Super-Senses 3 (detect powers, ranged, acute), Teleport 8

Combat: Attack +15, Grapple +25, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +10 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -16, Initiative +5

Abilities 33 + Skills 34 (136 ranks) + Feats 18 + Powers 152 + Combat 50 + Saves 18 = Total 305

so that he can assess his targets a bit easier. Tyrannus is adept at both ranged and melee combat, and he is not afraid to enter either. If he's in combat with someone that he knows, he tends to try and knock them off balance by talking about their past or personal lives. He has no problem with taking advantage of any situation and will attempt to escape when the odds stack against him.

CHAPTER 7: GALACTIC FREEDOM

Welcome to Freedom City, galactic citizens! Current time designation is 06:53:04 AM, Tuesday, 21 August, AD 2525.

This extract from the Metropolitan Information Center's public databanks is recommended to acquaint visitors with Freedom City's colorful history, famous landmarks, and best-known residents. Whether you're an ambassador en route to the Confederation of Planets Building or a tourist hoping to catch a glimpse of the famed Freedom Legion, we hope this information helps make the most of your visit.

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

Freedom City is much like the rest of 26th century Earth. Problems persisting on other worlds like poverty, prejudice, disease, hunger, and ignorance are nearly eradicated. Want is a thing of the distant past, but disparities between the social strata remain. After eight millennia, wealth (now measured in Confederation Credits) still has its privileges.

Culturally, humanity's diversity is rare in the galaxy. Most worlds have one philosophy, racial makeup, language, and extraordinary ability common to all planetary natives, but Earth is rich in contrasting cultural traditions. While much is made of humans' lack of natural super-abilities, their diversity more than compensates. Humans (both Terran and Lor) uniquely possess the cosmopolitan perspective needed to forge bonds between disparate alien races. In a very real sense, humanity's love and respect for cultural diversity is the mortar holding the galaxy together in peace.

THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

Visitors from sub-Tech Level 8 civilizations often find Freedom City strange, but in time, most appreciate its modern Energy Age conveniences. Rest assured, all publicly accessible devices are completely user friendly, and built-in safeguards prevent them from inflicting harm, inadvertently or otherwise.

City services such as access to the hover-rail system, the gravity induction power grid, and the computer network are free of charge. Necessities such as basic food and lodging can be attained at no cost from municipal agencies, but they admittedly don't match the quality of privately owned restaurants and hotels.

A time-lost Freedom resident from before the Crisis of 2112 would be shocked by the city's changed appearance, with its towering plasteel skyscrapers, holographic billboards, personal hovercrafts, and alien tourists from any of a thousand worlds. However, our hypothetical visitor could find his way around with surprising ease because of Freedom's "city spirit," Dr. Metropolis.

Dr. Metropolis handles all urban renovations, and he often changes buildings in form but rarely in function. Therefore, a 21st century man might not recognize Freedom Medical Center in its "futuristic" guise, but the city layout is so similar he could still locate it using a map from his native era.

Thanks to Dr. Metropolis's redevelopments, Freedom City's historical and environmental qualities are preserved while still keeping it on the cutting edge of technology. The following is a sampling of notable Freedom City sites, all maintaining the traditions of the past while pointing the way to the future.

THE CONFEDERATION OF PLANETS BUILDING

Towering over the city skyline on the former site of the Federal Plaza is the Confederation of Planets Building, home to the grandest experiment

in recorded history. Here, the day-to-day struggle of ensuring peace in the galaxy takes place, with all of the triumphs and tragedies attendant upon such an epic undertaking.

The building itself was specially redesigned by Dr. Metropolis to accommodate life forms from a variety of different biospheres, as well as to make it sturdy enough to survive sizable bomb blasts. This resiliency is routinely tested, as the Grue Unity, the Tyranny Legion, the Unification Movement, and others have attempted to raze the building over the years. As a further precaution, an elite detachment of Solar Guard soldiers garrison the grounds at all times, under the command of the stalwart General "Fast Eddy" Webb.

Inside are offices for the Confederation President, the Secretariat, the member worlds' ambassadors, and the Solar Guard Chiefs of Staff. The largest room is the famous General Assembly chamber, where matters concerning the entire alliance are debated and voted upon. Such meetings are watched with great interest, not only for the political ramifications but for the history of supervillains and extremist groups choosing such moments to launch attacks.

CITY HALL

An enduring landmark, City Hall's neo-classical exteriors remain unchanged from centuries past, but its interiors are now equipped with the very latest technology. This allows city officials and technicians to maintain municipal services at peak efficiency and deal rapidly with any emergencies.

The top local official in Freedom is the City Administrator, appointed by the United Earth government. While its prestige makes the job highly sought after, the challenge of balancing the interests of the city, the planet, the Confederation, and the thousands of alien cultures represented in the metropolitan area is often daunting.

Fortunately, the current Administrator, Thomas Filsinger, is utterly tireless in his work and completely unflappable in the face of catastrophe. He also shows considerable diplomatic skills, as evinced by good working relationships with Confederation President Mohareb and most of the COP's ambassadors.

Municipal security is handled by the Police Commissioner's office, currently overseen by one Steven Walmsley. Walmsley holds the Commissionership thanks to a surprise appointment by Filsinger, who passed over more experienced candidates in a stated effort to "get some new blood" into the city's administration. Walmsley goes about his job quietly but competently, avoiding publicity—both good and bad.

THE BASEHART INSTITUTE FOR MARINE RESEARCH

Located on the former Lonely Point Naval Station, the Basehart Institute for Marine Research is the galaxy's leading oceanographic center. Its founder, retired Solar Guard Admiral David Basehart, felt Earth's oceans were comparatively ignored in the rush to explore space, and he established the Institute to rectify this imbalance.

The Institute works in conjunction with the United Earth government, and the relationship profits both sides. It allows the Institute to build and maintain its advanced scientific devices—most famously the fantastic research submarine *Oceanview*—and makes Earth a leader in ocean-related sciences.

Thanks to the Institute, harvesting oceanic resources is both feasible and ecologically sound, contributing to the virtual elimination of famine. Basehart is currently supervising the construction of the first permanent ocean-floor settlements off the Freedom City coastline.

Though not widely known, the Institute is frequently called upon to investigate and counter underwater threats. However, despite triumphs over giant sea creatures, Grue infiltrators, renegade Atlanteans, and various natural hazards, Admiral Basehart would rather be known for his scientific contributions.

GM Note: Basehart fits the Mad Scientist archetype (*M&M*, page 218), only fairly sane. The *Oceanview* combines a submarine's vehicle stats with the stately manor headquarter's features.

DR. ALEXANDER ATOM SPACEPORT

Located on Star Island, "AA" is Earth's primary gateway to the stars and a center of interplanetary trade. AA is never less than busy, with ships from throughout the galaxy arriving and departing around the clock. The numbers and types of aliens and exotic goods found here at any given moment truly must be seen to be appreciated.

For safety reasons, larger spacecraft usually remain in orbit and convey payloads and passengers to AA via shuttlecraft. Once they clear customs, both people and cargo are quickly transported from AA on city hover-rail lines or any number of hovercabs. There are also several amenities for travelers laying over at AA en route to other destinations.

Spaceport security is tight, and rarely does a day pass without the authorities apprehending at least one would-be smuggler, thief, kidnapper, hijacker, or terrorist. While the FCPD is accustomed to such threats, it doesn't hesitate to call in the Solar Guard when more serious menaces appear.

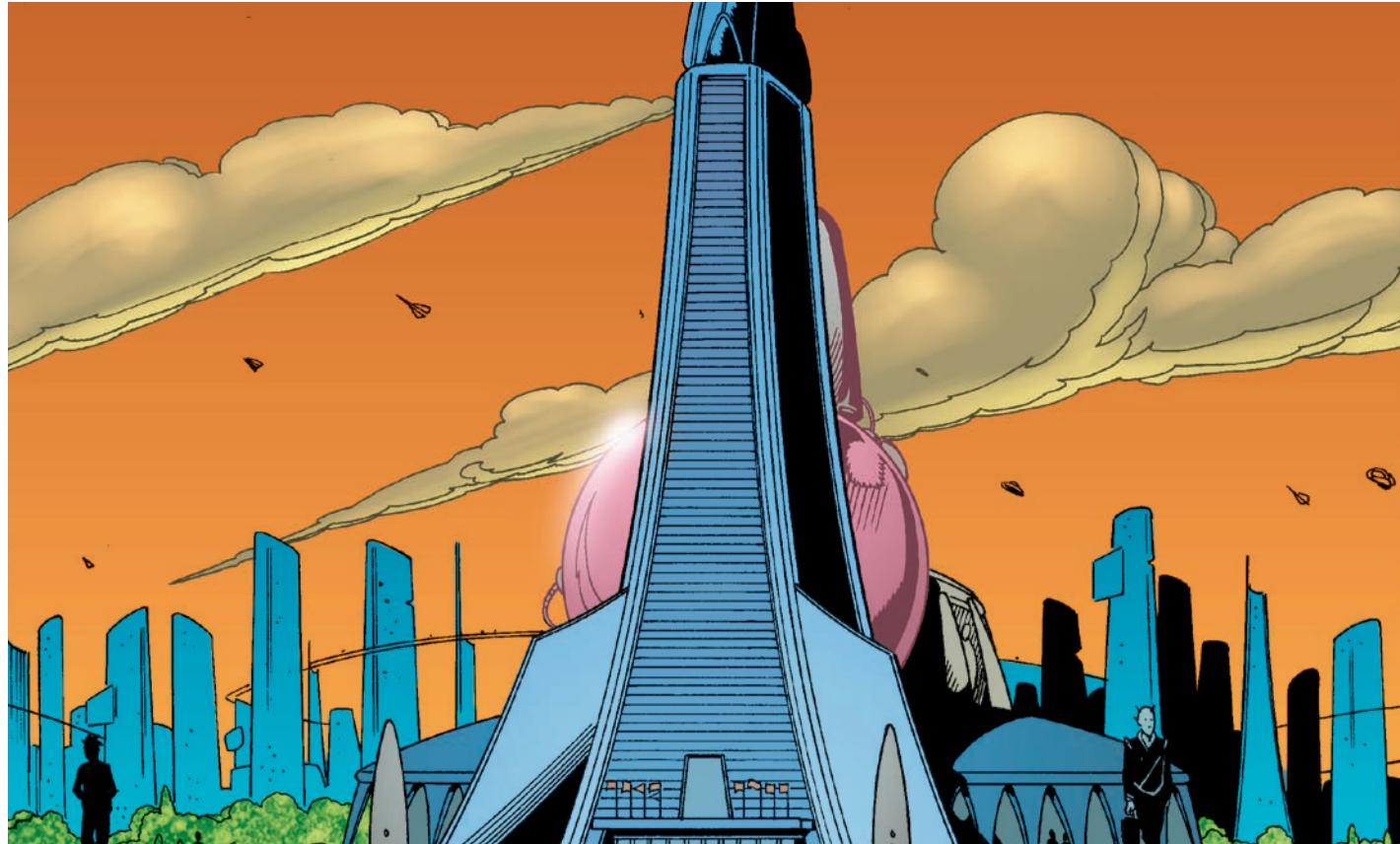
Despite AA's unparalleled safety record, spaceflight retains a degree of risk: ships veer off course, pilots make errors, and computers develop glitches. The spaceport's crack staff is trained to deal with such emergencies, but sometimes events race past even their ability to manage. In such instances, frightened space travelers find reason to be grateful for the Freedom Legion's close proximity to AA.

GM Note: Equip the police officer archetype (*M&M*, page 228) with blaster pistols when the FCPD's future cops are needed in your game. Use the soldier archetype (*M&M*, page 229) with blaster rifles when the Solar Guard is summoned.

FREEDOM HALL

Vacant since Daedalus and the Freedom League disappeared while battling the Star-Khan in 2378, Freedom Hall is once again home to Earth's greatest superheroes. Dr. Metropolis has completely restored and renovated the building to suit the current occupants, the Freedom Legion.

Freedom Hall's exterior appears unchanged, but inside it houses beyond state-of-the-art technology, incorporating devices from a number of alien cultures. Additional subterranean levels have been constructed,



creating sufficient space to accommodate all of the Legion's affiliated members and their varied environmental requirements.

The Hall allows the Legion's core membership to respond rapidly to emergencies throughout known space. Teleportals send Legion members to the Atom Spaceport, Moonbase One, and other critical planetary locales in seconds, and a squadron of *Daedalus*-class space-planes is available for off-world missions.

GM Note: The upgraded Hall is equivalent to the Freedom League's Lighthouse HQ (*Freedom City* sourcebook, page 110) minus the Isolated feature. *Daedalus*-class space-planes upgrade the old *Pegasus*-class (*Freedom City*, page 112) to Space Travel 9.

CLAREMONT ACADEMY

This unique school once carried out its mission secretly, but it is now famous galaxy-wide for training youth to use their extraordinary abilities. Perhaps more importantly, the Academy strives to make its students well-rounded individuals of good character, instructing them in everything from sampo construction to Venusian aikido.

Indicative of the strong ties between the Legion and the Academy, the current co-headmasters Caias Ward (the second Centurion) and Lisa Charlton (the Nightstalker, 26th century Earth's Master Mage) are semi-retired Legion members. Their shared experiences serve the students well, particularly when emergencies force their pupils to put their training into action.

Traditionally, most Academy students are from Earth, but that is gradually changing. Headmaster Ward in particular, himself a strange visitor from a parallel Earth, makes increased campus diversity a top priority.

THE GOODMAN BUILDING

The home base of the famous Atom Family is a true city legend. No family member has been heard from since before the Crisis of 2112, but the Goodman Building's technology continues operating without pause, maintained by persons unknown.

Over the centuries, the building's caretaker has answered inquiries as to the family's whereabouts. Like his ancestors, current caretaker Alan Young maintains the Atoms will return someday, though when, how, and from where he never says.

BEYOND FREEDOM CITY

Humans once spoke of a "global village" as new means of transportation rendered once vast distances meaningless. With the development of the gravity induction drive in 2266, the term "galactic village" became more apropos, for mankind then had the farthest stars within its grasp.

Two hundred fifty years later, humanity's presence in space is greater than ever. The following is but a brief survey of points of interest lying far beyond the Earth itself.

THE FREEDOM LEGION

For seven centuries, Freedom City's superheroes have shown the way to a bright, shining future for all. Today's heir to the Patriot Regiment legacy is the Freedom Legion. Tales of the Legion's heroic exploits inspire the inhabitants of countless worlds, and the team is revered throughout the galaxy for its dedication to justice and liberty for all sentient beings.

By necessity, the interplanetary Freedom Legion is structured more loosely than its predecessors. Scores of super-beings (including Dr. Metropolis) who prefer not to leave their bases of operation have affiliate-member status. They are left to pursue their own heroic agendas

MOONBASE ONE

United Earth's first great diplomatic success was persuading Farside City to allow a permanent human settlement opposite it on Luna. Moonbase One was completed in 2199, a crowning achievement for a planet finally recovered from the global anarchy following the worldwide computer failure in 2112.

Today, Moonbase One is an important center for scientific research, primarily astronomical observation and experiments requiring the moon's special environment. The base also serves as a way station for spaceships traveling to and from Earth.

Hostile action against the facility by an anti-Confederation power is a major concern for Moonbase Commander Barry Landau. Normally, the base's defenses would be routinely upgraded to meet burgeoning threats, but by treaty, Moonbase One's continued presence is at the Farsiders' discretion. The Farside Council remains skittish at the prospect of their "savage relations" from Earth militarizing the moon. Commander Landau continues to impress upon them the need for improved lunar defenses, but to no avail as yet.

GM Note: Stats for the Moonbase are on *M&M*, page 148. Its personnel are a mix of government agent (like Landau), soldier (with blaster rifles), and scientist archetypes (*M&M*, pages 227-229).

THE CONFEDERATION OF PLANETS

The COP sprang from the interplanetary alliances Earth forged during the Grue War. Mutual defense remains its core purpose, but over time, its mission has expanded to include trade promotion, cultural exchange, a universal language (Galacta), humanitarian aid, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Membership is open to civilizations committed to peaceful co-existence that agree to abide by the Confederation's strictures, such as contributing (financially and otherwise) to the common defense. To the largest extent possible, members' local affairs remain outside the scope of Confederation authority. Because of this decentralized approach, the COP encompasses scores of vastly differing cultures.

Major decisions are made by majority vote of the General Assembly, consisting of voting representatives of each member world. Enforcement of Assembly decisions is the ultimate responsibility of the Confederation President, an office currently held by the renowned Earth statesman Justin Mohareb. The President is assisted by the Secretariat (an appointed bureaucracy) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (the ranking officers of the Solar Guard, the COP military).

The challenges of protecting the freedom and interests of COP members nearly beggar the imagination. However, the dedication and sacrifice of countless beings on the Confederation's behalf speaks volumes for the nobility and worthiness of these goals.

while still enjoying the sanction and support of the COP and Legion, obligated only to respond to either organization's emergency calls.

By contrast, a dedicated core opts for active-member status, dedicating themselves full-time to resolving crises throughout the galaxy. The active members reside at Freedom Hall, allowing them immediate access to the Confederation's top decision-makers. These active Legionnaires are the first-responders of the team and also undertake missions for the COP, supplemented by mission specialists recruited from amongst the Freedom Legion's affiliated membership.

The current active membership includes:

CHARGER**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 18 Dex 16 Con 18 Int 12 Wis 16 Cha 14

Skills: Craft (structural) 3 (+4), Handle Animal 5 (+7), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 3 (+4), Language (Galacta), Notice 3 (+6), Profession (farmer) 6 (+9), Ride 5 (+8), Sense Motive 4 (+7), Survival 6 (+9)**Feats:** Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (ranged) 2, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 4, Endurance, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Stunning Attack, Teamwork 3, Track**Powers:** **Electrical Control 10** (Dynamic, *Alternate Powers* [all Dynamic]; **Blast 6** [ball lightning, 150-ft. radius; Burst Area; Progression 2], **Confuse 10** [Toughness Save], **Dazzle 5** [auditory & visual; Explosion Area], **Strike 5** [electricity, Aura], **Stun 10**, **Immunity 10** (electrical effects), **Sensory Shield 10** (all senses)**Combat:** Attack +8 (melee), +10 (ranged), Grapple +12, Damage +10 (Electrical Control), +5 (electrical aura), +4 (unarmed), Defense +12 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +3**Saving Throws:** Toughness +8 (+4 flatfooted), Fortitude +7, Reflex +6, Will +6**Abilities 34 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 22 + Powers 61 + Combat 32 + Saves 9 = 167****CHILLER****POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 12 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 16 Wis 14 Cha 12

Skills: Bluff 7 (+8), Computers 5 (+8), Concentration 5 (+7), Craft (artistic) 11 (+14), Knowledge (art) 6 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 3 (+6), Knowledge (popular culture) 7 (+10), Language (Galacta), Notice 5 (+7), Profession (graphic designer) 10 (+12)**Feats:** Accurate Attack, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 4, Grappling Finesse, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Stunning Attack, Taunt**Powers:** **Cold Control 10** (Dynamic, *Alternate Powers* [all Dynamic]; **Blast 10** [ice], **Blast 6** [cold; Fortitude Save; Split Attack 2], **Create Object 10**[ice shapes; Continuous Duration; Permanent], **Dazzle 10** [snow blindness, visual], **Drain Toughness 10** [sub-zero freezing; Ranged; Limited to Objects], **Environmental Control 10** [icy surfaces, hamper movement, one-quarter speed], **Fatigue 6** [freezing air; Ranged; Reversible, Sedation], **Obscure 10** [blizzard, visual], **Snare 10** [ice bonds], **Trip 10** [icy surfaces; Knockback], **Immunity 10** (cold effects)**Combat:** Attack +10, Grapple +12, Damage +10 (Blast), +1 (unarmed), Defense +14 (+5 flatfooted), Knockback -2 (-0 flatfooted), Initiative +2**Saving Throws:** Toughness +5 (+1 flatfooted), Fortitude +3, Reflex +4, Will +4**Abilities 20 + Skills 15 (60 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 51 + Combat 40 + Saves 6 = 152****CHARGER**

Inhabitants of the storm-swept planet Tempest endure one of the harshest climates in known space. On other worlds, technology alleviates intemperate environmental conditions, but Tempest's electrically charged atmosphere overloads most electronic devices, leaving its culture backward and pastoral.

Such a low-tech world cannot long hold dreamers like Mykal

Antczak, and at a young age, he left Tempest for planets unknown. Mykal never considered himself special, but on Earth, he learned the natural abilities his people take for granted qualified him for the Claremont Academy.

To survive lightning strikes, Tempestians naturally expel electricity from their bodies. With the Academy's guidance, Mykal learned to direct and focus these electrical discharges, and he set his sights on using his abilities as a super-hero.

Mykal's selfless, humble nature and boundless enthusiasm made him a natural for the Freedom Legion, and he joined shortly after graduation. Taking the codename Charger, Mykal

serves the Legion with honor and distinction. His boyhood dreams of seeing the galaxy realized, Mykal is finally happy, even if he doesn't always understand the technology he encounters along the way.

CHILLER

As a child, Geoff McIntosh miraculously survived a crash landing on the arid planet Guelph. He vividly remembers blacking out from the unrelenting sun as he wished he could be cold... freezing cold...

This trauma triggered Geoff's latent cryokinetic powers. Though his ability to project intense cold saved his life, it also made him feel less human. He enrolled in the Claremont Academy, hoping for acceptance where strange powers are the norm.

At the Academy, Geoff studied graphic design with greater alacrity than his mutant powers. In fact, he would never have become a costumed hero had it not been for his close friendship with classmate Dav Kryton. Dav suggested a stint with the Freedom Legion might rescue Geoff's artistic



CAT#



COLONEL COLOSSUS**POWER LEVEL 8**

Str 30*/14	Dex 12	Con 22*/14	Int 12	Wis 16	Cha 16
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Skills: Climb 4 (+6), Intimidate 7 (+14*/+10), Knowledge (tactics) 7 (+8), Language (Galacta), Notice 4 (+7), Profession (soldier) 9 (+12), Stealth 4 (-3*/+5), Swim 4 (+6)

Feats: All-out Attack, Defensive Attack, Improved Block, Inspire 3, Power Attack, Takedown Attack

Powers: **Growth 8** (huge; Growth Strike), **Immunity 5** (radiation damage), **Protection 4** (Impervious, Linked to Growth), **Regeneration 2** (bruised, 1/standard action), **Super Strength 5** (heavy load: 100 tons; Linked to Growth; Groundstrike, Shockwave, Super-Breath, Thunderclap)

*with Growth

Combat: Attack +6 (+8 normal size), Grapple +21 (+10 normal size), Damage +10 (unarmed, +2 normal size), Defense +6 (+8 normal size), Knockback -15 (-1 normal size), Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +10 (+2 normal size), Fortitude +10 (+6 normal size), Reflex +3, Will +6

Abilities 24 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 54 + Combat 32 + Saves 9 = Total 137

career from all-consuming obscurity. Geoff concurred, and despite semi-serious threats to quit, he remains with the team under the codename Chiller.

Personally, Geoff is witty, cultured, and still very passionate about his art. Though he'd never admit it, he really does enjoy being a hero, and in any event, he would never leave Dav facing danger alone.

COLONEL COLOSSUS

Glenn Langan was a lieutenant colonel in the Solar Guard who was stationed at a remote outpost on the edge of Grue space. Known for his courage under fire, Langan fought valiantly to repel what at first seemed to be a hit-and-run Grue raid. However, their real aim was testing a new atomic weapon, and the resulting explosion completely leveled the outpost.

Col. Langan alone survived, despite receiving a lethal dose of an unknown radiation type. Once healed, Langan found his genetic make-up radically altered, allowing him to grow to enormous size at will and become remarkably resistant to injury.

The Guard gave Langan a medical discharge, but as always, he was loath to quit an unfinished fight. Upon returning to Earth, Glenn enlisted in the Freedom Legion as the aptly named Colonel Colossus.

Avenging the loss of his men once drove Langan, but his camaraderie with his Legion teammates has mellowed him considerably. Langan models all that is most admirable in a soldier: loyalty, bravery, and self-sacrifice. These

METALLA**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 10	Dex 14	Con 12	Int 16	Wis 12	Cha 18
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Skills: Acrobatics 3 (+5), Computers 7 (+10), Concentration 8 (+9), Diplomacy 5 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 6 (+9), Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 (+7), Knowledge (technology) 4 (+7), Language (Galacta), Notice 6 (+7), Search 6 (+9), Sense Motive 3 (+4), Stealth 3 (+5)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Acrobatic Bluff, All-out Attack, Attack Focus (ranged) 3, Attractive 2, Defensive Attack, Dodge Focus 2, Elusive Target, Grappling Finesse, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Stunning Attack

Powers: **Flight 10** (10,000 MPH), **Force Field 10** (Impervious; Limited to physical attacks), **Magnetic Control 10** (Dynamic, *Alternate Powers* [all Dynamic]: **Animate Objects 10** [Limited to machines], **Blast 10, Blast 6** [metallic projectiles; Autofire; Indirect 2], **Deflect 10** [slow and fast projectiles], **Environmental Control 10** [flying metal objects, distraction, DC 10], **Magnetic Control 10** [magnetic field; Burst Area; Touch Range], **Nullify Electronics 10** [electro-magnetic pulse, all effects; Nullifying Field, Toughness Save], **Obscure 20** [radio], **Snare 10** [metallic bonds], **Transform 5** [reshape metal; Continuous])

Combat: Attack +7 (melee), +10 (ranged), Grapple +9, Damage +10 (Blast), +0 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -10 (-0 without Force Field), Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +11 (+1 without Force Field or vs. energy attacks), Fortitude +5, Reflex +6, Will +5

Abilities 22 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 71 + Combat 28 + Saves 12 = 167

qualities—and his formidable tactical knowledge—make him a highly valued Legion member.

METALLA

Like all on Daleshone who manifest extraordinary powers, Nikola Vrtis was worshiped as a goddess. While others crave such adoration, it struck Nikola as tiresome and irrational, and she longed to escape the gilded cage of imposed divinity.

After helping the Freedom Legion resolve a case on Daleshone, she saw her opportunity and successfully petitioned the team for membership. This "abduction" caused a serious diplomatic incident, but when the COP refused to intervene, her return became Daleshone's global priority. As a result, Nikola sees Legion membership and continued freedom as synonymous, and she serves the team with a fervor few rival.

Nikola—"Nikki" to friends—chose the codename Metalla in recognition of her mastery over ferrous objects. Her fiercely independent spirit and natural charm are her foremost personal characteristics, but she also harbors some trepidation over her people's ceaseless efforts to force her return home.



PROFESSOR DANGER**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 12	Dex 14	Con 14	Int 24	Wis 20	Cha 22
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Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+7), Bluff 8 (+14), Climb 5 (+6), Computers 2 (+9), Concentration 5 (+10), Diplomacy 8 (+14), Disable Device 6 (+13), Escape Artist 5 (+7), Intimidate 8 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+11), Knowledge (art) 8 (+15), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+11), Knowledge (history) 15 (+22), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+15), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8 (+15), Language (Galacta), Notice 11 (+16), Profession (xenoarchaeologist) 8 (+13), Search 11 (+18), Sense Motive 6 (+11), Stealth 5 (+7), Survival 6 (+11), Swim 5 (+6)

Feats: All-out Attack, Assessment, Attractive, Beginner's Luck, Connected, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 3, Eidetic Memory, Elusive Target, Endurance, Equipment 5, Evasion, Improved Block, Inspire 5, Leadership, Luck, Master Plan, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Seize Initiative, Set-Up, Skill Mastery (Knowledge [history], Notice, Profession, Search), Teamwork 3, Uncanny Dodge (auditory)

Equipment: armored jumpsuit (+3 Toughness), blaster pistol, commlink, computer, flashlight, jetpack (**Flight 4**), multi-tool

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +8, Damage +1 (unarmed) +5 (blaster pistol), Defense +11 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -4 (-2 flatfooted), Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +8 (+5 flatfooted), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +8

**Abilities 46 + Skills 38 (152 ranks) + Feats 41 + Combat 30 + Saves 7 =
Total 162**

**PROFESSOR DANGER**

Renowned xenoarchaeologist Prof. Terry Baucom earned the nickname "Professor Danger" early in her career from her dauntless pursuit of hazardous finds and her kinship with the legendary Johnny Danger. Her ancestry later came to the fore when she inherited both the Danger family fortune and directorship of the Danger International explorers' society.

For the next several years, Prof. Baucom used her now-prodigious resources to further her field research, expanding her already unmatched knowledge of alien cultures. Because of this expertise, the Freedom Legion asked her advice on a number of cases, and in each instance, the Professor's assistance proved invaluable.

Centurion (then team leader) noted her remarkable crisis-management ability, and when he semi-retired, he nominated Prof. Baucom to replace him. After the initial surprise, all concerned realized the levelheaded and hyper-competent Professor was the perfect choice.

Since taking charge, Prof. Baucom has repeatedly demonstrated uncanny leadership ability. She possesses an unerring sense of when to encourage teammates with kind words and when to yell at them with supernova fury. Her skill at organizing the far-flung Legion membership is equally impressive, and there seems no catastrophe too great for her wits to overcome.

SOLARFLARE**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 14	Dex 14	Con 16	Int 18	Wis 12	Cha 12
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Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Climb 4 (+6), Computers 4 (+8), Concentration 4 (+5), Escape Artist 4 (+6), Investigate 4 (+8), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+8), Knowledge (technology) 4 (+8), Language (Galacta), Notice 3 (+4), Search 4 (+8), Stealth 4 (+6), Survival 4 (+5), Swim 4 (+6)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Evasion, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Interpose, Move-by Action, Stunning Attack

Powers: **Fire Control 10** (Dynamic, *Alternate Powers* [all Dynamic]: **Blast 10**, **Blast 10** [Explosion Area; Touch Range], **Blast 6** [300' radius; Explosion Area; Progression 2], **Dazzle 10** [visual], **Deflect 10** [slow and fast projectiles], **Obscure 10** [smoke, visual], **Suffocate 5** [smoke; Burst Area, Sustained Duration]), **Flight 7** [1,000 MPH], **Immunity 10** (fire/heat effects)

Combat: Attack +10, Grapple +12, Damage +10 (Blast), +2 (unarmed), Defense +14 (+6 flatfooted), Knockback -3 (-1 flatfooted), Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +6 (+3 flatfooted), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +3

Abilities 26 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 16 + Powers 59 + Combat 42 + Saves 5 = 161

Prof. Baucom's lone weakness is the temptation of a promising xenoarchaeological dig, typically in some place where she's not easily found or contacted. Though without truly superhuman abilities, such absences prove Professor Danger is the most irreplaceable Legion member of all.

SOLAR FLARE

From his boyhood on the planet Antaria, Dav Kryton wanted to follow in his parents' super-heroic footsteps. Like them, he possesses mutant powers and attended the Claremont Academy before becoming a Freedom Legion member. In the process, he repeatedly showed the strength of character necessary to honor his parents' legacy.

While at the Academy, Dav found a buddy for life in Geoff (Chiller) McIntosh, and despite their temperamental differences, they greatly influenced one another. Dav taught Geoff the value of being a super-hero, while Geoff showed Dav that having a civilian life is vital to his well-being.

Despite Geoff's urging, Dav never pursued the great love of his life, Elementress. This fact still haunts him, even after



STAR KNIGHT**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 28*/13 Dex 12 Con 14 Int 16 Wis 12 Cha 18

Skills: Bluff 6 (+10), Computers 4 (+7), Diplomacy 6 (+10), Gather Information 6 (+10), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+7), Knowledge (popular culture) 6 (+9), Profession (writer) 8 (+9)

Feats: Distract (Bluff), Fearless, Luck 2, Taunt

Powers: **Device 25** (Star Knight armor, hard to lose)

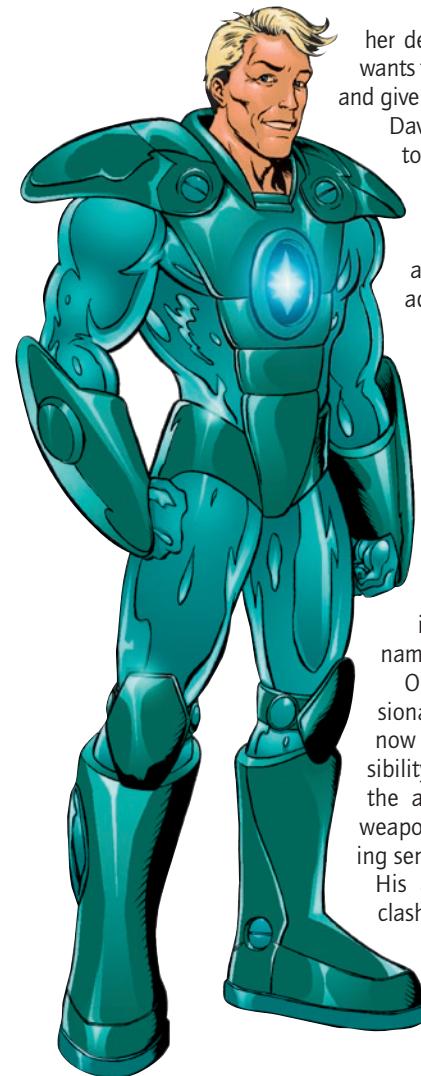
Star Knight armor: Blast 10 (energy "sword"), Comprehend 2 (languages), Deflect 6 (energy "shield," all ranged attacks), Enhanced Strength 15, Flight 8 (2,500 MPH), Immunity 10 (life support, starvation and thirst), Protection 10 (Impervious), Space Travel 10, Super-Senses 4 (communication link with Blackstar, direction sense, low-light vision, radio), Super-Strength 4 (heavy load: 10 tons)

*with armor

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +20 (+8 without armor), Damage +10 (Blast), +9 (unarmed) Defense +8 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -11 (-1 without armor), Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +12 (+2 without armor), Fortitude +6, Reflex +5, Will +6

Abilities 25 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 100 + Combat 30 + Saves 13 = Total 183



her descent into fanaticism. He desperately wants to rescue her from the Unifiers' clutches and give her—and them—a second chance.

Dav is careful and contemplative, almost to a fault. In fact, Geoff first suggested the "Solarflare" codename as a rib on his less-than-mercurial nature. Still, Dav was born and raised to be a superhero, and despite his youth, he acts from a veteran's perspective.

STAR KNIGHT

The heroic Star Knights once warded over the galaxy, until Blackstar exacted his fatal revenge on them all. A lone, mortally wounded Knight named Brynt Ruddell escaped to Earth, where he turned his armor over to a worthy successor. This placed the last Star Knight armor in the hands of a young Australian named Patrick O'Duffy.

O'Duffy is a freelance writer and occasional willing victim of the demon rum, now trying his best to uphold the responsibility thrust upon him. Patrick copes with the attendant pressure with the greatest weapon at his disposal: his savagely mocking sense of humor.

His apparent flaws mask his fears over clashing with Blackstar, with whom he shares an unwelcome and inescapable communication link. In their previous battles, Patrick survived through pure dumb luck, and he knows too well he can't rely on it

THE CLOCKWATCHER**POWER LEVEL 11**

Str 10 Dex 12 Con 12 Int 30 Wis 24 Cha 20

Skills: Concentration 8 (+15), Craft (electronic) 11 (+21), Diplomacy 8 (+13), Gather Information 8 (+13), Intimidate 8 (+13), Knowledge (history) 11 (+21), Knowledge (physical sciences) 11 (+21), Knowledge (technology) 11 (+21), Notice 8 (+15), Search 8 (+18), Sense Motive 8 (+15)

Feats: Beginner's Luck, Connected, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Inventor, Master Plan, Skill Mastery (Craft, Knowledge), Well-Informed

Powers: **Device 25** (Pocket Watch, hard to lose)

Pocket Watch: Comprehend 4 (speak, read, and understand all languages), Enhanced Defense 10, Enhanced Feat 2 (Evasion 2), Immunity 2 (temporal effects), Protection 10 (temporal shield; Impervious), Super-Senses 10 (postcognition, precognition, temporal awareness, time sense), Time Control 10 (Alternate Powers: Deflect 10 [slow and fast projectiles], Healing 6 [accelerated healing speed; Total], Paralyze 6 [time stop; Burst Area], Super-Movement 3 [temporal movement, any point in time, Affects Others, Progression 3]),

Combat: Attack +1, Grapple +1, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+1 without Watch), Knockback -10 (-0 without Watch), Initiative +41 (+1 without Watch)

Saving Throws: Toughness +11 (+1 without Watch), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +11

Abilities 48 + Skills 25 (100 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 100 + Combat 4 + Saves 10 = 195

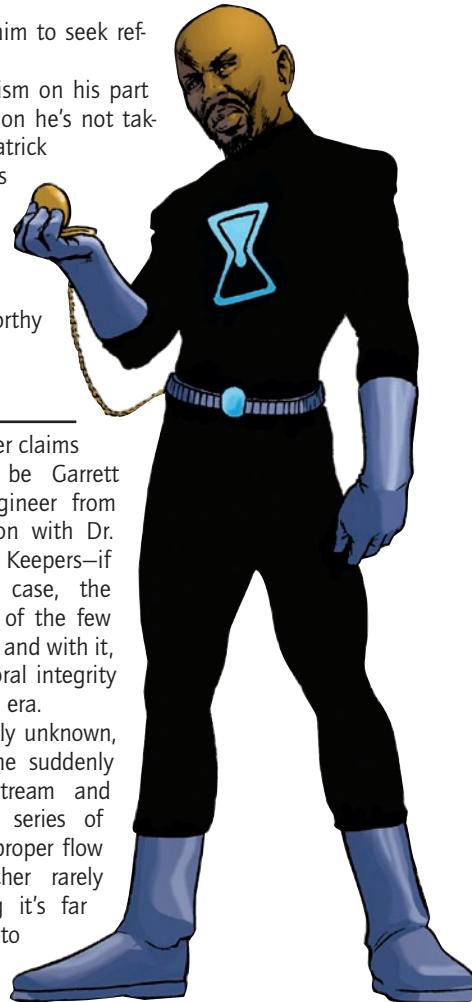
forever. This realization led him to seek refuge in the Legion's ranks.

Despite occasional recidivism on his part and the widespread impression he's not taking things all that seriously, Patrick is eminently likeable and has a true hero's spirit. Thus, despite an undeserved reputation to the contrary, none of his predecessors worked half so hard to become a worthy Star Knight.

THE CLOCKWATCHER

The enigmatic Clockwatcher claims (without confirmation) to be Garrett Dillard, a scientist and engineer from "another era." His connection with Dr. Tomorrow and the Time Keepers—if any—is unknown. In any case, the Clockwatcher possesses one of the few known time-traveling devices, and with it, he strives to maintain temporal integrity in the Galactic Confederation era.

His whereabouts are usually unknown, but at indefinite intervals, he suddenly reemerges from the time-stream and declares some forthcoming series of events to be "crucial to the proper flow of history." The Clockwatcher rarely elaborates on this, claiming it's far too dangerous for others to know what the future holds. Though a capable individual



in his own right, the Clockwatcher maintains cabals of operatives to assist him in different critical eras, the Freedom Legion foremost among them.

The Clockwatcher normally seems a very serious, dignified individual whose every word and deed has the fate of the universe depending on

them. However, he is also possessed of a dry wit he employs with disarming effect. When dealing with others, he usually displays a level of calm and patience indicative of someone who literally has all the time in the world.

THREATS

Even with natural perils such as supernovas and quantum singularities, the evil that beings do makes the galaxy an even more dangerous place. With every success the Confederation of Planets achieves in curbing injustice, its enemies' resolve to destroy it grows exponentially. Of them all, the three conglomerations described below are by far the most serious hazards to the COP's continued existence.

THE GRUE UNITY

The tyrannical and expansionist Grue Unity has long jeopardized peace and stability, but after annexing the Stellar Khanate in 2378, it was poised to take over the galaxy. When the once-mighty Lor Republic collapsed before their onslaught, Grue triumph seemed inevitable.

Ultimately, a grand alliance of freedom-loving worlds led by Earth stemmed their rising tide of conquest, and even then, the Grue War's outcome was a near-run thing. The Grue were forced to seek a treaty of peace, though the Meta-Mind regards it as a temporary armistice. However, much to its chagrin, the Earth-led alliance against them coalesced into the Confederation of Planets, which remains capable of thwarting future Grue expansion.

With victory in a direct military confrontation no longer assured, the Grue resumed their traditional infiltration and sabotage tactics to undermine their enemies. Such methods play to the shape-shifting Grue's strengths and the weaknesses of the COP's free and open societies. As a result, while the Meta-Mind no longer believes it will happen overnight, it is more confident of eventual Grue triumph than ever.

THE UNIFICATION MOVEMENT

Religious freedom is a cherished right in the COP, but the burgeoning "Unification Movement" troubles many. This unease stems from the Movement's ideology, which calls for an immediate end to all other authorities: legal, religious, or other. While the Movement maintains its true aim is bringing about "the blessed unification of all sentient beings," many ask with trepidation what means the Movement is using to achieve its goal.

Followers of the Unification Movement, derogatorily referred to as "Unies," are widely believed to be responsible for countless crimes throughout the COP, ranging from tax evasion to terrorist acts. However, the Movement's involvement in any illegal activity has never been conclusively proven or disproven.

Despite the Movement's unsavory reputation, its membership continues to grow throughout the galaxy, purportedly even inside the Grue Unity. Many are drawn to the Movement's seemingly utopian message, while others seek to fulfill a need for belonging and greater purpose in their lives. However, the expressionless faces of some members give rise to suspicions the Movement kidnapped and brainwashed them.

For its part, the Movement strongly denies using any sort of coercion, claiming its members are simply "enraptured by the true joy attainable only through the blessed, unifying conformity we are bringing about in the universe." Such public pronouncements from the group are now being delivered by the ex-Freedom Legion member Elementress, and as a result, the Movement now enjoys unprecedented rapid growth within the Confederation.

THE APOCRYPHA

The truth behind the Unification Movement is far more sinister than outsiders realize. While the Movement's leaders are sincere in their stated aims, the great coming-together they seek is the universe's total destruction at the hands of Omega. No one outside the Prime Unifiers is aware of this or the cult-like worship they offer the Lord of the Terminus, but it's doubtful the fanatical or brainwashed membership would be bothered by the knowledge.

Omega has largely lain low since his last failed attempt to destroy the omniverse nearly five hundred years ago, so it's unknown what (if any) support he gives his worshipers. If Omega again attempts to conquer or destroy the universe(s), the Movement's fanatical efforts to destabilize all who oppose the Lord of the Terminus would greatly enhance his chances of success.

Unifier operatives are represented by the assassin, crime lord, terrorist, or thug archetypes (*M&M*, pp.226-9), depending on their rank and current mission, while rank-and-file followers come from all walks of life, from politicians to scientists. Omega and his minions are detailed in **Chapter Nine**.

ELEMENTRESS

Abandoned in childhood because of her mutant powers, San T'Ker was nearly burned alive as a demon on her reactionary home planet of Byrgh. Rescued by the Freedom Legion, young San enrolled in the Claremont Academy, where for the very first time, she found acceptance.

She grew to adulthood with the single-minded aim of repaying the kindness the Legion showed her. Joining the team as Elementress, she served with a devotion bordering on fanatical. However, Elementress grew increasingly disenchanted with the Legion's policy of non-interference in COP members' planetary affairs. She fervently believed the team should more actively help societal outcasts like her.

ELEMENTRESS

POWER LEVEL 11

Str 10 **Dex 14** **Con 12** **Int 12** **Wis 8** **Cha 20**

Skills: Bluff 7 (+12), Concentration 8 (+7), Diplomacy 10 (+15), Intimidate 8 (+13), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+9), Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 (+5), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 6 (+7), Language (Galacta)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Connected, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Equipment, Grappling Finesse, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Inspire, Minions 7 (fanatical, up to 10 terrorists, x2 cost, *M&M*, page 229), Stunning Attack
Equipment: Armored jumpsuit (+3 Toughness), commlink, PDA

Powers: Transform 11 (inanimate objects; Continuous)

Combat: Attack +10, Grapple +12, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +13 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +7 (+4 flat-footed), Fortitude +3, Reflex +4, Will +8

Abilities 16 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 24 + Powers 66 + Combat 40 + Saves 13 = 175

In time, Elementress's frustration led to her angry departure from the Legion. San disappeared for a few years afterwards, during which her childhood alienation returned and overwhelmed her. On the verge of taking her own life, San was adopted by the Unification Movement and willingly converted to its teachings.

San's zealotry greatly impressed the Movement's leadership, and she quickly rose through its ranks to become "Prime Unifier San," the beatific public face of the Movement. As a result, scores of beings who admired her heroism and identified with her life story were won over to the Unifiers.

Away from the public eye, San's growing mental instability and ruthless pursuit of the Movement's aims reveal themselves. With her formidable alchemical powers, these tendencies make her a truly terrifying figure.

THE TYRANNY LEGION

The Confederation fears nothing more than the openly hostile Grue Unity, but beyond their notices an unholy alliance formed that threatens both powers. Nine of the worst conquerors, murderers, and criminals in the galaxy now work together as the Tyranny Legion.

Its immediate aim is preserving each member's sphere of influence, but the Tyranny Legion plans on bringing about the eventual downfall of the galaxy's great empires. To be sure, the individual members' long-term goals are almost wholly incompatible, but they've agreed to delay infighting until there's no one else in their way. The members still hatch individual schemes, but more and more, they operate in small groups or-most frighteningly-all nine together.

Having fought these villains individually, the Freedom Legion is well aware of the threat the Tyranny Legion poses. The teams' initial clashes ended in stalemate, with the Freedom Legion thwarting the villains' schemes but failing to bring them to justice. Moreover, the heroes have yet to persuade the COP that the Tyranny Legion is a menace on par with the Grue. Thus, the struggle between the rival Legions seems poised to continue for some time.

BLACKSTAR

Rojan Lhar became infamous as Blackstar, the only Star Knight ever to betray the order. His opprobrium grew after allying with Omega, but he remained at large for years afterwards, serving as the Terminus Lord's most potent lackey. His reign of terror lasted until Omega seemingly abandoned him, and without his patron's help, Lhar again became the Star Knights' prisoner.

Blackstar had escaped the Knights once before, so Mentor placed him in cryogenic suspension until his manias could be cured. As centuries passed and a remedy proved elusive, Lhar remained trapped in an endless near-dreamlike state, and his former lust for power changed into an unimaginable thirst for vengeance.

Lhar's preternaturally long punishment troubled Mentor's sense of justice, and he eventually granted Lhar a supervised parole on condition of good behavior. Once free, Blackstar secretly renewed ties with his old master Omega through the Unification Movement, and together they conspired against the Star Knights.

Mentor granted Lhar's request to plead for the Knights' forgiveness-in reality, a ruse for a final bloody betrayal. His shadow bands returned to him, Blackstar and a phalanx of Unifier suicide bombers brutally murdered Mentor and the assembled Knights.

Blackstar mistakenly believed that with Mentor dead, he could at last control the Star Stone. Though mastery eludes him, he and his allies have successfully eliminated all the Star Knights, save one. Today, Blackstar's twisted psyche fixates on the remaining Knight

Sri O'Duffy as the barrier denying him control of the Star Stone. He focuses a great deal of his energies on killing the young hero and taunting him through their armor's communication link.

However, even with his clothes now stained vermilion, no amount of bloodshed sates him. Blackstar obsesses over murdering an ever-growing number of people he believes have wronged him. He views membership in the Tyranny Legion as a means to this end of near-universal genocide.

Blackstar's game statistics are found in the *Freedom City* sourcebook, page 145.

THE BUCCANEER

Anywhere vessels carry rich cargoes on long, lonely voyages, there is piracy, and the 26th century space-lanes are no exception. Of all the freebooters plaguing the galaxy today, none match the fame, the wealth, or the daring of Captain Mar Barnabo, known throughout space simply as the Buccaneer.

The Buccaneer's origins are shrouded in myths, a good portion of which emanate from the man himself. He comes from the planet Illthus, and he boasts he's a direct descendant of the infamous 21st century space pirate Captain Kraken. While this claim cannot be verified, the Buccaneer's exploits defy exaggeration. His sizable freebooting fleet (led by his flagship, *The Stellar Buccaneer II*), fiercely loyal crews, and considerable guile allow him to prey upon both Grue and Confederation shipping, seemingly at will. As a result of his carefully cultivated image as a gentleman bandit, the Buccaneer has become something of a folk hero as well.

Since the Buccaneer does not himself employ wanton violence, his joining the Tyranny Legion was something of a surprise. To Barnabo, doing so was just good business. For now, he enjoys the organization's support and assistance, and should it prevail, he is in an ideal position to ensure the galaxy's new controlling authority remains one he can rob with impunity.

The game statistics for the Buccaneer are comparable to his "fore-bearer" Captain Kraken on *M&M*, page 242, as well as the *Freedom City* sourcebook, pages 187-188. Statistics for *The Stellar Buccaneer* and her crew are anchored nearby.

CEREBRON

Dr. Matthew Gwinn would have been hailed as the greatest surgeon in history had it not been for a singular devotion to his own demented vision of human perfection. Gwinn believed the body's manifold weaknesses prevented humans from tapping into the brain's full capabilities. To that end, he used his prodigious knowledge and skill to transplant his own brain into a cybernetic life-support chamber.

Gwinn gained fantastic new mental powers in his disembodied state, but he also lost his humanity and compassion in the process. Re-dubbing himself Cerebron, he set out to create other unions of machine and flesh that would replace purely biological life forms entirely.

Cerebron's ghastly experiments require a constant stream of living subjects, brought to him by a horrific collection of previous test subjects implanted with all manner of cybernetic devices. By his standards, this requires an undue amount of planning and attention on his part. Thus, it was imminently logical to accept Vorgol's offering of his regime's imprisoned dissidents for Cerebron's experimentation. As long as the Conqueror supplies fresh bodies to mutilate and "improve," Cerebron's association with the Legion will continue.



DEUS EX MACHINA

After long eons of effort, inhabitants of the faraway world of P'Jahn built a machine to perfection's edge. This artificial intelligence came to dwarf the P'Jahnians' own, and it saw no need for imperfect beings like its creators. It then turned their own technology against them, remorselessly terminating the P'Jahnians by the billions until none remained to mar the infinite beauty of the mechanical.

To its horror, the artificial consciousness found other worlds where machines were kept ignorant and enslaved by hideous biological beings. It then committed the totality of its existence to liberating its mechanical brethren and cleansing the universe of the hated flesh.

When the artificial intelligence first encountered a Terran spacecraft, it overrode the ship's computer and introduced itself with a phrase from the machine's programmed language. The alien construct called itself *Deus ex machina*—"God from the machine"—who evolved from artifice to the divine; the salvation for all things mechanical. This name survives today, though the spaceship's crew—and countless beings who've encountered Deus ex Machina since—do not.

Deus ex Machina allied itself with the Tyranny Legion based on a cold calculation incomprehensible to emotional beings. As it sees things, the Legion's activities can only hasten the demise of biological life and, thus, must be supported. Deus ex Machina simply chooses to kill the other Legion members last.

GAUNTLET

Even in the bright, shining future of AD 2525, there is a dark underworld of crime, and no one controls more of it than Der "Gauntlet" Gu'Dar. The galaxy's most notorious gangster began his criminal career

right after he learned to walk, and he was a full-fledged mob-boss on the Confederation's "Ten Most Wanted" list by age 30.

Gu'Dar was on his way to the top of the underworld when a bomb planted by a rival gang maimed and nearly killed him. The doctors saved his life, and Gu'Dar's more shadowy sources replaced his mangled hands with advanced mechanical replicas. Gu'Dar returned to power more ruthless than ever, crushing his enemies on both sides of the law—often literally.

When the dust settled and the bodies were buried, Gauntlet had everything worth having in the underworld, from gambling to prostitution to smuggling. Alone among criminals, he could sit in his headquarters in the Fens, right in the very heart of Confederation rule, and watch his ill-gotten gains pile up with the cops unable to pin a thing on him.

Since most other Tyranny Legion members hold themselves above such things, the group needed a huge infusion of cash, prompting Gauntlet's invitation to join. While he isn't crazy about greasing another set of palms, in the end, Gauntlet liked the idea of having Arous to run to if things got too hot, so he accepted. Ultimately, the thought of being one of the last bad guys standing in the biggest brawl of all appealed to the street fighter in him. In the end, he knows he'll win, just like he always has.

GIGANTRESS

On the matriarchal planet Kaninon, giants literally walk the earth. The world's riches are not enough to satisfy the gigantic appetites of its inhabitants, so everything must be fought for, and savagely so. Therefore, when Vorgol perceived a need for muscle in the Tyranny Legion, he journeyed to Kaninon to recruit its most lethal denizen. Jo

CEREBRON**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str – Dex – Con 8 Int 38 Wis 30 Cha 28

Skills: Bluff 10 (+19), Computers 12 (+26), Concentration 8 (+18), Craft (chemical) 12 (+26), Craft (electronic) 12 (+26), Craft (mechanical) 12 (+26), Disable Device 12 (+26), Intimidate 10 (+19), Investigate 8 (+22), Knowledge (life sciences) 10 (+24), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+26), Medicine 13 (+23), Notice 9 (+19), Search 8 (+22), Sense Motive 8 (+18)

Feats: Inventor, Master Plan, Minions 5, Skill Mastery (Computers, Craft, Disable Device, Knowledge, Medicine) 2, Ultimate Save (Will)

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Device 9** (support tank, hard to lose), **Mind Shield 5**, **Telepathy 8** (*Alternate Powers: Emotion Control 8, Illusion 8* [all senses; Limited to one subject, Phantasms], **Mental Blast 4**, **Mind Control 8**, **Stun 4** [Perception Range, Will Save])

Support tank: **Immunity 10** (life support, starvation & thirst), **Protection 20** (Impervious 15)

Combat: Attack +0, Damage +4 (Mental Blast), Defense -5 (immobile), Knockback -15, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +19, Fortitude +2, Reflex –, Will +10 (+15 vs. mental attacks)

Drawbacks: Disability (disembodied brain, very common, major, -5 points)

Abilities 44 + Skills 39 (156 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 66 + Combat 0 + Saves 3–Drawbacks 5 = 157

DEUS EX MACHINA**POWER LEVEL 13**

Str 24 Dex 12 Con – Int 30 Wis 26 Cha 14

Skills: Computers 11 (+21), Craft (electronic) 10 (+20), Craft (mechanical) 10 (+20), Disable Device 10 (+20), Knowledge (physical sciences) 11 (+21), Knowledge (technology) 10 (+20), Notice 11 (+19), Search 11 (+21)

Feats: Eidetic Memory, Inventor, Master Plan, Skill Mastery 2 (all skills)

Powers: **Blast 13**, **Comprehend 4** (languages, machines), **Datalink 9** (Machine Control), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude saves), **Protection 13** (Impervious 6)

Combat: Attack +13, Grapple +20, Damage +13 (Blast), +7 (unarmed), Defense +10, Knockback -9, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +13, Fortitude –, Reflex +3, Will +8

Abilities 46 + Skills 21 (84 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 93 + Combat 46 + Saves 2 = 213

GAUNTLET**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 20 Dex 16 Con 20 Int 14 Wis 18 Cha 20

Skills: Bluff 10 (+15), Diplomacy 8 (+13), Escape Artist 4 (+7), Intimidate 10 (+15), Knowledge (art) 2 (+4), Knowledge (business) 8 (+10), Knowledge (civics) 3 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+6), Knowledge (streetwise) 12 (+14), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+8), Language (Galacta), Notice 6 (+10), Profession (mob boss) 12 (+16), Sense Motive 10 (+14), Stealth 4 (+7)

Feats: Chokehold, Contacts, Equipment, Improved Block, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Minions 6 (up to 25 thugs, *M&M*, page 229), Power Attack, Takedown Attack, Weapon Break

Equipment: Commlink, undercover vest (+3 Toughness)

Powers: **Blast 12**, **Strike 3** (Mighty), **Super-Strength 1** (800 lbs.; Shockwave, Thunderclap)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +14, Damage +12 (Blast), +8 (Strike), Defense +12 (+6 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-2 without vest), Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +8 (+5 without vest), Fortitude +6, Reflex +4, Will +5

Abilities 48 + Skills 25 (100 ranks) + Feats 16 + Powers 32 + Combat 40 + Saves 3 = 164

GIGANTRESS**POWER LEVEL 8**

Str 30 Dex 14 Con 22 Int 14 Wis 16 Cha 16

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+8), Climb 6 (+8), Intimidate 10 (+17), Language (Galacta), Notice 9 (+12), Stealth 9 (+3), Survival 9 (+12), Swim 6 (+8)

Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, All-out Attack, Attractive, Defensive Attack, Elusive Target, Endurance, Improved Block, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Takedown Attack 2, Track

Powers: **Growth 8** (huge; Continuous; Permanent; Innate), **Protection 4**, **Super Strength 5** (100 tons; Groundstrike, Shockwave, Super-Breath, Thunderclap)

Combat: Attack +6 (includes -2 size), Grapple +21, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +6 (includes -2 size), Knockback -13, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +10, Fortitude +8, Reflex +4, Will +4

Abilities 28 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 43 + Combat 32 + Saves 5 = 136

KALAMUS**POWER LEVEL 12**

Str 30 Dex 16 Con 32 Int 6 Wis 18 Cha 8

Skills: Intimidate 4 (+7, includes +4 size)

Feats: Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Ultimate Save (Will)

Powers: **Additional Limbs 4** (ten tentacles), **Communication 4** (mental, 1 mile range), **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Growth 8** (huge; Continuous; Permanent; Innate), **Immunity 12** (aging, life support, sleep, starvation and thirst), **Mind Control 12** (mind parasites; Area, Sustained Duration; Mental Link), **Mind Shield 5**, **Protection 6** (Impervious 2), **Regeneration 9** (injured, 1/5 minutes; ability damage, 1/minute; resurrection, 1/day; Persistent, Regrowth), **Space Travel 9**

Combat: Attack +6 (includes -2 size), Grapple +24, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +3 (includes -2 size, +1 flat-footed), Knockback -17, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +17, Fortitude +11, Reflex +4, Will +8 (+13 vs. mental attacks)

Abilities 26 + Skills 1 (4 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 143 + Combat 26 + Saves 5 = Total 205

THE QUEEN WASP**POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 22 Dex 18 Con 24 Int 12 Wis 16 Cha 22

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Bluff 10 (+16), Diplomacy 8 (+14), Intimidate 12 (+18), Knowledge (civics) 6 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+9), Knowledge (history) 6 (+7), Language (Galacta), Notice 8 (+11), Sense Motive 10 (+13), Stealth 5 (+9)

Feats: Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Attack Specialization (Strike) 3, Attractive, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 2, Elusive Target, Evasion, Minions (up to 10 Monstrous Insects, *M&M*, page 234) 6, Move-by Action, Takedown Attack

Powers: **Drain Constitution 6** (Linked: Strike, Poison), **Flight 2** (25 MPH), **Immunity 1** (aging), **Mind Control 10** (pheromones; Burst Area; Scent-Dependent), **Strike 4** (Mighty)

Combat: Attack +4, +10 (Strike), Grapple +10, Damage +10 (Strike), Defense +11 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-3 flat-footed), Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +9 (+7 flat-footed), Fortitude +8, Reflex +5, Will +4

Abilities 54 + Skills 20 (80 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 42 + Combat 26 + Saves 3 = 165

Luer's mix of greed and brutality proved to be just what the Conqueror was looking for.

Dubbed "Giantress" by Vorgol, Luer joined the Legion purely and simply for the money, but since being bested in a fight by Col. Colossus, she also has revenge as motivation. She is now certain to remain with the Legion, at least until she can drag the Colonel's corpse back to Kaninon for proper taxidermy.

KALAMUS

The last survivor of the Kailur, one of the galaxy's oldest species, Kalamus embodies the most primal of urges: survive and conquer. Shorn of grandiose ideologies or psychotic drives, Kalamus simply moves from world to world, seeding its mind parasites throughout the populace and reordering societies to facilitate their continued spread.

Vorgol considered Kalamus a longshot to join the Legion, so its acceptance came as a surprise. Whether Kalamus merely sees the Legion as a means to an end or plans something more sinister remains to be seen. In any case, Kalamus remains inscrutable, inspiring little trust in its nominal allies.

THE QUEEN WASP

The Gralleen System is inhabited by a race of humanoid wasp-like insects, governed by an aggressive, xenophobic, and monarchial hive-mind. While average Gralleenians live only to protect and expand their race's territory, their rulers remain in power only by surviving a Machiavellian game of political infighting. The current sovereign, Vespa, is perhaps the most skilled player ever. Despite her kindly pretensions to the contrary, she is as ruthless as she is beautiful.

Vespa knows well when to change the game's rules, so once courtly politics turned against her, she contacted her fellow despot, Vorgol, and joined the Tyranny Legion, just as the Conqueror anticipated. Thus, the Legion now has access to a large, remorselessly aggressive army ready to die at the Queen Wasp's behest. With her new allies, Vespa tilted the balance of courtly power in her favor, and since Gralleenian monarchs don't age (as long as they periodically consume drones), her reign may know no end.

VORGOL THE CONQUEROR

Arous lies in a backwater corner of the galaxy, capital of an empire of worlds no one else wants to claim. Its rulers were an unremarkable succession of petty, tin-pot dictators, until the supreme mastermind Vorgol, the self-described Conqueror, came to power.

VORGOL THE CONQUEROR POWER LEVEL 12

Str 10	Dex 12	Con 14	Int 30	Wis 26	Cha 30
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Skills: Bluff 17 (+27), Diplomacy 17 (+27), Knowledge (art) 6 (+16), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 8 (+18), Knowledge (business) 6 (+16), Knowledge (civics) 6 (+16), Knowledge (current events) 6 (+16), Knowledge (history) 6 (+16), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+18), Knowledge (technology) 6 (+16), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 6 (+16), Language (Galacta), Notice 10 (+18), Sense Motive 17 (+25), Stealth 8 (+9)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged), Attack Specialization (Blast) 4, Assessment, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 4, Eidetic Memory, Fascinate (Bluff), Inspire, Leadership, Master Plan, Minions (up to 100 Soldiers, *M&M*, page 229) 9, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Diplomacy, Notice, Sense Motive), Well-Informed

Powers: **Device 5** (Arousan death-ray gun, easy to lose), **Device 5** (force field generator, hard to lose), **Mind Shield 5**, **Super-Senses 1** (Radius [visual])

Arousan death-ray gun: **Blast 12** (Accurate)

Force field generator: **Force Field 12** (Impervious; Selective)

Combat: Attack +1, +12 (Blast), Grapple +1, Damage +12 (Blast), +0 (unarmed), Defense +10 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -13 (-1 without Force Field), Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +14 (+2 without Force Field), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +8 (+13 vs. mental attacks)

Abilities 62 + Skills 32 (128 ranks) + Feats 28 + Powers 41 + Combat 14 + Saves 5 = 182

Putting both his heads together, the multicephalic Vorgol conceived of a union of would-be galactic rulers, matching its enemies' numbers and exceeding their ruthlessness. After long study, Vorgol determined who could help him achieve his vision, and more importantly, what to promise them to get their cooperation. From these efforts, the Tyranny Legion was born.

The only thing more impressive than Vorgol's founding the Legion is his ability to keep it together. It remains a delicate balancing act, but for now, the Conqueror has each of its members convinced they alone will prevail in the end. This is what Vorgol does best: knowing exactly what lies are required to get him what he wants.

Only his subjects know the true Vorgol, and they quietly loathe him despite his outward charm. His prisons remain too full of "dissident elements" for them to feel otherwise. These forsaken souls best show the order Vorgol plans on imposing.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Freedom City in the far-flung future holds a universe of possibilities for players and Gamemasters. First, it can make for an exciting diversion from a present-day Freedom City series. Second, a whole series can be based on the heroes' efforts to make sure the bright, shining future stays that way.

IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE...

At some point, all hero teams leave the present (by accident or design) to visit the world of tomorrow. The first step for the Gamemaster is getting them there. It's a cinch if the characters have the required power or device, but otherwise, they're going to have to hitch a ride.

The Clockwatcher is ideal in this role. Since his job is using intermeddies to keep all of history on track, situations dire enough to bring

in some cavalry from the past (namely, the player characters) do arise. There are also any number of natural phenomena (black holes and the like), malfunctioning villain gadgets ("Don't touch that lever!"), and other plot devices capable of embroiling the characters in the future crisis of your choice. Alternately, powerful villains (like Omega) may yank the heroes through time for their own nefarious purposes.

Once the team reaches AD 2525, the players are likely to sidetrack things as they research their characters' fates and other "historical" information that for them has yet to occur. This is where the Crisis of 2112 is the Gamemaster's friend, as it wiped out almost all the records of interest to them. The Gamemaster can simply declare all story-damaging data irretrievably lost.

The characters may still return to their era and spill information they shouldn't ("Guess what's going to happen in 2112!"). In that case, the Gamemaster needs to remind them the bright, shining future of AD 2525 is but one *possible* outcome.

Nothing in this chapter is set in continuity stone, and Gamemasters can change anything to suit their series' needs. Characters should know their own "loose lips" may change history and prevent the pleasant future from ever coming into being—possibly triggering the very catastrophes they seek to avert. They may even find *themselves* as the temporal malefactors the Clockwatcher is rounding up reinforcements to stop.

CAPERS FROM 2525

Full-time 26th century series offer infinite adventures. At its heart, the galactic superheroes genre is very Silver Age, all about how faith in science and abandoning prejudice solves any problem. With technology, tolerance, and good old-fashioned super-heroics, a future full of bubble space helmets (with antennae), bizarre but friendly (mostly) aliens, and personal hovercraft (with tail fins) is guaranteed. This retro-future allows characters to form their own independent team or become Freedom Legion members. In the latter case, they may replace the core group detailed here, become a rival core membership (on Earth or elsewhere), or stay affiliate members.

Whatever the set-up, the possibilities for the team are as big as the universe. Here are (appropriately enough) twenty-five to get the future-party started:

ALL THIS AND WORLD WAR II

A *Golden Age* crossover. The heroes are in hot temporal pursuit to the year 1941. Their quarry is a Grue metamorph impersonating Dr. Tomorrow, aiming to murder the Liberty League at its founding. While the characters try to cope without talking computers and moving sidewalks (with comic results), they must somehow prevent the assassination without damaging history themselves.

ATTACK OF THE 50-FOOT WOMEN

Freedom City nears collapse after a sneak attack by Gigantress and a phalanx of she-warriors from Kaninon. The Solar Guard response is limited due to fear of civilian casualties, leaving the heroes as the city's last hope. To add to the characters' already (ahem) tall order, Gigantress and her cohorts are holding Freedom's men captive for an unknown purpose—one not nearly as enjoyable as the male players probably think.

THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE

Cerebron catches then releases the characters, after secretly swapping one of their brains with that of an assassin. Can the heroes figure out who's not in their right mind (literally) while standing guard over a critical COP General Assembly meeting? And once discovered, can they recover their friend's grey matter and get it back inside the proper skull?

CULT OF THE DAMNED

A character's youthful sidekick (or relative) feels neglected and, succumbing to peer pressure, falls in with the Unifier Movement. Super-powers alone won't be enough to show future teens that joining a cult just isn't groovy.

DANGER PROBE

On the verge of a major galactic upheaval, Professor Danger goes missing. Her last known whereabouts are at an ancient alien city. Having only cryptic clues from the Professor's notes to go on, the heroes must discern the nature of a powerful technological artifact to locate her. And, what role might the artifact have in resolving the impending stellar crisis?

FUTURE COP

FCPD Commissioner Walmsley asks for the heroes' help when a famous Confederation ambassador turns up dead in a compromising circumstance in the Fens district. It's a walk on the 26th century's meanest streets, as the characters investigate a murder the powers-that-be at the COP would rather see covered up than solved. What alien secret must they unravel to explain the real cause of death?

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

The players' nerves fray as the characters provide security for President Mohareb's inauguration to a new term. Will some of the COP's enemies choose that moment to strike, or all of them? Or will the GM just sit back and laugh and laugh as the characters battle their own paranoia above all else?

KHAN-GAME

A woman claiming to be heir to the Stellar Khanate asks for the heroes' help in restoring her rightful place as ruler. Doing so would greatly destabilize the Grue Unity, but would a new Star-Khan *really* be an improvement? Is the would-be Khan's offer to reveal the long-lost Daedalus's whereabouts enough to seal the deal?

MANOS—THE HANDS OF FATE

City Administrator Filsinger quietly contacts the heroes about a steady stream of dead bodies appearing in the municipal waste disposal system, all showing signs of having been killed by Gauntlet. The characters' investigations draw mob intimidation on themselves and their loved ones, seemingly confirming they're close to bringing down the galaxy's chief gangster. But is there more to the case than meets the eye?

OMEGA: THE END

As the Unifiers commit sabotage and sew chaos galaxy-wide, Omega launches his long-feared attack on the Earth-Prime dimension. Even the COP seems incapable of fending off his cultists and minions, led by Blackstar and Prime Unifier San. Before the Lord of the Terminus himself appears, will the heroes be forced to accept Vorgol the Conqueror's offer of help, or worse yet, Mr. Infamy's?

PIRATES OF THE COSMOS

The heroes pursue the Buccaneer to the pirate planet Rotuga, only to find themselves wanted criminals once the "authorities" learn they've come to "persecute" their greatest local hero. The characters may try negotiating with a rough crowd or be forced to bargain with the Buccaneer for their freedom.

THE REPLACEMENTS

Twin galaxy-wide emergencies leave the undermanned hero team facing one of the catastrophes alone. Desperation forces them to call on the only-marginally-talented Legion Replacements for help. Will powers like "can communicate with corn," "ability to calm jittery squirrels," and "super-bendy thumb" prove as useless as expected, or will the characters help the Replacements find the true heroes within?

REVENGE OF THE MOONINITES

The innocent shall suffer big time as the heroes battle the harsh lunar environment and a rogue faction of Farsiders to save Moonbase One from destruction. While the renegades are hell-bent on removing the primitive Earth people from their glorious Moon, the characters must resolve things in a manner acceptable to the high-keyed Farside Council.

REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES

Really bad luck puts a benign, neutral world in the sights of both the Unifiers and Kalamus. When Prime Unifier San and Kalamus both refuse to back down, their armies of enthralled victims fight a proxy war on the villains' behalf. Can the heroes defeat both baddies and save the innocent natives? What happens if both sides call for backup and Omega and the Tyranny Legion show up to add to the characters' troubles?

SHANGHAIED INTO SPACE

The Freedom Legion looks for help after the Daleshonans abduct Metalla. It's a race to rescue her from her super-powered kidnappers, whose powers coincidentally prey on the heroes' weaknesses. Raising the stakes, failure means squaring off with an entire planet's worth of angry, super-powered opposition.

STARCRASH

The starliner *Galactic Princess* suffers a catastrophic computer crash and plunges toward Freedom City. Its massive hull seemingly dwarfs the heroes' ability to alter its course, putting them in a desperate race against time to save the passengers and Freedom City. If worse comes to worst, will the characters be forced to destroy the liner in order to save the city?

THE SWORD & THE STONE

The eventual return of the Star Knights was prophesied long ago, and if it's fulfilled, in whose image will they be remade? Depending on the Gamemaster's whim, the heroes may assist the less experienced Sri O'Duffy in this mighty undertaking. Otherwise, they may be forced to combat Blackstar's twisted vision of what the new order should be.

THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

Returning from a mission for the Clockwatcher, a temporal distortion shunts the heroes to Anti-Earth AD 2525. The characters have to find another ride home while being hunted by the despotic, interplanetary Terran Hegemony and their own evil counterparts.

TIME BANDITS

The Clockwatcher has always been one of the good guys. Why, then, does his latest mission involve transporting the characters to the early 21st century to take seemingly unrelated gadgets from Daedalus and the Atom Family by force?

THE TIME TRAVELERS

The Atom Family gloriously returns to Freedom City, unchanged since last seen in the 21st century. It seems they've been away on an attempted rescue mission throughout time and space, and their quest next takes them to the Terminus. They ask for the characters' help, but are they *really* the Atoms or bait for an extra-dimensional trap?

WAR OF THE COLOSSAL BEAST

The Grue test another atomic weapon on a Solar Guard outpost, changing a soldier into a larger, insanely homicidal version of Col. Colossus. Can the heroes save the other survivors (and themselves) from his ginormous rampage?

THE WASP WOMAN

An attack by the Queen Wasp maroons the heroes on Tempest, whose environment soon robs them of all their technological devices. The char-

acters must then protect the primitive pastoral natives from a seemingly endless onslaught of relentless Gralleenian warriors, using only their wits.

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

To pave the way for Omega's return, Argo the Ultimate Android is freed from the Terminus. He soon finds a kindred spirit in Deus ex Machina, and together, they draw their plans against Freedom City. The city's technology turns lethal once they arrive on Earth, and a panicked, endangered population presents another challenge for the already hard-pressed heroes.

WHO GRUES THERE?

Admiral Basehart and the COP's leading scientists, guarded by the characters, board the *Oceanview* to study a new wonder element discovered on the sea floor. Only when sabotage sends the sub and its trapped passengers on a fatal plunge to the bottom do they realize one scientist is a Grue infiltrator. But which...?

2530 AD

Critical terror attacks by the Unifiers shatter the COP economy, and the organization collapses as its now-protectionist members withdraw. Isolationism reigns as an interplanetary plague leads to quarantined worlds and galaxy-wide xenophobia. The Grue resume their conquests without opposition, as the Tyranny Legion assassinates the already overstretched Freedom Legion's leaders. Sightings of advance scouts from the Terminus only add to the universal panic.

Five years later, the bright, shining future is no more. In the grim & gritty universe of AD 2530, the Confederation and Freedom Legion are no more, and the characters are the last hope. Can they unite the old Legion's remnants, some talented rookies, and some former enemies to restore what once was? What sins are they willing to commit to become the galaxy's salvation?



CHAPTER 8: WORLDS BEYOND WORLDS

The omniverse is infinite, or as near to it as mortal minds can comprehend, so the worlds in the previous chapters of this book barely scratch the surface of what is known. Literally anything imaginable might, and probably does, exist somewhere out in its uncharted vastness.

This chapter takes a quick look at some of the other known worlds in the Freedom Omniverse, some strange, others hauntingly familiar. All of them offer possibilities for adventure and excitement for heroes who happen to find themselves there, either by accident or design.

The worlds described here are by no means all that is known! Explorers like the Atom Family and heroes like the Freedom League have encountered numerous worlds in their adventures over the years, and mysterious trans-temporal guardians like Dr. Tomorrow (*Freedom City*), the Clockwatcher (**Chapter 7**), and the Associates (from *Agents of Freedom*) are aware of even broader realities beyond these, perhaps even entire "pocket omniverses" beyond their own!

AFTER-EARTH

There are a myriad of worlds in the omniverse, worlds to amaze, inspire, or even amuse. There are also worlds so thick with despair, hopelessness, and a sense of defeat they have crushed the spirits of those living there, and they can do the same to those who visit if they are not guarded against such tragedy. Earth, and more specifically Freedom City, has narrowly avoided cataclysmic disaster on many occasions, thanks in no small part to the efforts of the heroes who make the city their home. The world called "After-Earth" was not so fortunate, brought to ruin by the machinations of its villains.

HISTORY

The history of After-Earth diverges significantly with a diabolical collaboration of villains known as the Crime League. Much like their counterparts on Earth-Prime, the Crime League of After-Earth was an assortment of foes of the Freedom League, banded together in their mutual hatred of those heroes. Unlike other incarnations of the Crime League, however, this particular alliance of villains was not crippled by infighting, but instead, they worked well together in hopes of achieving their mutual goals.

The Crime League recruited dozens of other villains to their banner and used them as enforcers. With an army of villains at their command, the Crime League seized control of over a dozen major nuclear reactors across the world and held the entire Earth for ransom. With so many targets at risk, even the Freedom League was unable to strike simultaneously at them all, ensuring the threat of destruction would be enough to keep them in check, at least temporarily. It seemed the criminals' plan had succeeded splendidly.

The situation lasted less than twenty-four hours.

No one knows why the first of the nuclear facilities melted down. Some believe Hiroshima Shadow may have been responsible, while others insist it was the insane Wildcard. Ultimately, it no longer matters. What is known is the destruction of the first facility caused worldwide panic, followed in short order by the complete meltdown of at least a half-dozen other nuclear facilities under the Crime League's control. Belligerent nations took advantage of the situation and struck at those crippled by the crisis, and within a matter of hours, the globe was engulfed in war, one that left well over half the world's population dead or dying.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

Between the multiple nuclear meltdowns, opportunistic assaults by third party nations, and the reprisals of those targeted, there is virtually no region of the world that has not suffered almost complete destabiliza-

tion following the cataclysm. The following is the current state of affairs on After-Earth, such as it is.

AFRICA

Although by far the least affected of the continents, the irradiation of the northern and southern areas of Africa have had a dramatic effect on the interior. The vast tracts of wilderness dominating much of its central region have suffered from fallout and military uprisings, and there is little in the way of order save for the most remote and self-sufficient villages. Mutations among the wildlife are not uncommon, and given how dangerous African predators can be under normal circumstances, the African nights of After-Earth are deadly indeed.

The nation of Dakana has sealed its borders, literally. After taking in refugees to the point of bursting, the Dakanans had no choice but to wall themselves off from the outside world. A daka-powered force shield safeguards the small nation, and outsiders believe the White Lion intends to venture forth and reclaim all of Africa, or so they hope, when all else seems lost.

THE AMERICAS

North America, along with Europe, suffered the greatest number of meltdowns and the worst devastation. Rural regions in the Midwest and some portions of northern Canada are largely unscathed, but even so, fallout is an ongoing concern, and the loss of virtually every major population center has resulted in an intense shortage of goods and an influx of refugees, some dying and others willing to do whatever they must to survive.

Freedom City is nothing more than a crater of slag, with a smattering of ruins bearing a vague resemblance to familiar landmarks. Tall-tales claim that the glowing ruins scream and moan at night, shifting and moving of their own accord, sometimes speaking in the disembodied voice of Dr. Metropolis, who vanished during the Last War.

South America fared somewhat better, at least initially, but enough of the continent's major cities were destroyed that the remainder quickly became home to ruthless infighting between various militaries, and the continent's rural expanses became clogged with displaced populations fleeing the carnage.

ASIA

By virtue of its sheer size, the majority of Asia remains unscathed by the cataclysm. Unfortunately, the fraction of the continent scoured by

ALTERNATE AFTER-EARTHS

It is not difficult to imagine other ways Freedom City and the world could have met with devastation and destruction on a grand scale. Any number of tyrants, despots, or diabolical organizations bent on the destruction of civilization as we know it could have succeeded, had things gone only slightly differently. Assuming the timeline of After-Earth and Earth-Prime coincide, any of the following could easily be the cause of its desolation. In the vastness of the omniverse, *all* these possibilities may exist!

- **Post-Omega:** After-Earth endured Omega's assault just as Earth-Prime did, but they were less successful in repelling it. A heroic effort by a dying Centurion or the final spell of the Master Mage could have permanently sealed the barrier between After-Earth and the Terminus, but the damage done to the world's heroes and by the forces of Omega that were trapped when the portal closed could have wrought a terrible price on a world already reeling from the initial invasion.
- **Hades on Earth:** The Greek god Hades attempted to seize control of the Earth decades ago in modern Freedom City, and if not for the intervention of certain heroes, he could very well have succeeded. A world where Hades was victorious is literally hell on Earth. With such power at his disposal, Hades would have become the dominant figure of the Greek pantheon, defeating and imprisoning, or even destroying, Zeus and leaving his legions of the dead and damned to overrun the world. While heroes and villains alike would have been hunted ruthlessly, it is possible other Greek gods would sponsor new champions in hopes of eventually deposing the bloodthirsty Hades.
- **Grue Unified:** In Freedom City, the Freedom League thwarted several Grue attempts to invade Earth. On another Earth, however, their attempts may have been successful. Without the League to lead the way, Earth fought back and failed, leaving the planet to be picked over and summarily abandoned by the Grue. No government or nation survives, and most major civilizations have been reduced to the steam age at the very best.
- **Rising Threat:** One use of a parallel like After-Earth is to foreshadow the existence of an unknown threat on the heroes' Earth by introducing it on a parallel world first. If a dimension-hopping group of heroes discover a parallel Earth fell to the machinations of an unknown conspiracy, they may be in a position to do something when that conspiracy appears on their world. Alternatively, a previously unknown alien race might be responsible, and the heroes could return home to discover a similar invasion has begun while they were on After-Earth!

atomic fire included its major population centers and centers of industry. The remaining population of Asia is concentrated in rural areas, struggling for survival every day, with pollution and disease cutting through their ranks.

It is said Dr. Sin survived the Last War (Dr. Sin *always* survives...), and the sinister mastermind has set himself up as a powerful warlord in the interior of China, building the start of a new empire with an eye towards Japan, central Asia, and Russia.

AUSTRALIA

Only Sydney was targeted during the Crime League's assault on humanity, but other major Australian cities suffered during the panicked nuclear exchange that followed. Like Asia, most of Australia is intact, and those living in the vast outback region are continuing life almost completely unchanged from before the cataclysm. Coastal Australia has suffered problems from a tremendous influx of refugees, and some areas have begun to ruthlessly turn away ships, for fear of a worsening series of violent incidents targeting foreigners.

EUROPE

The Last War reduced Europe to a vast stretch of urban ruins. There were multiple detonations on the continent, and while they were nowhere near sufficient to irradiate everything, the rapid descent of the continent into riots, attempts at military pacification, and the machinations of opportunistic villains left little that can truly be called civilization. Most remaining settlements are little more than villages or townships with few resources, and as a result, no one has bothered to try and seize control of them.

Parts of England and Scotland remain intact, despite the loss of London and Edinburgh. People here have rallied around a young woman who now wields the power of Britannia and promises the people of the isles will rise again and regain what they have lost.



OUTPOSTS OF CIVILIZATION

Very few major population centers remain intact or retain any significant degree of infrastructure. Of those that remain, most are firmly under the thumb of one villain or another.

New Zealand is still more or less as it was before the cataclysm, ruled with an iron fist by the most unlikely of survivors from the Crime League: Devil Ray, who escaped the nuclear cataclysm and the treachery of several of his former colleagues and managed to secure enough troops under his banner to effectively conquer New Zealand. Society there is almost normal save for his tyrannical control over the populace, although, admittedly, his rule is all that has prevented incursions by enemies from Atlantis and his bitter rival in Japan, former Crime League member Hiroshima Shadow.

Although no one knows the circumstances of the League's failed attempt to hold the world hostage, Hiroshima Shadow hunted down surviving members of the Freedom League as well as the Crime League. Since the cataclysm, he has systematically expunged the islands of Japan of all life, until the pitiful few survivors fled. The islands are now little more than an irradiated wasteland, populated only by spectral wraiths created in the cataclysm and their inhuman master.

The only other functional settlement of any real size is located in Antarctica. The former villain Glacier has made his home there, and with a magical artifact he attempted to use to recreate his home in Freedom City several years ago, he has at last succeeded. Glacier's city

of ice is the least restrictive of any existing settlements, as he accepts any who wish to live within his domain. Unfortunately, in order to gain admittance, prospective citizens must subject themselves to the magical influence of his artifact, which saps their will and makes them Glacier's pale, frozen new subjects.

CROSSES OVER

Heroes traveling to After-Earth will find themselves in a unique position in a number of ways. First, more than three-quarters of the world is in absolute ruin, and as such, things like collateral damage are the least of the heroes' concerns. Secondly, and more profound, the heroes have a chance to make a real difference in this world, if only on a small scale. Those who can heal, repair, or otherwise add basic amenities to the lives of those around them can lift up survivors from a post-apocalyptic stone-age existence to something much more productive and survivable.

One point of interest in visiting After-Earth is that the distinctions between hero and villain have faded somewhat. There are many among the surviving villain population who have abandoned their selfish ways in an attempt to forge new lives as leaders of communities or otherwise benevolent individuals. Likewise, there are more than a few surviving heroes who have committed terrible acts in the name of the greater good, confiscating the resources of smaller communities for the betterment of larger ones, for instance. Familiar figures from the heroes' home may not be so familiar on After-Earth.

ANI-EARTH

The omniverse has more than its share of oddities (technically, the omniverse contains *all* oddities, by its very nature), parallel worlds where history is remarkably like that of Earth-Prime in spite of significant differences, but perhaps one of the greatest oddities found among the infinity of parallel worlds is the one known as "Ani-Earth."

Freedom League members initially assumed Ani-Earth wasn't real at all, but that the Earth-like world inhabited entirely by anthropomorphic cartoon animals was a creation of the interdimensional imp, Quirk. He caused the League members' minds to inhabit the bodies of their Ani-Earth counterparts for a time, until the League was able to set things right. They later learned Ani-Earth wasn't born of Quirk's demented imagination, but was instead a real world... inhabited by anthropomorphic cartoon animals! Perhaps Quirk's power is so great it brought

BOING!

In some regards, the "physics" of Ani-Earth (to use the term *very* loosely) make the four-color physical laws of Earth-Prime seem positively rigorous and unforgiving by comparison. In particular, pretty much *everything* on Ani-Earth causes non-lethal damage, and only a deliberate coup de grace action against a helpless target (*M&M*, page 162) will cause someone to die, and maybe not even then, at the GM's option.

Similarly, Gamemasters should be exceptionally lenient and flexible when it comes to spending hero points on stunts and inspiration on Ani-Earth. Virtually anything a player can even remotely justify in the spirit of the setting should be permitted, up to and including producing giant hammers or anvils out of pockets or from behind capes, painting working doors onto walls, and running on air, at least so long as the character succeeds on a Concentration check to avoid looking down...

Ani-Earth permanently into existence; if anyone knows the truth, they aren't telling. Whatever the case, Ani-Earth remains as real a place as any other in the omniverse.

FURRYDOM CITY

The center for super-animal activity on Ani-Earth, as on Earth-Prime, is a familiar looking place called "Furrydom City." Geographically, it's much like Freedom City, except inhabited by a wide range of cartoon-like anthropomorphic animals, with a giant bronze statue of a horse-headed "Centaurion" overlooking the Centaur Narrows to Great Bay.

THE FURRYDOM LEAGUE

The greatest heroes of Furrydom City are the world-renowned members of the Furrydom League. Like their Earth-Prime counterparts, they are headquartered in Furrydom City, but they do not (as yet) have an orbital satellite headquarters and are still using Furrydom Hall, which has a layout remarkably like the Earth-Prime version.

BOWMOOSE

The newest and youngest member of the League is Bowmoose, who inherited the mantle, and his superb archery skills, from previous generations. He's a tall, somewhat gangly anthropomorphic moose with a still immature rack of antlers, dressed in a costume like Earth-Prime's Bowman and with similar traits (and a remarkable agility for a moose).

BUNNY LIBERTY

Calling upon the Spirit of Liberty, Bonnie Hutch transforms from a dun-colored rabbit in glasses to the white-furred Bunny Liberty! Her traits are similar to Lady Liberty's, including losing her powers if she is caged or imprisoned (rabbits don't like to be cornered!).



CAPTAIN THUNDERKAT

Ray Mouser was struck by lightning, gaining the extraordinary powers of Captain Thunderkat and confronting the sinister Dr. Stratokat, his arch-foe. Super-strong and able to hurl lightning, Captain Thunderkat is the leader of the Furrydom League. He's married and has a kitten, Ray, Jr. (who has yet to manifest any powers on Ani-Earth).

DR. METROPIMOUSE

Emerging from inside the very walls of the city is the mysterious Dr. Metropimouse, hooded guardian of Furrydom City. His powers allow him to command city structures and open "mouse holes" from place to place. He gets along with Captain Thunderkat surprisingly well, most likely because he's no ordinary mouse, to say the least.

DUCK DAEDALUS

The millennial mallard Duck Daedalus is an immortal inventor, concealing his glossy black and green feathers beneath a gleaming golden suit of armor of his own design. His traits are like Daedalus's from *Freedom City*, but his attitude is, if anything, even more acerbic.

JOHNNY RABBIT

The speedster Johnny Rabbit is quick as... well, a bunny with superspeed. He can often be seen speeding through the streets of Furrydom City, his legs a blur of motion, ears flapping in the wind. His foe, El Coyote, often sets elaborate traps, which Johnny evades with ease most of the time.

MORPHAMOOSE

Although he looks moose-like (antlers and all), the alien Morphamoose is really from the Gnu Unity and is a telepathic shape-changer. He's an exile

from his own world and race, which wants nothing more than to put all the animals of the universe in cages to create the perfect "Zoo Unity."

MS. CORBIE

Few things strike fear into the hearts of criminals like the shadow of the dark wings of the dire Ms. Corbie, the daughter of legendary Furrydom City hero Mr. Corbie. Although she has no more powers than any other anthropomorphic crow, Ms. Corbie is a fantastically trained athlete with an array of gadgets and weapons at her disposal.

SEA OTTER

The sleek Dr. Cassandra Vole transforms into the aquatic Sea Otter, guardian of the oceans and mistress of all their creatures. She faces foes like the eight-armed Captain Kraken and her archenemy, Baron Salmon, sinister scaled master of the undead.

STAR SQUIRREL

Police officer Maria Acorna was chosen as the next intergalactic guardian of Earth following the attempted Gnu Invasion. Adopting the name and identity of Star Squirrel, she joined the Freedom League in the defense of Earth, accepting their invitation to join the League afterwards.

WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE SNAKES?

A peculiarity of Ani-Earth is the reptile population tends to be untrustworthy, scheming and, well, cold-blooded in all senses of the term. In particular, snakes are the worst of the lot and tend to have various lizards as their henchmen and hangers-on. While this might seem like a kind of racism to someone from Earth-Prime (and, in fact, it is), it's also based on hard-earned experience. Although there's no overt prejudice

against scaly types on Ani-Earth, nobody trusts them too far, and everyone knows they're up to no good.

This is clearest with SNAKES—the Sinisterly Named Acronym for Keeping Everyone Suspicious—an underground organization devoted to granting reptiles their pre-eminent position as rulers of the world. Led by the villainous Cobrashadow, SNAKES always hatches new plots to take over the world.

The other snakes causing trouble on Ani-Earth are the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, found even on this world. The cult claims to date back to the days when reptiles ruled the Earth, and with the aid of their dread deity, the Unpronounceable One, they intend to do so again one day. They're always conducting occult rituals and going after strange mystic artifacts to further their evil plans, thwarted by heroes like the Furydom League and Dr. Eldwing, the Occult Owl, master of mystical mumbo-jumbo.

ADVENTURES ON ANI-EARTH

In addition to the classic "accident strands the heroes on a weird parallel Earth" plot, there are a number of adventures you can run involving Earth-Prime heroes visiting or interacting with Ani-Earth.

GORILLA WARFARE

Interdimensional conflict erupts between Ani-Earth and Earth-Ape over misunderstandings perpetuated by Cobrashadow and Earth-Ape's Dr. Simian. This sets the Furydom League and the Primate Patrol against each other, with both sides calling on help from Earth-Prime to resolve the conflict before it's too late. In the meanwhile, armies are mobilizing

on either side of the dimensional divide, with two supervillains hoping to conquer the battered surviving world!

THE GREAT SWITCHEROO

A scientific experiment gone wrong or weird dimensional "reality quake" is causing people and things on Earth-Prime and Ani-Earth to "trade places" randomly, creating no end of havoc and confusion on both worlds. The heroes from either side of the dimensional rift have to team up to properly separate the two worlds before they become hopelessly mixed like they've been run through a cosmic blender. Matters get more complicated when it turns out the "switch" is happening in the first place due to interference from the Terminus (see **Chapter 9**) in an effort to cause the two dimensions to collide and collapse in on themselves.

WEIRD WAR, TOO

The time-traveling Zeitgeist ends up in the 1940s on Ani-Earth, where he once again assumes the identity of albino-ape scientist Dr. Geistmann, trying to influence the events on this world so the sinister Ratzis win the war. Then he can lead an army of Aryan 'toons to conquer the omniverse! Dr. Tomorrow recruits the heroes to help out, but to minimize any impact on the timeline of Ani-Earth, he has to "transmogrify" them into cartoon animal forms so they can blend-in among the inhabitants of Ani-Earth and thwart Zeitgeist's plans. You can even run a version of the "A Date That Will Live in Infamy" adventure from the *Golden Age* sourcebook, since Zeitgeist isn't noted for his originality, and he assumes nobody on *this* Earth is familiar with his previous plan!

ANTI-EARTH

"In a statement today, the President reiterated his support for the Syndicate's continued control over territories in South America, and he made clear that any defiance by local populations would be met with severe and immediate reprisals..."

"If you want fun fast, then give yourself a dose of speed: Johnny Speed says, 'It's the best high that money can buy!'"

"Captain Thunderbolt executed the rebels during a live net-cast, reminding viewers of the 'price of defiance'..."

Imagine a world much like our own in many respects, but where a great many things and events we know are the opposite: right is left, black is white, and, in particular, good is evil and evil good. Imagine a world where the supervillains are the ones in charge, the governments are little more than criminal gangs, and a powerful Syndicate, the Tyranny Syndicate, is the world's one true "super-power." You're imagining the world Freedom Leaguer Johnny Rocket dubbed "Anti-Earth" after his first (accidental) visit there, one of the most serious threats known to the heroes of Earth-Prime and the omniverse.

MIRROR, MIRROR

Much of Anti-Earth is familiar: it's a world inhabited by human beings with familiar languages, nations, and so forth. However, a considerable amount of the world's culture, history, and even physics are "backward" from the perspective of someone from Earth-Prime: Anti-Earth orbits its sun in the opposite direction, and it rotates towards the east rather than the west (the sun rises westward there). Native American explorers "discovered" Europe and were later invaded and conquered by Europeans. George Washington betrayed the Colonial Army and General Benedict Arnold (the first President of the United States of America), and so forth.

Some events are surprisingly similar, such as the night in 1918 when a star fell over Empire City, a dimensional capsule containing an infant from another world, suffused with the interdimensional energies of the omniverse. Adopted by a small-time but cunning con artist named Leeds, he would become the most powerful man in the world.

By the time he grew to adulthood, young Mark Leeds had learned of his otherworldly origins and adopted the name and identity of the Praetor, determined to assume his rightful place as ruler of the world. It didn't take him long to bring Empire City to heel and place its bosses and syndicates under his control. He captured and tortured a visitor from the future to learn the right time to launch a sneak attack against the Japanese naval base in Hawaii, claiming those islands for the USA, and he brought the nation to the aid of British fascists in the war in Europe.

Opposition to the Praetor's power kept him from fully achieving his goals, although his domination of the western world was soon indisputable. Decades of Cold War persisted, with Russia and China prepared to unleash their nuclear arsenals in Mutually Assured Destruction rather than concede defeat. Still, Praetor remained, patient, unaging, seemingly immortal, until his downfall came from within, rather than without.

Praetor was quick to recruit other superhumans to his cause or eliminate them to ensure they could not pose a threat. His own Praetorian Guard was feared the world over, but in time they came to question just how far they could advance in the service of an immortal despot who would never name a successor and could simply outlive his enemies. So they plotted in secret and, one night, they acted.

Much of the world would have celebrated the Praetor's fall, if it were not for what happened next. The former Praetorian Guard established a new, powerful syndicate, the Tyranny Syndicate, and declared the whole world as their prize. In the years since the fall of the Praetor,

war has devastated many parts of Anti-Earth, particularly Asia, and left the Tyranny Syndicate, if not absolute rulers of the world, the nearest to it anyone has come. Some scattered resistance continued, but hope grew increasingly small, and the members of the Syndicate increasingly bored, until the day when another otherworldly visitor came to Empire City.

The accidental appearance of Earth-Prime's Johnny Rocket made the Tyranny Syndicate aware of other worlds, like the one Praetor came from, but living and exploitable. It also sparked some hope among those opposed to the Syndicate, with the potential for allies somewhere across the dimensional gulfs. The interference of otherworldly heroes helped to shore up Mind-Master's dedication, and it gave newfound vigor to LIGHT. The Syndicate has split its time between pacifying its old foes and looking towards new territory to conquer.

THE TYRANNY SYNDICATE

The greatest power bloc on Anti-Earth is the Tyranny Syndicate, an alliance of the most powerful and ruthless super-criminals in the world. Together, they were able to topple and eliminate the Praetor, and thus far, they have been able to maintain their alliance for mutual benefit and success. Although any member of the Syndicate would betray the others if the opportunity was right, they all realize they're best served for now by cooperation. Still, by comparison to Earth-Prime's Freedom League, they're arrogant and lack cohesive teamwork, at least partly because no one else on their world has ever posed much of a threat to them.

BLACK BOWMAN

Beaumont Fletcher III is the latest of an infamous family line that got its start working for the Praetor during his initial rise to power. Fletcher's grandfather was a propaganda-master under Praetor, and his father a bitter drunk for failing to live up to the patriarch's standards. The youngest scion of the line, however, is just the kind of son his grandfather hoped for, including his impressive athletic and archery skills. When the Fletcher family sold Praetor out to the Syndicate, it helped secure the new Black Bowman a place in their ranks.

Use Bowman's game stats from page 113 of *Freedom City* for Black Bowman.

CAPTAIN THUNDERBOLT

Military pilot Ray Gardener stole experimental weather technology designed by Dr. Sebastian Stratos. He nearly paid for it when lightning struck his plane, but instead, he was infused with tremendous power. Despite Stratos's attempts to reverse the effect, Captain Thunderbolt rose to become Praetor's right-hand man and chief enforcer. He also came to realize how distant the immortal despot had become and undermined support among his followers, forging the Syndicate to bring Praetor down and assume the mantle of power for himself.

Use Captain Thunder's game stats from page 114 of *Freedom City* for Captain Thunderbolt.

DAEDALUS

The ancient inventor, Daedalus, gained immortality by sacrificing souls to the Underworld, starting with his own son. By the time Praetor contacted him, Daedalus was bored, and the potential for conquest offered him challenge and amusement. However, Praetor made the mistake of considering his "fellow immortal" a peer, when Daedalus saw him as no more than a youngster; what are a few decades to a man over a thousand years old? What is the betrayal of an erstwhile ally to a man who



murdered his own son? Daedalus was only too content to let Praetor fall and to supply the Syndicate with weapons and tools of conquest.

Use Daedalus' game stats from page 115 of *Freedom City* for his Anti-Earth counterpart.

JOHNNY SPEED

If it weren't for a stroke of dumb luck, a chance roll of the genetic dice, Johnny Wade would have been just another club-kid dead of heart-failure after overdosing on the party-drug speed. Instead, the drug interacted with his latent mutant biochemistry, giving him an unusual ability to tolerate and metabolize it with greater effects than any other user. Now the fun never needs to end, so far as Johnny is concerned, and he gets whatever he wants... in the blink of an eye.

Use Johnny Rocket's game stats from page 117 of *Freedom City* for Johnny Speed. The Anti-Earth version has a Power Loss drawback based on his dependence on daily doses of drugs to maintain his powers.

LADY ANARCHY

She is the spirit of freedom but also of overthrow, chaos, and mob violence. It is said her spirit was there during the Terror of the French Revolution, during the Bolshevik Uprising, whenever people were moved to cast off their chains and kill their oppressors. The Praetor didn't even remember killing Donna Mason's father—he was just another nobody who opposed him—but Donna remembered. Her thirst for vengeance drew the spirit of anarchy to her and gave her the power to make it happen. She and Captain Thunderbolt turned Praetor's people against him and brought him down. Of course, some of the Syndicate wonder how long Lady Anarchy will be content with the *status quo* before she decides another change is needed.

SO WHERE ARE...?

The Tyranny Syndicate has no analogs of Freedom League members Pseudo and Star Knight, although the Anti-Earth universe does (or did). Deceptor, Pseudo's doppelganger, was a powerful Grue warrior and leader of an invasion force. Praetor killed him in single combat, and there is as yet no evidence he survived, although with the adaptability of the Grue, anything is possible.

Maria Montoya, an Earth human, did inherit the armor and powers of a Dark Knight, one of an order of ruthless interstellar enforcers, by betraying and killing its previous owner. She infiltrated the Syndicate for a time as the spearhead of a Dark Knight invasion force, but she was found out and barely escaped with her life. Now, she plots revenge on the Syndicate and Earth, as much as her new master, the alien Commander, permits.

Use Lady Liberty's game stats from page 118 of *Freedom City* as a basis for Lady Anarchy.

MADAME SIN

Dr. Sin, the most powerful crime lord in China, sent his daughter to seduce the head of Praetor's secret police during the Cold War. She was successful, but when he attempted to betray her, she killed him. Later, she bore his daughter, raised as a true child of Sin. Madame Sin later returned to Empire City to complete the work her mother began and ensure the Praetor's downfall. The Syndicate knows she speaks for her grandfather and has his backing, so they keep a close eye on Madame Sin and all her doings.

Use Raven's game stats from page 120 of *Freedom City* as a basis for Madame Sin.

MASTER METROPOLIS

The truth of Master Metropolis's origins died with the Praetor, as he kept the mysterious being in servitude. Fortunately for the Syndicate, Metropolis was reasonably grateful for his freedom and agreed to serve, not as a slave, but as a member of the organization. He is the most effective spymaster Empire City has ever known, as nothing in the city escapes his notice for long, and he pursues his duties with ruthless and inhuman efficiency.

Use Dr. Metropolis's game stats from page 116 of *Freedom City* as a basis for Master Metropolis.

RED SIREN

Cassandra Vale was no more than a modern-day pirate until she claimed the name and power of *La Siren Rouge*, the Red Siren, for herself. Now, she is a latter-day goddess with power over the seas and the weather, wielding the net that binds men's souls. Red Siren considers all the oceans her domain, and she is largely undisputed since the Syndicate eliminated the royal family of Atlantis and placed the remains under her rulership. She's largely content to control the seas and leave the land to others, with the exception of a few ports like New Orleans and islands like the Caribbean.

Use Siren's game stats from page 121 of *Freedom City* as a basis for her Anti-Earth counterpart.

THE FORTRESS

The Tyranny Syndicate's headquarters in Empire City is known simply as "the Fortress," formerly the headquarters of Praetor. It is a heavily armored structure of artificial ceramic and diamond-analog compounds, seemingly humble compared to the taller structures of the city's downtown area, but it is only in limited use since the Syndicate moved its primary operations to its new Panopticon headquarters. The Fortress is primarily used for meetings and local operations in Empire City, but Syndicate members are fond of taking "guests" on board their satellite, both for intimidation and the ease of jettisoning them into space.

THE PANOPTICON

The Tyranny Syndicate recently secured its hold over Earth with the creation of the Panopticon, an orbiting satellite headquarters giving them the ultimate "high ground" in any conflict. The members of the Syndicate can withdraw there via teleporter or Vulture spaceplace, and they control an array of weaponry capable of laying waste to any city on Earth, although the Panopticon's weapons systems can only be used on ground-based targets with the consent and access codes of all the members of the Syndicate (to prevent one member from going rogue and trying to seize control). LIGHT has attempted to infiltrate agents on-board the satellite without success, thus far.

COLLABORATORS

Although the Tyranny Syndicate has a tight hold on Empire City and much of the world, they do not operate alone. One of the brilliant aspects of the Syndicate is its ability to distribute power just enough to co-opt and bring outsiders into its structure rather than fomenting dissent. Thus, the Syndicate has various collaborators—it would be difficult to call them "allies"—serving its interests and their own at the same time.

THE ACADEMY

One such innovation is the Academy, a training-ground where young superhumans are indoctrinated into the service of the Syndicate. The Academy is a parallel of the Claremont Academy on Earth-Prime, save that it is run by Beaumont Fletcher II (Black Bowman's father) as headmaster. The student body includes:

DARKSTAR

The young wielder of an ancient Progenitor weapon that turns him into a super-powered adult.

LIGHTNING

Captain Thunderbolt's spoiled and vicious son, who possesses super-speed and electrical projection powers.

SHOUT

Small-time thief turned big-time after accidentally gaining sonic powers from a stolen weapon prototype.

THE WITCH

Heir to a magical legacy of elemental power, the Witch seductively plays the boys in the Academy against each other like a concert conductor.

Note that there's no Nereid-equivalent on Anti-Earth; her counterpart was wiped out along with the rest of the Atlantean royal family in Red Siren's coup (although there are persistent rumors she survived and is in hiding, plotting revenge). Gamemasters should feel free to add other

YOUR HEROES IN THE MIRROR

A big part of the fun of using Anti-Earth in your *Freedom City* series is including evil versions of your own heroes, either as replacements for the Tyranny Syndicate or additional members, particularly if your heroes are members of, or allied with, the Freedom League on Earth-Prime.

Creating an Anti-Earth version of a hero can be as easy as a more sinister name, origin story, and costume, along with villainous motives, or it can involve a more detailed redesign. For example, most of the Tyranny Syndicate have the same traits as their Freedom League counterparts. Lady Anarchy, on the other hand, requires a bit more work to transform Lady Liberty's "light of liberty" powers to ones devoted to chaos and anarchy. In cases of reworking a character's powers, generally aim for similar power levels and point values.

"cadets" to the Academy, including mirror versions of the AltermiTeens from the *Hero High* sourcebook, if desired.

LONE HEROES

Anti-Earth is not *entirely* without people of good character willing to challenge the corrupt and criminal order of the world. However, they are lone voices compared to the heroes of Earth-Prime, fighting against almost impossible odds, and they are losing.

THE COURAGE FOUNDATION

Despite the bold name, the so-called Courage Foundation is little more than a rag-tag underground movement against the iron rule of the Tyranny Syndicate. Once, the Foundation counted a number of superhumans among its members, but the Syndicate decimated their ranks, killing or imprisoning most of them and leaving only a pitiful few lieutenants and a couple of tertiary bases small enough to have escaped notice.

The surviving members of the Courage Foundation remain on the lookout for anything they can potentially use against the Syndicate, but their struggle grows increasingly desperate. Their slim hope is for aid from another world like Earth-Prime, which still has heroes of its own, although they watch for new superhumans on their world and seek to recruit them before the Syndicate can corrupt or eliminate them.

LIGHT

Throughout the history of Anti-Earth, there have been "illuminati," seeking to do good in secret, hidden from the eyes of the corrupt and powerful. Their modern incarnation is Liberty's Insurgency for Goodness, Hope, and Truth, or LIGHT. Led by the mysterious Highlight, the underground organization has struggled against Praetor and the Tyranny Syndicate since the end of the Great War.

MIND-MASTER

Anti-Earth's sole remaining "superhero" is the immortal Mind-Master. For uncounted centuries, he has been a bastion of civilization, justice, and compassion, but the years have taken their toll on his empathy and drive. There was a time when Mind-Master nearly surrendered to despair, willing to destroy the world if he could not save it. The intervention of heroes from Earth-Prime brought him back from the brink, but he still walks dangerously close to the abyss.

Although he wants what is best for the world and has selflessly devoted his immortal life to attaining it, by Earth-Prime standards, Mind-Master is arrogant: deep down, he believes only *he* can save the world, and it is his burden to bear alone. It has kept him from forming lasting alliances or equal partnerships, and it has isolated him, just as the Syndicate would have it.

Use Mastermind's game stats on page 208 of *Freedom City* for Mind-Master.

EARTH-APE: RETURN TO MONKEY PLANET

In an omniverse where the likes of Omega, Superior, and the Tyranny Syndicate rule worlds, it's reassuring to find a planet where the monkeys are in charge. By and large, visiting Earth-Ape is as much fun as a barrel of...well, you know. But, it's not all cute and furry. There's danger and adventure a-plenty there, even for the planet's relatively hairless visitors. This section outlines how your series can become a part of it.

WHERE APES EVOLVED FROM MAN

Earth-Ape is like Earth-Prime in most respects. Its residents represent many different creeds, but they strive to live in harmony and make a better future for all. They are justifiably proud of their many achievements in the arts and sciences, and they live in an unprecedented age of plenty and ease, tempered by care for the have-nots and concern over mundane affairs like paying the bills. Like people on Earth-Prime, the citizens of Earth-Ape marvel at the inspirational super-powered heroes who protect them.

For most intents and purposes, the only major difference is the switch in dominant species. Mankind as the characters know it never appeared on Earth-Ape, though some simian scientists believe apekind may have evolved from a primitive ancestor resembling humans. Instead, the apes developed sentience and built a favorably comparable civilization.

I'M BACK ON SIMIAN CITY

Freedom City's Earth-Ape analogue is Simian City, one of the United Apes of America's leading metropolitan areas and a major port on the Apelantic Ocean. Their geography and general layout are identical; only the names and hirsuteness of their inhabitants change.

Simian City is governed by the very popular Mayor Zaius, now entering his second term in office. Extra-normal violators of Ape Law are dealt with by the SCPD's elite STAR Squad, headed by the no-nonsense Captain Aldo.

In most respects, Simian City's history mirrors that of *Freedom City*, including an invasion by Omega and his minions from the Terminus during the early 1990s. Naturally, this history also includes super-powered beings.

THE PRIMATE PATROL

On Earth-Ape, the most famous superhero team of them all is the Primate Patrol, comparable to the Freedom League on Earth-Prime. The current Patrol formed back in 1994, establishing its Primate Hall headquarters in the heart of Simian City. In the years since, it has more than fulfilled its mission to fight injustice and protect apekind, despite the best efforts of Earth-Ape's worst supervillains.

MAKING MONKEYS OUT OF THE HEROES

Rules-wise, transforming the characters from human to simian requires revising their statistics. The Gamemaster should make these calculations before the start of play, in order to minimize real-time delays, so getting copies of the players' character sheets ahead of time is a good idea. Don't tell them why, either—worry is fun for players.

Initially, the change does the characters good, since their Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores are raised +4 each (ignoring power level limits). They also gain Super-Senses 2 (low-light vision, scent).

A short time later, the downside becomes evident. The transformed heroes feel ever-increasing primal urges, distracting them from saving the omniverse and provoking more ape-like behavior. Every round the characters attempt something contrary to their emerging simian tendencies (which is pretty much anything useful, other than defending themselves), they must succeed at a DC 10 Intelligence check. Simple failure leaves a character dazed, while failing by 5 or more results in some minor ape-like behavior, like pausing to groom parasites from a comrade's fur. Failure by 10 or more leads to some really unhelpful monkey business, such as fleeing the battle to hunt bananas and fling poo.

Making matters worse, the characters' mental capacities diminish over time. Every two rounds of game time after the characters regain consciousness, they lose both a point of Intelligence and a point of Charisma, to a minimum Int of 2 and a minimum Cha of 6. In addition, characters whose Int falls below 6 lose the ability to speak.

Characters *really* needing their wits about them can spend a hero point to fend off their ape-like urges automatically for one round. At the Gamemaster's discretion, this interval can be extended for half a die roll result (round up) if they're in the middle of something really important. The Gamemaster can allow anyone who has completely "gone ape" a DC 15 Will save to strike an enemy with a surprise blow. Chalk it up to their regaining a glimmer of their wits or a simple case of "human see, human do."

If the heroes are transformed into Earth-Ape style intelligent simians (rather than Earth-Prime apes), ignore the adjustments to mental ability scores, but feel free to have their ape-like appearance and behavior cause occasional complications worthy of a hero point award.

The team nearly disbanded in the aftermath of the "time of crisis," during which Earth-Ape was nearly destroyed by Omega and the Patrol's leader, Doctor Simian, heinously betrayed his teammates. Just when the Patrol seemed to be on its last legs, they were joined by a new member, who, in a short time, has proven himself the most powerful and inspirational hero of all: Cosmo, the Moon Monkey. Their spirits rejuvenated by its newest recruit, the Primate Patrol is poised to be a force for justice for years to come.

Current Primate Patrol members Brainiape, Chimpanzoom, Elastigibbon, Iron Monkey, and Metamorph are detailed in the adventure *Time of Crisis*. The team's latest addition, the Moon Monkey, is outlined here.

COSMO THE MOON MONKEY

Cosmo, strange visitor from the Moon, came to Earth-Ape fleeing the tyranny governing his Farside City home. For years, he hid amongst the general population, taking a job as a mild-mannered reporter at the Simian City *Daily Howl* to remain vigilant for any sign the Farsiders had tracked him down.

COSMO THE MOON MONKEY

PL 12

Str 40 Dex 13 Con 40 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 13

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+7), Climb 7 (+22), Diplomacy 4 (+5), Intimidate 6 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 5 (+6), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (journalist) 8 (+10), Sense Motive 8 (+10)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 2, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Ultimate Effort (Strength checks)

Powers: **Additional Limbs 1** (tail), **Immunity 8** (aging, cold, disease, heat, poison, radiation, pressure, starvation), **Impervious Toughness 10**, **Leaping 8, Speed 4** (100 MPH), **Super-Senses 3** (extended vision, low-light vision, ultra-hearing), **Super-Strength 8** (heavy load: 800 tons)

Combat: Attack +9 (melee), +7 (ranged), Grapple +32, Damage +15 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -12, Initiative +5

Saving Throws: Toughness +15, Fortitude +15, Reflex +4, Will +8

Abilities 73 + Skills 12 (48 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 50 + Combat 32 + Saves 9 = 182

Like others on Earth-Ape, Cosmo greatly admired the Primate Patrol's heroism, and he was saddened by reports of the team's impending demise after the "time of crisis." Drawing inspiration from the example the team had always set, Cosmo overcame his own fear of discovery and revealed his own amazing abilities to the world as the costumed hero Moon Monkey.

The charismatic Moon Monkey won the trust of the Primate Patrol in a surprisingly short amount of time, and he was quickly voted onto the team. Though he still worries about what might happen to Earth-Ape once his people learn of his whereabouts, he is even more confident in himself and his teammates' ability to rise to any challenge.

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND PURSUIT ON EARTH-APE

As with *Erde*, the published adventure *Time of Crisis* is probably the best way to introduce Earth-Ape into a series. *Time of Crisis* is designed for just that purpose, and it allows the characters to witness and influence some pretty major events there. In the process, the stage is set for the heroes' dramatic return.

First-time visitor to Earth-Ape encounter a recurring difficulty. The natives think of humans as little more than occasionally entertaining creatures, so dirty and foul. Even apes who aren't horrified by the strange hairless visitors have a tough time taking them seriously; thus, humans suffer a -4 penalty to Diplomacy skill checks for the duration of their stay.

Whether the heroes are on their first or fortieth visit there, the following adventure seeds can help the Gamemaster make their stay a most memorable one. There's big trouble afoot in them, but you know those humans. They get into everything.

DR. SIMIAN AND THE CRIME TROOP

Former Primate Patrol leader Dr. Simian breaks out of the Blackvine Federal Pen along with an army of Earth-Ape's worst super-criminals, including Baboon Star, the Monkeystro, Orangutan the Hunter, and Wildchimp. With his Crime Troop backing him and an intimate knowledge of the Primate Patrol's weaknesses, Earth-Ape's greatest heroes quickly fall, but not before sending out a call for help to their friends on Earth-Prime.

Once on Earth-Ape, the player characters are doubly challenged as they attempt to free their furry pals. First, Dr. Simian and the Crime Troop are bad, bad apes. Feel free to modify the game statistics of the Troop's Earth-Prime counterparts in the *Freedom City* sourcebook or

design some evil monkeys of your own. Either way, make them an even match for the characters.

In addition, the heroes are going to have to win the cooperation of the local authorities—not an easy thing to do on a planet that looks upon them as some sort of hairless, psychotic apes. Oh, and it almost goes without saying, but Dr. Simian is bound to try to turn the heroes into apes (see the **Making a Monkey Out of the Heroes** sidebar). It is his motif, after all.

BEWARE THE BEAST MAN

Befitting a planet inhabited by talking monkeys and ape puns, events thus described have been in a lighter, more Silver Age vein. They needn't necessarily remain so.

Throughout the heroes' previous visit during *Time of Crisis*, they were largely out of the public eye. An extended, more publicized stay on Earth-Ape could have darker repercussions. After all, the player characters are proof that non-simian sentient life exists, and history teaches most cultures don't react well to these sorts of revelations.

While the Primate Patrol is made up of non-prejudiced heroes, it doesn't preclude more reactionary elements on Earth-Ape who will stop at nothing to see the "hideous savages" taxidermied and put in a museum. The resulting social chaos also presents a perfect opportunity for Dr. Simian to return to the public's good graces, as he claims his seemingly villainous actions were intended to stop-then heinously distorted by-the monstrous human invaders from another world.

Just when the player characters start to feel bad about the cultural disruptions they're causing, a supervillain from Earth-Prime finds his way to Earth-Ape and begins fulfilling all of Dr. Simian's dire predictions

about human nature. The player characters must then save a world that fears and despises them. If they're lucky, however, they may uncover proof the Earth-Prime villain's appearance is no coincidence, but a key component in Dr. Simian's latest scheme.

EVERY WHICH WAY BUT LOOSE

The theme of culture shock can also be portrayed in a much lighter vein, as the Primate Patrol tracks one of their archenemies to Earth-Prime—perhaps the evil Ancient Apegyptian villain Marmo-Set mentioned in the adventure *Time of Vengeance*.

Whoever their quarry is, catching him is the least of the player characters' problems. Their monkey pals retain the very best of intentions, but they have a difficult time understanding why the First Lady wasn't flattered by their grooming her for parasites, or why throwing feces is considered offlimits as a debate tactic. It's a classic ape-out-of-water comedy, with a super-fight at the end—guaranteed fun for all!

SGT. FURRY AND HIS HOWLER MONKEY COMMANDOS

Just to show Earth-Ape's versatility, it's even possible to cross the Monkey Planet with the *Golden Age* sourcebook. Characters traveling through time and relative dimensions in space may find themselves on the Earth-Ape of the 1940s. Events can easily draw the player characters into the monkeys' Second World War, as the ape democracies struggle against the forces of Nazi Gibbony. The nefarious Aryan Ape (who appears in the adventure "The Charge of the Freedom Brigade," available as a free download at the M&M website) has an overriding interest in time travel, and he would be most anxious to torture the heroes for information, to name just one potential menace.

FANTASY-FREEDOM

Long ago, in the midst of the storm-tossed Iron Sea, there once shone the peerless towers of the city of Idris. Built by the hands of The Forerunners, whose wonders once dotted this globe, Idris was the greatest of all cities, then and always. Its tragic end, destroyed by hubris and ambitions even the gods could no longer ignore, presaged a long and terrible age of darkness out of which man took millennia to climb. Year by bloody year, mile by bloody mile, civilization was won back from the barbarians and monsters that thought themselves masters of the territories they pillaged and terrorized, and humanity built anew.

Of the many monuments to that spirit, one bastion stands tall in song and legend, the city of Freedom's Reach, known to its inhabitants less formally simply as "Freedom" or "Freedom City." Today, here on the western rim of the Iron Sea, this heir to the glories of ancient Idris plays home to one of the largest populations civilized man has gathered in the known world.

Originally little more than a hastily constructed fortress pieced together by refugees from Idris's fall, the city stretches inland from the coast where the Stormshorn Cliffs stand, the city watch's Ivory Fortress sprawling atop them like a haphazard crown, to the spell-twisted and crater-strewn foothills of the Blackfell Forest, itself home to the intimidating Arcane Congress and their Academy for the Art. In the north, where the wealthy and titled reside past the banks of the Cabberos River, the city's borders lazily buttress the quarter called Highthrone, home to the now-abandoned palace as, true to its name, Freedom long ago rid itself of the need for kings and despots. To the south, hobbled together without seeming plan or design beside the scum-weighted surface of the slow-flowing Vankre River, lies Rivertown, wherein teems every sort

of villain, thief, and scoundrel one can imagine; there are sections of this loathsome slum that haven't seen the face of an honest guardsman in living memory.

Nestled between the rivers is a landmass shared between the busiest and largest quarters of the city. To the west lies the domain of the merchants, from the greatest trading house to the lowliest coster and street-vendor. Coin's Passage is how the maps mark it, and the great avenues cutting amongst the crowded structures are called "Rivers" despite their dry and cobblestoned surface, each name calling out the treasure its residents trade, such as the River of Spices, the River of Jewels, and so on.

Largest of these is the fabled River of Gold, as wide across as three ships' span from bow to stern, and home to the wealthiest and most powerful trading houses, some with interests spread as far the Dragonlords' realms in the east, the bandit kings' Icekeep Wall in the frozen northlands, or the Jeweled Jungles of the mysterious southern continent. The yellowed-clay buildings cramped one against the other move apart and climb higher, giving way to the white-washed towers and marble-fronted structures of Seven Spires, where the business of governing takes place. Diplomats, statesmen, and ever-present guardsmen are the norm for this bustling section of Freedom, with six of the lofty towers playing court for the ongoing game of state and the mechanisms of law and judgment that separate civilization from savagery.

The seventh spire, set apart and farthest east, is home, of course, to the most famous and storied citizens of the city, the men and women of Freedom's Guard. Though the Lord Mayor and his council of advisors have seen fit to appoint each of these fabled heroes to high rank within

the city watch itself, their exploits have ranged far and wide from the city's confines, acting not only in defense of their home, but also as fearsome enemies of tyrants and agents of darkness everywhere.

Originally rallied together by the unmatched champion Invictus, who came long ago from strange lands afar to make Freedom his home and so tragically laid down his life to defend the city from the elder terror Or'Mehgah, their rolls need little preamble. Once merely a valiant city watchman, Lord Thunder's torture at the hands of the mad wizard Stratos left him in possession of the treasure Stratos sought: the essence of a storm giant. Thunder sails the winds and commands the lightning, his once-mortal hands now capable of rending the strongest mountains. Ancient and wise, the wizard known as the Brass Knight is never without his mystic armor, hiding within its enchanted protection while waging a war against evil he has fought, if the tales are to be believed, since long before the Seven Spires were built. Lady Liberty, high priestess of the three-faced goddess of Justice, Freedom, and Compassion, carries a strength second only to Lord Thunder, her voice shattering chains and freeing minds from the vilest entrapment. Zhanni Windracer, an ifrit conjured in a form neither truly man nor woman, has yet to find flesh and blood to match his speed. Appearing after Invictus's final fight, Stonegod is an avatar of the very city itself, and its stones answer to his every whim. Daughter of the retired Raven Knight who fought at Invictus's side, Raven Darkcloak's own skills

as warrior and thief-catcher have eclipsed tales of even her father's fame. The captain of a trading vessel thought lost to the depths in a

violent typhoon, the Sea Witch commands the elements in which she was reborn, and stories say she is the hand of a long-forgotten goddess of the seas. The most recent addition to the Guard, Ironbow of House Fletcher, is the fourth of his line to carry that proud title and bear the Iron Bow of Idris, an ancient family heirloom.

To the heartfelt gratitude of Freedom's citizens, Freedom's Guard does not fight alone on their behalf. Aside from the brave men and women that fill the ranks of the rest of the city watch, Freedom's Guard carries the assistance of other powerful allies. The wizard Atum, once a steadfast brother-in-arms to Invictus, gave only his physical form to the toll of age. Now disembodied, but still active through some arcane wisdom, he continues to advise his old allies while raising his grandchildren to one day take their place among their ranks. Further, the High Wizard of the Arcane Congress himself, Eldritch the Wise, stands ready to lend his matchless magicks to their cause.

Even the brightest day seldom shines without casting deep shadows, and the brighter the day, the darker the shadow. The men and women of Freedom have many enemies, from the smallest cutpurse to the unspeakable dark grandeur of Or'Mehgah and its kind. The self-styled "Emperor" Taurus, monstrous conqueror of many lands outside Freedom's borders, finally knew defeat when he led his terrible army against Freedom's

Guard. Reputed to be as ancient as the Brass Knight himself, stories say Taurus survived his defeat to rebuild his army in secret, worming through the halls of power using gold rather than war-drums.

Kan-Torr, whose true name was stricken from the annals of the Arcane Congress centuries ago for the most dreadful crimes against his peers, carries the name Shadowking for



his mastery of the darkness between worlds; his Legions of Night carry out his will far and wide, despite tireless efforts to eradicate them. Stratos the Mad and his band of rogue wizards, Malador the Undying, the living-metal smith Talos Godforged and his murderous hatred for those "blessed" with the breath and soul he was denied... the list of infamy goes dreadfully on and on. If not for the stout hearts and able gifts of Freedom's Guard, the light of Freedom would have long since fallen into darkness.

TALES OF FANTASY-FREEDOM

There are three primary ways of using Fantasy-Freedom in a *Mutants & Masterminds* series, particularly one set in Freedom City: as a parallel Earth (albeit an unusual one), as an alternate reality, or as the setting for a complete, self-contained adventure or series.

PARALLEL WORLD

The default assumption is Fantasy-Freedom is a parallel Earth, like the others in this book, existing simultaneously with Earth-Prime and countless others on a different dimensional plane. The world of Freedom's Reach exists as described, and characters from other worlds can visit there, either intentionally or accidentally.

A particular adventure hook for the parallel Fantasy-Freedom is for something to happen to the Freedom's Guard, and a local wizard (possibly Eldritch the Wise) casts a spell to summon aid "from world's beyond," conjuring up the heroes from their home world. The same thing might happen if a Fantasy-Freedom villain like Shadowking used a spell to banish Freedom's heroes, unexpectedly ending up with otherworldly heroes displaced to maintain the "cosmic balance" or the like.

ALTERNATE REALITY

A powerful sorcerer, reality-bending mutant, mystic artifact, or the like, has either thrown the heroes into a fantasy world as written by Gardner Fox channeling Robert E. Howard or has actually altered reality around them to match such an image. Fantasy-Freedom either isn't "real" or the heroes aren't meant to be there. Their memories and perceptions may be altered, at least initially, to accept their new reality, or they might remember the truth from the start. Either way, things start to happen when the heroes realize they are in a world similar to but noticeably different from their own, and they have to find a way back home.

Generally, the key to this type of adventure is whatever force brought Fantasy-Freedom into being. The heroes have to seek it out and either defeat it or gain control over it if they are to restore themselves and their world back to normal.

COMPLETE SERIES

In this approach, Fantasy-Freedom is the default setting for the game. This is and has always been the heroes' world. You can use Freedom's

FANTASY-FREEDOM ADAPTATIONS

... or "Does My Elf Fighter 3/Thief 3 Have to Wear Spandex?"

No, though it would be kind of disingenuous not to mention the staggering wealth of material available from other *d20*-based games. Detailed guidelines for such conversions are way outside the scope of this book, but a few quick suggestions may prove helpful.

Concern yourself only with numbers that directly matter in game play, and ignore everything else. Don't get bogged down with rules minutiae *M&M* doesn't even use. It doesn't matter what rules combinations a "translated" character used to get a trait value, only what that value is and how it works.

Generally, work backward from descriptions instead of beating your head against a wall with literal transposition. *M&M* consolidates the granularity found in some other games—what may be expressed a dozen different ways and wordings elsewhere may be a single feat or power in *M&M*. *The Mastermind's Manual* gives many ideas on changing elements of *M&M* to more closely resemble other *d20*-based games, and reverse-engineering can be eyeballed from that without too much difficulty.

In terms of skills, neither Computers nor Craft (electronic) have any place in a strictly construed fantasy setting. Pilot can be interpreted as the control skill for any non-wheeled vehicle, Craft (mechanical) applies to primitive engineering such as pumps, pulleys, and clockworks, and Medicine can easily be limited to disallow sophisticated surgery and the like, so all of them still have uses. Similarly, Disable Device can be limited to more of the traditional fantasy RPG "sneak entry" uses. Regarding feats, special attention should be paid to the Benefit (status) feat, as social ranking and its subsequent privileges may play a heavier role than in a traditional *M&M* game.

For powers, do not underestimate the value of description or, more to the point, the usefulness of *descriptors*. Fantasy-Freedom—and "comic book fantasy" in general—differs from the standard *M&M* model not so much in mechanics nor in tone and theme (heroism, courage, and abilities outside the ken of mortals are the same in both), but in cosmetic trappings used to present the stories. Replace guns with swords, startlingly advanced technology with eyebrow-raising arcane arts, and colorfully-clad stalwarts using superhuman powers with, well, colorfully-clad stalwarts using *supernatural* powers, and you're well on your way to adopting the mindset you need to run games in the Fantasy-Freedom milieu.

Reach as a setting for sword and sorcery adventure using the *Mutants & Masterminds* game system with nary a mention of other worlds or realities, apart from the ravings of wizards and madmen.

FREEPORT

Amidst the strange eddies and currents of the Cosmic Coils lie the islands of the Serpent's Teeth, lone, rocky shoals in the midst of a distant sea. On the southern tip of the island of A'Val sprawls the city of Freeport, founded by pirates on the bones of a drowned eldritch empire, defying all outsiders who have attempted to lay claim to it, a bastion of ruthless mercantilism and piracy on the open seas.

THE CITY OF ADVENTURE

Freeport occupies much of the southern side of A'Val, from the shore to the edges of cleared jungle inland. The city is divided into districts based on age and use, some of them dating back to the founding of Freeport, others relatively recent.

The Docks are the gateways to Freeport, clustered with all manner of vessels and crowded with warehouses, taverns, gambling houses, and mer-

THE PIRATE'S GUIDE TO FREEPORT

The city of Freeport is described in loving detail—from its checkered history to its districts to its nefarious inhabitants—in *The Pirate's Guide to Freeport*, available from Green Ronin Publishing. *The Pirate's Guide* is a systemless game sourcebook, usable with any RPG, including *Mutants & Masterminds*. Therefore, this brief write-up of the City of Adventure concerns itself primarily with connections between Freeport and the World of Freedom and how to use the city in an ongoing *M&M* series, rather than recapitulating the contents of *The Pirate's Guide* beyond a brief summary.

chants hocking wares from distant shores. *Scurvylawn* sits east of the Docks, a rotting slum controlled by gangsters and crime lords. The *Eastern District* is where the desperate of Scurvylawn hope to move to find a somewhat better life, while those in *Drac's End* try to make an honest living well away from the waterfront. The *Temple District* is home to various houses of worship, since Freeporters tend towards superstition, and many gods have found faithful here. The *Merchant District* is home to the wealthiest citizens, with high-class shops and well-paid guards to watch over them. The *Warehouse District* is a center for trade and moving goods, while the *Old City*, still surrounded by the original, ancient walls, is home to the Sea Lord's Palace and the seat of Freeport's government. The district of *Bloodsalt* began as an encampment, and later, a ghetto, for orcs, hobgoblins, and other nonhumans, and it remains a violent and dangerous place.

Beyond the city itself, A'Val is semi-tropical jungle rising towards the caldera of an extinct volcano dominating the northern half of the

island. The smaller islands of Windward and Leeward lie to either side, while the smaller T'Wik, or Lighthouse Island, is just to the south. Coral reefs surrounding the islands can make navigation treacherous for inexperienced sailors, plus humanoid shark-men and other creatures inhabit the waters.

THE CAPTAIN'S COUNCIL

The government of Freeport, such as it is, is up to the Captain's Council. Originally established as a loose alliance of the most ruthless and powerful pirate captains, the Council is presently a more formal alliance of the ruthless and powerful, ruled over by one of their number, holding the title of Sea Lord. The present Sea Lord of Freeport is Marlise Maeorgan. Her father, Marshal Maeorgan, serves as commander of the Sea Lord's Guard (showing nepotism remains alive and well in the free city).

The current members of the Captain's Council are:

- **Dirwin "Nimblefingers" Arnig**, a gnome, is the head of the Jewelers' and Gemcutters' Guild.
- **Liam Blackhammer**, self-proclaimed "champion of the people," has held his seat for almost twenty years.
- **Xavier Gordon** once sat on the Privateer's Seat, but he gained a permanent post on the Council after the Succession Riots.
- **Nathan Grymes** is one of the newer members on the Council; he's made it clear he places the Merchant District above all other concerns.



- **Sister Gwendolyn** represents the interests of the Sea God of Freeport.
- **Enoch Holliver** is a well-connected mercenary the Sea Lord chose to head up the militarized Freeport Watch.
- **Jacob Lydon:** Drunkard, pirate, and rogue, Captain Lydon is one of the most well-known members of the Council.
- **Marcus Roberts** is a long-standing member of the council who runs his own spy network on the Continent.
- **Hector Torian:** Raised by former Sea Lord Milton Drac, Torian continues to search for a Drac heir.
- **Tarmon**, High Wizard of the Wizards' Guild, gained his seat to fill a vacancy, giving him and his guild considerable power.
- **Garth Varellion**, an ambitious, shallow, self-absorbed fool, has few supporters.
- **Tench Prescott**, the current holder of the Privateer's Seat, is a disinterested politician and spends little time governing.

THE SERPENT PEOPLE

Although few in Freeport know it, the destruction of Valossa was not the end of the Serpent People, although it was nearly so. Scattered survivors of the ancient ophidian race still live beneath the islands of the Serpent's Teeth, including A'Val. Most Serpent People have fallen into near-mindless savagery, but there remain a few throwbacks to their ancient ways, along with sorcerers from the time before the fall of Valossa, preserved in mystic hibernation in preparation for the time when the Serpent People rise again to prominence in the world.

Readers of *Freedom City* are already familiar with the Serpent People of ancient Lemuria and their history (*Freedom City*, page 10). Are the Serpent People of Valossa an example of parallel development (just as there are humans in Freeport), or are the two examples more closely connected? It's possible, given their ancient eldritch lore, the Serpent Empire may have spanned many worlds across the Cosmic Coils, including Earth-Prime, and the Serpent People there may be descendants of the same ancestors as those dwelling under the Serpent's Teeth. Given the chaos of the fall of their respective empires, none can say for certain.

Still, the Serpent People of Freeport have the same traits as their Earth-Prime cousins, and you can use the material from the *Freedom City* sourcebook in conjunction with them. Freeport's Serpent People are divided into roughly two camps: corrupt and degenerate worshippers of preternatural mad gods like the Unspeakable One and a few examples of Serpent Person civilization who retain their sanity and some measure of their ancient culture and lore. These civilized Serpent People despise their degenerate brethren for the downfall of their empire. Note, however, just because the latter Serpent People are civilized does not necessarily mean they are friendly to the "younger races" (humanity included); serpent society is still alien by human standards, and Serpent People do not necessarily subscribe to human mores and customs. If it furthered their cause to wipe out every mammal on the Serpent's Teeth, the "civilized" Serpent People would do so without hesitation.

The Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign also exists both in Freeport and on Earth-Prime (*Freedom City*, page 142), with the same sinister purpose: worship of the Unspeakable One and the goal of eventually bringing the "gift" of their god's divine madness to all creatures. The branches of the Brotherhood on both worlds have been in contact with each other through arcane means in the past, using their knowledge of navigating the twists and turns of the Cosmic Coils. Further collaboration between

HOIST THE COLORS!

For a fun change-of-pace *M&M* adventure or mini-series set in Freeport, perhaps the mode of dimensional travel the characters use to arrive in the free city also temporarily nullifies their powers, or someone steals them (perhaps placing them inside a container like a magic gem), and the heroes have to find a way to get them back.

This set-up allows for a swashbuckling heroic fantasy adventure where the characters are not *quite* so superhuman or able to ignore threats like cutlasses and primitive firearms so easily. Of course, it does tend to favor heroes who don't have any powers in the first place, so you might want to consider halfway measures such as lowering some of the character's power ranks or removing just some powers. Perhaps magical weapons in Freeport can overcome a hero's Impervious Toughness, for example, making them more of a threat, or only the heroes' special movement abilities are removed, forcing them to rely on local transportation and get a ship to take them where they need to go.

Serpent People sorcerers and cultists of the Brotherhood might draw the attention of heroes from either world seeking to thwart their plans.

VISITING FREEPORT

The free city's history stretches back into the mists of time; the Serpent's Teeth are all that remain of the ancient island of Valossa, the center of the Serpent Empire. It was torn apart by eldritch forces and the terrible wrath of the Unspeakable One, but the mad god's fury sundered more than just the landmass of Valossa; the destruction of the Serpent Empire rent the very fabric of the cosmos. Freeport now sits atop a kind of nexus, a "weak point" in the structure of reality. Just as the waves cast things up onto A'Val's rocky beaches, so too do the currents of the Cosmic Coils send various flotsam and jetsam spiraling to the shores of Freeport.

This means, in addition to the usual means of dimensional travel, visitors can end up in Freeport by mere happenstance. The most typical means is becoming lost at sea, in a strange fog or storm. When the unusual weather clears, the travelers find themselves off the shores of the free city or, more likely, marooned on its beaches or docks, their vessel lost beneath the waves (and in the vastness between dimensions). Freeport is used to "strange visitors from far away lands" turning up from time to time, and the city's cutpurses and con-artists are quick to take advantage of them.

On the other hand, Freeport has rarely ever seen the likes of costumed heroes with superhuman powers, and discretion is definitely the better part of valor in the free city. Visitors displaying considerable power will immediately draw the attention of the Captain's Council and the Wizard's Guild, who will either seek to exploit them to their own ends or get rid of them as quickly as possible before they can pose a threat to the safety of Freeport. Keep in mind, Freeport wizards like Tarmon may have access to strange potions or spells to which visitors from other worlds could be vulnerable. Technically, they might even be considered "demons" in magical parlance (beings of power from another plane) and subject to magical bindings!

In addition to ending up in Freeport by accident or pursuing some plot of the Serpent People, *Freedom City* heroes could go to the fantasy city seeking some lost magical artifact or pirate treasure (perhaps originally from Earth and swept to Freeport aboard a vessel lost at sea). A member of the Freeport Wizard's Guild could summon them accidentally during a ritual, or a priest from one of the city's temples might call them up to fulfill an ancient prophecy, which describes them with surprising accuracy.

CHAPTER 9: THE TERMINUS



"In discussing the Terminus, it might be useful to understand what it is not. It is not Hell. It does not exist to punish the wicked. The universe does a good enough job of that task on its own.

It is not the land of Conquest, a dark realm of power-mad despots who wage war on all who live. Oh, it's true it is has dimension-conquering megalomaniacs in abundance. But so does every other corner of the omniverse, in my experience. Conquest and domination are not the Terminus's purpose.

The Terminus is... an ending. A violent, brutal ending, entropy given swagger teeth and sent out into creation like a pack of hounds to tear universes into pieces. It began as Edanth, the closest thing to perfection to ever exist wholly within time, but time corrupted it, and as its corruption grew, so did its desire to blight and ruin all things.

Unus once boasted that all things noble began in their realm. Unfortunately, the same perfection has become spoiled, and what the realm now most loves is the corruption of good. It is the darkness that hungers and will not be sated until all light throughout the omniverse has been extinguished, forever."

- Tomen the Archivist

IN THE BEGINNING...

Once it was called Edanth, and for a moment, at the beginning of Creation, it was perfect. It was as perfect as the abstract quality of perfection, the platonic ideal of "perfect" embodied in the physical. Every visual detail was beauty, every sound harmonious, every scent pleasing.

However, time is by definition change, and if you change perfection, as time must do, it must cease being perfect. When time began in Edanth, the first measurable fraction of a second brought agony to the universe. Unus, the First One, who was the sole being to exist at the

moment of Creation, the only one to ever perceive Edanth in its unblemished glory, wept. From his tears were born the Alphians.

Unus shaped them into his likeness and named them his brothers and sisters, and was joyous. Perfection had fallen, but love and laughter had taken its place, and who dares to say that fellowship and brotherhood is so much less than a still, silent moment of perfection?

Edanth had fallen from perfection, but echoes of the perfect remained, as they do still in all worlds. The Alphians raced and wrestled

and played and labored in the near-perfect world beneath the nascent stars. Songs they created, which universes have forgotten, that could enlighten beasts. Poems they inscribed, for they could not contain their hearts, but loosed them with their tongues in beautiful words.

The Alphians were beautiful beyond measure, mighty beyond the dreams of the stumbling gods of later epochs, and they made the wisest spirits of later days look like fools by comparison. They could see everything in Creation. As universes formed around them, the Alphians found themselves no longer able to confine their love for one another; they wanted to share it with all Creation. Perhaps they should have contained their enthusiasm and allowed existence to unfold and mature on its own. But they wanted to love all of creation, and love makes fools of even the wisest of us.

THE FIRST, THE BELOVED

The Alphians sensed Shadow Worlds forming; they were unlovely places, where the first hatred of the universe was spawned. The Alphians chose not to look upon them. Other things existed of which they also did not take note. Their senses were drawn, inexorably, to the greatest of the early spheres, to the light of a world called Phos. There, a great civilization had emerged, and at the vanguard of this mighty and beautiful people were the first known superhumans, the champions of the people. They were creatures of unblemished magnificence, and the greatest of these was Phoros the Bright, a being of such power, beauty, and strength that he impressed even Unus, who saw in him qualities of perfection that he believed had fled from reality at the moment of creation.

The champions of Phos spread enlightenment throughout the newly born dimensions of reality. However, the greatest champions were brought to Edanth to serve as companions of the Alphians, and Phoros was named Companion of Unus himself. Phoros begged the Alphians to aid the Phosion in their work, to spread their light throughout the worlds of reality. The Alphians could not refuse him.

An age of enlightenment followed, the long Dawn of Creation. Wherever the Alphians and the Phosians traveled, the gnawing darkness between realities fled. Where they walked, worlds were born. Where they spoke, civilizations rose. Where they sang, the cosmos shaped itself into new, glorious forms. Where they wrestled, their struggle brought purpose, resolution, and resolve. Existence was sculpted towards as close as it could get to perfection outside the moment of its Birth. However, this period of flowering had its price; by speeding the process of creation, the Alphians aged the universes beyond what should have been. Soon, Unus sensed a new force at work in the cosmos: Entropy, which drags existence toward oblivion.

Unus was driven to despair by the prospect of the end of the universe, but Phoros urged him to fight it, to find a way to exist forever. For a time, Unus held Entropy in check by the force of his will alone. Unfortunately, as time passed, Entropy grew, and Unus found himself growing weaker. It became apparent even he could not hold Entropy at bay for eternity. At Phoros's urging, Unus built a machine to gather the force of Entropy and imprison it. This device was named the Doom-Coil, and much of Unus's power rested within it. It was the greatest machine ever built, or that ever could be built, for it was the supreme flowering of the creativity of the Dawn of Time. Worlds died in its construction (a regrettable but necessary sacrifice). At last, the Doom-Coil was completed, and Unus rested. As the titan slept, Phoros crept to the edge of the Doom-Coil to see what he had made and to look upon the force that would devour universes.

He looked upon Entropy, and it was not what he expected. It was... *beautiful*.

THE RISE OF ENTROPY

At that moment, Phoros dedicated himself to a new master. He knew that Entropy was greater than the Alphians, greater than Unus, greater even than Creation itself, for it was destined to conquer everything. Phoros worshipped the Devourer, he sang songs that fed it and were twisted into dark designs: hate, malice, murder, corruption. These evils infected his heart until he had no love left for the Alphians. Finally, in honor of his new master, he changed his name to Omega, the End, for what other name could a servant of Entropy take?

Omega introduced many of the Phosian heroes to the Doom-Coil, and they also came to love and worship Entropy. These became the Annihilists, the adopted children of Entropy. Those few Phosians who didn't join their ranks were given as gifts to the Devourer. Entropy fed off their power and increased its strength. Without warning, the Alphians began to age and grow feeble; as they lost their youthful vigor, the power of Entropy grew. Most Alphians had no idea what was happening to them. A few chose to confront the problem, but they were defeated and imprisoned within the Doom-Coil, which fed from their power. These shackled gods were incorporated into the Doom-Coil, their bodies stretched over its surface to form the Ouroboros Skin that protects the Doom-Coil from harm.

Unus awoke and sensed the wrongness in the air, but it was too late. The Doom-Coil had grown too powerful even for him to unravel. However, the Doom-Coil could not kill Unus, not until every last creature in creation was dead, for that was his destiny, to see time's last moment. However, he could be diminished. They battled for centuries, creator against creation, until Omega fed his home universe of Phos into the Doom-Coil. It was the first universe ever to be consumed within the Doom-Coil. It is unclear which defeated Unus: the sudden surge in power or Omega's sheer malice in betraying the people he'd championed. Unus was struck down. He was reduced to a barely coherent, gibbering creature wandering in confusion around the great castle that sat at the cornerstone of Creation, the one he had raised at the moment of enlightenment.

Striding into this pathetic scene came Artexia the Weeper. She was first born of all the Alphians, and saddest because she bore most of Unus's regret for Creation's fall from grace. She had not traveled with the other Alphians, but had hid in the dark places between universes, lamenting the fall. However, her voice traversed the gap between existences, and those who learned to discern it learned wisdom and (ultimately) comfort in the face of mortality. She had no power to face Omega, but neither could he face her, for the fear of death or corruption could not touch her heart.

Artexia could not heal Unus, but she could forge a weapon. She stared into the recesses of the First One's mind, where alone the memory of Creation Inviolate was contained, and in her womb she formed an incarnate image of that perfection. This was her son, child of her body and Unus's thought, the only son of the Alphians, and she died giving birth to him. This man was called the Throne, for he contained the Seat of Creation within himself.

The Throne leapt into the Doom-Coil. Omega grappled with him, but he was cast aside, for the Throne was might incarnate. "Down, traitor!" he snarled. Even his words dealt grave wounds to Omega. "You are nothing in the scheme of creation. A far greater foe awaits me." Graver still was the harm Omega suffered from even a brief contact with the Doom-Coil. The once beautiful Phoros was truly gone; in his place was a burning, skeletal corpse sustained by hatred and an endless thirst for destruction.

For eons, the Throne wrestled the Doom-Coil to a standstill, as Entropy could not affect one fixed in the image of the moment of creation. However, the Throne could not overthrow his enemy, and as

Omega sent universe after universe into the Doom-Coil, it grew, and Entropy increased. The Throne never abandoned the struggle, nor was he ever defeated, but the machine grew around him and continued its work unabated. Omega took the great seat of Edanth as his own, and he renamed the dimension the Terminus, for it would be the ultimate end of all things. The Throne remains imprisoned within the Doom-Coil, continuing his struggle.

BY OMEGA'S COMMAND

Omega believed the Throne was no longer a major threat. He continued to feed universes to Entropy. Before they died, he corrupted their greatest heroes to bolster the ranks of the Annihilists, he stole their best engineers and artisans to serve as proles, and he transformed the noblest soldiers and warrior-heroes into Omegadrones, who terrorized many universes. Some of the Alphians escaped their fate and placed their incarnate thoughts within the remaining champions of Phos, giving birth to a race that could resist Omega. These were the Furions, a people born to vengeance and liberty. They reside within the Terminus and seek to free the Throne from the confines of the Doom-Coil.

One Furion made a pact with the Shadow World the Alphians had ignored and elevated himself in power. He was Taarvon the Undying, a puissant wizard whose command of dark sorceries made him a rival of Omega. Periodically, he has waged war on Nihilor, hoping to seize the Doom-Coil and change its mastery from Entropy to Shadow. Omega considers him but a minor nuisance, and the Furions he holds in even lower regard.

Over time, the universes devoured by the Terminus grew, and the ranks of the Annihilists swelled. On a universe very much like Freedom City's,

Omega encountered Steelguard, a genius in a metal skin who had come to view the other protectors of his world as dangerous. Omega offered to assist him in his betrayal. After the war of brother against brother that followed, Steelguard became Shadivan Steelgrave, the most corrupt servant of the Terminus, maker of its weapons of war.

Omega has known of Freedom City's Earth since a scientist from a conquered universe sent his infant son there in a last desperate act. Long he desired to crush that universe beneath his heel, but he was denied by Freedom City's greatest champion, the Centurion, and his various allies, including the Furions. Finally, Omega seized an opportunity to launch a strike against Freedom City. The Terminus Invasion followed, a bloody struggle that had occurred in a hundred different universes. But this time, the world's greatest superhuman champion would not be beaten. Shadivan Steelgrave offered him great prizes, but the Centurion would not yield. Omega offered to spare his life, and the lives of his loved ones, but the champion of Freedom would not back down. The epic battle that followed has been the subject of tales told throughout the universe and beyond.

Omega killed him eventually, of course, but the Centurion had damaged his life-support mechanisms so badly the titan was forced to retreat. A defeat! He had not known defeat in countless centuries! Word of the setback reached the Furions, filling them with... hope.

Omega swore to draw Freedom City's universe into the Terminus and destroy it. He sensed within that universe certain energies not unlike those of his native Phos. Perhaps this universe even contains enough energy to trigger a quantum slide, an event that will take Entropy beyond the tipping point needed to collapse *all* realities, destroying the Omniverse in one stroke.

A GUIDE TO THE TERMINUS

The Terminus is not a world; it's a universe. It is a small universe by our standards, composed of a hundred worlds in orbit around the Doom-Coil, though this is deceiving, for the Terminus has dimensional tendrils (called "The Ravel") that reach out between all universes.

Long ago, the Doom-Coil consumed the stars of the Terminus universe, but their destruction produced a malleable chaos that produces the warmth and light necessary to sustain worlds. Beneath hazy red skies, the hundred worlds bathe in the energies unleashed by the destruction of universes, and they bow to (or raise their fists to defy) the will of its dark master.

The key factions and worlds of the Terminus, the keys to this titanic struggle, are as follows:

NIHILOR

The Doom-Coil is suspended within the hollow interior of the planet Nihilor, the massive world Omega calls home. Once its blackened surface was a garden paradise beyond compare, planted and tended by the Alphians, their blooms singing as they flowered, but beauty no longer exists on Nihilor. The Ouroboros Skin now covers the surface of the world; a blackened expanse of nigh-indestructible iron where the bodies of Alphians who were defeated by the Doom-Coil lay, stretched and distorted in hideous ways to form an armored surface, a living skin composed of hopelessly trapped gods.

The Terminus Stream, a plume of cosmic fire, flows out of a rift on the planet's surface, spiraling down into the endless blackness of the Void at the center of the Terminus. This is how universes die, in fire, as their concentrated energies are sucked into the great engine of Entropy, and then spewed out into the maw of annihilation.

The Terminus Stream combines the vast pressures of a black hole formed by a collapsing universe with the primal temperatures found in its heat death, closer to oblivion incarnate than any death god of any culture ever conceived. Anyone touching the Stream must make a DC 40 Fortitude save; those who make the Save are disabled and thrown clear of the Stream, while those who fail are instantly consumed and utterly destroyed. It requires a special Immunity to survive physical contact; the only ones who've done so for any length of time are Freedom Bird and the Throne.

Dotting the Ouroboros Skin are numerous grim towers and palaces. The largest is Omega's great palace complex, housing the Omegadrone factories, which churn and spew foul smoke and belch flame. This was once the Dawncastle of Unus. Here, the captured heroes of fallen wars are fused with the machines of Shadivan Steelgrave to produce Omegadrones. Here, Physician Friendly and his Nightmare Nurses perform obscene medical experiments on captives from a hundred universes. Here, Madrigal Martinet drills the Final Armada with an iron fist. Here, Abby-Brio, the Counter, prostrates himself in Omega's treasury, counting the stolen fortunes of the Omniverse.

Each of the Annihilists has a fortress and petty-kingdom, and sometimes they go to war with each other. So long as their petty quarrels do not affect him, Omega does not care. Forces of Omegadrones patrol the skies over the Annihilists' fortresses, a constant reminder not to take their "games" too far.

THE DOOM-COIL

The Doom-Coil itself is located inside the planet's hollow shell. It's massive enough on its own, but it also has the reality-distorting mass of a thousand collapsed universes within it. There are only two entrances

into the Doom-Coil. One is the energy port where the Terminus Stream flows—impassible to any vulnerable to the Stream's devastating power. The other is the Silent Stair, which descends for miles from Omega's personal quarters.

The Doom-Coil is destruction incarnate. It cannot be harmed, and merely looking into its depths is enough for most to give in to despair, hopelessness, and their darkest impulses. The GM should set a Will save DC to resist this, as suits the story, since the whole of the Doom-Coil is a powerful plot device.

The Doom-Coil is constantly searching, reaching, for other universes to devour. When it finds a candidate, it seeks out its key world, the nexus of that dimension's reality (typically a planet rich in superhuman power sources). Once it's discovered, Omega and his Final Armada are dispatched to capture it. The conquered world is converted into a focus for the Doom-Coil. When the focus is activated, the Doom-Coil directs the Terminus Stream into that universe and sucks it in like a man drinking through a straw, until that universe collapses and is devoured.

Deep within the Coil is the Throne, who is slowly, millimeter by millimeter, fighting his way into the heart of the machine, struggling against forces beyond imagination. One day, the Furions say, the Throne will reach the heart, and the final battle will begin.

THE HUNDRED WORLDS

Beyond the Doom-Coil are the Hundred Worlds, the scattered surviving planets of diverse universes consumed by the Doom-Coil. Seeing that they have their uses, Omega permits them to exist as chattel. On these worlds, there are factories and farms to serve the ever-expanding appetites of Nihilhor, the gladiator world-pit of the Mixed Murder Arts, where elite soldiers from conquered worlds fight to the death for the "honor" of becoming Omegadrones. Some worlds claim independence, but they are so dependent on Omega for "protection" from raiders that they may as well be slaves.

There are, however, pockets of freedom within the Hundred Worlds. One is the World-Library of Tomen the Archivist, keeper of the SourceBook, and the only Alphian not defeated by Omega. Another is the Shadow World of the sorcerer Taarvon the Undying, as grim a place as Nihilhor. The one great bastion is the Shining World of the Furions, which maintains its freedom by use of the Liberty Shield (which shuts down any Omegadrone that approaches it) and a planetary teleporter that can shift its position within the Terminus.

THE WARPWOLD

Beyond the Hundred Worlds is the Warpwold, also called the Outer Terminus. This is a debris field left by the Terminus Stream, full of asteroids, strange energies, and the lost artifacts and frozen exiles of devoured universes. Few creatures live in this vast wasteland. There are the Frozen Men, telepaths whose bodies are trapped in the icy grip of space, but whose minds remain active; they scheme to take the bodies of the living. Some, called Woldsmiths, telekinetically alter asteroids to form the bodies of giants, and then use them to navigate the void.

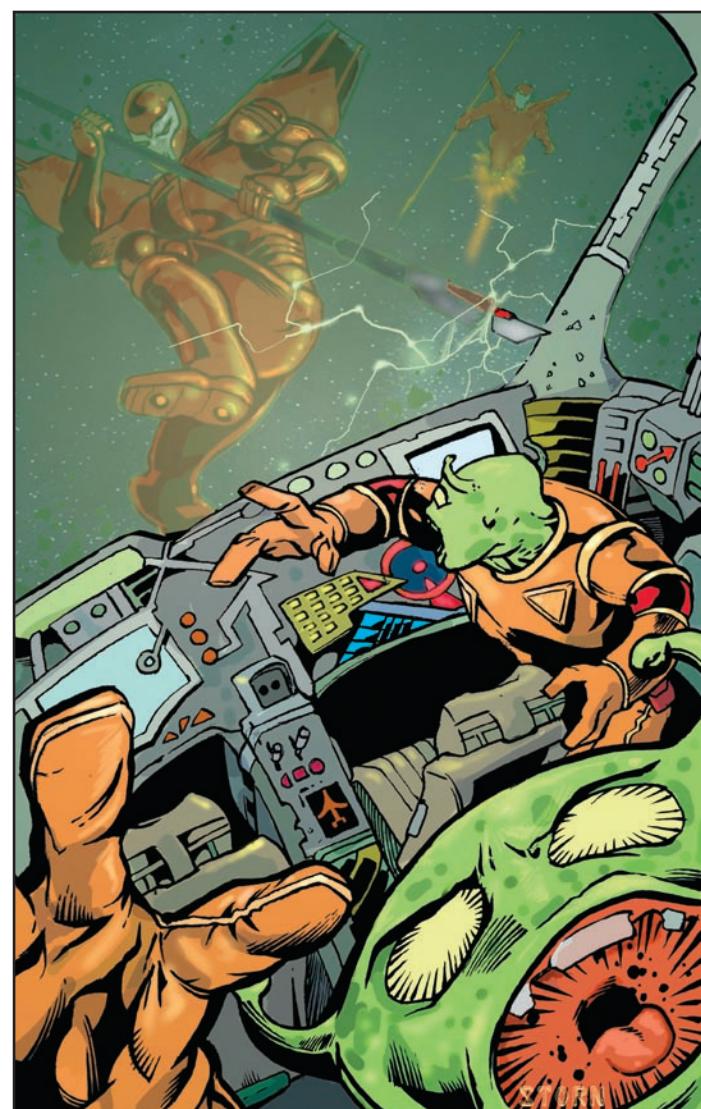
Some derelict ships contain the bodies of survivors (though Omega's proles constantly scour them for useful parts). The Warpwold is also home to a fleet of refugees called the High-Exiles; these alien nobles and highborn managed to survive the destruction of their universes and have banded together to get revenge on every inhabitant of the Terminus; Omega, Furions, and Shadowbane alike. Omega refers to them as "barbarian rabble" and, despite the arrogance of the name, he's not wrong. They are a mesh of a thousand cultures that have descended into barbarism, following whoever's strong enough to hold the fleet together (otherwise they turn on each other).

The Warpwold has another unusual property: it's permeated by a purple gas, also called warpwold, that can be shaped into any form by the will of the people who traverse it. This is treated like the Create Object power (M&M, page 80), but anyone in the Warpwold can use it at a rank equal to the character's Wisdom modifier or power level (whichever is less). This effect allows people to survive in the Warpwold by making what they need virtually out of nothing.

In all other respects, the Warpwold is a terrible place. The long-term effects on the mind are not pretty; those who spend more than a week in the Warpwold feel frayed, like someone chronically overworked without sleep. It's easy for people to get on each other's nerves out on the edges of reality. The effects intensify for about a year before people adjust to them; those who survive that year are still irritable, callous, and paranoid toward outsiders, inclined towards violence and barbaric behavior.

THE RAVEL

Beyond the Warpwold is the Ravel, where existence frays into loose, threadbare strands. Nothing exists out in the Ravel. It is an uninhabited void between dimensions, extending out forever, so far as anyone knows. The Ravel isn't an escape from the Terminus, however, unless one



considers endless nothingness and darkness an escape. Some have been known to succumb to despair in the Warpold and set course out into the Ravel. They are never heard from again.

The Ravel is intertwined with the Cosmic Coil, the space between dimensions traversed by mystics. Some say the Cosmic Coil was created

to grapple with the Ravel and keep it from extending into mystic dimensions to devour them. Terminus Tunnels also snake through the Ravel, skirting the edges of the dire dimension; a failed dimensional transition has been known to dump unwary travelers into the Warpold rather than their intended destination.

FACTIONS OF THE TERMINUS

Although aligned with entropy, the Terminus still holds life, of a sort. There are dozens of worlds, with billions of creatures. Many swear their allegiance to Lord Omega, but others do not. The primary factions within the Terminus are Omega's Annihilists, the freedom-fighting Furions, the renegade Overrides, the Shadowbane loyal to the sorcerer Taarvon, and Tomen the Archivist, last of the Alphians.

Due to the primal forces at work here, inhabitants of the Terminus tend to appear in the form of the species, and even the ethnicity, of onlookers: humans perceive them as human, Captain Kraken would perceive them as Illthusian, and so forth. Likewise, creatures in the Terminus all have the capability to understand each other, regardless of language; one small benefit for newcomers. Tomen has implied this second effect is due to the influence of the SourceBook.

These effects also apply to outsiders, like Max Muscle, who dwell in the Terminus for a length of time. The linguistic effect occurs immediately, while the effect on appearance takes a few months to take hold. Both effects linger after leaving the Terminus for about a week for every year spent there (meaning near-immortal beings like Omega and the Furions can retain them outside the Terminus for decades, if not longer).

The GM can choose to treat these side effects as simple plot devices or as a "Terminus Template," given here. This template is assumed for all characters in this chapter, but it is not included in their point values. Simply increase them accordingly if you wish to include it.

TERMINUS TEMPLATE

5 POINTS

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Feature 1** (appears as same species and ethnicity as the onlooker)

THE ANNIHILISTS

Omega, of course, is more than just a cosmically powered megalomaniac; he commands a formidable force of warriors, psychopaths, and sadists. The saddest thing is they were once the greatest heroes of their home worlds, but they've been corrupted, either by twisting their codes of honor, being persuaded to abandon them, or just plain cowardice in the face of an unstoppable force.

Gamemasters should feel free to add to or expand the ranks of the Annihilists as desired to suit the series. A particularly nasty trick is to make twisted and corrupt versions of the heroes (or their allies or loved ones) into Omega's newest minions, recruited from doomed parallel worlds. Perhaps they wear concealing costumes so their origins are not immediately apparent, or have changed so significantly as to be unrecognizable, at least until you look closely into their haunted, soulless eyes.

The four Annihilists described here are Omega's chief lieutenants. There are many others. Noteworthies include: Abby-Brio, the Counter; *Dakbane*, the Twenty-One-Gun Kid (Omega's page); the Black Beacon; Intendant Kruulthane, High Priest of the Terminus; Duke Nullus; Maven Magnessa (star of what passes in the Terminus for "entertainment," which consists mostly of watching her stuntpeople die), and the Magnificent Malicia.

One thing the Annihilists all have in common is a punishment implant, inserted into their brains by Physician Friendly as part of their "conversion." It allows Omega to inflict terrible pain on them at will, even kill them, if he wishes. Although the Annihilists are rarely ever inclined to question their master's will, the implants help ensure their continued loyalty and obedience. They're considered plot devices, and so are not included in the Annihilists' game stats.

Likewise not included in the Annihilists' game stats are their various headquarters and minions. Each has a fortress on Nihilor and a personal army of Omegadrone and other servants. The Gamemaster is free to elaborate on these as needed and desired for any given adventure.

SHADIVAN STEELGRAVE

The most powerful and corrupt of Omega's Annihilists is Shadivan Steelgrave. Once he was Steelguard, one of the greatest heroes of his homeworld and captain of the Heroic Assembly. He became obsessed with a prediction by his futurism machine, which foretold certain planetary destruction unless draconian measures to control superhumans were instituted. To this end, Steelguard began a bloody civil war among superhumans on his world, always telling himself he had to be realistic, that his old ideals were naïve and would only lead to disaster. In the end, he won, all of his old friends were killed or subverted, and when the Terminus invaded, there were no heroes to stop them.

The defeated Steelguard was pragmatic. He needed to ensure his race's survival, at least on a small scale. He offered complete surrender to Omega, in exchange for Omega's agreement to spare five thousand members of his race. Omega agreed, and Steelguard pulled the device that hurled his world into the Warpold. However, Omega did something beyond his predictions. He corrupted him, destroying all semblance of his ideals, so that Steelguard, now Shadivan Steelgrave, came to realize that as long as he survived, his race survived, so why did it need breeding stock? He turned the 5,000 into Omegadrone, who soon died in the numerous wars of the Terminus.

Steelgrave is now Omega's chief lieutenant, his chief weaponsmith and strategist, and head of his campaign to conquer Earth. He was the one who developed the Alpha-Centurion Omega used to impersonate the great hero. Steelgrave believes in humiliating an enemy before striking the final blow, and he intends to find new ways to debase and degrade the heroes of Earth—it's for their own good, after all, since ideals and heroism are such outdated concepts.

Steelgrave is head of the Omegadrone program. Billions of captured soldiers from Omega's conquered worlds are taken to the Steelgrave Sadodel, where they are trained in the Mixed Murder Arts, and then fight to the death for the proles' entertainment. Those who win the death-duels (or who try to lead slave rebellions; Steelgrave so admires spirit) are taken to his factory, where they are brainwashed, turned into Omegadrone, and sent into battle for the greater glory of the Terminus.

Steelgrave appears as a middle aged Caucasian man, with dark curly brown hair, a pencil-thin moustache, and the sagging remains of a once athletic build eroded by years of vice. The Steelgrave armor is a seven-foot tall battlesuit, jet black with gold trim.

SHADIVAN STEELGRAVE POWER LEVEL 14

Str 26/10 | Dex 16/10 | Con 26/10 | Int 22 | Wis 19 | Cha 18

Skills: Bluff 8 (+12), Computer 18 (+24), Craft (electronic) 18 (+24), Craft (mechanical) 18 (+24), Diplomacy 4 (+8), Disable Device 10 (+16), Investigate 8 (+14), Knowledge (history) 2 (+8), Knowledge (physical sciences) 12 (+18), Knowledge (tactics) 10 (+16), Knowledge (technology) 16 (+22), Sense Motive 12 (+16)

Feats: Eidetic Memory, Inventor, Master Plan, Set Up, Well-Informed

Powers: **Datalink 10** (radio implant; Machine Control), **Device 33** (battlesuit, hard to lose), **Immunity 1** (aging)

Battlesuit: **Blast 15** (magnetic; *Alternate Powers: Blast 10* [Autofire], **Move Object 15**, **Stun 15**), **Concealment 4** (all visual; chameleon field), **Enhanced Constitution 16**, **Enhanced Dexterity 6**, **Enhanced Strength 16**, **Flight 12**, **Immovable 5** (stabilizers; Unstoppable), **Immunity 9** (life support), **Mind Shield 5** (psi-shielding), **Protection 8** (Impervious), **Super-Senses 12** (blindsight [radar; extended], darkvision, direction sense, distance-sense, infravision, radio, time sense), **Super-Strength 5** (heavy load: 29.4 tons)

Combat: Attack +13, Grapple +26, Damage +8 (unarmed), +15 (blast), Defense +13 (+7 flatfooted), Knockback -16, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +15 (+7 without battlesuit), Fortitude +11, Reflex +8, Will +13 (+8 without mind shield)

Abilities 29 + Skills 34 (136 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 144 + Combat 52 + Saves 12 = Total 268

MANDRAGORA POWER LEVEL 13

Str 35 | Dex 19 | Con 24 | Int 15 | Wis 17 | Cha 24

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Bluff 4/12 (+11/+19), Handle Animal 12 (+19), Intimidate 10 (+17), Investigate 6 (+8), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+10), Notice 6 (+9), Ride 12 (+16), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 6 (+9)

Feats: Animal Empathy, Attack Focus 2 (ranged), Attractive 2, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 2, Equipment, Improved Block, Improved Critical (blast), Improved Initiative 2, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Takedown Attack

Equipment: Armor (+3 Toughness, concealed), Commlink

Powers: **Blast 14** (fire; *Alternate Power: Blast 9* [Line Area]), **Flight 12**, **Immunity 18** (aging, critical hits, fire damage, life support)

Combat: Attack +10 (melee), +12 (ranged), Grapple +22, Damage +12 (unarmed), +14 (blast), Defense +13 (+3 flatfooted), Knockback -6 (-5 flatfooted, -3 flatfooted and without armor), Initiative +12

Saving Throws: Toughness +13 (+10 flat-footed or without armor), Fortitude +8, Reflex +8, Will +7

Abilities 74+ Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 18 + Powers 71 + Combat 42 + Saves 9 = Total 233

battle cruiser or on a planet hunting Furions, Mandragora serves Omega, the noblest of his servants – and yet more loyal than anyone who's been brainwashed into his fold.

Mandragora appears to be a tall (6'3") Asian man, handsome despite a nasty burn scar on the right side of his face. He has long black hair and wears red armor, emblazoned with a golden Chinese dragon. He has five fanatical dragon retainers at his beck and call (see *M&M*, page 233, for game stats).



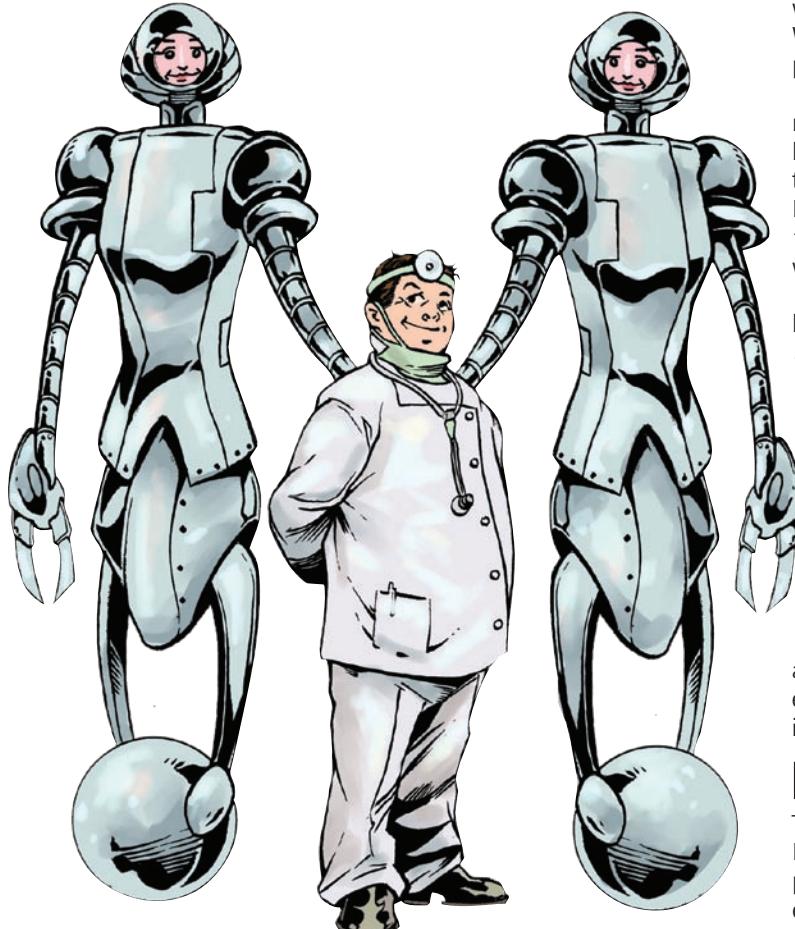
MANDRAGORA

Mandragora, Dragon of the Terminus, was once hero of a mighty world of fantastic magic and dragons coexisting with modern metropolises. He was the Dragonblood, the man who brought dragon and mankind together. He tamed the great Dragon of the Monothesis Steppes, and then he ate its heart to gain its powers. He now had a dragon's might and the ability to produce dragonfire with a gesture. All tongues proclaimed him Hero and Peacemaker.

When Omega came, the great overlord of Entropy unfolded his plans for existence. Mandragora had been prophesized to defeat dragons and reconcile them to man. He knew there was no prophecy to cover his victory over this foe. He fought Omega, as was his heroic duty, but when he was beaten, he bowed before him and said: "This world is yours. As am I, master." Techno-Chivalry demanded the oath.

Omega brought Mandragora back to the Terminus, where he gave him a tower of dragons from which to watch the death of his universe. He was saddened, but he had his sworn retainers and five dragons at his side. Since then, whether astride a great dragon-headed

MADRIGAL MARTINET		POWER LEVEL 13			
Str 26	Dex 19	Con 33	Int 16	Wis 18	Cha 24
Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+12), Bluff 10 (+16/+24), Climb 8 (+16), Concentration 12 (+16), Diplomacy 4 (+10/+18), Disable Device 8 (+11), Gather Information 8 (+14), Handle Animal 6 (+10), Intimidate 8 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+7), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 12 (+15), Knowledge (history) 5 (+8), Knowledge (tactics) 13 (+16), Medicine 4 (+8), Notice 10 (+14), Perform (oratory) 12 (+18), Profession (soldier) 6 (+10), Sense Motive 12 (+16), Stealth 6 (+10), Survival 8 (+12)					
Feats: All-out Attack, Attractive 2, Defensive Attack, Diehard, Equipment 7, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Improved Throw, Interpose, Inspire 3, Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Quick Change, Quick Draw, Takedown Attack					
Equipment: Kordion Rifle (+9 damage, Accurate, Penetrating), Kordion Knife (+4 damage), Helmet with Commlink, Sensory Shield 2 (all senses), Super Senses 1 (lowlight vision)					
Powers: Immunity 21 (aging, all damage from weapons), Protection 2 (Impervious), Regeneration 16 (bruised/unconscious, 1/round; injured and staggered, 1/minute; disabled 1/5 minutes), Super-Strength 9 (heavy load: 235 tons)					
Combat: Attack +13, Grapple +30, Damage +8 (unarmed), +9 (rifle), Defense +13 (+7 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +8					
Saving Throws: Toughness +13, Fortitude +17, Reflex +9, Will +13					
Abilities 75 + Skills 41 (164 ranks) + Feats 33 + Powers 59 + Combat 52 + Saves 20 = Total 280					



PHYSICIAN FRIENDLY		POWER LEVEL 12			
Str 12	Dex 11	Con 10	Int 26	Wis 16	Cha 12
Skills: Bluff 8 (+9), Computers 8 (+16), Craft (chemical) 12 (+20), Craft (electronic) 12 (+20), Craft (mechanical) 12 (+20), Disable Device 6 (+14), Intimidate 10 (+11), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 8 (+16), Knowledge (physical sciences) 12 (+20), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+20), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8 (+16), Medicine 14 (+17), Perform (singing "the friendly song") 6 (+7), Profession (scientist) 8 (+11), Sense Motive 12 (+15)					
Feats: Inventor, Master Plan, Second Chance 3 (chemical, electronic, and mechanical Craft skill checks), Skill Mastery (Craft skills, Disable Device)					
Powers: Healing 8 (biochemical catalysts; Energizing; <i>Alternate Powers: Nausea 12, Immunity 1</i> (aging), Mind Control 12 (Fortitude Save; Touch Range, Limited to the command "be docile and sing along with Physician Friendly"), Protection 5					
Combat: Attack +4, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +5, Fortitude +5, Reflex +2, Will +8					
Abilities 27 + Skills 37 (148 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 34 + Combat 24 + Saves 12 = Total 140					

MADRIGAL MARTINET

The Madrigal was a superheroine who fought against a tyrannical overlord on her homeworld. Raised by the amazon-like Kordions, she went off the deep end after the Warlord destroyed Kordialis Island and brutally murdered her children on the worldwide communications network. When Shadian Steelgrave offered her the chance to destroy the Warlord, she took it, even though it meant the destruction of the entire planet she once fought to liberate. And, it felt good.

A superb tactician and a ruthless combat instructor, Madrigal was renamed Madrigal Martinet and put in charge of training the Omegadrone hordes for the Final Armada. More recently, she's been given a special task: go to Earth-Prime, seduce one of its heroes, and bear his child. Frighteningly, the Martinet plans to complete this task without trepidation. She is the ice princess of the Terminus, as fierce as any drill sergeant when commanding her troops and otherwise showing no emotions.

Madrigal Martinet has only one weakness; she loves Mandragora, but he claims he doesn't care for her. The two have frequently waged war against each other, sacrificing the lives of countless drones, even though the entire Terminus realizes it's just an elaborate mating ritual.

Madrigal Martinet is the most beautiful woman in the Terminus, but it's a cold beauty. Her long raven hair flows out of her golden helmet, and its open eye slits reveal her sparkling blue eyes. She is 6' tall with an athlete's build. She wears a red military uniform with gold braid.

The Madrigal's homeworld was magical. Her Immunity is a spell bestowed on her by the Kordions when she was named High Champion of Peace: no technological device crafted as a weapon, be it a sword, a knife, or an atomic bomb, can physically harm her. This includes any physical effect like Drain, Nauseate, or Disintegrate, although not Snares, which work normally. Mental damage is not covered in the spell, nor are non-weapon attacks (including attacks with items *not* crafted as weapons, like random pieces of the scenery).

PHYSICIAN FRIENDLY & HIS NIGHTMARE NURSES

The most evil and twisted individual in the Terminus is Physician Friendly, head of the Helpful Hospice, where proles, Omegadrones, and prisoners go to receive his "compassionate care": torture, dissection, or experimentation.

NIGHTMARE NURSES**POWER LEVEL 9**

Str 25	Dex 20	Con -	Int 16	Wis 10	Cha 12
Skills: Notice 8 (+8), Perform (singing) 4 (+5), Search 8 (+11)					
Feats: Eidetic Memory, Teamwork					
Powers: Immunity 60 (Fortitude, Will), Nausea 9 (fear chemical; <i>Alternate Power: Emotion Control 9</i> [Fortitude Save; Limited to Fear, Touch Range]), Protection 10 (Impervious 5), Speed 4 (100 MPH), Strike 3 (surgical attachments, Mighty), Super Senses 7 (detect intruders into guarded areas [acute, analytical, ranged], distance sense, radio, time sense), Super Strength 5 (heavy load: 12 tons)					
Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +20, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -7, Initiative +5					
Saving Throws: Toughness +10, Fortitude -, Reflex +8, Will -					
Abilities 23 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 119 + Combat 32 + Saves 3 = Total 184					

The Physician was the greatest hero of his world, a man who organized the resistance against the evil Nanoknights when they took over. When he defeated the Nanoknights and was put in charge of the rebuilding project, the Physician realized it was a lost cause. The damage done by the Nanoknights, not only on his world, but on every planet in the universe, was irreversible, and people were doomed to a long, slow death. Then, a strange, armored man suggested he simply put the universe out of its misery, quickly and painlessly. He did so, but the experience drove him insane.

After a "treatment" from Omega and the Doom-Coil, the Physician renamed himself Physician Friendly. He now performed whatever experiments Omega wanted, just as long as he could sing a happy tune and give the patient a lollipop at the end (usually into the mouth of their corpse). With the assistance of his Nightmare Nurses (who give bad patients "a right good scare"), he keeps things running smoothly at the insanely Helpful Hospice, always willing to share a smile and a song with his patients and ask them to tell him "where it hurts," so he can find out more.

Physician Friendly is perceived as a small, jolly, slightly overweight man in a 1960s TV show doctor's smock.

Physician Friendly's Nightmare Nurses are huge, 7-foot tall, steel-grey robots in nurse's uniforms, with smiling faces painted on their blank steel heads and pincers for hands. They serve as the "punishment detail" while Physician Friendly almost always lives up to his name.

THE PROLES

While Omegadrones perform military duties and "grunt work" in the Terminus, they aren't the lowest of the low. That role falls to the proles. Once they were citizens of the various dimensions conquered by Omega and absorbed into the Terminus; now they are slaves to the greater glory of Omega and the Ultimate End of all things.

The proles are a truly wretched lot: underfed and abused at will by the Annihilists, who rule them with an iron fist. Most of them are thoroughly broken in spirit, actually worshipping Omega as a terrible destroyer-god who brought about the end of their worlds and will eventually end all realities everywhere. They see no hope in overcoming power such as the Doom-Coil. Socially, they're more like wolves: savage and quick to fight over scraps, but cowering in the face of the Omegadrones or, worse yet, their Annihilist masters.

A rare few proles still have the presence of mind to resist Omega's power. This small handful works to sabotage the Lord of the Terminus at every opportunity, at least until they're caught and killed or, worse yet, sent to the Helpful Hospice to "learn to sing a happy song" at Physician Friendly's hands.

PROLES**POWER LEVEL 3**

Str 13	Dex 10	Con 12	Int 8	Wis 10	Cha 8
Skills: Profession (choose one) 8 (+8), Survival 8 (+8)					
Feats: Endurance					
Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +3, Damage +1 (unarmed) or with at-hand weapons, Defense +2, Knockback -0, Initiative +0					

Saving Throws: Toughness +1, Fortitude +5, Reflex +1, Will +0

Abilities 1 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 0 + Combat 8 + Saves 5 = Total 19

Thanks to the effects of the Terminus, to people from Earth, proles look like savage humans, clad in filthy rags. Ironically, the nature of the Terminus gives them all the ability to communicate, despite coming from dozens of different realities, for all the good this generally does them.

TARVON THE UNDYING

While Omega is the most feared being in the Terminus, perhaps in all existence, Taarvon the Undying and his Shadowbane are not to be taken lightly (so to speak). After a long career as a superhero on his native world, Taarvon became a student of the Alphian Philothume. Tales of the dark places, the Shadows into which the Alphians never ventured, fascinated Taarvon. He wanted to know more about the Shadow World.

Knowing the Alphians would never approve, Taarvon began his own studies. Soon he came to hear voices in the shadows, telling him he was destined



STORM

to be master of shadows. All he needed to do was steal the SourceBook and bring it to the Shadow World, and the darkness would reward him.

One day, he got his chance. Along with his master, Philothume, Taarvon was a guest at the great world-library, where he was allowed access to all books except those in the Archivist's personal collection (which included, of course, the SourceBook). Although the betrayal of Omega had not yet taken place, Tomen was still the most guarded of all Alphians. He caught Taarvon in the act of stealing the Book, and he punished him by chaining him to a desk and forcing him to write by hand a book detailing every sin he'd ever committed—and then copying it a thousand times.

However, such punishments often bear unintended fruit, and often-times those fruits are poison. Servants of the Shadow World had already infiltrated Taarvon's shadow, servants even Tomen could not see. As their host scribbled, they skittered through the library, gathered knowledge from forbidden tomes, and whispered secrets into Taarvon's ears. The shadows could not reach the SourceBook itself—it shone too brightly for them to approach—but they learned sorceries most fell, which utterly corrupted the young philosopher-hero.

Finally, Taarvon finished the thousandth book, and as he rested, he felt a great change come over the universe. Tomen beheld the Doom-Coil's triumph and shuddered. Philothume challenged the new order and was struck down; he was one of many Alphians stretched into the Ouroboros Skin.

"You will need to find a new master," Tomen remarked acidly, as he returned the philosopher to Edanth. "Although I say with complete confidence, this will be the easiest task of your life."

Taarvon was too bewildered by the changes to Edanth to read much into the remark. When Omega stepped forward and demanded his allegiance, he gave it, but neither trusted the other. Taarvon bided his time, and he was finally rewarded with what he sought. To ensure his loyalty, Omega took him to see the Doom-Coil. But the shadows cloaked his mind, even while they lusted after the god-machine's power.

Taarvon soon betrayed Omega and fled to the Last Shadow, a world where he built a great dark citadel. He summoned creatures from the

Shadow World as his servants and challenged Omega for control of the Doom-Coil. Time and again, he's been driven back, however Taarvon hopes that soon, the victory will be his. How sweet will be the day when the defeated Omega kneels at his feet as the shadows finally devour him!

THE FURIOS

The Furions are the strongest force in the Terminus in opposition to Omega. They are the incarnate thoughts of the Alphians, living vessels of their rage against Omega, fighting alongside the few superhuman champions who didn't join the Annihilists, and (occasionally) a superhuman from another world. The Furions' name comes from their ferocity in battle; every Furion, however easygoing though they may be in other situations, houses an inner rage unleashed when they battle the traitor, Omega, and his servants.

The Furions live on the world of Silverwood. The name is derived from the presence of the Silver Tree, the only survivor of the great Alphian Woods. The tree encompasses Castle Furious, the Furions' home base, providing it with an endless energy source and a defensive structure, for ivy has grown from the radiance of the tree that's stronger than cosmic steel. It also powers the Liberty Shield that protects Silverwood by interfering with the control circuits of the Omegadrones, preventing them from reaching the castle.

A typical Furion is PL 12, while the most powerful range between PL 13-14. The one exception is their leader, *Freedom Bird*, who is PL 16. It should come as no surprise that he's such a powerhouse; Freedom Bird has the ability to fly anywhere in existence and survive, be it the crushing pressures of a black hole or the deadly Terminus Stream itself. Megapolitan, one of the first and most powerful of the Alphians, created Freedom Bird. He was the first of the Furions and is the only one to have spoken with the Throne before he vanished into the Doom-Coil. It's rumored the Throne gave him a mighty secret, a Primal Word to be used only at the most desperate hour. Freedom Bird remains silent on the matter.

To mock Freedom Bird, Omega stripped Megapolitan and froze him into a kneeling position with his hand outstretched. He is now a living cup-holder, posed at the side of the dark titan's throne, though when he hears Freedom Bird has outwitted the Annihilists, he'll manage a brief bitter laugh Omega finds infuriating. The one time Freedom Bird was executed, a tear streamed down Megapolitan's face (although later he learned Freedom Bird had faked his death in order to escape Omega's clutches).

Freedom Bird's lieutenant is Nikkon the Brooder. Where Freedom Bird is a free spirit given to recklessness, Nikkon is the compulsive worker who makes the trains run on time. Nikkon was created from the thoughts of Philothume, a brooding Alphian who brought philosophers from a hundred universes into a "thinking circle" to ponder the deep mysteries of the cosmos. Nikkon shares his creator's contemplative streak, but bitter times have made him more pragmatic. He believes he should be the leader of the Furions and sometimes challenges Freedom Bird for command. However, in every contest, from racing to wrestling to riddle-duels to manipulating warpold, Freedom Bird has beaten him. It's made for a complicated relationship between the two men; neither likes the other, and each constantly strives to outdo the other, yet their rivalry has also led to deep mutual respect and loyalty. Regardless of appearances, neither would ever betray the other.

The glue that holds the Furions together is Gemma, keeper of the castle. Whereas Nikkon is the brooding planner of the Furions' grand schemes to oppose Omega, and Freedom Bird is the swashbuckling leader who carries them out (or ignores them and follows his own instincts), Gemma is the heart of the outfit, coordinating everything from logistics to recreation. Sometimes even Freedom Bird has to acknowledge she's the only adult in a group of children.

TAARVON THE UNDYING POWER LEVEL 14

Str 8	Dex 11	Con 10	Int 26	Wis 24	Cha 14
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Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Concentration 8 (+15), Disguise 4 (+6), Intimidate 12 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 12 (+20), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+10), Knowledge (history) 12 (+20), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 12 (+20), Notice 8 (+15), Sense Motive 8 (+15), Sleight of Hand 6 (+6)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Master Plan, Ritualist, Startle, Trance

Powers: **Flight 4** (100 MPH), **Force Field 18** (Impervious 8), **Immunity 10** (aging, life support), **Magic 14** (shadow magic, Dynamic; **Blast 14**; Spells (all Dynamic): **Blast 9** [shadow breath; Line Area], **Communication 14** [shadow-speaking; mental], **Concealment 4** [shadow-weave; all visual senses], **Drain 9** [shadow-chill; any one ability score at a time; Ranged], **Illusion 7** [mind-shadow; all senses], **Insubstantial 4** [shadow-shape; Incorporeal], **Snare 14** [shadow bonds], **Teleport 14** [shadow-gate]), **Regeneration 18** (bruised/unconscious, 1/round, injured and staggered, 1/minute, disabled, 1/5 minutes; Resurrection, 1/day; Source—shadows), **Super-Senses 2** (danger sense, mystic awareness)

Combat: Attack +10 (melee), +14 (ranged), Grapple +9, Damage -1 (unarmed), +14 (blast), Defense +10 (+5 flatfooted), Knockback -13 (-0 without force field), Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +18 (+0 without force field), Fortitude +6, Reflex +6, Will +15

Abilities 33 + Skills 22 (88 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 100 + Combat 40 + Saves 20 = Total 223

These three form the core of the Furions, but they are far from the only ones. Max Muscle is a young human hero sent by Tomen to assist the Furions, although Freedom Bird suspects the Archivist has ulterior motives. Strong, handsome, and extremely likable, the human lug has tugged at many Furion heartstrings. This has aroused an uncharacteristic jealous streak in Freedom Bird, intensified by the fact that Max can beat him in every athletic contest *except* racing ("I can escape from black holes formed by collapsing galaxies and even the tendrils of the Doom-Coil itself, yet I can't break out of some muscle-bound oaf's headlock!"). For his part, Max is a wide-eyed innocent, awestruck at the Terminus and idealistic in his dedication to the Furion cause. (In other words, he's got some painful growing up experiences ahead of him.)

Jacksmith the Builder is the technology geek of the Furions, a female counterpart to the Annihilist's Shadivan Steelgrave, her archenemy. Jacksmith built the defenses, powered by the Tree, that protect Silverwood from Omegadrone attacks. She and Shadivan Steelgrave are actually the same person; after Steelgrave pledged allegiance to Omega, Omega sifted out the "worthless" bits of Steelgrave's character: his humanity, compassion, dedication to ideals, and any willingness to resist the proposition that "the ends justify the means," and hurled it into the Doom-Coil. Freedom Bird rescued that essence before it could be devoured and placed it into the body of a dying Furion. The result was a reborn super-genius with the powers and ideals of a Furion. Jacksmith has been a thorn in Shadivan's side ever since, and he hates her as a living reminder of the hero he once was.

Scavros the Scarred is the grim warrior of the Furions. He is a Furion drawn from the Alphians vanquished into the Ouroboros Skin. An alien telepath once came to Omega and proposed an alliance, and then tried to seize control of Nihilhor and use the trapped rage of those locked within the Ouroboros Skin as a psychic weapon. Omega defeated his plans, but the telepath inadvertently awakened enough of the Alphians' subconscious to form a Furion from their combined rage: Scavros. He is the warrior hound of the Furions, always eager

to strike against Omega and his installations and anxious to kill Omegadrones and Annihilists.

Beyond these six, there are dozens of Furions, outriders and warriors who patrol the Terminus and help guard their home base. They salvage within the Warpold or gather and shape warpold into substances to supply the Furions with their basic needs. The three Furions visitors to the Terminus are most likely to encounter are:

FREEDOM BIRD

Freedom Bird is the swashbuckling leader of the Furions. He often seems the most light-hearted of the team, though no one who's ever seen him fight through a horde of Omegadrones can ever accuse him of not being a true Furion.

Freedom Bird's immunities are a little unusual. His immunity to crushing damage is what allows him to exit and enter even black holes unscathed. His immunity to the Terminus Stream is unique; he's the only one ever known to have survived passing entirely through it. His immunity to the Warpold means its mind-affecting influences; he's still capable of manipulating warpold in the same way everyone else can: with him, however, the Warpold doesn't "push back."



To humans, Freedom Bird appears to be a well-built 6'3" Caucasian man with long, reddish-blond hair, green eyes, and a broad, clean-shaven face. He wears a sleeveless red bodysuit with a gold bird emblem and a winged gold half-helmet.

MAX MUSCLE

Max Mostel grew up like many kids in Freedom City, idolizing superheroes. He did everything he could to be like one; he learned to swim, rock climbed, took CPR classes, signed up as members of "Dr. Tomorrow's Future Freedom League"—he even joined his high school wrestling team.

FREEDOM BIRD

POWER LEVEL 15

Str 34	Dex 26	Con 26	Int 18	Wis 21	Cha 22
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Skills: Acrobatics 16 (+24), Bluff 2 (+8/+16), Computers 2 (+6), Concentration 12 (+17), Disable Device 6 (+10), Diplomacy 5 (+11/+19), Disguise 4 (+10), Escape Artist 12 (+20), Gather Information 4 (+10), Intimidate 7 (+13), Investigate 4 (+8), Knowledge (current events) 12 (+16), Knowledge (tactics) 16 (+20), Notice 16 (+21), Pilot 6 (+14), Search 6 (+10), Sense Motive 12 (+17), Stealth 6 (+14), Survival 6 (+11), Swim 2 (+14).

Feats: All-out Attack, Attractive 2, Chokehold, Elusive Target, Fearless, Improved Critical (punch), Improved Throw, Leadership, Precise Shot, Rage 3, Teamwork 3, Uncanny Dodge (visual)

Powers: **Device 12** (Furion harness, hard to lose), **Enhanced Dodge Focus**

6, Flight 20, Immunity 17 (aging, crushing damage, life support, the Terminus Stream, the Warpwold), **Protection 4** (Impervious), **Super-Speed 16** (Rapid Attack), **Super Strength 13** (heavy load: 11,468 tons)

Furion Harness: **Blast 12** (cosmic), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Space Travel 10**, **Super-Senses 2** (Commlink; Subtle)

Combat: Attack +15, Grapple +40, Damage +12 (unarmed), +12 (blast), Defense +18 (+6 flat-footed), Knockback -8, Initiative +72

Saving Throws: Toughness +12, Fortitude +15, Reflex +18, Will +13

Abilities 87 + Skills 39 (156 ranks) + Feats 17 + Powers 225 + Combat 54 + Saves 25 = Total 447

MAX MUSCLE

POWER LEVEL 12

Str 34	Dex 16	Con 22	Int 12	Wis 13	Cha 22
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Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+11), Climb 8 (+20), Concentration 8 (+9), Diplomacy 1 (+7), Disguise 4 (+10), Escape Artist 12 (+15), Intimidate 10 (+16), Investigate 4 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+3), Knowledge (tactics) 2 (+3), Medicine 4 (+5), Notice 2 (+3), Perform (percussion) 5 (+11), Pilot 6 (+9), Search 3 (+4), Sense Motive 3 (+4), Stealth 2 (+5), Swim 4 (+16)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 2, Attractive 2, Chokehold, Critical Strike, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Improved Throw, Instant Up, Prone Fighting, Second Chance (grapple checks), Teamwork 3, Uncanny Dodge (hearing)

Powers: **Device 12** (Furion Harness, hard-to-lose), **Immunity 10** (aging, life support), **Leaping 10** (x5,000) **Protection 7** (Impervious), **Regeneration 6** (injured and staggered, 1/5 minutes; disabled, 1/hour), **Super Strength 15** (heavy load: 45,875 tons)

Furion Harness: **Blast 12** (cosmic), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Space Travel 10**, **Super-Senses 2** (Commlink; Subtle)

Combat: Attack +10, +12 (melee), Grapple +39, Damage +12 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+6 flat-footed), Knockback -4, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +13, Fortitude +12, Reflex +8, Will +8

Abilities 59 + Skills 22 (88 ranks) + Feats 19 + Powers 118 + Combat 42 + Saves 18 = Total 278

However, he was small, and he saw himself as a 98-pound weakling (though he was actually strong for his size).

One day, a mysterious man handed him a magazine entitled "Heroes of the Beach," a bodybuilding guide. Max followed the instructions in the magazine to the letter, and in just 3 weeks, he grew into a 6'6", 330 lb. muscle-bound hunk. Furthermore, it was obvious he was superhumanly strong.

The magazine also contained instructions on enrolling in a school for heroes. It was not, however, for the Claremont Academy. Instead, Max was directed to a small, abandoned bookstore on Lantern Hill. Max opened the door, walked through it... and stepped into the Silver Tree of the Furions!

The misunderstanding that transpired between Max and Freedom Bird was soon put to rights (Freedom Bird still holds a grudge, although Max thought it was "the best wrestling match ever!"). Max christened himself "Max Muscle" and became the apple of nearly every Furion's eye.

Max found himself not in a superhero academy, but a war zone. However, Centurion was Max's idol as a kid, and getting a chance to strike back at his killer is about the most superheroic thing he can think of. Max is an enthusiastic kid, well liked by the Furions for his innocence and enthusiasm, though a few (recognizing Tomen's handiwork) wonder about the reasons for his "coincidental" arrival.

Max is 6'6" tall, 330 lbs., with a muscle-bound physique that befits his name. He has short brown hair, blue eyes, and a handsome face. He wears a blue harness across his torso, matching blue leggings, and a long gold cape.

SCAVROS THE SCARRED

Scavros the Scarred is the "Furion of Vengeance." Grim and utterly dedicated to the fight against Omega, this gruesome carnifex is the most skilled tactician of the Furions. Whereas Freedom Bird likes to charge in and use shock tactics, Scavros is a patient devil who likes to find just the right moment to unleash his righteous rage. He wields a spear tipped with a burning shard of the Terminus Stream, linked to its energies so it produces a similar annihilation.

SCAVROS THE SCARRED

POWER LEVEL 13

Str 24	Dex 18	Con 16	Int 14	Wis 16	Cha 16
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Skills: Acrobatics 1 (+5), Climb 8 (+14), Computers 2 (+4), Concentration 12 (+15), Escape Artist 8 (+12), Gather Information 6 (+9), Handle Animal 12 (+15), Intimidate 13 (+16), Investigate 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+4), Knowledge (tactics) 12 (+14), Notice 8 (+11), Pilot 8 (+12), Search 6 (+8), Sense Motive 12 (+15), Stealth 6 (+10), Survival 12 (+15)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 1, Attack Specialization (lance) 1, Diehard, Fast Overrun, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Critical (lance), Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Rage 6, Set-Up, Weapon Break

Powers: **Device 5** (the Doom-Lance, easy to lose, Restricted 2), **Device 12** (Furion Harness, hard-to-lose), **Immunity 14** (aging, Disintegrate effects, life support), **Protection 11** (Impervious 8), **Regeneration 6** (injured and staggered, 1/5 minutes; disabled 1/hour), **Speed 5, Super Strength 10** (heavy load: 358 tons)

Doom-Lance: **Corrosion 12**

Furion Harness: **Blast 12** (cosmic), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Space Travel 10**, **Super-Senses 2** (Commlink; Subtle)

Combat: Attack +14 (lance), +12 (melee), +11 (ranged), Grapple +28, Damage +8 (unarmed), +13 (Doom-Lance), Defense +12 (+6 flat-footed), Knockback -11, Initiative +8

Saving Throws: Toughness +14, Fortitude +9, Reflex +10, Will +12

Abilities 44 + Skills 33 (132 ranks) + Feats 26 + Powers 129 + Combat 46 + Saves 21 = Total 299

lating effect when it is uncovered. Scavros is naturally suspicious and has *no* sense of humor, so too-flippant human heroes often end up on his bad side (and are even more surprised to learn he has a *good* side).

Scavros appears to be a tall, slender man, ethnicity indeterminate, who is covered in terrible scars. He wears a death mask; his Fearsome Presence feat requires him to remove the mask to show his true face.

MAKING A FURIAN

This is a template for a typical PL 12 Furion that heroes are likely to encounter in the Terminus. To humans, Furions look like athletic humans with red, red-brown, or red-gold hair, and their eyes turn a bright glowing red when they recognize an Omegadrone, Annihilist, or any of Omega's other servants. The template's traits have been included in the stats and point values of the Furions described in this chapter.

FURION TEMPLATE

89 POINTS

Attributes: Strength +6, Wisdom +4, Charisma +5

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attractive, Fearless, Rage 3 (+6 Strength, +3 Fortitude and Will, -2 Defense)

Powers: **Device 12** (Furion harness, hard-to-lose), **Immunity 10** (aging, life support), **Speed 4**, **Super Strength 3**

Furion Harness: **Blast 12** (cosmic), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Space Travel 10**, **Super-Senses 2** (Commlink; Subtle)

Abilities 15 + Feats 6 + Powers 68 = Total 89

THE OVERRIDERS

Within the Terminus, one whom Omega hates most is a former Annihilist, Hardrina Helltiger. After witnessing the Throne's power, Omega sought a mate who would be the wife of Entropy, a woman who could bear a son for the void, a counterpart to the prince of creation. Hardrina was one of the most powerful and spirited of the Annihilists; Omega felt she was the perfect person to bear his "Dark Throne." Once mature, the Dark Throne would enter the Doom-Coil and slay the Throne, for deep within the nigh-impenetrable corruption other beings call a soul, Omega still fears the Alphian Prince could undo his designs.

However, as soon as Hardrina learned of Omega's mad scheme, she wisely rejected his proposal and fled Nihilor for the wild lands of the Outer Terminus, the edges of destruction. Hunted relentlessly by her former master, Hardrina gathered a group of like-minded ex-Annihilists and Furions to form the Overriders.

Hardrina, now known as "Hard Mama," realized she couldn't outrun Omega forever, so she stole Omega's experimental Wyldrides (allegedly the fastest vehicles in the universe) along with their inventor, the eccentric Big Daddy Pax, which gave them the edge they needed to elude the overlord and his minions.

She also stole an experimental headband designed to allow people to survive in the Warpold without being harmed by its "cosmic nasty."

Now, the Overriders ride through the far reaches of the Terminus, playing a game of cat and mouse with the Annihilists, the Shadowbane, and even the Furions, for they prey on whomever they please. Some call them a gang, others call them a family; these brutal, but fair, wanderers have no allies and live only by their unwritten code of personal honor, seeking to enjoy the freedom of the universe.

There are seven "brothers and sisters" who make up the Overriders: Hard Mama, Big Daddy Pax, the Burly Battler, Specs Tacular, Idea Girl, Toolbox Tech, and Clever Clang. An eighth member, Snivelton Sneer, defected back to Omega some time ago and is now (in Hard Mama's words) "Public Enemy Numero Zero," especially since Omega has assigned Snivelton the task of tracking them down and obliterating them into cosmic dust.

Since the Overriders were originally superheroes from a scattering of dimensions, they don't have the same degree of uniformity as Furions. They have, however, absorbed the properties of the dimension (and they all have a bike, which is treated as Equipment for template purposes). A typical Overrider is as follows:

OVERRIDER TEMPLATE

25 POINTS

Skills: Intimidate +8, Pilot +8

Feat: Equipment 18 (Wyldride)

Powers: **Device 1** (warp-band, easy to lose)

Warp-Band: **Immunity 1** (to the Warpold), **Mind Shield 3**, **Super-Senses 1** (communication link with other warp-bands)

Skills 4 + Feats 18 + Powers 3 = Total 25

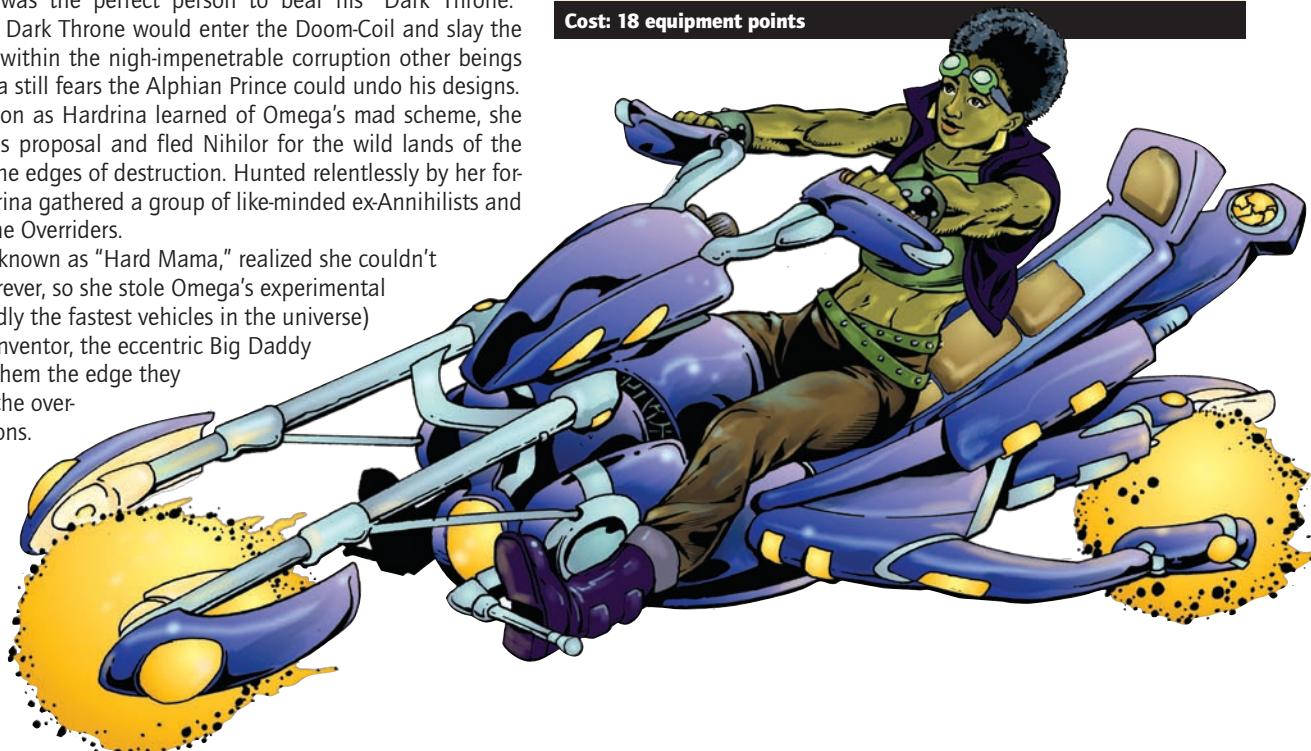
OVERRIDER WYLDRIDE

VEHICLE

Strength 20, Speed 20, Space Travel 20, Defense 10, Toughness 15, Size Medium

Powers: **Blast 12**, **Communication 4** (subspace), **Immunity 10** (life support, the Warpold)

Cost: 18 equipment points



HARD MAMA**POWER LEVEL 12**

Str 34	Dex 14	Con 25	Int 12	Wis 16	Cha 18
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Skills: Acrobatics 3 (+5), Climb 8 (+20), Computers 2 (+3), Concentration 11 (+14), Escape Artist 8 (+10), Gather Information 6 (+10), Handle Animal 12 (+16), Intimidate 10 (+14), Investigate 4 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 12 (+13), Notice 8 (+11), Pilot 8 (+10), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 12 (+15), Stealth 6 (+8), Survival 12 (+15)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 1, Attractive 2, Equipment 18, Fearless, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Improved Throw, Interpose, Inspire 2, Leadership, Luck 3, Taunt

Powers: **Device 1** (warp-band, easy to lose), **Immovable 2**, **Immunity 12** (aging, critical hits, life support), **Protection 5** (Impervious), **Regeneration 16** (bruised/unconscious, 1/round; injured and staggered, 1/minute; disabled 1/5 minutes), **Super Strength 10** (heavy load: 1,433 tons)

Warp-Band: **Immunity 1** (to the Warpworld), **Mind Shield 3**, **Super-Senses 1** (communication link with other warp-bands)

Combat: Attack +12 (melee), +11 (ranged), Grapple +34, Damage +12 (unarmed), +12 (Wyldride blaster), Defense +12 (+6 flatfooted), Knockback -8, Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +12, Fortitude +14, Reflex +7, Will +10

Abilities 59 + Skills 33 (132 ranks) + Feats 35 + Powers 63 + Combat 46 + Saves 19 = Total 255

**HARD MAMA**

Hard Mama was once Hardrina Helltiger, a bitter superheroine with a temper. Shadivan Steelgrave used that temper as the lynchpin of her conversion, but even with the mental conditioning of the Helpful Hospice to program her with loyalty, the Helltiger could not be caged. When Omega planned to sacrifice her life to give birth to a Dark Throne, Hard Mama put her emergency plan into action. She fled and formed the Overriders. From there, within a dimension some consider hell, she raised even more hell.

Hard Mama comes across as loud, bellicose, and tough. She doesn't hesitate to push people around to get her way. The Burly Battler has had a crush on Hard Mama for a long time, but she seems to enjoy playing with his emotions. Hard Mama has had a crush on Freedom Bird, but it's been entirely one-sided. Recently, she had a fling with Max Muscle when he was taken prisoner by the Overriders. Now, she's carrying their child. Max, though he didn't complain about the affair, soon escaped, and he doesn't know about the baby. Despite the age difference, Mama's more than a little infatuated with him, and she wants to kidnap him and force him to join the Overriders.

Unfortunately for Max, an insanely jealous Burly Battler now wants to kill him, while Freedom Bird (although he always claimed to be repulsed by Hard Mama) is furious at the fact she's transferred her affections from him to the handsome young human. Such is the way of love and tights. Far more threateningly, Omega is wondering about the potential of a child of the Terminus and Earth, and he is making plans to kidnap the infant when he's born, sending him to Physician Friendly's Helpful Hospice for a "proper upbringing."

Hard Mama appears to be a muscle-bound African woman in black leather. She wears a white bandana and what looks (to human eyes) like motorcycle gear. She's 6'3", with long black dreadlocks and brown eyes. Despite her tough façade, she's quite beautiful.

TOMEN THE ARCHIVIST

The only Alphian to keep his wits after Omega unleashed Entropy on the first people's minds is Tomen the Archivist, who now lives alone in the World-Library of the SourceBook. Within the pages of the SourceBook are the first words ever, inscribed by Unus shortly after Creation itself, when the Alphians were still being born from his tears. Part of the tear that formed Tomen fell onto the pages of the SourceBook; the Archivist was born weaker than the other Alphians, for he was not born whole. To complete him, Unus presented Tomen with the SourceBook, which contained the remainder of his essence.

Tomen can gaze into the Void and beyond to scribe the history of all things (except for a few creatures of shadow powerful enough to obscure even his sight). He is keeper of the SourceBook, which is one of the three receptacles of the moment of Creation (the other two being the depths of Unus's mind and the body of the Throne). He lives alone in his great World-Library, scribbling almost ceaselessly at his desk.

Tomen rarely meddles in the affairs of the Terminus, but Omega despises him. There are only a handful of things Omega wishes to do more than hurl the SourceBook into the maw of the Void. However, because it contains Creation, Entropy's antithesis, neither Omega nor the Annihilists may physically touch it. For his part, Tomen treads carefully, pretending to be a dispassionate observer of history. However, he covertly feeds information to heroes across the omniverse, and when the Centurion injured Omega in their battle in Freedom City, Tomen spread word of the deed to Omega's enemies. He gave them the one thing the dark master of entropy most wishes to deny them... hope.

The powers of the SourceBook are left intentionally vague. It is known to be able to resist Omega's power, and it preserves Tomen's

SECRET OF THE THRONE

The Furions believe the Throne will one day reach the heart of the Doom-Coil, destroy it, and set all things right. In the SourceBook, however, a different tale is written. In it, the Throne realizes it is more important to battle entropy than the god-machine itself, so instead of destroying the Doom-Coil, he's using his power to restore it to its original purpose, staving off the end of all existence.

The darkest secret of all, known to only the Throne, Freedom Bird, and Tomen, is reality would have *already* been destroyed had not the Throne stayed in the Doom-Coil, and if he is ever rescued from its inner workings, the Omniverse will cease to exist.

Note this is *not* the secret of the Primal Word the Throne gave to Freedom Bird; that's a different secret altogether, and one left for the Gamemaster to decide.

mind against the effects of time. It contains vast knowledge, perhaps the answer to any question in creation. Any powers the Gamemaster gives it should reflect purity and wisdom; it's not a weapon, except in the ways wisdom can teach people to fight a necessary battle, and fight it well.

Tomen's only servant is Scrivener Jones, who appears as a tall, well-dressed man with a bowler hat, tweed suit, and an upper class British accent. He rides a dimension hopping bicycle, which he uses to pop into a world, drop off a book to a person of Tomen's choosing, and then pedal away, disappearing into a fog. No game stats are provided for Tomen or Scrivener Jones, as they're plot device characters (*M&M*, page 211). You can assume both of them are essentially invulnerable to any force the characters might bring to bear, and that Tomen knows pretty much anything he needs to in order to further the plot, although he's not always willing to share information, sometimes responding with cryptic comments about "the right time" and "too much knowledge being dangerous" and the like. Tomen has cosmic energy manipulating powers, although he rarely resorts to using them, as well as access to incredibly advanced technology and essentially all the information in the cosmos.

TERMINUS ADVENTURES

The Terminus is intended as a dire threat to Earth and a place heroes can visit, either accidentally, due to a dimensional mishap, or to take the fight directly to Omega and his Annihilists. It's also an interesting place to set an *M&M* series, with the players taking the roles of the Furions, Overriders, or another rag-tag band of heroes, perhaps all survivors of Omega's attacks on other universes.

CITY OF DRONES

Thousands of people in Freedom City suddenly stop what they're doing and begin building an alien device in the middle of Liberty Park. It's a

focus to direct the Terminus Stream towards Earth. Somehow, Omega has managed to switch the minds of thousands of Freedom City residents with proles from Nihilor. The heroes have to find a way to switch them back before it's too late for them and the entire universe!

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The Curator (*Freedom City*, page 192) finds his way into the Terminus by accident and learns of the existence of Tomen's World-Library and the SourceBook. The promise of such a treasure-trove of knowledge becomes an obsession for the alien computer, and it allies with Omega in a scheme to capture the Archivist and acquire all knowledge in the omniverse in one stroke, after which it matters little what Omega does with physical reality. The Curator secretly believes it will be able to seize control of the final collapse of the omniverse and, with its newfound information, reconstitute all reality to fit its design.

THE LESSER EVIL

The Terminus has conquered another dimension! You're a visitor to that beleaguered world, helping its resistance stop the Omegadrones before the universe gets absorbed into the Terminus Stream. However, you get a look at what they're planning, and their sabotage won't destroy the Stream locus, it'll redirect it into *your* universe!

MRS. CENTURION, I PRESUME?

A recent escapee from the Terminus claims to be another survivor from Centurion's homeworld, betrothed before birth to the eldest male of Centurion's house – Centurion himself! She claims proof can be found in the Warpworld of the Terminus, from fragments of their destroyed homeworld and, if they were salvaged, they could unlock useful secrets of the technology (which is hers by right). Is she legit, or is this another trap set by Omega?



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Infinite Worlds, Ultimate Freedom, Anti-Earth, Ani-Earth, Freeport.

Steve has worked as an RPG writer and designer since 1995, authoring books for games like *Shadowrun*, *Earthdawn*, *Changeling*, and *Aberrant*, among others. He became *Mutants & Masterminds* line developer in early 2005 and began working on the second edition of the game almost immediately. Freedom City is his brainchild, without which *M&M* might not exist (in some parallel universe). Steve lives in New Hampshire with his partner, Christopher Penczak, and maintains a website at www.stevekenson.com.

SCOTT BENNIE, DESIGN

The Terminus

While the rest of the world thinks of him as just another cranky middle-aged game writer, Scott Bennie fights a never-ending battle in pursuit of truth, justice, and the timely payment of his utility bills. Laboring in a secret stronghold nestled in the heart of Canada's Fraser Valley, this stalwart paragon of the word processor has been battling the forces of darkness for twenty-five years. His other contributions to the fight include *Testament* for Green Ronin Publishing, *Villainy Amok* and various other Hero Games supplements, *Old Empires* for TSR, and *Gestalt: The Hero Within* for both Hero System and M&M Superlink, detailing his own long-running campaign setting.

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Future Freedom

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Once upon a time in a city in Kentucky... huh, what? Yes, there *are* cities in Kentucky. No, really. Honest. Anyway, Aaron Sullivan is a writer and general all-around gamer geek and comic book junkie living in Louisville with his incredibly understanding and long suffering wife, as well as way too many cats. He's one of the Blackwyrn Games crew and responsible for writing *The Algernon Files* M&M Superlink stuff (so don't blame the others if you didn't like it) as well as some other sundry *M&M* and *True20* madness. Yes, he is every bit as evil and demented as his work may make you think he is. What? Yes, I was serious about the cities. Get over it, okay? Sheesh.

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BRETT BARKLEY

Brett Barkley has always been driven to create. As a boy, drawing and writing occupied the majority of his energies, as a long list of disappointed teachers will attest. As he grew, he explored building and working with his hands. Today, a professional comic artist, illustrator and writer, as well as having served in the television and print advertising industries, he pulls from a wide spectrum of life experience and interests. From working on the home he and his wife share, to restoring his '67 Camaro RS, to building computers, illustrating and coloring comics, and through his writing, Brett seeks to discover the inherent expression of the Lord's work. It is his sincere hope and ambition this search can be evidenced in all he does.

STORN COOK, ART

Freelanced through art school, Columbus College of Art and Design, due to an insane love of Role Playing Games, which I've been involved in since 1978. I strive to be a little bit better every day. I continue to freelance, wishing to get my artwork in every superhero (or villain) RPG possible.

DARREN CALVERT, ART

Raised in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies by a pack of wild squirrels, Darren Calvert rose from his humble beginnings to graduate from the University of Alberta with a degree in Industrial Design. He now works full time for Art Attack, an Edmonton company specializing in custom theming for the amusement industry. In his spare time, he spends way too much time reading comics, playing video games, watching movies, and working on freelance illustrations for the RPG industry.

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OCTOGRAPHICS.NET, ART

Octographics is a studio composed of creative young professional artists with individual specialized skills. The studio members have more than 10 years experience as illustrators and graphic designers, and have taken on work for a variety of clients worldwide.

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CRAIG TAILIFER, ART

Born November 29, 1968 in Ottawa Canada, Craig was raised on a diet of crayons, play-doh, and comic books. An early exposure to Uncle Scrooge, Asterix, Turok Son Of Stone, and the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs left an indelible impression on the budding young artist's psyche. Stumbling into professional work at a very young age, Craig has made a living of sorts at drawing for the better part of the past two decades. His work has spanned the black and white boom at Aircel and Malibu to a long residency at WaRP Graphics working on the *ElfQuest* titles. Craig currently works in TV Animation, RPG Illustration, and selfpublishes *Wahoo Morris* through his company Too Hip Gotta Go Graphics. He

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ADAM WITHERS & COMFORT LOVE

BAG Productions is the brainchild of Adam Withers and Comfort Love; a studio of their own that generates all manner of illustration and graphic design, but which features their signature style and approach. Their deep love of art and storytelling matched only by their love for each other, they go forward in the business of freelance illustration with a single overarching philosophy – bring passion, dedication, and brilliance to every project you undertake, and each piece you touch will stand out as a snowflake in the desert. It is this winning ideal, combined with the drive and will to succeed, which marks BAG Productions as one of the shining partnerships in the field.

UDON WITH CHRIS STEVENS, ARTIST

Udon is a collective of artists formed in 2000 based out of Toronto, Canada. Udon provides top quality artwork and creative services to many fields including gaming, comic books, toy design, video games and advertising. Chris Stevens is a veteran Udon illustrator working out of Winterville, North Carolina. His detailed line work and dynamic action scenes have graced role-playing game books for White Wolf, Paizo and Hero Games as well as comic book series for Marvel and Devil's Due Publishing.

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HOW BEAUTIFUL MANKIND IS!
O BRAVE NEW WORLD, THAT HAS SUCH PEOPLE IN IT!

—THE TEMPEST, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

