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ADVENTURE

GRR2521

# MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

## TIME OF

# CRISIS

## 2.0



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### ADVENTURE

# MASTER THE GAME!

The *Mutants & Masterminds Deluxe Gamemaster Screen* is both sturdy and practical and looks great on the game table.

All the charts and tables you need to run the World's Greatest Superhero RPG are displayed on durable hardback stock, with a panoramic action illustration of the Freedom League on the front! It includes a handy Toughness Save Matrix, for instantly determining damage in the heat of combat.

The screen also includes a second edition update of the classic *Time of Crisis* adventure by long-time *M&M* author Christopher McLothlin, a great adventure to kick-off your own *Mutants & Masterminds* series. Omega, the evil overlord of the Terminus, has begun a scheme to destroy not just the universe, but *every* universe, and destiny has chosen your heroes as the only ones who can stop him!

The perfect complement to the core rulebook, the *M&M Deluxe GM Screen* is a must for Gamemasters. Be more than just a Gamemaster...

## BE A MASTERMIND!



# MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

FEATURING THE ADVENTURE  
TIME OF CRISIS!

# DELUXE GAMEMASTER SCREEN

A GREEN RONIN PRODUCTION

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**Author's Dedication** To Julius Schwartz, Creator of Worlds.

**Special Thanks to** My wonderful & patient wife Tanith, and the Lord Jesus Christ who makes all good things in my life possible.

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### Mutants & Masterminds Deluxe GM Screen

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# TIME OF CRISIS

**T**hey soar on wings of eagles and move with the speed of thought. Their strength is like unto the gods, and their wisdom illuminates the darkest mysteries. With their heroism, they give hope to millions. With their courage, they inspire us all. They are the superheroes of Freedom City.

Protecting Freedom City from strange and fantastic menaces is a supreme challenge, but the metropolis' super-powered champions have been equal to the task. Under the heroes' watchful eyes, Freedom has remained safe.

There remains a threat beyond the ken of even the greatest heroes—an intellect vast and cool and unsympathetic, slowly and surely joining his plans against not just a city, but the whole of existence. Everything that is—everything that *can be*—faces certain destruction at the master of entropy's hands, and only Freedom City's heroes stand a chance of thwarting his mad schemes.

Grab your cape and cowl. It's time to save the worlds.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

*Time of Crisis* is an adventure scenario for the *Mutants & Masterminds* role-playing game, second edition. It's designed for use with approximately six players, all running power level 10 characters. Its storyline begins in Freedom City, *M&M's* very own ready-made campaign setting, but later developments occur on parallel worlds far removed from the usual surroundings.

Only the second edition *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook is needed to play *Time of Crisis* from start to finish. Gamemasters wanting to expand the scope of the bookend chapters (or simply wish to provide more detailed accounts of events) are encouraged to check out the second edition *Freedom City* sourcebook, a complete guide to the setting and its inhabitants. The *Worlds of Freedom* sourcebook does much the same for the parallel worlds appearing in *Time of Crisis'* middle chapters: *Erde*, Earth-Ape, and Anti-Earth.

In Freedom City's official timeline, the events of *Time of Crisis* occurred back in 2002. As such, *Time of Crisis* can be run as a "flashback" adventure detailing an ongoing game's back-story, or as a prelude to a campaign just beginning. Alternately, the scenario's events can be moved forward to now, with only minor adjustments needed to match contemporary Freedom City's status quo. Of course, in non-Freedom City campaigns the adventure can take place whenever the Gamemaster sees fit.

*Time of Crisis* can be modified to accommodate larger groups of players or characters above PL 10. In either case, the power levels of *Time of Crisis'* villains can be raised to equal (or exceed) the player characters'. Additional miscreants drawn from other *M&M* books can also be added, or Gamemasters can design their own.

Gamemasters may prefer a locale other than Freedom City, particularly if they're running a homebrew campaign setting. In that case, *Time of Crisis'* bookend chapters can take place in any other modern urban area—just change the names to suit the alternate location.

*Time of Crisis* can be used with another role-playing game system if the Gamemaster and players so desire. A significant amount of rules conversions is likely in order, but the adventure's plot can be used unchanged.

Gamemasters may see fit to lengthen or shorten the adventure. If so, *Time of Crisis* is structured as five self-contained chapters, and Gamemasters can simply add to or subtract from them as desired. Additional chapters must be devised by the Gamemasters wanting them, but since the bulk of *Time of Crisis* takes place on strange alternate worlds, the possibilities are unlimited. If their imagination needs a jump-start, the *Worlds of Freedom* sourcebook details several pre-fab parallel Freedom Cities (like Ani-Earth), all *très* suitable for use as additional *Time of Crisis* vignettes.

## NOTES ON THE NEW EDITION

(Or, "That's Not How I Would've Converted Chimpanzoom!") The wonderful, sainted people who paid for *Time of Crisis* v1.0 are going to notice some changes in the redux. Nothing major—the plot, for a start, remains entirely unchanged—but someone's bound to notice a few differences in the background details. For the inquisitive, we present some words of explanation.

First, some things were flat-out wrong the first time. Almost all these goofs stem from an over-reliance on various language translation sites, and correcting them resulted in some better-rendered names. In other cases, artists depicted characters differently than described in their stat-blocks, but this time out sound and vision are in harmony. So yeah, some NPCs are different from before, but now they're not unintentionally funny to our German fans—or at least that's the hope.

Second, the Freedom City universe is now more clearly defined, and not all the new, more canonical info jibes with *Time of Crisis'* original rendition. This shiny new edition incorporates revisions (all cosmetic, we promise) necessary to bring *Time of Crisis* into current continuity. Consider this rendering to be the "correct" version of how *Time of Crisis* went down in Freedom City canon, and chalk up the changes to Steve Kenson punching a wall.

Lastly, all characters unique to *Time of Crisis* have been rebuilt from the ground up using the *M&M* 2e rules. Elastigibbon hasn't become a grim, gun-toting homicidal vigilante, but some new wrinkles have been added to your old *Time of Crisis* favorites: a new skill here, a new power there. These upgrades may not be the way you'd have done them yourself (especially since a straight port wasn't our aim). If you're not down with these changes, please feel free to substitute your very own done-over stat-blocks. Otherwise, enjoy!

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

As always, the Gamemaster should read the entire adventure before running any part of it to be fully prepared for the players' potential reactions. Here's a brief overview of *Time of Crisis* to give a sense of its overall scope.

In **Chapter One**, Freedom City police ask the player characters to help apprehend the villainous Thieves' Guild, who are looting a casino. The heroes likely overcome the Guild in short order, but before they can bask in the glory of their victory, the world around them vanishes. They then find themselves trapped in the limitless void of the Terminus.

There, the characters meet the omniscient Norn, who explains Omega has at long last fulfilled his goal of destroying all reality. Her intervention saves the heroes, and gives them a chance to restore the universe. To do so, the characters must go back in time and dismantle Omega's doomsday devices, located on four parallel Earths. Unbeknown to the heroes, they must also defeat Omega's minions on each world.

Moving to **Chapter Two**, the characters arrive on the first parallel Earth, a nightmarish world called *Erde* where Nazi Germany won World War II and conquered half the globe. There, the heroes must defeat the malefic Nazi *Übermenschen* and sabotage Omega's bomb before it detonates. In the process, the heroes give the American Resistance a much-needed hand by freeing Dr. Tomorrow, a Golden Age hero on their own Earth holding the key to freeing *Erde* from Axis tyranny.

**Chapter Three** takes the player characters to an Earth inhabited by sentient primates instead of humans. Though the simians are essentially benevolent, the heroes must overcome the apes' apprehension before the two sides can work together. While the player characters come to grips with their strange surroundings, they become pawns of Earth-Ape's most

## AND IN LOCAL NEWS...

Before running *Time of Crisis*, try to seed these news bites into your regular campaign. Some provide clues to later events, while others just add flavor. Introducing local news into your campaign makes Freedom City seem more alive to the players, and its potential destruction all the more grave.

- Dr. Metropolis repaired damage caused by a battle earlier today between members of the Freedom League and the Power Corps in Midtown. The objective of the power-armored mercenaries remains unknown at this time.
- Animal-rights activists thought to be in league with Dr. Simian recently broke into ASTRO Labs and “liberated” a dozen chimpanzees and an orangutan. In response, Dr. Simian has posted a recorded statement online denying any involvement.
- Today the Atom Family confirmed the recent disappearances of work crews in Brazil’s Amazon rainforests were caused by the Green Man. The heroes reunited the missing workers with their families and assured authorities the threat was over, at least for the time being.
- The local media are running story after story remembering the 1993 Terminus invasion of Freedom City. “Where were you on the day it happened?” human-interest pieces are the most common. Attendance at the Super Museum exhibition of invasion artifacts is reported to be record breaking.
- Suspected mobster Thomas Gianetti was found dead yesterday, the apparent sixth victim of the mysterious vigilante known only as the Silencer. The FCPD says it is still investigating the matter.
- Freedom Leaguer Johnny Rocket prevented avowed hate-monger the White Knight from marring the opening of the city’s Celebrate Diversity Festival in Riverside, although the super-criminal escaped capture. City officials announced plans to increase security but refused to cancel the remainder of the festival.
- No leads are reported in last week’s disappearance of an ancient Egyptian death mask from the Hunter Museum of Natural History. Police say the investigation is still ongoing.

respected citizen, the secretly evil Dr. Simian, whose last-minute power play seriously hampers their efforts to avert doomsday.

The events of **Chapter Four** take place on Anti-Earth, where evil is the norm and good the aberration. Outnumbered and disorientated, the heroes must survive on a world ruled by evil counterparts of Freedom City’s heroes (including themselves), and somehow prevent its destruction. Moreover, the characters must save the day after a betrayal by their ally Mind-Master, Anti-Earth’s lone superhero.

Ultimately, the heroes must confront Omega himself to save their Earth, and this epic clash occurs in **Chapter Five**. Back home at last, the outgunned player characters face the elemental force of entropy personified, and the fate of all they hold dear hangs in the balance.

## FROM THE BACK-ISSUE BINS

Beyond all worlds exists a dimension known as “the Terminus,” a continuum ruthlessly lorded over by Omega, the master of entropy. For aeons, Omega’s goal has been expanding the Terminus by destroying literally everything else. Thus far, the timely interventions of Freedom City’s superheroes (on the characters’ Earth, and others) have prevented him realizing his aim.

Besides the heroism of Freedom City’s champions, Omega’s greatest obstacle is the sheer enormity of the task itself. What was created in six days can’t be annihilated as quickly, and as universe upon universe is targeted for destruction, the problem only compounds.

Omega eventually reconsidered his tactic of subduing and ravaging the omniverse one dimension at a time, deeming it an inefficient use of his resources. With this new insight, the dread Lord of the Terminus adopted the mind-set of a diamond cutter instead of a conquering warlord, aiming to shatter all creation with a few precise blows.

Studying the omniversal geometry of dimensions to determine reality’s weakest points took time. It took even longer to build and empower enough devices with the required destructive capability. Time, however, is on the side of immortals like Omega, and eventually his plans were ready to be put in motion.

Omega’s schemes require simultaneously destroying four particular parallel dimensions with massive cosmic-energy explosions. This causes an inter-dimensional chain reaction that obliterates all creation and collapses it into the Terminus. In each key alternate reality, the required detonation point is a parallel Earth. Always one to hold a grudge, Omega chose their alternate versions of Freedom City to be “grounds zero.”

On these Earths, Omega enlisted various individuals to conceal and protect the cosmic-energy bombs while they make final crucial self-calibrations. None of Omega’s unwitting dupes have any idea of the devices’ true purpose, leaving only one entity to prevent the destruction of the universes—the Norm, who has but one desperate chance to save all of existence.



# CHAPTER ONE: THE END OF THE WORLDS

It all begins on a typical autumn weekday in Freedom City, as a chilly morning gives way to a sunny and mild afternoon. The constant movement of traffic, cacophony of noise, and plethora of smells and tastes bombard the senses just as city residents have long since grown accustomed to.

Most of Freedom's citizens are busy at work, enjoying a late lunch, or studying their lessons at school. The city's superheroes spend the day the usual way: protecting grateful innocent bystanders from an array of purse-snatches, burglaries, drug deals, gang violence, and assorted other street crimes. In short, it's about as quiet as things ever get for costumed crime-fighters.

Of course, it's times like this when real trouble breaks loose. This day—the *last* day—is far from an exception.

## THE TROUBALERT!

How and why the player characters first become involved in the adventure depends on their spot in the hierarchy of Freedom City's hero teams. The authorities contact well-known and -established teams at the first sign of trouble, while newbie groups find themselves called in as an afterthought. Curtain-jerking rookies may even have to get to the crime scene by sheer happenstance.

## WHO YA GONNA CALL?

If the player characters are affiliated with an existing hero team (like the Freedom League, Next-Gen, Atom Family, or a group "substituting" for them in Freedom City continuity), the adventure begins as Captain Bill "Bulldog" Maddicks video-phones their headquarters. Maddicks commands the city police department's elite STAR Squad, which is specially equipped and trained to deal with supervillains. Though he only begrudgingly works with superheroes, Capt. Maddicks is dedicated to protecting the city and has more than proven himself worthy of the heroes' trust and respect.

Maddicks sports full riot gear as he talks to the characters, and several similarly dressed STAR Squad officers are behind him forming a cordon around a grandiose building. A large sign at the very front of the premises reads, "PARADISE HOTEL CASINO & LOUNGE— Appearing for Two Big Weeks: the Mary Kaye Trio—With Joe E. Lewis and Lili St. Cyr!" From experience or by reputation, longtime Freedom City residents recognize the establishment as one of the more famous gambling houses located in the city's Southside area.

The captain is all business as he tells the heroes, "Looks like we got a situation down here. A group of superhuman perps is trying to knock over Paradise, and the place is full of innocent bystanders. We're all ready to move in, but Commissioner Kane wants you folks to go in first and see if you can end it quick and quiet, before these creeps get any ideas about taking hostages. We got the place surrounded, so they ain't getting out any other way."

Maddicks doesn't have much more information to share, and in any event is in no mood to answer questions before the characters arrive on the scene. If asked about the supervillains, the captain says only, "We know there's a group of them, but their descriptions don't match any of the usual suspects, so we figure they're a bunch of out-of-towners."

## NEW KIDS IN TOWN

If the characters are part of a new team still building a good rep in Freedom City, Capt. Maddicks contacts them through whatever means the group established for use in public emergencies. The heroes may not know Maddicks personally, but if they've spent any recent time in Freedom City, his reputation precedes him.

After getting the team's name wrong (and not caring one whit about the characters' reaction to the slight), Maddicks barks out, "Okay, the Freedom League's off fighting the Crime League in low-Earth orbit, the Atom Family's gone to Timbuktu, and the Next-Gen's all grounded for a week—or something. So you people are all I got!"

As above, Maddicks schools the heroes on the situation at Paradise, but he makes it clear he's sending in his men if "the rookies" don't show up soon. If the characters are newcomers to Freedom City, Maddicks can provide directions, and if their team is a low-budget operation, he can arrange for a police helicopter to airlift them to the scene. Either request does little to shore up the captain's faith in the heroes, and provokes a tirade unrepeatable in a Comic Code-approved book.

## THE LONERS

Involving heroes with no prior connection to each other or Freedom City requires a bit of creativity on the Gamemaster's part, and perhaps some fudging as well. As always, the Gamemaster should be guided by what best suits the campaign and players.

The easiest way to get the characters to the crime scene is alerting them to the casino heist via the media. News of the robbery attempt and potential hostage situation is on every local TV and radio station within minutes of police arriving at the scene, which should tip off properly vigilant superheroes. If they don't tune in to the continuous live coverage on their own accord, a phone call from a concerned friend ("Are you watching Channel 25 news right now?") can get them up to speed.

Characters periodically cut off from outside contact (for whatever reason) are especially troublesome in this instance, so the Gamemaster should ensure the attempted theft occurs when such characters are available. For instance, the casino heist can take place after dusk to accommodate a Goth-y character with an aversion to light.

If all other contrivances fail to suit the characters involved, the Gamemaster needs to call "amazing coincidence" and simply have the character(s) already in the vicinity of Paradise when the trouble starts. For reasons later evident, missing the opening battle is not an option for any of the characters.

Gamemasters are urged to avoid the classic "heroes meet for the first time and fight" cliché if any characters are previously unacquainted. If the players insist on scuffling anyway, the Gamemaster should alter the timing of the potential hero-fight or the casino robbery so the characters are not pounding on each other when they should be rounding up the bad guys.

## NOW TELL ME, WHO ARE YOU?

Any heroes showing up at Paradise on their own volition and offering to help the police face varying degrees of suspicion from Capt. Maddicks. Since every known reputable hero has already been contacted about the matter, Maddicks eyes the sudden appearance of unknown costumed fig-

## PARADISE

One of the newer additions to Southside Freedom's burgeoning Boardwalk gaming area, Paradise is designed to transport its patrons to a more temperate (and tacky) version of a tropical resort and get them to blow the family nest-egg there. The ranch-style building occupies an area within a tightly spaced block of casinos, including the Southside Palace, Golden Calf, and Atlantis. The front portion is claimed by the gaming, lounge, and dining areas, with the hotel rooms placed in the rear.

Paradise's grand, neon-lit marquee and exteriors are decorated with artificial palm trees and other assorted *faux* exotic trappings. The building walls are adobe layered over mundane brick and stone, and are largely windowless outside the hotel area and the large, well-lit main casino entryway. All other entrances to the gaming area are covered with large, metal security doors, warded over by state of the art anti-burglary equipment.

Beyond the main entrance atrium and its ex-boxing-champion greeters is the casino area: one large, continuous high-ceilinged room filled with slot machines and gaming tables. Directly opposite the atrium are the areas closed to the public, such as the counting room, vault, offices and surveillance room. Above the off-limits area is a partial second floor occupied by the casino manager's office, which offers an unobstructed view of the casino floor from behind large angled one-way mirrors.

Paradise's lounge and dining areas are directly accessible from the gaming area, but the hotel rooms (and the famous indoor pool) can be reached only by traveling the entire length of the casino and running its full gauntlet of temptations. The lounge area also has an off-limits back area with offices and the performer's dressing rooms. Naturally, the lounge serves drinks strong enough to make ma and pa bet junior's college fund. To help them make back their losses, the dining area serves up its meals buffet style.

ures warily. He knows little about the robbers and is watchful for any potential allies they may have outside the casino, hence his skepticism.

At least one successful Diplomacy skill check is required to convince Maddicks of the characters' sincerity and good intentions. As per the Interaction Table, Maddicks is Unfriendly towards any heroes with a (hopefully unjust) poor reputation, and Indifferent towards all others. His attitude must be improved to at least Friendly before he agrees to sanction the heroes' actions. Note that since Maddicks is already Friendly towards heroes with a good established rep, no check is necessary for them.

If the Diplomacy check succeeds, the captain authorizes the characters to go into the casino just as if he'd contacted them himself. Otherwise, the heroes either have to sneak inside Paradise without Maddicks' sanction or resort to less kosher methods like Mind Control to bypass the police cordon. In either event, they're going to find themselves wanted fugitives in Freedom City in Chapter Five, at least until they can justify their actions to the authorities.

## CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATIONS

Whenever the characters arrive, the scene at the casino is little changed from when Captain Maddicks first contacted them. His men completely cordoned off the area around Paradise, and cleared the immediate vicinity of civilian onlookers. All the casino's windows appear dark and obscured from the outside, clouded by some indefinable substance.

No matter how cautious or obvious the characters' approach, there is no reaction or challenge from inside the casino. Those advancing on the building by conventional means find the doorways and windows obstructed from the inside by ice. Their metal frames are cold enough for bare flesh to stick until warmed, and breath becomes frostily visible when near them.

Any character wanting some audible clues must make a DC 20 Notice skill check if trying to hear through a wall, or DC 15 if attempting to listen at a door or window. Success divulges what seems to be the crash of thunder, howl of winds, and steady drumbeat of rain coming from inside Paradise.

Most Super-Senses (such as Scent and Ultra-Hearing) discern nothing useful from outside the building. However, X-Ray Vision works as normal (unless blocked by ice or some other present substance), and characters employing it can see the chaotic scene created by the Thieves' Guild inside the casino as described in **Trouble in Paradise** below.

## THE THIEVES' GUILD

Though they rarely work together as an actual team, the Thieves' Guild occasionally unites in its love of money, particularly the "stolen in large quantities" kind. Normally, the Guild members use their exotic gadgetry and weapons to commit robberies in the Midwestern United States, and are brought to justice by that region's superheroes.

This time, unknowingly at Omega's behest, the members are trying their luck at knocking over a casino in faraway Freedom City. Days before, Omega's operative offered the Guild the biggest cut of the take and an escape route, neither of which is forthcoming. To Omega, the Guild is a mere cat's-paw. It's too unknown in Freedom City to be defeated quickly and not dangerous enough to arouse suspicion of its true mission: distracting the city's heroes until the cosmic-energy bomb detonates.

### THE BOLA

Eduardo Guerrero's father raised him to follow in his footsteps and become one of Argentina's hardworking native cowboys, the *gauchos*. Outside of his natural skill with a bola (a gaucho's traditional weapon), Eddie proved himself a poor cowpoke. This was due mainly to his overriding interest in the village ladies, whom the charming, handsome young man loved and abandoned on a whim. Eventually, a legion of angry fathers and husbands forced him to take flight from his village.

Seeing no more appealing alternative, Eddie then turned to crime. He did so in the most flamboyant manner possible (to impress the *mamacitas*, of course) as the costumed *bandito* known as *Las Boleadoras*. After a successful crime spree in Argentina, *Las Boleadoras* headed for the U.S. in search of bigger heists and more lovely ladies. Now in America, the Bola's roguish charm and skill with his array of trick weapons make him a supervillain to be reckoned with, but his greatest weakness remains a pretty face.



### THE FIREBUG

An only child, Shawn Hensley was completely indulged by his wealthy parents, and considered a bright, promising child until the day he started a fire just to watch the pretty flames. The Hensleys spared no expense to rid little Shawn of his pyromania, and in time the lad was seemingly cured.

In truth, Hensley sublimated his condition, and every aspect of his life—including his advanced technological studies—disguised an obsessive search for new ways of creating infernos. Later, his mother and father perished in just such a blaze, secretly set by their “cured” son.

His parents’ deaths made him rich, but Shawn wanted more. Inspired by other costumed villains, he spent his entire inheritance becoming the arsonist crook known as the Firebug. In this guise, the deceptively lucid Hensley commits crimes to fund the development of new high-tech devices, all designed to make more pretty flames for his amusement.



**THE BOLA (LAS BOLEADORAS) PL 10**

<b>Str 14</b>	<b>Dex 20</b>	<b>Con 16</b>	<b>Int 14</b>	<b>Wis 14</b>	<b>Cha 20</b>
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**Skills:** Bluff 6 (+11), Craft (chemical) 6 (+8), Craft (mechanical) 6 (+8), Knowledge (technology) 6 (+8), Language (English), Profession (gaucho) 1 (+3), Ride 2 (+7)

**Feats:** Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Attractive, Distract (Bluff), Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 4, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (Blast 6) 4, Precise Shot 2, Quick Draw, Ultimate Aim

**Powers: Device 20** (trick bolas, easy to lose)  
*Razor Bolas: Blast 6*  
*Exploding Bolas: Blast 8* (Explosion Area)  
*Flash Bolas: Dazzle 7* (visual)  
*Smoking Bolas: Obscure 10* (visual)  
*Steel Bolas: Snare 10*  
*Oil-Slick Bolas: Trip 9* (Improved Throw)

**Combat:** Attack +7 (melee), +11 (ranged), Grapple +9, Damage +8 (Blast), +2 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +5

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +7 (+3 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +6, Will +4

**Abilities 38 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 23 + Powers 60 + Combat 28 + Saves 4 = Total 160**

**THE FIREBUG PL 10**

<b>Str 14</b>	<b>Dex 18</b>	<b>Con 18</b>	<b>Int 22</b>	<b>Wis 16</b>	<b>Cha 14</b>
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**Skills:** Bluff 4 (+6), Craft (chemical) 9 (+15), Craft (electronic) 9 (+15), Craft (mechanical) 9 (+15), Disable Device 4 (+10), Knowledge (physical sciences) 9 (+15), Knowledge (technology) 9 (+15), Language (French, Japanese, Spanish) 3, Search 4 (+10), Stealth 4 (+8)

**Feats:** Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Favored Environment (extreme heat) 2, Inventor, Master Plan, Skill Mastery (Craft, Knowledge [technology])

**Powers: Device 18** (heat/flame gadgets, hard to lose)  
*Flamethrowers: Blast 10* (flame; Line Area)  
*Pyromorphic Field Generator: Environmental Control 10* (extreme heat), **Fire Control 10**  
*Blowtorch Rocket Pack: Flight 6* (500 MPH)  
*Costume: Immunity 7* (fire damage, suffocation), **Protection 1**

**Combat:** Attack +2, Grapple +4, Damage +10 (Blast), +2 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +4

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

**Abilities 42 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 72 + Combat 16 + Saves 3 = Total 160**

**THE HUCKSTER**

Johnny Goff is a born salesman, maybe the best who ever lived. Selling ice to the Eskimos was just another day’s work for a man of his abilities, and soon arrogance and greed seduced him into hawking dangerously defective products. Someone was bound to get seriously hurt, and eventually a sales-trip through southwest Virginia peddling home-brewed “low-calorie beer” left a lot of blind hillbillies in its wake. One class-action lawsuit later, Goff was left with nothing but a warehouse full of fatally faulty merchandise.



Goff’s psyche was always a bit on the edge, and poverty more than pushed him over it. Determined to rebuild his lost fortune at any cost, he modified his hazardously defective gadgets into even more deadly devices, and dubbed himself the Huckster, after the traveling charlatans of old. Like them, the Huckster is all about the sales pitch, but his spellbinding blarney is always a prelude to much more blatant and direct thefts.

**LOOKING GLASS**

Since early childhood, Marguerite Frey has been the most beautiful person anyone had ever seen. Everyone told her so, and it wasn’t long before she believed it, too. Thereafter Marguerite was never far from a mirror, admiring her own beauty as much as anyone else ever did.



She was vain to be sure, but Marguerite’s devotion to her looking glass went far beyond mere narcissism. With a passion bordering on mania, she learned everything she could about mirrors: how they worked, how they were made, and their history. In time she unlocked the deepest secrets of the reflecting pane, including previously undiscovered scientific applications bordering on sorcery.

**THE HUCKSTER PL 10**

<b>Str 14</b>	<b>Dex 14</b>	<b>Con 14</b>	<b>Int 20</b>	<b>Wis 16</b>	<b>Cha 22</b>
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**Skills:** Bluff 9 (+15), Craft (chemical) 10 (+15), Craft (mechanical) 10 (+15), Gather Information 9 (+15), Knowledge (current events) 10 (+15), Knowledge (popular culture) 10 (+15), Knowledge (technology) 10 (+15), Profession (salesman) 15 (+18), Sense Motive 9 (+12)

**Feats:** Assessment, Attack Focus 2 (ranged), Defensive Roll 4, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 4, Fascinate (Bluff), Improvised Tools, Inventor, Master Plan, Quick Draw, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Gather Information, Profession, Sense Motive), Sneak Attack 3, Taunt, Ultimate Bluff, Well-Informed

**Powers: Device 15** (defective consumer products, easy to lose)  
*“Johnny Human Torch” costumes: Blast 6* (fire; Explosion Area)  
*“Johnny Jalapeno” cream pies: Dazzle 6* (pepper-base irritants, visual)  
*“Johnny Supermodel” weight-loss tonic: Disintegration 6*  
*“Johnny Spaceman” rocket pogo stick: Leaping 6* (x100 distance)  
*“Johnny Buzzkill” smokeless ashtray: Obscure 6* (smoke, visual)  
*Sword cane: Strike 3*

**Combat:** Attack +6 (melee), +8 (ranged), Grapple +8, Damage +6 (Blast), +3 (Strike), +2 (unarmed), Defense +10 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +6 (+2 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

**Abilities 40 + Skills 23 (92 ranks) + Feats 24 + Powers 45 + Combat 24 + Saves 5 = Total 161**

## LOOKING GLASS

PL 10

Str 12 Dex 14 Con 14 Int 24 Wis 18 Cha 16

**Skills:** Bluff 5 (+8), Craft (electronic) 12 (+19), Craft (mechanical) 12 (+19), Disable Device 5 (+12), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+19), Knowledge (physical sciences) 9 (+16), Language (French, Italian) 2, Notice 5 (+9), Search 5 (+12), Stealth 5 (+7)

**Feats:** Attractive 2, Defensive Roll 5, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 5, Improved Aim, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Master Plan, Precise Shot 2, Skill Mastery (Craft, Knowledge), Sneak Attack, Uncanny Dodge (visual)

**Powers:** **Device 2** (jet packs, hard to lose), **Device 15** (mirror gadgets, easy to lose)

*Jet Packs:* **Flight 5** (250 MPH)

*Laser-Mirror Gun:* **Blast 8** (heat; Penetrating; Accurate 2)

*Holographic Mirrors:* **Confusion 10** (funhouse mirror images), **Illusion 10** (visual, 50' radius; Progression 3)

*Reflecting Pane:* **Deflect 8** (energy attacks; Reflection)

**Combat:** Attack +6, +10 (Blast), Grapple +7, Damage +8 (Blast), +1 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +7 (+2 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +5

**Abilities 38 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 22 + Powers 53 + Combat 24 + Saves 5 = Total 160**

Patenting her discoveries would have made her fabulously wealthy, but Marguerite is accustomed to having everything handed to her. There was nothing left for her admirers to bring her, so she decided to steal whatever was left, putting her discoveries to use as the costumed thief known as Looking Glass, the Mistress of Mirrors.

## THE MAD MAPLE

Early on, Adam Jury was a typical Canadian: polite, well-educated, and proud of his home and native land. It was not until he fell in with a bad crowd—an extremist group convinced Canada is being kept from its greater destiny by the U.S.—that his tendencies towards political radicalism and sociopathy emerged. As Jury's obsession with avenging America's slights against Canada (both real and imagined) grew, he used his natural inventiveness to design ever more fantastic weaponry to seek vengeance with.

To that end, Jury debuted as the costumed "political activist" known as the Maple Leaf. However, his long-winded public pronouncements on the countless virtues of Canada and endless flaws of America sounded so insane to most listeners the media quickly re-dubbed him "the Mad Maple." Despite this unflattering appellation (which angers him to no end), Jury continues his "economic redresses" (a.k.a., armed robberies) against American businesses undeterred.



## THE WEATHER MISTRESS

Before reaching age 18, Cortney Cline saw her agricultural kinfolk financially ruined by a severe drought, the family homestead destroyed by a flood, and her parents killed by a tornado. Later, while walking through a blizzard to the menial job that supported her through college, Cortney vowed fate's cruel hand—the weather—would no longer control her destiny, and instead she would be *its* mistress! From then on, Cline dedicated herself to studying meteorology and any manner of technology which might allow her to bend the very elements to her will.



## THE MAD MAPLE

PL 10

Str 14 Dex 18 Con 18 Int 20 Wis 16 Cha 18

**Skills:** Bluff 3 (+7), Computers 6 (+11), Craft (electronic) 8 (+13), Disable Device 3 (+8), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+13), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+13), Knowledge (current events) 6 (+11), Knowledge (history) 6 (+11), Language (French, Inuktitut, Cree) 3, Notice 3 (+6), Search 3 (+8), Stealth 3 (+7)

**Feats:** Attack Focus 4 (ranged), Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 4, Endurance, Improved Throw, Improved Trip, Inventor, Master Plan, Move-by Action, Taunt

**Powers:** **Device 2** (costume, hard to lose), **Device 15** (Ice Staff, easy to lose)  
*Costume:* **Immunity 5** (cold damage), **Protection 1**, **Speed 4** (ice skates, 100 MPH)

*Ice Staff:* **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: Objects Only], **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]), **Illusion 7** (cold-induced hallucinations, all sense types, 10' radius; Continuous Duration, Fortitude Save; Limited: One Subject, Phantasms; Progression), **Strike 3** (Accurate, Extended Reach, Mighty)

**Combat:** Attack +6 (melee), +8 (Strike), +10 (ranged), Grapple +8, Damage +10 (Blast), +5 (Strike), +2 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +4

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +9 (+5 flat-footed), Fortitude +5, Reflex +5, Will +4

**Abilities 44 + Skills 15 (60 ranks) + Feats 19 + Powers 53 + Combat 26 + Saves 3 = Total 160**

## THE WEATHER MISTRESS

PL 10

Str 12 Dex 14 Con 14 Int 18 Wis 14 Cha 12

**Skills:** Computers 4 (+8), Bluff 7 (+8), Craft (electronics) 5 (+9), Disable Device 7 (+11), Knowledge (earth sciences) 7 (+11), Knowledge (technology) 5 (+9), Notice 7 (+9), Search 7 (+11), Stealth 7 (+9)

**Feats:** Attack Focus (ranged) 6, Attractive 2, Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 4, Favored Environment (aerial) 2, Improved Throw, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Master Plan, Move-by Action, Taunt

**Powers:** **Device 17** (Weather Vane, hard to lose)

*Weather Vane:* **Deflect 5** (wind screen, slow projectiles; Reaction Action), **Flight 3** (50 MPH), **Immunity 10** (weather effects), **Super-Senses 9** (weather awareness [Acute, Extended 5, Radius, Ranged]), **Weather Control 10** (precipitation, distraction, DC 10, Dynamic, Alternate Powers [all Dynamic]: **Air Control 10**, **Blast 9** [lightning bolt; Indirect 2], **Blast 5** [tornado; Burst Area, Concentration Duration], **Dazzle 5** [thunder and lightning, auditory and visual; Explosion Area], **Environmental Control 10** [extreme cold], **Environmental Control 10** [extreme heat], **Environmental Control 10** [wet surfaces, hamper movement, one-quarter speed], **Fatigue 6** [humidity; Ranged; Reversible, Sedation], **Obscure 10** [fog, visual], **Snare 10** [ice])

**Combat:** Attack +2 (melee), +8 (ranged), Grapple +3, Damage +9 (Blast), +1 (unarmed), Defense +14 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +6 (+2 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

**Abilities 24 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 24 + Powers 68 + Combat 24 + Saves 6 = Total 160**



Several years, many research grants, and numerous failures later, Cline finally hit upon the discovery she sought. Unbeknownst to her, success was made possible by devices indirectly acquired from Dr. Stratos. These gadgets were non-functional, but (like Captain Thunder) became imbued with trace energies from Stratos' mutant weather-control powers. Cline incorporated pieces of these gadgets into her masterwork, a device she dubbed "the Weather Vane." With it, she reshapes local climates with but a thought.

Despite her achievement, she still didn't feel the scales of fate were balanced, and set out to steal the riches life "owed her all along." Since then, Cortney Cline has perverted the forces of nature to sate her greed as the costumed criminal known as the Weather Mistress.

## TROUBLE IN PARADISE

The first obstacle facing the characters is getting inside Paradise. The doors and windows are mostly normal glass (toughness 1), but the Mad Maple reinforced them with walls of solid ice, which increase the total toughness to 11. Breaking through the walls, floor or ceiling is another option, but their toughness rating is 15.

Once inside, the heroes find themselves literally in the middle of a storm. Courtesy of the Weather Mistress, the gambling and lounge areas are getting drenched by heavy rain showers and buffeted by high winds. The storm reduces visibility throughout Paradise, so the heroes likely have a difficult time telling friend from foe.

Wind and rain took their toll on Paradise's interior, and almost all the furnishings and decorations have been knocked about. Still, the overturned gaming tables, bars and the like provide decent cover (toughness 7).

The casino employees and patrons (use the Bystander archetype in *M&M*, page 226) are using said cover as best they can against the elements, and run towards any exit the heroes made. The bystanders' exact numbers and locations are unspecified, so Gamemasters can use them to best effect during the battle. They may overwhelm the characters in a panicked rush to escape, mistake the heroes for villains and attack, get

in the characters' way at a critical moment, put themselves in need of a rescue, or show up just as the villains decide to take a hostage.

## NEVER COUNT YOUR MONEY WHEN YOU'RE SITTING AT THE TABLE

When the heroes enter the building, most Guild members are downstairs at the casino vault, forcing Paradise's boss Sam Rothstein and several employees to empty the safes and fill bags with cash. The only villain not near the vault is the Weather Mistress, who maintains the storm and observes the casino floor from the manager's office. She warns her colleagues of any trouble via intercom, in which case the other Guild members lock the bystanders inside the vault and head up to the casino floor.

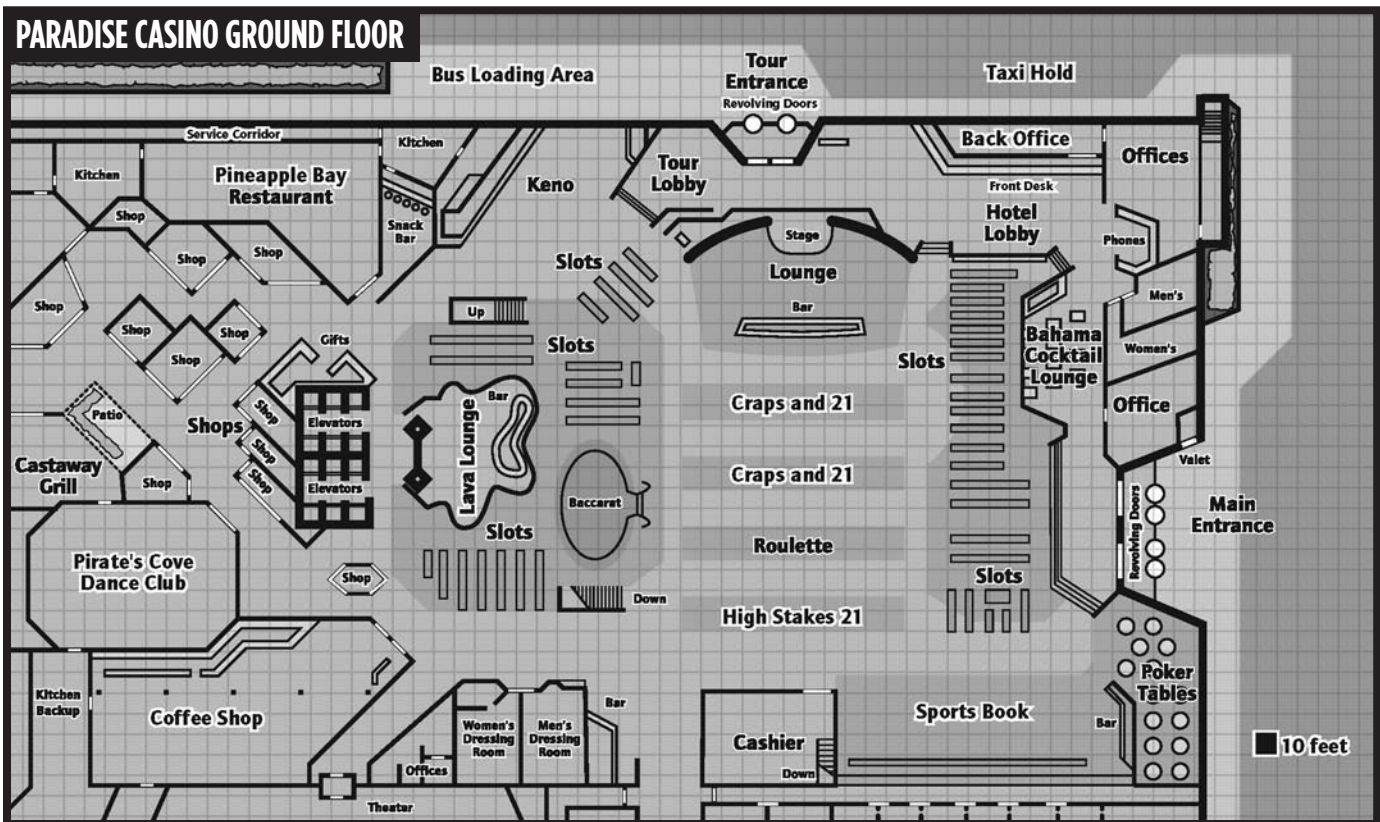
## BRING ON THE BAD GUYS

The Thieves' Guild responds as follows during any battle with the characters. First, since they expect their patron to rescue them at any moment, the members do not surrender voluntarily, opting to flee the scene by their own means instead. Second, though none of the Guild members are cold-blooded killers, they are not above deliberately endangering innocent lives (such as taking hostages) if it gains them an advantage over an opponent.

Lastly, the Guild members have worked out various ways to complement each others' attacks. Whenever practical, they coordinate their assaults in the manners outlined in the section following.

### THE BOLA

Along with his usual array of weapons, the Bola has a couple more tricks to enhance his fellow Guild members' specialties. First, he modified some of his Steel Bolas into Lightning-Rod Bolas, constructed primarily out of copper and aluminum. In addition to the normal bonuses for attacking entangled/bound characters, all electrical attacks against targets caught in a Lightning-Rod Bola receive a +2 to both the attack check and damage bonus.





Any target felled by an Oil-Slick Bola finds themselves covered in flammable liquid. The oil adds a +2 damage bonus to all heat and flame attacks against the unfortunate target (plus any attack modifiers for a prone target), until they take a full action for every round spent lying in the slick to clean themselves up.

Whenever possible, the Bola uses these two attacks to “set up” victims for the Weather Mistress’ lightning bolts or the Firebug’s flamethrowers. If a hero targets the Bola in retaliation, he looks out for his own safety first and switches focus to his attacker.

If the battle goes against the Guild, the Bola flees just as his colleagues do, but tries bringing a guest along. Ever since he set first foot in Paradise and saw her posters, the Bola has been smitten with the lounge’s featured exotic dancer, Lili St. Cyr. Before he leaves the premises, he tries kidnapping her from her dressing room. The Bola’s not above using her as a hostage, but it’s all a bluff—he’d never harm a *mamacita*.

## THE FIREBUG

With his one-track pyromaniac mind, the Firebug is the most straightforward Guild member. Throughout the combat, he remains airborne and blasts any opportune target with his flamethrowers. Despite his mania, he’s fully aware heroes who’ve been struck by an Oil-Slick Bola or Napalm-Cream Pie burn well, and shoots at such targets whenever possible.

Like his cohorts, the Firebug flees from a losing battle. However, he makes sure as many buildings as possible are set afire as he runs, starting with Paradise.

## THE HUCKSTER

It’s all about style for the Huckster, so he always uses whatever attack displays the most panache on his part. Like the Bola, he modified a device to enhance the Firebug’s flamethrowers. He’s changed the recipe for his “Johnny Jalape o” cream pies, transforming them into Napalm-Cream Pies.

A target struck by such a pie has the Duration of any subsequent heat or flame attack against them increased to Continuous, as the jellied reactants ignite and burn. Victims don’t stop burning until they use a full action employing some flame-retardant device (like the casino’s numerous fire extinguishers). If not ignited, the sticky Napalm Cream cannot be scraped off until the Dazzle’s effects fade.

It has nothing to do with bravery, the Huckster is always one of the last to run from a losing fight. He just can’t leave a crowd without a flowery exit speech.

## LOOKING GLASS

By far the most self-centered of an unbelievably selfish lot, Looking Glass makes no effort to help her fellow Guild members unless there’s no risk to herself. If the battle goes against the Guild, she is always the first to bail on it. Most members got used to Looking Glass’ perfidy long ago; only the Bola (still hoping to make her one of his *mamacitas*) ever lifts a finger to help her.

## THE MAD MAPLE

Thoroughly soaked by the Weather Mistress’ rain showers, any spot on the casino floor can be frozen instantly by the Mad Maple’s Cold Control power. This slows characters to one-quarter their normal ground movement rate, and forces them to make DC 20 Reflex saves to avoid falling if they exceed that pace.

Characters not dressed for the weather suffer additional penalties from the Maple’s cold powers. Heroes with the Immunity (cold) power are safe, but those not clad in waterproof material (Gamemaster’s call) are quickly as soaked as the casino floor and suffer a -2 penalty to all checks made to resist cold-based powers.

Like all true fanatics, the Mad Maple never retreats or surrenders. The other Guild members know this, and count on him unwittingly covering their escapes.

## THE WEATHER MISTRESS

The indoor storm acts as a DC 10 distraction to everyone else inside Paradise, and the Weather Mistress maintains it until her teammates need a clear shot at the heroes. At that point, she calms the storm, and leaves the manager’s office to hover above the battle. Once there, she prefers striking down her opponents with her Blast power, with or without the aid of the Lightning-Rod Bolas.

The Weather Mistress’ other powers come into play if she opts to abandon her erstwhile allies. In that event, she uses Obscure to cover her escape and her Air Control power to push innocent bystanders into harm’s way, forcing the heroes to rescue them.

## WHEN IT’S TIME TO RELAX

If the players capture all (or most of) the Thieves’ Guild, or at least save the innocent bystanders and the loot, it’s Miller Time. Shortly afterwards, Capt. Maddicks and his men move in to secure the area. Subdued villains are disarmed, then stereotypically vow revenge as the cops haul them away. Medical personnel tend to all injured parties, including any seriously hurt player characters.

The just-rescued people are immensely grateful, and most stop to thank the characters as they exit the building, even if they have no real idea who their costumed saviors are. In fact, several well-meaning folks mistake the characters for some of Freedom City’s more-famous costumed heroes as they express their appreciation.

Once the media points its cameras and microphones at him, no one shows more gratitude than Sam Rothstein. He gives a generous handful of chips to each of the heroes, and promises to “comp them anytime” once he gets the place up and running again. Before the characters can hit the slots, Capt. Maddicks demands a word with them *right @#%\$-ing now*.

If Maddicks requested the heroes’ intervention, he asks for an immediate report on the battle, pointedly questioning any instance where the characters failed or endangered innocent lives. Once the captain is satisfied the heroes performed up to his high expectations, he offers a gruff “You did good” and a handshake. Events then proceed to **Not with a Bang...**, below.

By contrast, Maddicks is apoplectic when he eyeballs anyone who went in without authorization, and their success makes him only slightly less so. The characters are in for a Samuel L. Jackson-ish rant, but if they weather it gracefully, the captain foregoes filing charges. If and when they meet again, Maddicks is willing to work with the heroes, provided they show they’re going to do things his way. Otherwise, they just get yelled at some more.

## THE LOSERS

If the Thieves’ Guild defeats the player characters, the villains soon grow tired of waiting for their ride to show up, and escape on their own with as much loot as they can carry. Eventually, unconscious heroes are awakened by a concerned paramedic, who barely finishes treating their wounds before a totally gone-ballistic Capt. Maddicks gets all up in their grills.

As above, Maddicks demands a full account of the battle, but in this instance he loudly and harshly criticizes almost every decision the characters made. Before the heroes can tell their side, Maddicks orders them to leave the scene immediately and entertains no debate on the subject.

As they depart, the people they failed to help stare at the characters, silently and disappointedly. An incensed Sam Rothstein and his hired muscle promise them a complementary pair of broken legs if they ever set foot in the joint again. After that, the media await, anxious to point an accusing finger and microphone at the costumed failures. Once they manage to get through the door, the scene switches to **Not with a Bang...**

Things are even worse for heroes who went into Paradise against Maddicks’ wishes. As soon as the paramedics verify the characters aren’t dead, the captain orders his men to arrest them. Before anyone can react, events suddenly proceed to **Not with a Bang...**

## NOT WITH A BANG...

Instantly, the characters' surroundings disappear in a blinding flash of white light. Then just as quickly everything turns pitch black, as if an obsidian shroud were suddenly drawn over their bodies. For what seems like great aeons following, the heroes are trapped in a terrible state of non-being. They are not alive, nor do they know the peace of death. They are merely *aware*, horribly cognizant of the void surrounding them. So harrowing is this loss of everything save fear, even the excruciating burning of their empty lungs following is a welcome return to life.

If any characters lack the means to survive in the icy vacuum of space (Immunity, equipment, powers), they suffer the tortures of their now-hostile environment until they are almost inescapably entwined in death's embrace. At the last possible moment, a warm, breathable atmosphere suddenly immerses the heroes, with no rational explanation for its presence. Their battle injuries are completely healed, but they soon find little joy in being alive.

## EVERYBODY KNOWS THIS IS NOWHERE

When the characters finally get their bearings, they find themselves floating in a void atop a flat, rocky asteroid about twenty feet square. A dim crimson light emanates from a distant indeterminate source, revealing only a dark void ahead which appears to be a black hole.

If the heroes explore their surroundings, emphasize the emptiness. The asteroid they occupy is completely barren, and the atmosphere which inexplicably clings to it does not extend any further than necessary to keep the characters alive on its surface.

Characters with Knowledge (physical sciences) skill recognize their current location with a successful check (DC 20; DC 15 if the heroes were in Freedom City during the Terminus invasions). Even if they don't know the Terminus by name, they can still deduce its basic nature as a void beyond the known universe. Any characters using Dimensional Movement learn an even more disturbing fact: there's literally nowhere else to go, as all the other dimensions are gone.

If the characters didn't start *Time of Crisis* as a team and are only now coming together, allow some time for role-playing their first extended meeting and let them get to know each other. Non-chatty characters who attempt to leave find out quickly there's nothing to see here...literally. Stubborn types who fly off to explore every inch of the nothing reappear on the asteroid when the Norn first manifests.

## SECOND CHANCES

When the heroes truly start despairing (or events start dragging a bit), an awesome angelic countenance materializes before them, radiating a palpable cosmic-level energy. Her indescribable beauty and long flowing dark hair complete her seraphic appearance. "Be not afraid," she says, "I am the Norn, and I have preserved your existence in order to bestow upon you the opportunity to undo this great wrong—the destruction of the omniverse."

If any character is rock-stupid enough to move against the Norn, their attacks pass harmlessly through her form. Should the trigger-happy morons continue wasting ammo, the Norn simply vanishes and leaves them marooned on the barren rock. She returns every 12 hours or so (which seems like an eternity in the Terminus) and again tries communicating with the characters.

When able, the Norn relates the following information to the heroes. She defers all questions until she's done making these points.

- "A power far greater than herself" long ago charged the Norn to nurture life and goodness and aid their defenders, though she is forbidden to take an active role herself. This is all she reveals about her nature, but it's quite evident her brevity stems from a real sense of urgency rather than anything sinister.

- Currently, the heroes are in a remote corner of the Terminus, a grim realm which is currently all that's left of the omniverse.
- The Norn rescued the player characters by pulling them from the time-stream just before the disaster struck. The trauma they experienced after the white flash of light was a temporal brush with what would have been their deaths had the Norn not intervened. No one else could be saved, so they are now literally "the last heroes."
- An incredibly powerful and evil being known as Omega, Lord of the Terminus, is responsible for the catastrophe. He simultaneously detonated cosmic-energy bombs on four specific parallel Earths, including the characters' home world ("Earth-Prime," as it's called). This caused a chain reaction which destroyed all alternate dimensions, including Earth-Prime's.
- An agent of Omega hired the Thieves' Guild to distract Freedom City's heroes from noticing the bomb on Earth-Prime.
- Despite the cataclysm, the Norn can send the characters back in time to a place near each of the cosmic-energy bombs, perhaps a day or so prior to their detonation. Once there, the heroes must find and defuse them. If the heroes deactivate the bombs in time, everything will be restored just the way it was. Total annihilation will be averted, and the omniverse will be safe.
- In these difficult circumstances, the Norn's vast energies will be nearly exhausted transporting the player characters through time and space, making repeat journeys impossible. If anyone asks, the Norn acknowledges repeatedly bending time in this manner may well fatally drain her, but she's more than prepared to make that sacrifice. Therefore, there are no temporal "do-overs," and the heroes get only one trip to stop a particular bomb from going off.
- The spent Norn will be unable to provide much assistance beyond getting the player characters where they need to go. Even if that weren't the case, more grandiose use of her powers risks attracting Omega's attention. If necessary, she tells the heroes Omega's involvement would be a bad thing—a *very* bad thing.

Believe it or not, the player characters are free to say "Thanks, but no, thanks" to the Norn. If that happens, she tries persuading any shirkers to reconsider in a surprisingly gentle manner. The Norn also makes it clear she has no spare energies to send the insubordinate home with, so they'll be marooned in the Terminus. If their answer remains "Hell no, I won't go," the Norn and any volunteering to help her vanish, leaving the slackers abandoned on the asteroid.

"Heroes" staying behind (yes, those are sneer quotes) are then free to live out their miserable lives in the Terminus. Their pathetic state of being likely persists only as long as it takes Omega and his armies to find and kill them. The Gamemaster may then grant one last chance to join the Norn's good fight, in which case any penitent characters can catch up to the events of *Time of Crisis* apace. Alternately, the Gamemaster can play out their struggle against Omega in his home dimension as an extended campaign of its own (in which case the Terminus chapter in the *Worlds of Freedom* sourcebook can be most helpful).

The characters agreeing to help the Norn slowly fade from view, feeling a tingle of energy pass through their bodies and a mild sensation of falling. They then reappear on the first of the four parallel Earths, as outlined in the next chapter.

## AWARDING POWER POINTS

Depending on their degree of success against the Thieves' Guild, the Gamemaster should award each character from 0 to 2 power points. Losing to the villains puts the reward in the 0-1 point range, while winning is worth 1-2 points, hinging on how much unnecessary harm was done to innocent bystanders and private property.

# CHAPTER TWO: TOMORROW THE WORLD

As the heroes materialize, they gradually become aware of their new surroundings. Darkness engulfs them, and the rubble-covered ground is unsteady beneath their feet. Their nostrils fill with dust and mildew, and the crisp air chills their bones.

Anyone with proper vision enhancement (Super-Senses, a lit match, etc.) gets some idea of where they are. The room around them seems to be a damp, ruined basement, with only the broken remnants of stone steps leading up to ground level. As the heroes walk closer to the steps, thin rays of moonlight stab through the edges of the ruined ceiling. The bits of rubble shift and move under their strides, stirring up full regiments of fleeing rats in their wake.

The collapsed building above covers the ceiling and the top of the basement stairs in rubble (toughness 12). If the heroes try pushing their way through, a successful DC 15 Strength check does the trick. If they do so away from the walls, the heroes must climb up onto the shaky, weakened ground floor. Once there, a DC 15 Reflex save is required to avoid a 10' fall (and the accompanying damage) back into the basement.

Once the heroes are safely above ground, more light illuminates the darkness. Nearest to them are several fires of varying sizes, blazing amongst the ruins of a devastated urban neighborhood. In the distance, the moon silhouettes an inner-city skyline that seems strange, yet somehow familiar. At last, their eyes behold the iconic tri-towers of Freedom City's Pyramid Plaza, but at the peak of their ninety stories is a sight to make blood run cold. Shining in the glare of numerous spotlights, giant blood-red flags fly atop each of the three towers, all emblazoned with the black swastika of Nazism.

The ultimate nightmare has been realized here. Welcome to *Erde*.

Readers with access to *Worlds of Freedom* can find more information on the history of *Erde*, its connections with Earth-Prime, and the events following this adventure, in **Chapter Four** of that sourcebook.

## THE ROCKETS' RED GLARE

After they escape the ruined basement and explore the surrounding area, the heroes become aware of a rumbling mechanical noise which shakes the ground beneath them. The sound of grinding, crushing stone sets the heroes' teeth on edge, until it's drowned out by the high-pitched whistling screech of jet engines.

Appearing suddenly on the horizon is a trio of slender, night-black forms, with the elongated profile of an aircraft. They're held aloft by large, high-speed rotors, one on each side, enclosed in armored carapaces. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (technology) skill check identifies it as an advanced vectored-thrust system, which accounts for the aircraft's remarkable agility. Anyone studying the machines also notices their ominous markings: Iron Crosses and swastikas.

The aircraft make a quick sweep of the heroes' vicinity and seemingly overshoot them, but then turn on a dime and begin strafing the characters. If the heroes stand their ground and fight, the flying machines try to herd them towards the tanks advancing from the direction of the city.

While the characters' attentions are focused skyward, the Nazi armor enters the battle. The tanks are house-size steel-grey juggernauts, flattening everything before them flush with the ground. They pursue the heroes relentlessly, as the flying machines' strafing mercilessly corrals them inside the path of the tanks' mammoth treads.

The characters are at a severe tactical disadvantage with only scattered rubble for cover, which is equally useless against aerial gunfire and getting crushed by tanks. If the heroes manage to overcome the drawbacks of their exposed position and defeat the Nazi war machines, events progress to **The Terror of Flight**. In the event the characters are all incapacitated by the battle, they are taken prisoner and kept under sedation until **The Dawn's Early Light**.

## DESCENT INTO THE DARKNESS

On this parallel Earth, the U.S. delayed involvement in World War II until after the U.K., the U.S.S.R. and the rest of Europe fell before the German onslaught. Any chance of stemming the tide of worldwide fascism was lost when Japan launched a devastating surprise attack on American forces throughout the Pacific, forcing the U.S. into a two-front war it couldn't win.

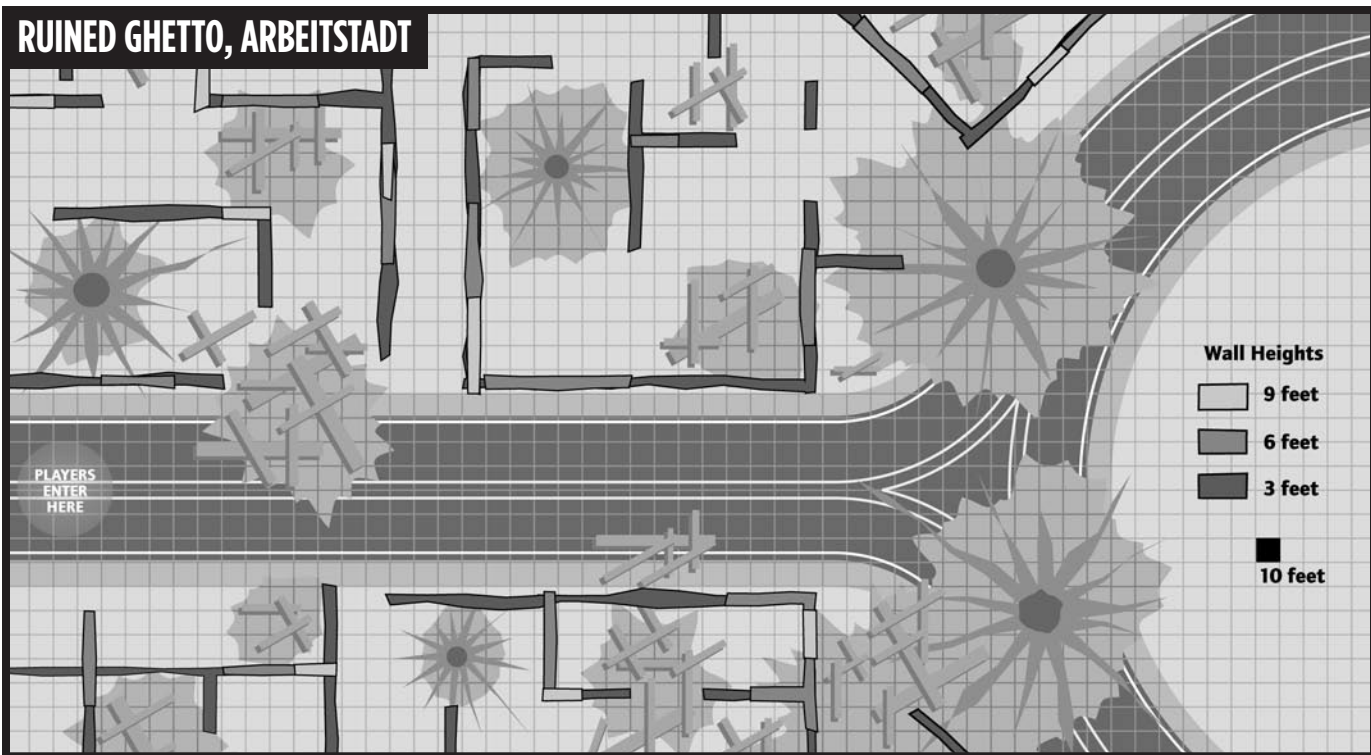
The American Dream officially died on August 29th, 1949, its passing marked by a mushroom cloud over the radioactive crater that was Washington, D.C. America's subsequent collapse secured the Axis conquest of *Erde* (the now-ubiquitous German name for the planet). What was the U.S. is partitioned at the Mississippi River between Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan (for more details on *Erde*, check out the *Worlds of Freedom* sourcebook).

Freedom City offered fierce resistance to the invading Nazis, and only after flattening the entire metropolitan area did the Reich finally conquer it. In the decades following, the Nazis rebuilt the city to glorify National Socialism, renaming it *Arbeitstadt* ("City of Work"). *Arbeitstadt*'s general layout closely resembles Freedom City's back on Earth-Prime, except for the ruined outlying areas and some otherwise familiar structures altered to suit Nazi ideology.

In reconstructing *Arbeitstadt* as a symbol of the occupation, the Nazis made it a prime target for the American Resistance. Rarely does a week pass without some swastika-covered structure going up in flames. In retaliation, the Nazis raze the city's outlying areas in gaudy shows of force, even though they're pretty much just blasting rubble into smaller bits of rubble.

Despite the resistance's courage and sacrifices, there is no force left on *Erde* capable of defeating the Axis powers' conventional military might. Even if there were, their legions of cybernetic war machines and other super-weapons would tip the scales back in favor of tyranny. For a time, the American Resistance still had hope, personified by Tomas Morgen, a Nazi-bred eugenic superman who turned against the Reich. After years of endless struggles, Morgen used an experimental Nazi time machine to change World War II's outcome. However, when Morgen returned to present-day *Erde*, he found history unchanged and the world still in the iron grip of Axis tyranny.

No one's sure what happened to Morgen after that. Officially, he was killed by a squad of superhuman Nazis, though some say he took his own life once he realized his efforts failed. Others, particularly the American Resistance, hold out hope Morgen is still alive, somewhere.



### MESSERSCHMIDT ME 619 “WALKÜRE”

The cutting edge of German tactical-support aircraft, the Me 619 *Walküre* (Valkyrie) combines a state-of-the-art vectored-thrust propulsion system with a devastating array of weaponry, capable of engaging both hard and soft ground targets. Against small bands of poorly armed resistance fighters, the *Walküre* is nearly invincible, and provides considerable fire support in combined operations against more threatening opposition.

In combat, the *Walküre* relies on strafing attacks with its auto-cannons, using its missiles only when confronted with targets under hard cover or truly formidable foes (like the characters). As noted above, its primary role in the anti-resistance missions over Arbeitstadt is to keep fleeing targets within range of the tanks, concentrating its fire on any straying too far from the armor’s path.

Like the *Löwe*, the *Walküre* is cybernetically piloted by a disembodied human brain, directly interfaced with all the vehicle’s systems. This allows

a superhuman degree of control over the most minute of the Me 619’s 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.

### PANZERKAMPFWAGEN XXVI AUSF. F “LÖWE”

The *Löwe* (Lion) series of tanks was designed with “bigger is better” firmly in mind. Literally the size of a house, the *Löwe* mounts a massive 155mm main gun, in addition to an armory’s worth of machine guns, covering

MESSERSCHMIDT ME 619 “WALKÜRE”						PL 12
Str 34	Dex 14	Con -	Int 10	Wis 6	Cha -	
<b>Skills:</b> Notice 16 (+14)						
<b>Feats:</b> Favored Environment (aerial) 12, Improved Initiative, Move-by Action						
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Blast 12</b> (missiles; Explosion Area; Homing), <b>Blast 6</b> (auto-cannons; Autofire 2), <b>Communication 6</b> (radio, 20 miles range; Area; Subtle), <b>Flight 6</b> (500 MPH), <b>Growth 12</b> (gargantuan; Permanent; Innate), <b>Immunity 30</b> (Fortitude effects), <b>Super-Senses 17</b> (blindsight [radar, Extended 4, Radius, Ranged], direction sense, distance sense, infravision [Radius, Extended 2], time sense)						
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +0 (includes -4 size), Grapple +24, Damage +12 (Blast), Defense -4 (includes -4 size), Knockback -17, Initiative +6						
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +11, Fortitude -, Reflex +5, Will -2						
<b>Drawbacks:</b> Disability (disembodied brain, -5 points)						
<b>Abilities -10 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 158 + Combat 8 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 5 = Total 183</b>						

PANZERKAMPFWAGEN XXVI AUSF. F “LÖWE”						PL 10
Str 30	Dex 14	Con -	Int 10	Wis 6	Cha -	
<b>Skills:</b> Notice 16 (+14)						
<b>Feats:</b> Improved Initiative, Move-by Action						
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Blast 10</b> (main gun, antipersonnel rounds; Explosion Area; Alternate Power: <b>Blast 10</b> [armor-piercing rounds; Penetrating]), <b>Blast 6</b> (machineguns; Autofire), <b>Communication 6</b> (radio, 20 miles range; Area; Subtle), <b>Growth 8</b> (huge; Permanent; Innate), <b>Immunity 30</b> (Fortitude effects), <b>Obscure 6</b> (smoke projectors, visual), <b>Protection 3</b> (Impervious), <b>Speed 3</b> (50 MPH), <b>Super-Senses 17</b> (darkvision [Extended 3], direction sense, distance sense, infravision [Extended 3], normal visual [Extended 3], Radius 2 [all visual], time sense)						
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +10 (includes -2 due to size), Grapple +28, Damage +10 (Blast, unarmed), Defense -2 (includes -2 due to size), Knockback -12, Initiative +6						
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +6, Fortitude -, Reflex +5, Will -2						
<b>Drawbacks:</b> Disability (disembodied brain, -5 points)						
<b>Abilities -6 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 147 + Combat 24 + Saves 6 - Drawbacks 5 = Total 172</b>						



every firing arc. Only the most advanced anti-tank measures can breach its hull, making it more than a match for Arbeitstadt's resistance forces and their meager cache of heavy weapons.

*Löwen* 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 Me 619's, *Löwen* are guided by disembodied brains specially conditioned for the task. As a result, they possess all the same behavioral characteristics noted in the *Walküre*'s entry above.

## THE TERROR OF FLIGHT

Unbeknownst to them, the characters' fight against the Nazi war machines attracts the attention of the American Resistance leader in Arbeitstadt, a woman known as "Lilith." If the heroes prevail, she emerges from her hiding place in the smoking rubble and emphatically tells them, "Come with me if you want to live." If the characters refuse her offer, she resumes hiding until an ever-increasing number of Nazi war machines subdue the heroes (leading to **The Dawn's Early Light**, below) or they finally see the wisdom in accepting her generosity.

Lilith leads the heroes through a series of concealed tunnels linking a network of abandoned basements, sewers, and subways. After seemingly endless dark miles, she calls an abrupt halt in a nondescript cavern, one apparently dug by hand. She lights a torch on the wall and, though winded, has plenty of questions for the heroes.

It's likely the characters have a few of their own, and Lilith answers them as best she can. She's not a history teacher, but can relate the information in the **Descent into the Darkness** sidebar. At the very least, she tells the heroes enough for them to grasp where *Erde*'s history did its 180 from events on Earth-Prime. Lilith's main concern is the present, and as soon as possible, she shifts discussion towards the American Resistance' current plight.

## TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING

The resistance knows the Nazis recently acquired a device that apparently fell to *Erde* from parts unknown. It's been transported to the Von Braun Island Space Control Center (a location the characters know as Star Island, just offshore from the city) for study. Resistance spies report the device contains nearly limitless—almost cosmic—levels of energy. The characters likely figure out exactly what the device is at "cosmic," and Lilith knows such power cannot fall under the Nazis' control, so it's a race to suggest teaming up.

Resistance spies can smuggle Lilith and the characters onto Von Braun Island. While she's confident they'll make it inside past security, she's equally sure the trip is one-way. For her part, almost-certain death is no deterrence, nor should it be for true heroes. However, if the characters devise a plan of their own (perhaps one with a lower certain-death quotient), Lilith is willing to listen. To persuade her to go along with their wacky schemes, the heroes must convince Lilith they've got a better means of sneaking in, or the firepower to overcome the island's considerable defenses.

If the characters find their own way onto the island, the Gamemaster must improvise the ensuing events, but the potential results are the same. A half-baked plan concludes with a serious beat-down on the heroes, carried out by as many Nazi war machines and guards as it takes to do the job. Afterward, the characters wake up in a jail cell just as described in **The Dawn's Early Light** below.

Well thought-out and -executed plans, on the other hand, can get the heroes past the guards and all the way to **The Foe's Haughty Host** below. In either case, the Gamemaster needs to have Lilith tagging along, as she may be needed to trigger events later in the scenario.

## O'ER THE RAMPARTS WE WATCH'D

If the characters go along with Lilith's plan, she leads them deeper into the catacombs underneath Arbeitstadt to a small resistance encampment. Once she vouches for them, the resistance fighters are eager to help the heroes, including packing them into the shipping crates which carry them to Von Braun Island. The fit inside the crates is tight, the time

spent there dark and endless, and the portage carried out by men who think "Fragile" must be Italian.

The characters' crates are fairly cheaply made, and peepholes are easy to find if the heroes want to get a look at the world outside. What the heroes see is most disheartening. Streets and buildings familiar from Freedom City are populated by hopeless, ragged people begging and scrounging for scraps to survive on. Though dirty and skeletal, the faces of friends and relatives are recognizable amongst them, making the evident despair and oppression all the more real and heartbreaking for the characters.

The only people enjoying the land's plenty are the ever-present Gestapo agents. They're harassing the haggard-looking passersby for their identity papers and heaping abuse on those too weak from hunger and misery to comply with Nazi-like precision. Everywhere, signs mock the citizens of the National Socialist States of America: "*Arbeit macht frei*" ("Work makes you free").

In the end, Lilith's contacts are as good as their word, and the characters' turbulent journey by truck and boat ends inside the walls of Von Braun Island without incident. That is, of course, when the real trouble begins.

## LILITH

In addition to her natural raven-haired beauty, Elissa Carey's considerable writing talent always 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 as a journalist made her witness to extreme Nazi 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 whose loss she more than identified with. She quickly proved an adept leader and eventually became head of Arbeitstadt's resistance cells.

After she witnesses the characters in action, Carey becomes convinced they're the second coming of Tomas Morgen. She's willing to do anything to secure their help in removing the cosmic-energy device from the Nazis' hands. Lilith is adamant about accompanying them on this mission, as only she can vouch for them to the resistance (something she doesn't hesitate pointing out, if need be). In most other matters, she is willing to defer to the characters' judgment.



LILITH						PL 4
Str 10	Dex 12	Con 12	Int 12	Wis 12	Cha 16	
<b>Skills:</b> 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)						
<b>Feats:</b> 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						
<b>Equipment:</b> Binoculars, laptop computer, leather jacket (+1 Toughness), submachine gun (+4 damage)						
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +3, Grapple +3, Damage +4 (submachine gun), +0 (unarmed), Defense +3 (+1 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +1						
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +2 (+1 without leather jacket), Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +3						
<b>Abilities 14 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 19 + Combat 10 + Saves 6 = Total 62</b>						

## THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

If the characters were crated onto the island, the first light they've seen in several hours stabs into their eyes through a widening crack at the top of the container. Events then proceed to **The Foe's Haughty Host** below.

Heroes defeated by the Nazi war machines in **The Rockets' Red Glare** receive an equally rude awakening on their retinas as consciousness returns to them. They find themselves locked in holding cells without their devices and equipment, and a smell of sterile, embalmed cleanliness fills the air.

However the heroes got there, Lilith is imprisoned along with them, having been captured trying to rescue them. Despite their defeat, she was impressed enough with their abilities to seek their aid in sabotaging a cosmic-energy device purportedly here on the island. She is more than willing to answer any questions the heroes have about where they are, what happened to the world, and the like.

The cell door (hardness 11) has a thin slit in it, through which the characters can see into a narrow hallway. Abutting it is a block of holding cells, one of which (unbeknownst to them) contains a sedated Dr. Tomorrow.

A simple mechanical lock stands between the heroes and a jailbreak, and a successful DC 16 Disable jimmys it open. The door is also warded by a silent alarm, which takes a DC 20 Disable Device skill check to disarm. If activated, the alarm alerts a five-man squad of bored and inattentive Nazis (use the Soldier archetype in *M&M*, page 229). Otherwise, the guards are just sitting around waiting to get surprised and quickly subdued.

The heroes' devices and equipment were confiscated, and the current exact location of each item depends on its importance to the owner. If a character is severely hampered without his gear, it's found in possession of the Nazi guards who seized it as a souvenir. Gamemasters wanting to challenge their players can put their gadgets elsewhere on the island, perhaps under investigation by Nazi scientists. The characters then must decide what their priorities are—finding the bomb, or their stuff.

## THE FOE'S HAUGHTY HOST

Whether they came in with the mail or busted out of jail, the heroes next find themselves inside a gray circular structure about the size of a large warehouse. Beneath the retractable dome roof, banks of supercomputers, monitors and other scientific equipment line the walls, with ladders leading up to the similarly equipped catwalk levels ringing the interior. Under the catwalks are two sets of sliding metal doors, one leading outside and the other to the rest of the Space Control Center (including the holding cells the characters may have just escaped).

Dominating the building's interior is a huge, red-black sphere connected via cables to various scientific instruments along the walls. The sphere pulses with a weird, crimson energy which makes the air itself crackle.

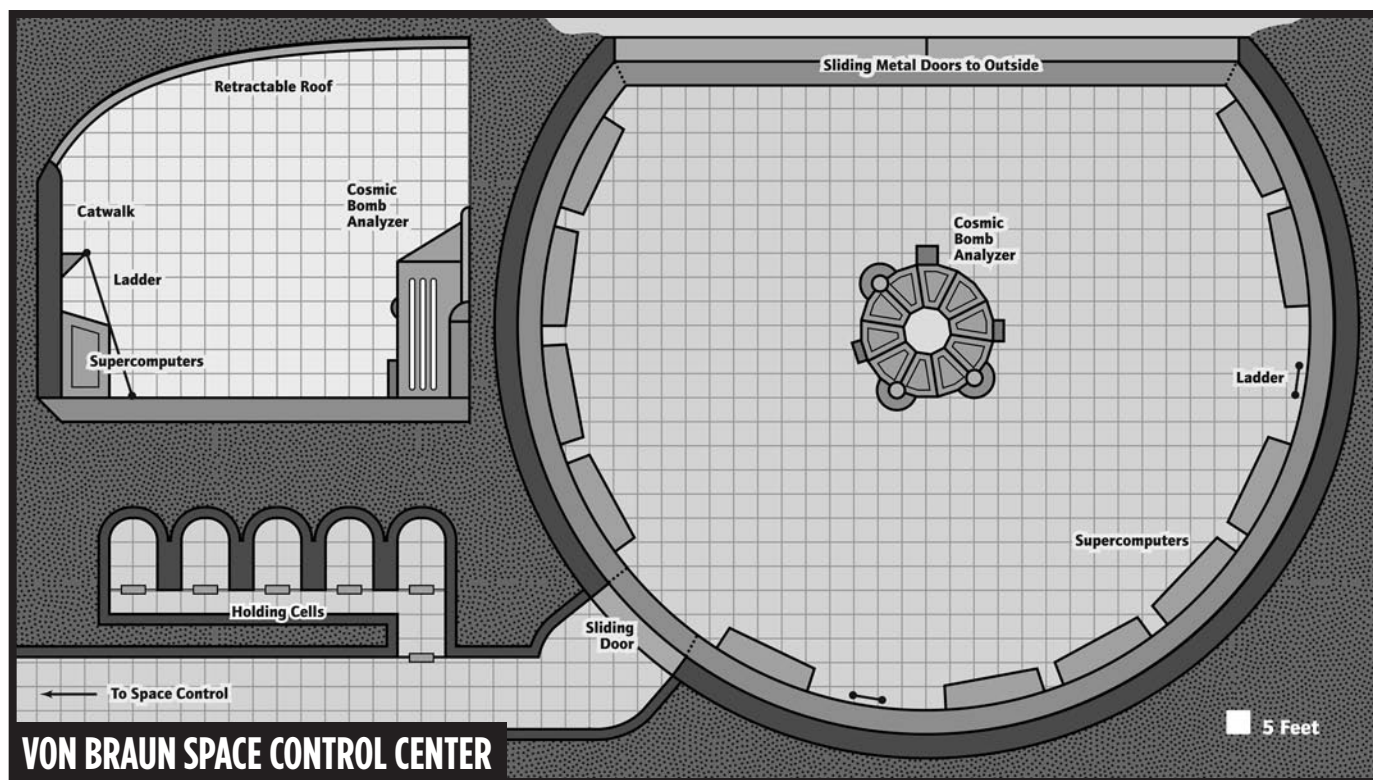
Before the heroes investigate further, a bald, middle-aged man in a white lab coat addresses them in a severe German accent. With all the sinister he can muster, he snarls "*Güten tag, herr Amerikaners. I am Doktor Wilhelm Rolf, und ve have been expectink you.*"

"Ve antizipated ze terrorizts in ze rezistance vould strike againz our Cozmick Energy Generator, zo ve had you delivered here, to give you von look at it, before *der Übermenschen kill you!*" A team of superhuman Nazis then appears behind the Doktor, and the fighting begins.

## THE PERILOUS FIGHT

During the battle, Lilith knows she's out of her league fighting superhumans, so she quickly relieves an intruding guard of his submachine gun and takes cover behind a sliding metal door. From there she periodically fires out into the hallway to prevent Nazi reinforcements from joining in. This keeps her relatively safe during the fight, and if the characters hose





things up, leaves her able to free Dr. Tomorrow from his cell (see **The Bombs Bursting in Air**, below).

Dr. Rolf is content to stand back and watch the anticipated slaughter, his confidence stemming from the fact Omega chose him to be the cosmic-energy bomb's "guardian" on *Erde*. Rolf totally buys Omega's promise to unlock the device's secrets for him, making him custodian of an unlimited power source that will make the Reich invincible. His arrogance simply won't allow him to believe the characters have any chance of changing this "destiny."

Though the Reich is uncertain what the sphere actually does, its potential is enough to have a squad of superhumans stand watch over it, an elite team known as *der Übermensch* ("the Overmen"). *Der Übermensch* aim to finish the fight the best way they know how: take the heroes down fast and hard with the most devastating attacks practicable.

All walls and building materials have hardness ratings of 10; hardness 14 for the holding cell walls. The sphere is completely impervious to any and all forces directed at it, but the Gamemaster should describe to the players each errant shot striking it. Every impact on the cosmic-energy bomb triggers a scary (but ultimately harmless) energy discharge, just to keep the heroes nervous and focused on their ultimate goal.

## DER ÜBERMENSCHEN (THE OVERMEN)

On *Erde*, all those with superhuman abilities get conscripted by the Axis powers, and 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 godlike than they really are.

*Der Übermensch* are unique among the various Nazi super-squads in that all members are native-born Americans. Pacifying the rebellious former U.S. has long been a goal of the Reich, and it sees *der Übermensch* as a twofold means to that end. On one hand, the team is an inspirational symbol urging their fellow Americans to collaborate and share in the Nazis' power and glory. At the same time, the media unflinchingly show the horrible wrath *der Übermensch* inflicts on the Reich's enemies, terrifying any would-be rebels into submission. *Der Übermensch* are firmly committed to their assigned tasks, eager to prove their loyalty and worth to the Reich.

## DER EULE (THE OWL—ERDE VERSION)

All the men of Howell Heflin's family gave either their lives or limbs defending America from the Axis invasion. Even after the Reich's triumph, his father raised him to be an all-American boy. Howell couldn't have turned out any differently.

His family's stories about a dead, loser country did nothing to pique young Howell's interest. Only the wide Alabama skies seemed to inspire him at all—skies now belonging to the Nazis. Whether it was the streaking *Luftwaffe* jets passing over his house, or the Reich landing the first man on Mars, he saw only Nazis escaping the surly bonds of *Erde*.

After Howell discovered his mutant telekinetic powers, he denounced his family as traitors to the Reich and volunteered for the *Luftwaffe*. Like his ancestors, he proved to be an elite warrior, one whose fanaticism surprised even his superiors. During training his telekinetic power showed its versatility, boosting his strength and allowing him to fly.

In recognition of his abilities and devotion, the Reich awarded him his Talon Gauntlets and the codename *der Eule*, used by Nazi agent Hans Graumach during World War II. Like his predecessor, *der Eule* is a bird of prey serving the Reich no matter what brutal things it asks of him, so long as it allows the skies to be his domain.

*Appearance:* See illustration on page 18.

## DIE GEIST (THE GHOST)

Carol Braun's scientist parents dedicated themselves to perfecting atomic energy for the greater glory of Nazism. Since her mother and father both spent long periods of time near radioactive materials, the Reich closely watched Carol for any signs of useful mutant abilities.

As fate decreed, Carol's powers didn't manifest until a severe trauma drove them to the fore. She awoke one night as a massive explosion leveled the entire University of Chicago campus where her family lived and worked. Carol had but an instant to cry for help as her house came down around her. To her shock and surprise, the rubble and flames passed through her body harmlessly.

The Reich immediately deduced Carol's survival was due to emergent mutant powers, and steps were taken to ensure she'd always use them in its service. She was told a bomb planted by the American Resistance killed her parents, and at that moment Carol's soul died with them. All that remained were her hurt and rage, and Carol directed them toward a single goal: bloody vengeance upon her parents' murderers.

She fanatically trained herself to peak physical condition, mastering hand-to-hand fighting as well as her powers. Carol also learned to focus the force of her now utterly ruthless personality, inspiring terror as great as her physical beauty. She ultimately transformed herself into a vengeful spectre, and now few inspire more abject fear in the Reich's enemies than *die Geist*.

*Appearance:* *Die Geist* is a beautiful, terrifying athletic young woman in skintight white body-suit, covering her from head to toe.

## GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

David Beasley had it all—good looks, charm, a high-ranking position in the Propaganda Ministry, and a clean Gestapo file—until his latent mutant power manifested. Thereafter, any solid object touching his skin causes a powerful explosion, and despite all efforts Beasley can't shut this ability off.

Despondent, he turned his power on himself, only to find himself immune. Only the Reich's intervention prevented him from ending his life some other way, and it did so by promising a cure in exchange for his joining *der Übermenschen*. Beasley agreed, and Nazi scientists soon perfected a non-reactive substance from which his distinctive uniform is fashioned.

This discovery allows Beasley a semblance of a normal life, but his lethally supercharged body still bars him from most human contact, making him a remorseful, joyless individual. His despair only deepened when he learned his close friend Elissa Carey joined the resistance after his forced isolation. He'd always wanted to be more than just friends, but now she was out of his life for good.

Now doomed to be an enemy of the person he cares for most, Beasley morosely chose the Norse apocalypse *Götterdämmerung* as his codename. With nowhere else to turn, Beasley simply does as the Reich commands, incapable of feeling anything but his own overriding sense of sadness and loss.

*Appearance:* *Götterdämmerung's* field-gray costume resembles a hazmat suit, with only his sad eyes visible. When the gloves come off (to use his powers), his hands glow a greenish yellow.

## DER HAND DES TODES (THE HAND OF DEATH)

Even a world as cruel and debased as *Erde* has little room for true psychopaths, and a homicidal maniac like Roy Barnes would certainly have experienced the Reich's swift "justice" had not his mutant abilities appeared first. Given his psyche and shrinking powers, the Reich trained Barnes as a commando and an assassin, capable of killing anyone, anywhere, at any time. The demise of anyone he targeted became so certain Barnes was given the codename *der Hand des Todes*, the Hand of Death itself.

*Der Übermenschen* are cold-blooded killers, excepting Barnes who truly enjoys the act of murder. He kills with a sick glee and maniacal determination that chills even his teammates. Only fear of the Reich's reprisals keep his homicidal tendencies in check to any degree, and even then no one who knows him ever turns their back on him.

*Appearance:* *Der Hand des Todes* wears ninja-like, loose black clothing. His mask does not hide the scary-mad intensity of his stare.

## DER EULE (THE OWL—ERDE VERSION)

PL 10

Str 24    Dex 22    Con 20    Int 16    Wis 20    Cha 16

**Skills:** Acrobatics 3 (+9), Language (German), Notice 6 (+11), Survival 6 (+11)

**Feats:** Acrobatic Bluff, All-out Attack, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Diehard, Dodge Focus 3, Elusive Target, Evasion, Favored Environment (aerial) 2, Improved Block, Improved Initiative, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Takedown Attack, Track

**Powers:** **Device 4** (Talon Gauntlets, hard to lose), **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Telekinesis 6** (1,600 lbs.; Perception)

*Talon Gauntlets:* **Blast 8, Strike 3** (Mighty)

**Combat:** Attack +8, Grapple +15, Damage +8 (Blast), +10 (Strike), Defense +11 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +10

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +8 (+5 flat-footed), Fortitude +6, Reflex +7, Will +6

**Abilities 58 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 46 + Combat 32 + Saves 3 = Total 163**

## DIE GEIST (THE GHOST)

PL 10

Str 14    Dex 20    Con 18    Int 20    Wis 18    Cha 22

**Skills:** Bluff 4 (+10), Diplomacy 4 (+10), Intimidate 4 (+10), Knowledge (art) 4 (+9), Knowledge (physical sciences) 5 (+10), Language (English, French, Spanish) 3, Notice 8 (+12), Sense Motive 4 (+8), Stealth 8 (+13)

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee), Attractive 2, Connected, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Elusive Target, Endurance, Fearsome Presence 4, Improved Block, Power Attack, Takedown Attack

**Powers:** **Invisibility** (all visual senses; Close Range), **Insubstantial 4** (vulnerable to light-energy attacks), **Strike 10** (phasing attack; Affects Corporeal)

**Combat:** Attack +8 (melee), +7 (ranged), Grapple +10, Damage +10 (Strike), +2 (unarmed), Defense +10 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +5

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +7 (+4 flat-footed), Fortitude +5, Reflex +6, Will +5

**Abilities 52 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 21 + Powers 49 + Combat 28 + Saves 3 = Total 164**

## GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

PL 9

Str 20    Dex 20    Con 26    Int 16    Wis 18    Cha 18

**Skills:** Bluff 9 (+13), Computers 7 (+10), Intimidate 9 (+13), Language (English, French, Italian, Spanish) 4, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 7 (+10), Knowledge (current events) 7 (+10), Knowledge (history) 7 (+10), Knowledge (popular culture) 7 (+10), Profession (propagandist) 10 (+14), Sense Motive 9 (+13)

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll, Dodge Focus, Elusive Target, Improved Block, Improved Critical (Strike) 4, Power Attack, Takedown Attack 2

**Powers:** **Immunity 1** (own powers), **Strike 9** (Aura, Explosion Area; Permanent)

**Combat:** Attack +8, Grapple +13, Damage +9 (Strike), Defense +9, Knockback -4, Initiative +5

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +9 (+8 flat-footed), Fortitude +8, Reflex +6, Will +5

**Abilities 58 + Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 13 + Powers 19 + Combat 32 + Saves 2 = Total 143**



DER HAND DES TODES (THE HAND OF DEATH) PL 10					
Str 20	Dex 20	Con 18	Int 12	Wis 28	Cha 20
<b>Skills:</b> Acrobatics 3 (+8), Disable Device 9 (+10), Escape Artist 9 (+14), Intimidate 7 (+12), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+7), Language (German), Notice 9 (+18), Search 9 (+10), Stealth 9 (+14), Swim 6 (+11)					
<b>Feats:</b> Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Diehard, Dodge Focus 2, Fearless, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Block, Improved Critical (Strike) 3, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Power Attack, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Disable Device, Escape Artist, Notice, Stealth), Sneak Attack 3, Startle					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Device 5</b> (hard to lose, poisoned wrist-blades), <b>Shrinking 12</b> (diminutive; Growth Strike) <i>Poisoned wrist-blades:</i> <b>Drain Constitution 10</b> (Linked: Strike, Poison; Incurable, Slow Fade), <b>Strike 1</b> (Linked: Drain, Penetrating; Mighty)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +6, Grapple +11, Damage +6 (Strike), +5 (unarmed), Defense +12 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -3 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +5					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +6 (+4 flat-footed), Fortitude +5, Reflex +6, Will +9					
<b>Abilities 58 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 22 + Powers 33 + Combat 32 + Saves 2 = Total 164</b>					

## ÜBERMENSCH II (OVERMAN)

While Tomas Morgen turned against the Reich, other spawn of its eugenics programs fulfilled their preordained destiny as paragons of Nazism. Of them, none are more powerful, more charismatic, or more dedicated than SS *Sturmbannführer* Robert Inglis—a superman amongst the supermen. These qualities brought Inglis to the personal attention of *der Führer* himself, *Überlegen* (Superior).

Morgen joining the resistance inspired all the Reich's enemies, and Superior saw Inglis as an equal and opposite symbol, one who might finally end the American insurgency. Inglis already loathed Morgen maniacally, making him eager to fulfil his role as “the perfect American Aryan.”

Superior's faith in Inglis was so great he bestowed him with the codename *Übermensch*, which *der Führer* himself used during World War II. Soon after, Inglis was given command of *der Übermenschen*, which is named in his honor and obeys his every order without question.

*Der Übermenschen's* campaign to win the hearts and minds of their fellow Americans and eradicate the resistance has been very successful so far. If it continues, an ultimate honor awaits *Übermensch*: being named *Reichspräsident* of the National Socialist States of America.

In the meantime, Inglis' every thought, word and deed are dedicated to further glorifying the Reich. While he can be utterly charming at times, underneath it all is a ruthless man completely subsuming his own identity within the twisted ideals of National Socialism.

*Appearance:* *Übermensch* wears the standard SS officer's uniform, which highlights his close-cropped blonde hair and striking blue eyes.

## WEISSER RITTER (WHITE KNIGHT)

Much like his counterpart on Earth-Prime, *Erde's* version of Daniel Foreman grew up believing in racial superiority. Rather than becoming a social outcast like his Freedom City doppelganger, *Erde's* Foreman became a rising star in Arbeitstadt's Nazi Party hierarchy.

Foreman sought to prove his zeal for National Socialism by volunteering for a ritual aimed at “awakening the power in pure Aryan blood” presided over by the mystic *Herr Niedertracht*. Of the participants, Foreman alone developed superpowers, which he regarded as gifts from the fire god Loge. Foreman dubbed himself *der Weißer Ritter*, a divinely chosen crusader to purify *Erde* of “inferior races” with cleansing fire, and does so with religious fervor.

Unlike his teammates, *der Weißer Ritter* was not trained and educated for combat from childhood, growing up instead on the mean streets of Arbeitstadt. As a result, he lacks some of their sheer physical prowess, but

ÜBERMENSCH II (OVERMAN) PL 12					
Str 35	Dex 28	Con 32	Int 18	Wis 22	Cha 22
<b>Skills:</b> Craft (chemical) 7 (+11), Disable Device 7 (+11), Intimidate 7 (+13), Knowledge (tactics) 7 (+11), Notice 7 (+13), Profession (soldier) 7 (+13), Stealth 7 (+16), Survival 7 (+13)					
<b>Feats:</b> Attack Focus (melee) 2, Diehard, Dodge Focus 2, Fascinate (Intimidate), Fearsome Presence 7, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Initiative, Inspire 5, Leadership, Master Plan, Startle, Track, Uncanny Dodge (visual)					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Leaping 5</b> (x50 distance), <b>Speed 4</b> (100 MPH), <b>Super-Strength 5</b> (50 tons)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +12 (melee), +10 (ranged), Grapple +29, Damage +12 (unarmed), Defense +11 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -5, Initiative +13					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +11, Fortitude +11, Reflex +9, Will +7					
<b>Abilities 97 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 25 + Powers 19 + Combat 38 + Saves 1 = Total 194</b>					

WEISSER RITTER (WHITE KNIGHT) PL 11					
Str 26/16	Dex 13	Con 16	Int 10	Wis 13	Cha 14
<b>Skills:</b> Intimidate 8 (+10), Notice 4 (+5), Sense Motive 6 (+7), Survival 6 (+7)					
<b>Feats:</b> All-out Attack, Attack Specialization (blast), Minions 6 (up to 25 thugs, <i>M&amp;M</i> , page 229), Power Attack, Sneak Attack					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Enhanced Strength 10</b> , <b>Fire Control 11</b> (Alternate Powers: <b>Blast 7</b> [Area Burst], <b>Dazzle 11</b> [visual]), <b>Flight 4</b> (100 MPH), <b>Protection 9</b> , <b>Strike 11</b> (fire, Aura), <b>Super-Strength 4</b> (heavy load: 6 tons)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +8 (normal), +10 (blast), Grapple +21, Damage +8 (unarmed), +11 (blast), Defense +10, Knockback -6, Initiative +1					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +12, Fortitude +7, Reflex +4, Will +8					
<b>Abilities 22 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 81 + Combat 36 + Saves 14 = Total 169</b>					

commands the loyalty and respect of rank-and-file Nazi Party members (like his Minions) in ways his comrades cannot. (Gamemaster Note: *der Weißer Ritter* is cut off from his Minions while on Von Braun Island.)

*Appearance:* *Der Weißer Ritter* wears a white hood and tabard emblazoned with a black swastika over his khaki cargo pants and black combat boots.

## THE BOMBS BURSTING IN AIR

If the player characters are getting pestered by *der Übermenschen*, the Gamemaster can have Lilith discover Dr. Tomorrow in his holding cell. She then retrieves his devices and frees him in time to be the cavalry for the embattled heroes. Lilith can also distract *Götterdämmerung* if he catches sight of her. Overcome with remorse over his lost love, he stops whatever he's doing long enough for the heroes to catch a much-needed break.

Should all else fail and the good guys lose to *der Übermenschen*, the Nazis are surprised as the fallen heroes disappear. *Erde* fades as a pure white light engulfs the characters. Inside the light, the heroes see the Norn weeping over their failure and then witness *Erde's* explosive destruction. As the planet burns and disintegrates, the Norn says, “We can still hope for success on the other Earths. Perhaps that will be enough to avert the total cataclysm.”

## WHAT SO PROUDLY WE HAILED

In the happier outcome, *der Übermenschen* fight to the very last but eventually fall before the heroes' righteous might. All the characters have to do then is figure out how to switch off the massive cosmic-energy bomb, and they can punch out for the day.

Defusing the bomb requires a skill check with either Craft (mechanical) (DC 25) or Disable Device (DC 30), and success causes the bomb to stop glowing. If a character's check exceeds its target by 5 or more, he gains an important insight into the device's design. The bomb's detonator is a sort of "cosmic energy lightning rod" and if removed completely disarms the device. Thus, taking the rod guarantees no one can rearm the bomb in the heroes' absence. The detonator is easily portable, being only about ten inches long and an inch in diameter.

If no characters have the skills required to defuse the bomb (or choose not to use them, for whatever reason), help is closer than they think. Locked in a holding cell just down the hall from the cosmic-energy bomb is none other than Dr. Tomorrow himself. The Nazis have been torturing him in the vain hope of forcing him to unlock the secrets of the sphere with his prodigious intellect.

Dr. Rolf, if threatened, quickly divulges Dr. Tomorrow's whereabouts. Failing all else, Lilith can conduct a post-battle sweep of the area and find the imprisoned hero. If Dr. Tomorrow's skill check is good enough to give him the aforementioned insight about the cosmic detonator component, he makes it a point to give that knowledge (and the detonator itself) to the characters.

## DR. TOMORROW

The hero known as Dr. Tomorrow first appeared in Freedom City—seemingly from nowhere—the day after the Pearl Harbor attack. He soon became world famous as the leader of the legendary Liberty League, but only a select few knew he came from an alternate future where the Axis powers conquered the world.

Born Tomas Morgen, he was bred to be the genetically perfect Aryan and raised as a "poster boy" of the victorious Third Reich. However, Morgen joined the American Resistance after learning the truth about the Reich's atrocities. Later, Morgen stole an experimental time-travel device from a Nazi lab and used it to go back into the past in order to prevent the Axis from winning World War II.

As Dr. Tomorrow, Morgen played an invaluable role in the Allied powers' victory. He then returned to 2002, only to find things wholly

unchanged from when he left it. In truth, the past he visited was that of Earth-Prime, not his native *Erde*. The time machine had burnt itself out, and with no other means of escape, Morgen was taken captive by the Nazi forces in Arbeitstadt.

Though his captors don't suspect it, Morgen planned for the possibility his attempt at altering the timeline might fail. Before leaving Earth-Prime, he developed noburpolene, a chemical formula capable of turning the situation on *Erde* to the resistance's favor. Despite torture and imprisonment, he clings to the hope he may gain his freedom and the opportunity to use his secret weapon.

## THE LAST CRUSADE

After the cosmic-energy bomb has been defused and Dr. Tomorrow freed, the weary but unbowed living legend of World War II makes a determined path to the characters. He thanks each of them and says, "You just saved the world. Now *Erde*—Earth—has a chance to be free."

The good guys' thoughts likely turn to escaping Von Braun Island sooner or later, and Dr. Tomorrow verbalizes this need if the characters don't. Once this course is agreed upon, the sound of heavy gunfire from the down the hall suggests more prudent exits lie elsewhere.

If the heroes wisely choose to follow Dr. Tomorrow and Lilith, they lead the heroes outside through the sliding metal doors, where they spot a Me 619 squadron approaching from the horizon. Before anyone else can react, Dr. Tomorrow stops in his tracks and concentrates on the metal monsters. One by one they begin crashing into the water, the ground, or each other. Dr. Tomorrow stands silent for a long moment afterwards, then finally utters, "It works. *Mein Gott, it works!*"

Before the heroes ask, Tomorrow turns and enthusiastically tells them, "My noburpolene formula works!" He explains the Nazis' war machines are piloted by disembodied brains, all conditioned against resisting orders. The noburpolene he developed and imbibed just before leaving the year 1945 (mere days ago, from his perspective) provides a sort of telepathic boost. It's insufficient to affect another ordinary human being, but more than enough to make puppets of the Nazi war machines.

"Once I make more noburpolene for the resistance, we'll turn the Reich's own weapons against it and set this world free," says Tomorrow, "and we have you heroes to thank for it." Coming from a man who sacrificed so much to prevent the nightmare of *Erde* from becoming a reality on Earth-Prime, that is high praise indeed.

Dr. Tomorrow continues, "Even with the noburpolene, we could use heroes of your caliber. Will you stay and join the fight for freedom?" Before they reply, the characters' surroundings slowly fade from view. Dr. Tomorrow seems to recognize what's happening, and Lilith and he bid the heroes a fond farewell as they disappear en route to their next destination.

## AWARDING POWER POINTS

Depending on their degree of success against the Nazis, the Gamemaster should award each character from 0 to 2 power points. Losing to *der Übermensch* and causing the destruction of *Erde* puts the reward in the 0-1 point range, while winning is worth 1-2 points.

The Norn heals any lingering injuries the characters have before the next chapter commences. As an added bonus, the Gamemaster can have the Norn resurrect any characters killed on *Erde*, again plucking them from the time-stream just before their deaths. Risen heroes receive no power points for this chapter, unless they sacrificed themselves for the greater good (Gamemaster's call). Of course, the Gamemaster can just opt to let dead heroes lie, and explain the sudden appearance of any replacement characters as "reinforcements" pulled from the past by the Norn.

In any event, the Norn makes it clear such extraordinary help is by its very nature limited, and she may or may not be able to grant any more such favors. This may be a bluff on the Gamemaster's part, but it should serve to make the players warier in the future.

### DR. TOMORROW

PL 8

**Str 18** | **Dex 18** | **Con 18** | **Int 24** | **Wis 24** | **Cha 24**

**Skills:** Bluff 4 (+11), Climb 4 (+8), Computers 8 (+15), Concentration 7 (+14), Diplomacy 6 (+13), Disable Device 8 (+15), Drive 8 (+12), Escape Artist 8 (+12), Investigate 8 (+15), Knowledge (history) 9 (+16), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+15), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+15), Language 5 (French, German, Japanese, Latin, Russian), Medicine 4 (+11), Notice 5 (+12), Pilot 8 (+12), Ride 4 (+8), Sense Motive 8 (+15), Stealth 8 (+12), Survival 4 (+11), Swim 4 (+8)

**Feats:** Assessment, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 2, Eidetic Memory, Elusive Target, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Inspire, Inventor, Jack of All Trades, Leadership, Precise Shot, Quick Draw

**Powers:** **Device 1** (ray gun, easy to lose), **Device 3** (jet-pack and space suit, hard to lose)

*Ray Gun:* **Blast 5**

*Jet Pack:* **Flight 3** (50 MPH)

*Space Suit:* **Immunity 9** (life support)

**Combat:** Attack +11, Grapple +15, Damage +4 (unarmed), +5 (ray gun), Defense +10 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -3, Initiative +8

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +6 (+4 flat-footed), Fortitude +7, Reflex +10, Will +10

(Note these statistics reflect Dr. Tomorrow's abilities before he became a Guardian of Time, as detailed in the *Freedom City* sourcebook.)

**Abilities 66 + Skills 34 (136 ranks) + Feats 16 + Powers 15 + Combat 38 + Saves 12 = Total 181**

# CHAPTER THREE: MONKEY PLANET

**A**fter the omnipresent gloom of *Erde*, the next world the heroes materialize on is several magnitudes more pleasant. They materialize in an alley inside an exceptionally clean and tidy urbanized area. The sun shines brightly in a clear blue sky, forming a halo around three tall buildings. They appear to be Freedom City's most famous landmark, the Pyramid Plaza, and the large Stars & Stripes flying atop them seems to confirm its identity.

Yeah, looks like the heroes won't be dealing with any freaky, "History has *gone wrong* here!" sort of scenes. This time, all they have to do is explain their mission to the friendly natives, and everything is put right in time for brunch. However, when the heroes startle a talking gorilla in a police uniform passing by the alley, they realize the Norn has deposited them on Earth-Ape.

## IT'S A MADHOUSE— A MADHOUSE!

Before the heroes react, the shaken gorilla cop reflexively shouts, "What—what're you?!" in colloquial American English, then frantically calls for back-up. He slowly backs away from the characters, and if they make any sudden moves, he draws a futuristic-looking weapon and orders, "Don't move, you—you freaks!"

A group of onlookers gathers behind the nervous gendarme, and characters looking its way notices the crowd is made up of English-speaking, contemporarily dressed, human-sized apes of all kinds: gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, and more. They appear every bit as horrified by the characters as the gorilla cop, and alternately point, yell, scream, or tend to several

swooning women (or monkeys wearing make-up and dresses, at least).

## TAKE YOUR STINKING PAWS OFF ME

At this point, the assembled apes are far too terrified of the heroes to listen to anything they say, and react to even the most benevolent of gestures as if they were mortal threats. Shortly before the characters panic the gorilla cop into shooting (or events reach a stand-off), several siren-blaring black panel trucks emblazoned with "Simian City Police Department—STAR Squad" race onto the scene. Once they stop, a number of gorillas in riot gear begin filing out to establish a cordon.

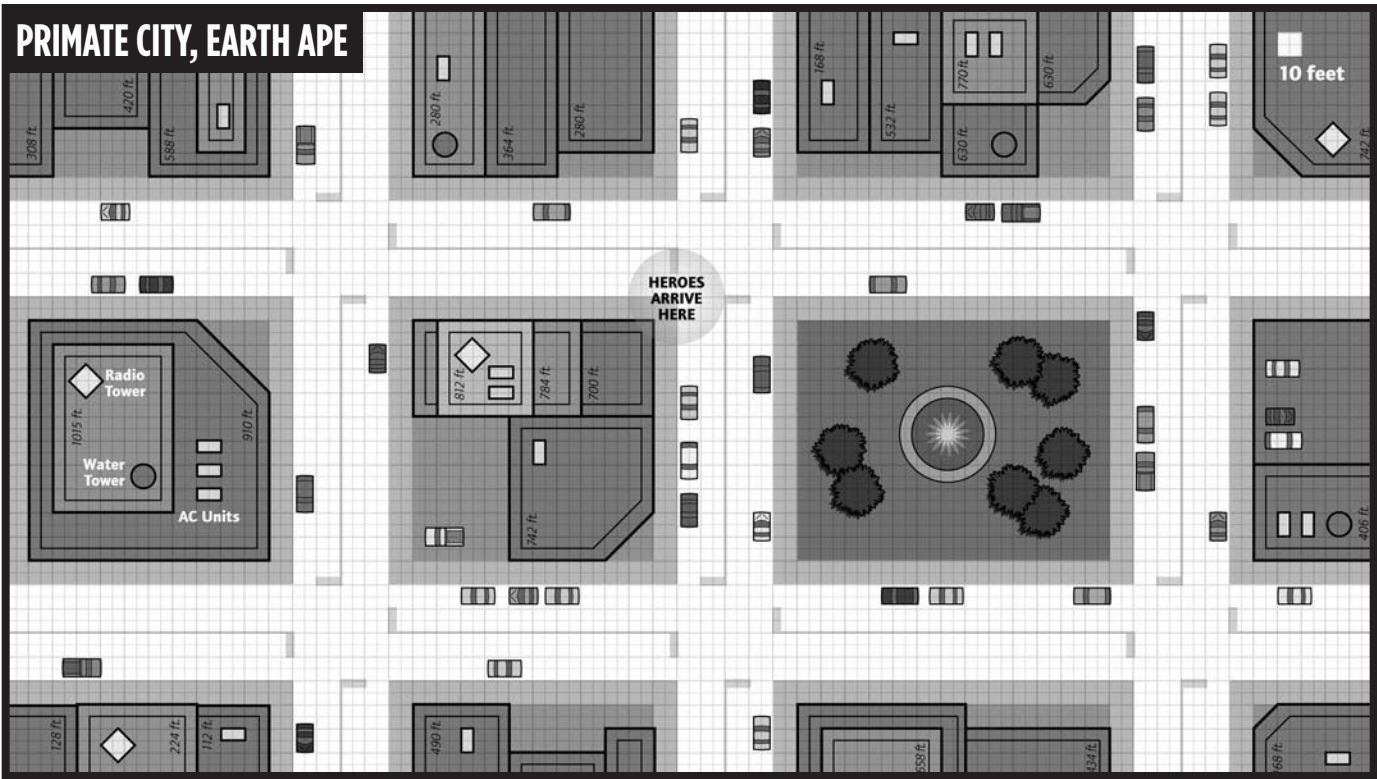
Whether shots were exchanged or not, the first policeape points at the heroes and yells, "Get them! They're some kind of *monsters!*" Following that recommendation, the gorillas in riot gear open fire on the heroes.

Two policeapes are present for each character, and they continue trying to apprehend the heroes until one of the following events occurs. First, if the policeapes subdue the characters, or the heroes surrender peacefully, they are taken into custody and events proceed to **See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil** below. The characters might convince the Hostile gorilla cops of their good nature, but since human physical appearance is highly disturbing to the apes, all Diplomacy skill checks are made with a -4 penalty.

Second, if the characters defeat the policeapes, the horrified onlookers panic and flee the scene. The Primate Patrol intervenes before events get further out of paw, as described in **Ape and Super-Ape** below.

The last (and best) possibility involves the characters demonstrating their goodness with a selfless act of heroism during the battle. One stray shot is all it takes to send a pile of rubble crashing down towards a frightened ape mother and child, and the Gamemaster should give the characters every opportunity to get the innocent bystanders out of harm's way (if they fail to take it, they oughta turn in their capes & cowls). Once





the crowd sees the characters' good deed, a moment of stunned silence passes before they begin cheering the now beloved heroes. After this, the public and police response to the characters improves, and some even look past their "obvious deformities."

In the unlikely event one of the player characters looks like (or is) a simian, the policeapes assume he's a supervillain leading a gang of hairless mutant henchmen. Events proceed as described, although the monkey heroes have an easier time explaining themselves since they don't suffer the -4 penalty to Diplomacy skill checks.

### SIMIEN CITY STAR SQUAD POLICEAPES

Simian City's Finest know full well they walk the strangest beats a cop can be assigned. From the moment they first pick up their badges, its members are on the lookout for the weird and unusual, especially costumed

supervillains. The PCPD has been on edge ever since Omega attacked the city a few years ago, leading an army of hideous extra-dimensional creatures to wreak havoc on the city it's sworn to protect.

Therefore, it's only natural when creatures as disgustingly ugly as the characters (to ape eyes, anyway) appear out of nowhere, the PCPD assumes the worst and responds as if another full-scale invasion is on. Despite this, they are still policeapes, and they work to capture the characters with non-lethal force, protecting innocent bystanders as much as possible.

## APE AND SUPER-APE

Before the confrontation between the heroes and the police explodes into full-scale war, an amplified voice from the sky, pleading yet authoritative, demands the violence stop immediately. Even if the characters don't comply, the police do. The officers immediately stop firing and carry any wounded behind their established cordon. By the time the characters look up, the crowd is already cheering its hearts out to welcome the city's greatest heroes—the Primate Patrol.

The Patrol is fully apprised of the preceding events and is more than willing to give the characters the benefit of the doubt. Dr. Simian, the Patrol's leader, welcomes the characters to Simian City on behalf of the entire United Apes of America. After that, Simian listens for as long as the characters talk. If the humans try impressing Simian and his team with their gifts of gab, the Patrol is considered Indifferent on the Interaction table. If the characters won the crowd over by performing a heroic act—something Dr. Simian is quick to praise—the caped apes are friendly. The broad-minded Patrol members do not find the characters hideous, so the humans' Diplomacy skill checks are not penalized.

If the characters explain their current, reality-saving mission and request the Patrol's help, Dr. Simian advises them the best course of action is consulting with the local authorities. Simian is politely adamant about this, and arranges an immediate meeting with the city fathers within the hour, which is dramatized in **See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil**.

SIMIEN CITY STAR SQUAD POLICEAPES						PL 5
Str 14	Dex 14	Con 14	Int 10	Wis 12	Cha 10	
<b>Skills:</b> Climb 3 (+5), Drive 2 (+4), Intimidate 5 (+5), Investigate 2 (+2), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+2), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+4), Knowledge (tactics) 5 (+5), Medicine 2 (+3), Notice 4 (+5), Profession (police officer) 4 (+5), Sense Motive 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+6), Swim 3 (+5)						
<b>Feats:</b> Accurate Attack, Defensive Attack, Equipment 7, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Precise Shot 2, Stunning Attack						
<b>Equipment:</b> Armored jumpsuit (+3 Toughness), binoculars, blaster pistol (+5 damage), commlink, handcuffs, night vision goggles, tear gas grenade						
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +5, Grapple +7, Damage +5 (blaster pistol), +2 (unarmed), Defense +5, Knockback -2, Initiative +2						
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +5 (+2 without armored jumpsuit), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +3						
<b>Abilities 14 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 16 + Combat 20 + Saves 6 = Total 67</b>						

## WHERE APES EVOLVED FROM MAN

Earth-Ape is like Earth-Prime in most respects. Its residents represent many different creeds, but 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 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 superpowered 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.

The characters appear in one of the United Apes of America's leading metropolitan areas, Simian City. Its geography and general layout are identical to Freedom City; only the names and hirsuteness of its inhabitants have changed.

## DISCIPLINING THE MONKEY

Most Patrol members are unknown to the characters, but they recognize Dr. Simian if they succeed at a DC 10 Knowledge (current events) skill check. Success indicates at least a passing familiarity with Simian's doppelganger on Earth-Prime, a well-known supervillain and member of the notorious Crime League.

While the characters' own reception on Earth-Ape should teach them about judging others based on appearances, they may assume this Dr. Simian is an arch-villain and attack him. This is especially true if they beat the DC to recognize him by 5 or more and are aware of Earth-Prime Dr. Simian's past attempts to turn all humans into apes.

If a fight breaks out, the Primate Patrol does everything in its power to persuade the characters to cease hostilities. The Gamemaster should point out how the Patrol continues asking for a peaceful dialogue even after the characters' aggression, and its members take only defensive actions. If the alleged heroes persist despite the copious hints, the Patrol eventually fights back with a vengeance, along with as many policeapes as it takes to deliver the beating the characters so richly deserve. Events proceed to **See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil** from here.

## THE PRIMATE PATROL

On Earth-Ape, the Primate Patrol is the most famous superhero team of them all, comparable to the Freedom League on the characters' home world. The current Patrol formed back in 1994, and in the years since has more than fulfilled its mission to fight injustice and protect apekind, despite the best efforts of Earth-Ape's worst supervillains.

The Patrol emphasizes teamwork and trains together extensively, constantly devising better ways of combining their abilities while in combat. In a fight, Brainiape and Dr. Simian keep to the rear. The former uses his powers to frustrate the opposition's actions, and the latter studies the enemy for weaknesses his array of super-scientific gadgets can exploit. By contrast, Iron Monkey and Chimpanzoom are up-front fighters, taking on the toughest opponents toe-to-toe and counting on their powers to protect them from harm. Elastigibbon and Metamorph, on the other paw, take a stealthier approach, using their abilities to strike when foes least expect it.

### BRAINIAPE

From an early age, Virgil knew he wasn't like other orangutans. He often heard what his schoolmates were thinking, and when the bigger apes picked on him, he could make them let him alone just by thinking it. For years, these strange abilities frightened the young anthropoid, until he heard the first media reports of Chimpanzoom's debut as a superhero.

Inspired by Chimpanzoom's example, Virgil vowed to use his powers helping all apekind, and devised his own costumed identity as Brainiape. He soon developed quite a reputation as a crime-fighter, and when the Primate Patrol was first organized, Brainiape was a consensus choice for recruitment. While Brainiape is on good terms with all his teammates, he feels especially grateful to Dr. Simian for helping him master his mental powers and furthering his inquiries into the mysteries of the simian mind.

### BRAINIAPE

**PL 10**

Str 14	Dex 12	Con 12	Int 20	Wis 24	Cha 18
<b>Skills:</b> Climb 3 (+5), Concentration 10 (+17), Diplomacy 5 (+9), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 6 (+11), Notice 10 (+17), Sense Motive 10 (+17)					
<b>Feats:</b> Dodge Focus 2, Eidetic Memory, Ultimate Save (Will)					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Comprehend 2</b> (speak and understand all languages), <b>Flight 3</b> (50 MPH; Levitation), <b>Force Field 10</b> (Impervious), <b>Mind Shield 6</b> , <b>Super-Senses 2</b> (low-light vision, scent), <b>Telekinesis 10</b> (12 tons; Perception; Precise), <b>Telepathy 10</b> (Alternate Powers: <b>Illusion 10</b> [all senses; Limited: one subject, Phantasms], <b>Mental Blast 5</b> , <b>Mind Control 10</b> , <b>Stun 5</b> [Perception Range])					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +0, Grapple +2, Damage +5 (Mental Blast), +2 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -0 (-10 with Force Field), Initiative +1					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +11 (+1 without Force Field), Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +14					
<b>Abilities 40 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 90 + Combat 14 + Saves 5 = Total 164</b>					

### CHIMPANZOOM

**PL 10**

Str 18	Dex 24	Con 22	Int 12	Wis 12	Cha 18
<b>Skills:</b> Bluff 5 (+9), Diplomacy 5 (+9), Drive 9 (+16), Gather Information 5 (+9), Intimidate 5 (+9), Knowledge (physical sciences) 3 (+4)					
<b>Feats:</b> Beginner's Luck, Connected, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 3, Elusive Target, Evasion, Instant Up, Move-by Action, Quick Change					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Super-Senses 2</b> (low-light vision, scent), <b>Super-Speed 10</b> (Rapid Attack, Rapid Fire, Wall Run, Water Run, Alternate Powers: <b>Air Control 10</b> , <b>Blast 6</b> [sonic boom; Explosion Area, Linked: Dazzle; Touch Range], <b>Dazzle 8</b> [sonic boom, auditory; Explosion Area, Linked: Blast; Touch Range], <b>Deflect 10</b> [slow and fast projectiles], <b>Nauseate 10</b> [spin attack], <b>Spinning 10</b> , <b>Strike 10</b> , <b>Stun 10</b> , <b>Suffocate 10</b> )					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +7, Grapple +11, Damage +10 (Strike), +4 (unarmed), Defense +10 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-3 flat-footed), Initiative +47					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +9 (+6 flat-footed), Fortitude +7, Reflex +10, Will +3					
<b>Abilities 46 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 13 + Powers 63 + Combat 28 + Saves 6 = Total 164</b>					

### CHIMPANZOOM

Lucius' reputation as the greatest daredevil stunt-driver who ever lived was already firmly cemented into the public mind. His legend grew even larger after he announced his most death-defying feat yet: driving an experimental prototype vehicle designed by famed scientific genius Dr. Simian to a new world land-speed record. No one's quite sure just how fast Lucius traveled on that fateful day, but he was finally found a week



**DR. SIMIAN****PL 13**

Str 21	Dex 15	Con 14	Int 34	Wis 28	Cha 17
<b>Skills:</b> Acrobatics 5 (+7), Climb 13 (+14), Craft (electronic) 8 (+20), Craft (mechanical) 8 (+20), Intimidate 6 (+9), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+20), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+20), Notice 4 (+13), Sense Motive 4 (+13)					
<b>Feats:</b> Acrobatic Bluff, Eidetic Memory, Improved Pin, Leadership, Power Attack					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Device 13</b> (hover chair, hard to lose), <b>Growth 4</b> (Permanent, Innate), <b>Protection 3</b> , <b>Super-Senses 2</b> (low-light vision, scent) <i>Hover Chair:</i> <b>Blast 12</b> (Split Attack), <b>Datalink 7</b> , <b>Flight 4</b> , <b>Force Field 12</b> (Impervious 6), <b>Mind Shield 7</b>					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +11 (includes -1 size), Grapple +20, Damage +5 (unarmed), +12 (blasters), Defense +9 (includes -1 size), Knockback -11/-2, Initiative +2					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +17 (+5 without force field), Fortitude +8, Reflex +8, Will +10					
<b>Abilities 61 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 70 + Combat 44 + Saves 13 = Total 209</b>					

**ELASTIGIBBON****PL 12**

Str 16	Dex 20	Con 20	Int 18	Wis 20	Cha 18
<b>Skills:</b> Bluff 5 (+9), Climb 4 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 7 (+11), Knowledge (popular culture) 7 (+11), Notice 6 (+11), Perform (comedy) 7 (+11)					
<b>Feats:</b> Chokehold, Distract (Bluff), Dodge Focus 3, Fascinate (Perform), Grappling Finesse, Improved Block, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Improved Throw, Improved Trip, Interpose, Set-Up, Taunt, Weapon Bind					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Elongation 7</b> (500'), <b>Growth 12</b> (gargantuan; Growth Strike, Alternate Power: <b>Shrinking 12</b> [diminutive]), <b>Sonic Control 6</b> (gibbon song, Alternate Power: <b>Obscure 12</b> [auditory]), <b>Super-Movement 1</b> (swinging), <b>Super-Senses 2</b> (low-light vision, scent)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +10, Grapple +20, Damage +3 (unarmed), Defense +14 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +5					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +5, Fortitude +6, Reflex +6, Will +6					
<b>Abilities 52 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 18 + Powers 62 + Combat 42 + Saves 3 = Total 186</b>					

later and hundreds of miles away in the middle of an old atomic proving ground. He was now a very different chimpanzee.

Whatever strange forces Lucius was exposed to gave him the ability to move at speeds undreamt of by apekind. His awesome newfound abilities instilled Lucius with a greater sense of purpose, and compelled him to use his gifts for the good of all. Though he kept the colorful costumes of his stunt driving days, Lucius renamed himself in recognition of his new mission and abilities. He was no longer just a chimpanzee, he was Chimpanzoom, the Fastest Ape Alive!

Dr. Simian trained Chimpanzoom to use his powers, and as a duo fought crime before organizing the Primate Patrol. Though he still defers to Simian's judgment on most matters, as one of the first super-apes Chimpanzoom commands a great deal of public fascination, perhaps even more so than the publicity-shy Doctor.

**DR. SIMIAN**

Earth-Ape hails Dr. Simian as its greatest scientific genius and philanthropist. His many inventions (mass produced by his company, ASTRO Labs) improve the quality of life of all apekind, but most consider his organizing and training of the Primate Patrol his crowning achievement. While he largely shuns the spotlight and prefers fighting crime from the

**IRON MONKEY****PL 11**

Str 30/10	Dex 12	Con 12	Int 28	Wis 12	Cha 12
<b>Skills:</b> Acrobatics 6 (+7), Climb 6 (+16), Computers 10 (+19), Craft (electronic) 10 (+19), Craft (mechanical) 10 (+19), Knowledge (technology) 10 (+19)					
<b>Feats:</b> Dodge Focus, Inventor, Skill Mastery (Computers, Craft, Knowledge)					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Additional Limbs 1</b> (prehensile tail), <b>Device 26</b> (powered armor, hard to lose) <i>Powered armor:</i> <b>Blast 11</b> (force beams; Accurate 3), <b>Communication 7</b> (radio, 200 mile range; Area; Subtle), <b>Enhanced Strength 20</b> , <b>Flight 8</b> (2,500 MPH), <b>Immunity 9</b> (life support), <b>Protection 10</b> (Impervious), <b>Sensory Shield 10</b> (visual), <b>Super-Senses 9</b> (blindsight [radar, Extended 3, Radius, Ranged]), <b>Super-Strength 3</b> (6 tons)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +5 (melee), +11 (Blast), Grapple +18, Damage +11 (Blast), +10 (unarmed), Defense +9, Knockback -10 (-0 without powered armor), Initiative +1					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +11 (+1 without powered armor), Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +3					
<b>Drawbacks:</b> Normal Identity (full round, -4 points)					
<b>Abilities 26 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 105 + Combat 26 + Saves 6 - Drawbacks 4 = Total 175</b>					

<b>METAMORPH, THE MANDRILL OF 1,000 FACES</b>					<b>PL 11</b>
Str 20	Dex 30	Con 24	Int 14	Wis 24	Cha 20
<b>Skills:</b> Acrobatics 10 (+20), Concentration 10 (+17), Diplomacy 7 (+12), Escape Artist 10 (+20), Gather Information 7 (+12), Intimidate 7 (+12), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 10 (+12), Notice 7 (+14), Sense Motive 7 (+14), Stealth 10 (+20), Survival 7 (+14)					
<b>Feats:</b> Assessment, Blind-fight, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Evasion, Fearless, Improved Block, Improved Critical (Strike), Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Power Attack, Skill Mastery (Acrobatics, Escape Artist, Knowledge, Stealth), Trance					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Morph 8</b> (primates), <b>Strike 6</b> (Mighty), <b>Super-Senses 2</b> (low-light vision, scent)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +10, Grapple +15, Damage +11 (Strike), Defense +11, Knockback -4 (-3 flat-footed), Initiative +10					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +9 (+7 flat-footed), Fortitude +8, Reflex +10, Will +8					
<b>Abilities 72 + Skills 23 (92 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 25 + Combat 42 + Saves 2 = Total 179</b>					

sidelines, there are few on Earth-Ape who don't know Simian and revere him for his goodness and generosity.

They would be equally shocked to learn it is all a facade. Like his doppelganger on Earth-Prime, a lab accident bestowed Simian with his vast intellect and made him every bit as evil and bent on world domination. Unlike his counterpart, the Earth-Ape Simian is much better at disguising his ambitions.

For years, Simian has plotted, waiting for the perfect moment to place Earth-Ape under his absolute rule. When the cosmic-energy bomb fell into his paws (just as Omega intended), he realized his hour had come at last. By the time the characters appear, Simian believes he's on the verge of mastering the bomb's intricacies and using it to coerce Earth-Ape into submission. Therefore, the humans constitute a major threat to his plans, leading him to activate a contingency plan he established nearly a decade ago.

**ELASTIGIBBON**

Julius was one of Earth-Ape's most beloved funny-apes, equally adept at physical and stand-up comedy and famous for his hilarious gibbon songs.

# the PRIMATE PATROL



While shooting a movie on location overseas, an adoring fan offered him a rare native fruit reputed to bestow magical powers on those who would use them for good. While Julius wanted a tasty snack far more than a change of destiny, he underwent an amazing transformation after consuming the gift.

The mystic fruit gave Julius the ability to make his body as stretchable as rubber and change his size at will. Reacting to the change with characteristic aplomb, Julius figured he'd better live up to his end of the deal and use his abilities fighting the good fight. Though still a wisecracker, he embarked on a new side career as the stalwart crime-fighter Elastigibbon, a member in good standing of the Primate Patrol.

## IRON MONKEY

Dr. Milo's remarkable mechanical genius rivals even Dr. Simian's. Though this should make them competitors, in truth Milo respects and admires Simian. It was Simian and Chimpanzoom's example that prompted him to create the invincible powered armor that makes him a superhero.

Originally, Milo intended to mass produce the armor, giving police a tremendous edge over any sort of criminal. However, when Milo presented his creation to Dr. Simian for his approval, Simian counseled the more suits of powered armor produced, the greater the chance they would fall into the wrong paws.

Impressed by the young capuchin's boyish enthusiasm, Simian suggested Milo alone wear the armor. He promised if Milo followed his advice, Simian would induct him into the Primate Patrol. This was the chance the young inventor had always sought, and he eagerly accepted the chance to fight injustice alongside the renowned Dr. Simian. Since that day, criminals everywhere have learned to fear the might of the Armored Ape, the one-and-only Invincible Iron Monkey.

## METAMORPH, THE MANDRILL OF 1,000 FACES

For years, Senpei sought insight and wisdom in the Far East, studying the ancient secrets of meditation, martial arts, and philosophy. The greatest secret he uncovered was learning how to alter his physical appearance through the power of mind over matter. While most apes would be tempted to use such abilities for personal gain, Senpei chose to use them for the greater good.

His *sensei* always warned him evil wears countless guises, but through clarity of thought and purpose, good men could turn evil's own strengths against it. Senpei took these lessons to heart, and decided to combat injustice with its own deceptiveness as Metamorph, the Mandrill of 1,000 Faces.

Since joining the Patrol at Dr. Simian's behest, Metamorph has served as the team's covert operative, using his abilities to gather information on all those Simian deems to be a threat. Despite spending years in the hustle and bustle of the modern world, Senpei has lost none of his monastic outlook on life, and remains the team's moral and spiritual center.

## SEE NO EVIL, HEAR NO EVIL, SPEAK NO EVIL

Whether prisoners of the PCPD or guests of Dr. Simian, the characters are eventually escorted to City Hall to meet with Hizzoner. If they arrived in custody, the meeting takes place in a holding cell; otherwise, it's in the comfort of the mayor's office. In either case, Mayor Zaius and STAR Squad commander Captain Aldo are in attendance, along with the Primate Patrol. As a goodwill gesture, Dr. Simian sees that any injured characters receive medical treatment.

## DR. SIMIAN'S SECRET UNDERGROUND BUNKER

Dr. Simian constructed this facility for use as an emergency shelter and communications center in the event of some great catastrophe. Set miles underground and accessible only through two massive exterior blast doors and a secure high-speed lift, it's sturdy enough to survive a wide range of disasters.

Its interior is simply designed: an upper chamber about the size of an aircraft hangar, and a slightly smaller sub-basement room beneath. The sub-basement is reachable only via an elevated platform which meshes with the upper chamber's floor when in use there. An almost seamless sliding panel covers the hole in the floor when the platform is down below.

To study the sphere, Simian moved a great deal of scientific equipment into the upper chamber, and built ladder-accessible scaffolding around the device to hold still more. The equipment facilitates research in a wide range of disciplines, from chemistry to physics and everything in between. As a precaution, the sphere rests on the elevating platform, where it can be lowered into the sub-basement in case it shows any signs of volatility.

The sub-basement houses Simian's advanced telecommunications equipment, allowing him to sample and—if need be—override all manner of media, from the internet to radio and television. Various digital recording and transmission devices are present as well.

The assembled apes are full of questions for the humans. Dr. Simian and the mayor are curious about the origin of the strange visitors from another planet, while Capt. Aldo is concerned they're a potential threat. While the characters probably want to talk about the impending end of the omniverse, the apes have no inclination to listen until they account for themselves and their actions.

Winning monkey hearts and minds is not easy. Capt. Aldo thinks the characters are more of Omega's extra-dimensional monsters. Mayor Zaius wants to believe the best about the humans, but takes his cues as to how to proceed from local weirdness expert Dr. Simian. Surreptitiously, Simian has already calculated exactly how the humans can be duped in furthering his clandestine schemes.

## THE ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING BOMB

After the characters tell their side of the story, Dr. Simian reveals the very object they seek was recovered by the navy after splashing down in the Apelantic Ocean. With the U.A. Government's permission, the sphere was transferred to Dr. Simian's labs for study and is undergoing a battery of scientific tests under his direction. He claims the characters' story confirms his suspicions about the device, and he asks the humans' help in disarming the device.

While the characters may suspect the deal sounds too good to be true, they have little practical alternative to playing things Simian's way. If the players are recalcitrant for whatever reason, Mayor Zaius adds his voice to Simian's in pleading for their aid. Should all else fail to convince them, Capt. Aldo threatens to "lock you animals up in a cage and throw away the key" if the characters don't agree to help.

## BENEATH MONKEY PLANET

Under heavy police escort, the characters are driven to the local Anthropoid Scientific and Technical Research Organization (ASTRO) Labs facility. This "get to know you" interval provides the players with some good role-playing opportunities, as well as giving later events a much more dramatic impact.

It so happens the characters share a ride with the Primate Patrol. The ape heroes are quite curious about their counterparts from another world and put aside any past hostilities as simple misunderstandings. Again, this interlude is intended to give Earth-Ape some emotional resonance with the players. Even if their characters just sit and stare out the window, they still get a view of happy children at play, loving families spending time together, and hardworking apes going to and from their jobs.

Once at the ASTRO Labs facility, the characters lose their police escort and are quickly waved inside by security guards. They drive through massive double doors onto a high-speed lift, which carries them miles underground in mere seconds. Before their stomachs catch up with them, the lift stops and another pair of large metal doors open, revealing the interior of a large subterranean complex and the ominous form of the cosmic-energy bomb.

As the characters and the Primate Patrol enter the complex, the huge doors close behind them with a foreboding crash. They see several lab-coated rhesus monkeys busily engaged in various scientific studies, all of which focus on the bomb. In its general layout, the complex is similar to the one which housed the cosmic device on *Erde*, but seems to be carved inside a mountain, rather like a bomb shelter.

Once inside, Dr. Simian anxiously wants to learn what the characters know about the cosmic-energy bomb, particularly how to disarm it. If the characters have the know-how and confidence to defuse the bomb, Simian offers to assist and tells them to begin the procedure when ready. However, if they entrust Simian with the job (or at least have greater faith in his abilities), he promises to begin the defusing after he runs some quick diagnostics on the bomb.

When the chosen individual steps toward the sphere to start the dismantling, the voices of the Primate Patrol ring out in robotic unison: "You cannot be allowed to interfere." Then, moving stiffly and wearing obvious glassy-eyed expressions, the anthropoid heroes attack the (likely surprised) characters.

## BATTLE FOR MONKEY PLANET

The fight likely occurs inside the underground bunker, but it's possible the characters will try taking things outside; perhaps to allow the bystander scientists to escape. Punching through the walls and the miles of solid earth reinforcing them isn't practical, and the elevator doors are made of tough stuff (hardness 25) in their own right. Opening them requires finding the proper control panel (DC 20 Notice Skill check) and beating the electronic lock's encryption codes (DC 30 Disable Device skill check).

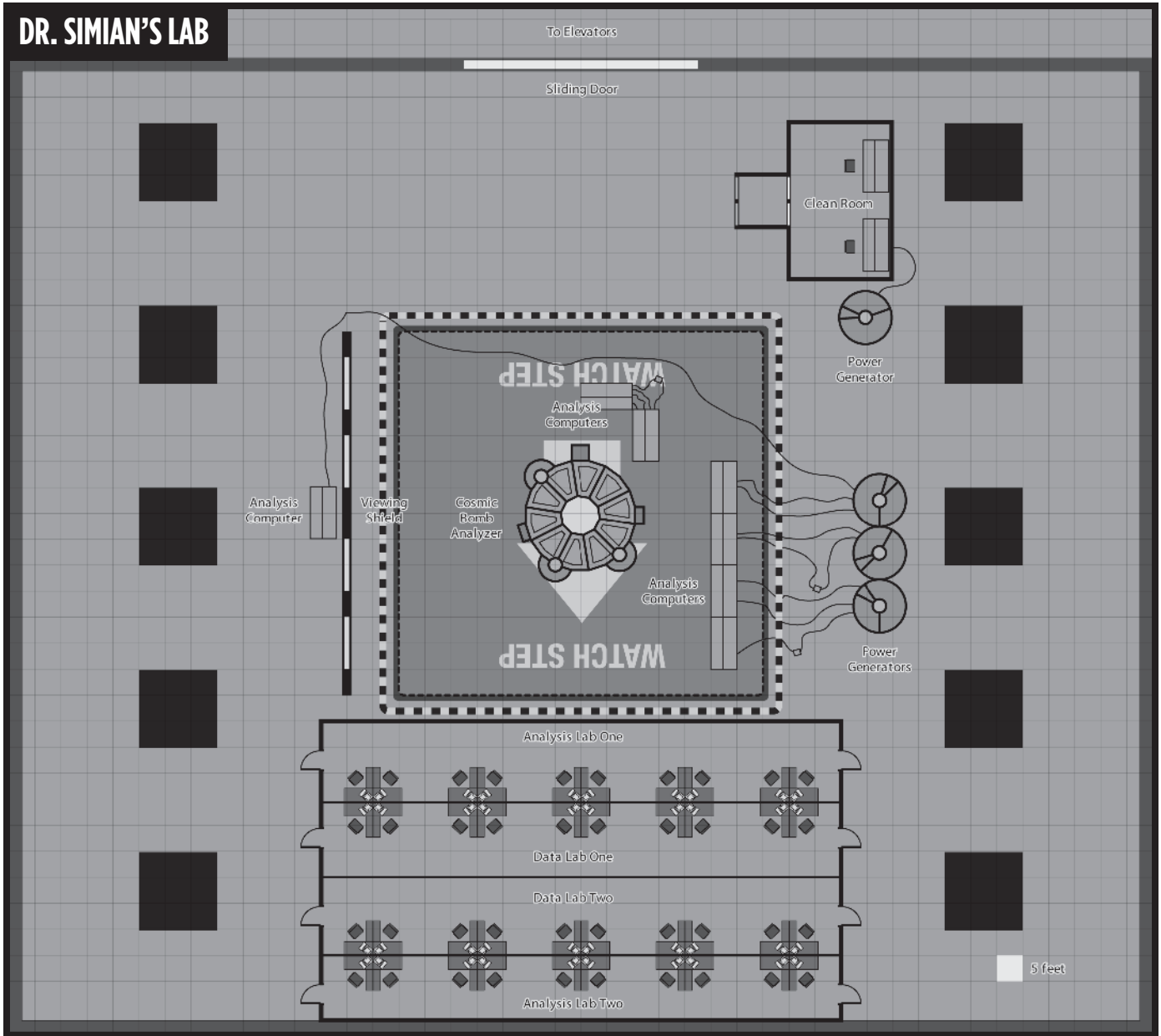
Unless an exit is made for them, the lab monkeys (use the Scientist archetype in *M&M*, page 229) run about the bunker in a panic. This not only works to Metamorph's advantage (see below), but allows the Gamemaster to put them in harm's way as needed, complicating the characters' lives and making sure the climactic battle doesn't end too soon.

In the course of the fight, the Primate Patrol acts as follows. Even though they're essentially puppets under Dr. Simian's control (thanks to mind-control chips he secretly implanted in their nervous systems years ago), his intimate knowledge of their powers, capabilities, and tactics results in little loss of combat efficiency.

### BRAINIAPE

Simian keeps Brainiape as far away from the action as possible, as this doesn't inhibit his powers in any way. Since the characters likely guess some sort of mental domination is afoot but have no certainty of the source, Simian attempts using Brainiape's Mind Control power to force the humans to turn against their fellows. Once that ploy is up, Brainiape's more direct attack powers (Mental Blast, Telekinesis, Stun) come to the fore.

If Simian is revealed as the Patrol's puppeteer, he quickly switches gears and uses Brainiape's Illusion power to cover his escape. Failing all



else, he sacrifices the ape mentalist like a chess pawn in a foolhardy paw-to-hand attack.

**CHIMPANZOOM**

Simian uses the Fastest Ape Alive to harry and distract anyone too close to learning who's pulling the Patrol's strings. Even if Chimpazoom can't inflict any harm on a given target, his elusiveness keeps the characters off-balance long enough to suit Simian's aims.

**DR. SIMIAN**

The evil mastermind pretends to be under mental domination like his fellows until (and if) the characters catch on to his ruse. After that, Simian drops the act and openly displays his true, megalomaniacal self.

Maintaining control over his erstwhile teammates is taxing, even with Simian's vast intellect. He must make a DC 15 Concentration skill check (untrained) every round to do so. Failure releases one of the controlled Patrol members, though the caped ape remains stunned until he shakes off the mind control with a DC 22 Will save. An additional member

leaves Simian's control for every 5 points by which the Concentration skill check missed.

If the characters don't surmise Simian is behind the Patrol's sudden heel turn, they have a chance to pick up on the subtle physical tics required to convey orders to the enslaved. This requires a DC 10 Notice skill check.

Simian doesn't join the fight unless there's no other way to ward off an attacker. Whenever possible, he summons the controlled Patrol members to intervene in such situations. If all else fails, he flees and activates his De-Volver Ray (see **Going Ape**, below).

**ELASTIGIBBON**

Simian attempts to keep Elastigibbon between himself and the characters without being too obvious about it. With Elastigibbon's considerable reach and ability to tie up opponents (literally), he's ideal for delaying potential attackers while Simian scampers off to safety.

If Simian is under no immediate threat, he has Elastigibbon set up favorable attacks for other Patrol members, such as grappling foes for Iron



Monkey to punch out. In a running battle, Elastigibbon uses the shadowy confines of the bunker to lay in ambush and thwart any attempted pursuits.

### IRON MONKEY

Fittingly, Dr. Simian uses the Armored Ape like a tank. Throughout the battle, Simian commands him to advance and press attacks against the most powerful and threatening player characters. Unless it's necessary to save his own hide, Simian never orders Iron Monkey to retreat, preferring him to keep the characters off-balance with unrelenting attacks.

### METAMORPH

Simian uses Metamorph for surprise attacks. At first opportunity, Metamorph hides in the shadows and transforms himself into a rhesus lab monkey. He then attempts backstabbing one of the characters in the guise of a panicky bystander.

Ideally, Simian wants Metamorph to lure a character out of his allies' sight (like behind the sphere) where he can ambush and duplicate him. In the character's guise, he sneak attacks the unsuspecting humans, leading them to assume the duplicated individual fell victim to the same mind control as the Primate Patrol.

As a last resort, Simian covers his escape by having Metamorph mimic his own appearance. In this case, Metamorph attacks and holds off the pursuing characters while the Real monkey McCoy escapes.

### MONKEYING WITH THE RESULTS

If the characters hand the monkeys' red butts back to them in the fight, events proceed without change to **Going Ape**, below. By contrast, if the enthralled Primate Patrol is beating on the humans like a piece of Samsonite luggage, the Gamemaster has some choices to make about how the adventure proceeds.

The most likely outcome has the defeated characters wake up in the sub-basement much hairier than before (see **Making a Monkey Out of the Heroes**, below). They're inside a cage (hardness 20) secured with an electronic lock (DC 23 Disable Device check to open). The chain of events resumes in **Going Ape** once the characters get free.

However, if the poor characters have lost too many fights already, the Gamemaster can shift the odds a little in their favor once the battle starts going against them. As noted in **Battle for Monkey Planet** above, the Primate Patrol members can break free of Dr. Simian's control. To give them a fighting chance, the Gamemaster can have as many apes as needed regain their will and help go after Simian.

### GOING APE

Once the battle well and truly turns against Dr. Simian, he draws his trump card. Even as consciousness deserts him, the evil ape presses a conspicuous red button on his hover chair (or a handheld device, if separated from his chair). The overhead lights immediately change from incandescent white to a pulsing green, and a loud humming sound fills the room. Everyone in the room blacks out under the influence of the inescapable green beams generated by Simian's ultimate Plot Device—the De-Volver Ray.

The characters are not out for long, but when they regain consciousness, they find themselves transformed into various apes! When the shock of their all-over bad hair day wears off, the characters notice the Primate Patrol is physically unchanged but knocked out cold by the Ray. The caped apes remain unconscious until **Escape from Monkey Planet**, below. Thus, it's up to the newly hairy heroes to stop Dr. Simian and save the day.

## CONQUEST OF MONKEY PLANET

After activating the Ray, Dr. Simian lowered himself and the cosmic-energy bomb into the heretofore unrevealed sub-basement. Once there, a coterie of rhesus lab monkeys, unaware of their boss' heel turn, treated Dr. Simian's injuries and helped him prepare to deliver a message to the world.

The next step for the characters is picking up Dr. Simian's trail. Their newly developed Super-Senses (scent) power can confirm Simian didn't use the obvious exit (DC 10 Notice skill check to do so), and determining this adds a +5 bonus to all subsequent Search skill checks. The unmodified Search skill check DC for finding the sliding floor section above the sub-basement is 22.

Getting into the sub-basement means smashing through the hardness 20 sliding floor. Alternatively, if the characters have sentience left, they can override the control mechanism (DC 25 Craft (electronic) or DC 25 Disable Device skill check).

Whenever the characters get to the sub-basement, Dr. Simian is posing and gesturing in trademark megalomaniac fashion before a honeycomb of monitor screens. He addresses Earth-Ape on every radio and television station, threatening to detonate the cosmic-energy bomb if the entire world doesn't immediately surrender to his absolute rule. Stunned and frightened world governments are transmitting their complete capitu-

### MAKING A MONKEY 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 (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 (like disarming the cosmic-energy bomb, for instance).



lations to Dr. Simian when the monkey-fied heroes finally interrupt, re-emphasizing the fact only they can save Earth-Ape now.

The rhesus monkeys in the sub-basement are now wise to their boss' nuttiness, and run outside the battle's range at first opportunity. Potentially, the Gamemaster can have them blunder into the fight at key moments, but this is likely too much of a complication for increasingly savage heroes' time-limited smarts.

If Simian is on the verge of defeating the characters, the Gamemaster can allow anyone who's completely "gone ape" a DC 15 Will save to strike Simian with a surprise blow. Chalk it up to their regaining a glimmer of their wits or a simple case of "human see, human do." There's also the option of bringing freed Primate Patrol members into the fight, if the Gamemaster hasn't sent in the cavalry too many times already.

For most, defeating Dr. Simian before they start looking for circus employment is challenge enough. However, if the characters are doing too well, the Gamemaster can bling Simian out with a duplicate of Iron Monkey's powered armor for the climactic confrontation.

## ESCAPE FROM MONKEY PLANET

The Gamemaster must prepare for several possible conclusions in this chapter. Ideally, Dr. Simian is beaten and the cosmic-energy bomb disabled before the transformed heroes lose their last vestiges of sentience. Defusing the bomb requires a skill check with either Craft (mechanical) (DC 25) or Disable Device (DC 30), with a +2 bonus if the character defused the cosmic-energy bomb on *Erde*.

In case the characters don't have the needed skills or literally go ape before they finish the job, a reawakened Iron Monkey (or a rhesus lab monkey) can pinch-hit for them. If the check is good enough, the simian disarmer shares what he learned about the "cosmic lightning rod" at first opportunity. Said ape happily paws the detonator over to the characters if they ask.

Cruel or monkey-hating Gamemasters can simply let events run their course and allow Earth-Ape to be blown to bits if no one deactivates

the cosmic-energy bomb. A bereaved Norn rescues the characters at the last second and restores their human forms before sending them on to Chapter Four, desperately hoping the omniverse might be saved despite Earth-Ape's demise.

If the good guys won and defused the bomb, the characters regain awareness inside the friendly confines of the Patrol's spacious Primate Hall headquarters. The Patrol is completely free of Simian's mind control, and in gratitude for saving Earth-Ape, Iron Monkey has reversed the De-Volver Ray's effects. Chimpanzoom assures everyone the traitorous Dr. Simian is being held by the authorities under tight security, and will receive a fair trial in accordance with Ape Law.

A glow then surrounds the characters and the Norn appears above them. Before they fade away, Chimpanzoom offers his paw in friendship, and tells them they will always be welcome on Earth-Ape. The other Primate Patrol members gratefully echo this sentiment as the Norn beams the humans up.

## AWARDING POWER POINTS

More so than in preceding chapters, the actual power-point award depends less on winning or losing the super-fights and more on how they conducted themselves as heroes. The characters' adventures on Earth-Ape test their commitment to the heroic ideal, and those who truly upheld it (rescued endangered innocents, no prejudice based on appearances, accepted all peaceful overtures) deserve the larger rewards. Depending on these criteria, the Gamemaster should give each character from 0 to 2 power points.

All characters injured during the closing battle are healed by the Norn during their time-and-space transport. As in Chapter Two, the Norn may return dead characters to life or replace them with new heroes as the Gamemaster and players see fit. Again, resurrected characters get no power points for this chapter, unless they went out like a hero fully expecting to stay dead afterwards.

# CHAPTER FOUR: THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

**A**s the heroes zap into the next parallel Earth, they find themselves atop a two-story building with a decent view of the large urban area around them. What they see is surprisingly familiar.

They're *home*, or at least all signs point to it. The air tastes like Freedom City's, and the skyline's exactly like the one they left behind on Earth-Prime. No zombies, Confederate soldiers, avenging disco god-fathers, giant badgers, or Martian war machines prowl the familiar streets—just ordinary-looking Freedom City folk. Most reassuring is the Paradise casino just across the street, the last thing they saw on Earth-Prime. It's unchanged, right down to the marquee and police cordon.

Any joy the characters feel is soon muted by an explosion shattering the far side of the casino's roof. This causes great and obvious consternation in the surrounding police, especially after a group of obvious superhumans makes its escape through the resultant hole.

The police are powerless to prevent the superhumans from getting away with their purloined property, which likely prompts the heroes into action. As they draw nearer, they feel their adrenaline rush give way to disbelief, then shock and horror as they realize the crooks who just knocked over the casino look just like *them*.

They have met the enemy, and they are it. Wrong is right on Anti-Earth.

## THEY CAME TO ROB EMPIRE CITY

The characters may be in the mood to sit down and talk things out, but their evil doppelgangers definitely aren't, so combat ensues even if the heroes don't shoot first. More so than in previous battles, the characters are expected to win this one, for a number of reasons.

First of all, this chapter is a bit combat-heavy, and since this fight is least important to the plot, it should be kept as brief as possible to avoid bogging down the adventure's pace. Second, the heroes' evil counterparts are bent on escaping with as much cash as they can carry, and their tactics reflect this with a total lack of coordination and teamwork. Third, the characters are fighting opponents whose weaknesses are intimately familiar to them, and they're almost certain to take advantage of that.

The bottom line is the anti-heroes are there primarily for shock value, and once the surprise dissipates, they need to go down hard and fast. If the characters are losing the bout for whatever reason, Mind-Master puts

in an early appearance (as described in **The Immortal One** below) and saves them from themselves.

If the players are portraying members of the Freedom League, the Gamemaster must avoid using their evil counterparts at this point in the adventure, as the plot requires saving their appearance for later. The Gamemaster should use other villains as the opposition in this battle, perhaps the Anti-Earth versions of the Atom Family or Next-Gen (detailed in the *Freedom City* sourcebook).

## THE IMMORTAL ONE

After the characters put the kibosh on their sinister identical cousins, a portly man leads a squad in full riot gear onto the casino roof (or wherever the battle ended up), all dressed like members of the Freedom City Police's STAR Squad. The porcine commander shouts at the characters, "Don't even *think* about the cash. Scram before I blast you straight to Hell," revealing the voice (if not the frame) of Capt. Maddicks.

Proof positive it's Maddicks appears when he gets in the characters' faces and starts yelling at them. However, his Anti-Earth twin pauses to order his men to gather up the loot and arrest everyone. Evil Maddicks had a deal with the anti-heroes for half the take in exchange for the police's non-interference, and assumes the characters are there swiping all the Benjamins (well, the Aaron Burrs at any rate) before he gets his cut.

The characters are probably still in full hero mode when Maddicks threatens them and starts pocketing fistfuls of stolen cash, so a showdown with the Empire City Police impends. It's a tangential battle the heroes can't win, so Mind-Master appears and clear away the bad cops before things get ugly.

After the beaten ECPD slinks away, Mind-Master approaches the characters. He's tall, with dark skin, intense blue eyes and neatly kept jet-black hair. His clothes are very nondescript save for a navy-blue duster. He smirks and says, "I am Mind-Master, and I am glad to be the only hero on this planet no longer."

"Ignore these so-called 'policemen.' They are the merely the symptoms," Mind-Master intones to the heroes, "Come with me if you wish to cure the disease." The characters are probably chock-full of questions, but Mind-

## TURNING TO THE DARK SIDE

In preparation for **Making a Monkey Out of the Heroes** in Chapter Three, the Gamemaster should already have copies of everyone's character sheet. Therefore, creating their Anti-Earth duplicates is largely a matter of tweaking what's already on paper.

To ease confusion during the fight sequence, each anti-hero needs a modified codename: Captain Nice becomes Captain Nasty, Major Good is Major Evil instead, etc. The Gamemaster can also create cosmetic distinctions between the analogues, like giving the evil duplicates dueling scars, wicked goatees, overlarge tattoos, or simply changing bright costumes to dark.

Most skills and feats suit good and evil versions equally well. A good character with Diplomacy skill may have an evil doppelganger more prone to use Intimidate or Bluff (perhaps with the Taunt feat). A hero who uses Profession (teacher) in his secret identity may have a anti-hero duplicate with a less savory occupation like Profession (pimp).

Gamemasters should bear one simple thing in mind when making changes. The anti-heroes' main purpose is be fun for the players to beat the crap out of, so any change making them more unlikeable is probably one they should implement.





Master defers them with, "We are not safe here. Long have I awaited your arrival. We have much to discuss, and we should do so in private." With the police reinforcing for another attack, the heroes are wise to accept the invitation. Despite a passing resemblance to Mastermind, his evil twin on Earth-Prime, Mind-Master clearly has their best interests at heart.

### IN THE CITY

When the characters take the hint, Mind-Master leads them down into the subway system. As they go, they get a glimpse of life on Anti-Earth. Shopkeepers are shaken down for "contributions" by policemen, while

drug-dealers, muggers, and prostitutes ply their trades openly. The sleazy bars and adult movie theaters are full, while the churches and synagogues stand empty. Everyone seems to be willing purveyors of misery and suffering, or their helpless victims. Among them are people the heroes recognize from Freedom City despite the sad states of their parallel versions.

Things get uglier once they board the train, as the underground resembles a blood-sport arena more than anything else. Still, Mind-Master counsels against the characters intervening, telling them, "If you act now, it will only reveal our presence to those seeking our deaths, and all will be lost. Caution provides us a chance to put all things right."

Eventually, the characters disembark the train underneath the heart of the city's Fens district. Mind-Master leads them toward a collapsed and cordoned off tunnel with a quick admonition to "Follow." He then passes through the wall of rubble as if it wasn't there. Once the characters comply, they find themselves inside an austere but highly technological complex, replete with computers, advanced monitoring systems, weapons, and some spartan living quarters. This is Mind-Master's base of operations, the Nerve Center.

### MIND MASTER

PL 15

**Str 25** | **Dex 25** | **Con 25** | **Int 25** | **Wis 25** | **Cha 25**

**Skills:** Computers 8 (+15), Concentration 12 (+19), Diplomacy 8 (+15), Intimidate 6 (+13), Knowledge (earth sciences) 8 (+15), Knowledge (history) 16 (+23), Knowledge (life sciences) 12 (+19), Knowledge (tactics) 12 (+19), Knowledge (technology) 14 (+21), Medicine 10 (+17), Sense Motive 10 (+17)

**Feats:** Attack Focus (ranged) 5, Endurance, Equipment 20, Jack-of-All-Trades, Master Plan, Power Attack, Trance, Ultimate Save (Will)

**Powers:** **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Flight 8** (2,500 MPH), **Force Field 12** (Impervious), **Immunity 3** (aging, disease, poison), **Telekinesis 15** (heavy load: 400 tons, Damaging), **Telepathy 8** (Touch Range)

**Equipment:** Distribute Mind Master's Equipment ranks as desired for his headquarters and other resources.

**Combat:** Attack +10 (melee), +15 (ranged), Grapple +17, Damage +7 (unarmed), +15 (telekinesis), Defense +11, Knockback -15, Initiative +7

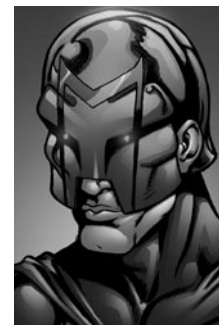
**Saving Throws:** Toughness +19 (+7 without force field), Fortitude +12, Reflex +9, Will +20

**Abilities 90 + Skills 29 (116 ranks) + Feats 31 + Powers 96 + Combat 42 + Saves 20 = Total 308**

### MIND MASTER

Like his counterpart on Earth-Prime Mastermind, Mind-Master was once a primitive *pre-homo sapiens* man whom the Preservers abducted and recreated as a superhuman being. He thereby gained access to almost limitless knowledge and a vast array of advanced technology. Mind-Master also tried to guide humanity to a greater destiny, but found his every effort thwarted by the unrelenting cruelty and all-consuming evil of mankind.

A glimmer of hope appeared when other superpowered individuals appeared, but it quickly faded. Rather than use their wondrous abilities for good, they acted only in brutal self-interest and became rulers of a harsh and malefic



## THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

The Freedom League's Johnny Rocket was Anti-Earth's first visitor from Earth-Prime. He found on the surface are all the trappings of modern, civilized life, but underneath it evil is the expected norm, and good the aberration.

There was no great turning point in Anti-Earth's history "where things went wrong." Things have *always* been "wrong," as evinced by the cash with portraits of Benedict Arnold, John Wilkes Booth, and Richard Nixon in the casino loot bags. The masses are truly downtrodden here, fostering an all-pervasive corruption that makes good and innocent people few and far between.

The best comparison for the players is 1920's Chicago. In both times and places, the mail gets delivered and the trains run on time, but the real powers behind everything are ruthless thugs ruling through fear and intimidation. On Anti-Earth, the biggest, most ruthless thugs are doppelgangers of Earth-Prime's superheroes. None of Earth-Prime's villains got duplicated as such, probably due to some cosmic redundancy clause. In any case, more evil-doers on Anti-Earth are definitely unnecessary.

Foremost among Anti-Earth's superhuman gangsters is the Tyranny Syndicate, an evil xerox of the Freedom League. The Syndicate acts as a ruling, mail-fisted junta behind the scenes of Empire City, a simulacrum of the characters' own Freedom City. Only one man stands between the Syndicate and total world domination, an immortal called Mind-Master. As the only true superhero, Mind-Master desperately searches for a way to bring justice to his blighted world.

world. The immortal, now publically calling himself Mind-Master, vowed to use his might against all those misusing their gifts. For the last decade, his primary nemesis has been the Tyranny Syndicate.

His lonely struggle against the Syndicate and everyone like it seemed hopeless. Indeed, his great knowledge of history told him beyond question his efforts were doomed. His only cause for optimism came when he learned the Tyranny Syndicate fought and lost a battle with super-powered *heroes* from a parallel Earth. Since then, he has sought ways of enlisting the aid of these extra-dimensional champions.

Mind-Master continues his quixotic crusade despite his fearing its futility. He knows full well his best chance for success lies beyond the farthest stars, so he watches for any sign deliverance from the fabled "good Earth" has arrived.

## END OF THE DREAM...

Once safely inside the Nerve Center, Mind-Master inquires how the heroes came to Anti-Earth. While he asks as many questions of the heroes as they do of him, he grows more morose as they explain their mission to him.

The characters cannot know, but their words snuff out the last embers of Mind-Master's hopes. From the moment his scanners detected the heroes' arrival, he believed they were a liberation force, but instead they're but a small handful of survivors from a dead Earth. The destruction of Earth-Prime leaves Anti-Earth with no source of salvation, and the Norn's plan to resurrect the omniverse offers it no help even if it does succeed. Millennia of sadness, loss, and hopelessness then drive Mind-Master to a desperate scheme.

He tells the heroes his instruments detected the sudden appearance of an object containing "considerable" cosmic energy a day prior to their arrival. Unfortunately, said item is now at the worst of all possible locations: "the Fortress," headquarters of the Tyranny Syndicate.

According to Mind-Master, the heroes' main advantage is the Syndicate's need to answer all challenges or risk losing the iron grip of fear in which they hold the world. Therefore, a direct attack on the Syndicate's headquarters is almost certain to draw them into an open fight the heroes just may be able to win. If nothing else, it should provide enough of a distraction for Mind-Master to slip inside the Fortress and deactivate the bomb.

Mind-Master seems gratified if the characters agree to his plan. He's open to changes so long as the basic plan is not altered from the heroes attacking the Syndicate while he disables the bomb. If the characters persist with counter-suggestions, Mind-Master notes their teamwork gives them the best chance in battle with the Syndicate. Further, he reassures the heroes his millennia of life make him best qualified to defuse the bomb, and his powers make him best able to sneak into the Fortress undetected. While he welcomes firsthand advice on how to disarm the

bomb, Mind-Master resists direct aid from the heroes (even those suited to the task), insisting numbers are vital when fighting the Syndicate.

If his persuasions fail, Mind-Master tells the heroes to proceed as they see fit. He declines to join their plan, preferring to remain available to rescue the characters should their "foolhardy scheme" fail. Since whatever the heroes are planning inevitably leads to a clash with the Tyranny Syndicate, Mind-Master's designs are implemented in any case.

## ...BEGINNING OF THE NIGHTMARE

Mind-Master's many centuries of despair have led him to the sort of act long unconscionable to him. He sees no point in saving Anti-Earth only to have it remain under Tyranny Syndicate's dominion. Thus, his machinations are aimed at either liberating Anti-Earth or destroying it.

In his plan, the heroes distract the Syndicate and ideally vanquish it. Whether the characters win or lose, Mind-Master uses the battle to deliver an ultimatum to Anti-Earth's other superhumans and their lackeys. Deceiving the characters troubles Mind-Master's conscience, but from the moment they inadvertently revealed what the strange device in his possession is, he ceased listening to it.

The bitter irony is the cosmic-energy bomb fell into Mind-Master's hands by design. Lord Omega anticipated Mind-Master using the bomb for his own selfish (though good-intentioned) aims. Tragically, Mind-Master vindicated him.

## BREAKING UP THE SYNDICATE

If the characters go along with Mind-Master's tactics, he cloaks their presence en route to the Fortress. Once there, he ostensibly leaves to infiltrate the building, but in reality returns to the Nerve Center and broadcasts his demands to the world.

Should the characters do things their way, they have no trouble finding their way to the Fortress since it occupies the same spot as Freedom Hall on Earth-Prime. A brief overview of the premises is in the accompanying sidebar to guide the Gamemaster, if needed.

Regardless of where the confrontation occurs, the Tyranny Syndicate displays little lack of teamwork, unlike the characters' evil doppelgangers. The Syndicate members don't like each other, but they've been around long enough to realize they must hang together, or they will surely hang separately.

Initially, the Syndicate obeys Dalton's Second Simple Rule and "takes it outside," since it wants no harm done to its expensive crib and doesn't care about civilian casualties. If the battle seriously turns against it, the Syndicate changes tactics and flees for their base's protection.

The characters may interrogate the Syndicate about the cosmic-energy bomb, which it sincerely knows nothing about. While the villains' denials may make the heroes suspicious, its real significance is likely to go unrecognized. After all, villains tell lies, don't they?

# THE TYRANNY SYNDICATE

The Tyranny Syndicate came to power after banding together to eliminate the Praetor, the cruel superhuman dictator who ruled Empire City. Unfortunately for the city, the Syndicate had no interest in liberating its people, only in seizing power. They beheaded Praetor's vainglorious statue overlooking the city, leaving its head lying in Praetor Park and the decapitated monument as a testament to their victory.

At first, the Tyranny Syndicate seemed to be yet another superhuman gang intent on maximizing its members' power and profit, but over time, the Syndicate became the de facto rulers of Anti-Earth, devastating any region daring to oppose them. Having eliminated all potential rivals through ruthlessness, guile, and superior firepower, the Syndicate now enjoys a stranglehold on organized criminal activities. The "legitimate"

authorities are little different, as the Syndicate carries judges and politicians around in its pockets like so many nickels and dimes.

With whole nations as its puppets and Empire City its personal kingdom, the Syndicate grew bored, arrogant and soft. It might have fallen victim to infighting or a hungrier rival clique had it remained so, but discovering Earth-Prime literally gave it a new world to conquer. However, repeated defeats by the Freedom League thwarted its ambitions and gave hope to its enemies.

Today, the Syndicate's influence is slightly but noticeably diminished. Plans to subjugate Earth-Prime are on hold while it fends off a host of new rivals—many with considerable power bases of their own—and the continuing irritant that is Mind-Master. Time will tell if this is a minor aberration during the Syndicate's reign of terror, or the beginning of its end.

In *Time of Crisis*' 2002 setting, some changes in the Tyranny Syndicate noted in the *Freedom City* sourcebook are still to occur. Black Bowman hasn't joined yet, and the team hasn't relocated to its Panopticon space station. If Gamemasters wish to incorporate these differences into *Time of Crisis*, they are certainly free to do so. Moving the Syndicate's base requires some plot surgery (preventing the heroes from getting nuked from orbit, for one), but adding Black Bowman is no hassle. His game statistics are pretty much the same as Bowman's in the *Freedom City* sourcebook, page 113.

## CAPTAIN THUNDERBOLT

PL 12

**Str 38** | **Dex 14** | **Con 18** | **Int 12** | **Wis 13** | **Cha 18**

**Skills:** Concentration 4 (+5), Craft (electronic) 4 (+5), Diplomacy 4 (+8), Drive 4 (+6), Intimidate 8 (+12), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+5), Notice 6 (+7), Pilot 10 (+12), Profession (test pilot) 8 (+9), Sense Motive 6 (+7), Survival 2 (+3)

**Feats:** Equipment, Leadership, Power Attack

**Powers:** **Absorption 12** (energy, healing, limited to electricity), **Electrical Control 12** (Alternate Powers: **Blast 8** [40-ft. Burst], **Dazzle 12** [auditory, 40-ft. Burst]), **Enhanced Strength 20**, **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Protection 10** (Impervious), **Super-Senses 2** (detect electricity, ranged), **Super-Strength 6** (heavy load: 200 tons)

**Combat:** Attack +10, Grapple +30, Damage +14 (unarmed), +12 (blast), Defense +10, Knockback -12, Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +14, Fortitude +8, Reflex +5, Will +7

**Drawbacks:** Vulnerable to Power Drains (+50%, -2 points)

**Abilities 33 + Skills 15 (60 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 116 + Combat 40 + Saves 13 - Drawbacks 2 = Total 218**

## DAEDALUS

PL 11

**Str 30/10** | **Dex 14** | **Con 16** | **Int 30** | **Wis 18** | **Cha 12**

**Skills:** Computers 8 (+18), Craft (chemical) 8 (+18), Craft (electronic) 10 (+20), Craft (mechanical) 10 (+20), Craft (structural) 8 (+18), Disable Device 12 (+22), Knowledge (earth sciences) 4 (+14), Knowledge (history) 10 (+20), Knowledge (life sciences) 4 (+14), Knowledge (physical sciences) 12 (+22), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+22), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 6 (+16), Language 16, Notice 6 (+10), Sense Motive 6 (+10)

**Feats:** Attack Focus 2 (ranged), Eidetic Memory, Equipment, Improved Tools, Inventor, Jack-of-All-Trades, Master Plan

**Powers:** **Device 19** (battlesuit, hard to lose), **Immunity 3** (aging, disease, poison), **Regeneration 2** (Resurrection 1/day, Regrowth)  
**Battlesuit:** **Blast 10** (gravitic force, Alternate Power: Snare 10), **Enhanced Strength 20**, **Flight 5** (250 MPH), **Immunity 9** (life support), **Protection 10** (Impervious), **Super-Senses 5** (radio, X-ray vision), **Super-Strength 5** (24 tons)

**Combat:** Attack +10 (melee), +12 (ranged), Grapple +25, Damage +10 (unarmed), +10 (blast), Defense +8, Knockback -11, Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +13 (+3 without armor), Fortitude +12, Reflex +5, Will +8

**Abilities 40 + Skills 33 (132 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 82 + Combat 36 + Saves 16 = Total 215**

## CAPTAIN THUNDERBOLT

On Anti-Earth, reckless ex-test pilot Ray Gardener stole experimental weather technology designed by Dr. Sebastian Stratos, an ethical scientist looking for ways to help humanity. Gardener nearly paid for it when lightning struck his plane but, instead, he was infused with tremendous power. Despite Stratos' attempts to reverse the effect, Captain Thunderbolt rose through the super-criminal ranks to become Praetor's righthand man, but eventually betrayed his master and organized the Tyranny Syndicate to overthrow him. Now he keeps a close eye on his erstwhile "allies" for signs they intend to do the same to him.

Capt. Thunderbolt relies upon his considerable superpowers and well-practiced bluster to see him through most crises. He sometimes calls upon on Madame Sin's tactical acumen, but doesn't trust her any more than necessary.

## DAEDALUS

Granted immortality by Hades, Daedalus is required to sacrifice other souls to the god of death in his place. He started with his naive son, Icarus, sabotaging his wings and sending him to his death. Daedalus followed with countless others across the centuries, engineering wars and plagues just to extend his own existence. 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 is 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.

Like his doppelganger in the Freedom League, Daedalus is his world's greatest scientific mind and inventor. However, the Anti-Earth Daedalus is a hard, bitter man, driven nearly mad by the curse of his immortality. After studying all science could teach him, he wants more than anything to enliven his endless years by finding new challenges for his superior but amoral intellect.

## JOHNNY SPEED

Sometimes called "Johnny Rotten" by Lady Liberty, the villainous Johnny Speed is the grandson of a retired superhuman gangster. After getting accidentally shot in a rival mobster's hit against his grandfather, the would-be killers still wanted revenge and revealed young Johnny Wade's homosexuality to the world.



KERON

2

AND

Willy

## THE FORTRESS

In deference to security concerns, the Tyranny Syndicate's HQ is set back from the street. A protective wall of solid stone, eight feet high and two feet thick, surrounds the compound. Inside the wall is a small front plaza with a manicured lawn and broad steps leading up to the main entrance. The landscaping is quite similar, though huge, white marble statues of the Syndicate's members replace the front plaza.

The building itself is five stories tall and somewhat blocky, narrowing slightly toward the top like a truncated pyramid. Its outer surface is pristine black obsidian with tall, narrow windows and a glassed-in atrium. The windows are not actually glass, but a carbon-composite similar to diamond created by Daedelus and Master Metropolis. They are "melded" into the structure of the building and do not open. The outer surface of the windows has a blue-tinted mirror finish. Thus, the only openings in the building are the main entrances and the rooftop hangar bay doors.

Inside the building's main entrance is an atrium running the full five floors, a bank of elevators, and walkways leading into either side of the building. In front of the elevators is a security desk where the grounds are kept under constant surveillance, and the rare visitors are searched and detained. Additional sophisticated security systems check everyone passing through the front gates and approaching the building to ensure they're not a threat.

The upper floors contain quarters for the Syndicate and its guests, office space, a conference and briefing room, dining facilities, supplemental labs and work areas, and the top-floor hangar bay for the storage, maintenance, and launching of the team's vehicles.

The Fortress also has two subterranean levels, including a parking garage, the building's power plant and support equipment, the secure-meeting room, main computer core, and laboratories. It also contains the Syndicate's "wreck room" where it trains and conducts combat exercises, with the unfortunate souls who've angered them the usual targets.



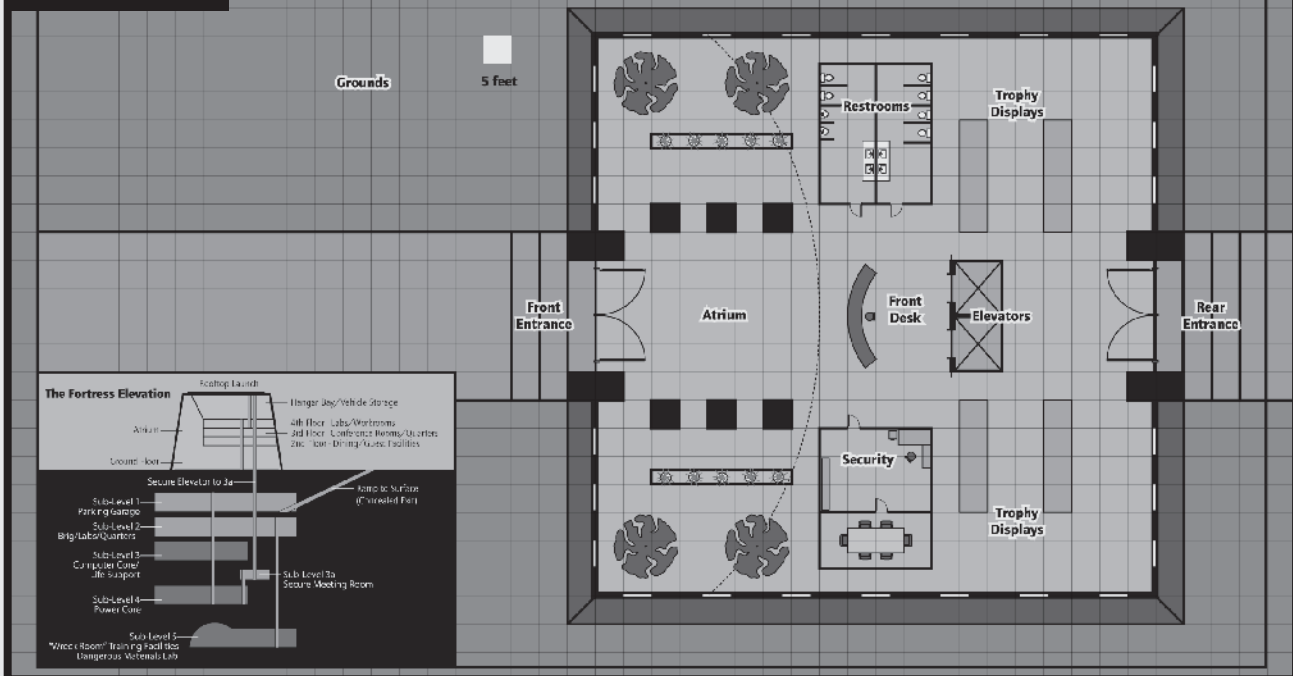
### THE FORTRESS

### HEADQUARTERS

*Size: Large, Toughness: 15, Features: Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed, Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Gym, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Laboratory, Living Space, Power System, Security System. Cost: 18 equipment points*

**Cost: 18 equipment points**

## THE FORTRESS



**JOHNNY SPEED****PL 10**

Str 12	Dex 16	Con 14	Int 12	Wis 12	Cha 16
<b>Skills:</b> Acrobatics 6 (+9), Bluff 6 (+8), Disable Device 6 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+5), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+5), Notice 6 (+7), Search 8 (+9)					
<b>Feats:</b> Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 6, Elusive Target, Equipment, Evasion, Instant Up, Move-by Action, Quick Change, Taunt					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Super-Speed 10</b> (10,000 MPH, Alternate Powers: <b>Air Control 10</b> , <b>Strike 10</b> , Wall Run, Water Run)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +9, Grapple +10, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +16 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +43					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +4 (+2 flat-footed), Fortitude +6, Reflex +13, Will +4					
<b>Drawbacks:</b> Weakness (speed drug, common, moderate, -3 points)					
<b>Abilities 22 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 53 + Combat 38 + Saves 17 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 152</b>					

Being publicly outed angered Johnny, and caused his family and closest friends to reject him. Humiliated and embittered, he became Johnny Speed, a vicious junkie hooked on the designer drug "zoom." If it weren't for a roll of the genetic dice, he would've been just another club-kid dead of heart-failure after overdosing on the party-drug. Instead, it interacted with his latent mutant biochemistry, giving him superhuman speed. 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.

Johnny's a complete hedonist interested in enjoying every indulgence power and wealth can bring. He likes playing games of cat-and-mouse, daring opponents to catch him. He particularly enjoys making fools of would-be heroes. To Johnny Rocket's chagrin, Johnny Speed can breach the barrier between worlds and has impersonated him on Earth-Prime to ruin his good reputation.

**LADY ANARCHY**

Like the Freedom League's Lady Liberty, Lady Anarchy is possessed by a spirit of freedom, but one completely hostile to all forms of government no matter how just and benevolent. Lady Anarchy uses her power and influence to overthrow all the world's institutions, because to her chaos is the only true state of being. While Anti-Earth's debased society seems worthy of destruction, the jungle law she wants in its place is no improvement.

The spirit of chaos and anarchy invested Beth Walton-Wright after Praetor casually murdered her father, giving her the power to help topple the dictator. She is the latest in a long line of women to fall under the spirit's influence, and her temperament and background made her an obvious choice. In her day job, she's infamous as a high-priced attorney to whom no client is too despicable to defend, be they terrorists, the basest demagogues, or homicidal ex-athletes. No tactic is out of bounds for her, from race-baiting to outright jury tampering.

Filled with bitterness, Lady Anarchy is the Syndicate's wild card, and the other members wonder how long she'll be content with the *status quo* before she decides another change is needed and leads a revolt against them. In truth, Syndicate membership is a necessary evil to her, providing the billions necessary to sponsor the many international terrorist groups she directs.

**MADAME SIN**

Dr. Sin, the most powerful crime lord in China, sent his daughter Jasmine to seduce Duncan Summers, head of Praetor's secret police. She was successful, but when he attempted to betray her, she killed him. Later, she bore his daughter Callie, and raised her as a true child of Sin. From childhood Callie was trained in every art of espionage and combat and given a number of special high-tech gadgets designed for her use. In time she exceeded even her father's murderous abilities.

**LADY ANARCHY****PL 11**

Str 30/14	Dex 16	Con 14	Int 12	Wis 17	Cha 18
<b>Skills:</b> Concentration 8 (+11), Diplomacy 8 (+12), Knowledge (civics) 11 (+12), Knowledge (history) 5 (+6), Language 1 (Spanish), Notice 6 (+9), Profession (lawyer) 8 (+11), Sense Motive 9 (+12)					
<b>Feats:</b> Defensive Attack, Endurance, Equipment, Inspire, Quick Change, Teamwork					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Enhanced Strength 16</b> , <b>Flight 5</b> (250 MPH), <b>Fire Control 11</b> (Fires of Anarchy, mystic; <i>Alternate Powers:</i> <b>Deflect 11</b> [all ranged attacks], <b>Emotion Control 11</b> (Burst Area, Limited to anger), <b>Nullify 11</b> [all binding and imprisoning effects at once]), <b>Protection 10</b> , <b>Super-Strength 6</b> (50 tons)					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +12, Grapple +28, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +10, Knockback -6, Initiative +3					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +12, Fortitude +8, Reflex +6, Will +11					
<b>Drawbacks:</b> Power Loss (all powers, when bound or imprisoned, -5 points)					
<b>Abilities 31 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 68 + Combat 44 + Saves 17 - Drawbacks 5 = Total 175</b>					

**MADAME SIN****PL 12**

Str 15	Dex 22	Con 16	Int 24	Wis 20	Cha 22
<b>Skills:</b> Acrobatics 8 (+14), Bluff 8 (+14), Computers 4 (+11), Disable Device 6 (+13), Disguise 6 (+12), Drive 4 (+10), Escape Artist 8 (+14), Gather Information 8 (+14), Intimidate 10 (+16), Investigate 16 (+23), Language 5, Notice 9 (+14), Pilot 6 (+12), Search 8 (+15), Sense Motive 8 (+13), Sleight of Hand 6 (+12), Stealth 8 (+14)					
<b>Feats:</b> Acrobatic Bluff, Assessment, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 4, Equipment 10, Evasion 2, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Jack of All Trades, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Stealth), Sneak Attack, Startle, Takedown Attack, Uncanny Dodge (auditory)					
<i>Equipment:</i> commlink, costume (+2 Toughness), grapple gun ( <b>Super-Movement 1</b> [swinging]), utility belt: flash-bangs ( <b>Dazzle 4</b> , visual & auditory), Alternate Powers: boomerangs (+2 damage), smoke bombs ( <b>Obscure 4</b> , visual, Continuous), stun grenades ( <b>Stun 4</b> , Ranged), plus up to 10 points in other equipment.					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +16, Grapple +18, Damage +2 (unarmed), +4 (boomerang), Defense +16 (6 flat-footed), Knockback -4, Initiative +10					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +8 (+5 flat-footed), Fortitude +6, Reflex +10, Will +9					
<b>Abilities 59 + Skills 32 (128 ranks) + Feats 39 + Combat 56 + Saves 11 = Total 197</b>					

Madame Sin later returned to Empire City to complete the work her mother began. She eventually took her father's place as Praetor's ruthless keeper of order in Empire City, only to join the Tyranny Syndicate in overthrowing him. While she has served the Syndicate well, her teammates do not trust her at all. They know she speaks for her grandfather and has his backing, so they keep a close eye on all her doings.

**MASTER METROPOLIS**

The truth of Master Metropolis' 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 as a member of the organization.

Metropolis is a manifestation of cold urban order, and the most effective spymaster Empire City has ever known, pursuing his duties with

**MASTER METROPOLIS****PL 11****Str 18** **Dex 12** **Con 30** **Int 18** **Wis 18** **Cha 10****Skills:** Craft (structural) 16 (+20), Disable Device 8 (+12), Intimidate 6 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+12), Sense Motive 8 (+12), Stealth 6 (+7)**Feats:** Diehard**Powers:** **Animate Objects 11** (Limited to urban materials, Alternate Powers: **Snare 11**, **Telekinesis 11** [Perception Range, Limited to urban materials]), **Density 4** (x2 mass, Strength +8, **Immovable 1**, **Protection 2** [Impervious], **Super-Strength 1**, Permanent, Innate), **ESP 9** (all senses, Limited to urban areas), **Flight 1** (10 MPH, Limited to urban areas), **Immunity 12** (aging, life support, sleep, starvation), **Mind Shield 5**, **Protection 2** (Impervious), **Regeneration 6** (injured and staggered, 1/5 minutes, disabled, 1/hour, Regrowth, Source: urban areas), **Super-Movement 3** (permeate, Limited to urban materials), **Super-Senses 1** (radio), **Teleport 9** (900 ft./anywhere on Earth, Medium: urban areas)**Combat:** Attack +10, Grapple +15, Damage +4 (unarmed), Defense +8, Knockback -10, Initiative +1**Saving Throws:** Toughness +14, Fortitude +10, Reflex +4, Will +10**Drawbacks:** Weakness (non-urban environments, -1 Con per 20 minutes)**Abilities 38 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 103 + Combat 36 + Saves 9 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 197****RED SIREN****PL 11****Str 24** **Dex 16** **Con 18** **Int 14** **Wis 16** **Cha 16****Skills:** Diplomacy 8 (+11), Intimidate 8 (+11), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+10), Knowledge (life sciences) 4 (+5), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8 (+10), Language 2 (Dahomeny, French), Riding 6 (+9)**Feats:** Environmental Adaptation (aquatic), Equipment, Favored Environment (aquatic), Quick Change, Ritualist**Powers:** **Animal Control 10** (Limited to sea-life), **Device 5** (silver net, easy to lose), **Flight 3** (50 MPH), **Immunity 3** (aging, disease, drowning), **Protection 6**, **Swimming 8**, **Water Control 10** (Alternate Powers: **Blast 10**, **Dazzle 10** (visual), **Suffocate 10**, **Weather Control 10** [distraction, hamper movement]), **Super-Strength 5** (12 tons)  
*Silver Net:* Snare 11 (Affects Incorporable 2, Tether)**Combat:** Attack +11 (+12 aquatic), Grapple +23, Damage +7 (unarmed), +10 (blast), Defense +11, Knockback -5, Initiative +3**Saving Throws:** Toughness +10, Fortitude +9, Reflex +8, Will +8**Drawbacks:** Normal Identity (Cassandra Vale, free action)**Abilities 44 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 82 + Combat 44 + Saves 15 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 198**

ruthless and inhuman efficiency. He considers Empire City "his" in fact as well as metaphor, and nothing there escapes his notice for long.

**RED SIREN**

As on Earth-Prime, Cassandra Vale became a willing conduit of the voodoo ocean spirit. However, to the people of Anti-Earth the Red Siren—*la Siren Rouge*—is a manifestation of the dark side of the sea and the cruelty of nature. Mortals must placate the former modern-day pirate, or else she vents her rage against them for poisoning her waters and the disdain they show for "the old ways." Her favorite targets are polluters and deniers of the *loa*'s power (including adherents of any other religion).

Red Siren considers all the oceans her domain, and 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 Caribbean islands.

Her alliance with the Syndicate gives her the worship and prominence she considers her due, and provides her allies against her rival, Baron Samedi. Samedi is the vassal of another voodoo spirit, and the Siren and he represent opposing powers of life and death. They usually work to thwart the other's plans but sometimes find reason to work together (before inevitably betraying each other).

**SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS**

If the heroes are victorious in battle, there is a moment of stunned silence before the huddled civilian masses begin cheering wildly. The scene reminds the characters of the Berlin Wall coming down, but this spontaneous celebration may just put that one to shame.

Some means of incarcerating the Syndicate members is needed, and the Gamemaster should allow the heroes to find one. The characters can "borrow" the necessary gear from some unbelievably intimidated Empire City cops nearby, or use the Syndicate's own containment cells inside the Fortress. However it's accomplished, the Syndicate must be out of commission before events proceed **We Are Controlling Transmission** below.

The heroes eventually notice Mind-Master hasn't shown up to join the victory lap. A search of the Fortress fails to reveal his presence, and more disturbingly it turns up no sign of the cosmic-energy bomb, either—a pretty darn difficult thing to hide.

**JAILBREAK**

Characters defeated by the Syndicate eventually wake up in the aforementioned holding cells inside the Fortress, surrounded by toughness 15 walls. The cell doors are made of parallel metal bars secured by a state-of-the-art electronic lock (DC 30 Disable Device skill check to bypass). The heroes have been stripped of all equipment and segregated into cells with Nullifying Fields (rank 12, all powers, sustained duration).

The characters see no guards, and though they have no way of knowing it, aren't under any meaningful electronic surveillance, either. Even in their weakened condition, the characters may escape by their own means, and the Gamemaster should let the heroes try with all due chance of succeeding. Note the heroes can easily take 10 or 20 in these circumstances, especially since they're going nowhere without a successful check of some kind. If the characters do get out on their own volition, events progress to **We Are Controlling Transmission** below.

If the characters' lockpicking skills are weak, they can go after the Nullifying Fields instead. It takes a successful DC 20 Craft (mechanical) or DC 25 Disable Device skill check to sabotage a field generator, with a possible -4 penalty for being sans tools. The heroes can also use extra effort to gain an opposed check against the field's effects (see *M&M*, page 94) which can re-activate their powers and allow them to bust out.

**THE WAGES OF SIN**

Should the characters seem well and truly stuck, a brief interlude dramatizes their early parole. After several hours of failing to break out of their high-tech hoosegow, the heroes see Madame Sin slowly staggering towards the cell block. Her costume is bloody and torn, and a torn piece of her cape supports her obviously broken arm. She speaks, but a stream of blood from her nose, mouth and ears makes communication difficult.

Despite her battered state, Madame Sin's intensity still flares as she interrogates the heroes: "The bomb you were after—are you serious about deactivating it?" If the characters manage a sincere affirmative, Madame Sin opens their cells and mutters a brief "Mind-Master has it" before her wounds drag her into unconsciousness.

True heroes can stabilize her condition if they have the proper skills or move her to the base's automated infirmary. Madame Sin is out of commission for some time to come, so there's no chance of her recovering and threatening the character's mission. Making a DC 15 Medicine skill check treats her array of physical traumas, the least of which is her left arm's compound fracture.

## WE ARE CONTROLLING TRANSMISSION

As the heroes leave the vicinity of the Fortress, they notice people on the street moving at a more frantic pace than usual. Depending on how much time has passed, they may already be fleeing, panicky mobs. If the characters have access to any broadcast media (via a power, an electronic billboard, or storefront TV), they find out what's causing the mass hysteria.

Every channel and every station repeat a dire warning on continuous loop. It shows Mind-Master inside the Nerve Center, and behind him looms a huge glowing red-black sphere object the heroes recognize all too well. Mind-Master declares,

*"People of Earth, I have in my possession the most powerful explosive device ever constructed. If detonated, it would shatter the world like an eggshell. Those to whom this message is directed have by now scanned the source of this transmission and confirmed this as fact."*

*He continues, poised but sadly: "I have observed the entire history of mankind, and grown tired of humanity's goodness perishing beneath unbridled wickedness and neglect. Those who most perpetuate evil—the superhuman criminals who rule over us—must now surrender unconditionally and accept my judgment for their crimes."*

*In closing, Mind-Master's voice grows cold and hard: "If even one of you fails to comply with my demands, the bomb will put this corrupted world out of its misery. My powers will reveal any failure to accede to this ultimatum. You have twelve hours to conform to my will, or at long last face your reckoning."*

## FROM THE INNER MIND TO...

Even if the characters sympathize with Mind-Master, the bomb is still glowing and activated. Thus, the clock is ticking on Anti-Earth's existence, as well as the omniverse's. The heroes must get back to the Nerve Center and defuse the cosmic-energy bomb, even if they have to go through Mind-Master to do it.

As the characters race across Empire City, they witness people attempting a desperate and futile flight from danger, or rioting in a final act of defiance. While the heroes may briefly stop to help, nothing can be higher priority than stopping the bomb, however much they want to help those endangered by the city-wide chaos.

When the characters finally reach the abandoned subway tunnel, they see the Nerve Center as it was before, but the far wall has vanished to reveal a large chamber beyond. It's the size of a large warehouse, standing empty save for the cosmic-energy bomb and Mind-Master, who sits brooding.

If the characters lost their fight with the Tyranny Syndicate, its members lie fallen around the bomb, displaying injuries similar to Madame Sin's as described in **The Wages of Sin**. The Nerve Center's weapons systems are all smoking and spent, having taken an obvious toll on the Syndicate and the base itself.

## THE OUTER LIMITS

This chapter's first possible ending is a struggle to the finish between the heroes and Mind-Master. Taking him down won't be easy, but Mind-Master bears the heroes no ill will and pulls his punches unless they get close to stopping his plan.

If the characters defeat Mind-Master (or keep him sufficiently distracted), defusing the bomb requires a skill check with either Craft (mechanical) (DC 25) or Disable Device (DC 30). A character gets a +2 bonus to the check if he defused either of the cosmic-energy bombs previously encountered. Should a substitute disarmer be required, Evil Daedelus revives in time to do the job (though he needs help reaching the device with both legs broken). In case the characters haven't learned the cosmic lightning-rod's significance, any nearby heroes overhear Daedelus mumbling to himself about it.

Things are trickier if Mind-Master trounces the characters. The Gamemaster can declare the bomb destroys Anti-Earth but have the Norn rescue them beforehand and send them on to Chapter Five. Alternately, the Gamemaster can have Mind-Master undergo a change of heart at the last moment and wake up someone with the proper skills (preferably, a player character) and together they can disable the bomb.

## MIND GAMES

The second possible outcome involves the characters talking Mind-Master out of his rash course. Despite present appearances, Mind-Master has the

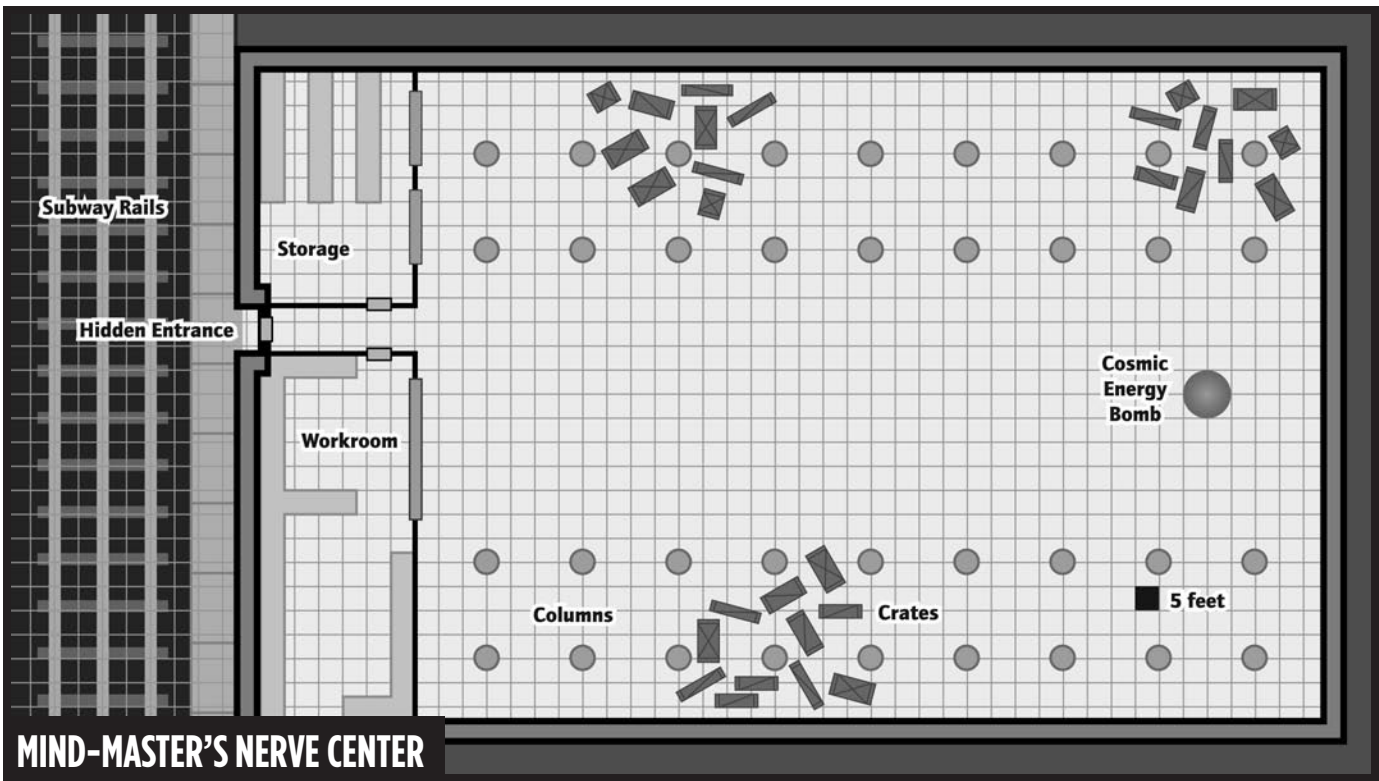


THE DEVICE FLOATING BEHIND ME IS THE MOST POWERFUL EXPLOSIVE DEVICE **EVER** CONSTRUCTED. IF DETONATED, IT WILL SHATTER THE EARTH LIKE AN EGGSHELL. I HAVE OBSERVED THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF MANKIND. I HAVE GROWN TIRED OF HUMANITY'S GOODNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS PERISHING BENEATH UNBRIDLED WICKEDNESS AND NEGLECT.

YOU WHO MOST PERPETUATE EVIL... THE SUPERHUMAN CRIMINALS WHO CLAIM TO RULE OVER US... NOW HAVE A CLEAR CHOICE. **SURRENDER TO ME UNCONDITIONALLY AND PREPARE TO ACCEPT MY JUDGEMENT FOR YOUR CRIMES.**

IF **EVEN ONE** OF YOU FAILS TO COMPLY, THE BOMB WILL PUT THIS CORRUPTED PLANET OUT OF ITS MISERY **FOREVER**. I, THE MIND-MASTER, KNOW YOUR IDENTITIES AND YOUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS. YOU HAVE **TWELVE HOURS** TO CONFORM TO MY WILL OR AT LONG LAST FACE THE RECKONING FOR YOUR ACTIONS.





best of intentions, but centuries of futile effort finally took their toll and blinded him to the consequences of his actions. There's still a true hero inside Mind-Master, and a concerted effort by the characters may yet bring him back from the reckless path he's chosen.

Using the Interaction Table, Mind-Master begins the final confrontation Hostile towards any characters attempting to thwart his scheme. However, so much of his better nature remains that multiple attempts can be made to change Mind-Master's attitude.

Even at the Hostile stage, Mind-Master doesn't use potentially lethal attacks against the characters, including the Nerve Center's deadly weapons grid. He does so because he's still a good guy, and plans on letting the heroes disarm the bomb as soon as he finishes reordering society to his liking. Unfortunately for the characters, this would take decades more time than Anti-Earth has left.

At the Unfriendly and Indifferent stages, Mind-Master merely does what he must to keep the heroes away from the bomb. This includes erecting a Force Field around it and himself.

Once he's at Friendly, Mind-Master stands down and doesn't interfere with the characters' efforts to disarm the bomb. At Helpful he does everything in his power to assist them (including reviving Evil Daedelus, if need be).

While die rolls are an inescapable part of the game, the Gamemaster can negate them here if the players' roleplaying is halfhearted or non-existent. Mind-Master already weighed the options, and fully believes a quick death for Anti-Earth is preferable to further suffering by its inhabitants. He believes the rest of the omniverse is irretrievably lost, so he's not swayed by appeals to help the "futile effort" to resurrect it. Since Anti-Earth's supervillains would detect its de-energized state and realize its harmlessness, he laughs off any suggestions to bluff them with a defused bomb.

### THIS IS THE END, BEAUTIFUL FRIEND

After the bomb is defused, Mind-Master becomes a morose, beaten man, at last fully grasping the magnitude of what he tried to do. He meekly offers himself up to whatever punishment the characters see fit to administer. He wants absolution and expects only his execution can grant it.

This is a great opportunity for a heroic speech from the characters, urging Mind-Master to find redemption in rededicating himself to the ideals he upheld for so long. It's more a matter of role-playing than "roll-playing," so no real die-throwing is required. Cautious characters wondering about Mind-Master's sanity and stability can try a Sense Motive check to reassure themselves he's back on the straight and narrow.

Mind-Master is in tears (of joy or remorse, depending on the characters' actions) as the heroes sparkle and fade from view. The last sight they see on Anti-Earth is its lone hero, profusely thanking the characters for giving him a second chance (if things ended on an upbeat note), or anguished and repeating, "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...."

### AWARDING POWER POINTS

The Gamemaster should award each character from 0 to 2 power points. Rewards are dependent on defeating their evil dopplegangers and the Tyranny Syndicate, disarming the cosmic-energy bomb, and putting Mind-Master back on the path of righteousness.

All characters wounded during the chapter are healed by the Norn during transport. She may also return dead characters to life, but the next chapter's setting makes it very easy to introduce new replacement heroes there instead. Again, resurrected characters get no power points, unless they willingly sacrificed their lives like true heroes.

# CHAPTER FIVE: FROM OMEGA TO ALPHA

**B**efore the heroes fully comprehend their surroundings, noise—familiar and unnerving—bombs their unguarded ears. It's a loud voice, leading like the first link in a chain to knowledge of their whereabouts. Capt. Maddicks is interrogating them, while playing cards and poker chips lie scattered around their feet. They're back in the Paradise casino, at precisely the last moment they remember before the Norm first pulled them from the time-stream.

The heroes are home, for as long as it lasts. Their Earth hides the last cosmic-energy bomb, and Freedom City is about to become ground zero unless they find it in time.

## I'M YOUR CAPTAIN

Capt. Maddicks is the first and most obvious resource available as the characters scour the city for the bomb. However, he's skeptical at best, since all he saw was a bright glow around the characters for a second. If the heroes departed on bad terms with the captain, it takes some sweet-talk to persuade him *The End Is Near*.

Convincing "Bulldog" of their mission's urgency requires a Diplomacy skill check, adjusted by the captain's current mood. The heroes' obvious sincerity—the kind gained only by seeing the omniverse blown up—gives them a +2 bonus on the check.

If the characters simply got beat by the Thieves' Guild and allowed them to escape, Maddicks is Unfriendly towards them (as per the Interaction Table). By contrast, he is Hostile (and plans to arrest the characters) if they lost the battle after going in without his authorization. Under these circumstances, the characters may have to take it on the lam if they can't persuade Maddicks doomsday is nigh. Obviously, being pursued by the police seriously complicates their search efforts and hinders their chances of finding the bomb in time.

An Unfriendly or Indifferent result is enough to get Maddicks to forego charges. An Indifferent result also gets the characters permission to question any captured Thieves' Guild members. A Friendly or better result earns them the captain's full (if begrudging) cooperation.

Despite their usefulness, Maddicks and the FCPD are intended to be a means of last resort for the Gamemaster. The bomb's hiding place is too unlikely to draw attention from even the sharpest detective, and having the police deduce its whereabouts really upstages the characters. Therefore, the cops should only tip off the heroes if all their efforts fail. In that case, Maddicks provides the 411 to the clueless fugitive heroes after their "crazy story" checks out.

## NO HONOR AMONG THIEVES

The FCPD won't stand for the villains getting too roughed up, but otherwise the characters can beg, cajole, threaten, or lie to the Thieves' Guild as they see fit. As the heroes interrogate them, they find the Guild members are feeling varying degrees of cooperative.

Of the lot, the Firebug is most difficult to get anything useful from. He's such a basket case over his pretty fires being extinguished all he does is ask the characters what color the flames were when the universe burned. Looking Glass is ready to talk, but since ratting out her nebulous employer shaves nothing off her sentence, she's more interested in turning (grossly exaggerated) state's evidence against the other Guild members. Similarly, the Mad Maple is too full of long-winded political

rants to be a good stool pigeon. Attempts to question any of these villains are at +2 DC.

The other members—the Huckster, the Weather Mistress and the Bola—all feel betrayed by their erstwhile employer, and all attempts to get them to talk are at -2 DC. The Bola especially wants to spend some time with any female heroes present, so Bluff or Diplomacy skill checks attempted by distaff characters receive an additional +2 bonus against the amorous *bandito*.

Regardless of exactly who spills their guts, the Guild members share the same information. They were each contacted through their "usual sources" and put in touch with a "Mr. Johnson" operating out of Freedom City. He promised the Guild an escape route and 80% of the take if they agreed to knock over Paradise on his behalf.

Mr. Johnson was an ordinary-looking guy of extraordinary means. He had the Guild flown into Freedom City on a private jet, and kept to himself in a forward compartment throughout the trip. If asked about any unusual occurrences, the Guild members recall a bit of turbulence threw open the intervening door, revealing Mr. Johnson tinkering with a red-black cylinder about the size of a length of pipe, emitting an ebon-crimson energy. Whatever it was, Johnson quickly concealed it, and was loath to answer questions about it. (If they've seen one already, the characters recognize it as another "cosmic lightning rod" detonator for Omega's doomsday bombs. Otherwise, the trademark glow should tip them off to its origins.)

If asked about Mr. Johnson's whereabouts, the last time the Guild saw him he hailed a cab at the airport and asked to go to Liberty Park. If they use the Park as their search's starting point, this information gets the heroes within a reasonable distance to the bomb.

## WWW.LOOKINFORABOMB.COM

Heroes may hunt for clues out on the information superhighway. It's not easy to locate, but there is a dandy one out there on the internet (and if it's on the net, it *has* to be true). A web search and a DC 25 Computers skill check turn up a disturbing image on the Freedom City Super Museum web site.

The Museum's webcams allow people worldwide to tour selected exhibits, even if they can't visit Freedom City in person. Right smack dab in the relics from Omega's 1993 invasion of Earth is an object labeled "unidentified device." The characters immediately see it's a cosmic-energy bomb, pulsing with the tell-tale red-black energy it only emits when activated. If the characters found out Omega's lackey Mr. Johnson headed for nearby Liberty Park, they have a pretty good guess as to how the device got all lit up like that.

## HEY, ANY YOU PEOPLE SEEN A BOMB?

Characters who prefer getting their 411 off the streets can also get some pointers to the Super Museum. However, if a hero's canvassing anywhere outside Midtown, any rolls the character attempts are largely the result of Gamemaster pity and face very high DCs.

Asking questions in and around the Midtown area (such as Liberty Park) improves the odds tremendously, requiring a DC 25 Gather Information

skill check. If a character asks around in the vicinity of the Super Museum (by happy accident or design), the DC is reduced to 15.

If the heroes had to make a break for it to avoid being arrested by Maddicks' STAR Squad, things are a bit more complicated, since characters must question a lot of complete strangers without attracting the cops. Under these circumstances, the DC of all Gather Information attempts is increased by 2.

Contacting Freedom City's other hero teams result only in brief conversations, if that, as they're all currently dealing with their own crises. If the characters have contacts with the Atom Family, the living computer Dr. Atom may let them into the Goodman Building, especially if they mention Omega or the Terminus. The computerized genius can then use the building's equipment to detect any nearby cosmic-energy sources. This approach, while effective, is time-consuming, and moves the plot ahead to Omega's arrival in **The Panic in Liberty Park** without any time for additional information or resource gathering.

## MUSEUM PIECES

Whether they get there on their own savvy or just blunder about until Maddicks drops a dime and tells them where to go, the characters should eventually wind up at the Super Museum. Their arrival is met by a throng of visitors wanting to get "that superhero's" autograph. The Gamemaster can re-emphasize the character's mission by describing a blinding flash of white light—only to reveal it's a tourist's flash camera, not the end of the omniverse.

On request, the characters get an immediate audience with the museum's curator, the distinguished Dr. Jerry B. R. Thomas, who eagerly helps the heroes in any way he can. If asked about the "unidentified device," Thomas grows a bit somber and says it was found after Omega's 1993 invasion near Centurion's fallen body. Whatever it is, experts thoroughly examined it and found it to be completely inert. The energy it appears to give off is a special lighting trick meant to recreate some eyewitness descriptions of it. He mentions how some claim Centurion gave his life deactivating the device, while most believe he died fighting Omega. Dr. Thomas doesn't know which is true, but mentions both accounts are "part of Centurion's growing myth."

Dr. Thomas pauses once he gets within arm's length of the glowing bomb. "Strange," he notes, "the special lighting equipment is *unplugged*..." The sight of the thoughtful academic holding up the limp, unattached cord should be plenty to scare the characters into action.

## THE PANIC IN LIBERTY PARK

Before the characters change the object from "bomb, threatening to destroy the universe" to "museum exhibit, fun for the kids," a red-orange blast of energy shears away an entire museum wall. The masonry explodes inward, catching all nearby (heroes included) flat-footed and

forces them to make a DC 18 Reflex save or be struck by flying debris (DC 23 Damage save).

The blast exposes the exhibit room to 52nd Avenue and Liberty Park. Along with the sudden draft and masonry dust, a booming, bone-chilling voice comes through the opening: "This world is doomed! Doomed to crumble before the power of entropy!" The heroes now face the Lord of the Terminus himself, Omega.

Omega's tactics are simple: shoot down anyone (hero or tourist) getting near the cosmic-energy bomb with a full-force entropic Blast. The heroes have one round to clear the room of bystanders before Omega's next blast levels the room and everyone in it. As the walls and street collapse before Omega's blast, the bomb itself remains unaffected.

Lord Omega starts slowly towards the bomb from about 15' past the park's edge. If this draws the characters into Liberty Park (where they've got more room to maneuver), consult the sidebar for a general description of its layout.

## FOREIGN OBJECTS

To be quite blunt about it, a team of rookie heroes is more of an inconvenience than a threat to a mega-villain like Omega. He knows this, and is currently just as full of hubris as entropy. That said, the characters are holding a stronger hand than even they realize, and victory may be theirs if they're smart enough to play it correctly.

The best equalizers the characters can have in their possession are the bomb detonators, a.k.a the "cosmic lightning rods," which they pulled from the bombs to deactivate them. Depending on events in the preceding chapters, the heroes may have up to three of these devices—four, if an enterprising someone removes the one from the bomb in the Super Museum. If the characters get close enough to wield them, the rods can be deadly to Omega.

Since the rods and Omega's armor are made of the same material and imbued with the same energies, the villain's normal defenses are ineffective against them. In game terms, each rod acts as a Strike 10 attack against either Omega or his armor. Lord Omega and his armor's Toughness save bonuses are both a combined +0 against rod attacks, leaving him and his suit only unmodified die rolls to make the DC 25 Toughness saves. Scoring a critical hit on Omega's armor with a rod beaches it and triggers his Weakness drawback.

Of course, the heroes may not know what they have at the battle's start. If so, the Gamemaster can clue them in by having the rod(s) glow brighter, emit noise, vibrate, or otherwise get the characters' attention whenever the Lord of the Terminus is nearby. Omega himself can tip the characters off if he spots a hero with a detonator rod, as he gets seriously freaked at the very sight of it. Characters holding detonators then becomes Omega's prime targets, but it also delivers notice the heroes have the arrows of Paris in their hands.

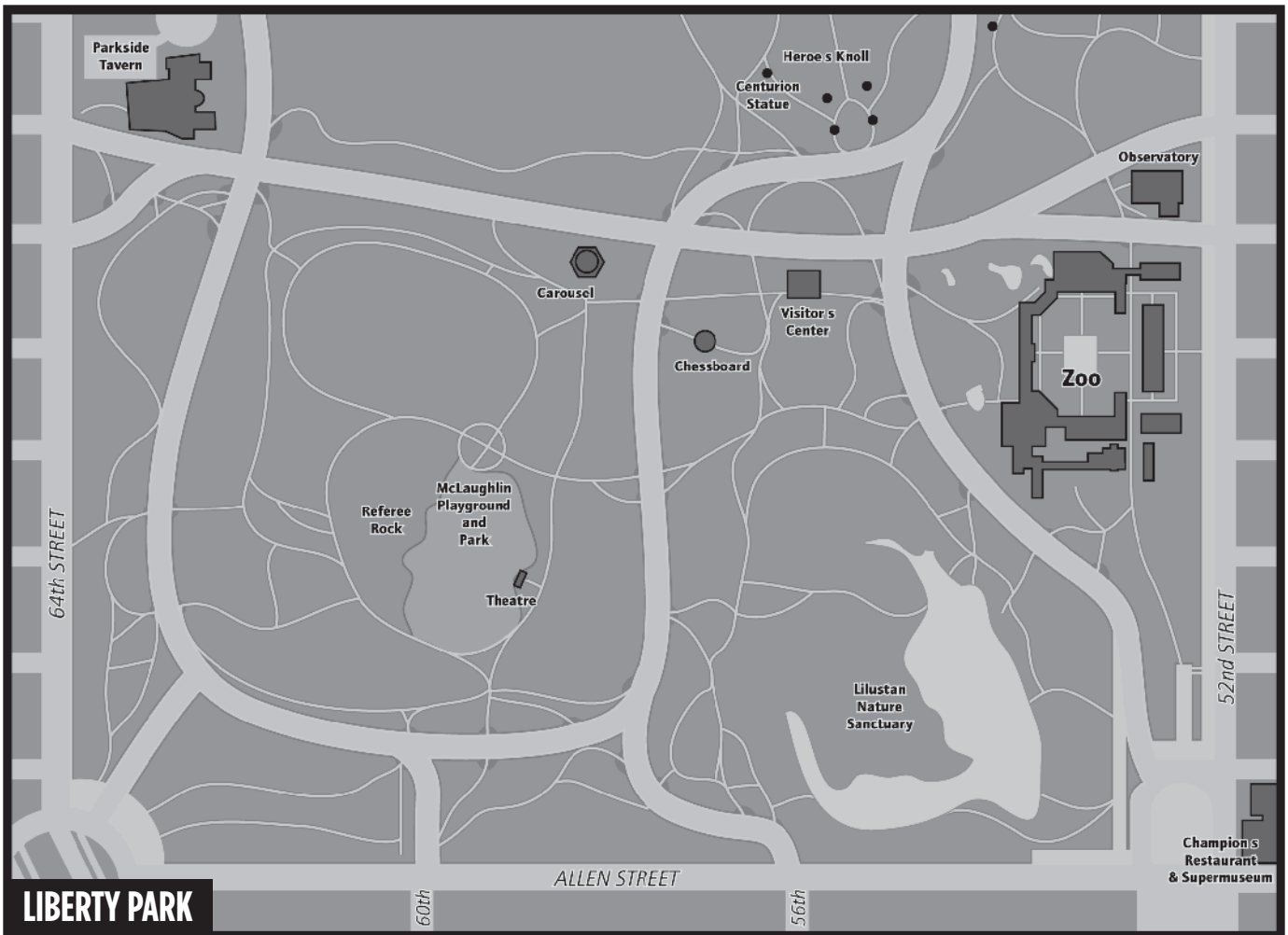
A detonator can also tip the characters off to Omega's Weakness drawback. Whenever a rod draws near the mega-villain, a violent, negative reaction in the energies flowing through his armor occurs. This hint may

### LIBERTY PARK

High stone walls surround the park, pierced by open wrought-iron gates every few blocks, one of which lies twisted amidst the rubble of Omega's opening salvo. One paved road immediately inside the walls encircles the park, two more cross the park north to south, and another two run east to west. Just the heroes' luck, these paths are all well-stocked with pedestrians as the fighting starts. Normally closed to all but emergency vehicles and a few horse-drawn carriages, the roads soon fill with ambulances and STAR Squad tactical vehicles.

Thankfully, most of Liberty Park's attractions (the athletic fields, the Botanical Gardens, Children's Zoo, and the Bandshell) are either just opening or closing down for the day, but the open, grassy areas more than make up the helpless passers-by quotient. The City Reservoir is another potential source of trouble, as any damage the battle inflicts on it causes major problems for a thirsty metropolis.

Near the reservoir is the Heroes' Knoll memorial area, and its statue honoring Omega's archenemy Centurion is one of the few things that can throw the Lord of the Terminus off his game. Each round he's in range, the Gamemaster adds 5 to Omega's checks to Notice the statue. Once he does, Omega stops whatever else he's doing (unless seriously threatened by something else) and blasts the effigy of his long-standing foe to bits. This is certainly petty vandalism, but it may also buy some hard-pressed heroes the recovery time they need.



savvy the heroes to the fact destroying Omega's armor is a mite easier than harming the man inside.

### PORTABLE DEATH-RAY... PRICELESS

If the characters have no detonator rods, the Super Museum itself may hold their salvation. Among the Museum's exhibits are devices left over from innumerable failed mastervillain plots. One of them just might be jury-rigged into service against Omega if a character has the necessary Craft skills and the Inventor feat.

Under the circumstances, Dr. Thomas (if conscious) is willing to let the heroes take whatever they need. It takes a DC 15 Search skill check to find the formerly functioning items among the dummy props. This eliminates the inventing design check (see *M&M*, page 131) but leaves the exact damage and attack type up to the Gamemaster, since the character is just riding on another mad scientist's lab-coattails. They may then jury-rig the device back into service as normal.

Looking in the *Deus ex Machina* Exhibit for a cosmic-something Omega might be vulnerable to is a much more difficult undertaking, requiring a DC 25 Search skill check. Otherwise, the device can be jury-rigged as outlined above. Any such cosmic device reduces Omega and his armor's Toughness saves by an amount equal to its damage bonus.

Of course, one player with mad skills and a hot die may slap together a device awesome enough to turn the epic final battle into a cosmic-powered turkey shoot, but this is quite easily remedied. All the Gamemaster has to do is describe the heat and smoke coming out of the offending weapon as it burns itself out permanently.

### ...NOR THE BATTLE TO THE STRONG

Another factor influencing things in the heroes' favor is right now, Omega is just plain tuckered out. If you think about it, blowing up the omniverse is really hard, tiring work—which is probably why more people don't try it. Even Omega could use a protein bar or something at this point. His energy reserves are low, and this prevented him from intervening personally until now. He's still not quite back up to 100%, and thus can't spare the energy to bring his legions of followers along with him to Earth-Prime.

Gamemasters can simulate this exhaustion by reducing Omega's Cosmic Energy Control power to 15 and his Toughness save to +15 (with Impervious 8). Note with his armor, Omega normally has a Toughness save of +24 (with Impervious 12), so this is a significant break for the good guys.

Heroes can also use their luck and teamwork against the solo villain. The characters should have some hero points remaining for the climactic battle, and the Gamemaster needs to make it clear there's no better time to use them. This is particularly true for heroes with the lethal cosmic detonators in their mitts.

The characters' superior numbers provide them an inherent tactical advantage over the lonely Omega, one they should exploit to the utmost. While they may lack the power to topple a mega-villain individually, their numbers allow them to distract Omega, make combined attacks, use aid, and otherwise make the fight a challenge for the bad guy.



## SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

It's entirely possible—gamers being devious by nature—the characters confront the dread Lord of the Terminus with all four detonator rods, a damage bonus 10 cosmic weapon salvaged from the Super Museum, a score of hero points and a tactical plan “Stonewall” Jackson would envy. It may not be probable, but the plot devices meant to level the playing field may instead tilt things too far against the villain.

The players won't have any fun if Omega simply beams in and takes down their characters like Earl Anthony rolling a beer frame. However, it's nearly as big a letdown if the characters face off with a literal shatterer of worlds and the ensuing fight looks like Act III of *Julius Caesar*, with Omega in the title role. Therefore, here are some “dirty villain tricks” the Lord of the Terminus can pull during the battle to frustrate overly clever players.

Never underestimate the time-honored villain tradition of endangering innocent lives, which Liberty Park is conveniently full of. Omega is not above shooting a passerby (use the Bystander archetype in *M&M*, page 226), especially since he knows from experience heroes stop hassling him and rush to get “the weaklings” to safety.

Bigger stunts are possible, too. Omega can distract heroes by igniting a gas main under the street or blast buildings—near the foundation if he wants to collapse them, near the top if he wants them to domino into one another. Dread Omega can then laugh while the heroes try saving scores of victims from the collapsing rubble. It's harsh, but that's why they call it evil, baby.

If the detonator rods become a balancing problem (which is more likely if the characters acquired more than one), the solution is simple. The rods are bomb components after all, not cricket bats, so it's quite reasonable to rule a detonator shatters into a million useless pieces after a given attack. Of course, the Gamemaster should be careful he doesn't leave the heroes weaponless against a rampaging PL 19 supervillain, but the thought is here if Omega needs the assist.

## OMEGA, LORD OF THE TERMINUS

His origin is spoken only in whispers throughout the cosmos, and the truth is shrouded by the mists of time. He was once a mortal being—a scientist studying the nature of the universe, they say—but he delved too deeply into things mortal beings were not meant to know. He unleashed a cataclysm, destroying his entire universe. He alone survived, thrust into the void beyond the omniverse—the Terminus. His ill-fated experiments may have even *created* the Terminus, or perhaps merely unleashed its power to spread cancerously through the omniverse. The truth may never be known, since that mortal scientist is long dead; in his place stands Omega, the Lord of the Terminus.

Omega has ruled over his domain throughout recorded history and his goal has always been the same: expand the Terminus until it engulfs all that is. The barriers separating the many dimensions and layers of reality stand between Omega and his objective. Instead, the forces of entropy can only worry at omniversal reality, chipping away bits and pieces here and there, drawing them into the Terminus where they become part of the cosmic flotsam of Omega's domain.

On occasion, inhabitants of other dimensions discover the Terminus, to their sorrow, since portals into his realm allow Omega's forces to conquer or destroy other worlds. Omega has invaded Earth-Prime as well, uniting the heroes of Freedom City against him. Each time, they only barely managed to repel Omega, and his most recent incursion did considerable damage to Freedom City. Omega himself was badly damaged in the fray, and retreated to his throne-world of Nihilor to recover and plot anew. Only when the knowledge and means to destroy the omniverse with surgical precision were finally his did Omega strike once more.

More information on Omega and the Terminus can be found in *Freedom City* and **Chapter Nine** of *Worlds of Freedom*.

## OMEGA, LORD OF THE TERMINUS

**PL 19**

Str 56	Dex 12	Con 50	Int 18	Wis 20	Cha 18
<b>Skills:</b> Bluff 8 (+12), Concentration 18 (+23), Intimidate 16 (+20), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+12), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+12), Notice 6 (+11), Sense Motive 8 (+13)					
<b>Feats:</b> Assessment, Attack Focus (melee), Diehard, Fearless, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Takedown Attack					
<b>Powers:</b> <b>Cosmic Energy Control 24</b> (Alternate Powers: <b>Blast 22</b> [Homing 4 (x25)], <b>Blast 23</b> [Ricochet, Split Attack], <b>Dazzle 16</b> [visual, Area] <b>Disintegration 12</b> , <b>Transform 9</b> [any inanimate matter], <b>Teleport 12</b> [1,200 ft./20 million miles, Portal]), <b>Device 6</b> (armor, hard to lose), <b>Immunity 13</b> (aging, life support, starvation and thirst, sleep, and his own powers), <b>Super-Strength 11</b> (heavy load: 100,000 tons) <b>Armor: Comprehend 2</b> (languages), <b>Flight 5</b> (250 MPH), <b>Impervious Toughness 12</b> , <b>Protection 4</b>					
<b>Combat:</b> Attack +15 (melee), +14 (ranged), Grapple +49, Damage +23 (unarmed), +24 (blast), Defense +14, Knockback -18, Initiative +5					
<b>Saving Throws:</b> Toughness +24, Fortitude +20, Reflex +8, Will +20					
<b>Drawbacks:</b> Weakness (when armor is breached by a critical hit, -1 drain on all abilities per minute, -5 points)					
<b>Note:</b> The above traits do not include Omega's legions of followers or the entire worlds of resources at his disposal. The GM should feel free to give Omega whatever equipment, devices, minions or the like called for in the adventure.					
<b>Abilities 114 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 113 + Combat 56 + Saves 22 - Drawbacks 5 = Total 325</b>					

## BEAMING DOWN THE CAVALRY

Frowns appear if the characters, having been bounced like ping-pong balls across the omniverse, get their spandex-ed butts kicked by Omega at the very end. To be sure, they say this cat Omega is a *bad* mother (shut your mouth!), and it's certainly possible for him to mop up the planet with any hero team. However, there is a way to even up the odds that doesn't feel like a total cheat, because it rewards the characters for what they've achieved in the adventure thus far.

If Omega's still standing tall and just about done beating up the hapless heroes, the Norn expends her remaining life-energy to give Earth-Prime one last chance for survival. This causes bright flashes of white light to illuminate the landscape suddenly, streaming from portals opening in the sky itself. Out of these gateways come reinforcements from the parallel worlds saved by the characters.

Depending on the outcomes of previous chapters, this group may include Dr. Tomorrow leading a phalanx of Nazi war machines under his mental control, the Primate Patrol (minus Dr. Simian, of course), or Mind-Master. If not enough heroes survived to turn the tide, the Norn can talk the Tyranny Syndicate into helping. Sure, its members are all evil and stuff, but still they're not letting Omega get away with trying to blow up the world they worked so hard to conquer.

If the characters left behind any “cosmic lightning rods,” there's an added bonus. The other-dimensional heroes now wield them, having gleaned their full significance after the characters' departure. However, the Gamemaster must make sure the non-player characters are *not* the ones ultimately using them. They're in this chapter to take lumps for the characters, and dish out a few on Omega before getting knocked out. Otherwise, the players wind up being spectators at their own game.

In a pinch, one or more of Freedom City's existing hero teams (like the Freedom League or Atom Family), can show up in the same role. This can work, dramatically speaking, if the Gamemaster is planning on wiping them out of existence (see **Post-Crisis Reboot**, below). However, the players get a greater sense of heroic accomplishment using heroes from the parallel Earths who owe their lives to the characters.

## BREAKING THE THIRD LAW

Assuming the battle ends with Omega's defeat, the climax unfolds as follows. Time seems to stop for the heroes, as the Lord of the Terminus stills for an agonizing moment before toppling backwards. If he's merely unconscious, a dimensional transport device activates, and he falls into a portal back to the Terminus. There he gradually regains his strength and once more plots the destruction of Earth-Prime, for which his hatred now burns with a fire greater than a thousand suns.

One side-effect of the transport device is a temporary, localized surge of cosmic energy which completely shatters any surviving cosmic detonators. Omega will not be beaten by them a second time.

If Omega dies (an unheroic, but possibly necessary, conclusion), his armor fractures like glass and the cosmic fires inside slowly extinguish, leaving only the impossibly charred skeleton within. After great aeons, even entropy itself has died.

The GM can of course invoke Gamemaster Fiat and have Omega undergo a corpse-free "death," until-like Elvis—he's finally ready for his big comeback. Alternately, an unwary someone (like Mind-Master) can casually touch Omega's blackened remains, causing orange and black flames to engulf him. As the fire consumes the body, it draws the cursed soul into the Terminus to be its new entropic master. The new Omega inherits the predecessor's powers, but may have a very different agenda for the Terminus. In any case, the threat of Omega is reborn in a more unpredictable form. As those of the Terminus say, "Omega is death and life and both are eternal."

## THE FAMOUS FINAL SCENE

At some point, the final cosmic-energy bomb needs to be disarmed, requiring a skill check with either Craft (mechanical) (DC 25) or Disable Device (DC 30). A character gets a +2 bonus to the check if he defused any of the cosmic-energy bombs previously encountered. If the characters still need help with this task, an appropriate member of the "extra-dimensional cavalry" (like Iron Monkey) can provide it. Otherwise, another Freedom City hero (like Daedalus) can arrive just after the battle and spell them.

Once the bomb is defused, there is yet another brilliant, all-engulfing flash of white light, and the spectral figure of the Norn coalesces from it. She thanks the heroes for their courage and sacrifice and confirms the omniverse has been saved as a result of their actions. The Norn may mourn the dimensions they didn't save (which are now lost), or relate how their latest success altered history and completely restored the omniverse (GM's choice). If asked about her own well-being, the Norn gratefully assures all concerned the renewed realities will in time replenish her life-energy to its former level.

If the Gamemaster used the **Beaming Down the Cavalry** option above, the honored dead (if any) are suitably laid to rest in a solemn ceremony attended by all. Soon after, a fawning press corps besieges every cape in sight (especially Dr. Tomorrow, who hasn't been seen on Earth-Prime in fifty years).

Eventually, farewells are exchanged, and the extra-dimensional heroes assure the characters they are welcome visitors on their worlds (except for the Tyranny Syndicate, which tells them to go to Hell). The Norn adds, "As you know, such journeys are possible. The road is open to those brave enough to travel it." However, the time travel-lagged heroes are likely to decline the invitation politely, at least for now. With that, the still-weary Norn manages a smile and sends everyone back to their respective home Earths, leaving the heroes on the world they just saved.

## O DEATH

It's in keeping with comic-book tradition for any characters slain in the final battle to stay dead, just like Centurion. Their sacrifice remains a testament to true heroism under the most dire of circumstances. Those who fell battling Omega inspire other superhumans, some of whom are bound

to assume their code-names and attempt to live up to their examples. In other words, it's the start of a good back-story for players needing replacement characters.

More benevolent Gamemasters can use a **Post-Crisis Reboot** (see below) or the Norn's time-scooping abilities to resurrect any deceased heroes. Immediate resurrection greatly undercuts a character's sacrifice, however, and renders the climax much less dramatic. Leaving a character dead also keeps the door open for more spectacular resurrections later on. Depending on what the Gamemaster and player want to do with the character, more adventures can arise from the hero's grave once it's empty. Freedom City can be horror-struck as the beloved hero returns as a zombie controlled by Baron Samedi, or the character's flesh could become entropic and return him to life wielding a fraction of Omega's powers.

## AWARDING POWER POINTS

With this chapter, the adventure concludes, and each surviving character should receive from 0 to 2 power points. The reward is fairly simple to gauge: if they disposed of the cosmic-energy bomb safely, fended off Omega and lived, they deserve all points they can get.

## POST-CRISIS REBOOT

One of *Time of Crisis'* more radical outcomes involves the omniverse continuing as the Norn hoped it would, but due to some irreversible destruction, it's different than it was before. Essentially, this allows Gamemasters to take an eraser to their existing game universe and redraw it anyway they see fit.

Inherently, this gives the Gamemaster a great deal of possibilities to choose from. Some of the more probable ones include a "merging" of one or more of the parallel worlds, a change in the relative prominence of the player characters, and alterations to the game universe's fundamental assumptions. None are to be implemented without due consideration, so a few words of advice follow.

Taking the rich panorama of parallel universes and changing it to something all mixed-up in a bucket is a serious step. It's only advisable if the Gamemaster wants to use elements of the other universes regularly without resorting to dimensional travel. The players' responses in *Time of Crisis* are the best gauge of how intriguing any given element is likely to be as a regular part of the campaign. A moderate level of interest can be satisfied by a follow-up adventure or two, and any element less compelling is best left out. Only if the players *demand* to see "them monkey superheroes" (or the like) on a weekly basis should this option even be considered.

The second possibility involves any dissatisfaction the Gamemaster and players feel about the characters' importance in the game world. Perhaps they're tired of being perceived as the Freedom League's cabana boys, and want to play in a Freedom City where they're the unparalleled A-list heroes. If so, the Gamemaster can declare the League (and maybe some others) killed during the battle, MIA in the post-*Time of Crisis* universe, or non-existent in the re-booted history. There's a great follow-up rescue adventure down the line in the second case, and a much more epic campaign in the third, as the main-event villains now come looking for *them*....

Finally, a post-*Time of Crisis* reboot can be used to correct any ongoing problems or failed premises in the campaign. Maybe that character with the annoying time-travel power is ruining too many of the Gamemaster's storylines. If so, his temporal journeys can be over once *Time of Crisis* is done. Perhaps in hindsight the "no magic in this universe" edict seems to be the result of too little sleep and too much party liquor. In that case, *Time of Crisis* can lead to the birth of magic in the universe, opening up many new potential plotlines. Literally anything that hasn't worked out as hoped can be dismissed with at least a comic-book level of plausibility. Again, there's no limit to the omniversal redecorating the Gamemaster can do, so the old omniversal maxim "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is well worth repeating here.

# FREEDOM'S MOST WANTED

**"SARGE,  
WE'RE  
GONNA  
NEED  
SOME  
BACK  
-UP..."**



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