

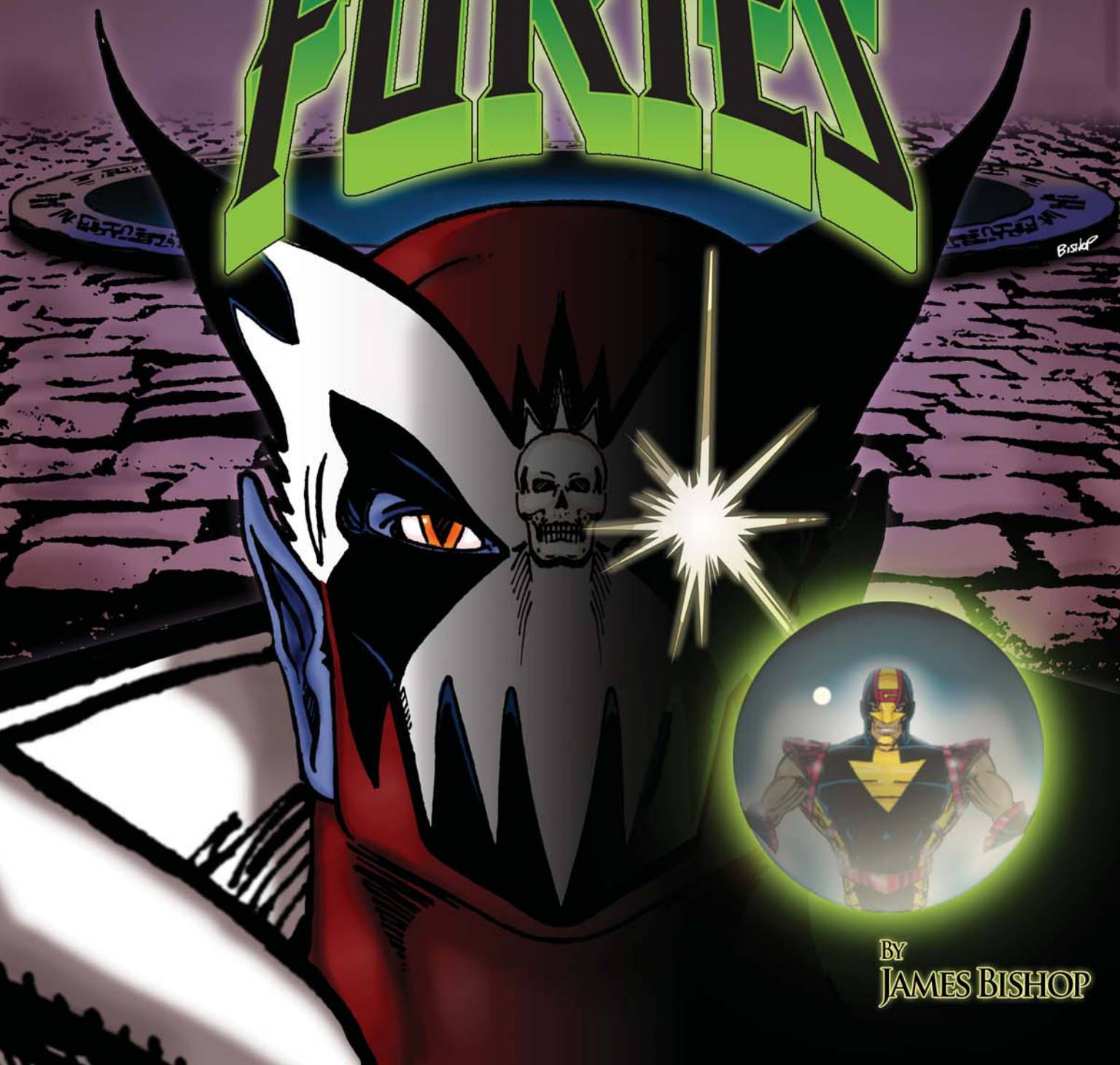
VILLAINS
AND
VIGILANTES™

FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED

2026a

FINAL FIGHT WITH THE

FURIES



Bisk

BY
JAMES BISHOP

SOMEWHERE IN ANCIENT BRITAIN, AS A WARRIOR FINDS RESPITE FROM A LONG BATTLE, SOME FINAL ADVICE COMES FROM THE FADING APPARITION OF A ONCE-POWERFUL BENEFACTOR ...

THE DEFEAT OF KUDARAK IS INDEED NOW A PYRRHIC VICTORY. EVENTUALLY, HE WILL REGAIN HIS STRENGTH. I LEAVE IT TO YOU TO ENSURE THAT HIS MENACE REMAINS THWARTED.

SO LONG AS THE COMPASS REMAINS HIDDEN AND OUT OF HIS REACH, HE WILL BE TORMENTED HERE IN EXILE, UNABLE TO ESCAPE THIS WORLD TO CAPATALIZE ON OUR MISFORTUNES.

AND THE KEY STONE?

SHALL IT REMAIN WITH THE LINE OF ARTHURIUS?

YES...

...EVEN WITHOUT THE COMPASS, WHEN OUR POWER IS NEEDED AGAIN, THE KEY WILL BE ALL MEN WILL HAVE TO OPPOSE THE SLAYNE AGAIN.

YET MARK MY WORDS JULIUS DOOMSAYER AS MY TIME AMONG THE LIVING IS ENDED...

...KUDARAK MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO MALKAPHERA AND REJOIN HIS SLAYNE BRETHREN. YOU MUST CARRY THIS KNOWLEDGE AND ENSURE THAT IN TIMES TO COME A CHAMPION WILL ALWAYS STAND AGAINST HIM. ONE DAY WILL SEE HIS RETURN AND A FINAL CONFLICT.

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES BISHOP * EDITED BY SCOTT BIZAR

TO BE CONCLUDED!

FINAL FIGHT WITH THE
FURIES

A

**VILLAINS
AND
VIGILANTES™**

MEGA-ADVENTURE

written and illustrated by James Bishop



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Gilbert, AZ 85299
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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

I've been hearing about this adventure/campaign for the past several years and am happy to finally have a chance to actually see it and go through it. As Final Fight with the Furies is really more of a long-term campaign than the usual adventure, it is longer than the standard adventure package and should be treated differently. The opening encounters should be played long before the main body of the adventure/campaign – probably playing a number of other adventures in between those opening encounters and the main sequence of Final Fight with the Furies.

I suspect that GMs will find that by playing other adventures between the parts of this one that they will build tension and recognition between the player-heroes and the main villains provided herein. If that is done, the challenging nature of this adventure (player-heroes should be of at least ninth level) will be worth the danger and difficulty faced by the heroes and they will have the chance to truly save mankind/civilization/the world from an ancient and cosmic evil poised to reappear after a long-time absence from human affairs.

Enough of the preparatory comments; get on with the adventure and good luck!

Scott B. Bizar
Editor-in-Chief

FROM THE AUTHOR

Greetings and welcome to what I hope will be as grand an experience as any adventure can be. As the list of players to thank grew, I realized that for many of them there was a certain mystique about the villains featured in this book. They were my personal ultimate villain group (read: “*Brotherhood of Masters of Evil Emissaries of Bad Things about to Happen*”). Over the length of the campaign, my players would absolutely cringe at these encounters, and even though they always seemed to appreciate a seat at the RPG table, they often only seemed to use the edge, especially if it was the Furies – there were rivalries and feuds and vengeance and drama. At the height of our group, there were 12-15 regular players and so these bad guys often had their own “reserve” members to help me, the GM, with the ebb and flow. It was an absolute chore to run some of those adventures, but produced lots of excellent role play and brought us all a lot of joy.

I strongly suggest that this adventure be purchased with the idea that the villains within be presented in their context prior to the events of this story and gradually introduced into your game to give your group history with them; there is material at the beginning of the script to help flow to this direction. Of course, the players in the various incarnations of our group faced these villains more than once and this current bad guy line-up has one or two additions and one or two omissions. Our players’ relations and interactions with the villains became more intimate than I would expect your group to experience right away, but given time, anything can happen. Likewise, if you have some recurring villains already that you as a GM believe would fit well, the Furies would surely expand their ranks with a few more like-minded cretins.

INTRODUCTION

Long ago an evil sorcerer was sent to Earth to sabotage peace in the galaxy. His plan was thwarted and, at great cost, he had been virtually imprisoned; marooned on this planet with no known way to escape. However, in recent years this sorcerer, Baen Kudarak, called the Dreadlord, an evil like none else on Earth, has discovered the presence of an ancient secret which may be the key to his freedom.

PROLOGUE: INITIAL ENCOUNTERS

This should come as no surprise, but if you are anyone but the GM who will be running this adventure (and in particular if you will be playing in a group set to embark on this journey), then you should probably stop reading and close this book.

If you are the GM, then this initial section is a series of short suggested encounters to help immerse the players into an involved history or association with the various villains in this adventure. It is recommended that each of these be run as solo or small group encounters for the heroes in the group so that each of the players will gain a sense of rivalry or familiarity with a particular villain featured. As suggested above, and it cannot be stressed enough, if the villains’ levels in this book are too high for your players, the ones introduced to the heroes in these first prologue sections should be modified down in an ‘historical’ context to an appropriate level for these encounters and then presented in their current form when encountered at the time of the adventure’s core.

In addition, the GM should read each of the backgrounds of the villains in this book and decide how best to integrate them into the construction of your gaming campaign. It is possible that a small version of the Furies in an assembled state could also be encountered at some time prior to the events of this book.

This adventure is for a very experienced group of 5 or more players from at least Levels 9 to 11, but as with every adventure can be tuned up or down by adjusting the levels of the villains. There are opportunities for NPCs to be added to the group in some of the chapters. These characters could also be given to any new players joining the game in progress or something to that effect if the GM so desires. The chapters of this adventure are not designed to necessarily be used in strictest order and may contain some recommendation or suggestion on alternate courses. The adventure will begin smoothly if conditions exist where the players’ heroes are an organized team. If the association of the heroes is too loose, it may be convenient to have them on a schedule for some sort of meeting or event to bring them together. The heroes will also likely be somewhat famous (or infamous) since at the recommended level of the adventure, the heroes will surely have had their share of spotlight in the local media or have been honored or acknowledged in some public way, especially if they have foiled other plots as a group in the V&V Universe.

GM take caution to your players, the adventure’s tone is fairly serious. If portrayed correctly the villains won’t surrender easily and if they have to retreat, they may just come back eventually to collect their pride by extracting the balance of flesh from the heroes. No one likes to lose, especially the Furies.

In the end, remember that the game is supposed to be fun. Make the most of this packed adventure that could spell a certain doom for the heroes and, if they fail, quite possibly the whole Earth as this certainly could be the Final Fight with the Furies!

There are rumored to be jewels as old as written history which, when assembled, will allow him to enter the hidden entrance to a lost city of ancient legend wherein resides a dormant gateway, the last of its kind on Earth. He must be stopped from controlling the gateway, else he will be able to end his long exile and return to his cabal where others as powerful as he await to once again threaten the galaxy...

i. INTEGRATION

If the GM has chooses to use these encounters and, after doing so, is comfortable that the villains have properly been integrated into the campaign; he or she may decide to integrate more of their existing story arcs previous to beginning the actual adventure.

It is recommended that the GM run these initial encounters or any other introduction to the villains gradually and not in sequential order or in a back-to-back fashion. The purpose of these encounters (or any other things that the GM may wish to run prior to the adventure) is to add flavor to the campaign and to present a natural feel when these villains are finally encountered during the adventure.

If the GM feels that he or she is creative enough to fashion more introductory episodes similar to the following short interludes featuring the other villains in this adventure, he or she should be careful not to contradict their origins. Also, the GM should avoid using the main villain, Dreadlord, at all costs. He is meant to be the sort of villain that is so powerful that a hero will likely see several tiers of villains prior to ever encountering him. Other villains featured in this adventure may have yet to experience the circumstance which transforms them into their current evil incarnation, such as Burst or Eliminator. On the other

hand, the GM may choose to run similar encounters with every villain featured in this book and have the encounters run right up into the timeframe of the current story.

ii. PRIME MOVER

Any players who have a special agency law-enforcement background or are involved in any special capacity with elite organizations such as C.H.E.S.S. are the ideal candidates to run afoul of Grav in his time before the Furies. Grav is a fugitive near the top of many short lists reserved for good guys who have betrayed king and country. Even though the truth is quite political and bears gray area worth examining, many agency personnel who want to track this former hero down are blinded by the dog-good rhetoric to the degree that any reasonable attempt to discover his true motives or, if perhaps his court-martial by the OMA was unwarranted, are often lost to itchy trigger fingers in the face of his formidable powers and reputation.

Grav does not avoid centers of population, rather quite the opposite; he tends to hide in plain sight while trying to achieve his goals. People mean collateral damage and Grav knows the OMA understands how much havoc he can create in a largely peopled area. Grav truly would wish to avoid harming innocents, but will do what needs to be done to maintain his freedom of action.

Grav's agenda is that of recruiting for the Furies, and at the time of this encounter, he may have already recruited some of their number (Vortex), although this encounter should be a single exposure to Grav. If Grav is to be encountered, the hero will likely have been given a special meter by his or her particular agency. The meter is equipped with a satellite uplink that detects singularities in concentrated spots around the globe. In this manner, Grav will be easy to track anytime he uses his powers to fly or exerts himself in heavy combat. Unfortunately for the hero, the meter is rather large and clumsy and cannot be concealed. The mission is simple: Capture Grav alive and bring him in to face the judgment of his court-martial.

Grav is meeting a contact named Abe to help with a list of potential agents in the various alphabet soup agencies who will be likely candidates for defection. Raptor is on this list. They will be meeting just outside a place called Alcatraz Bar & Grille at the Mission Granada Mall. The GM can locate this mall in any city he or she chooses. Grav will be stationary long enough for the hero to have the grill and nearby shops evacuated, if that is the hero's plan, but, of course, they would lose the element of surprise.

Abe will have just handed over the list. If the hero should try to involve or capture 'Abe,' Grav will be forced to 'silence' Abe. Abe is just a normal guy, so unless the hero can also control gravity, Grav's first action will be to bluff a conversation with the hero and snuff Abe. The GM should be careful to not remind the player about the meter. If the player still has it in his possession when he or she comes face to face with Grav, it will become apparent to him not only how he was tracked, but that he had help from someone with some technological resources.

If at any time the hero is simply losing, Grav will offer the hero a chance to stand down and walk, using psychology and his own personal experiences to have the hero question their loyalties, motives, orders and the authority of those who gave them. If Grav should win the encounter, he will warn the hero that since it is their first encounter, he'll let the hero walk, but will advise against further action. He will compliment the hero for his or her 'spunk'...

If the hero is winning and Grav knows he will be captured, he will 'surrender,' remaining silent, and once incarcerated in a temporary cell until the bigger authority can transport him to a proper facility, he will summon Vortex with a hidden device in his glove. Vortex will show up in 1d6 turns and waste no time in teleporting the two away to safety in an anonymous location.

When next encountered, Grav will not give off any reading to the meter as he will make the adjustments necessary to compensate for the use of his powers for flight. Such a device will still detect him in heavy use of his powers, such as in combat, but at that point he would likely not care...

MAP: MISSION GRANADA MALL AND SURROUNDING AREA

The following map is intended to provide a generic landscape for a typical retail shopping mall. Some mall locations have breezeways of open air between the facing shops of the mall and others are massive enclosed structures of varying sizes depending upon the local climate and size of the retail hub. On the map, the GM is encouraged to place any of the shops, including Alcatraz Bar & Grille, as he or she sees fit. Since we understand that many GMs will have a different vision of what a mall is like, a star has been placed on the map where this author envisioned the battle might take place. Remembering restaurants are usually in the area locations surrounding a mall or in convenient locations near the main entrances or the "food court" area found in most malls, the GM is given the freedom to choose.

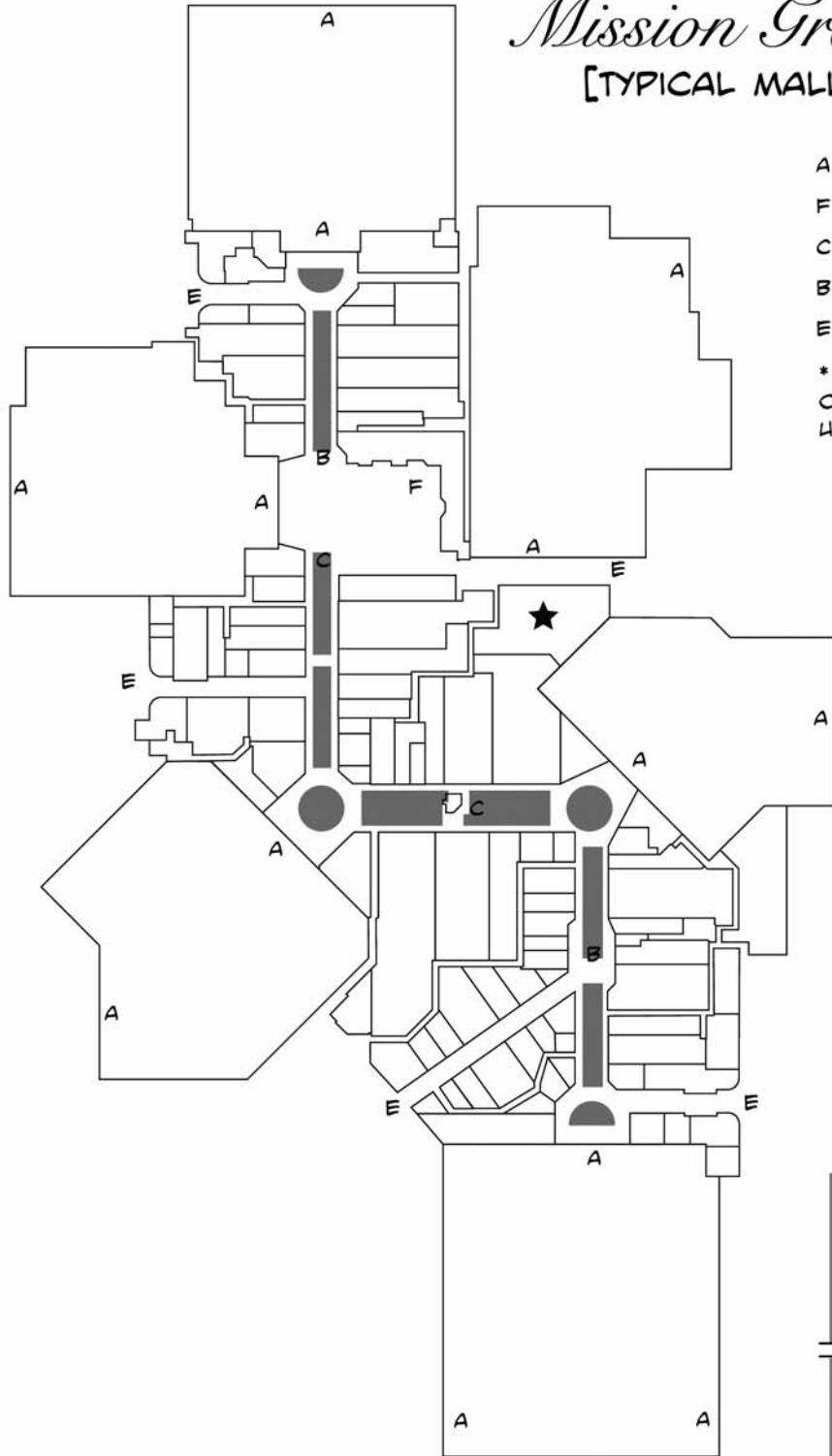
The map provided portrays no particular scale and depicts a typical single level. Mission Granada Mall is two levels. The GM is encouraged to divide the mall entrances into lower and upper level exits for variety; hence not all entrances or exits will be so located depending on elevation. The GM and players also may notice on the map several small hallways that run behind the shops on the interior. For those who do not know, these are typically service hallways for moving inventory, refuse and even store employees in and out of the mall without disturbing commerce.

The listing provided below for the GM is intended to evoke thoughts of familiar places to some players to allow for suspension of disbelief; some names of the shops provided are thinly veiled pseudonyms for popular commercial establishments and the like. The categories should be fairly obvious. A few of the listings are marked (Anchor) and their placement by the GM should correspond to locations on the map. These of course represent large retail, entertainment or service venues that have a significant floor area and offer a much wider quantity and/or variety of their related product than their competitors. An Anchor's financial commitment and draw of potential consumers is what will attract smaller businesses to a retail area in hopes of capturing some of the traffic intended for the larger retailer.

Accessories	Artifacts
Accessories	Larise's
Accessories	White Lies
Accessories	Fab U
Banking	Bank of the States
Banking	First American Bank
Banking	Guardian Federal Credit Union
Cell Phone & Accessories	Grasshopper Wireless
Cell Phone & Accessories	Celluphones
Cell Phone & Accessories	Diamondline Wireless/Horizon
Children's Apparel	Kasneyworld Store
Children's Apparel	Jamboree
Children's Apparel	Kinderland
Cosmetics	Basic Escentuals
Cosmetics	Bath & Body Emporium
Cosmetics	Close Shave
Cosmetics	Avenida
Cosmetics	Lush Us
Cosmetics	Originals
Cosmetics	Perfumaniac Perfume Shoppe
Cosmetics	The Body Shoppe
Cosmetics	Ultra Girl
Department Stores	Lears (Anchor)
Department Stores	Broussard's (Anchor)
Department Stores	Bergstrom (Anchor)
Department Stores	Robbins (Anchor)
Electronics	Bob's Mac Store
Electronics	Digital World
Electronics	Digitell
Electronics	RadioShoppe

Mission Granada Mall

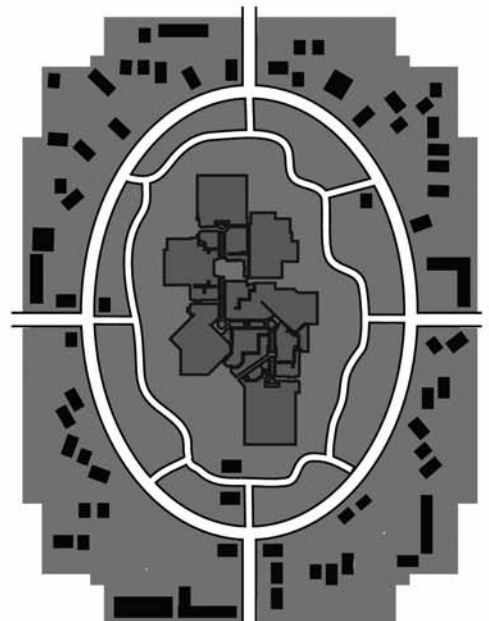
[TYPICAL MALL FLOOR PLAN]



- A ANCHOR STORE/ENTRANCES
- F FOOD COURT SHOPS
- C ESCALATOR LOCATIONS
- B ELEVATOR LOCATIONS
- E MALL ENTRANCES
- * SHADED AREAS REPRESENT OPEN AIR/NO FLOOR ON UPPER LEVELS

TYPICAL MALL AREA

- PARKWAY/AVENUES
- MALL
- PARKING LOTS
- AREA LOCATIONS



***ALL SCALE IS AT GM'S DISCRETION**

Electronics.....	Better Buy (Anchor)	Gifts, Cards & Books	Dixie Candle
Entertainment	Gold Rush Arcade	Gifts, Cards & Books	Hallcraft
Entertainment.....	GameZone	Gifts, Cards & Books	The Green Woodpecker
Entertainment	Build-Yer-Bear Works	Gifts, Cards & Books	Stearnes & Vogel (Anchor)
Entertainment	DaVinci Art Studio	Home & Office	Flagstone
Entertainment.....	Larkins Movie Theatres (Anchor)	Home & Office	Evan Alden Furniture
Eyewear	Lears Optical	Home & Office	Indoor Safari
Eyewear	Lens Dealers	Home & Office	Kidsty Children's Furnishings
Eyewear	Level Three Optics	Home & Office	Pottery Shards
Eyewear	Optique	Home & Office	Windsor Hardwood
Eyewear	Sunglass Pavilion	Jewelry	Felzenberg Jeweler
Eyewear	World Vision	Jewelry	Malta Jewelers
Family Shoes	Chic Shoes	Jewelry	Molina Diamonds
Family Shoes	Discount Shoestock	Jewelry	Tinker's Jewelry Repair
Family Shoes	Footnotes	Jewelry	Zanes
Family Shoes	Gators Footwear	Men's Apparel	Teddie Hauer
Family Shoes	Snitchers	Men's Apparel	Coldwater Canyon
Family Shoes	Starting Line	Men's Apparel	Gentlemen's Wearhouse and Tux
Family Shoes	Treks	Men's Apparel	Outlaw Menswear
Fast Food	Baja Cali Fresh	Nutrition	Greenleaf
Fast Food	Baron's Custard & Steakburgers	Nutrition	Nutri-Hut
Fast Food	McDougal's	Refreshments & Specialty.....	Marble Slab Creamery
Fast Food	Panda Empress	Refreshments & Specialty.....	Perq's Coffee
Fast Food	Kahuna Grill	Refreshments & Specialty.....	Auntie Anne's Pretzels
Fast Food	Nero's Gyros	Refreshments & Specialty.....	Orange Dream
Fast Food	Schitzel's Pretzels	Refreshments & Specialty.....	Dee's Candies
Fast Food	Steak Escape	Refreshments & Specialty.....	Lady Godiva Chocolatier
Fast Food	YBOY Frozen Yogurt	Restaurant/Bar	Kangaroo Jack's Bistro Bar
Fast Food	Sandwich Train	Restaurant/Bar	Thunder Dan's Sports Grill
General Apparel	Billy's	Restaurant/Bar	Alcatraz Bar & Grille
General Apparel	Mango Empire	Restaurant/Bar	Tonic
General Apparel	Weatherby & Finch	Restaurant (Food Court)	Villa Pizza
General Apparel	Wild Horse Outfitters	Restaurant (Food Court)	Flaco's Fresh Mexican Grill
General Apparel	Aerospaciale	Restaurant (Food Court)	Eden Bakery & Cafe
General Apparel	American Outfitters	Restaurant.....	Panda Empress
General Apparel	Buckle, Hitch & Post	Restaurant	Buffalo Brown Wild Wings
General Apparel	Clue	Restaurant	Abuelito's Mexican Food
General Apparel	Dillinger Co. Craze	Restaurant	Firebirds Wood Fired Grill
General Apparel	Express U	Restaurant	Keg & Company Steakhouse
General Apparel	Jersey Jeans	Restaurant	Little Sparta
General Apparel	Pacific Beach	Restaurant	P.E. Wong's China Bistro
General Apparel	Smoke & Mirrors	Restaurant	Thai Knots
Gifts, Cards & Books	Smoking Aces Tobacconist	Restaurant	The Old Spaghetti Factory
Gifts, Cards & Books	Spitzer's Gifts	Restaurant	Suzihana
Gifts, Cards & Books	Dugout Books	Restaurant	Olive Press
		Restaurant	Hibachi-San
		Salon & Day Spas	Dolce Salon & Spa
		Salon & Day Spas	ShortCuts
		Salon & Day Spas	Anthony Cheshire's Hair Salon
		Salon & Day Spas	Neo Club MedSpa
		Salon & Day Spas	Regency Salons
		Services	Alterations by Z Tailor
		Services	Electric Pagoda Tattoo & Piercing
		Services	Fantasy Photos
		Services	Fashion-Time Nails
		Services	Kandids Photos
		Services	Lewis Forbes Financial
		Services	Glitz Camera Repair
		Services	SpiffyLube Automotive
		Services	SaveNow Tire Center
		Specialty Apparel	Hatter Matter
		Specialty Apparel	Prototype X Sportswear
		Specialty Apparel	Schwag
		Specialty Apparel	Victoria's of Hollywood
		Sporting Goods &Accessories	Big Jock's
		Sporting Goods &Accessories	Athletic Aesthetic
		Sports Apparel	CycleStyle



Sports Apparel	Sport Court
Teen Apparel	ZoomRoom
Teen Apparel	Forever Young
Teen Apparel	SoCal Girlz
Teen Apparel	Wet Kiss
Toys, Games & Hobby.....	Toys-4-U
Toys, Games & Hobby.....	Knobbie's Hobby
Toys, Games & Hobby	BLOX
Toys, Games & Hobby	Imagine That
Women's Apparel	Baby Boutique
Women's Apparel	Divina's Collections
Women's Apparel	JR Loveletter's
Women's Apparel	Kayla Denise
Women's Apparel	Annette Traylor
Women's Apparel	Babe
Women's Apparel	Body Curve
Women's Apparel	Downtown
Women's Apparel	Jairo's
Women's Apparel	Limited Exposure
Women's Apparel	Liz Intimates
Women's Apparel	Manhattan on 5th & Company
Women's Apparel	My Other Mother's Maternity
Women's Apparel	To the Nines
Women's Shoes	Loft 59
Women's Shoes	Brubakers
Women's Shoes	Alto

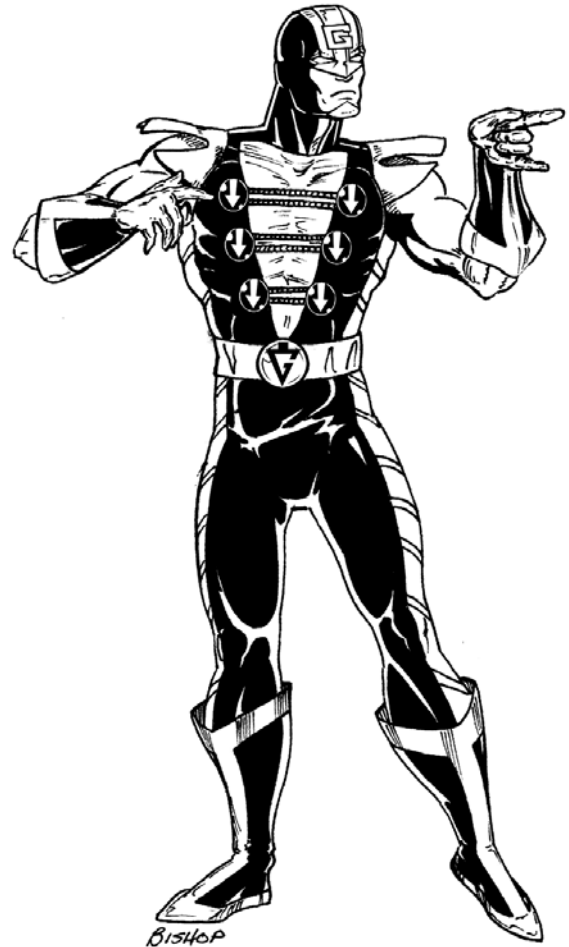
GRAV

Identity: Garrett Helm	Side: Furies
Sex: Male	Level: 14
Age: 33	Training: +5 with Gravity Control; Strength

Powers:

1. Heightened Endurance B: +29.
2. Heightened Strength A: +10.
3. Gravity Control: Grav can manipulate gravity as defined in the V&V rulebook to a range of 20'. His mastery over the power is further escalated by how easily he can exert the power. He may use this power at half the normal PR cost for any application.
4. Devitalization Ray: Grav can use his gravity powers to sap energy from targets by exerting gravimetric pressure on them. At a PR cost of = 3 per shot, doing 3d10 damage to the victim's power score. Grav is limited in his use of this power in that he must already have afflicted the target with his gravity control power, which he must continue to use simultaneously. If Grav chooses to use this power, it requires great concentration and he must remain stationary.
5. Force Field: Grav can project force to make screens or blast with as defined in the V&V rulebook. Grav's screens provide 1" square coverage for each current point of Power. Force Screens take one action to set up plus an additional action per turn to maintain, maximum range = 90'. PR cost = 1/2 of the number of points of damage repulsed. Any screen can be reshaped at a cost of movement only. Grav attacks with this power for 1d10 damage at a range of 90'; PR=1 per attack.
6. Flight: 3960" per round (900 mph), PR = 1 per hour of flight.
7. Willpower A. 1 PR per use as a defense.

Weight: 188 lbs.	Basic Hits: 4
Agility Mod: —	Strength: 20
Endurance: 45	Agility: 15
Intelligence: 19	Charisma: 19
Hit Mod: 19.3024	Hit Points: 78
Reactions from Good: -3	Evil: +3
Damage Mod: +2	Healing Rate: 5.6
Accuracy: +2	Power: 99
Carrying Capacity: 1175 lbs.	Basic HTH Damage: 1d10



Movement Rates: 80" ground, 3960" flying/900 mph	
Detect Hidden: 14%	Detect Danger: 18%
Inventing Points: 8	Inventing: 57%

Origin and Background: Garrett Helm was an original member of the OMA's Garrison field team. Once a consummate hero, he was the romantic interest of Goldwing, the sister of the hero known as Whitemane. He had the respect of most of his former teammates and was in line to promote... until Flashpoint!

Operation Flashpoint began with the escape of Adam Wilhite from hot sleep which kept that mutant from threatening the public good. The containment plan backfired and Adam trashed the facility at Project Helix. During the course of apprehending Adam, the still young Garrison field team followed a squad of DEFCON operatives into the hot zone, where they discovered the decimated remains of that same armored scout squad. Trying to confront Adam and calm his anger was the standing order, with anyone who had a free hand evacuating any civilians in harm's way.

This proved futile due to an error in judgment by the team's leader, Warstar, who at the time was suffering from psychological issues and suddenly attacked Adam. It was an even more inopportune time for that mistake as Goldwing was in psychic contact with the extremely powerful escapee. The psychic backlash caused Goldwing to suffer a fatal aneurism and collapse. Grav, shocked and devastated, began wildly manipulating the landscape and battling Adam. Although he was trying to turn the tide, Grav's escalation was killing many more bystanders and Flashpoint was able to defeat him easily for his lack of focus. The battle also resulted in the death of Warstar, who sadly also was destroyed in Adam's rage.

In the aftermath, Grav was brought to Court Martial. Although his fellow surviving Garrison members, Paladin, Whitemane, and Siege, had witnessed the incident correctly and identified their leader Warstar as the person who caused the needless escalation, Grav too was singled out for further forcing the situation beyond control and causing the deaths of innocents. He was found guilty and was terminated as an agent, to await sentencing. However Grav was having none of it, and before the gavel came down, Grav easily burst his bonds and escaped, never to be seen again.

Soon he was confronted by Dreadlord. Grav knew a small amount of information about Dreadlord's activity that had been rumored, discovered, or pieced together by the OMA and its predecessor agencies. Dreadlord at first thought Grav still a hero, but when informed of his outlaw status, proposed Grav "serve" him. Not wanting to serve a "master," Grav initially declined the offer, but after further negotiation, he agreed that if the price was right, he would be an ally to buffer Dreadlord against the very super-heroes that were once his friends as he knew, sooner or later, this Dreadlord would be opposed by them. However, Grav, knowing he was at least powerful enough to threaten Dreadlord, insisted that he do his own recruiting of other supers on his own terms, while not excluding the possible inclusion of Dreadlord's other minions in these new endeavors.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Grav is an effective organizer and leads the Furies like he would an OMA squad, tactically effective and from a good vantage point for the whole of the battle. He will keep Vortex close by in case the quick evacuation of the team is necessary. When engaged in combat Grav will turn his enemies into weaklings by imposing the effects of heightened gravity in order to expose them to other Furies' attacks.

It should be noted that Grav has a philosophy that is reflected in the operation of the Furies: The Furies, under Grav's direction in the field, will act as a team and be objective-oriented. In this practice, they will base threats on how difficult the threat complicates an objective and act accordingly. They will usually enter combat to neutralize opponents in order to resume obtaining their objective results. However, as they are also pragmatically evil, if an opponent is judged to be both powerful and persistent, they will only want to fight that opponent once and will seek to have an opponent eliminated if possible.

Personality/Character Traits: Grav is actually a good man at heart, but has supremely adapted to being the villain he needs to be. He is loved by his teammates and does his best to insulate them from the worst aspects of serving their dark master. If Dreadlord were to release his 'tethered' minions, Grav would part ways with (if not order the elimination of) Burst, whom he views as irredeemable filth; until that day, he tolerates him and uses him sparingly in field missions.

If he is forced to confront his former teammates from the OMA, he will likely show some restraint allowing them to live or escape, but will not fail in the accomplishment of his objectives.

iii. THIRD DEGREE BURNS

The GM should run this seed with between one and three heroes, as the twins are early in their careers, but dangerous nonetheless. Having come from a background where luxuries were having clothes to wear and food to eat, the girls are using their new found power to establish themselves. Renting themselves out to the local mafia underground, they fawn on a heavysset former boxer turned drug lord, Benny the Rifle. They hang specifically with Benny in his nightclub, Ringside.

Benny has slipped up. Some of his henchmen ratted him out to the authorities when they got collared for lesser offenses, but the local PD gets in touch with the heroes because Benny is rumored to have supervillain muscle in the club. Benny does have a minor supervillain, Kilo, a Samoan metahuman with super strength and toughness as his very visible bodyguard. But Benny is no fool and years of boxing have taught him to never expose all your weapons in the first round, hence his secret employment of the twins, Bombshell and Fallout.

Benny won't go quietly and might have a car around back, waiting in the alley with a normal human driver. No one will make a move until someone tries to take Benny into custody. Then Kilo will step up and throw a punch, while Benny slips out the back door. If only one hero is present, the twins may not even get involved unless Kilo goes down. More than one hero will warrant some action.

Neither Bombshell nor Fallout are carelessly emitting their powers, but as soon as it becomes apparent that their meal ticket is in danger of being revoked, they'll step up to earn their paychecks. Assisting Benny is aiding and abetting, and they are already accomplices by acting as enforcers for Benny when he arranges his deals.

Losing this fight will net the twins a ride downtown; they've got no record as yet, but they will remember any hero who takes them down. If the twins win the fight, they'll want to dispose of the heroes, but they know Benny doesn't want that kind of reputation and, instead, they'll leave the heroes delivered unconscious to a random vacant lot.

KILO

Identity: Hono Milau
Sex: Male
Age: 28

Side: Evil (Benny)
Level: 6
Training: +5 HTH

Powers:

1. Heightened Strength: +15.
2. Heightened Endurance: +13.
3. Willpower A (variable use) PR=1 per turn.

Weight: 265 lbs.

Agility Mod: -2

Endurance: 24

Intelligence: 11

Reactions from Good: —

Hit Mod: 7.2

Damage Mod.: —

Accuracy: —

Carrying Capacity: 4265 lbs.

Movement Rates: 65" ground

Detect Hidden: 8%

Inventing Points: 3

Legal Status: No record as yet

Basic Hits: 6

Strength: 31

Agility: 10

Charisma: 10

Evil: —

Hit Points: 44

Healing Rate: 4.2

Power: 76

Basic HTH Damage: 2d8

Detect Danger: 12%

Inventing: 33%



Origin and Background: Hono doesn't have any particularly exciting back story. He is very aware of the operations that Benny undertakes but does not do drugs himself. Aside from the amoral choice that he may have made in guarding Benny, he works for money to pay the bills and regards his job as a normal gig.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Kilo doesn't have combat tactics to speak of, but is a well-trained and effective brawler.

Personality/Character Traits: Hono is not a particularly nice man, nor does he really care about anybody else. It is difficult to get him to divulge any information that may compromise his job. It pays very well, so short of being brutally tortured and risking possible death, he'll keep quiet.

MAP KEY: RINGSIDE NIGHTCLUB

When Benjamin "Benny the Rifle" Thigpen was in his prime, he was seen as a champion of the everyman who came from humble origins. Benny did, in fact, come from a rough neighborhood and a very poor part of the city. During his rise, he saved most of his earnings and avoided being tied to contracts with promoters that would sap his wealth. Then he won the heavyweight title and his net worth seemed to go through the roof. He came back to the neighborhood in typical fashion as most athletes from the ghetto do when they make it big. He started neighborhood revitalization programs and really began to make a difference.

But as Father Time started to catch up with him and his career began to wane, the flow of cash versus the weight of expenditure began to take its toll. Endorsement deals and other revenue streams started to dry up; soon Benny found that his autograph was no longer being sought after and promoters avoided setting him up for any big matches. With his good name still intact, Benny took drastic measures to preserve the empire of influence he had built over the years. Benny started living a double life; that of a high-profile, well-respected, if not outspoken former boxer and that of a drug lord bent on product distribution and the gathering of wealth at the expense of endangering the community that had supported his endeavors all those years.

Aside from getting the occasional spot in a beer commercial, Benny owns a very popular nightclub where he visibly supports the growth of new talent in the boxing world. The club is a very visible cover for the shady dealings of his drug empire.

A. Main Entry: This is the main entry foyer where occasionally Benny will greet guests of the club. At all times, just outside, there will be a security detail choosing who enters the club and who does not on event nights; on all other nights the security detail simply keeps its eye on the comings and goings of the guests. The security detail normally consists of two men on the outside and three men on the inside of the door. The walls around the main entry and the bar are lined with autographed portraits of several famous celebrities and athletes posing with Benny over the years and would indicate that Benny has many friends in famous circles.

B. Bar: This is a full service bar manned by three bartenders at any given time and has a full selection of the finest top-shelf liquors and beverages. It should be noted that all the bartenders are women with extraordinarily good looks; the customers tip better as a result. Bartenders will intentionally wear their uniform shirts as tight as possible with the plunging necklines showing generous amounts of cleavage, likewise, the bartenders will flirt with no shame: it is company policy.

C. Manager's Office: The manager of the club, Cedrick Wilford, operates the club from here. Cedrick is almost always found in this office after 2 PM each day except Sunday. He is very aware of the dealings that take place behind the scenes in the club, but will deny any of this if asked and also will provide Benny with whatever credible alibi he may need. Employee records are kept here, and the time clock is here as well, but heroes will find no evidence of wrongdoing in any of the materials contained in this room.

D. Dining Room: These are the dining areas of the club. Reservations are required.

D2. Dance Floor: This portion of the dining area is usually cleared for a dance floor.

E. Walk-In Freezer: This is where frozen food is stored and has a locking, pressurized door.

F. Female Restroom: The ladies' room is kept very clean and smells of floral scents. Male heroes who wander into this room will notice that the female restroom has several dispensers not commonly found in a restroom designed for men.

G. Walk-In Refrigerator: This is where the freshly prepared food or goods in need of constant refrigeration are stored.

H. Boxing Ring: Inset into the floor a total of nine feet down (three three-foot tiers of dining floor) is a square boxing ring. The ring itself is

set on a 5-foot raised platform with a post at each corner to which four parallel rows of ropes are attached with a turnbuckle. In addition, each rope is secured at the midway point. The ring is twenty feet to a side between the ropes with another two feet outside. The corner posts rise five feet from the platform. The ring itself has two inches of thick, durable padding covered by stretched canvas (SR: 4). The ropes are around one inch (25 mm) thick in diameter (SR: 4) and held up by the corner posts at heights of 18, 30, 42, and 55 inches.

I. Media Booth: This is a complete sound station where audiovisual personnel and other technicians control and operate their equipment. One might find a disc jockey here each night, except in the case of a scheduled exhibition fight, when one might also expect to find cameramen and sound personnel.

J. Announcers' Table: This is a long banquet type table with several microphones mounted opposed from the comfortable chairs along one side. All the seats face the same direction in order that the occupants have a ringside unobstructed view of the main event.

K. Kitchen: This is a full service kitchen complete with all manner of appliances and utensils. It specifically has several items intended to prepare and support a gourmet menu, although most of the fare is 'bar and grill' type of food. The door that leads to the main dining room is significantly wider and swings on a swivel.

L. Locker Room: This room is where the boxers who frequent the club as a training venue store their equipment. It is also the room where they prepare before a match. A bank of lockers is on the east wall. Each locker is two feet high by one foot wide and has a combination lock securing its contents. The lockers are made of steel (SR:11) and contain sundries like shaving cream and razors, soap and deodorant, and personal effects belonging to each of the persons using the lockers.

M. Male Restroom: The men's room does not smell floral at all, but it is clean. It is unusually large in comparison to the female restroom, and has an adjoining door to the shower room which is locked with an electronic keypad for entry. In this way boxers can still use the restroom without fans entering the shower room. Boxers registered to train in the club, Cedrick and Benny know this combination, but all other club personnel do not.

N. Shower Room: Located between the men's room and the locker room, this room has four vanities and sinks with corresponding shower stalls on the opposite side of the room.

O. Powder Room: This room is a small lounge with a vanity and mirrors and a few extra chairs. Typically, this is where the emcee or announcer, or any other celebrity guests would prepare just prior to making an official appearance. There are many more framed portraits of various celebrities posing with Benny and Cedrick and other members of the club on all the walls in this room, but other than this, there is nothing else of interest here.

P. Parking Lot: This is a large asphalt lot that ironically was paved over the empty lots that remained when Benny purchased five small crack houses neighboring the club when it was first constructed.

Q. Valet Station: There is a podium here along with a secure cabinet that on high-profile nights valets maintain the keys of customers who take advantage of valet parking. On evenings when valets are on duty, there will be three. One valet will be found manning the podium and custody of guest keys at all times, the second and third will find the one curbside to accept an incoming vehicle in rotation as the other returns from the lot and turns over the keys to the valet manning the podium.

R. Rear Exit: This is the door from which most employees arrive and leave the club. The timeclock is here.

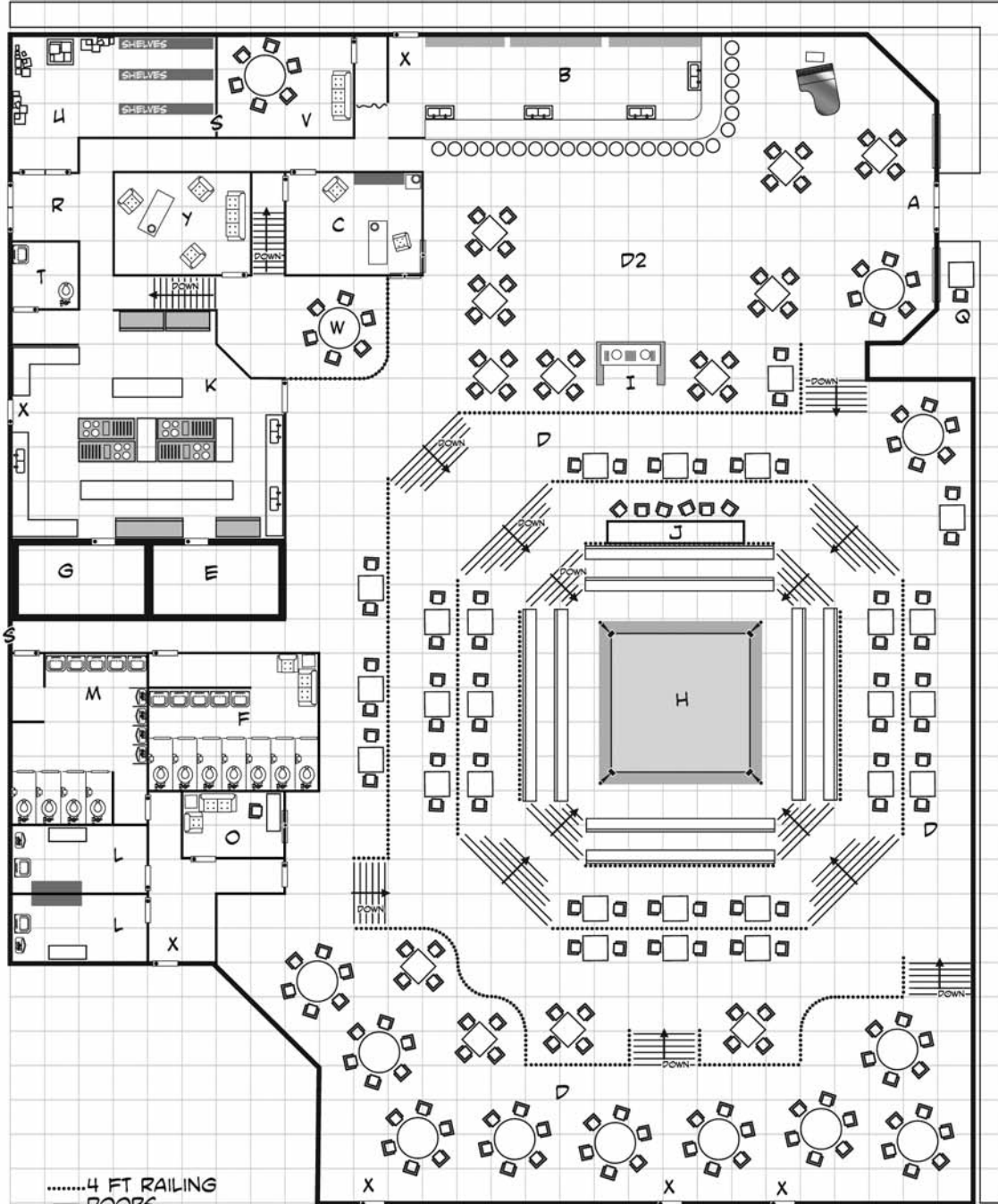
S. Secret Door: These doors are concealed at various locations for convenient departure like the 'speakeasies' of old.

T. Toilet Room: This is a restroom and changing room for the club employees.

U. Storage Room: Dry goods storage is here. Food stuffs, alcohol beverages, and the like are here.

V. VIP Room: This is where Benny sometimes entertains certain

IRVING PARK BOULEVARD



- 4 FT RAILING
- DOORS
- WINDOWS
- TWO-WAY MIRROR

SCALE: 1 GRID = 5 FEET SQUARE

RINGSIDE RESTAURANT/NIGHTCLUB VENUE

clientele or holds 'private' poker games.

W. Benny's Table: This is where Benny's table is located in the club. The platform is an overlook ten feet above the level of the main dining room. Benny will be seated flanked by Bombshell and Fallout in their secret identities, a pair of young beautiful twins, each with a highly athletic figure wearing expensive looking, but tastelessly exposing, cocktail dresses. One of the twins' hair seems to be dyed green, the other's is a fiery red. A rather large Samoan (Kilo) wearing a peculiarly out of place button up shirt with a ridiculous Hawaiian motif will be standing near the exit to the platform and is watching the stairway that leads to the overlook.

If the GM decides to use Benny, he is advanced in age, but still could be a handful.

Benny 'The Rifle'

Level 6, Male

WT	ST	EN	AG	IN	CH	HP	Pwr	Dmg	Acc	CC	HTH	Move
205	14	10	11	15	15	8	50	+1	—	384	1d6	35

Powers:

1. Natural Weaponry: Boxing, +2 HTH, +4 damage.

X. Emergency Exits: These are actual emergency exits.

Y. Benny's Office: Lined with yet more autographed portraits of several famous celebrities and athletes posing with Benny over the years, in addition to other keepsakes and memorabilia, Benny's office is a comfortable space with a hand-crafted wood desk and plush furniture and garnish.

BOMBSHELL

Identity: Jessica Donnelly
Sex: Female
Age: 26

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 11
Training: Intelligence

Powers:

1. Mutant Power: (Chemical Flames) Bombshell's whole body is covered in chemical flames. This power operates as Flame Powers and grants automatic Flame Power or Chemical Power defense (whichever is advantageous) while she is burning, flight at 75mph (330" per turn) PR=3 to activate, and PR=1 per hour of flight. She may project her flames as a Flame Attack; this has a range of 50" and does 1d12 damage. PR=3 per attack. She may optionally project her flames outward up to a 10" radius affecting all targets within for an additional 1 PR per use. Bombshell's flame powers also employ a 'chemical' aspect simultaneously with either form of the previously mentioned attacks. Bombshell's flame attack will 'burn' 1d4+2 extra turns causing 1d12 additional damage on the first two rounds, and one die class less each round thereafter (1d10, 1d8, 1d6, and 1d4, respectively). Damage is doubled against non-living structures and materials under SR 12.
2. Adaptation: 1 PR per use as defense.
3. Heightened Agility A: +10.
4. Heightened Endurance B: +22.
5. Special Power: Bombshell is immune to Fallout's powers.

Weight: 125 lbs.

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 40

Intelligence: 15

Hit Mod: 15

Reactions from Good: -4

Damage Mod: +4

Accuracy: +4

Carrying Capacity: 313 lbs.

Movement Rates: 75" ground, 330" flying

Detect Hidden: 12%

Inventing Points: 5

Legal Status: Wanted for questioning.

Basic Hits: 3

Strength: 10

Agility: 25

Charisma: 22

Hit Points: 45

Evil: +4

Healing Rate: 3.6

Power: 90

Basic HTH Damage: 1d6

Detect Danger: 16%

Inventing: 45%



Combat Tactics/M.O.: Bombshell doesn't have a lot in the way of tactics. She dishes out heavy firepower to deadly effect. She is more careful of the residual effects of her powers than her sister.

Personality/Character Traits: Jessica, like her sister, is very distrustful of both males and authority figures. If treated fairly, she will attempt to please a male leader, unless that person crosses her. Jeanette is very outgoing and demonstrative in her actions and at the very least will demean an opponent in any way possible; she is not a casual killer. She will often speak for her sister as well and will appear to others as the 'stronger' of the two.

FALLOUT

Identity: Jeannette Donnelly
Sex: Female
Age: 26

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 10
Training: Endurance

Powers:

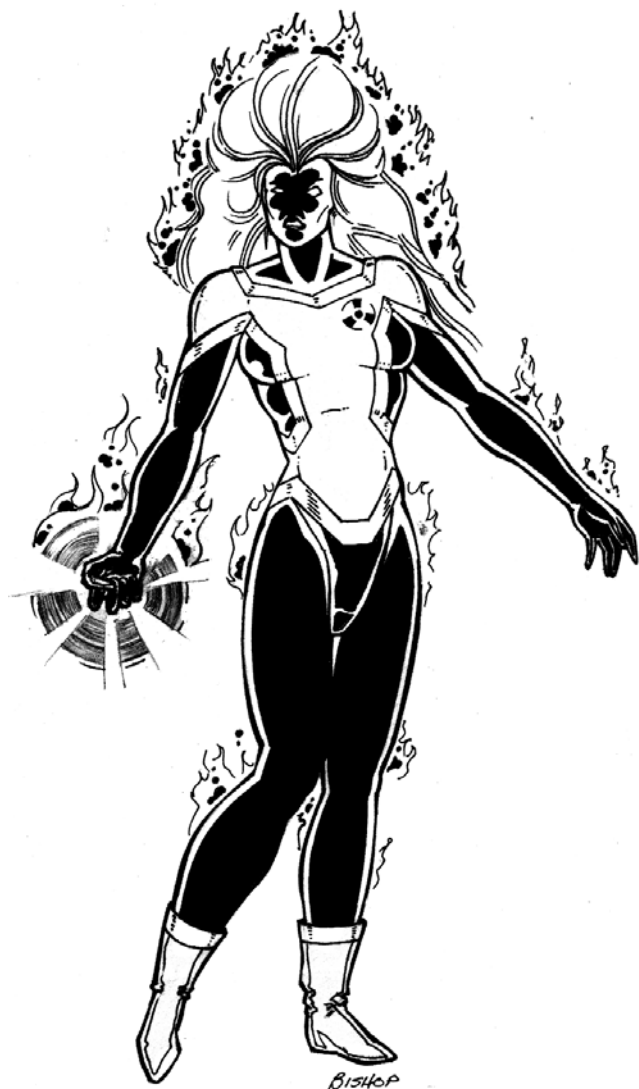
1. Mutant Power: Radiation Generation: Fallout's whole body exudes radioactive flames that operate as Flame Powers granting her automatic Flame defense while she is burning, flight at 75mph (330" per turn) PR=3 to activate, and PR=1 per hour of flight. Flame attack

has a range of 50" and does 1d12 damage. PR=4 per attack. The radiation spectrum around Fallout while she is burning also provides immunity from light-based attacks directed at her person.

Unlike Bombshell, when she is 'burning', Fallout has no choice in limiting the 'radioactive' side effects which cause all her attacks, including HTH, to 'burn' 1d12 extra turns causing 1d4 additional damage from radiation and fire each round thereafter.

Opponents who do not have appropriate defenses (Adaptation, Regeneration, etc.) to exposure may contract a cancerous radiation sickness or other usual harmful side effects. This sickness will take effect as a character will fail to resist on a percentage chance equal to a ratio of (4/Endurance). The target's healing rate will decline to one quarter its effectiveness and the character will lose 1 hit point and 2 power points per day until they are dead. Each day the victim may save again to resist further decay, but due to the severity of this type of cell damage, the GM may rule until the victim gets proper medical attention at a hospital and or similar facility for whatever length of time, the sickness will not subside.

2. Adaptation: 1 PR per turn when used as a defense.
3. Heightened Agility A: +10.
4. Heightened Endurance B: +22.
5. Special Power: Fallout is immune to Bombshell's powers.



Weight: 125 lbs.
 Agility Mod: —
 Endurance: 40
 Intelligence: 15
 Hit Mod: 15
 Reactions from Good: -4
 Damage Mod: +4
 Accuracy: +4
 Carrying Capacity: 313 lbs.
 Movement Rates: 75" ground, 330" flying
 Detect Hidden: 12%
 Inventing Points: 6
 Legal Status: Wanted for questioning.

Basic Hits: 3
 Strength: 10
 Agility: 25
 Charisma: 22
 Hit Points: 45
 Evil: +4
 Healing Rate: 3.6
 Power: 90
 Basic HTH Damage: 1d6
 Detect Danger: 16%
 Inventing: 45%

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Fallout, like Bombshell, doesn't have a deep tactical regimen. She is very temperamental and lashes out when threatened. She is very reckless when it comes to limiting the residual effects of her powers, having far less restraint than her sister.

Personality/Character Traits: Jessica, like her sister, is very distrustful of both males and authority figures. If treated fairly, she will attempt to please a male leader... until that person crosses her. Jessica is not as talkative or verbal as Jeanette, and prefers to remain quiet. Jessica will usually allow her sister to speak for her and follows her lead.

Origin and Background: Jessica Donnelly and her twin sister, Jeannette were victims of abuse at the hands of their father. Their mother became ill shortly after they were born and their father became resentful. Eventually, their mother died from complications and, the neglect that their father had directed toward their mother for 'abandoning' him to raise the children while she was ill, turned to abuse and disdain for the girls. After their powers began to manifest when they were teens, their father became inexplicably ill; at first to a mild degree and then progressively worse. Insidiously, the twins recognized the sickness as the exposure to the subtle effects of their emerging powers. They humored their father with half-hearted treatment until one day when he demanded they take him to the hospital. They both exchanged knowing grins and refused. Ready to leave him in his pain, Jeannette fatally dosed him with radiation. The twins disabled the phone and locked the doors, and then went to stay in a hotel for the evening. Returning to the home the next day, indeed, their father was dead. Jessica then set the home ablaze.

It didn't take long for the twins to embark in sadistic crime waves and begin taking on jobs as enforcers for criminal enterprises. Eventually they gained the attention of Grav, who inducted them into the Furies. Bombshell and Fallout are not under the effects of Dreadlord's 'Tether'.

iv. TARNISHED LEGACY

After a humiliating dismissal from his government contract, Ormond as Cannonade begins breaking into the labs of many competitors. The default location for this encounter is Austin Technologies 'Fab 6', as in 'fabrication' laboratory, and a map of the local laboratory and warehouse is included. If the GM should wish, he or she could replace the company by picking from his or her own campaign's technology companies or feel free to use a similar company described in another V&V adventure or supplement. In *Crisis at Crusader Citadel*, there is a map of a Manning Enterprises location that would also be a suitable target for Cannonade.

Cannonade is not interested in the workings of the technology itself, but is mining the materials in the laboratories for raw pieces and scraps that he can convert; high technology, especially micronized technology applications are most expensive to fabricate and by simply stealing components, Cannonade will be saving time and money by acquiring them after they have already been processed. He will attempt his break-in during the wee hours of the morning when there will be minimal security.

The GM should run this segment as being before Cannonade is recruited into the Furies. In this timeframe, his armor is slightly less sophisticated due to the limitation of resources. It is suggested that modifications be applied to his power list that reduce the effectiveness of his powers.

If Cannonade should lose, he will be approached by Grav in a prison cell at some time during the wait for trial and, of course, he will be recruited and his armor 'reacquired.' If he should win, he will still be recruited by Grav at some point, but until then he will make sure his getaways waste no time with brutality or gloating; freedom, evasion and escape will be his only concern. He will not bother with the defeated hero, whether that means leaving a dead body behind or worrying about being pursued once an unconscious hero wakes.

MAP KEY: AUSTIN TECHNOLOGIES FAB 6

A. Secured Entry Hall: This is the main entry to the building. The doors are secured and locked at all times within an electronic lock (as are all doors in the facility). During normal business hours, a security guard stationed in the security office will be monitoring a closed-circuit camera observing all people who come and go through this entrance. There is an electronic sensor pad on the wall outside the door where authorized personnel will be able to swipe their badge in order to sound a mild buzzer to alert the security team to their presence. The security team then analyzes the person as they wait with a full body scan. The scan is a combination of thermal and x-ray technology which allows the security team to see temperature anomalies through layers of clothing in order to make out any hidden equipment or weapons beneath a layer of normal clothing. The GM should triple the Detect Hidden score of a member of security using this device when attempting to detect anomalies. If the security team is reasonably satisfied, they will send a signal that unlocks the entry door for exactly 3 seconds. It will be obvious to the person waiting that the lock has been disabled, but it will be equally as obvious when the lock is again engaged. If the door is opened when unlocked it will automatically close in ten seconds and will lock when it becomes closed again. Company policy prohibits "piggybacking." Each authorized employee must swipe their badge to gain entry and exit.

B. Security Booth: Inside the building just beyond the secured entry hall, two guards here monitor all people entering and exiting the building. They also hear the buzzer when an employee swipes his or her card on the outside. If the guard in the security office unlocks the entry door, a green light illuminates in the security booth to alert the two guards that the door has been opened properly.

AT Security Guards

Level 5

Sex	WT	ST	EN	AG	IN	CH	HP	Pwr	Dmg	Acc	CC	HTH	Move
M	170	12	11	11	10	10	5	44	—	—	240	1d4	34
F	130	10	12	11	10	10	5	43	—	—	143	1d4	33

These guards are armed with both normal pistols and tasing pistols. Tasing pistols attack as Paralysis Ray with all the effects thereof as described in the Villains and Vigilantes rule book, but may only be used three times before the pistol has no power left and only up to a range of four inches in gameplay. The attack also does 1d2 damage and fatigues the victim on a successful hit by 5 PR. There is a 2 in Endurance chance that a paralyzed victim will become incontinent. Thus a victim who has an Endurance score of 100 would have a 2% chance while a victim who has an Endurance score of 20 would have a 10% chance.

C. Security Office: This office has three desks, two of which have a personal computer with flat screen monitors and files strewn about the desktop along with comfortable padded office chairs. At these desks active security personnel likely complete reports and mundane duties associated with their occupation. The third desk also has a flat

screen computer monitor that is attached to a server tower and several other drives that are hardwired into the network controlling the building security and communication apparatus. Only at the station can the cameras and security devices be enabled and disabled. There are several file cabinets located in this room that contain information which has yet to be converted to digital storage that has been accumulated over years of operation.

D. Administrative Office: The office located here has a desk that has a personal computer and flat screen monitor on the desktop, as well as pencils, pens, file folders, and a calendar blotter. The laboratory administrator has written down objectives of the research and their deadlines and time frames on this calendar. The notes are a highly condensed version of the activities that take place in the lab and are far from complete in terms of detail. The desk contains very little in the way of files describing any secret processes. If someone were to spend a reasonable amount of time scrutinizing the information found in this desk, they would likely come to the conclusion that anything important that is worked on or discovered in the laboratory is immediately sent in digital format to the corporate headquarters of Austin Technologies at the end of that business day with only brief footnotes left behind to account for activities of the employees for payroll purposes.

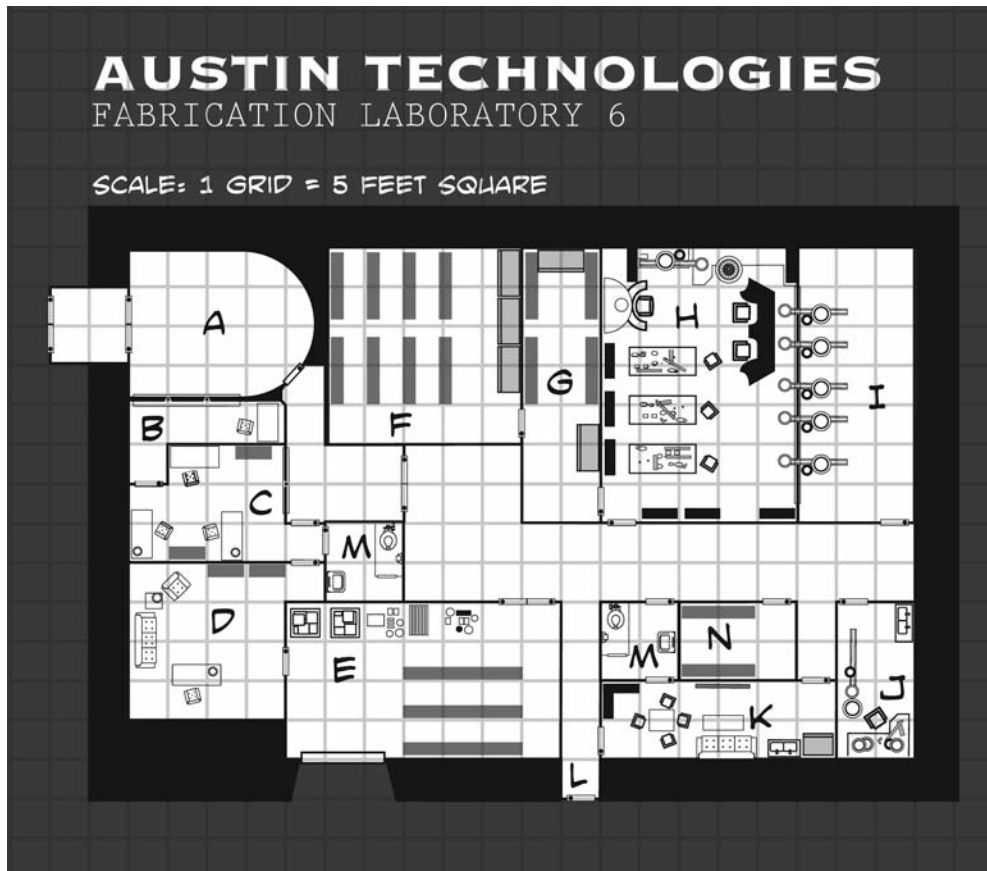
E. Shipping & Receiving: Any modules or materials constructed in the laboratory are gathered here when in a complete form and packaged for overnight delivery to other locations as necessary. There are many sizes and shapes of heavy-duty cardboard containers along with appropriate amounts of bubble wrap, foam peanuts, foam padding and other packing materials. There is also an abundance of different types of adhesive and adhesive tapes, fasteners, and a fully working shrink-wrap machine complete with materials. Hanging on clipboards on the wall one might find a record of materials that have been shipped that includes contents, time of pickup, and destination. There is a large heavy alloy roll-up garage door (SR:12) that is double padlocked with heavy-duty locks (SR:14). This door also has an overriding electronic lock that operates sliding security bars 1 inch thick (SR:14) distributed at intervals of 4 inches across the doorway which retract during normal business operations. The controls for the door and its lock, of course, are found in the security office.

F. Materials and Component Storage Room: This room is very similar to a normal warehouse with the exception that it is a much more Spartan environment, organized and clean. Here, arranged neatly on its shelves, are the different small components and source materials of technology necessary to construct the devices and technological elements which make possible many of the most high-tech devices on the cutting-edge. Materials here have a structural rating (SR) ranging from 3 to 14 depending on apparatus and function.

G. Clean Room Raw Materials Laboratory: This is the area where technicians take the most rudimentary material involved in the components process and assemble them into the basic components used for the larger technologies. Any single raw material used here will be of no benefit to specialized function until made into a component.

H. Clean Room Assembly Chamber: This area is where laboratory technicians assemble by hand the various pieces of technology unassisted by robotic controls. Precision is achieved with holographic projection that has an interactive element allowing configurations to be displayed in three dimensions in regard to the assembled components. Many of the components from the component storage can also be found here in various stages of assembly during normal business hours, however, when the laboratory shuts down for the evening, the components are catalogued and returned to the components room and placed on shelves in sealed sterile packaging until the next shift when they are assembled for use. Completed materials from this room will usually find themselves on one of the three assembly arms in the automated finishing room.

I. Automated Finishing Room: This room adjoining the clean room assembly chamber is where technicians use remotely operated automatons to apply sealants and other finishing materials to the components which make them ready to use prior to shipment. There



are three assembly arms on individual tracks with service trays and scopes attached. The assembly arms move on the tracks closer to the observation windows when technicians need to assure the components are positioned in the correct alignment and retract away when sealants and chemicals are applied. The controls to these devices are located in the clean room assembly chamber.

J. Repair Node: This small lab contains all the tools (precision wrenches, mallets, screwdrivers, and other hardware such as nuts, bolts, and screws) necessary to repair the assembly arms found in the automated finishing room. If for any reason the automated assembly arms or tracks that house them should malfunction, this is where they will be taken for reasonable repair if repair is possible.

K. Employee Lounge: This is a small break room complete with a refrigerator and microwave oven, flat screen TV and comfortable couch. There is also a small square dining table surrounded by four chairs.

L. Fire Exit: This exit door is highly secured from the outside with no handle or visible egress to pry it open but from the inside can easily be pushed open. However, in doing so anyone who exits this door will trigger automatically an emergency alarm which also notifies via wireless network signal into existing telephoning networks the appropriate local authorities for fire, medical, and police. There are large red signs with stark white writing that warn anyone with the ability to read that opening the door will automatically trigger an alarm.

M. Restrooms: These two rooms are unisex bathrooms with only regular toilets, wash sinks, and appropriate soap and disposable paper towel sundries.

N. Storage: This closet has spare supplies for the bathrooms as well as cleaning materials, brooms, mops, and solvents used to maintain a clean environment.

CANNONADE

Identity: Benjamin Ormond

Sex: Male

Age: 44

Side: Furies (Evil)

Level: 12

Training: Intelligence

Powers:

1. Armored Battle Suit: Ormond derived the basic apparatus from his government contract days with the DEFCON project, but beyond the basic exoskeleton structure, the weapons and defensive enhancements are all Ormond's. Armor B: ADR 140. The Cannonade armored suit confers the following abilities and bonuses:

a. Special Weapon: Amplified Exoskeletal Strength: Amplifies Carrying Capacity by 50x when wearing the suit (Total Carry Capacity is 33,671 lbs. and Base HTH damage is 4d10). PR cost for amplified Strength is 1 per 1d10 exertion.

b. Special: Power Reserves: When using the various abilities built into the suit he, may expend Power cost from a reserve pool of 112 points [Device:S56,E16,A14,I26]. Cannonade may recharge this reserve by connecting to a reasonable source of electric power. He may charge 1d6+4 points of Power per turn spent charging, but may not use any of the armor's abilities and must remain stationary while doing so.

c. Invulnerability: 10 pts. per attack; if ADR on armor is less than 50%, this value drops to 5. The suit also adds 200 lbs. to Ormond's weight, but he does not gain any personal Basic Hits, Carrying Capacity, or Agility Modifier from this. When calculating his mass for any other purpose, he counts as weighing 380 lbs.

d. Heightened Senses: Computer assisted sensor arrays provide 3x Detect Hidden, 2x Detect Danger. Cannonade can use UV low light detections as well as scan into IR and thermal spectrums. Cannonade

is also able to access libraries and volumes of data as well as hack wirelessly into networking systems. Cannonade may use any or all of these senses in a single turn, but the PR cost is 1 per turn.

e. Life Support: While wearing the battle suit, Ormond's breathing is self-contained. This power costs no PR.

f. Adaptation: While wearing the battle suit, Ormond may employ this defense for 1 PR per hour.

2. Special Weapon: Power Gauntlet: Ormond's mighty battle suit has a powerful weapon with multiple settings for ranged energy attacks mounted in the right gauntlet:

a. Disintegration Blast: Range = 56", damage is 1d20 at a PR cost of 2 per shot.

b. Stunning Blast: Attacks as Paralysis Ray, Range = 32", does 1d4 damage and victim is paralyzed, but does not become unconscious. PR = 5 per attempt.

c. Power Blast: Range = 36", damage is 1d20 at a PR cost of 1 per shot.

d. Special Weapon: Seismic Hammer: Attacks as Vibratory Powers with all the side effects as described in the V&V rulebook, although Ormond may not employ the power's defense, nor vibrate through walls or become non-corporeal. This power may be used to boost HTH damage to 3d8 and render an opponent's Invulnerability score half as effective.

3. Flight 896 mph/3942" per turn, no hyperflight, 1 PR per hour. (Flight is based on the estimated Strength score of 56 rated from power 1a, weight as described in power 1c, and armor having an Endurance of 16 set with Device parameters as indicated in the rulebook.)

Weight: 180 lbs. (380 lbs.)

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 16

Intelligence: 26

Hit Mod: 5.616

Reactions from Good: -2

Damage Mod: +3

Accuracy: +1

Carrying Capacity: 669 lbs. (33,671 lbs.)

Basic HTH Damage: 1d8 (4d10)

Movement Rates: 48" ground, 896 mph / 3942"/turn flying

Detect Hidden: 18%(54%)

Detect Danger: 22% (44%)

Inventing Points: 17

Inventing: 78%

Legal Status: Record, not currently Wanted.

Basic Hits: 4

Strength: 18

Agility: 14

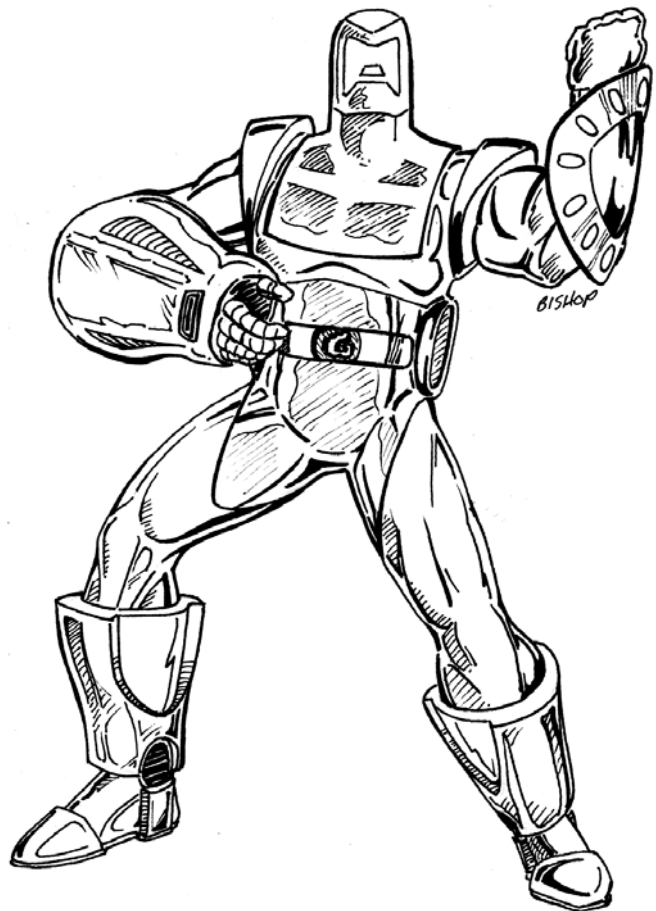
Charisma: 15

Hit Points: 23

Evil: +2

Healing Rate: 1.6

Power: 74



of the Furies, Ormond perfected his suit and became Cannonade.

Eventually Cannonade and the rest of the Furies were negotiated by Grav into the service of Dreadlord. Ormond has a wary eye on the dark lord and cautions Grav whenever possible. Cannonade is not under control of the 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: When engaged in combat, Cannonade will seek out any other 'armored' opponents and engage in an attempt to prove the superiority of his own designs. Only after he has defeated this person, will he become a "team player."

Personality/Character Traits: Ormond is an arrogant jerk to anyone he deems 'inferior', which is usually everyone else, except his teammates, who for some reason, he views as equals in most ways. He has some compassion, but so long as he has the upper-hand, it is difficult to reason with him.

V. SHOWTIME

Devastatia is on the loose and newly arrived in the United States. After being here a very short time, she reads about one of the player-hero's exploits and heroic deeds and will anonymously tip them off to a crime that is about to happen. She informs the media personnel at 4:00 PM that Armondo's Jewelers located in the posh area of town at 32nd Street and Biltmore Boulevard will be hit at 6:00 PM just after closing by a gang of bandits, the 10th Street Desperados, who actually are currently at large, and that now the gang is using superhuman muscle. Of course the true bandits have no knowledge of this or any plans to be there, and if they are watching the media coverage, they will be mildly surprised and maybe even honored to learn they are being given credit for a high profile job like this.

Being the good citizens they are, the TV station's management reaches out and by whatever means it can be done to their star hero

and gives them all the relevant information. A savvy hero may suspect something is up if they have heard of the 10th Street Desperados; they are more a convenience store and spray paint sort than the type of criminals who would commit an uptown jewelry heist. There is a 25% chance the hero will have this knowledge; doubled if the hero has any streetwise skill type or knowledge.

While in reality there won't be much of a crime, Devastatia just wants to humiliate a hero and beat them within inches of their life. The ambush will occur only after both the hero the TV crews arrive at the jeweler's location to discover nothing happening. Devastatia will wait for the hero to peer into the darkened entrance, leap from the roof of the building and the fight will begin.

If Devastatia wins, she will leap away and leave the hero broken and bloody and possibly even dying, but the media filming of the event will make sure that emergency personnel will be available to the hero immediately if necessary. If she loses, eventually she will be freed from prison by Grav, if in the campaign she doesn't break out on her own.

DEVASTATIA

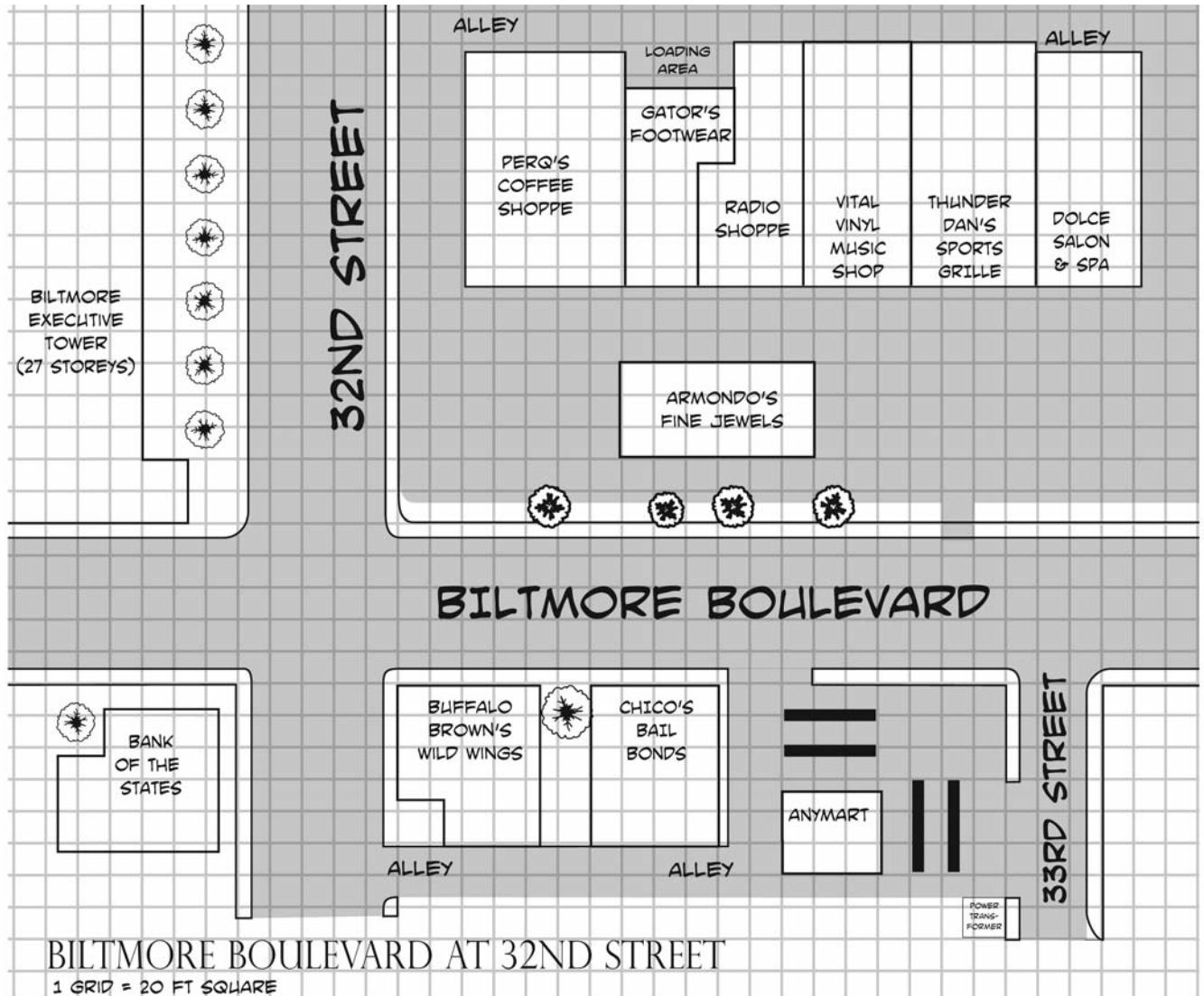
Identity: Gemma Sinclair
 Sex: Female
 Age: 35

Side: Furies (Evil)
 Level: 10
 Training: Strength

Powers:

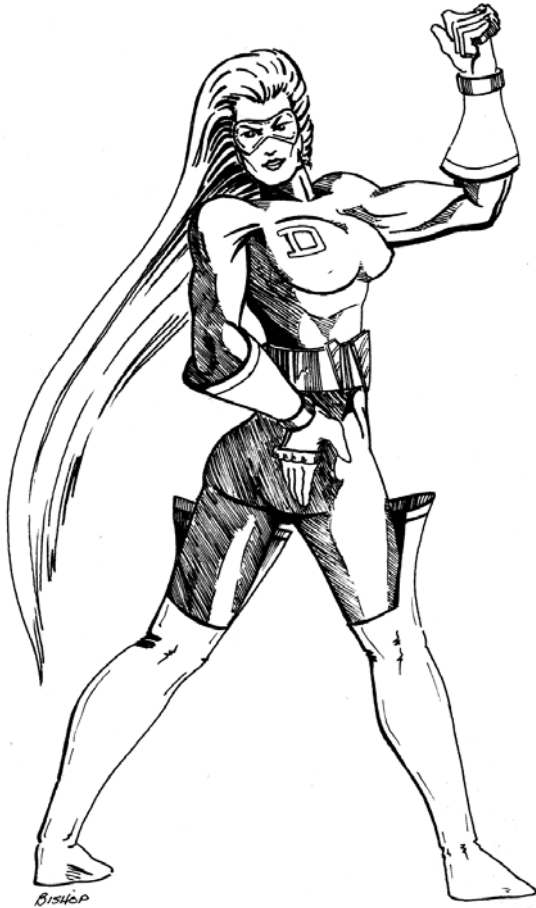
1. Invulnerability: 20 points.
2. Heightened Strength B: +27.
3. Body Power: Enhanced Physique. Devastatia has been mutated further beyond the superhuman powers she possessed originally as Evil Godiva. This power has multiplied her weight by 2, increased her height to 8 feet tall, and confers 10 pts. Invulnerability (already added in above) in addition to granting:
 - a. Heightened Strength: +27.
 - b. Heightened Endurance: +18.
 - c. Heightened Speed: +450" +15 to initiative.
 - d. Size Change: Devastatia may alter her height at will and return to the 6 feet tall form she possessed as Evil Godiva without giving up the benefits (and drawbacks) of her Enhanced Physique. She may not grow beyond the specifications above, nor may she shrink beyond this height. She tends to only use this part of her abilities to blend into a crowd if needed, but prefers her 8 feet tall size.

MAP: BILTMORE BLVD AT 32ND STREET



4. Special Weapon: Knuckledusters: +3 to hit, +6 damage HTH.
 5. Heightened Senses: Parabolic Hearing at a range of 32"
 Weakness: Psychosis: Devastatia will not retreat from a fight against a man. Male heroes will be able to use chauvinistic taunts against her with ease (although this could be dangerous). After sustained combat of more than 5 turns with a male opponent, if she is unable to defeat them, she will become careless and frustrated. Each turn thereafter she receives a cumulative -1 to hit her opponents.

Weight: 340 lbs.	Basic Hits: 7
Agility Mod: -2	Strength: 72
Endurance: 32	Agility: 12
Intelligence: 18	Charisma: 23
Hit Mod: 25.688	Hit Points: 180
Reactions from Good: -4	Evil: +4
Damage Mod: +2	Healing Rate: 6.3
Accuracy: +1	Power: 134
Carrying Capacity: 63,996 lbs.	Basic HTH Damage: 5d10
Movement Rates: 566" ground (129 mph)	Detect Danger: 18%
Detect Hidden: 14%	Inventing: 54%
Inventing Points: 2.8	
Legal Status: Wanted in the UK.	



Origin and Background: Devastatia began her super-criminal career on a low note. In her initial guise as Evil Godiva, she was broadcast on a televised showdown and suffered a more-than-humiliating defeat at the hands of Major Victorious, an aging cold war hero of the people. Gossip in the streets of London was not only rampant, it was far from flattering.

Fleeing, and going into hiding, she was almost completely discouraged when she was contacted anonymously. The subsequent meeting with a broker introduced her to Dr. H.L. Powercraft, a genetic scientist with a

shady reputation for 'helping' criminals achieve their 'potential'. The doctor performed his procedures and delivered spectacular results with no side effects, transforming Gemma into a much larger and more powerful version of herself and then turned her loose.

Her first order of business was to lure Major Victorious into confrontation which was predictably easy. The hero was taken quite by surprise and easily overpowered as Devastatia, as she now was calling herself, revealed her identity to the Major as she strangled him to death right in the streets of London.

Devastatia had been 'on the run', but after a few years of solo operation has now ended up in the employ of Grav as one of the Furies. Devastatia is not under the effects of the 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Devastatia knows how to keep her cool, having suffered ultimate humility in the public eye. She can be a team player and enjoys the rush she gets from beating another human being to death.

Personality/Character Traits: Devastatia is a cold blooded killer, having evolved into a slight tinge of madness since being 'powered up'. As Evil Godiva she was a petty criminal with minor super powers; as Devastatia, she is absolutely ruthless and above such nonsense, leaving the thievery to the lesser criminals and styling herself a hero-killer. She doesn't simply kill at random and has no issues with restraint or following orders from Grav.

vi. TO CATCH A THIEF

This encounter should be reserved for a hero who isn't truly 'super-powered' but is instead a really skilled martial artist. This will be one of Factor's typical smash and grabs where he has a couple of duplicates watching his back, while a few of them disable alarms, and bypass systems while Factor himself sits at a local tavern watching a hockey game on pay-per-view.

The site of the burglary is a customs warehouse near a train hub located at the state line. In the warehouse, one of Factor's favorite tactics to use when he has multiple 'selves' working in unison is to use his Mimicry power to pretend to speak in different voices even if no one is watching. He then passes himself off when encountered as a uniformed organization. He often will use the 'F' logo on his belt to further make his multiple selves claim to be operatives of F.O.R.C.E., although this is patently untrue.

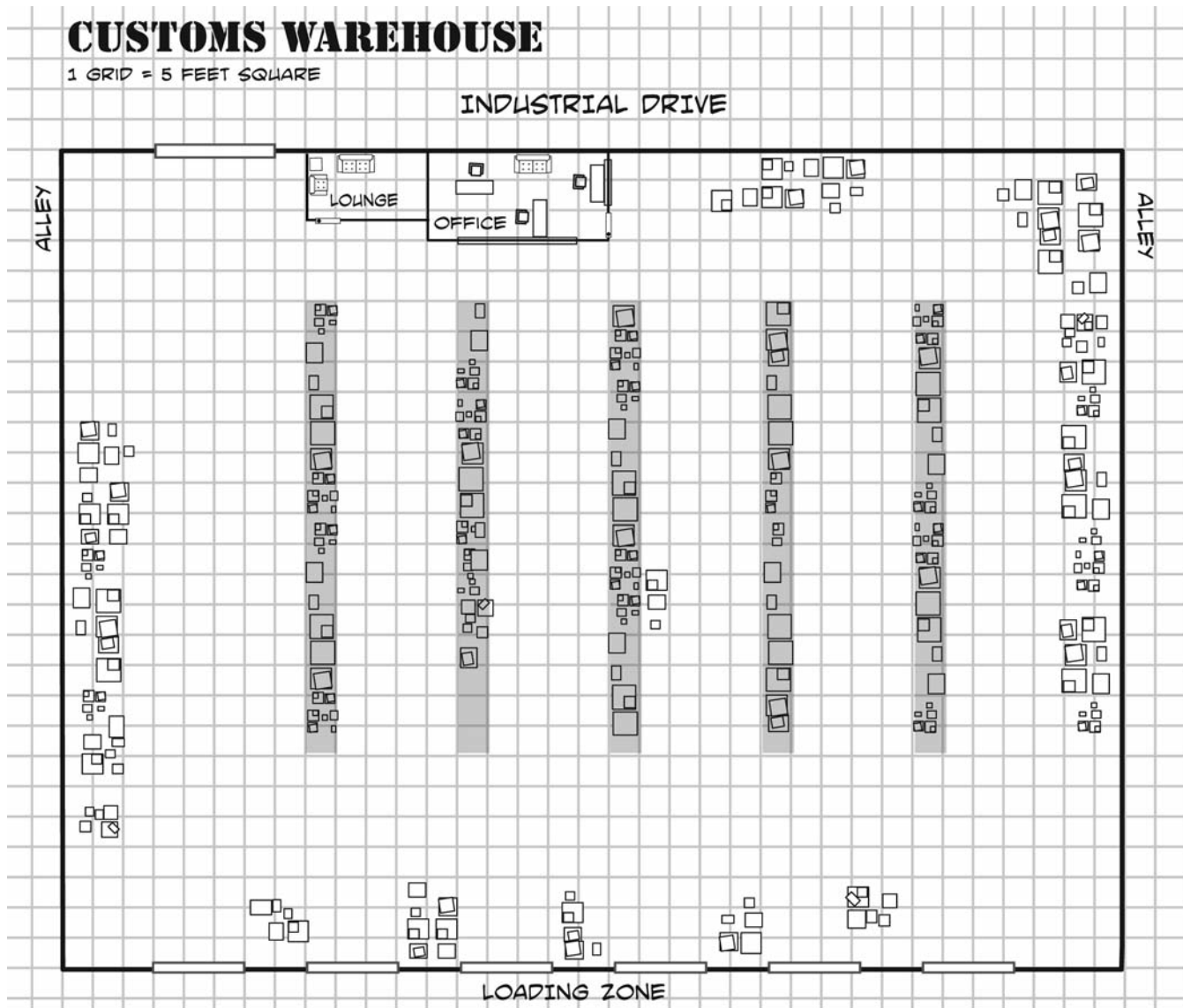
As this encounter requires that a hero patrol the rail terminal and warehouse area, some story of criminal activities in the area should be given to the hero to encourage such surveillance. If a hero or group routinely carries out such patrols, this will not be necessary, but must be taken into account for any hero who does not routinely patrol an area of this type.

The hero should encounter Factor while on this routine patrol of the warehouse district and transit terminals. It can be any time of the early morning or late evening, but not normal business hours as this place would be teeming with customs agents. Factor, of course, would prefer to operate under the cover of darkness and at a time when no one else is around to see or hear him work. The hero will spot suspicious movement in the alley between buildings. There will be two figures in front of a service entrance; one will be using a high-tech device to break the code on the electric lock, while the second holds in place a low-beam flashlight to aid the other. These two figures are two of Factor's duplicates. A third wearing a black petticoat will be stationed at the end of the alley at the street trying not to look too inconspicuous, yet remaining vigilant. There are a total of six Factor duplicates at the location. The actual positions of the three remaining are at the discretion of the GM. If any of the original three are attacked by the hero, the rest will come running.

If Factor should win, he will hogtie the hero with thick rope and more knots than a Cub Scout troop could provide. Factor is not a killer, and won't become one today. After subduing the hero, Factor will make haste to complete the job and leave the area. If Factor should lose, but none of his duplicates remain conscious, each will 'pop' as they fall unconscious and the hero's job will be done. However, should Factor

lose the battle and the last remaining duplicate not be knocked unconscious, the hero may attempt to interrogate him. If the interrogation is successful, the last duplicate will reveal the name of

the bar where the true Factor is located. If the interrogation is unsuccessful, then the last duplicate will feign that he is the real McCoy and allow himself to be taken to jail. Nice work hero!



FACTOR

Identity: Lawrence Emberly
Sex: Male
Age: 30

Side: Dreadlord (Evil)
Level: 9
Training: Agility

Powers:

1. Heightened Intelligence: +10.
2. Heightened Endurance: +12.
3. Willpower A (variable use) PR=1per turn.
4. Body Power: Multiple Selves: Factor may create a duplicate version of himself by tapping infinite parallel dimensional space he occupies. These duplicates are real in all respects and may act independently of the original with all his stats, powers and abilities. He may create as many as his power score will let him. It costs 2 PR for the first, 3 for the second,

5 for each thereafter. Factor has a maximum number of 18 duplicates possible (2 per level). Each time a duplicate is created, that duplicate has a maximum PR -1 for each duplicate made previously. The duplicates will last for up to 240 game turns (1 hour) unless they are rendered unconscious at which time they will 'pop' and disappear from our dimension. Factor also has the ability to maintain a telepathic rapport and clairvoyance between all his facsimiles making him the perfect advance scout. The distance of the telepathy between any of the duplicates and Factor himself is 300 miles. The duplicates know that they are in fact duplicates and there is no chance for 'rebellion' or dissent.

a. Psionics: Mimicry: Factor has a special ability to modulate his vocal cords to sound like different people. This ability is used most often so that he can have his duplicate selves convince the enemy they are different people. Characters may use an unmodified Detect Hidden roll

to discover this deception. If the detecting character has equipment that will aid in analyzing the vocal patterns, this machinery will boost the Detect roll normally to aid in discovery.

b. Psionics: Rapid Calculation: Factor has the cognitive ability to process thought transactions much faster than a normal person. This power is what allows him to communicate with, track, control and maintain the actions of multiple duplicates at one time. It has the fortunate side effect of allowing quick calculations and multiplying his detection scores by a factor of two and one half.

Weight: 180 lbs.

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 25

Intelligence: 24

Reactions from Good: -2

Hit Mod: 8.64

Damage Mod. : +3

Accuracy: +2

Carrying Capacity: 381 lbs.

Movement Rates: 52" ground

Detect Hidden: 45%

Inventing Points: 11

Basic Hits: 4

Strength: 12

Agility: 15

Charisma: 15

Evil: +2

Hit Points: 35

Healing Rate: 2.8

Power: 76

Basic HTH Damage: 1d6

Detect Danger: 55%

Inventing: 72%

Origin & Background: Lawrence Emberly had been a petty criminal using his multiple selves to commit burglaries and such while always making sure to have an alibi.

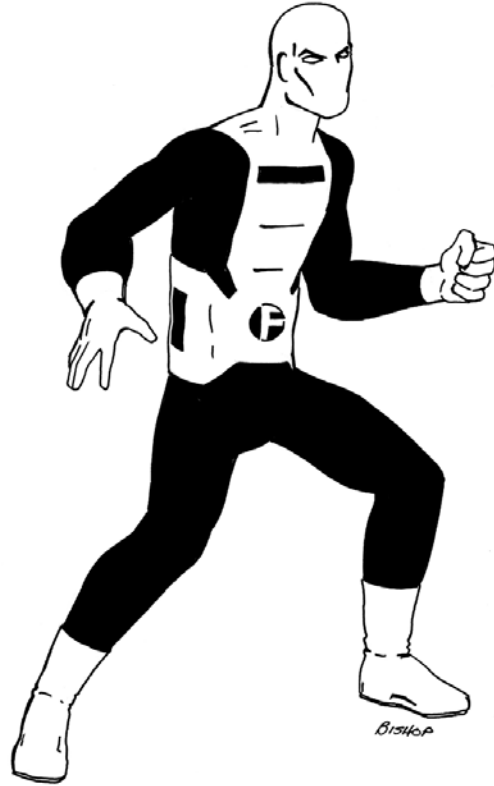
One night, he was given a 'hot tip' on a shipment with priceless artifacts arriving under a minimal guard. Too good to pass up, he arranged a fence for the incoming goods and proceeded to infiltrate the ship in dock with the treasures.

Unknown to him, the shipment was also of particular interest to Dreadlord who wished to exploit some of the ancient finds for one reason or another, perhaps for some unknown mystical properties. Emberly was confronted by Dreadlord himself, who somehow forced Emberly's multiple selves to merge again into one. Given the choice of a lifetime of servitude or death, Emberly, not knowing the history of his captor, chose the former. He was placed under the effects of the 'Tether' and allowed to live.

At first he felt no different as he took up ranks with the Furies, and like Ore, whom Emberly became friends with, found that being a part of the Furies made things easier and more profitable.

During a mission, Factor, as Emberly was called now, made a terrible mistake that accidentally foiled the mission. Although no one was hurt or captured and his fellow Furies were very forgiving to the affable 'new' guy, Emberly felt first-hand what the 'Tether' was all about. The intensity of that experience has since created subtle psychoses in Factor of fear and loathing. He has since become less outgoing and is prone to depressions, although he does not dare to allow these things to affect his judgment or abilities.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Factor is most often used for infiltration and



reconnaissance. In combat, Factor usually likes to create multiples and will attempt to overwhelm someone with numbers or use them to help arrest an opponent to make it easier for a teammate to deal with them. If no other options in combat exist, Factor will never prefer to engage more than one enemy, even if he has multiple selves available. He will do this reluctantly and only temporarily as a stalling tactic until help arrives, else he will withdraw.

The more duplicates Factor creates, the more likely he will be controlling them remotely while he remains close by in hiding and in a relaxed posture to conserve personal energy.

Character/Personality Traits: Factor is an obedient member to Grav and the Furies who respects his teammates, but he also harbors resentment because most are not under the 'Tether'. In his spare time, he secretly seeks information or knowledge that will free him.

Emberly is amicable if engaged and not particularly nasty as a person. If he were somehow freed of the 'Tether', he would probably still stay with the Furies if they had nothing to do with Dreadlord. Factor is always afraid to displease the dark master for fear of Dreadlord killing him.

1. ONE NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

It's been several days since any of the player characters have had a good night's sleep. Whether this is coincidence or some sort of bug in their food supply, the prevailing mood finds the player-heroes in need of a good 'workout.' The opportunity will avail itself much in the same way as most do: The players will find themselves privy to a police band communication or a direct call for help. The local municipal authorities will somehow inform them that a strange field has formed around the downtown Museum of Natural History. Query and answer over the bands describes it as a somewhat translucent purplish hue that seems to be resistant to penetration. Due to the dark nature of the field, no details can be seen beyond the outside façade; any open windows or doors are too dim to see the interiors of the building. The field is a cube that encompasses the museum grounds thoroughly. Since the field is so supernatural in appearance, the local authorities are contemplating an immediate escalation... Of course, it is highly likely that the heroes will at this point catapult themselves into saving the day.

1.1 TESTING THE WATER

When the heroes arrive, they will find the field as described by the authorities, and there will be squad cars and officers of the local constabulary at various points around the perimeter. The immediate police officer in charge, Lt. Humphrey, will actually have a look of relief on his face as the player-heroes approach. Humphrey will tell the heroes that there doesn't seem to be a way in, but in this quip, will mention that the only thing they haven't tried is sewer access. HQ told Humphrey not to try that due to the magnitude of the perceived threat the monstrous force field exudes. Humphrey did order the building's floor plan if the heroes should inquire.

The curious hero will find that physically an attack will mire the contacting attack momentarily and then thrust back with the same force as exerted. There is a 50% chance that the first person who attacks in this manner to test the field (whether a punch or thrown object) will be hit by their own attack. Subsequent attacks will have the same chance until the heroes realize the futility. Bullets will suddenly travel in slow motion and then fall to the ground, spit out of the field harmlessly as far as the characters can tell. Energy will simply be absorbed and dissipate. Noncorporeality or Vibratory powers used to attain intangibility will be ineffective as well.

If the heroes do nothing beyond an attempt to penetrate the field, it will last one hour after their arrival and then simply fade over about fifteen seconds to nothingness. The museum will no longer be obstructed in any way and the heroes can gain entry. They will find two security guards amidst the hall of dinosaurs suspended from the jawbone of Tyrannosaurus Rex in the room marked S4 on the map. They appear to have been twined together by some sort of webby substance. They have been beaten into unconsciousness, but with a few weeks of hospitalization, the guards, Jack Spence and Marvin Kwiatkowski, will fortunately mend any broken bones. The pair can be lowered and cut loose with some serious effort: Even though the webby twine is only the width of common yarn, it is as strong and resistant as half inch thick nylon rope. Once awake, the two guards won't be of much use to tell what happened; their attackers were in numbers and brutally quick. If the heroes are insistent, they may get some answers through the cloud of injury and fatigue.

Kwiatkowski was in the Ancient Civilizations Hall and, when his attackers appeared from the shadows, he managed to shout a warning and fire a bullet at an attacker, but was unable to see the outcome of his shot. About that same time, Spence was in the Industrial Age Hall

when he heard Kwiatkowski shouting and triggered the silent alarm, but it was too late for him as well as his assailants also came in numbers from the shadows and quickly overpowered him.

Investigation of the break-in will reveal that not much was disturbed at all in most of the museum. The exhibits in the Ancient Civilizations Hall were picked over until one specific display was singled out and its contents relieved on one of their number.... At this point, the GM should skip to Section 1.3, as the next becomes irrelevant.

1.2 SINISTER SHADOWS

If a schematic of the building is obtained, the heroes will become aware of a sewer access that leads to a sub-basement that may afford access. Alternately, should one of the characters have knowledge of the sewers or for some reason operates in those tunnels, they will know for certain the location of this access door. The players will not encounter anything but harsh odors and muck slogging to the sub-basement entry.

MAP KEY: MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

SUB-BASEMENT

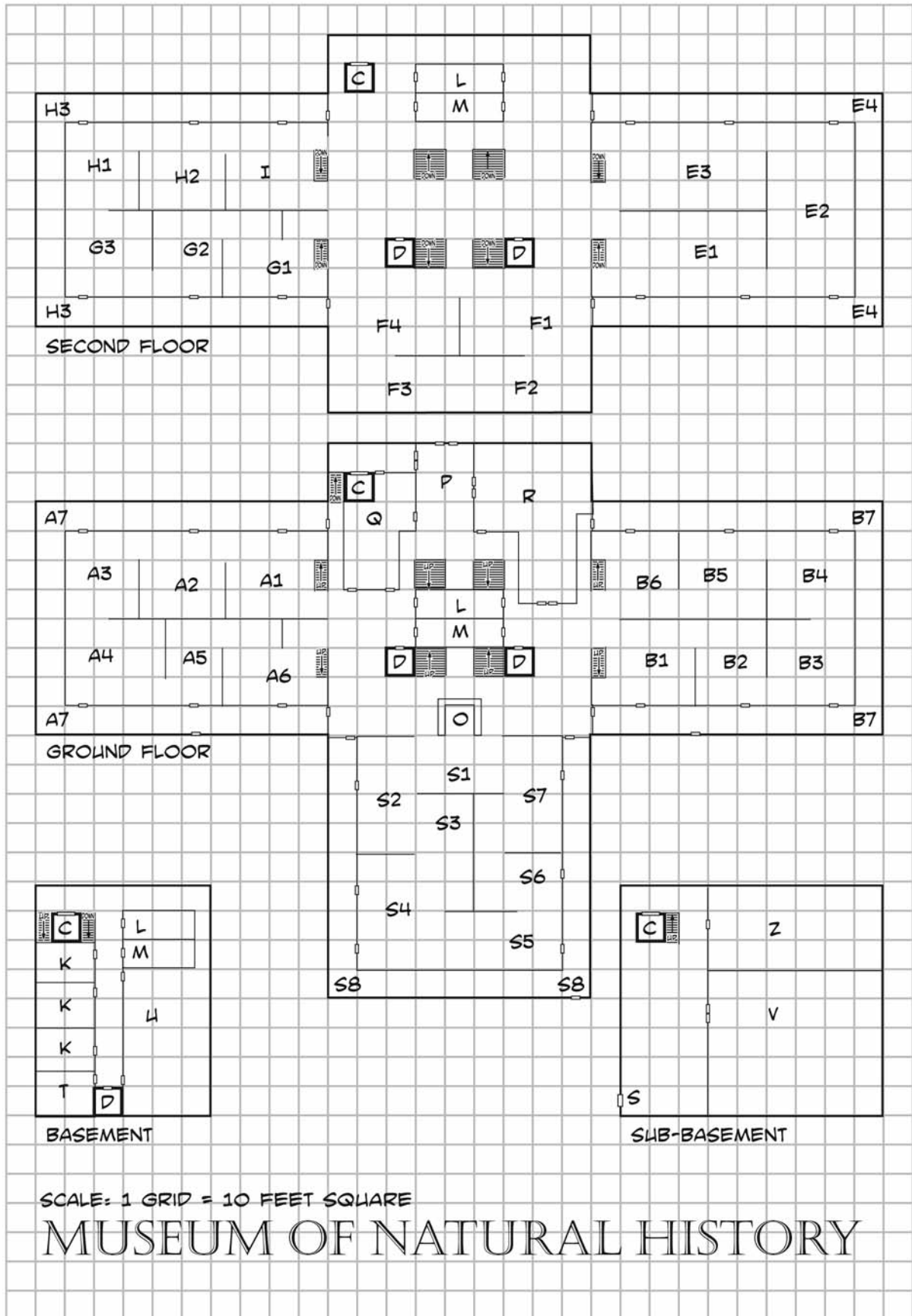
C. Service Elevator
S. Sewer Access
Z. Power Supply and Management Room
V. HVAC/Furnace

BASEMENT

C. Service Elevator
D. Elevator
K. Administration/Curators Offices
L. Ladies' Room
M. Men's Room
T. Records Management
U. Maintenance

GROUND FLOOR

A1. Ancient Civilizations – Lost Millenniums Hall
A2. Ancient Egypt: Pre-Dynastic to New Kingdom
A3. Mesopotamia: Uruk, Sumer, and Babylon
A4. Ancient Greeks and Minoans
A5. Ancient China: Hsia and Shang
A6. Ancient India: Harappa to Vedic Age
A7. Assembly Room 1
B1. Empires Hall
B2. Persia: the First Indo-European Power
B3. Alexander
B4. Rome: 1000 Years
B5. Han Dynasty
B6. Gupta and the Golden Age of Hindu
B7. Assembly Room 2
C. Service Elevator
D. Elevator
L. Ladies' Room
M. Men's Room
O. Operations & Customer Service Kiosk
P: Main Hall
Q. Gift Shop
R. Restaurant Café
S1. Origins of the Universe



- S2. Oceans/Formation of Life
- S3. Continents and Super-Continents
- S4. When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth
- S5. Mass Extinction Theories
- S6. Rise of Mammals
- S7. Prehistoric Man and Ages of Ice
- S8. Assembly Room 3

SECOND FLOOR

- C. Service Elevator
- D. Elevator
- E1. Barbarian Hordes and the Fall of Rome
- E2. Far East Empires
- E3. The Dark Ages and the Byzantine Empire
- E4. Assembly Room 4
- F1. Papal Dominance, Kingdoms and Crusades
- F2. Genghis Khan and the Mongol Horde
- F3. Ottoman Turks and the fall of Constantinople
- F4. Renaissance and Reformations
- G1. Trade and Exploration
- G2. European Dynasties and Colonialism
- G3. Revolutionary Wars
- H1. Industrial Age
- H2. World Wars
- H3. Assembly Room 5
- I. The Nuclear Age
- L. Ladies' Room
- M. Men's Room

When the heroes enter the map at P (Main Hall), they will encounter 5d4 strange humanoid agents, the Dust Warriors. They are garbed in strange sleek raiment that resembles a stealthy black ninja outfit. Upon close inspection, the shine of ambient light will seem to reveal strange symbols, each approximately a quarter inch in diameter, covering the entirety of the outfit. These minions will also be armed with either short blades or clubs that all are of the same manufacture and seem to be derived of the same armory. These weapons have a very faint glow about them and are etched with strange glyphs and runes. They will hold up to battle (SR: 30) and be impervious to damage. The minions will miraculously be unable to be disarmed.

Peculiarly, if these combatants are defeated, killed outright, or knocked unconscious, they will disintegrate into strange piles of a white chalky substance; not even their garb will survive. Their weapons will not disintegrate in the same manner, but will instantly tarnish, decay and then crumble into rusty unusable relics as if just uncovered from the exposed context of an ancient ruin. The villain Redback will be in a dark corner of the room and will begin her attacks by picking off any heroes who are at a disadvantage against the Dust Warriors.

DUST WARRIORS

Level 6, Male

WT	ST	EN	AG	IN	CH	HP	Pwr	Dmg	Acc	CC	HTH	Move
180	14	14	12	10	10	9	50	+1	+1	373	1d6+d4	40

REDBACK

Identity: Draya Witherby
Sex: Female
Age: 29

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 11
Training: Evasion

Powers:

1. Animal Powers: Redback has several powers which are Arachnid in nature and confer the following abilities:

- a. Heightened Agility B: +21.
- b. Heightened Endurance A: +11.
- c. Natural Weaponry: (Flesh Hooks) +2 to hit, +4 damage HTH.
- d. Mutant Power: Adherence: Redback may adhere to and move along walls and ceilings at normal ground rate. She may exert her carrying capacity while running along walls, but if inverted (on ceilings, etc.) her

movement range and carrying capacity are applied against each other at a relative ratio. For example, if she exerts half her carrying capacity, she may exert half her movement; likewise if she exerts one quarter her carry capacity, she may move three quarters her movement while carrying this added weight. This power costs no PR.

e. Heightened Senses: Redback can see in the ultraviolet spectrum seeing as well in darkness as she can when illumination is present.

f. Body Power: Webbing: Redback has the ability to generate super-strong silk webbing very much like that of a spider. She can project this webbing up to 18" at a cost of 2 PR per ejection. Redback may use this webbing to swing, ascend, or descend from point to point where reasonable up to the 18" distance at the added cost of movement only. If she launches a web stream at an individual, it attacks as power blast and does a modest 1d6 damage. However, on a successful attack, Redback can grapple the opponent with 10x her Carrying Capacity (5,290 lbs). The webbing has 5d4 hit points per application/binding and an SR of 11 for purposes of breaking. Each successive hit is treated as a separate instance and must be broken individually. The webbing has a particular vulnerability to flame attack however and that power may bypass the SR value for the purpose of damage, likewise any leftover damage from one flame attack will automatically apply to the next binding.

Weight: 130 lbs.

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 23

Intelligence: 16

Hit Mod: 15.4752

Reactions from Good: -1

Damage Mod: +5

Accuracy: +5

Carrying Capacity: 529 lbs.

Movement Rates: 73" ground

Detect Hidden: 12%

Inventing Points: 12

Legal Status: Wanted for questioning by multiple agencies.

Basic Hits: 3

Strength: 18

Agility: 32

Charisma: 14

Hit Points: 47

Evil: +1

Healing Rate: 1.8

Power: 89

Basic HTH Damage: 1d8

Detect Danger: 16%

Inventing: 48%



Origin and Background: Redback grew up in Port Moresby, Australia and literally had an uneventful childhood within a normal family. After going off to college in Sydney, Draya was starting to have a lively time as a college coed when she became suddenly ill. She wasn't sure if she ate something bad and decided to shut herself into her dorm room. She last remembered falling asleep and next, a pounding on her door by firefighters. They forced their way into Draya's room and cut her free from some sort of silky cocoon. The incident seemed to pass except that Draya continually became ill when she ate certain foods and spent

too much time in the sun. She began to prefer nocturnal living, hard drinking, and soon discovered her powers. By this time her studies became nearly non-existent and she was being expelled.

She began losing her grip on a 'normal' life as she found herself in seedy company and shady surroundings. She became first a brute for hire, then smuggler and eventually an assassin, with no qualms about getting rid of associates who were less than fair in their negotiations.

For a few years she cut her teeth on being a right hand to Jade Spider. Eventually, Redback became tired of Jade Spider's intolerance and left her employ. A short time later, Redback accepted the offer of employment from Grav and became one of the Furies. Redback is not under the effects of the 'Tether' (see Dreadlord).

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Redback prefers to attack in the dark, using her UV vision to her advantage. She will also use 'guerrilla' tactics attacking suddenly from the shadows and harassing opponents. She will use her webbing to bind orifices (mouths and eyes) to limit her opponent's senses and speech as well as conventional tactics of binding hands and legs to inhibit free movement.

Personality/Character Traits: Redback is a cool customer and can be a team player, but her loyalty will be lost to anyone who shows the slightest hint she is expendable.

If Redback manages to defeat any heroes, she will attempt a quick and clean getaway, and is not concerned about leaving any Dust Warriors behind. If Redback is defeated and captured, she will not reveal any information to the heroes. She will remain as tight-lipped as possible and, when questioned, will only parrot the phrase "I want my attorney." It is likely that the heroes will not be able to decide what to do with her as they have her in custody, and then CHESS will arrive in the following section.

1.3 ENTER C.H.E.S.S.

The heroes emerge from the museum to find more authorities have arrived. The players will see a V.T.O.L. with CHESS markings on it. Several Rook agents and a pair of Knights will be deployed and begin interacting with the police, and establishing their own perimeter. Charles Parnee, an operative of CHESS, will approach the heroes and want to talk about the strange incident. Heroes who check Parnee's credentials will find he holds the rank of Bishop and has a spotless

2. ZERO HOUR

One week has gone by since the events at the museum (or longer, depending upon how the last chapter ended). If the GM wishes, they may actually run the information in these next few paragraphs as an adventure sequence to have the heroes try and foil the theft and be involved first hand, but it is not necessary since this section is merely to help the players feel that there are related events that are beyond their control in other parts of the world. For the GM who chooses this path, it is recommended that another cadre of Dust Warriors from Section 1.2 along with another member of the Furies be chosen to carry out the mission, with Vortex in wait to provide an escape from capture.

In world news (the GM may choose any reputable media organization, i.e. ABC, NBC, FOX, CNN, BBC, etc., or one that is already prominent in the campaign at large), the people of greater London are in shock and awe; details are coming to light about a night raid which took place at the Tower of London.

Reports say that a miasmic fog of swirling black mist crept into the corridors and courtyards while mysterious figures did battle with security forces. The apparent goal of the thieves were the famous Crown Jewels,

record. He will accompany the heroes to their base, or for more paranoid players, the roof top of the museum. Once comfortable, Parnee will brief the heroes on why CHESS is now involved and direct his men to take Redback into custody if the heroes will allow it.

Parnee shows the players a diagram and identifies this as a pre-Egyptian artifact that the museum had housed in a special section that was being featured on the mysteries of ancient civilizations that have unknown roots in the historical record. Specifically, this artifact was of carved marble made smooth with brilliant polished gemstones set into it. The artifact was dated to about 6500 B.C. and was found in 1927 in the deserts of Iran. The diagram shown depicts the artifact as complete, but Parnee tells



the group that a few of the stones in the diagram were missing from the actual piece. He will share the opinion that he believes that this is a map or compass of some sort that leads to something greater yet to be found.

The GM should allow the players to go into speculations with Parnee as to the origins of the missing artifact. Any wild goose chase is greatly encouraged to add to the reality that would follow this sort of discussion. Whatever happens in the aftermath, the next chapter of this adventure is where things begin to pick up and it will become apparent that something much larger is looming on the horizon. However, there should be no hurry to get to the next chapter as any tangents pursued will invariably lead to good role play.

GM's Note: It is revealed later in the adventure that Parnee is actually not a CHESS agent and is an assumed identity of the villain Anarch, who has infiltrated CHESS. If the heroes turn Redback over to Parnee, it is likely that the heroes will be seeing Redback again toward the end of this adventure. If the GM wishes to use Parnee as a loyal CHESS operative, his corpse will be lying next to Djanado's in Section 4.3. The operatives who accompany him in this section are actual CHESS agents and have no knowledge of the deception. Also of note for any characters familiar with CHESS are the absence of agents with the ranks of 'Valkyries' and 'Doves'. Under the advice of agency counsel, these ranks were deemed sexist and a violation of civil rights, and thus were eliminated by the administration.

as it is reported that the Yeomen Warders, or 'Beefeaters,' engaged and fought valiantly. There were few fatalities, and although the jewels were feared lost, in the aftermath all were found and accounted for with the lone exception being the strongbox containing the remainder of the Cullinan Diamond, the largest single diamond ever discovered.

The two primary legacies of the Cullinan are the First Star of Africa, the largest flawless cut diamond in the world weighing in at 530 carats, which is now mounted at the top of the Sovereign's Sceptre, and the Second Star of Africa of 317 carats, which is mounted in the Imperial State Crown, were both cut from the celebrated Cullinan. Originally weighing over 3,000 carats, the Cullinan was given to King Edward VII by the Government of the Transvaal (South Africa) in 1907. The remainder of the massive gem was kept in a strongbox with the rest of the collection, or so that is what records say.

What the news is not telling the public, mostly due to so few having any direct knowledge is that the strongbox actually contained a gem far more valuable that was thought to be left over from ancient Britain, specifically from a long destroyed crown believed to have belonged to the legendary Arthur himself...

If the heroes have pursued an interest in the museum theft and remained in contact with C.H.E.S.S., or if they have contacts with Interpol, Scotland Yard, or a major British super-hero or group, they should be informed of the loss of the less well-known gem in this robbery at the Tower of London.

2.1 THE MESSENGER

For this segment, the GM should be encouraged to have his or her players' characters be perched somewhere to witness this event; it should be no accident... fate has given them a major role in a cosmic performance. They could be camping, picnicking, in transit via an automobile or large SUV or any other method which has them positioned correctly to notice the star fall...

The early evening calm is broken by a crackling thunderous electrical disturbance which builds slowly and rages a few moments across the sky, followed by a clear and distinct boom. As the lightning clears from the build-up of the fiery clouds, a glowing meteorite streaks down to the horizon!

The object has crashed in a remote area outside the city; the terrain should be described as appropriate; if the players' characters work in New York City, it could be a hilly wooded area upstate; likewise if they operate in Las Vegas or Phoenix, a sandy desolate desert area would be acceptable. It is night time when the heroes arrive, so the darkness should add an air of mystery to the encounter.

Player-characters with the power Cosmic Awareness will be able to sense that indeed, something feels out of kilter in the cosmos that may have world shaping effects, especially if ignored. They should be encouraged to journey to investigate the fallen object, if not, then the GM should give incentive in the form of a mild throbbing at the temple or wrenching in the gut should they attempt to ignore this development.

If no player-hero possesses a Cosmic Awareness, or if for some reason the GM has trouble encouraging the players to investigate, then the GM should actually have the object crashing collide a lot closer to the heroes, perhaps even injuring them or endangering their lives in whatever they're doing at that moment.

When the heroes arrive at the site, they will find a long trail of minor debris and disrupted soil gouged several feet deep for nearly a hundred yards, culminating in the presence of a mostly intact craft that resembles the tumbling drum of a cement truck. There will be an obvious hatch wide open and a figure lying face down a few feet away. There are also some lights emanating from the interior and a glimpse inside will show what looks to be a pilot's compartment, albeit scorched and component-fried and bearing strange markings in excess - none of which is in any apparent Earth language.

The being, apparently a human female, is wounded, probably fatally, and the first priority should be medical attention. She can be stabilized, at least temporarily by any character with advanced medical training or healing powers.

She is dressed in some type of lightly-armored uniform or pilot's garb, potentially that of a soldier and armed with a small strange pistol. She has a beautiful face adorned with light asymmetrical tattooed markings.

Before too long, there will be a buzzing noise, then a pop, followed by more pop and crackle from the pod she arrived in. This is a grand hint that the craft is going to destruct. The heroes will not be able to prevent the craft's destruction, thus the GM will need to begin a countdown in secret of how many turns he wants to give up to roleplaying the scene before the craft actually explodes.

If the heroes do not get the pilot and themselves clear, anyone still within 5" will take 2d20+20 points of damage from an explosion resulting in a rupture of a neutron crystal that powered the craft. At 10" away, the damage will be halved. 20" to 30" away will require a save versus Agility or one quarter damage rolled will be inflicted, and after 30" no save will be required and damage will be avoided, although the wave of energy and heat will still be felt. If the players do not get the hint, the alien woman will not survive the blast, let alone be transported anywhere.

If she is stabilized as described above, she may regain a moment of brief consciousness, and may actually render a half-strength smile and gesture of thanks. She will have nothing coherent to say, but in that one glimmer of consciousness, she will force into the palm of one of the heroes a small orb. (If she dies, it will be found on her person by anyone who searches. If it is not found, it will fall into the hands of the OMA agents described later in this book.)

Any medical help or first aid will keep her from dying before she can be taken to a hospital, but eventually she will succumb to her wounds and never fully regain consciousness, even if brought to a proper medical facility. It is recommended that her passing occur after the heroes have made a legitimate effort to save her life. When she expires, her body will gradually glow brighter and brighter until concealed in a bright white light, and then the light will fade and she will be gone.

It is recommended that the heroes try to leave the scene before the authorities arrive and can regroup in a comfortable setting such as their base or their favorite hangout, discussing what has just occurred and hopefully asking the right questions and getting on track.

At the GM's discretion, it may be a few days in between this section and the next. In the intervening time, any investigation into local sources of knowledge will probably result in very little being learned. This applies to either of the extra-terrestrial encounters or any related items as the specific related information has not been seen since the elimination of Atlantis.

GM Note: For the consideration of the GM, the government, through its military or other agencies suited for extraterrestrial contact, will probably descend on the site within moments of the heroes' arrival. Time is of the essence for the player-heroes to make some hasty decisions regarding the fate of their otherworldly visitor. The forces of the state will assuredly quarantine the victim, and detain the heroes. At the discretion of the GM, this might be a good thing, but in most campaigns, this will prevent the heroes from acting with autonomy from the grasping controls of big brother. At the very least, characters with a sense of awareness will feel uneasy about sticking around...

2.2 THE ORB



The orb that the messenger had carried is a rather strangely textured object about the size of a softball. It has literally thousands of symbols and lines engraved about a millimeter deep over its entire surface in concentric and geometric patterns of many kinds that are overlapping so as to maximize the space, so there are no surface areas discernible, only gouges. It seems to be made of some sort of petrified wood and

takes on orange-brownish hues. It may remind some players of a Chinese puzzle made of finely carved wood if not for the weight. There is a noticeable deep notch in the orb which appears to be where a missing component jacks in like a key. Those with the proper senses will be able to detect magical properties from the orb. Logically, it should not be thrown since it apparently is some sort of precious cargo. But, if thrown like a projectile or used as a blunt weapon, the Orb has an SR of 23, weighs five pounds and will add 1d4+1 to HTH damage. By Earth standards, the engraving on such a fine scale is a feat of fine craftsmanship never before seen and for an object so small, its imperviousness will surprise many.

Those heroes with the powers of Cosmic Awareness, Telepathy, Emotion Control, or other appropriate Psionic powers, will find that the orb brought by the messenger has some sort of sentient investment to its nature; not to say that the orb is living, but that someone has imprinted their intelligence and perhaps knowledge into it. The person actually in custody of the orb, if they do not possess it already, will gain a limited form of Cosmic Awareness in regard to gut feelings of right and wrong and impending threats to the orb's security, but not any

precognition of any other events.

For purposes of use in this adventure, the orb functions initially as a sort of 'Magic 8 Ball.' It doesn't necessarily require a telepath to communicate with it, although this might help at the GM's discretion, and can indicate a 'hot/cold' as in 'right choice/wrong choice' or 'near/far' for queries that are not directly related to any of the embedded sentience that it possesses. The GM is encouraged to have it be treated as a useful tool along the way, perhaps even having different players holding it produce different or more detailed solutions so as not to alienate any participation. The orb should actually have extremely limited effect on the adventure since the GM will not want players to develop a crutch on its involvement. It will mostly show images and convey emotion in the mind of the wielder; most times with only the following information being clear to the telepathic inquiry at this stage of the adventure. There will not be 'voices' heard or noises emanating from the orb, although if the GM finds it useful, sometimes it can form the knowledge of some proper names associated with people and places seen, but that is all. It is strongly recommended that use of the orb cannot see or help detect the movements of any of the villains in this adventure at all. The GM should enforce a nebulous and unclear feeling regarding any attempt to gain any information in this way.

The player-heroes should be careful about who they tell about the encounter as most campaigns have clandestine agencies that attempt to quarantine those who claim to have had such contacts and sometimes work behind the scenes to discredit them. In specific, any thoughts of CHESSE, Charles Parnee, or any CHESSE contacts the players may be familiar with will bring an uneasy feeling to the person holding the orb; the feeling will be a sense of impending doom or dread.

GM Note: It is recommended that the character with the least amount of actual powers be given custody of the orb to assist with their transition to the 'cosmic' proportions of this adventure; conversely, players whose characters are equipped with Cosmic Awareness, Telepathy, Emotion Control, or other appropriate Psionic powers find the orb somewhat repulsive which could best be explained as a 'security' feature to protect its secrets. This scenario will produce a temporary loss of Charisma (-1d4+1) until that character relinquishes the orb to someone else.

2.3 CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The hero who ends up holding the orb will soon get a telepathic urging: They need to journey to Arizona! The character will feel compulsions based on the actions of the player. A GM should encourage the desire to look at a map, to see names of locales, and zero in on the northern region of Arizona's Gila County. It is recommended the player-heroes use whatever means to transport to the western United States available to them, or the GM may perhaps assist.

The characters should arrive in the small town of Payson, Arizona with an eye on a jaunt to a small corner of the territory off the Mogollon (pronounced MUGGY-own) Rim, taking the local roads; they will end up traveling to the village of Whispering Pines, a series of multi-acreage properties located just north of town off State Highway 260...

There is a modern cabin home on the front of Lot 12 of Whispering Pines Ranch and further back at the far end of a long driveway, a second cabin, quite a bit older but still apparently intact and in good upkeep. When the heroes arrive at the lot, they will see a young girl dressed in contemporary teenage apparel dropping a garbage bag at the front end of the driveway and talking on a cell phone; soon after a woman in her late 30s, apparently her mother calls her to the door of the front cabin home.

Hopefully, the heroes will be incognito and have a few members hang back with the rental car (or whatever mode of transport) while a few could approach the front cabin to speak with the woman, Beth Snowden. Ms. Snowden will at first treat any strangers with general

politeness and feign stupidity to any strange line of questioning or conversation. The teen, Beth's daughter Kimber, doesn't have a clue about anything of interest to the heroes at any rate and, if approached, will back away and go to the house and fetch her mother. If the heroes approach in costume, Ms. Snowden will tell them to leave, assuming they are here for some sort of hero advice or help from her great grandfather and trying her best to keep him undisturbed.

In any case, if the heroes come out with the simple truth, then Beth will act differently, especially if the player-character who has the orb should show it. For years her great grandfather has been telling her to expect company someday in regard to this subject matter. Beth will escort them to the cabin at the back and knock as she opens it. After a brief explanation, the voice of an elderly man will beckon the heroes to come in. In the modest back cabin, the heroes will find Thomas Snowden, with the appearance of a 65-year-old man dressed in a flannel shirt and jeans with hiking boots. He wants them to be comfortable and tells them he is glad they're here; he has been waiting a long time.

The old retired hero, who has become somewhat of a hermit, asks the heroes to show 'it' to him. He does not know the object is going to be an orb, only that there is something he is supposed to see. This object that he expects is, in fact, the orb; if the heroes produce any other object, Thomas will tell them that's not what he is talking about. The heroes may not want to show him, but nevertheless he tells the heroes he has all the time in the world. He starts into a short story, and after, if the heroes have still not shown it to him, they probably will. He begins:

"Anyone still alive who knows me or who I was knows that I was the World War I American hero, the Bullet. I could run as fast as an iron horse locomotive and had a nifty uniform that absorbed impacts, bullets, energy and whatever else I ran into.

My daddy taught me to serve my country; he was an Indian fighter and fought for Uncle Sam to preserve the Union. When the Spaniards blew up the Maine, he was all fired mad. I knew I could ride and shoot and, of course, run fast, so I offered my services, such as they were, to a volunteer group that was going to Cuba. I first distinguished myself by serving at the Battle of San Juan Hill alongside Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders...later I served that President as one of his 'biggest sticks'... I became quite 'political'.

I had retired from 'public' life and politics after Roosevelt lost on the 'Bull Moose' ticket, but returned to public service to go overseas even before America entered World War I at the personal request of President Wilson. That man was smart and knew I could help. When I got to England, I met Sovereign, a British hero. We became friends and, quickly, good friends. He told me about this duty he had to uphold the family honor, even claimed to have a lineage back to King Arthur. I thought he was full of it, but he was a nice enough 'chap,' so I humored the claim and even teased him about it once in a while. I never imagined. With all that has happened lately on TV, I knew it would be soon I heard from you.

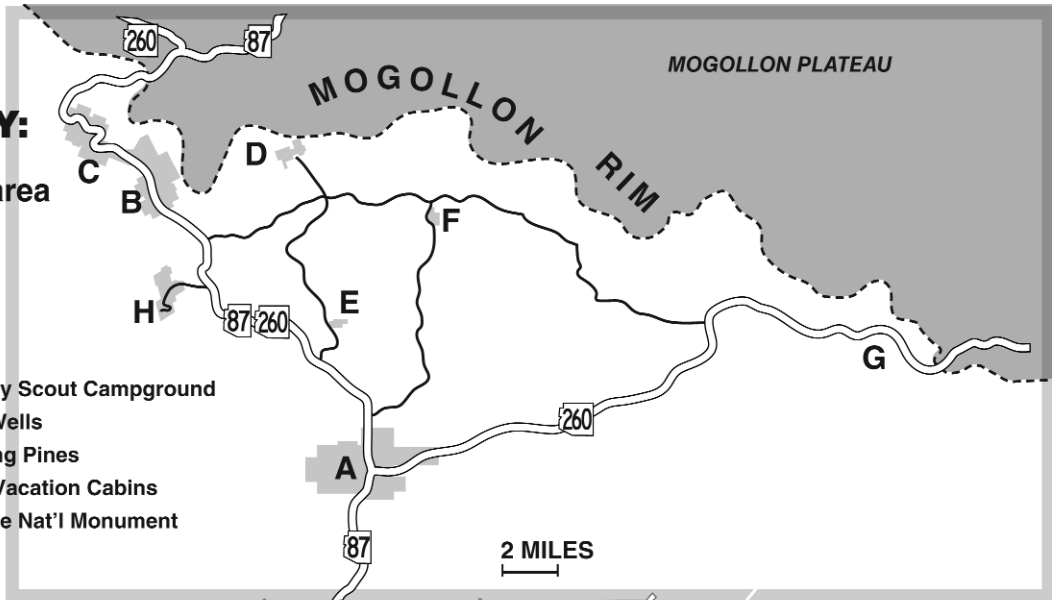
Anyways, we were serving in France in the bloodiest of campaigns, in the Somme. That battle lasted six months and on a cold October night near the end of the battle, Sovereign was surprised when just after we took an enemy position, an ammo dump exploded. He was practically standing in the middle of it... biggest explosion I ever saw took out half the hillside... he was hurt really bad. He knew he wasn't going to make it, so I ran him back to our HQ and they left us to talk in his final moments. He pulls out this,"

Thomas shows the heroes a small ornate box with strange runic markings that have been etched into it. This sort of craftsmanship will be familiar to someone who has seen the orb. Bullet continues.

"He tells me this thing has been in his family since before the Middle Ages. I said he should give something like that to family, but he tells me there weren't any he trusted and he still hadn't met a woman he fancied enough to have children with. Life is funny. He says to me that since he had no heirs, Bullet, his truest friend needed to take it. I was asked to carry on. I felt honored, so I accepted it, not really knowing

**RIM COUNTRY:
Payson, Arizona
and surrounding area**

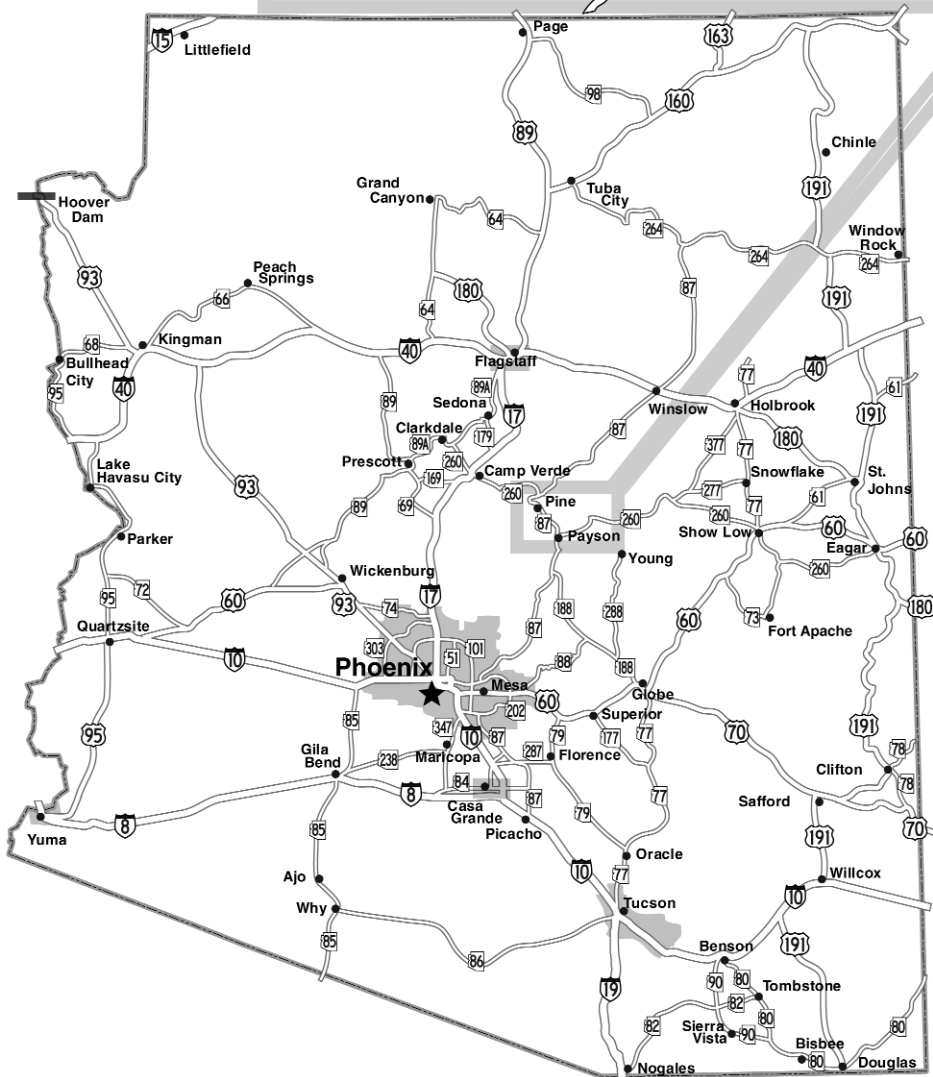
- Forest Roads
- 87/260 State Highways
- A - Town of Payson
- B - Town of Pine
- C - Town of Strawberry
- D - Camp Geronimo Boy Scout Campground
- E - Village of Flowing Wells
- F - Village of Whispering Pines
- G - Christopher Creek Vacation Cabins
- H - Tonto Natural Bridge Nat'l Monument



**STATE OF
ARIZONA**

- Interstate
- US Route
- State Route
- Cities And Towns
- Metropolitan Area

60 MILES



GM's Note/Point of Interest:
The V&V Adventure
To Tackle The TOTEM
(SKU2013) is set in the area
around Tucson, Arizona.

what it all meant. His last words to me were that I would always be an honorable man and quote 'You will live to know the time.' And then he passed away.

After the war, I retired again from 'hero' work, this time for good. When I was traveling across the Atlantic on the return trip home, I was sitting in a stateroom on the slow boat and decided to examine this thing a bit closer. Messing with it a bit, I had a vision about the heirloom and things that had I not lived so long I wouldn't know how to describe them. I saw flying cars and space ships, strange alien men with four arms and other things that really shook me up at the time. I was terrified and for a long time, I just tucked the box away. I eventually managed to regain my composure and put the visions out of my mind and, after a while, they stopped coming.

Eventually it became clear that being in the possession of the box had somehow caused me to age much slower. As I began to outlive my wife, remaining friends and all the other people in my life, I realized that the heirloom had allowed me to continue living. My wife just thought it was clean living on my part; fortunately she passed away before her time from a lymphoma before she could fully see the disparity. I became depressed. I drove to the Grand Canyon, to the ocean, and anywhere else I could think of to get rid of it. But every time I tried to throw it away, I always felt a warm comforting feeling at the last minute and the urge to keep it like it was the right thing to do. So, I moved here and bought this property and waited. I always invite relatives to stay in the front cabin so I can keep an eye on them and stay up on the latest events. You've met my great granddaughter, Beth. Heck, Kimber doesn't realize who I really am. I'm just Grandpa Tom."

(AND if the players haven't shown Thomas/Bullet the orb, then read the next sentence as Thomas holds his hand out...)

"Can I see it?"

The GM can feel free to allow the players to hold conversation for as long is necessary for them to be comfortable with Thomas. He sets the orb and box on the table in his dining room and very casually, yet moving with slow grace and care, unlocks and peels open the box. The layout of the open box forms a cross shape filled with strange runes and a small key-like object made of the same material of the orb and of a shape to fit the notch in the orb. He then breathes a sigh of relief as he notches the key into the orb. A wave of energy subtly washes over the entire cabin from the orb and Thomas says, "My part is done."

The box is itself important and will be brought with the heroes when they depart either by Bullet himself, or him bequeathing the box to the orb wielder. The box itself has important diagrams on it that will not mean a lot to the adventurers at this stage, but in Section 4.6, the heroes may find it more than useful. The GM should have the players look at the game prop of the box provided with the counters.

For Bullet's involvement being finished, he will now age at a rate of about a year every 2 months until his age catches up with him. If the player-heroes should return to Whispering Pines or remain in contact, Bullet will pass away peacefully in about three to four years. For the GM who is short on heroes for this adventure, or as mentioned in the introduction, the following fate can be used for Bullet:

If the heroes are short players and the GM needs an NPC, the scenario will play out so that when Thomas notches the orb, the wave returns him to age 27 and the stats provided for him as a physical specimen for World War I will be viable for game play. He will tell the heroes that he has time for one last mission if they'll have him. At the end of the adventure, if he hasn't died in a heroic fashion, Bullet will thank the heroes for this last mission and he will ask to 'go home.' He will then journey to the Seeing Chamber and Nimue will restore the power of the orb and Bullet will glow and disappear much the same way Zindrah did in the previous section when she passed.

If there is a new player who joins the group after the game is in progress or is willing to wait until this section, Bullet can join the team as a PC in the same way, with the exception that if the player wants to continue to play the character, it would be up to the GM how to proceed after the adventure.

BULLET (circa 1917)

Identity: Thomas Snowden

Sex: Male

Age: 27

Side: Good

Level: 9

Training: Agility

Powers:

1. Armor B: ADR 85

a. Special: Resistant Mesh: Provides 5 points Invulnerability against each incoming attack.

2. Heightened Speed: +360" (416" total) per turn, + 12 to initiative rolls.

3. Heightened Strength A: +10.

4. Heightened Expertise: Military Weapons, +4 to hit.

5. Heightened Expertise: (Variant) Dual Wield Pistols: Bullet may fire each pistol simultaneously and may fire at separate targets normally at +2 to hit instead of +4 per his Heightened Expertise with Military Weapons.

6. Special Weapon(s): Ivory-handled Revolvers (Pistols, 2), +3 to hit, 1d8 damage, Range = 108", 'speed-cylinders' (magazines) 8 rounds/shots each, 12 spares cylinders carried (total 14)/reload costs movement only.

Other Weapons (carried on battlefield): Knife, +1 to hit, +1d2 damage HTH, Hand Grenades (4), accurate range = 22"

Weight: 180 lbs.

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 16

Intelligence: 12

Reactions from Good: +2

Hit. Mod: 6.7716

Damage Mod: +2

Accuracy: +3

Carrying Cap: 619

Movement Rates: 416" inches/turn ground

Detect Hidden: 10%

Inventing Points: 6

Basic Hits: 4

Strength: 22

Agility: 18

Charisma: 15

Evil: -2

Hit Points: 28

Heal Rate: 1.6

Power: 68

Basic HTH: 1d8

Detect Danger: 14%

Inventing: 36%



INITIAL MESSAGES FROM THE ORB

The following sequence will play one time to the person who ends up maintaining custody of the orb in the player group, whether by committee of players' decision or GM's discretion. **Note that these images will only play once the orb has been 'completed' by the key.**

1. The orb was sent with the embedded information encrypted into the orb by Aurana, a priestess and apprentice to Veterra, Earth's Master of the High Council. Aurana will appear in the mind of the orb wielder as a very beautiful woman in her thirties with long black hair down past her waist, with extraordinarily styled raiment framing golden skinned features. Earth men may find her quite striking, while Earth women may feel threatened by her stature and poise. She is attired in flowing, yet Hollywood science-fiction oriented garb. The name Aurana will not necessarily be apparent and at the GM's discretion may be available with whatever skill roll they feel is appropriate.

2. The scene will briefly zoom out to an extra-orbital view of a planet that resembles Earth, but is obviously not, as its atmosphere and clouds will be tinted differently by a blue star. The planet has a few orbiting space platforms visible that look like giant airports, again,

3. THE DESTRUCTION OF STAR-ION

3.1 FALL OF A HERO

Shortly after the heroes return home from Arizona, they will be contacted by the local authorities about an emergency developing downtown. It seems that a well-known super-hero, Star-Ion, had been following up clues to one of his own cases and that he has, for unknown reasons, run amok in the downtown area. It is beyond the capacity of local law enforcement to bring the apparently out-of-control hero under control and end his rampage.

Star-Ion had embedded in the design of his costume a large powerful stone (in reality a polished shard of enchanted Asteryst) which he appeared to wear in medallion fashion on his chest. It was a glistening shard that radiated light and energy under 'normal' conditions when the hero would expend or display his powers.

But today, something is quite different about him. The crystal has apparently been ripped from his chest piece and is missing and Star-Ion is out of control. He has laid waste a large area of city block and bystanders are in various states of flight, panic or injury. Anyone arriving on the scene can discern that there are civilians who have paid for this rampage with their lives. Star-Ion, once a renowned hero, has apparently gone berserk and now must be stopped by the player-heroes!

Two villains lie potentially lifeless in the background landscape of what was apparently a large and destructive battle. The villains are Dead-Eye, a cyborg mercenary, and Brahman, a large brutish mystic. These villains' stats are found in the Furies' section at the end of the adventure. If any hero is well connected or knowledgeable of super-criminals who have been at large, these two are, with the GM assigning what he or she thinks is an appropriate level of skill check, able to be identified and known for their crimes. At the GM's discretion, these two may merely be unconscious or severely wounded rather than deceased. If this is the case, they will be too injured to fight if they should regain consciousness. If the GM has them survive this battle, it will be likely that they are in the custody of the authorities. Prior to being turned over by those authorities to the OMA for processing, Vortex will appear and assist them in escaping and rejoining their comrades.

Cosmic Awareness and telepathy can both be attempted to be used either directly on Star-Ion or indirectly on the scene to assess what caused this destruction, but Star-Ion is beyond reason. He has somehow been empowered beyond his normal levels, but is burning out as the source and stability of his power seems to have been stolen.

something right out of Hollywood. The continents will be foreign as well and lend further evidence that this is not Earth. When viewing the alien world, the name Xarith may materialize/sound in the wielder's mind (pronounced ZAIR-ith) with the same discretion for the GM as the name in item 1.

3. The view will zoom back into an antechamber to show Aurana having a conversation with another woman, who will look the part of a somewhat armored space soldier. This is a Phalanx Warrior, Zindrah (the observant player [GM's discretion/roll required] will recognize the wounded pilot from the previous section when she was in perfect health), sent to Earth and given the orb by Aurana.

4. The view will continue to a final vision of a fantastic city nestled at the edge of a large set of cliffs with spaceships and hovercraft frequenting the skyline and great towers and spires right out of a Lucas film. Interestingly, the hero will be able to clearly distinguish the Moon in the sky above the city.

The orb must be brought to the 'Seeing Chamber' and given to Nimue and will not grant any more visions.

STAR-ION

Identity: Paul Carpenter
Sex: Male
Age: 38

Side: Good (Irrational)
Level: 14
Training: Charisma/Agility/
Star Powers

Powers:

1. Mutant Power: (Imbued Star Powers): Star-Ion has the power of a star and may radiate this power for various effects. For 3 PR, he may activate and wreath his body in cosmic flames; he automatically receives Flame Power as a defense. He may use these cosmic flames as described for Flame power, attacking at an effective range of 66" for 1d12 points damage, PR=3. Star-Ion may also use this power to simulate Light Control at a range of 62" for 2d8 damage, PR=1 per attack. He may also use the Special Light attack/blinding flash option.
 - a. Flight/Hyperflight: Star-Ion may fly at 1085 mph (4774" per round) and may use hyperflight as described in the rulebook.
 - b. Heightened Attack: Star-Ion may add up to his level in points of damage to each attack.
2. Heightened Strength B: +17.
3. Heightened Endurance B: +15.
4. Heightened Agility B: +16
5. Body Power: Cosmic Resilience: Star-Ion may ignore the first 2d4 points of any attack. After this point, he may also ignore an additional 1d4 points of fire, heat, ice, cold or radiation based attack.
6. Adaptation: PR = 1 per attack when used as a defense.
7. Life Support: Star-Ion has no need to breathe, eat or excrete, but still may do these things out of human habit. He receives the defense for Life Support when applicable.
8. Cosmic Awareness: Star-Ion is attuned with the natural energy of life and the universe. He has Cosmic Awareness per the rules in the rulebook.

Weakness: Special*: Star-Ion may not be reasoned with at the time of this adventure and his Cosmic Awareness is not functioning. He will receive negative Charisma modifiers from all factions.

Weight: 188 lbs.
Agility Mod: -
Endurance: 31
Intelligence: 20
Hit Mod: 39.8164

Basic Hits: 4
Strength: 35
Agility: 31
Charisma: 22
Hit Points: 160

Reactions from Good*: -4
 Damage Mod: +5
 Accuracy: +5
 Carrying Capacity: 4,322 lbs.
 Movement Rates: 97" ground
 Detect Hidden: 14%
 Inventing Points: 8

Evil*: -4
 Healing Rate: 6.8
 Power: 117
 Basic HTH Damage: 2d8
 Detect Danger: 18%
 Inventing: 60%



Origin and Background: Star-Ion was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force and aspiring astronaut. He was fortunate to be included in a shuttle mission that propelled his standing publicly when he rescued a fellow astronaut and the satellite module during a failed spacewalk. In the moment of desperation where he had successfully ensured the rescue parties to safety, but himself was about to be lost, he was struck by an intangible energy fragment that had spiraled in from deep space and parts unknown. Regardless the origin of the mystery object's trajectory, its impact actually pushed Carpenter back into reach of the antennae and ladder rungs on the satellite module. No one realized anything had occurred out of the ordinary and Carpenter was a hero.

Soon after landing, Carpenter began experiencing hallucinations and nausea and went on a medical leave that became fodder for the media. The space agency quieted the frenzy with some well-timed 'PR' and Carpenter went on vacation. During a highly isolated sabbatical journey into the deep mountain ranges of Alaska that summer, he was camping and a strange old man appeared at his campsite. The old man wasn't attired as someone who was hiking the back country and although out of place, struck up a conversation with Carpenter that caused the astronaut to self-examine his life. They talked most of the evening and into the wee hours, with the old man leaving on his way as the sun

began to rise. Carpenter oddly accepted that this man was simply going to walk away and tired from the all-night discussion decided to nap for a while before taking on the day.

Carpenter woke several days later to a bear rummaging through his supplies and his camp in disarray. Frightened at first, Paul crept over to his tent to look for the rifle he had brought with him, but the bear took notice. Thinking the bear was going to charge, Paul steeled himself, but instead the bear stood slowly and then returned to all fours and walked away. There was an odd moment of attunement and Paul thought he may have even heard the bear speak. He could feel the trees growing and the wind felt like a blanket. A tugging at his chest prompted him to peel his shirt back revealing the Asteryst stone embedded on his chest. He grasped it and removed it without pain and looked puzzled at it. Instinctively he set it back to his chest and it fastened itself naturally to his skin and in a rush, Star-Ion was born knowing all he could be.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: When not in his maddened state, Star-Ion will attempt to blind opponents and contain them to enforce reason upon them, responding with direct force when negotiation fails.

Personality Traits: Normally, Star-Ion is an all-around nice guy, protective hero that is loved by many. He might seem a little haughty at times, but has a genuine concern for the plight of humanity. He often brings food to the hungry and helps with providing shelter and safety for the oppressed. He realizes all too well, however, that too much intervention on his part could lead to resentment from world leaders and possibly disastrous consequences to many innocents. Several times Star-Ion has journeyed to the stars and fought corruption on a 'cosmic' scale. In his journeys, he has acquired knowledge that he keeps secret regarding the Earth and its role on the cosmic stage. Despite this, he continues to be the hero he needs to be.

What has transpired here is that Star-Ion had been ambushed by the Furies. Star-Ion's cosmic awareness had alerted him to the presence of the orb and he was going to the city to make contact with the heroes, but Dreadlord, also sensing some portentous events were transpiring (in part due to Kudarak's own actions) commanded the Furies to stop Star-Ion from gathering allies and alerting any heroes to the scope of the events occurring. If he had been available to the heroes when they found the orb, the scenario would have turned out much differently.

At the opening of the battle with the Furies, he was injected with some sort of energy by Cannonade, who was wielding some sort of alien weapon provided to him by Kudarak. The immediate effects were not realized as Star-Ion merely thought he had been impaled and bravely fought on. As he valiantly battled against their numbers, his control of his powers started to fluctuate as his power seemed to increase. He then began losing his ability to stay focused and, in the midst of this disorientation, his power shard was ripped from his chest by Mammoth. In a sudden and violent reaction to having his power source removed, he exploded with power, killing (or wounding and rendering unconscious) two of his foes and ruining several structures nearby. With Star-Ion's mind deteriorating quickly and his powers ever increasing, the remaining Furies, secure with their prize, left the scene via teleportation by Vortex.

It is a truly tragic situation and the GM should be prepared that the only way to resolve the situation will likely see the heroes have to make the decision to kill this hero for the greater good. The more endearment to this legendary hero the GM can instill by building up Star-Ion's reputation, or somehow show that this hero is a great human being who will be missed when he is gone, may make the role-play that much more interesting.

As the combat progresses, the GM should tally an additional 2 points of damage to Star-Ion's damage result with whatever attack he uses for the first five turns, and then 1 point every other turn thereafter. The build-up of power should be progressive and noticeable to the heroes and likely add to the dramatic conclusion of this battle. Smart teams of heroes might think to evacuate the nearby citizenry or search for those

who have not already fled the area and ensure that they leave quickly.

If the battle should somehow last a full 15 rounds, Star-Ion will explode, obviously killing himself (he will be disintegrated to ash and there will be no remains), but even worse, causing 5d20 damage to those within 100 feet, 4d20 to the next 100 yards in radius, and 3d20 damage (attacking as Fire) to everything within four city blocks:

If the heroes are unable or unwilling to put this hero down, there will likely be more casualties.

Optionally, if the tone of the campaign is such that a GM does not wish to place his or her players in this uncomfortable spot, Star-Ion may be battled into submission by altering the fifteen-round limitation effect. Should he be halted and be used in subsequent campaign material, his Weakness should be replaced by this reference pertaining to the missing stone:

“Weakness: Special Requirement: Asteryst Stone: Carpenter has been permanently and irrevocably changed in his transformation to Star-Ion by the stone. Without the stone in physical contact, Star-Ion’s cosmic powers have no focus and the result is a 15 round countdown to an energy release, uncontrolled behavior, and then Star-Ion ‘explodes’ as described above, except that each d20 will be reduced to d6. After the explosion, Star-Ion will fall comatose (instead of the explosion consuming him) until the stone is returned to his body, at which time the stone will take on a ‘living effect’ and rebind itself to Star-Ion. Star-Ion will regain consciousness 1d4 days after the stone is replaced. If the stone is not replaced, Star-Ion will remain inert.”

3.2 BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

As the players emerge from the debris of the battle zone, they witness a single, large VTOL touching down before them (or their vehicle if applicable). However, this craft has no CHESSE markings on it, rather a seal that will appear to belong to a government agency and the agents who deploy are wearing different garb.

The players are approached by a few various uniformed OMA agents, fronted by one in particular wearing some sort of ranking insignia, Agent O’Brien. They will be asked to stand down and accompany them. Hopefully there will not be any conflict or resistance from the player-heroes, but the hearty allowance for role-playing dialogue and a tendency for some players to resist authority may lead such a confrontation to escalate to battle. These agents should be treated as 7th level and all will be armed with an automatic pistol. The GM can assign knowledge areas or other details as they see fit.

OMA AGENTS

Name	Hits	Power	Agi	Move	Dmg	Acc	HTH
O’Brien	12	57	15	42”	+1	+2	d8
West	10	48	12	32”	+1	+1	d8
Hartley	8	43	10	34”	—	—	d4

Defcon Agent	Sex	Weight	ST	EN	AG	IN	CH	HP	Power	Dmg	Acc	Carry	HTH	Move	Level
Hogan	M	205	13	12	12	12	12	13	49	+1	+1	349	1d6	37	8
Rust	M	191	11	12	12	11	11	08	46	+1	+1	242	1d6	35	7
Kaneicki	M	202	11	11	12	10	11	06	44	+1	+1	245	1d6	34	7
Doonan	M	192	11	12	12	11	10	08	46	+1	+1	243	1d6	35	7
Jones	M	189	12	11	12	12	09	07	47	+1	+1	267	1d6	35	7
Danko	M	178	12	12	12	09	09	09	45	+1	+1	261	1d6	36	7
Bonnarigo	M	196	11	12	12	10	09	08	45	+1	+1	248	1d6	35	7

The players will be asked to be taken via the VTOL to an undisclosed location. The GM is encouraged to use the nearest Air

DEFCON TEAM

Within moments of this contact with the three OMA agents, a cadre of armored agents touches down at the perimeter of the scene fronted by one in particular wearing some sort of ranking insignia and of a slightly tinted color. The armored agents begin patrolling and helping any local authorities maintain order.

The elite armored agents of the OMA wear the DEFCON Armor, a forerunner of the armored battle suits designed by Austin Enterprises. The DEFCON platform is currently being used by normal human OMA agents who are rated to combat super-powered menaces using the armor. Most crew members are considered to be 7th level with no superhuman powers other than those granted by wearing the armor. All actions or movement taken cost 1 PR from the personal total of the armor’s user. If provoked to combat, these agents fight with the utmost determination and loyalty to country and service.

Defcon Powered Armor Stats/Modifiers

Weight: Adds 150 lbs. to user, no added Base Hits.

Agility Mod: Per modified weight, only affects initiative.

ADR: 100 Power: 150

Damage Mod: +2* Accuracy: +2*

Endurance: 25, only applicable to saving throws

Carrying Capacity: x20 of user, PR of 1 from suit PR when exceed normal carrying capacity.

Basic HTH Damage: per modified Carry Capacity.

Movement Rates: +35” ground, Flight 2860”/650 mph

Detect Hidden: x3 (HUD, Infrared and UV modes available)

Detect Danger: x2 (Sensors, Radar apparatus, motion sensors)

Powers:

1. Special Weapon: Force Blasters: weaponry built into either gauntlet; attacks as Power Blast. A single blast from one gauntlet will deliver 1d20 damage in exchange for 1 PR from the suit. A combined blast from both gauntlets will cause an additional d10 damage for a total of 2 PR but will require a cool-down phase of 1 turn before either gauntlet may be fired. Attempting to use the gauntlets without the cool down will result in malfunction as it will burn out the regulator circuit. Consult the following and roll d100 in this case:

01-10 Both gauntlets malfunction until repaired.

11-80 One gauntlet malfunctions.

81-00 Will not blast, normal cool down required.

2. Natural Weaponry: +2 HTH, +4 damage from armored fists.

* Armor wearers may not add both personal Damage and Accuracy Mods to those provided by the armor.

2. Invulnerability per attack: 8 pts.

3. Flight: 650 mph (2860” per turn), no hyperflight. 1 PR per hour.



Force base and invent a secret and secure room deep in the base for the briefing. There, the heroes will be directed to a full color and high resolution hologram that crackles and then smoothly materializes into view and begins playing from the remote unit in an open briefcase even as it is being set-up.

"...are these the heroes?"

A woman with striking beauty and a dark complexion stands before the heroes in what appears to be a modified OMA agent's uniform. It is obviously decorated with some sort of elaborate rank and commendation. She first appears to be looking off camera and then turns her view to look directly at the gathered heroes. Her eyes slowly pour over each hero in the intervening silence until she is done with her inspection. She then begins speaking. GMs should modify portions of her speech that do not apply to the makeup of the group:

"Ladies, Gentlemen — I am Giovanna Ravas, Director of the Office of MetaHuman Affairs. We are a special branch of government who answer only to the highest authority. If you have had dealings with other organizations with other agencies, believe me, they likely have already reported your activities up the chain to us. In spite of any previous record you may have had, your slate for this briefing is clean and your freedom unabridged. Agent West will take anyone who does not wish to be here away now and return you to where it is you wish to go."

At this time, the holographic host motions to an agent standing at the doorway. If any of the players do not wish to move forward, have them gather and continue with them separately. Agent West will escort them to a V.T.O.L. that will, as promised, deliver these heroes wherever it is they wish to be. It is not encouraged that a GM allow the party to separate, but it does happen. GMs will be encouraged to find a way to work these players back into the adventure, if possible. If one of the defecting heroes has the orb, it may make things that much more interesting.

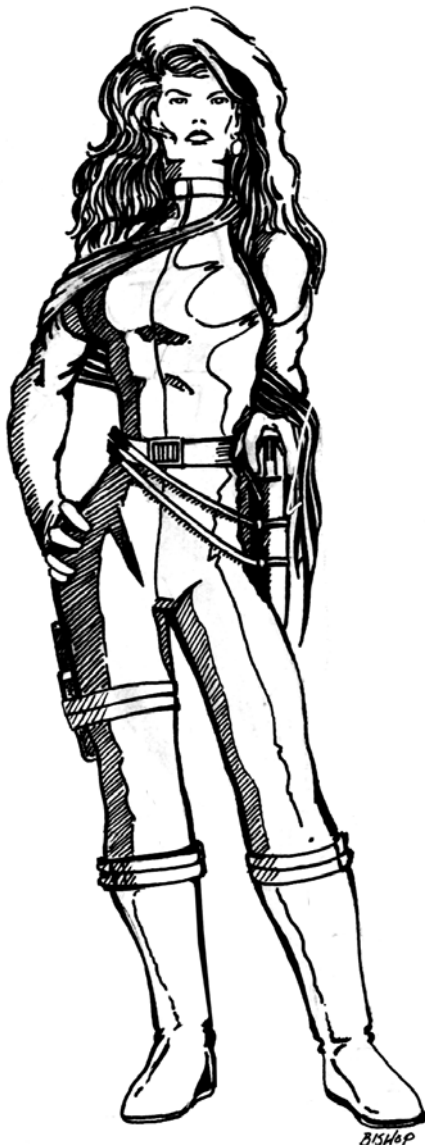
Ravas continues with her briefing:

"The loss of a great hero like Star-Ion is devastating. The absence of such a stalwart defender is a cruel twist of fate, all this notwithstanding the collateral damage; the city will take time to recover..."

"So the threat to the public seems to be quite real. I'd like to ask for your help in this crucial time. We recognize that your team of mid-level operatives has a good variety of ability; some offense, some defense and some utility. We think you may be the key to being able to derail the efforts of the assembly of super-powered felons which has recently come to the forefront of our concerns: The Furies."

"Their actions have been sudden, bold, and very public, with a high casualty count amongst affected civilian populations whenever they appear. It seems that the endangerment of innocents is a tactic they know will cause us to weaken our pursuit of them if they inflict high collateral damages to divert our focus and subtract from our efforts against engaging them directly."

"We expect that you might see more teeth from the Furies than you may have experienced with other villains. Be aware that in our brief experience in pursuit of these particular targets, we have noted they will likely not take prisoners if it presents a burden to the speed of their operation. Likewise, their view on eliminating their opposition... (a wry



Giovanna Ravas, OMA Director

smile crests her lips) ...is one that is borne of a philosophy that they won't have to fight you twice... just saying.

"We've had some agents survive the confrontation only due to disengagement and, for whatever reason, a break-off or lack of pursuit by the targets. We've had a lot of agents simply not come home."

"The agents who have survived have reported intelligence that seems to corroborate that they are searching for these."

Giovanna motions and points to the lead agent who hands the leader of the hero group an Asterystone perfectly carved just like the one in the diagram.

"We know that the stones are identical to the one that was taken from Star-Ion. We also know that the jewel taken from London and a third one are unaccounted for. So we're giving this one to you to protect and use if needs be. Why you ask? I'd say that these guys want the stones pretty badly; we think you have the best chance to stop them through force or cunning. In simplest terms, you guys are in the best position to use this as leverage or bait. Are there questions?"

Giovanna will answer questions as the GM sees fit; hopefully the GM has researched the adventure to the point where direct questions about the events may be answered in such a way as to not break the adventure. When all questions, if any, have been answered, Ravas concludes the briefing with the following:

"We would like to capture these villains alive; they have information that is just too valuable to not obtain and depositions based on hearsay are worthless. You are not truly authorized to use lethal force. I can't condone anyone taking the law into their own hands... except in the case of self-defense, which would be... understandable. Keep your heads on a swivel and in the game. It's dangerous out there. The clock is ticking."

The heroes may have a gut feeling that Giovanna is holding something back. Since she is remote and this is a transmission and not a live

location, it is nearly impossible for a mental snapshot to reveal more information than this suspicion. Giovanna, in fact does know a bit more. She (and those with a high enough clearance) knows that at least two of the villainous mercenaries were at one time operatives in her organization. This is causing her some distress as she certainly feels that both Grav and Raptor have inside organizational knowledge that compromises her ability to effectively capture them with their current technology and assets, hence the inclusion of the player-heroes to enhance the effectiveness of her pursuit.

If the heroes decide to help, they will be given a cellular device with a few programmed OMA contacts. They will be able to monitor comm traffic of other operatives involved in the operation. The goal of the OMA, in the final analysis, is the capture of the Furies (or any of the villains in this adventure); the discovery of portals to other worlds, if reported, will lead to an organizational decision for the government to seek control. When the dust settles on this adventure, the heroes may find themselves in the position of evaluating their level of trust in government control over the portals!

4. FROM HERE TO TIMBUKTU

4.1 UNDERCOVER

Parnee will contact the heroes at this point and ask if they have heard anything more about the artifact from Chapter 1. By this time, the players may have deduced the connection in the stones depicted in the diagram of the museum artifact, the attack on the Tower of London, and the one removed from Star-Ion just before he had to be stopped in the last chapter. Let them speculate some more about Parnee and CHES involvement even as Parnee tells them that CHES has located another of the stones in a mosque in Timbuktu, Mali. Though the bearer of the orb may feel the hackles at the base of their neck quiver on the topic, Parnee will play to their suspicions. Parnee will conveniently not mention the OMA contact and if the heroes mention it, Parnee will inform them that he has been in contact with them and everyone is in the loop.

Parnee will disclose that an alien invasion may be under way and the stones may be the key to stopping such a thing from happening. If transport is difficult, Parnee will send a V.T.O.L. to help the heroes make the journey halfway around the world. Additionally he will tell them that CHES is secretly helping a local revolutionary in the area in exchange for cooperation and entry to the mosque.

The V.T.O.L. from CHES will arrive within ten minutes of the heroes' agreement to go if they should take Parnee up on the offer for transport. If not, the GM should give the players whatever time they need to make the journey and encourage the group chatter about the artifact and stones. Parnee, if asked, says he will be meeting the heroes at the plaza that is in the shadow of a mosque in the African town.

4.2 CROSSROADS OF DESTINY

Conjuring up an end-of-the-earth remoteness of a sun-baked frontier town, the desert crossroad that once linked caravan trade from west Africa to its northeastern shores, Timbuktu (pronounced tim-buck-TOO) brought a variety of peoples together including black Africans, Berbers, Arabs and, above all, the Tuaregs. These nomadic people are descended from those who first created Timbuktu in the 11th century and seized it from invaders in 1434. The Tuaregs set up their camel-skin and palm-mat tents in the dry season, attracted by Timbuktu's location where the Niger River flows toward the Sahara Desert, some even saying the place was where "the camel meets the canoe." The tents soon gave way to sun-dried terracotta-colored mud brick buildings built in the Moorish style as traders, doctors, clerics, artists, poets and others settled. Arab traders brought salt and other goods that reached North Africa's Mediterranean shores and traded it in Timbuktu for gold and, above all, the books that make the town a center for intellectuals. If one were to ask the inhabitants of Timbuktu, they would likely say "gold came from the south, the salt from the north and divine knowledge from Timbuktu."

When France colonized West Africa starting in 1893, Timbuktu came under French rule until Mali became independent in 1960. Throughout the invasions, the Tuareg considered Timbuktu their city, so when France was negotiating Mali's independence, Tuareg leaders wrote to Gen. Charles de Gaulle in the 1950s, appealing for an independent homeland for the nomadic people, made up of several tribes united by common culture and the Tamashék language.

Timbuktu, known as an ancient seat of Islamic learning for its 700-

year-old mud mosques, is home to a library of ancient, camel-skin-bound manuscripts covering a range of subjects from science, astrology, and medicine to history, theology, grammar and geography. From the sizzling desert sands and burning sun, one could imagine entering the city's walled enclosures to central courtyards and through archways leading to the welcome cool of shadowy rooms where men once negotiated sums over copious cups of strong, mint-flavored tea brewed thrice in a time-honored tradition.

Yet in recent days, the area has become a hotbed of political tumult. The thunderous clamor from rocket launchers and pop of automatic gunfire that pierced the air around this fabled town has subsided.

Amidst the dust of civil war, Timbuktu is now occupied by a strongman, Huran Djanado, leading nomadic Tuaregs. Rumor in the streets can be heard that the city was attacked in the Tuaregs' fight to create a homeland for themselves. In truth, the Sahara's blue-turbaned nomads have been duped. Enter Djanado, a charismatic man who has convinced the Tuareg rebels to take advantage of the chaos surrounding the coup by timing their assault to coincide with the political crisis in the south.

That uprising, sparked in the capital city of Bamako, began when soldiers overthrew Mali's democratically elected leader in the capital of the nation, once a model democracy. The officer who led the coup, Col. Umbaka Nubkogo, declared the nation's constitution dissolved and issued a statement of martial law which caused the country's neighbors to immediately demand a 72-hour deadline to restore constitutional order or else face crippling sanctions. The former President of the nation went into hiding, but was to be resigning in a month anyway. Nubkogo soon surfaced and made a public reversal amid the international pressure that he was reinstating the former constitution from a prior regime and planning to hold new elections. His latest declaration appears to have staved off the sanctions, but the world holds its breath, waiting for the next move...

The traditionally nomadic Tuaregs, who dominate the north of the country, have long felt ostracized by the Bambaras who dominate the nation's south and whose members are overwhelmingly represented in the junta now controlling the capital.

The Tuaregs have rebelled before, but never have they succeeded in taking Timbuktu or the major northern centers of Kidal and Gao until now.

If the player-heroes approach the city, they may pass by soldiers from the darker-skinned Bambara ethnicity who agreed to leave the city under promise of safe passage from the lighter-skinned Tuareg group. As the heroes actually enter the city proper, they will meet no resistance, but will certainly see the presence of an armed camp of hundreds of blue-turbaned Tuareg militia, many of whom will be keeping an eye on them.

Word will spread quickly through the town that the heroes have arrived if they do make any contact with the people or revolutionaries. Again, they will be treated with relative peace and respect and will not be attacked so long as they keep their cool, and soon enough they will be summoned to a meeting with Djanado.

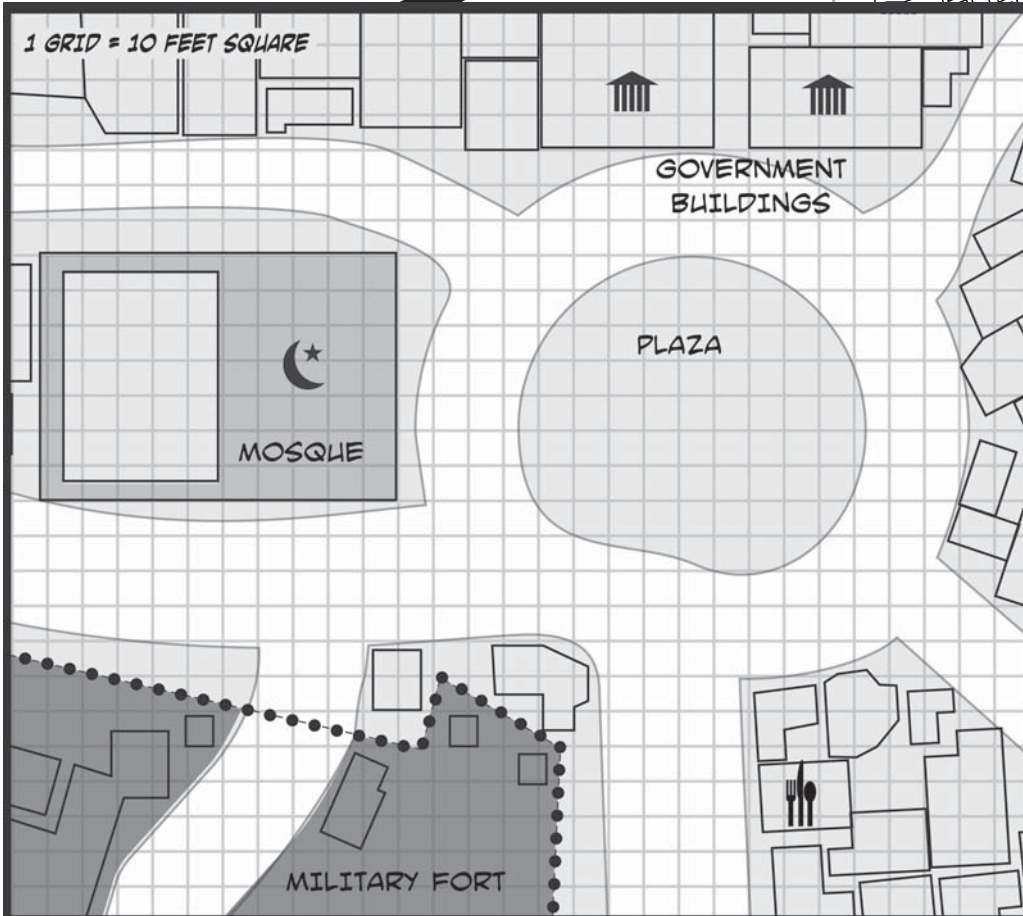
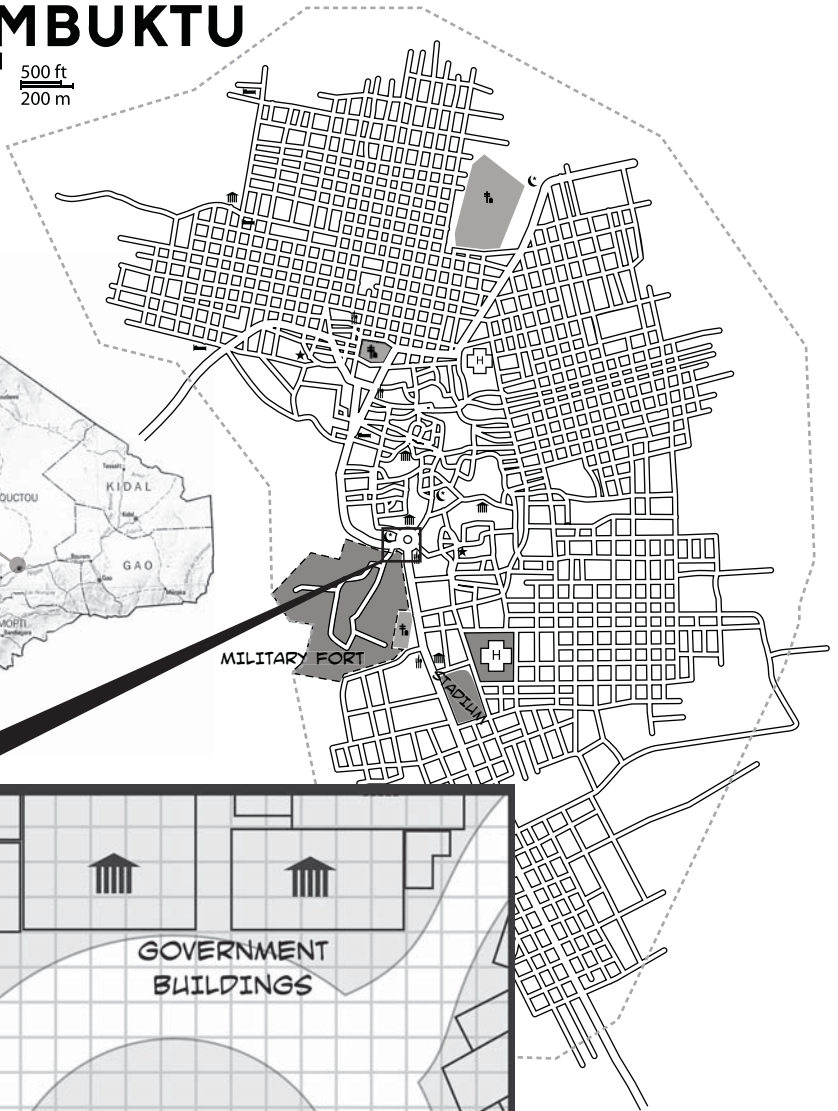
TUAREG FIGHTERS

Each of the Tuareg freedom fighters is armed with a semi-automatic rifle and enough ammo to last a sustained firefight. They are seasoned fighters who represent the militia of their people, who never have had a formal army over the centuries to protect them.

TIMBUKTU MALI

500 ft
200 m

- ☾ MOSQUE
- ⚰ CEMETERY
- 🏛️ GOVERNMENT/MUSEUMS
- ★ POLICE
- 🏥 HOSPITAL/CLINIC
- 🏠 HOTEL/LODGING
- 🍴 FOOD/DINING
- CITY LIMITS



Fighter	Sex	Weight	ST	EN	AG	IN	CH	HP	Power	Dmg	Acc	Carry	HTH	Move	Level
Tuareg 01	M	167	08	11	14	12	09	5	45	+1	+1	135	1d4	33	4
Tuareg 02	M	191	11	12	12	11	11	8	46	+1	+1	242	1d6	35	3
Tuareg 03	M	203	14	08	12	10	08	5	44	+1	+1	360	1d6	34	5
Tuareg 04	M	173	09	12	13	11	08	8	45	+1	+1	167	1d4	34	4
Tuareg 05	M	169	12	10	13	12	08	7	47	+1	+1	231	1d4	35	4
Tuareg 06	M	175	12	13	12	09	08	9	46	+1	+1	265	1d6	37	5
Tuareg 07	M	170	09	12	12	10	09	8	43	+1	+1	164	1d4	33	2
Tuareg 08	M	165	12	14	14	09	10	9	49	+1	+1	259	1d6	40	3
Tuareg 09	M	172	11	12	13	10	09	8	46	+1	+1	218	1d4	36	4
Tuareg 10	M	181	09	12	12	10	11	8	43	+1	+1	175	1d4	33	5

4.3 AGGRESSIVE NEGOTIATIONS

As the heroes approach the mosque, the roadways close by seem to be empty, as if a perimeter has been cleared from the holy place. The mud walls of the buildings are in stark contrast to the dusty streets. Local shops seem to be closed and the Tuareg fighters diminish a bit in number. Two guards flank the main entrance of the plaza and a squad is nearby to either side about twenty feet away behind some makeshift sandbags and fortifications.

Entering the doorway, the heroes will be greeted by Djanado himself. In truth this is not Djanado at all, the real rebel strongman has been killed and is being impersonated by Dreadlord's master-henchman Anarch! Anarch arrived about sixty minutes before the heroes and quickly dispatched Djanado. Anarch, in his disguise as Parnee had been working with Djanado and had been the one that supplied him with the weapons he needed to lead his coup. Even more significant, Djanado and his men had believed that all this time they had the backing of CHESS.

Anarch (in disguise as Djanado of course) states that he knows why the heroes have come. He says it is pointless however because he already has the stone and no longer needs to negotiate with anyone. The heroes will likely be incensed at the gall of this soldier and will probably throw their weight a bit as super-powered beings or try further diplomacy.

Anarch will play at the disguise as long as he can; he will continue stalling the heroes by causing them to think that if they try something hostile to recover the stone that their actions will cause an international incident. But if the heroes persist, they will soon gain the frustration of Anarch, who will begin to show a lack of patience. When talks start to break down, Djanado will suddenly shape change into Parnee and tell the heroes that he has deceived them this whole time (now speaking as Parnee.... Diligent players may realize that Charles Parnee is an anagram for 'Anarch Sleeper'...). Still yet while explaining how easy it was to deceive them and that he has been monitoring them since the museum, Anarch will change into his true form.

Anarch will demand any stones the heroes may possess and state that resistance is futile. He will only make this demand and warn them once, being sure to mention "Dreadlord" and inform the heroes that they will not interfere in the master plan! Then he will attack. Remember, up to this point in the adventure the heroes likely will not have heard of Dreadlord and knowing a bigger player is involved should bring concern that there is an ultimate mastermind behind all these events.

If Anarch is in danger of being defeated, he will retreat into the crowds of the city and blend in. If he escapes, he will likely appear in the final scenario at the GMs discretion (see Section 6.2), although the endgame will have plenty of heavy hitting villainy and more likely Anarch will become an independent mastermind to plague the heroes at a later time should they survive this adventure...

If Anarch wins, the players might have to roll up new characters. The GM doesn't have to play the role of lethal killer, yet it's hard to argue that one of Dreadlord's direct lieutenants would leave a formidable team intact.

An alternative for the GM may be that the heroes awaken in the CHESS VTOL that Anarch had been using when disguised as Parnee. They will be traveling at hypersonic speeds with the auto pilot set and the controls completely disabled. The exits will be sealed and the outer hull will be bolstered and reinforced (SR: 18, ADR: 100) by the craft's defense field. Like the auto pilot, the defense field was somehow activated and then the controls sabotaged. This second chance scenario will see a charted course into an active volcano, a fiery crash into a mountainside or gradual entry into orbit and beyond on the escape velocity achieved. An intelligent player may pick up on the charted course of the auto-pilot and spur the groggy heroes to action before it's too late.

ANARCH

Identity: Malefax
Sex: Male
Age: 200+ (30 apparent)

Side: Evil
Level: 16
Training: +7 to hit HTH, +4 defense HTH, +4 Evasion

Powers:

1. **Body Power: Synthetic Body:** Malefax is an artificial construct derived from an ancient alchemical process. In many respects, he appears to be completely human. However careful use of certain magical detects will reveal the lack of a true 'soul' and his aura of being a quasi-magical construct. In his 'DNA' coding is a single-celled sentient organism, alchemically altered and given a hive-like sentience that carries Anarch's memory. So long as any part of his cellular make-up survives, i.e. a piece of his flesh survives, given time, he will fully regenerate. If the true nature of his existence is discovered, and/or he is made aware of this, he will deny the truth of it, believing instead his programming as a vassal of Baen Kudarak, the Dreadlord of the Slayne. Aside from being able to alter his pigmentation and assume the form of any other human being at will (PR=1), he also has the following abilities:

- Heightened Intelligence: +30.
- Heightened Strength: +25.
- Heightened Agility: +16.
- Heightened Endurance: +13.
- Regeneration: At Healing Rate per turn.

2. **Willpower A (variable use)** PR=1 per turn.

3. **Damage Reduction:** Anarch is able, due to his cellular makeup, to absorb and reduce damage from an incoming attack. This power costs no PR and works even when Anarch is unconscious. The amount of any attack may be reduced by up to 50% rounding in Anarch's favor. Roll 1d6 and consult the following table:

Die Roll

1-2
3-5
6

Result

25% Damage reduction
50% Damage reduction
50% Damage reduction and
Double dice for Option A
of Energy Absorption.

4. Energy Absorption: Anarch has the ability to absorb and redirect potential energy that would otherwise damage his body. Anarch may opt for one of the two following options. This power costs half the PR of the original attack whether Anarch chooses Option A or B and does not work when Anarch is unconscious. Prior to Anarch's phase to attack in a given round, the GM should record each attack against him that successfully hits and the type of dice used by his opponent to perform the attack against him.

Option A: Channel: He may choose to assimilate the damage for conversion and then channel the stored energy into an attack against a single opponent. After rolling for the amount of damage reduction above, Anarch must subtract the remaining damage as if he has been normally hit. On his next HTH attack phase, he may then roll the same dice as the attacker used for to cause the damage. These dice are added as a carrier attack of 'general' bio-energy to Anarch's Basic HTH damage.

Option B: Dissipate: He may attempt to completely absorb the damage and dissipate it by rolling the same number and type of dice used for the attack, and dividing the result by two. For example, if an attack inflicts 2d8 damage, Anarch would use 2d8 as the basis to try to dissipate the attack. After applying his damage modifier, if the result is greater than the remaining damage, then Anarch has successfully avoided damage. If the result is less than the remaining damage, then Anarch takes all the damage normally.

Each attack directed against Anarch will use Option B as long as he is conscious. Anarch may only use Option A once each turn, so he will choose this strategy when most advantageous.

Weight: 200 lbs.	Basic Hits: 4
Agility Mod: -	Strength: 43
Endurance: 30	Agility: 25
Intelligence: 44	Charisma: 18
Reactions from Good: -3	Evil: +3
Hit Mod: 63.84	Hit Points: 256
Damage Mod. : +8	Healing Rate: 3.6
Accuracy: +4	Power: 142
Carrying Capacity: 8251 lbs.	Basic HTH Damage: 2d10
Movement Rates: 98" ground	
Detect Hidden: 30%	Detect Danger: 34%
Inventing Points: 4.4	Inventing: 132%
Legal Status: No Record, Subversive Mastermind	

Origin and Background: Anarch possesses Military, Disguise, Interrogation, World History, Politics and Computer Science skills all at genius levels of performance and knowledge. He is extremely wealthy/resourceful/multiple contacts.

Long ago, a single-cell from a great warrior was placed through a crucible of alchemical process and black art. Soon, a body formed, dark-skinned and fair. He grew quickly, trained by martial masters and cultists, recipient of knowledge long forgotten and bent to malign purpose. For nearly two hundred years the being known as Malefax has served his loathed liege, delivering insurrection, performing assassination, feigning death, and infiltrating the world's political machines a la carte. As a secret mole of Baen Kudarak the Dreadlord, he is consistently found masquerading in dangerous and powerful political positions and is a global threat to the world over...

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Malefax is a sophisticate amongst villains. He attempts to divide and isolate opponents and his methods will almost always be inclusive of collateral damage to cause confusion and distraction as he moves methodically toward his ultimate goals. Anarch will likely choose Option B of his power and gauge which of



his opponents is the most powerful before he begins using Option A to channel their energy against them for maximum effect.

Character/Personality Traits: Malefax is completely sociopathic and a great pretender socially. A true chameleon in every sense, his only real loyalty is to his 'father,' Dreadlord. He tolerates any of Dreadlord's other minions, only having any true measure of respect for Doomreaver. He does not retreat, although he will withdraw if an objective is completed and does not take prisoners. Many heroes have been led to their graves for their underestimation of this sinister agent.

ANOTHER IDEA FOR THE GM

Since it is technically possible for Anarch to regenerate from a single cell, there may be more than one individual who each believes himself to be the only villain named Anarch. If this is the case, in the unlikely scenario they should meet, they will act on a genetically programmed set of instructions which will cause each of them to gain a shared telepathic rapport and a hive-like mentality. They will next attempt to immediately seek out their master, joining forces to work or fight through any obstacles which may prevent this. When they reach Dreadlord, the dark mage will 'reintegrate' them back into one being. The new being will effectively be Anarch as portrayed in the stats above, but will gain a level and defect-free integrated memories!

GM Note: A version of Anarch is available as a Free Villain Bonus with more counters on the Free Downloads page of the FGU web site at www.fantasygamesunlimited.net.

4.4 THE TUKAM VALLEY

The Imam from the mosque is being held hostage in the back room of a tavern located at the far side of the plaza. Here is where the body of the true Djanado is sprawled (and Parnee, if the GM has chosen this option as suggested in Section 1.3). While Djanado did turn the stone over to Anarch, Djanado had no idea about the scroll left to the mosque by an unknown cleric in the 12th century, therefore, neither did Anarch. It was known in this place by the holy men who have cared for it over the centuries so that if the stone were ever removed from this resting place, the residing Imam would know to read the scroll and the beneficiary of the message would be so enlightened.

Anarch certainly has no reason to suspect the scroll's existence or purpose which is the first step on a conventional path to the discovery of ancient Atlantis as described in subsequent chapters. As Dreadlord's only concern is the acquisition of the stones, the scroll is an unknown quantity that would best be classified as intelligence of the enemy, hence it is still untouched; Dreadlord himself already knows of the existence of Atlantis and merely needed the compass to activate the Hypergate. The symbols from the scroll are translated to say:

*"GATHER UNTO YOURSELVES SILENT AND JOINED
WHAT WAS LOST WILL BE FOUND AND BE KEPT
WHAT IS KEPT WILL BE GIVEN
STEP INTO THE FACE OF THE ROCK
PACIFY THE KEEPER OF THE WAY
AND IN THE DOMINION OF THE TOKOHHM
KNOW YOU STAND ABOVE ETERNITY
THEN NOT ONCE BUT SEVEN TIMES
FOR EACH WORLD OF MEN PAY TRIBUTE
LO THERE WITH SIGNS ABOVE THE SKY YOU WILL SEEK
AND THERE WITH SIGNS BEYOND THE SKY YOU WILL SEEK
AND LO AGAIN THE SIGNS ACROSS THE SKY YOU WILL SEEK
IN WISDOM THE ANCIENT VOICES WILL SPEAK AND THE MOTHER
OF THE STONE BE GIRDED AGAIN FIND THEN THE WAY"*

At this point of the adventure, the Imam says he will read the scroll and instructs the heroes to hold hands (or similar appendages) and surround him in a circle. He will then read the scroll and, as he gets further into the passage, a circle of light will appear on the floor and rise upward. The circle of light is a sophisticated teleport spell and transports the characters instantly to the next location as described in Section 4.5. The character who possesses the orb will be compelled to join hands or feel the urge to release the orb to someone who will...

Any characters who refuse to participate will be left in the room with the Imam and as the cleric finishes reading the scroll, not only do the heroes who held hands disappear for parts unknown, but the scroll disintegrates when the teleport is complete.

4.5 THE MONUMENT

When the heroes reappear, they are located in a dense stretch of shrub growth at the end of a boxed canyon surrounded by high mountains (point A on the map). If a character has a GPS or geographic sense, they may with some degree of difficulty, find the party to have been teleported somewhere in the mountains of Northern India, specifically the largely unknown Tukam Valley. Before them is a stream that runs down the contours of the mountainside. Beside the stream is a stairway (located at B on the map) leading up to the mountain ledge at canyon's end (marked C on the map). This small elevated plateau is the location of the Vault of Tukam, an ancient monument, lost to antiquity and thought to be a legend among the natives of the region. Marked by a cave entrance that at first glance is concealed in shadows of the rocky mountain faces and towering pine trees, upon closer examination will reveal the cave is actually framed by a Neolithic arch constructed with expert craftsmanship from unknown origins.

There is a deep pool (marked D on the map) alongside the open area on the plateau. It has an alluring nature and is very pleasant to look at. If there is a character in the party who has any mystical sense about them, they have a (Detect Hidden x2) chance to detect that indeed the pool has a magical property: Any character that drinks from the pool will fully heal and be rested after the act. The effect will only happen once however, so the GM shouldn't give away the secret too quickly if the characters are already in good shape. They may need the pool later...

The Vault (located at F on the map) is a cave entrance is flanked by no less than three statues that seem to be embedded in the cliff face on the right and yet another to the left. Just beyond these has a short set of steps that lead to a landing five feet into the cave which has more steps after ten feet. There is a second landing at the bottom of the steps but beyond this there does not appear to be any further entrance beyond an egress that appears to be the beginning of a ten-foot high and ten-foot wide passage, but it terminates at ten feet deep. The wall at this end point has a five-foot circular indentation that has been carved smoothly into its face.

This cave entrance is guarded by the Stone Guardian. The Guardian is activated and emerges from the wall (at point E on the map) when any character passes down the main staircase and sets foot on the first landing.

THE STONE GUARDIAN

Level: 10	Weight: 6000 lbs.
Agility: 10	Hit Points: 200
Damage Mod.: +8	Accuracy: +4
Power: 60	HTH Damage: 5d10

Movement Rates: 60" ground

Invulnerability: 8 points versus each attack.

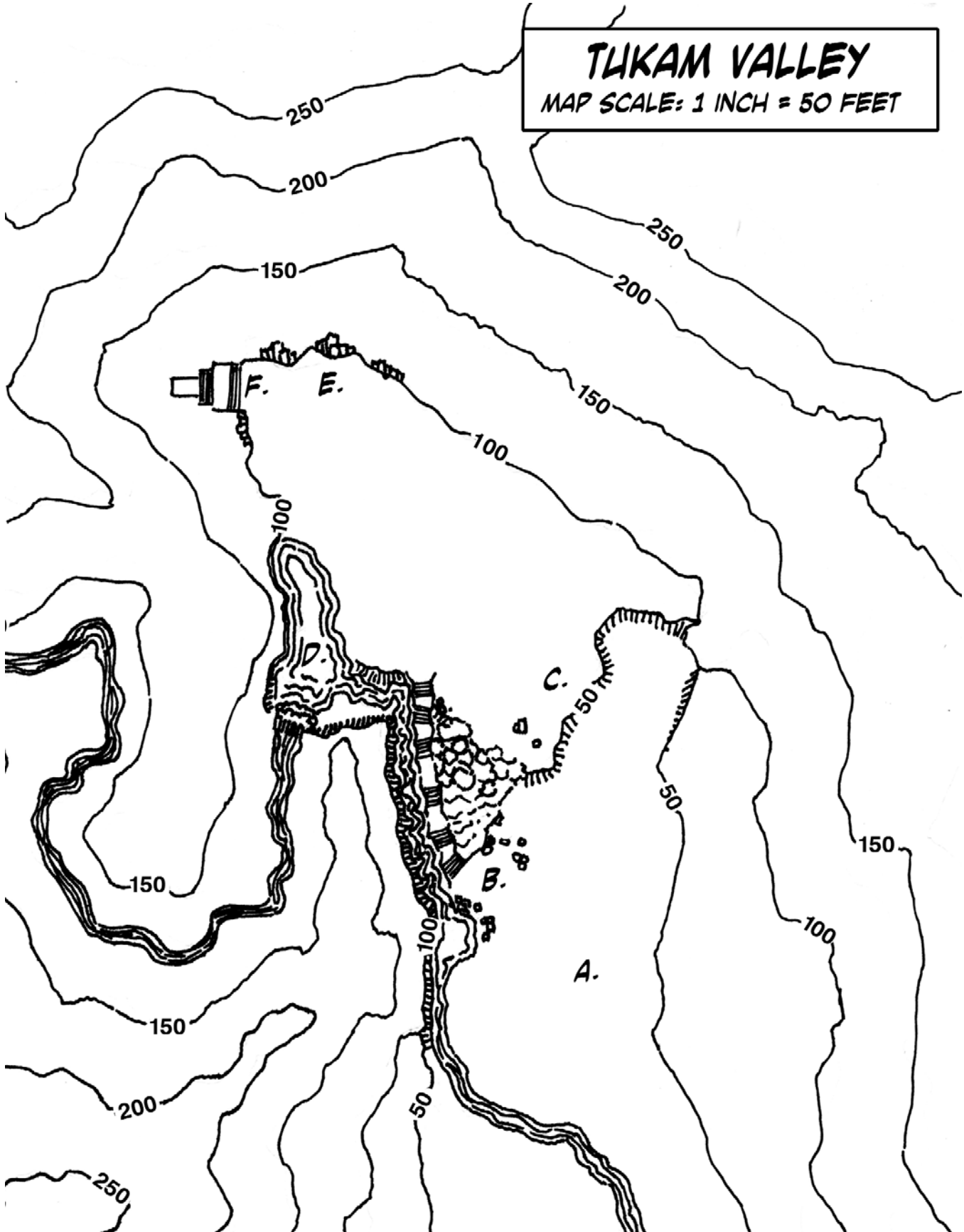
Special: Cannot be rendered unconscious per rules described in Chapter 3 of the V&V Revised rulebook.

The Stone Guardian will likely not be defeated by brute force (although it is possible). When active, the Stone Guardian has a weakness that if it has lost half its hit points, the deep blue turquoise crown glowing atop its head may be removed and the Guardian will crumble to pieces, leaving only the crown behind as a trophy.

The circular carving in the stunted passage will be a perfect fit to the Guardian's crown, revealing a ten-foot wide staircase made of fitted stones that descend down into the subterranean mass.



TUKAM VALLEY
MAP SCALE: 1 INCH = 50 FEET



4.6 THE LABYRINTH

The staircase is winding deep into the darkness. If the player-heroes can find no way to illuminate the pathways, then the GM should feel free to use the same types of crystals that light the chamber described in Section 5.1. There are no divergences in the stair that goes on for approximately five-thousand feet into the earth before arriving at a landing alcove overlooking a large cavern. The stone surfaces here are covered in a pitina that the energy from below has washed over the cavern stone, but beneath the pitina layer the entire chamber is a vein of Asteryst (SR:25). The cavern has many stone walkways that are suspended over what appears to be some sort of energy pool seething with power and emitting a bluish-white glow. At the junctions along some of the pathways are several symbols etched in the finely sanded stone floors. The symbols all seem to appear in multiple locations but in no seemingly logical distribution; likewise the bridges and pathways don't necessarily lead to distinct locations and the only common thread is their alignment either parallel or perpendicular in conformation to the cardinal points of the compass. It may be difficult to see the symbols clearly from the landing. An impenetrable field keeps any hero from being able to leap or fly from the landing.

On the far side of the chamber can be seen a large dais with a brilliantly illuminated archway, also illuminated in a bluish white glow. Several of the stairs and walkways find terminal there, although, upon entry to the chamber, there will be no clear or immediate path from the egress the heroes will be located at upon their entry into the chamber. From any of the walkways can be seen dark doorways all along the walls of the large chamber at various intervals. Likewise, there is no set pattern of distribution for the distance between the individual doorways.

The passage continues down approximately 200 feet further down in elevation from the landing into the actual chamber. The entry has a large archway also brilliantly illuminated that the heroes will emerge from. On the floor is the symbol of the tree. This symbol is located on the box that Bullet gave the characters, as are each of the symbols on the floor of this chamber.

Each of the symbol locations is a pivot point in a sequence that makes the resolution of the chamber a virtual maze without walls. Negotiating the maze of symbols successfully will guide the heroes to three specific, but separate, chambers wherein they will light the three beacons which will unlock a final chamber beyond the illuminated archway. Any heroes with the power of flight or teleportation or any other power that simulates them will be unable to use such a power in this chamber. Because gravity works normally, any person who strays from the pathways will fall down into the bluish white glow.

The percentage chance of slipping off the paths is equal to 4/ Agility score as a ratio for any characters who try to use means other than walking to travel the paths. Walking characters have a 1/ Agility chance to fall when moving normally. Failure will indicate the hero has fallen to their doom. The maximum walking distance is not necessarily limited, but a ninety degree turn costs the hero an action; all characters in the room may only perform one action per turn. Any character that falls can have a chance to be saved if there is another hero within five feet whose carrying capacity is at least equal to the characters weight. That hero may intervene and grab the hand (for example) of the falling character, successfully saving them with a successful unmodified HTH attack. Any character that fails and cannot be saved will never be seen again!

The energy is universal cosmic energy that gives off no indication of temperature, although its luminosity is quite blinding if one were to look directly down into it. Any player with a character that actually falls to their doom to meet an untimely demise should not be told so until the room has been resolved. This could be a 'bummer' moment in the campaign, but the GM is encouraged that any heightened sense of danger from a sensible player be rewarded with the GM hinting at the possible detriment of falling into a pit of seething energy...

When entering the room the first symbol, that of a tree, appears on this lower landing. The tree is a symbol used by the ancients of many cultures to represent life and growth, thus it was used by the masons

who constructed this room as a beginning point to the solution to the labyrinth. The Tree of Life symbol will also be found before the door under the illuminated archway on the far side of the chamber.

The various symbols other than the Tree are that of a Sun, Moon, Eclipse, Star, Planet, Comet, Cloud, Lightning, and Flame. To navigate the maze successfully characters must travel in sequence from the Tree forward to the first Star and then left to the first available Sun, and then left again to the first available Moon as a sequence. Then face left again and repeat this sequence six more times – (Left to) Sun, (Left to) Moon, and (Left to) Eclipse. After the sequence is complete, at the final Eclipse symbol, the hero should be able to see directly ahead one of the dark doorways described above which line the sides of the chamber. If the heroes do not pass over the symbols needed to complete the sequence, what is described in the next paragraph will not occur and the players will encounter a small empty cave through any of the dark doorways.

Upon successful completion of the sequential symbol circuit, the heroes enter this chamber will find an orb, similar to the one they possess, only far less engraved and this one is a deep reddish crimson hue. It is resting in a bowl shaped indentation in a stone altar. The altar has an identical empty bowl shape carved into its surface to the right of the resting orb. A symbolic rune, also the Tree, is carved in between the two bowls. A savvy player may deduce exactly what needs to happen. The orb needs to be moved to the other bowl and the orb the heroes possess temporarily set down into the now empty side. When this happens, the rune will light with a spiritual glow (similar to the energy at the depths of the chamber), and the character's original orb can be removed. Each step of this process takes an action, including removing the character's orb to leave the room. When the heroes emerge from the first dark doorway, he will begin and perform the next sequence in a similar fashion.

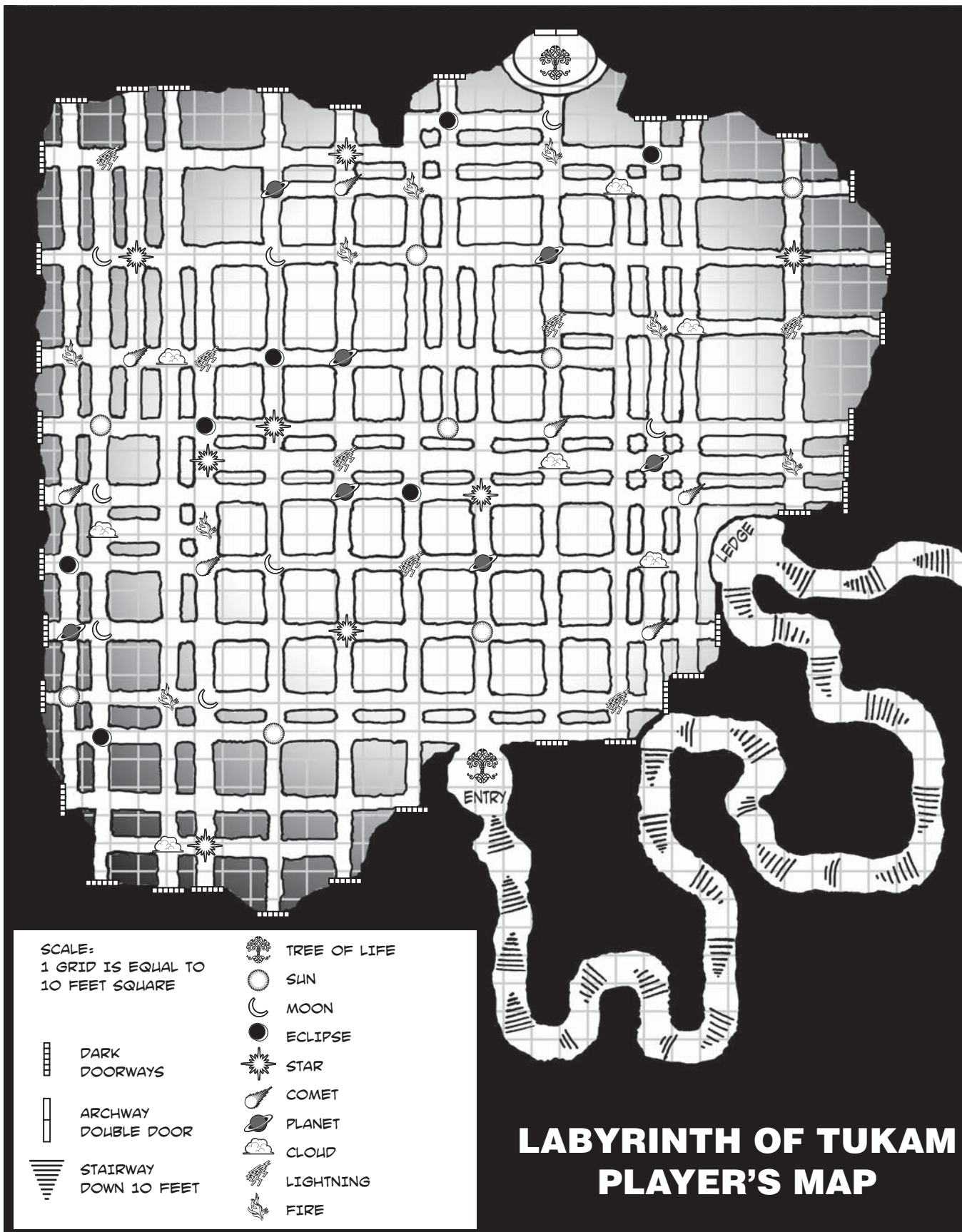
The next sequence of symbols, Star, Planet, and Comet, will be done from the onset of the hero's emergence from the first doorway with **right** turns after arriving at a symbol for its seven sequences with a similar result: The hero will be facing a second dark doorway. Again, after successfully completing the next sequence (using right turns) and entering this chamber, the heroes will find yet another orb, similar to the one they possess, and again far less engraved and this one a cold and luminescent azure hue. It too is resting in a bowl shaped indentation in an identically fashioned stone altar. The altar has all the same characteristics of the first altar, even the symbol of the Tree of Life.

Hopefully when the heroes finished, they remembered to retrieve the original orb for use again. When the heroes repeat the process, the rune will light with the spiritual glow, and the original orb can again be removed as before.

The next sequence of symbols, Cloud, Lightning and Flame will again be done from the onset of the heroes' emergence from the second doorway with a return to using **left** turns for its seven sequences with a predictable result: The hero will be facing a third dark doorway where the same sequence that occurred in the first two chambers will play out a third time the same way with the orb.

After activating the three dark doorways, the color of the illuminated archway will glow brighter, changing from the bluish hue to a golden hue; the door will also be unlocked. Hopefully the heroes have remembered to keep the original orb.

The box given to the heroes by Bullet (see the game prop of the box as a visual aid) and the scroll reading by the imam should give sufficient direction to a successful solution of the labyrinth. Obviously, if the players cannot decipher the meaning of the diagrams (also shown at the top of page 63), the GM has been supplied in an appendix at the end of this book with the solutions to each sequence and should feel free to let each hero make a saving throw versus Intelligence on d100 for disclosure if needed. If absolutely needed, Bullet will know the answers here and provide expository dialogue if he is accompanying them this far.



5. THE MOTHER STONE

5.1 DOWNLOADING DESTINY: THE SEEING CHAMBER OF THE STAR POOL

Beyond the final door is a great domed room with a few banks of strange looking high tech machines and devices. Some of them have obvious appearances that indicate computer interfaces, monitor devices, keyboards and switches. The center of the chamber is clear of machinery and devices and contains only a dark stone ring about twenty feet in diameter. The ring is covered in some sort of runes and is clear of any debris within the ring. Players who have participated in *Attack on the Poseidon Line* or *Menagerie* may recognize the formation, although the rings located in those adventures had no way to be activated prior to the activation of this one.

This room is lit by several large crystals around the perimeter of the dome at about fifteen feet from the floor. A podium stands before the pool and to the side of the chamber from the entry is a tunnel that has an opening about fifteen feet high and wide that proceeds into darkness. The dome itself seems to have a framework that looks as if it once supported some sort of paned window system, but now is obviously covered by rock strata.

Mainframe, the android form of Nimue, rises from a seat on a console at the far end of the room. She slowly approaches to just beyond the far side of the dark stone ring. She will query the heroes about their origins, but this is only a precaution in case they have less than honorable intentions. She will refrain from using her telepathy unnecessarily, but if the heroes for some reason portray themselves in a suspicious manner, she will resort to psionic methods to establish their motives and then decide accordingly whether divulging any information is a wise thing. The presence of the orb will be known to her since she can communicate with it to a limited degree. Mainframe will know that only someone who has an orb can reach this chamber, thus the heroes will have gained half her trust on arrival. She will ask probing questions and, once the GM decides that she feels the heroes are ready, she will inform them that the orb is a message intended for her master.

MAINFRAME

Identity: Nimue	Side: Good
Sex: Female (None)	Level: 12
Age: Unknown	Training: +10 w/Cyberpathy

Powers:

1. Heightened Intelligence: +20.
2. Heightened Strength: +8.
3. Android Body: Nimue appears to be 95% human. Her self-repair can mend up to 80% of damage to her internal systems. As Mainframe, she does not need to eat, breathe, or excrete and gains the Life Support defense. An astral shard is embedded in the cavity of the body that allows Nimue to live as long a life as an android as her systems can self-repair.
 - a. Heightened Endurance: +10.
 - b. Psionics: Cyberpathy (Special): Mainframe has the ability to telepathically communicate with machines, specifically any machine with an onboard computer, controller, or processor of any type. Since she is in android, and therefore a machine, this could be construed as a wireless network connection. However, because Mainframe functions as a sentient being of independent intelligence she is able to assert control over the functions of the machines that she

communicates with. Any device that she wishes to control must be within 32" at the time that she establishes contact, but thereafter the range of her cyberpathy is 32 miles. If the device or machine that she is controlling does not have artificial intelligence, then her control is automatic, but she cannot change the functions or mechanical workings that are naturally available to the machine in question. If the machine is another android or type of machine that possesses artificial intelligence, then her power attacks as mind control in all respects. This power can affect any android regardless of whether they are immune to normal mind control from organic beings. To establish control, the power has a PR cost of 2 per machine controlled, 8 PR if attempting to control an artificial intelligence, and PR of 1 per turn per machine after control has been established. Mainframe can control or command up to five machines at any given time.

4. Invulnerability: Mainframe may deflect the first 6 points per attack directed at her for 0 PR prior to applying her Armor power.

5. Armor B: ADR 50.

6. Astral Travel: Nimue may leave her body in an astral form per the rules in the V&V rulebook.

7. Telepathy: Nimue may use the powers of telepathy as described in the V&V rulebook.

8. Magical Spells: Nimue may, but rarely employs magical spells. Her android form somehow limits the effectiveness of this power. The GM should keep in mind any spells Nimue attempts to cast will be related to defense and healing.

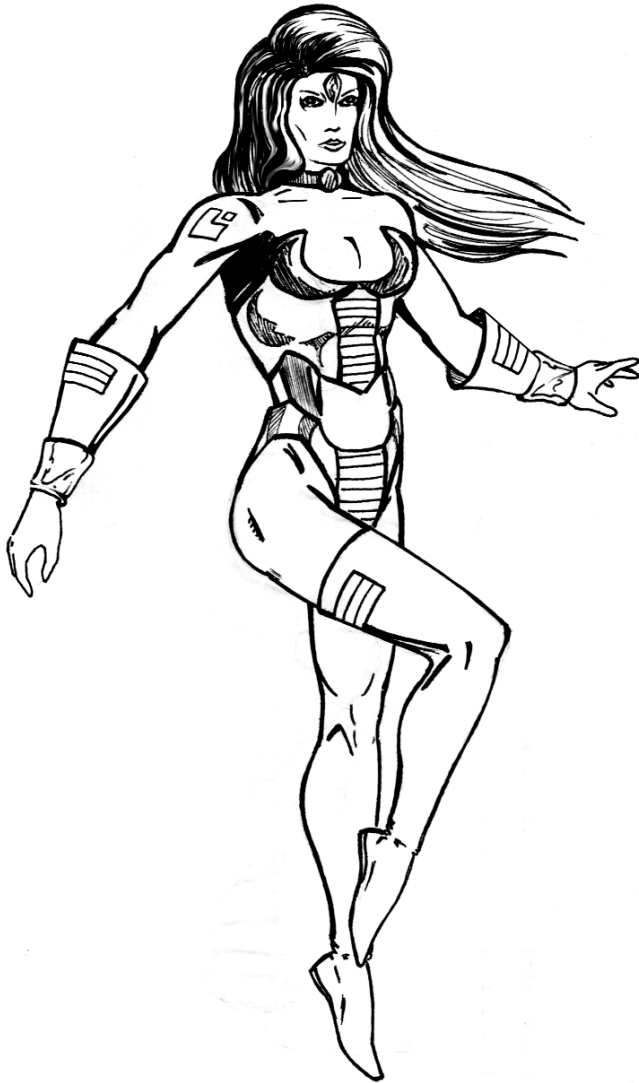
Weight: 180 lbs.
 Agility Mod: -
 Endurance: 20
 Intelligence: 32
 Reactions from Good: +2
 Hit Mod: 9.724
 Damage Mod.: +4
 Accuracy: +1
 Carrying Capacity: 1424 lbs.
 Movement Rates: 56" ground
 Detect Hidden: 22%
 Inventing Points: 12.4
 Legal Status: No Record

Basic Hits: 4
 Strength: 24
 Agility: 12
 Charisma: 15
 Evil: -2
 Hit Points: 39
 Healing Rate: 2
 Power: 88
 Basic HTH Damage: 1d10

Detect Danger: 26%
 Inventing: 96%

Origin and Background: When O'Ran returned to Earth to begin his new colony to replace Atlantis of old, his then apprentice, a beautiful and promising adept, Nimue, accompanied him to Earth. Veterra ascended to the rank of Master in his place and stayed on Xarith. Nimue was extraordinarily talented and built a rapport with many of the good people of the new Avalon. She gained a reputation for her great beauty and allure. During the siege of Camelot by the forces of evil, Nimue was overpowered by Tiberios just after his transformation into Doomreaver. When she knew her demise to be imminent, she spoke her contingencies and her spirit passed into an astral shard she had prepared. She was drowned by the evil knight in the lake near what is now the village of Riseley, England.

O'Ran had built the android that Nimue inhabits to be an archive drone. When Nimue visited his dream and revealed the demise of her physical self, O'Ran embedded the astral shard in the android and fashioned her likeness with his magicks. After O'Ran met his fate,



Nimue returned the favor, safeguarding his essence, guarding the Star Pool and Hypergate until such a time that a new Master rebuilds Atlantis for mankind.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Mainframe is not truly designed for combat and although she can be a capable opponent, she will attempt to avoid physical combat, and use robotic servants and systems to her advantage.

Character/Personality Traits: Mainframe is Nimue, the 'Lady of the Lake,' although at one time she was a powerful sorceress, the limitations of her android body have caused her personality to diminish from the proud lady she was to a disheartened servant of time. Her knowledge is vast and she has kept very abreast of world events. She is an excellent judge of character and won't spare anyone's feelings for the truth.

Nimue/Mainframe asks the heroes to give her the orb that they have brought with them and tells them she has been waiting a long time for its return. The player-heroes should have no real reason to not comply with her request and the orb will give its wielder no indication that this is a bad thing.

As she seats the orb, there is a crisp current in the air and the static will make hairs stand. The Star Pool glows brightly and then fades as a mirage forms at its center. The pool suddenly has the appearance that it is filled with calm water. From the water rise up effigies of people

(made of water with slight hints of original color until they become real looking cinematic events unfolding before the heroes' eyes).

The message from Aurana (in the orb) plays out in three-dimensional detail. Zindrah's original mission was to seek O'Ran and gather a league of heroes to return to the Blood Gate of Thuum to thwart the Slayne Lords once again. Sarkha'tai, the traitorous priest has ascended as Counselor from the human world of Fenharuhl. O'Ran's seat is now occupied by Veterra, but she has fallen out of favor as Sarkha'tai is now leader of the council. Sarkha'tai plans on allowing Kosm to return from exile as a conquering hero!

When the message of the orb finishes, the effigies collapse back to the pool and a new one forms, than of O'Ran, the Merlin.

If not for the trailings of liquid forming from his feet and merging to the pool in which he stands, O'Ran appears very real. Nimue addresses him, "Master, a message is delivered and the messengers seek your guidance."

O'Ran looks to the heroes and greets them; he almost seems alive.

"Greetings. I am O'Ran, the Merlin. This orb says much...

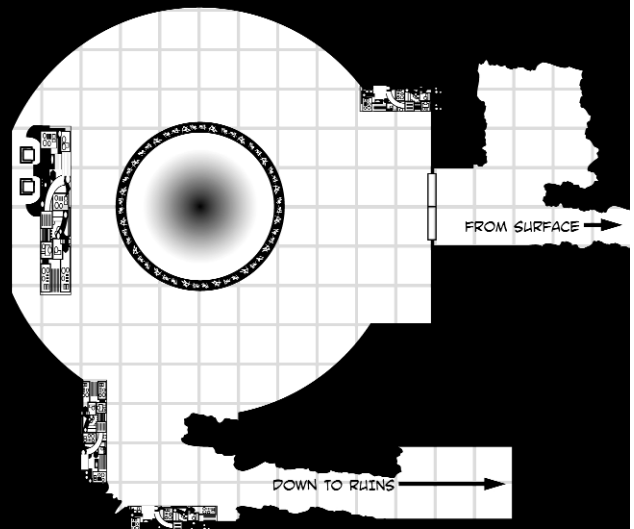
Stand witness to the machinations of the Slayne...

After the defeat of Auroth, the Slayne survivors retreated across the galaxy to their respective centers to regroup and eventually, over the millennia, the Slayne Lords who had a doctrine of quiet expansion, recruited many more cultists and followers to do their bidding and infiltrate various interplanetary governments. The final stroke of their new plan was to be the overthrow of the ruling house on Thuum and the release of Auroth to finish what they had begun millennia before. As I am now undone and unable to thwart that destiny alone, with my last tears I sought to prevent their agents from returning with the compass.

Kosm, the crown prince and heir to the ruling Thuugroni dynasty on Thuum, was subverted and under heavy influence by the Slayne Lords, murdered his parents and usurped the throne. This coup did not go unnoticed and attracted the attention of many civilized worlds. It was not difficult for them to draw a parallel between the character of the act and his worthiness to maintain the honored post that keeps our galaxy safe....

It was at this time that my colleague Veterra travelled to Xarith for a gathering to decide the fate of the new defacto guardian of the Blood Gate, Prince Kosm, who, after the murder of his sire, had declared himself emperor. Veterra voted in council that Kosm should be removed immediately. The other six Council members were hesitant and voted

MAP: CHAMBER OF THE STAR POOL



that it was not their responsibility to uphold the rights of the dynasty on Thuum, including Kosm, although they were quite unaware that a Slayne Lord by the name of Thuulekhan was secretly advising Kosm and even subverting the population of Thuum to the worship of Auroth.

Veterra, knowing the peril to Earth and the rest of the galaxy, and perhaps all creation, took matters into her own hands and commandeered the Sentinels and the Phalanx and wiped out Kosm's forces, forcing Kosm to flee into hiding with Thuulekhan. Martial law was instituted on Thuum and it seems this matter may be resolved. The Council did not agree with Veterra's actions and sought to chastise her for her role, but this is unresolved. There are rumors that Prince Kosm is massing an army to take Thuum back and the Council has decreed there will be no effort to stop him. His army is massing on Oryak, the fortress at the fifth orbit.

If this is true, we are all in peril; heed my warning.'

O'Ran will not be able to fully answer many questions related to world events since his demise, but does have an extensive knowledge of Dreadlord. Should the player-heroes not mention all that has transpired prior to their arrival, the GM should have O'Ran make inquiry into their involvement in the adventure. In doing so, it gives an opening for O'Ran to be surprised as he will now focus on the mention of his old enemy.

"Kudarak is still alive? And he has the compass?"

But no sooner can the water weird utter the phrase than a distant explosion resonates from the tunnel.

"The Hypergate! We have no time to lose. If Kudarak is here, then we are in peril for he has always known of Atlantis. We cannot help you my friends. Our power is diminished but Nimue will show you to the way down. You must go and stop Kudarak from using the Hypergate. He must not be allowed to return to Malkhaphera"

5.2 DESCENT

At this point, his image fades from the face of the water and the pool collapses flat and calm with the water effect disappearing as a mirage... and the room is darkened to its normal illumination again. The stone cannot be reactivated (savvy, players hopefully have taken notes). Coincidentally, the orb is now 'dead' as it has dumped its remaining enchantment into the 'star pool.'

Nimue will show the heroes to a shaft located at the end of the tunnel which may have at one time been a neatly carved stair passage into the earth, but through the ravages of time and inevitable seismic activity, have opened into larger crevices and made the way a harrowing winding of subterranean openings and ruins. She will wave good-bye and bid the heroes farewell.

Characters with travel powers will once again find they work normally and be able to navigate some of the passages with relative ease, if not any real degree of speed due to their unpredictable directions. Some of the openings are large enough that such characters with travel powers could carry their fellows if needed.

At the end of the passages through ruins and caverns that remain of an ancient city, the heroes will have traveled about seven miles further into the earth. The last of the underground ruins will be yet a large expanse. A major departure will occur for the heroes as this final area of ruined city will be 'lit' by the crystals, albeit with an ominous reddish hue, and provide excellent illumination, almost as if this segment were inhabited (which it is not).

6. THE LAST CRUSADE

6.1 THE TOMB OF ATLANTIS

Atlantis was once a proud city whose dignitaries held council with chieftains from all over Eurasia, and even some tribal heads in the Americas, during an era that predated the accepted rise of civilization. The origin of the lost civilization and its rise is speculated upon famously the world over. At some point beyond myth and legend, before humans became a sophisticated species, cosmic beings spread their seed to selected planets across the Milky Way. For many millennia humanity flourished on these far off orbs and, while on Earth, humans continued on their natural path. In time, representatives of humanity from the 'outer six' put together a delegation with the intent of settling on Earth and founding a citadel to watch over and safeguard the 'Mother Stone' and its native sentients. The greatest secret of Atlantis wasn't the seclusion it was able to maintain from wandering tribes over the millennia that it persisted (though that feat was indeed astounding). The greatest secret was in the extraction of the mineral Asteryst via the Great Apparatus. The properties of the stone, the energy it can harness, as well as its mysterious link to living beings, makes it a treasure unlike any other. Atlantis had the great fortune of being built at the edge of a continental plate whose fault was easily exploited by the superior technologies to dig deep into the mantle and extract this unique mineral. Asteryst is encountered on few worlds in the cosmos; these worlds have the common factor of being the world of origin for certain species in the universe. The discovery of these cosmic truths by human scholars in the Outer Six over the millennia led directly to the designation of Earth as humanity's most sacred ground.

Yet, with the fall of Atlantis, the destruction of the Great Apparatus,

and the cataclysmic continental shift, Atlantis and all the glory it once had suddenly became a memory and, further still, only a legend and a whisper. A few thousand years passed over the lands before even the basest of its science once again began to reappear in the fringe coasts of the Mediterranean and into the islands of the Pacific. However, to this day, the Atlantis that was never found and, thanks to some selected misinformation by a dark presence that persisted in the world, is a far cry from being thought of in any capacity close to its true identity.

MAP: RUINS OF ATLANTIS

The heroes will find several vast caverns filled with strange ruins. The ruins are a vast descending network with areas connected to others with causeways, tunnels, collapsed thoroughfares and aqueducts, fallen stone arches. The seemingly hybrid architecture is reminiscent of many ancient civilizations, but with a craftsmanship and masonry derived of certain science and angles that would make Frank Lloyd Wright puzzled with amazement. Among the ruins some items have been preserved and even maintained in sealed containers with various foodstuffs, trinkets and treasures. This actually includes several mysterious high tech devices of advanced origin that if not for a power source could be useful such as grav sleds or laser pistols out of a science fiction movie. Although there certainly are miles of ruins in disjointed caverns, the GM is encouraged not to spend too much time here distracting the players. They can always come back later.

Communications to the surface will not be possible, and the GM should consider any other subterranean society the PCs may have encountered, such as those found in the V&V adventure *Into the Sub-Realm* or *This Empress Earth*, possibly aware of the ruins to the extent that the PCs may see some sort of wandering patrol.

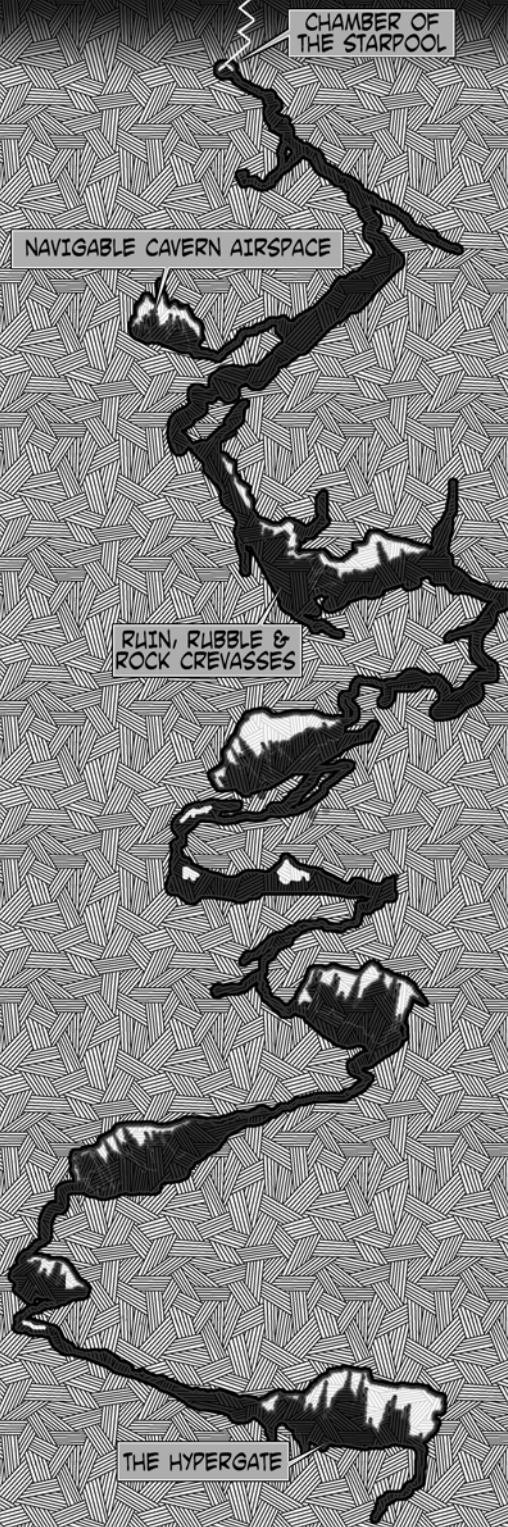
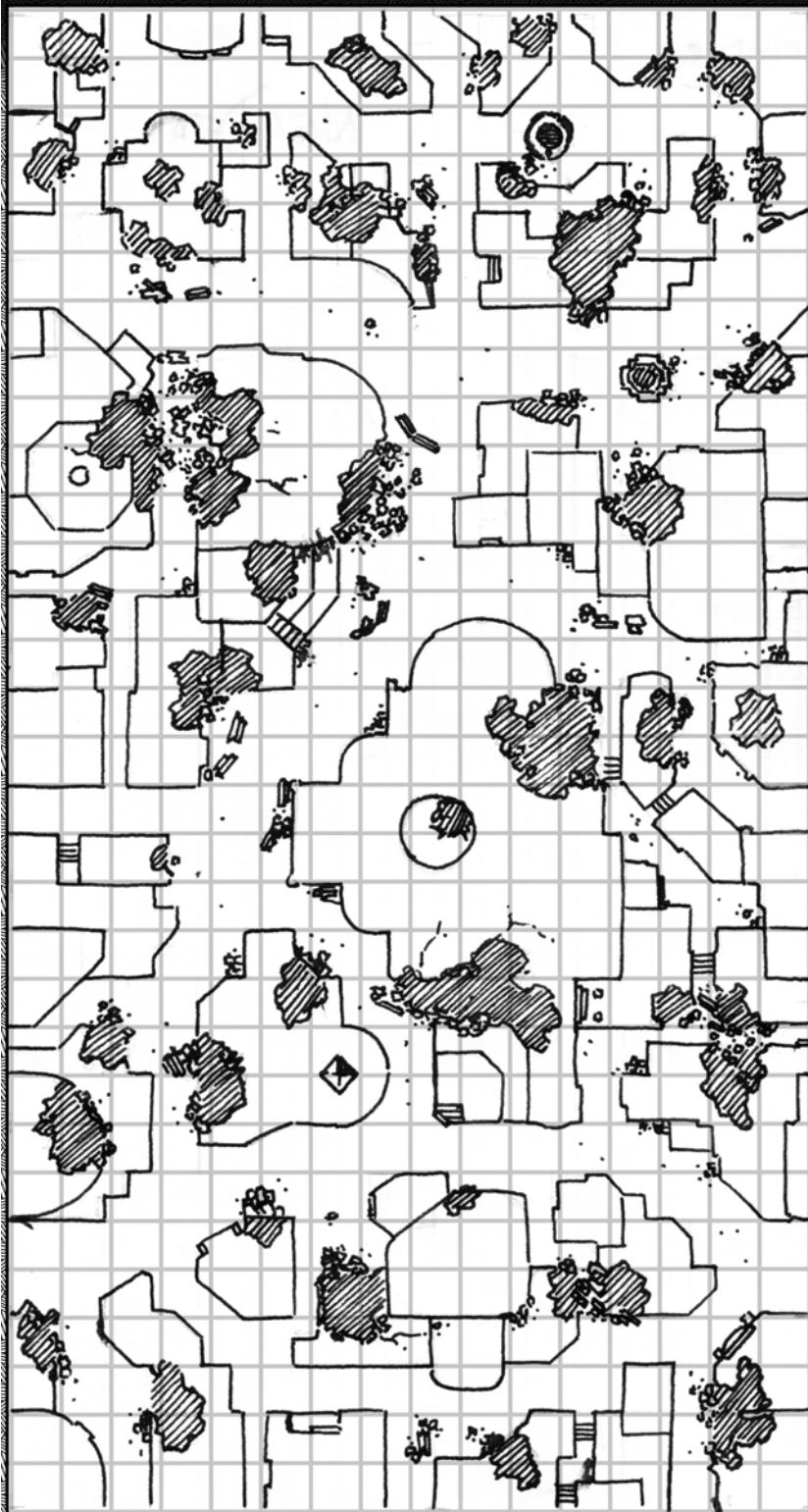
MAP: RUINS OF ATLANTIS

HIMALAYAN RANGE

TUKAM VALLEY

MAP SCALE = 1 MILE

RUINS GEOMORPH SCALE: 1 GRID EQUALS 20 FEET SQUARE



CHAMBER OF THE STARPOOL

NAVIGABLE CAVERN AIRSPACE

RUIN, RUBBLE & ROCK CREVASSES

THE HYPERGATE

6.2 FINAL FIGHT WITH THE FURIES!

The Furies who have not been defeated or captured by the heroes thus far will be in wait in the ruins just outside the Hypergate facility. As noted in previous chapters, Furies who were merely captured may have been 'sprung' prior to this fight. The Furies may be broken into two teams if numbers dictate an overwhelmingly lopsided villain victory will occur, but the villains really aren't so foolish as to forget that strength will be in numbers and teamwork. If broken down into two groups, the second line is in the Preparation Chamber to make their final stand against the heroes. They only need keep the heroes from advancing, but the motivation of the villains are not obvious to this point. If at any time the heroes question their motives aloud, they will likely say that it's 'nothing personal, just business.' However, if the GM has exposed the villains in plot seeds and prior adventures before executing the adventure in this book, then maybe it is personal!

Eliminator, if still undefeated at the beginning of the battle, will slip away to accompany Dreadlord and Doomreaver.

If Anarch survived his initial battle in Chapter 4, he will resurface here disguised as Dreadlord and 'lead' the battle from the back of the crowd. The Furies will be none the wiser either, having no clue that this is a dupe so that Dreadlord can escape through the Hypergate as he has been intending for so long. Anarch will continue to imitate his creator, even in defeat he will maintain this guise and continue the ruse for as long as possible.

If the villains win, they will not necessarily execute heroes summarily, but it is very possible that they may be taken through the Hypergate into the enemy's hands to be sold into gladiatorial sport on alien worlds or some other form of slavery. If the GM is not intent on following up with a series of cosmic stories in a galactic landscape, it could be that the villains strand the heroes in the ruins and then collapse the cavern to seal them in, or in the worst case, it might be time to roll up new characters and talk about the legends that were.

6.3 THE HYPERGATE

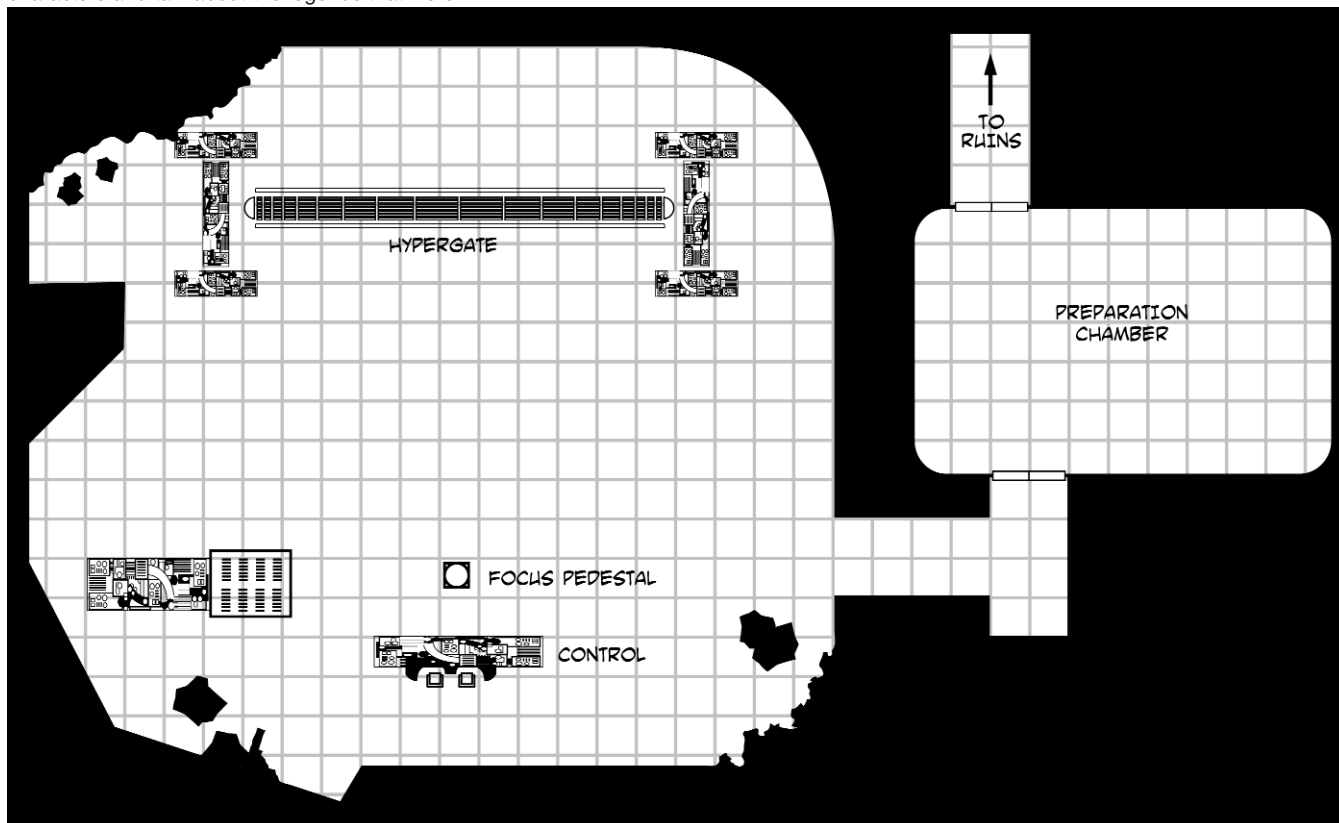
Dreadlord will be using the battle in the previous section as a stalling tactic to ensconce the compass and open the Hypergate. Although his game information is included in this adventure, he is not intended as a direct combatant in the adventure's core and especially in this final chapter. If the heroes successfully defeat all the Furies, it should be to no avail as Dreadlord will have activated and used the Hypergate to return to his cronies and give revelation of all that has happened in his time on Earth. These reports will consist of all the intelligence the GM can think Dreadlord would want to report to evil forces who would wish to destroy the Earth. This should at least include the successful defeat of O'Ran, the state of the world's politics, the technology of her defense, the presence of superhuman heroes whose powers rival the Sentinels, and anything else the GM deems worthy.

Dreadlord, Doomreaver, and Eliminator may, if the GM does not wish to run the sequel to this adventure, be engaged in the chamber of the Hypergate by the remaining heroes. If the heroes lose, then the information that Dreadlord may divulge in the previous paragraph plays directly to that adventure, *Black Souls' Abyss*. If the heroes should win, then the GM will simply have several more villains to choose from when running the campaign.

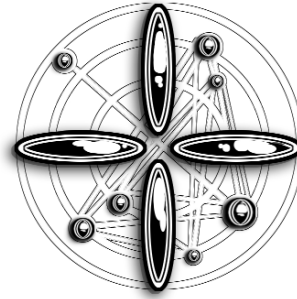
Again, if the GM has no intention of making the transition forward to the cosmic setting, then he will always have the option of somehow engineering the activation of the Hypergate to be unsuccessful, making Dreadlord that much more the bitter trapped supervillain, if that is possible. Although his defeat is hard to fathom, it is possible, though he will likely not be held long.

The Furies remaining on Earth who were under Dreadlord's tether will be freed from his control at this time if he should escape through the Hypergate. If they possess unnatural longevity, they will begin to age again at a slow rate that after a few years will return to the normal rate relative to their specific physicality and powers.

The heroes should be discouraged from pursuing Dreadlord immediately through the Hypergate, but if they persist, it will only be a



short time before it closes again. It is not broken and the compass has been left behind on the Focusing Pedestal to activate it. Also, Nimue will have intimate knowledge of its use. The heroes may realize that the secrets in this cavern are likely to come under scrutiny when they return to the surface, especially in regard to a debriefing scenario by the OMA. If the heroes wish to pursue through the Hypergate, the GM should proceed when ready with the sequel adventure, *Black Souls' Abyss*.



A STORY IN THE UNIVERSE

MOTHER TO HUMANITY

A long, long time ago, beyond the measurement of modern history, human beings born on the planet Earth developed a consciousness; sentience based on an unknown factor which transformed human beings from a simple species amongst many to the creatures of developing intellect who would eventually become masters of the planet. Not alone in the universe, humans of Earth were, in a sense, a foretold expectation of other races who had also at some point mysteriously achieved sentience and control of their own destiny.

Soon after the appearance of 'thinking' man, several tribes were taken by a race of galactic elders to other worlds that were capable of supporting life as we know it. These other six worlds, collectively called by some humans who originate there the 'Outer Six,' became a part of a galactic community across the Milky Way. Humans on these planets quickly were indoctrinated to technologies that enhanced their development, and, in turn, humanity's asset of adaptability and imagination spurred on these worlds' own knack for invention. As several worlds began to recognize the sovereignty of humanity, certain humans emerged with powerful abilities and, over the ages, evolution moved forward. Some even learned to tap into and manipulate the fabric of the cosmos itself, harnessing spiritual energies that bound the planes, something that would probably be best termed in the modern world as 'white' magic. These 'Masters' formed a council that would represent humanity among the other worlds and help to govern their affairs. Although Earth civilizations were in their nascent stages, largely set apart from the other six human worlds by their utter lack of development, one such Master represented Earth as an equal on this council, giving voice to matters when needed. For amongst the human worlds, Earth was special, even sacred, as it was mother to humans and to the spirit stone, Asteryst.

ATLANTIS AND THE GARDENS OF AEDEN

Early in the seventh millennium BC, Earth was still a planet ignorant of the political and technological cosmic community to which it belonged. Its continental geography was similar to today, with the exception of some features in the Middle East and Asia's south coasts. The Indian subcontinent, known then as Aiva, was separated by a thin strait from the rest of Asia to the north. That part of Asia's coastline opposite of Aiva was lined with a range of mountains on its southern edge, the present day Himalayas, running parallel with the coast and standing tall at about 25,000 feet. The lands of the Earth were all populated by low technology Neolithic tribes of man, except for one place, a sacred place. Legends among the tribes of man told of the place of Aiva and a wondrous city of the gods called Atlantis.

Atlantis was situated on the northern edge of Aiva amongst its many

coastal cliffs. The role of Atlantis and its inhabitants was to serve as a watch point for the goings on of Earth and base of operations for its involvement with the rest of the human worlds. It was an interstellar port and, in that city was located the Great Apparatus to extract the Asteryst stone from the great undersea fault in the channel below. The Asteryst stone was 'enchanted' and allowed certain technologies to be powered or constructed from the metal it was processed into: Asterite. More so, it was a spiritually attuned stone that could only be found in the bellies of certain planets and deeper than any other precious material or stone. It is speculated that the limited appearance of the stone coincides with the development of sentient lifeforms on a particular planet.

What is now the Persian Gulf was a low, lush valley with a large ancient city known as Aeden situated therein. Aeden was known for its gardens and was the most developed of all the tribal cities of ancient man. Aeden was used by Atlantis as a buffer to hold council with leaders from amongst the tribes of Earth humans. It was located at the crossroads for much of what are now Europe, Asia and Africa and was the center of trade. Beyond Aeden, at the valley's eastern end, was a tall pair of twin peaks called the Tumulcar. From a sacred shrine atop the saddle between the peaks, one could almost spy the spires of the wondrous city of Atlantis. As man prospered in low technologies of agriculture and masonry, Aeden became a great center of trade under the watchful eye of Atlantean scholars.

AUROTH AND THE SLAYNE LORDS

At some point in the history of the known universe, a being called Auroth, who was older than memory and more powerful than entire worlds' legions of armies was loose upon galaxies. Before long, Auroth had gained many followers of his own, subverting whole populaces to worship him as a god. From these enslaved he culled the most intelligent and twisted them. He began teaching ways of manipulating power in ways previously unknown or unthought-of, in essence, the origins of what may be called today, 'black' magic. His first apprentice, known as Slayne, became his greatest pupil and learned all there was to know of this powerful art form.

However, Slayne and those other chosen followers had to pay a terrible price for the twisting of the energies of the universe in such ways. At the cost of their lives and souls, they died and were resurrected as physical manifestations of the negative energy aspects of their former living selves. While not truly 'undead' by the definitions of modern literary science, the Slayne Lords, as they became known, are not living or dead either. Of all the weaknesses that the Slayne Lords now possessed, it was that their magicks could be thwarted by the use of Asteryst stone that channeled the energies of life which were now anathema to the evil cabal. The Shards of Abellion are, in fact, the purest of these stones known thus far.

DEFENDING THE COSMOS

On the human world of Xarith, the Council of Masters convened and, in resolution to the spread of Auroth Firstlight's dominion, began the two corps of galactic guardians who would become known as the Sentinels and the Phalanx. In purpose, these forces were designed to protect and watch over life against the impending tides of darkness.

The Phalanx guardsmen were the best of the best-trained martial combatants across the human worlds not possessed of mutations or super-powers. Their disciplines in mental and physical aspects were so powerful that they could indefinitely maintain their physiology and even cease aging, although it is speculated that, as with Sentinels, there is more of a secret behind the virtual immortality. The Sentinels were super-powered or otherwise uniquely empowered humans (similar to the superheroes and villains found on Earth today) who became cosmic guardians. They kept the same philosophical training and physical regimen as the Phalanx. Upon initiation into either corps, the recruits were even further altered by accepting essence from the shards of Abellion, a supremely powerful set of rune stones carved of pure Asteryst. The shards were documented since the beginning of their written histories to be all which remained of the powerful essence of Abellion, who was rumored to be Auroth's *twin*...

PARADISE LOST

When it became apparent that humanity was for some reason resistant to the subversions of Auroth that the ancient conqueror decided to destroy humanity's cradle, Earth. Only then could he see an end to the greatest resistance to his galactic takeover.

The assault on Earth began in the area of the solar system known today as the Asteroid Belt and an allied armada of human warriors and other friendly forces battled the onslaught of the demonic hordes of twisted aliens bent on the chaotic regime. This assault eventually centered over the great city of Atlantis.

In the mighty battle, the Council Master from Earth at the time, Mercillus, and his two acolytes, O'Ran and Veterra, directed the battle of Sentinels, Phalanx Warriors and other seemingly godlike warriors. The conflict saw at its climax over Atlantis, Slayne himself was engaged by Mercillus. Thrown were far-slung powerful bolts and energies and, in the zenith of the engagement, these caused the undoing of the Great Apparatus. Mercillus, in a desperate gambit to take advantage of the impending ignition of the great storages of fuels in the mechanisms of the giant drill into an effective distraction from the old sorecerer's defenses. This worked too well as Slayne was indeed destroyed, but the ensuing explosions, amplified by Mercillus's power, consumed the Earth Master as well.

The effect of the destruction of the Great Apparatus was nearly instantaneous, having disastrous, cataclysmic consequences. A massive quake ensued, shaking the Earth around the entire globe. Aiva jolted miles northward as the fault shifted, Asia jolted miles to the south. The mountain ranges lining the two coasts smashed together thrusting them upward while the great city of the gods, Atlantis, sunk down deep into that channel and then down into the raging fault. Aeden was also lost forever as the tectonic movements opened a channel, destroying and throwing down the Tumulcar and leaving the entire lush valley submerged beneath the ensuing deluge.

Both O'Ran and Veterra escaped death from the deluge, but most Atlanteans and Aedenites did not; several of the survivors were at sea when the catastrophe occurred and settled elsewhere when unable to return. Over time, the secrets of the wondrous technologies eventually passed into myth along with Aeden, humanity's perfect city. Many other cities of humans living in low technology saw their stone walls thrown to the ground that day as well.

Ultimately, the battle ended and Auroth was defeated in the orbit of Mars when the great being known as Scion, the first Sentinel, sacrificed himself to deal the fatal crippling blow. After his defeat, much

of the power of his followers was diminished. As a result, few Slayne Lords survived the battle. Auroth's power was broken in the galaxy. Auroth's broken form was dragged to the craggy world of Thuum, where a dimensional breach to an empty dimension was made with a single seal on a magnificent golden ingress. The seal was made so that the only way to break it open was with a sufficiently imbued focus and, at the time, only the legendary Shards of Abellion fit that specification. Thuum's rulers, long regarded as the most noble and honorable warriors (amongst the non-human worlds), were charged with the gates' keeping. Their task would be to select a champion in a life-long appointment to guard the "Blood Gate." Thus, after many millennia of epic confrontations and battle, Auroth was imprisoned beyond a dimensional portal to a place known only as the 'Oblivion.'

For thousands of years, the human worlds, including Earth, again prospered, albeit slowly, and the galactic community at large also prospered in peace and under no threat. O'Ran returned to Xarith, become Earth's new Master and he selected Nimue to be his apprentice. O'Ran installed an unwritten law that none should interfere with the development of Earth. He intentionally elected to not rebuild any of the lost glories of technologies that the inhabitants of Earth would be able to discover for themselves their destinies, free of the conflict that had dominated the galaxy.

RETURN TO AVALON

Around the year 500 AD, O'Ran had successfully watched over the Earth and had allowed her people to love and make war, and nurture themselves, culminating in enlightenment from a great human city known as Rome. When this bastion began crumbling, however under the imperfections of its greedy rulers and squabbling powers, it became apparent that the race of humanity on Earth was going to take a lot longer to come to grips with being a united people and, perhaps, would need a little help. To this end, O'Ran went to Xarith and petitioned the Council that the time had come to rebuild Atlantis and create a new influence to help guide Earth's peoples. But the rest of the Council did not agree that this should be the course to take, and, in fact, there was a motion to exclude Earth's Master from voting in matters at all from another Master, Sarkha'Tai of Fenharuhl.

Unknown to anyone, Sarkha'tai was a mole inside the Council, working in league with the Slayne. Although Sarkha'Tai was not inherently 'evil,' his own personal vanity and belief that there needed to be balance allowed him to be convinced to ensure the Slayne not be so opposed. O'Ran, a firsthand survivor of the battle with Auroth, was appalled at the suggestion and, even as the Council voted for the limitations against him, Master O'Ran resigned from the Council calling himself now 'Myrl'En,' or Merlin, roughly translated to mean 'master-less master.' With his blessing, Veterra became Earth's new Master with the intention that she would keep a watchful eye in his stead. O'Ran issued the Council a final ominous warning: Stay away from Earth.

O'Ran secretly confiscated the shards of Abellion and returned to Earth alone, instructed Veterra to never follow and remain to watch over the Council in his stead. When he arrived on Earth, O'Ran disabled or destroyed all the hypergate circles which had remained from ancient times, except one. From this one on the island of Britannia, he journeyed about the countryside to recruit men of honor to become his new Phalanx Warriors, although he did not tell them the true nature of the awesome power he had endowed upon them.

Meanwhile, Sarkha'Tai learned of O'Ran's departure, and thinking to eliminate his rival, divulged the knowledge of the events to the Slayne. Their leader, Khru'el Pyarphan, selected Baen Kudarak, who had fallen out of favor with the rest of the order, to pursue O'Ran to Earth. He was given simple but undesirable orders: He was to follow O'Ran to Earth and destroy him and, thereby, would earn his redemption. Journeying to Xarith, Kudarak was met by Sarkha'tai, who helped the dark mage conceal his presence in the Council's citadel. Deep in an inner sanctum, the hypergate that O'Ran had used still seethed with high magic. Kudarak then augmented its energies to pursue O'Ran.

Kudarak's arrival was only a few months after O'Ran's, and eventually he set about to locate O'Ran. Seeking to confront him and perform his mission, Kudarak soon realized that O'Ran, or Merlin as the local inhabitants were now calling him, had constructed a new utopic kingdom. Kudarak soon obtained his own allies and the two embarked in a protracted conflict through their allies that came to a final battle at Camelot, the palace of Arthur. Through guile and treachery, O'Ran was rendered inert by the cunning druidic magic of Morgan Le Fey, who thought him dead. The fey sorceress then reported to Kudarak, who now insisted he be called Dreadlord, that O'Ran had indeed perished as she turned over the Scepter of the Almighty, which she had captured from O'Ran in the fall of Camelot. Kudarak was unaware of Morgan's treachery however and the contingencies she had placed upon Modred favoring her son to seize Excalibur in the event of Arthur's demise (see Vanquishing Knight in *Vigilantes International*).

With aid from his followers, O'Ran escaped the fate Morgan had imposed on him, and, though his utopia had been destroyed in this latest war, he was resolved to not allow the Slayne cabalist to return to his masters with any success, if at all. After first hiding all the pieces necessary to operate his last hidden hypergate, he sought out a 'final' encounter with Kudarak and his personal guard. O'Ran brought with him his final two Phalanx warriors, Arthurius Pendragon, the king of Camelot, and Julius Doomsayer.

In the final battle, Dreadlord quickly neutralized Arthur and attempted to steal Excalibur. Julius intervened and shuffled the blade to O'Ran, who already had secured the Scepter of the Almighty, but then Julius was quickly overwhelmed and further detained by evil knights. O'Ran, who was still weak from his encounter with Morgan, was truly no match against Kudarak. Dreadlord struck a mighty blow that gave O'Ran a mortal wound. O'Ran fell to his knees and had lost his grip on the Scepter of the Almighty, which Kudarak then picked up. Thinking to deliver a coup-de-grace, Kudarak focused the Scepter at O'Ran, who, with his last breath, countered with Excalibur. A backlash of energies immediately cost Dreadlord an arm as the Scepter disappeared in a flash of divine energies. By that time, Julius had finished off the last of Kudarak's minions and began closing on the demonic caster. Dreadlord, knowing that he was now too wounded to resist, withdrew, having successfully completed his mission on Earth. Julius took O'Ran's body and performed rites of passing and then hid the blade Excalibur to be retrieved by Garren later. Julius then disappeared from history...

DREADLORD

Identity: Baen Kudarak	Side: Slayne Lords (Evil)
Sex: Male (Alien)	Level: 20
Age: unknown	Training: unknown

Powers:

1. Heightened Attack: +20 damage caused with all attacks. Dreadlord may choose to vary this amount to simulate a 'pulled punch'.
2. Heightened Intelligence x2: +42.
3. Heightened Endurance: +27.
4. Heightened Charisma: +22.
5. Armor B: ADR=81
6. Slayne Powers: Dreadlord is able to produce a variety of effects with 'spells'. All these count as being composed of 'magical' energy in their origin, even though they may manifest as a common energy or matter. The powers following should not be considered exhaustive. Some common spells or abilities he is known to have employed are:
 - a) Arcane Blast: up to 3d12 attacks as Power Blast. PR=1 per d12. Range = 76'
 - b) True Disintegration Beam: 1d8+8 vs. SR of un-living material. Any 'damage' that gets through target's SR is rolled at 1d4 per point versus target's hit points. PR=5. Range =76'
 - c) 'Vampiric Grip': Attacks as Devitalization Ray doing 2d20 versus his target's PR score. The DM will then treat the damage scored as Absorption and add the total to Dreadlord's Hit Points and Power at a 50/50% ratio. This power requires great concentration to channel its

power, thus it cannot be used at range limitation; Dreadlord must grab or hold his opponent and maintain contact to use this power.

d) Growth: May alter his height and mass; the larger he grows, the more power it takes to attain the height. PR= 2 per level of Growth to change and 1 PR per turn to maintain.

e) Transmutation: Command of non-living material from one state to another: 4d8 points of structure costs 8 PR at a range of up to 116"

f) Mind Control: This power functions in every respect as Mind Control as written in the V&V Revised rulebook.

g) Flight: Dreadlord may conjure the ability to fly at a speed of 2341" per turn, or 532 mph. PR cost is 1 per hour. He may not use hyperflight.

h) Teleportation: Maximum range = (126,000,000" (~119,318 miles), 7 PR cost per use, movement only. For a cost of 8 PR and a full action, Dreadlord may open a 2" by 2" (10' x10') portal for others to use rather than simply teleport himself. For an additional PR cost of 1 per turn, he may keep it open, but the portal will close if he does not pay the PR cost to maintain the opening.

i) Dimensional Travel: (currently limited, see Weakness: Physical Handicap below) A variation of his Teleportation ability, Dreadlord can open a dimensional gate which allows him to 'teleport' to specific interstellar locations. Chief among these is the Slayne Cabal's fortress headquarters on the world of Malkhaphera.

j) Stoneface: Dreadlord may assume a stony façade which grants him 8 points of Invulnerability to every incoming attack. PR cost is 1 per turn of use.

k) Force Wall: This power functions in every respect as Force Field as written in the V&V Revised rulebook.

l) Hold Inert: Attacks as Telekinesis, works as Paralysis Ray versus living, affects all moving objects; effected objects remain in the exact position held and are not effected by gravity, i.e. a hero effected by this while flying through the air will not fall to the ground.

m) Dispel Magical Effects: Dreadlord may negate any magical effect 'cast' by another wielder of magic, or from a magical device. The GM should use opposed Intelligence.

n) Ethereal Body: This power functions in every respect as Non-Corporeality as written in the V&V Revised rulebook.

o) Imbue Powers: Dreadlord knows the secrets of the Asteryst stone and its effects on a human vessel. If prepared he may embed the stone into human flesh for a variety of outcomes that can grant various superhuman powers or effects. The GM should role play Dreadlord in such a manner that he rarely chooses to use this ability as Asteryst is proof against many of the other powers he possesses. Once he uses this ability he cannot undo his craft due to the stones properties. Dreadlord usually will use his Soul Tether on anyone he 'helps' with this power to keep them under control should they become a threat.

p) Soul Tether: Also simply called the Tether, this power binds the individual who receives this 'gift' to be subject to Dreadlord's ultimate command, and attacks per Mind Control at a cost of 5 PR to the dark lord. A victim must be willing to receive the Tether. The immediate effects cause injuries to the recipient to be dramatically healed of any detriment when first applied.

The Tether transcends dimensions, although the limits have yet to be greatly tested. It has never been broken, except in the death of the victim, and Dreadlord himself has never been known to release it. Dreadlord is able to further control and chastise victims by causing pain in the form of 5d4 hit points with no save allowed. Dreadlord may deliver this jolt with each action he has and may adjust the damage amount lower if he perceives the life force of the victim to be too weak to survive. A victim cannot be created if they are already dead; the host must be living.

The Soul Tether can be broken in one of two ways. If the victim has a 'mental defense' sort of power, or Telepathy combined with Willpower, they may, on their turn every round they are 'tethered', attempt to break free with a d100 save versus Intelligence and a cost of 20 PR. Or, if a player is able to travel to the Astral or Spirit Plane, the GM may allow the Tether to be attacked as if it had a physical aspect. In this manifestation, the Tether has an SR of 14 and 56 hit points and will be

seen as a thread bound to the affected character's 'leg' that endlessly travels to oblivion. Dreadlord may suspend himself in trance and journey to defend such an attack, but will be vulnerable to surprise attack in the real world.

q) Life Force Manipulation: This power functions in most respects to Revivication as written in the V&V Revised rulebook, with exceptions as follows: There is a 1% penalty per day that the subject has been dead regardless of preservation, only one turn is required for Dreadlord, Dreadlord has a range of 38", and the PR cost is reduced to 5 per attempt.

Weakness: Physical Handicap: Dreadlord has no left arm. During a combat where he briefly attempted to wield the Scepter of the Supreme Being (see Vigilantes International, p.31), the scepter disappeared in a flash of violent energy, leaving the villain without his limb and unable to regenerate it through natural, scientific, or even magical means; it is a permanent condition. One major side effect to this wounding is that Dreadlord, for the time being, can no longer use his power Dimensional Travel to its fullest extent: He cannot leave the planet unless utilizing means other than his own personal energies.

Weight: 220 lbs.
 Agility Mod: —
 Endurance: 38
 Intelligence: 58
 Hit Mod: 22.9632
 Reactions from Good: -6
 Damage Mod: +9
 Accuracy: +2
 Carrying Capacity: 720 lbs.
 Movement Rates: 68" ground
 Detect Hidden: 40%
 Inventing Points: 26
 Legal Status: Wanted, Record.

Basic Hits: 5
 Strength: 14
 Agility: 16
 Charisma: 31
 Hit Points: 115
 Evil: +6
 Healing Rate: 5.5
 Power: 126
 Basic HTH Damage: 1d8
 Detect Danger: 44%
 Inventing: 174%

Origin and Background: A young Baen Kudarak was a political dissident on a distant world when he first became aware of the teachings of Slayne. Slayne was the first to hear the whisperings of Auroth and become aligned to the dark practice of universal energy manipulation, a practice commonly referred to in Earth terms as 'black magic'.

Baen was drawn to the oratory of philosophy expounded on by Khru'el Pyarphan, a Zar'Hylorian elder who was a legend in his own time (mind?), reputed as being only second to Slayne himself in wielding the 'dark' power. Khru'el had years before led a bloody coup on the government of Zar'Hylor and established a cult state. Five years into the reign of Khru'el, forces of order descended on the cults of Slayne and outlawed their practices; Kudarak was already fully immersed in their cabal.

As the Sentinels and the Phalanx of the High Council of Xarith besieged the palaces of Zar'Hylor, the Slayne Lords there and their minions were either killed or captured. Khru'el, Kudarak and few others managed to escape and after a brief meeting, decided to retreat to an unknown corner of the stars to regroup and one day, restore their cabal to rule the galaxy.

After Kudarak was dispatched to Earth and defeated O'Ran, the accident which had claimed his arm had the strange effect of preventing Kudarak from use of his Slayne sorcery to produce dimensional powers that would allow that he escape the Earth, thus in his final act as a physical being, O'Ran successfully thwarted Dreadlord from returning to his cabal and their dark fortress on the world of Malkhaphera.

Baen Kudarak has been behind the scenes in many societies over the ages, using his specific black arts to spread corrupted mystic objects, gems, pearls and alien artifacts to ancient kings and viziers on every continent. In these ultimate bargains, he consistently spawned new cults (ultimately to Auroth) amongst many nations' peoples. In Mesoamerica, he sowed the seeds of human sacrifice. In ancient



Europe, he incited beast worship and rebellion against Roman masters. He assisted with suppression of the Dark Ages and helped to divide religion. His most successful ancient corruptions led to the tragic downfall of many civilizations and although he escaped the notes of written history, the after effects of some of his influences echo today.

It is a favored tactic of Dreadlord's minions in the modern era to assume positions of power within an organization (especially those with low 'moral' standards) and subtly monitor their activities and influence them when needed. Using this network of spies and black artisans he has attempted many times over the years to discover and seize the means to return to Malkhaphera. Over the centuries, and most notably in this most recent one, astral forces of Earth's own sorcerer champions have been particularly active in thwarting his every scheme to his chagrin as he has been unable to locate and destroy them. Likewise as the surge in numbers of superhuman agents has increased, Kudarak feels the need to escape Earth more than ever to bring the Slayne Lords and destruction to humanity.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Dreadlord usually has a plethora of minions to do his bidding or to command into combat. Should he somehow be deprived of these luxuries, he will engage as quickly as possible to disable ranged attacks. If he is smothered in close combat, he will use his powers to blast subjects away from him, preferring to use ranged offensive power. If he has only one opponent in close combat, he will change to a brutal hand to hand style supported by devitalization and paralysis when possible; weakened opponents will find themselves ultimately in his 'Vampiric Grip'.

Character/Personality Traits: Baen Kudarak revels at being the big fish on planet Earth; he has grown powerful over the ages. In the cosmic scheme of things he's still a major player, but doesn't have the same authority or power to bully his lessers, and in the vastness of the galaxy, there are plenty of beings who challenge his level of power.

He is a true coward in the final analysis; if he is outclassed or perhaps outsmarted he will attempt to make retreat to fight another day, and in the interim until the next possible confrontation, will be so embittered that he will devise a unique method of extermination for the offender(s). GM Note: Dreadlord is intended to be an ultimate villain in a GM's campaign, with his appearance usually the culmination of several plots and events in the game. GM's should use him sparingly and try and ensure they don't encounter him too frequently in their 'early' careers.

DOOMREAPER

Identity: Tiberios Krae
Sex: Male
Age: about 1750

Side: Dreadlord (Evil)
Level: 16
Training: HTH Accuracy

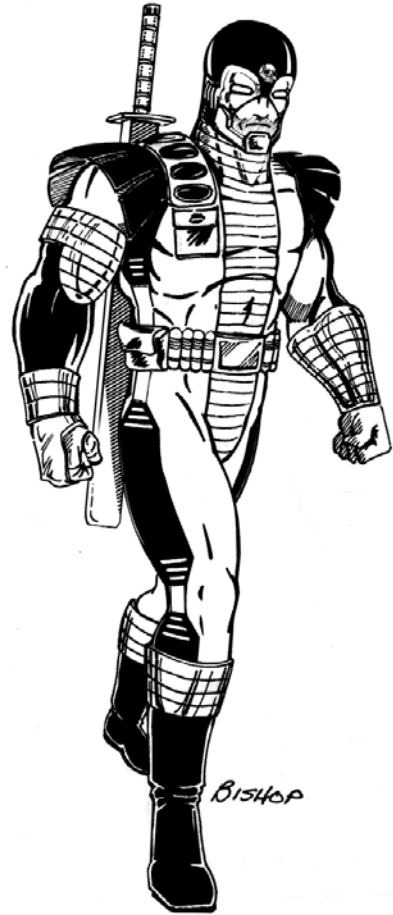
Powers:

1. Armor B: ADR 100.
2. Regeneration: The Doomreaver gains his Healing Rate each turn. This is a magical effect.
3. Special Weapon: Warluck Sword: +4 to hit HTH, +8 damage. On successful hits, the victim must roll a save on d100 will fail on a percentage roll equal to (5/Endurance) and lose 1 HP per phase. The infection is demonic in its root but attacks the tissue as if it were a rampant flesh consuming bacteria. If character has regeneration, the regeneration will cease to function, but the draining effect of the sword is abated; the character so afflicted will then be exposed to damage and healing as though they were unable to regenerate. Any character with Android Body power cannot be infected. An inventing point spent at a medical facility (or appropriately skilled treatment location) will stabilize the condition.
4. Arcane blast: 1d20 attacks as Power Blast. PR is 2 per use. The attack counts as 'magical' energy.
5. Body Power: Magical Construct: Originally Kirae was powerfully endowed by the shards of Abellion with the powers normally bestowed upon a Xarith Phalanx Warrior. These mystical cosmic abilities honed his body to near perfection, and gave him several mental disciplines. Unfortunately, since his 'death', becoming a thrall of Kudarak, the evil cabalist twisted the energies of Kirae's body and undid most of the abilities;
 - a. Heightened Strength B: +30.
 - b. Heightened Endurance B: +20.

Weight: 250 lbs.
Agility Mod: -2
Endurance: 40
Intelligence: 10
Hit Mod: 28.8
Reactions from Good: -4
Damage Mod: +1
Accuracy: +2
Carrying Capacity: 16125 lbs.
Movement Rates: 105" ground
Detect Hidden: 8%
Inventing Points: 4
Legal Status: No record; existence not acknowledged by authorities.

Basic Hits: 5
Strength: 50
Agility: 15
Charisma: 25
Hit Points: 144
Evil: +4
Healing Rate: 6
Power: 115
Basic HTH Damage: 3d10
Detect Danger: 12%
Inventing: 30%

Origin and Background: Doomreaver is a construct derived of a terrible fate of a noble warrior. Originally, the warrior had been Tiberios Krae and was a great hero; a living legend known for his triumphs amongst the Phalanx of the High Council of Xarith. Many centuries ago, he pursued a fugitive to Earth violating a decree, and further, the enforcement of that decree by law; worse he proceeded to do so alone.



In his zeal to apprehend this foe, Tiberios did not realize that Earth had none of the same trappings of technology as the other six human worlds, nor did he realize that the only hope he had of returning to Xarith with his quarry had been gone a century before his arrival.

In confrontation with the 'criminal' he had pursued, he quickly realized that his target was much more powerful than he had first assumed and was dispatched with no one to see him fall. But his foe, called Dreadlord on this world, had further plans for Tiberios.

Dreadlord performed many dark rituals on the fallen hero, preserving his living soul in his rotting flesh. The end result was an indestructible enslaved golem who lived now only to serve Baen Kudarak, the Dreadlord. Tiberios' soul resides within his 'dead' body still yearning to be free, tortured in anguish at his folly for more than a millennium. But despite his best assertions, he cannot assert control over himself and free himself. Doomreaver is under the absolute control of the 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Doomreaver pretends that he is oblivious to most things around him and will usually not use any tactics that are too sophisticated. This is the greatest manifestation of Tiberios wanting to die. However, he will be driven and focused to defeat his foes and complete tasks as assigned by Dreadlord's command.

Personality/Character Traits: Tiberios used to be larger than life, but the absolute perversion of his existence has left him with no desire to exhibit a personality and as a result he doesn't react to anyone in general. He obeys without hesitation and is a virtual killing machine. He will never be found too far from his master. He is free-willed enough to communicate and is always sure to set himself apart from the Furies, who, with the exception of Eliminator, he despises, especially if any dare to compare themselves with the once mighty warrior. He has ambivalent feelings toward Anarch, whom he regards as an equal and will fight alongside if Dreadlord so commands.

THE FURIES!

The Furies were formed by Grav after he was recruited by Dreadlord. Although Grav has used Dreadlord's resources to find the original members, he also realized from what he came to know about Dreadlord and his minions in his short time serving that it is important that the group remain somewhat independent from the dark sorcerer's control. Each member that Grav has recruited is wary to not displease the dark lord, else fall victim to being placed under his 'Tether' as a punishment. They are a tight team of diverse personalities, and in many respects are actually friends who care about each other, unlike most 'teams' of villains. There are exceptions among them, however, in that there are a few who are bound to the dark lord mind, body and soul.

The Furies remain wary of their benefactor, but the perks completely outweigh the dangers of serving this black master... for now.

BRAHMAN

Identity: Ravi Hesh
Sex: Male
Age: 29

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 10
Training: none

Powers:

1. Magical Spells: 'Tarva Heda.' Activating each aspect from his list his 'spells' costs Brahman movement only and a PR cost of 2; Brahman may only have one aspect active per action spent and each aspect may only last through the turn. Brahman may use these abilities on others, but rarely chooses to do so.

a. Aspect of the Bull: Heightened Strength +28. Carry becomes 17,444 lbs., Basic HTH damage = 3d10. He receives no bonus to hit points. This aspect doubles the Strength attribute of the recipient, but confers only Carrying Capacity/HTH damage. Maximum amount of Strength conferred to an ally is 30 points and does not alter an ally's hit points.

b. Aspect of the Bear: This aspect grants increased stamina which confers 10 pts. Invulnerability, doubles Endurance for the purposes of saving throws only, and may use Willpower as a defense.

c. Aspect of the Lion: This aspect manifests vicious mystical claws on both hands that grant Heightened Attack, +4 to hit, that may strike twice per attack roll in HTH.

d. Aspect of the Lamb: This aspect is used to heal damage and fatigue quickly. Regeneration 4 hit points and 8 PR per turn. Maximum Regeneration granted an ally is based on that ally's Healing Rate. Power regained will be Healing Rate x2 in points per turn.

2. Adaptation: Immune to heat (but not flame powers), poisons, toxins, virus and bacteria.

3. Heightened Endurance B: +23.

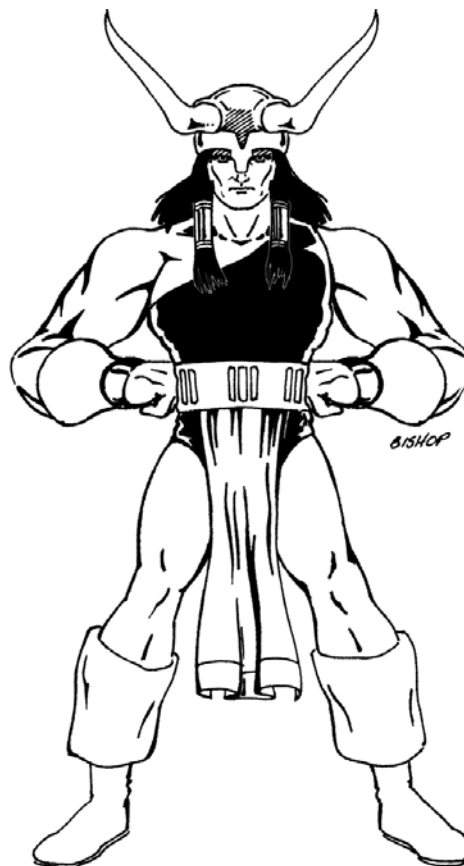
4. Heightened Strength A: +12.

Weight: 195 lbs.
Agility Mod: —
Endurance: 33
Intelligence: 12
Hit Mod: 10.164
Reactions from Good: —
Damage Mod: —
Accuracy: —
Carrying Capacity: 2462 lbs.
Movement Rates: 72" ground
Detect Hidden: 10%
Inventing Points: 8

Basic Hits: 4
Strength: 28
Agility: 11
Charisma: 10
Hit Points: 41
Evil: —
Healing Rate: 4
Power: 84
Basic HTH Damage: 1d12

Detect Danger: 14%
Inventing: 36%

Origin and Background: Ravi Hesh is perhaps fortunate if nothing else can be said of this man from India. His family found they were uncomfortable with his immense size. As a young man he struck out into the world where he eventually came into the use of his powers through undisclosed circumstance. Along the way, he used people's



assumptions of his origins to embrace a false sense of Hindu religion and a very fake outward personality. He was discovered by Cannonade during one of Ormond's forays in gathering tech supplies for the Furies. He was introduced to Grav and inducted as a member soon after, having supported the group since.

Like most of the Furies who were recruited by Grav, Brahman is not under the effects of the 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Hesh is best used in a team assault in support of other melee types. He will use his 'Tarva Heda' aspects to either buff himself or comrades and then guard flanks and watch the development of the battle, healing his allies if necessary.

Personality/Character Traits: Brahman is actually not a villain at all in the sense of pure evil, but is selfish in nature. He is quite the hypocrite, taking advantage to speak of peace and his beliefs, but then using his abilities to help those more ruthless and willing to do harm than himself.

BURST

Identity: Gaylord 'Wayne' Johnson
Sex: Male
Age: 44

Side: Dreadlord (Evil)
Level: 9
Training: Endurance

Powers:

1. Body Power: Bursting: Johnson may use parts of his body in explosive attacks to nearby opponents. This power attacks as Chemical Power. Damage, Radius range, and PR is variable based on how much body mass is burst. He is able to regenerate and reform completely after each burst, though depending on how much mass is used, the timeframe will also vary. Note there are some obvious drawbacks which are listed as side effects of the power.

Bursts body explosions and regeneration times are as follows:

Body Mass Dmg PR Regen Radius Drawback

Hand	1d8	2	1 turn	2"	—
Arm	1d12	3	2 turns	4"	-2 to hit HTH
Both Arms	1d20	6	3 turns	6"	-5 to hit HTH
Belly	2d12	6	3 turns	8"	may only move ½ available movement
Whole Body	2d20	10	5 turns	10"	may do nothing for 5 turns, immobile

2. Heightened Endurance: +12.

3. Mutant Power: Toxic Contagions: Any person who is hit by his Bursting attacks or suffers from a bite (successful HTH attack to grapple and bite) may be infected with a toxic contagion. The victim has a percentage chance equal to (5 in End score) of becoming ill until medical attention can be received from a proper facility as deemed by the GM. The illness will halt any regeneration and healing, and will weaken the victim, reducing their Power and carrying Capacity by half.

Characters may use Chemical Powers as a defense to reduce the chance of failure by half. Other proper defenses could provide some mitigation at the GM's discretion including Adaptation and Willpower, or a fully armored suit, but the GM should be cautious to not weaken this villain's effect as it is what truly makes him a threat.

Weight: 413 lbs.

Agility Mod.: -2

Endurance: 26

Intelligence: 13

Reactions from: Good:-2

Hit Mod: 3.234

Damage Mod.: —

Accuracy: -2

Carrying Capacity: 1,383 lbs.

Movement Rates: 50" ground movement

Detect Hidden: 10%

Inventing Points: 3

Basic Hits: 9

Strength: 16

Agility: 8

Charisma: 17

Evil: +2

Hit Points 30

Heal. Rate: 6.3

Power: 63

Basic HTH Damage: 1d10

Detect Danger: 14%

Inventing: 39%



Origin & Background: G. Wayne Johnson was a criminal in one of the worst ways and also a freak accident... at first. His everyday life was that of a trusted community leader and the responsible owner of Johnson and Johnson Waste Solutions.

No one knew.

Secretly, he'd lure teens and children away from their homes and do horrible things to them. Then he would smuggle their lifeless and mutilated bodies to his workplace where in his capacity as owner he had full access at all hours. He would bring them to the toxic waste disposal vats and dispose of the evidence.

After a horrible incident where a careless worker at the toxic waste management facility accidentally set off a blaze, Johnson, who was in the middle of a 'disposal' realized he was doomed. Frantically trying to escape, Johnson had the 'fortune' of surviving. Stumbling out of the chemical fires and into the nearby Nevada desert, Johnson eventually came to rest in the middle of nowhere unable to continue further. He had been somehow transformed into a toxic nightmare whose body parts would continually fill with toxic and radioactive pus and then burst open or disintegrate in the 'explosion' altogether, then he would lay there and regenerate only to have the cycle repeat. The pain was unimaginable and further scarred Johnson's already evil psyche as he somehow by force of will summoned Dreadlord.

Dreadlord did indeed come to 'rescue' Johnson. In exchange for 'stabilizing' Johnson's affliction, Johnson agreed to serve 'body and soul'. He was then added to the ranks of the Furies by Dreadlord and is absolutely in the control of his 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Burst likes to get close to victims and burst his toxic ooze over the victim. Johnson is not above actually biting and clawing at his victims either; in this way he can still spread his contagion and maybe even satisfy his hunger. Collateral damage is never a concern to Burst, there is no consideration for the welfare of innocent bystanders or property. If not for the wishes of Dreadlord, he wouldn't restrain his powers from 'accidentally' harming his teammates.

Personality/Character Traits: Burst is a sadistic killer who enjoys causing pain. One of the more unpleasant aspects of the man is his cannibalism of his victims when unrestrained, a trait that isn't popular at all with his fellow Furies who are not under the 'Tether'. Burst has little regard for the welfare or happiness of anyone, even the Furies, as he realizes he doesn't fit into normal life anymore.

DEADEYE

Identity: Johnnie Blassey

Sex: Male

Age: 36

Side: Furies (Evil)

Level: 9

Training: Intelligence

Powers:

1. Mutant Powers: (Aim) Johnny has an unnatural gift to be able to accurately shoot or throw virtually any object or weapon. DeadEye receives +4 to hit and receives no range to hit penalties or off balance object penalties when using a thrown object or thrown weapons. Likewise, DeadEye receives the same benefit from offset range bonuses +5 up to 960"

2. Special Weapon: Long Range Rifle. DeadEye is armed with a specially designed rifle that uses various different types of ammunition to produce different effects. Each type of bullet is charged with special ionized plasma that gives it a range of 420 inches. In anyone else's hands, the rifle will only have a range of 210 inches on the game. The rifle is +4 to hit in either case. The rifle operates from loaded cartridges containing 20 rounds per cartridge. DeadEye may fire one round per action and reload cartridges at a cost of movement only. DeadEye carries five cartridges and each round does 2d10 damage. DeadEye must expend 1 PR per use of the rifle. Anyone else attempting to operate the rifle must roll versus Detect Hidden to understand it's more than complex workings as this is no ordinary rifle; likewise it will cost 2 PR per use for the first week for an unfamiliar user.

3. Natural Weaponry: +3 HTH, +1d3+3 damage from mixed martial arts training.

4 Heightened Senses: x4 Detect Hidden score as DeadEye's cybernetic implant has a far greater acuity than his normal eye ever could have hoped to achieve.

Weight: 184 lbs.

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 17

Intelligence: 17

Hit Mod: 6.6528

Reactions from Good: —

Damage Mod: +3

Accuracy: +4

Carrying Capacity: 467 lbs.

Movement Rates: 53" ground

Detect Hidden: 48%

Inventing Points: 4

Basic Hits: 4

Strength: 15

Agility: 21

Charisma: 9

Hit Points: 27

Evil: —

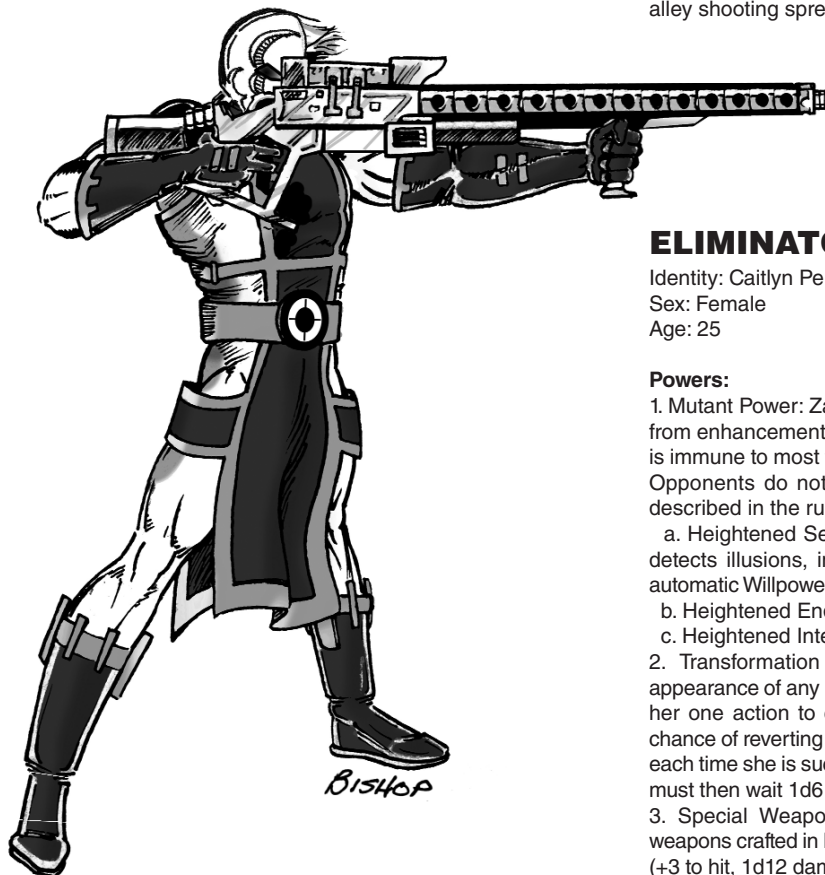
Healing Rate: 1.6

Power: 70

Basic HTH Damage: 1d6

Detect Danger: 16%

Inventing: 51%



ELIMINATOR

Identity: Caitlyn Perry

Sex: Female

Age: 25

Side: Dreadlord (Evil)

Level: 9

Training: Endurance

Powers:

1. Mutant Power: Zar'Hylorian Pod Powers: Eliminator benefits greatly from enhancements to her physiology from the parasite infection. She is immune to most forms of disease and can 'see' in a 360 degree arc. Opponents do not gain the flanking bonus from combat facing as described in the rules.

a. Heightened Senses: Heightened Sense of Reality: automatically detects illusions, imposters, bluffs, lies, etc; 4x Detection rolls, and automatic Willpower defense vs. Mind and Emotion control. No PR cost.

b. Heightened Endurance: +9.

c. Heightened Intelligence: +13.

2. Transformation C: Eliminator may shapeshift to assume the appearance of any humanoid creature of roughly the same size. It takes her one action to change and costs no PR. She has a percentage chance of reverting to her true form equal to the hit points she has taken each time she is successfully attacked. If she reverts for this reason, she must then wait 1d6 turns to assume a shape other than her own again.

3. Special Weapons: Eliminator carries customized Zar'Hylorian weapons crafted in Dreadlord's laboratories. She has an Energy Autorifle (+3 to hit, 1d12 damage, 2 shots per attack, range 75") and an Energy Autopistol (+2 to hit, 1d10 damage, 3 shots per attack, range 45").

Weight: 140 lbs.

Agility Mod: —

Endurance: 20

Intelligence: 24

Hit Mod: 6.336

Reactions from Good: -2

Damage Mod: +3

Accuracy: +2

Carrying Capacity: 332 lbs.

Movement Rates: 49" ground

Detect Hidden: 72%

Inventing Points: 7.7

Legal Status: Wanted, no record.

Basic Hits: 3

Strength: 14

Agility: 15

Charisma: 16

Hit Points: 20

Evil: +2

Healing Rate: 1.5

Power: 73

Basic HTH Damage: 1d6

Detect Danger: 88%

Inventing: 72%

Origin and Background: Johnnie Blassey has been a con his entire life. From humble and unremarkable origins, Johnnie's life began to take on meaning and flower as a member of the British Army. Unfortunately instead of a sense of honor, he only gained a love for being in a position to use firearms. He especially turned an odd corner when during a UN assignment as a 'policing' force, his unit actually became engaged in an action defending a town from an insurgency. Johnnie found out that he loved killing people. He didn't find sport or competition, he just liked the idea that his bullets could end a human life.

With this sort of behavior, it didn't take long for others to notice and soon he was on his way to being drummed out. But Johnnie wasn't going to let anyone drum him out. He turned on his unit and in frenzy shot many of his fellow soldiers, and then went on a rampage across the villages of the region. Holed up in an old tenement in a certain torn

MAMMOTH

Identity: O'ont Oka Bem
 Sex: Male
 Age: Undetermined

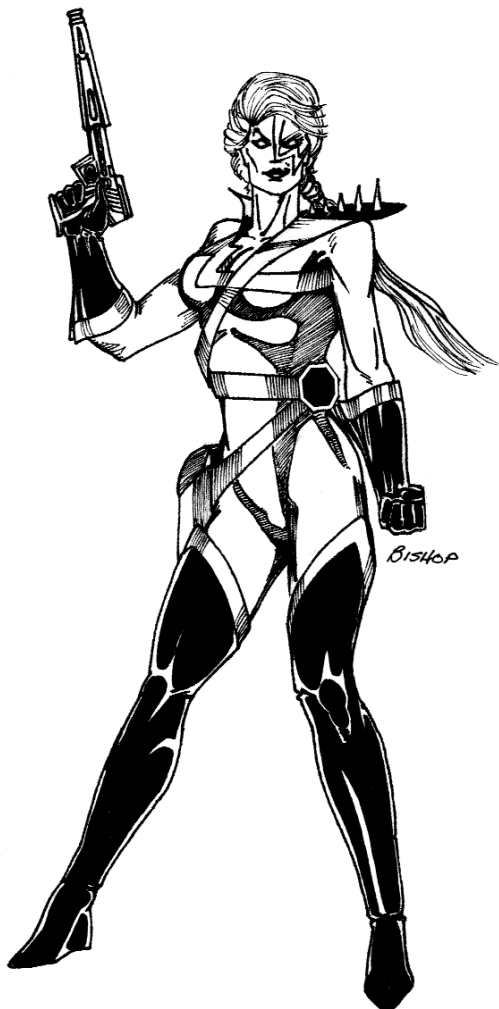
Side: Dreadlord (Evil)
 Level: 9
 Training: +4 to hit HTH
 +4 Intelligence

Powers:

1. Heightened Strength B: +25.
2. Heightened Endurance: +13.
3. Heightened Attack: +9 damage caused in all attacks.
4. Special Power: Immortality: Mammoth has an enchanted Asteryst stone embedded in his abdomen placed there by the sorcery of Baen Kudarak. It is not visible to the naked eye, but may be detected by magical detections, although the nature of its power will not be obvious. If it is somehow removed, Mammoth will lose no power, but will resume the aging process which was delayed by the stone during the Dark Ages. Because of the nature of Asteryst, Dreadlord, who is loath to use such a thing, cannot remove it as it is now affixed to a human vessel.
5. Mutant Power: Massive Body. Mammoth has been magically and permanently turned into a brutish hulk by Dreadlord with increased height and mass. He now stands approximately 8 feet tall, his weight is multiplied by a factor of 3 from his original weight and Mammoth also has Invulnerability of 12 points.
6. Regeneration: 1 action per turn maximum to heal full rate, cannot regenerate damage from magic spells or magic weapons.
7. Immune to fear and illusion.
8. Functionally Mute: Although Mammoth can speak in gestures, grunts and groans, he has not mastered any modern languages.
9. Heightened Expertise: +4 to hit with thrown projectiles.

Weight: 570 lbs.
 Agility Mod: -4
 Endurance: 25
 Intelligence: 9
 Hit Mod: 9
 Reactions from Good: +2
 Damage Mod: —
 Accuracy: —
 Carrying Capacity: 18953 lbs.
 Movement Rates: 74" ground
 Detect Hidden: 8%
 Inventing Points: 4

Basic Hits: 12
 Strength: 40
 Agility: 9
 Charisma: 8
 Hit Points: 108
 Evil: -2
 Healing Rate: 8.4
 Power: 83
 Basic HTH Damage: 3d10
 Detect Danger: 12%
 Inventing: 27%



Origin and Background: Eliminator is literally a 'hired' assassin from the planet Zar'Hylor. Her current form is that of Caitlyn Perry. The day the entry pod crashed into the country home of the Perry family, Caitlyn was closest to the impact.

When her husband came home shortly after to investigate, he found the desiccated body of his mother-in-law in the wrecked living room. In horror, he began frantically searching the broken rubble-strewn dwelling and suddenly saw his wife appear before him strangely pale and even more strangely attired... As he began to speak she blew a tunnel through his head with a high tech pistol weapon.

Caitlyn Perry remembers her former life, but has no emotional attachment to it; the Zar'Hylorian assassin pod has integrated into her physiology and assumed control, asserting its 'personality' and embarking upon its mission: To serve the Slayne and Baen Kudarak on Earth. Eliminator does not need to be under control of the 'Tether', but serves in every capacity as if she is.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Eliminator is prone to cheap shots when 'out of sight' as much as possible, many times attacking without her opponents even knowing she is around or disguised within large crowds.

Personality/Character Traits: Eliminator is as cold and calculating as any assassin could be. With a tendency to be ruthless in almost every situation, she doesn't even understand the definition of mercy. She is quite methodical and never disobeys commands.

It is very common for her to deny assistance to her teammates if it is not either directly related to extermination of a target or explicitly commanded for her to act in such a manner by Dreadlord.

Origin and Background: O'ont (pronounced Oh-ohnt) was a hunter from a barbaric tribe in Siberia in the 5th century A.D. Although not particularly well liked amongst his tribe, he was at the very least strong, skilled, and fearless. While hunting with a group beyond the frontiers, O'ont's group spotted a sharptooth (Giant Siberian Tiger) and decided in their hunger to pursue the cat into an oncoming storm. O'ont became separated from his group, who after several hours and starving, decided to turn back, abandoning O'ont to his fate.

Not realizing that the sharptooth was an animal vessel whom Baen Kudarak was using in gestalt to perform reconnaissance, O'ont stumbled upon a peculiar dwelling. Kudarak was poised to drain the life-force of the hunter, but sensed a fearless spirit. Kudarak suspended the hunter in the air before him and embedded the stone in his abdomen. Speaking a litany of strange chanting tongues, O'ont spun in the air growing into a large hulking superhuman vessel. Kudarak dubbed him Mammoth, thinking this a fitting new name for his new servant.

Rebellious at first, Mammoth soon learned how powerful his new master was and was broken of any subversive behaviors. O'ont has served Dreadlord ever since and is under control of the 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Mammoth's tactics are rudimentary, but effective. He still acts the part of the great hunter and only retreats if hopelessly overwhelmed. If he takes any considerable amount of damage he will seek a defensive position to fall back and regenerate. He likes to grapple and watch his prey die as he crushes the life from them. Mammoth is not stupid and should not be portrayed as such.



Personality/Character Traits: Mammoth has a truly warped personality and has come to enjoy serving Dreadlord over the centuries. The latest years of membership with the Furies are a particular joy as 'the hunt' is now easier with the additions of all the 'mighty hunters' to the group. Mammoth doesn't communicate well with strangers, but his teammates understand how to read his meaning. Mammoth is fearless and doesn't scare easily.

Of all Dreadlord's minions under the control of the 'Tether,' Mammoth is perhaps the most tragic in that he does not perceive the depth of the morality of making 'Evil' choices. He is more going with the flow and survival of the fittest, and over the years has adapted as needed to operate. Also unlike the others that serve Dreadlord (Burst and Eliminator), Mammoth actually likes Grav and the other Furies that he has been assigned by Dreadlord to accompany; likewise Grav has a reasonable rapport with the brute. Mammoth is smart enough to understand what taunting is and is not mentally challenged.

ORE

Identity: Guy Pesco
Sex: Male
Age: 36

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 8
Training: Strength

Powers:

1. **Body Power: Steel Body:** Ore is always in a 'steel form,' having no flesh body anymore. He has no need to eat, but does need water like a normal person and he still needs sleep. He doesn't truly breathe and as a result he gains defenses of Life Support and Adaptation in situations regarding environment or attacks on respiration where oxygen is a concern at no PR cost. he also gains the following:

- a) **Armor A:** ADR 100. Regenerates at a rate 50 points per 24 hours.
 - b) **Heightened Strength:** +22.
 - c) **Heightened Endurance:** +12.
 - d) **Stretching Powers (limited):** He can stretch his body up to 84" long.
 - e) **Invulnerability:** 12 points.
 - f) **Transformation: (Molten) Ore** can transform at will into a molten state. PR =2 per turn. In this form, he gains a defenses of Flame Defense and Non-Corporeality and, although he cannot pass through solid objects, he can slide his molten form under doors, through bars (if he can't melt them), and other openings that he would normally be too large to fit through in his solid form. Anyone touching his molten form is subject to a flame attack which does 1d12. He may still attack in this form in HTH, and may utilize his stretching ability at 50% effectiveness (42" movement/reach).
2. **Heightened Expertise:** +4 in unarmed HTH combat.
 3. **Weakness:** Slow, lumbering; ground movement is reduced by half.

Weight: 522 lbs.
Agility Mod: -4
Endurance: 30
Intelligence: 9
Hit Mod: 11.4
Reactions from Good: —
Damage Mod: —
Accuracy: —
Carrying Capacity: 16,265 lbs.
Movement Rates: 40" ground
Detect Hidden: 8%
Inventing Points: 7
Legal Status: Wanted, Record

Basic Hits: 11
Strength: 39
Agility: 11
Charisma: 9
Hit Points: 126
Evil: —
Healing Rate: 9.9
Power: 89
Basic HTH Damage: 3d10
Detect Danger: 12%
Inventing: 27%

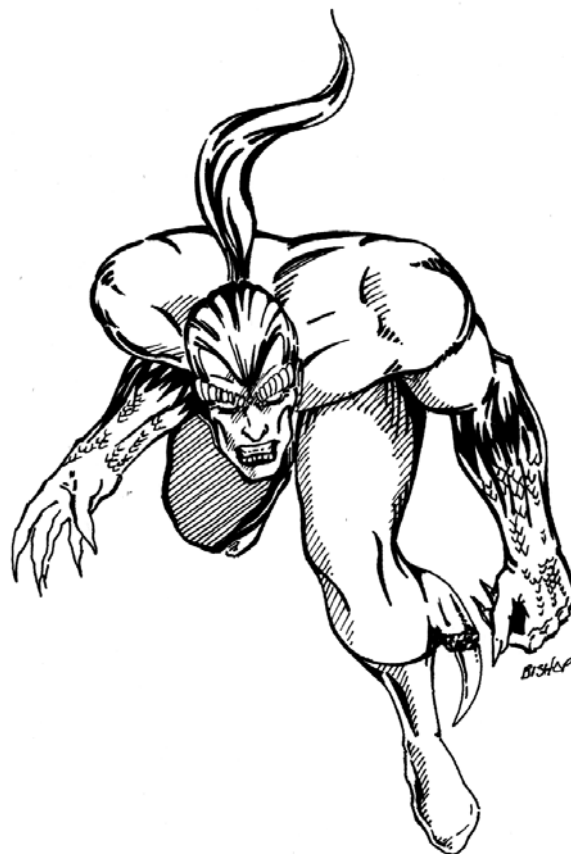


Origin & Background: Guy Pesco was an iron worker who was embroiled in a freak accident. Unsure of the nature of his powers' origin, he escaped from the custody of the scientists to whom he had somehow been remanded.

Of course, Grav knew as he monitored through some old contacts exactly what the OMA experimental teams had in mind. Soon after Grav had engineered his escape, it was explained to Pesco (with a severe bias) what the OMA intended to do to their guinea pig... After that Pesco was easily recruited or into the ranks of the Furies.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Ore is a brawler from his steel worker days when he used to 'square up' against other guys for paychecks... a GM should definitely play him with a fisticuffs-gliadiatorial style. He enjoys using his ability to stretch and go molten to gain position on his opponents or be relentless in his pursuits.

Personality/Character Traits: Ore originally was a law-abiding citizen who had a neutral view of the world; if you didn't bother him, he wouldn't pound you into dust. After the incident with the government, Ore developed issues with trust in legal authority and has now found that his life of crime, especially with his new powers, is not only profitable, but rather easy and enjoyable. Ore isn't really a killer, but could easily escalate to that decision if one of his friends on the Furies is threatened.



RAPTOR

Identity: Damon Black
Sex: Male
Age: 33

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 10
Training: Agility

Powers:

1. Heightened Agility A: +12.
2. Heightened Endurance A: +14.
3. 2x Natural Weaponry: Raptor Claws: +6 to hit, +12 damage unarmed.
4. Heightened Expertise: +4 to hit in all HTH combat.
5. Regeneration: Special: 3x Heal Rate per turn, costs movement only. Raptor does not gain the multiple in extreme cold weather. Temperatures of less than 32° F will yield a normal rate, and below -40° F, Raptor will cease regenerating.
6. Willpower A. 1 PR per turn as a defense.

Weight: 185 lbs.
Agility Mod: —
Endurance: 26
Intelligence: 15
Hit Mod: 16.128
Reactions from Good: -3
Damage Mod: +4
Accuracy: +5
Carrying Capacity: 780 lbs.
Movement Rates: 72" ground
Detect Hidden: 12%
Inventing Points: 8

Basic Hits: 4
Strength: 18
Agility: 28
Charisma: 19
Hit Points: 65
Evil: +3
Healing Rate: 2.8
Power: 87
Basic HTH Damage: 1d8

Detect Danger: 16%
Inventing: 45%

Origin and Background: Damon Black was a candidate for a special team of operatives that was to work within the framework of the OMA's new prison system. When he was passed over for leadership, being deemed too aggressive and having a borderline personality issues, he became resentful and resigned.

Wandering the streets, frequenting local drinking establishments, and having no general sense of purpose, he was contacted by Grav, also a former member of an OMA super-agent program. Grav offered a deal that was too good to refuse and Damon joined the Furies as the Raptor. Raptor has embraced the opportunity, being allowed a lot of room to 'cut loose' and exercise his more bloodthirsty tendencies.

Since the group's alignment with Dreadlord, Raptor is suspicious of the sorcerer's motives, and keeps a wary eye on the new alliance. Raptor is not under the effects of the 'Tether'.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Raptor moves about in fluid acrobatic style

and attacks without mercy. He is conscious to immediately evade and then oppose those with similar power sets, realizing just how dangerous he can be.

Personality/Character Traits: Although a very intelligent man who once was an instrument of the law, he has always felt the sting of being labeled 'prone to violence'. Because his temper is so fragile, he revels in the atmosphere where it is acceptable to be merciless and make simple decisions that require simple solutions.

Raptor will always vote to eliminate a potential hostage rather than have to maintain the burden of negotiation with the law. That being said, in all dealings with his 'new job', he prefers as little risk of law enforcement intervention as possible to threaten his freedom.

Raptor is vicious at most times, but can be a perfect gentleman who is particular about respect toward ladies despite appearances. He is also a consummate team player who acknowledges Grav's leadership.

VORTEX

Identity: Vaughn Van Blake
Sex: Male
Age: 32

Side: Furies (Evil)
Level: 8
Training: Teleportation

Powers:

1. Android Body: (Cyborg Body) Much of Vortex' physiology and internal organs were damaged in his near fatal accident. As a result, he has a number of powers that are now innate.

- a. Armor B: ADR 140.
- b. Heightened Senses: Vortex has had his sight and hearing drastically augmented receives triple his Detect Hidden for these senses.
- c. Life Support: Van Blake's digestive system has been drastically altered. He does not eat or excrete in traditional methods, subsisting on protein elixirs and intravenous nutrients to sustain his living parts.
- d. Heightened Strength + 6.

- e. Heightened Endurance + 8.
f. Heightened Intelligence + 10.

2. Teleportation: Up to 8,200,000" (about 7,765 miles) range at a cost of 6 PR per use. Vortex may at his discretion, rather than teleporting on his own, make a portal for others (and himself) to use. This portal is up to 5" wide and costs no extra PR for Vortex to manifest. He may allow it to remain open by spending 1 PR per turn until he deems it is time to close the teleport portal. Vortex has an implanted chip which allows him to key in on a special device possessed by Grav. Vortex may teleport to wherever Grav is without penalty, so long as Grav is within range, sight unseen. Vortex will materialize safely and will not be displaced in a solid object under any circumstances.

Weight: 255	Basic Hits: 6
Agility Mod: —	Strength: 22
Endurance: 24	Agility: 12
Intelligence: 24	Charisma: 8
Hit Mod: 10.53	Hit Points: 64
Reactions from Good: +2	Evil: -2
Damage Mod: +3	Healing Rate: 4.2
Accuracy: +1	Power: 82
Carrying Capacity: 1664	Basic HTH Damage: 1d10
Movement Rates: 58" ground	
Detect Hidden: 54%	Detect Danger: 22%
Inventing Points: 5	Inventing: 72%
Legal Status: Record, not currently Wanted.	

Origin and Background: Recruited by Grav into the service of Dreadlord, Vortex is now far more a machine than man...

At one point, Vaughn Van Blake had it all; wealth, girls, good looks. He attended lavish parties amongst the celebrity elite and had a horrible reputation for being a cad. Sometimes when he would get really intoxicated he would wake up in strange places with a few random party-goers. He thought nothing of this and apparently no one else seemed to care or notice as long as the money and fun were endless...

Then came the accident. The car was going really fast, the roads were banked by steep cliffs and curved like the worm at the bottom of the bottle. Vaughn remembered tumbling from the convertible as it careened over the cliffside and then lights and surgeons... then nothing.

The OMA had been monitoring Vaughn since his high profile alpha pings appeared on their radar every time he would drunkenly teleport 40 miles. Their surgeons worked frantically to save his life, having to utilize cybernetic body parts reserved only for top level agents. The OMA was able to save him, but the level of brain damage sustained made Vaughn nearly a robot, able to follow simple commands and virtually devoid of personality or emotional attachment of his former self. They would have used him, but the officials couldn't decide if his levels of function were adequate for field work even as they experimented with programming that would enable him to receive commands to activate his superhuman abilities. Eventually, Vortex was reaching a level of training until a glitch caused him to be placed in "storage".

It was here that Grav found him while running from the Court Martial. Grav knew that he could escape custody and make a clean getaway by taking Vortex into his 'care'. Once Grav agreed to work for Dreadlord, he used Vortex to locate and recruit new members into the Furies.

Over the intervening time, Ormond has used some of his technical savvy to upgrade Vortex' programming to allow for his 'personality' to reassert itself enough to learn and grow in his abilities.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: Vortex does not truly engage in combat, rather he will attempt to displace potential threats away from his person. He will try to remain available to perform his primary function as a transport facilitator. If a battle goes terribly wrong, Vortex will save Grav and evacuate to a safe location until Grav decides what they should do.

Personality/Character Traits: The only vestiges of Vortex' personality seem to expose themselves to a glimpse of hesitation during more emotional conversations; other than this his sole function is the transport and evacuation of the Furies. Vortex has become completely



loyal to Grav and is keyed to the sound of his voice for direct commands, although he is able to act on his own volition. If Grav is in imminent danger of capture, he will always ensure that he is able to help Grav escape, even if only the two of them are evacuated.

FURY ONE

In the event that Vortex is not being used in a transport capacity, or in conjunction with Vortex if needed, the Furies will most commonly use one of three identical craft launching from a hangar in an undisclosed location.

Fury One

Weight: 62,500 lbs.	Cargo Capacity: 8,000 lbs.
Crew: 2 (Pilot/Co-Pilot)	Passengers: 16
SR: 12(Outer hull)	Access Points: 2
Structural Points: 1250 (485 Structural Points to render inoperable).	
Maximum speed: 3,500 mph/may travel in space/no hyperflight.	

Fury One is armed with a pair of 360-degree dorsal turrets house Zar'Hyalorian energy cannons have a range of 1 mile and inflict 2d12 damage each, but may not be fired if the engines are off. They attack as Power Blast on the chart and benefit from expertise of the gunner controlling them if applicable.

Fury One can be programmed for autopilot capability.

Other attributes may be assigned by the GM to Fury One if needed.

EPILOGUE:

COSMIC ADVENTURES IN V&V

This adventure is intended as a prequel and represents a very condensed version of what can happen in the final chapters of a long campaign that is transitioning from a contemporary superhero global theme to a spacefaring foray into a 'cosmic' campaign. But what exactly is it that makes a campaign 'cosmic'?

In Villains and Vigilantes, the fact that it is a superhero role-playing game based on the comic book medium leaves no shortage of source material for a GM to draw upon. Both mainstream and independent publishing houses have had frequent excursions into cosmic settings. Fortunately, V&V has a flexible base of rules that are easy to adapt and make reasonable accommodation for the GM to mimic these types of stories. The GM only has to consider the factors associated with the definitions of these kinds of settings to come up with the feel of a campaign that makes the characters truly cosmic powered and not merely highly experienced.

Players gather and act out the roles of characters derived from comic book stories that are larger-than-life, thus their exploits are heroic in the goal of the role-playing game experience. In the same manner, the planet Earth also needs to take on a larger-than-life fantastic role to give the players a relevant stage. The following are suggestions of how to handle the various common threads found in galaxy-spanning stories and how best to integrate them into the campaign.

THE EXPANDING GALAXY

The very first thing to consider for any GM is going to be just how vast the setting will need to be to accommodate a cosmic campaign. Cosmic campaigns usually involve interplay of the associated heroes between multiple galaxy-spanning interplanetary locations. The Villains and Vigilantes universe, as published so far, has several aliens, alien races and distant worlds mentioned in the pages of its adventures and sourcebooks. Aside from any listed in this or its sequel volume, *Black Souls' Abyss*, a GM should consider the existence all of the following entries into the continuity as of this writing, but should not consider this list exhaustive:

Major Rall, Star Boss, and the Capellans (*From The Depths Of Space*)
 The Brounans, Vrinx, Harathlings, Jaas, Psy, and Aldrites (*From The Depths Of Space*)
 The Logrellians (*Battle Above The Earth*)
 The Torgee, Shredders (*The Dawn of DNA*)
 Sirriandor (*Opponents Unlimited*)
 UIY2249 (*Opponents Unlimited*)
 The Chirrdouk Confederacy (*Opponents Unlimited*)
 The Charinjoi Empire (*Opponents Unlimited*)
 The Xareon and the Gorg (*Devil's Domain*)
 Extractor (*Most Wanted Vol. 3*)
 Kilon, from planet Naylor (*Most Wanted Vol. 3*)
 Tympanus, a world orbiting Barnard's Star (*Pre-Emptive Strike*)

In addition there are at least two other entries that bear some distinction from the list above:

The Greys, origin unspecified (*Flying Saucer, Vessel of Abduction*), are largely based on close encounters reported all over the world since Roswell. They are the 'little green men' to older generations, the subject of television medium in popular syndicated prime time on shows like *The X-Files*, and the basis for speculation on whether we are 'alone.'

The Galactic Police of the Confederation (*The Centerville Incident*) are "of some two hundred sovereign nations, and totaling over 120,000 worlds." The organization is headquartered on the world of Sarvitiou Prime and serves "all but a very few nations within the Confederation." The Confederation boasts that it includes perhaps half of the races in the Milky Way galaxy, but it would be difficult to quantify this in official material considering the billions of worlds in the Milky Way galaxy alone. In addition, though the extent of its actual cosmographic area remains unclear, for exactly that reason the GM may certainly want to consider this expansive piece of canon for his or her own campaign.

The material introduced explaining the role of Earth and the universe as portrayed in this adventure is intended to flesh out how the Earth might fit into the V&V universe on the cosmic stage. While it might seem presumptuous to pave such an important role for humanity and the Human Worlds mentioned in this book, the V&V universe is, as mentioned above, a comic book-based universe. Earth, as portrayed in comic books, is usually the center of our storytelling world and often a participant through its super-beings on the grand universal stage.

SO WHAT MAKES THE CHARACTER COSMIC?

Often times, GM's and players alike fall into the trap that what makes a character "cosmic" is an arbitrary assignment or accumulation of fantastic godlike abilities and powers, the ability to fly faster than the speed of light, and the ability to sustain their life unprotected in the rigors of space. While this may be true for some characters on the cosmic scale, the true mark of a character that is cosmic is their relevance to the events on that scale. For example, in the Marvel Comics title, *the Avengers*, the title characters have been involved in multiple conflicts involving alien races across many worlds. Very few of the characters in those stories who are members of that super team are actually endowed with any powers that make them any more powerful than a highly trained martial artist, yet their reputations, actions, and politics make them relevant on the cosmic stage in those stories. Their daring and willingness to participate combined with their resourcefulness in obtaining the technology and transportation to take the fight to their enemies is just as important as any single one of the other members who is actually 'cosmic' powered.

In the same way, a GM running an adventure in Villains and Vigilantes will need to make sure that during the presentation of their story, the players' characters remain able to participate wherever the story may go and be relevant to its outcome. The GM should not be afraid to allow underpowered characters to outshine many of the NPC's they may encounter in order to gain reputation and respect from the forces that they are opposing. It shouldn't be uncommon for these characters to make contacts, parlay with warlords and emperors, acquire useful weapons, vehicles, starships, or to enter into systems of trade and currency. Similarly, the GM should be careful not to favor characters already suited for the cosmic stage to the detriment of anyone else's role-playing experience. A character could have all the power of Dr. Apocalypse and can still know nothing of the cosmic landscape.

Obviously, balance is key. The GM shouldn't make things too easy either; after all, we are talking about cosmic events. The cosmic stage has plenty of slugfest opportunities and simple brawl encounters, but aside from these, the GM should be thinking in terms of the players'

characters journey across the stars and the learning opportunities that would go hand-in-hand. Things like life aboard a starship, learning alien languages, encountering space phenomena, diplomatic missions and political intrigues, and exploring alien worlds are all vast troves of role-playing opportunities that could make a campaign rewarding in many different ways and last for a very long time.

SUGGESTED POWERS

Most suggested powers here are listed for their usefulness with regard to exposure to the one environment most superheroes rarely encounter, the vacuum of deep space. The following powers may make life easier for unassisted space travel, or survival from planet to planet, as the distance between is exponentially vaster than any distance player's heroes will have encountered foiling a robbery or chasing a villain to their hideout. As an aside, most planetary bodies other than Earth, or like planets described in an adventure, may have limited atmospheric supports that make life hospitable, or just flat out are composed of harsh elements and gaseous compounds with an equal level of hazard.

ADAPTATION

As heroes will need to be protected from the vacuum of space with its pressure and temperature extremes, Adaptation becomes a useful power. GMs should be clear about what this power will and will not protect the hero from and have the player mark their sheet accordingly. Adaptation should not be used as a catch all power that allows the character to grow new body parts or suddenly manifest gills when needed. If the GM and player want Adaptation to work this way, it should probably be described as a bonus effect from a "Mutant Power".

ASTRAL PROJECTION

If a character has Astral Projection, they will have a handy way to scout in environments normally restricted to other characters. Astral travel also bypasses some barriers that present the same difficulties. If the players are traveling through outer space in a starship and something impacts the ship and cripples it, it could be really convenient to have the character with Astral Projection survey the damages and save Captain Metro, the martial artist from Hoboken, from an unnecessary spacewalk.

COSMIC AWARENESS

It goes without saying that an intrinsic connection with the universe around the character could be useful. Cosmic awareness allows the character to sense great events and possibly sense when things are not as they should be; in a cosmic campaign such characters often have some sort of tie to a cosmic being that is an inherent force of the universe who may represent an abstract concept or force of nature as an NPC more than having a direct effect on the adventure, preferring instead to speak through the character using the heightened sense of awareness.

DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL

Another staple of this type of campaign might be Dimensional Travel. Sometimes Dimensional Travel is an excellent alternative to light speed travel. Dimensional doesn't only mean traveling to other planes and battling demigods or demon spawn, but the players and GMs should keep an open mind that space and its vastness fit perfectly the description of 'dimensional'. In the first variant of the power, the rulebook gives us 'hyperspace' thus allowing us to enter 'hyperspace' at some point and reasonably exit to have folded the distance in real space to virtually nothing.

FORCE FIELD

Force fields could be quite useful in protecting the wayward space traveler. The GM might enhance the campaign definition to require extra mastery over the power to allow the field to maintain artificial

atmosphere for the wielder so long as the person casting the force field first erected it within normal atmospheric conditions *and* is able to maintain it throughout the environmental exposure to dangers the characters would otherwise need more appropriate powers to counter. Likewise, if the GM allowed added definition to the power, could a player now use this power to shield their character or the entire group temporarily from the harmful effects of stellar radiation? In any case, how long before the oxygen runs out?

GRAVITY POWERS

A character with Gravity Powers could find themselves quite popular in a space campaign for obvious reasons as manipulation of this basic physical force would be sought after by anyone who became aware of the character's ability.

HEIGHTENED SENSES

Many detections and senses are overlooked in campaigns based in the modern world. Space is full of different spectra of energy and unstable elemental compounds and gases. The value of heightened senses is exponentially increased as the campaign moves deeper into the cosmos.

HYPERFLIGHT

The power Flight in the V&V Rulebook, p.12, describes characters who have the power of Flight and meet criteria which puts their speed over 450 mph to be able to achieve Hyperflight. The power of Wings, as described on p.19 of the same volume, does not describe that power to assign a 'hyperflight' component. Savvy GMs should pick up on this and allow characters with wings to shift to hyperflight only if they also possess the power Flight or a description in a 'wildcard' power which provides for that ability.

There are some basic things for the GM to consider when a character is using hyperflight. The first is that space is vast and three dimensional. Characters may need to supplement their hyperflight with knowledge skill areas in astronomy, astrophysics, and navigation (astrogation). Consider next the amount of time that it takes to travel from place to place even at the speed of light. Lastly, while hyperflight is assumed to have inherent personal protections, when not traveling at warp speeds, this power affords no protections or defenses from harmful effects of the environments one may find oneself in should they stop to ask for directions.

LIFE SUPPORT

As described in the book, Life Support is defined as a 'space suit'. GMs at their option may use this power and should not feel obligated to specify suit, rather the spirit of the power is what is important. While Adaptation is geared toward hostile environments, high pressure, extreme temperatures and the like, Life Support is more description of whether the character's life functions can be maintained in a certain condition unto itself. Specifically, the GM should focus on basic questions such as whether it is necessary to breathe at all, or eat and drink to consume nutrients, or the excretion of waste or bodily fluids to cleanse the body. Does the character age at the same rate as others?

ELEMENTAL APPLICATIONS: CHEMICAL, LIGHT, FLAME, ICE, 'LIGHTNING', AND MAGNETIC POWERS

While these powers would suffer in some situations and most have limited use in the vacuum of space, their inherent defenses and utility would be applicable to many of the rigors of a space campaign. Also, these powers may be great for sudden needs for illumination or power on derelict ships and other places void of energy sources. A character may find themselves in the company of beings on a world without much in the way of resources where they might be regarded as a valued commodity and even in some cases, role play might suggest the character's powers are a thing to be controlled or obtained, or even enslaved by those who desire their services. Of course, the hero could also be elevated to public hero for the same reasons.

“WILDCARD” POWERS

There are a gamut of other powers listed in the rulebook that could be expanded on to suitably fit to the campaign, especially the “wildcard” type powers of Body Power, Mutant Power, Psionics, and Special Weapon. Generally speaking, any powers that allow the GM and the player to negotiate a special effect and adapt to the campaign’s development are one of the strengths of the game that make it ideal to play at the cosmic level.

THE KITCHEN SINK

GMs should remember that the cosmic setting is like telling the stories from a thousand campaigns all at once. Earth is just one planet of so many more. It has billions of inhabitants, various civilizations and sub-cultures, and different available technologies and all the familiar trappings of home, but the GM will have to try to ensure the next world has nearly as much depth or, at least, the illusion thereof during the progressing story. The GM will need to be able to throw everything at the players, including the kitchen sink to accurately portray alien civilizations and far off locales. Nothing is off limits.

A good resource for the GM’s campaign is the adventure *From the Deeps of Space*, which contains many useful ideas for describing other worlds. Be prepared to answer any question the players may have and anticipate the need for description and context. Having said this, it should be noted that the GM should be able to have some minutiae ready if asked, but by the same token, should not get bogged down into too many of these details.

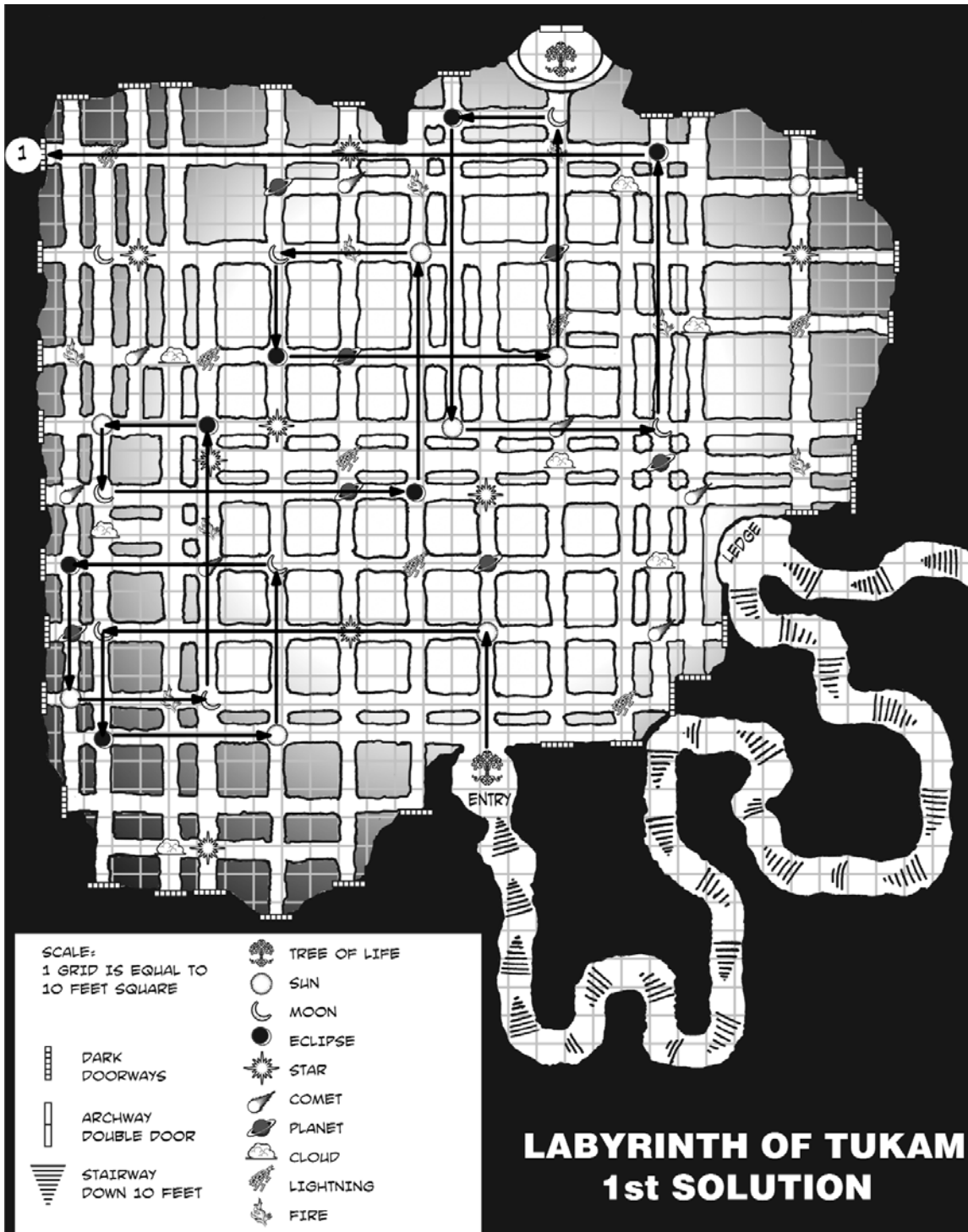
Keep the stories moving! Roleplaying the interaction and politics of a new world will be engaging to the players every bit as much as powers and technologies. Let characters explore and maybe even set up a new life amongst the stars, even if the intention may be to someday return home.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHOM I GOT TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE IN SUPERHERO RPGS:

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 Robert Lolmaugh, Midnight Man
 Mike Watson, aka Moosekind
 Mike Pietan, aka Sundown
 Pat Cottrell, aka Psyclone
 Dave Strunk, aka Blackout
 Kelley Spooner, aka Ramsteel
 Brian Heugel (RIP), aka FENRIS
 Brett Anderson, aka the one true Diamond
 Will Tubbs, aka Knightlion
 Jack Frazier, aka the Sphinx
 Greg Olson, aka Morph
 Jodi Thomas, aka Aviaris
 Nikki Sands, aka Arrow
 Bob Varga, aka Pitbull, “I can smell what religion they are...”
 Roy Ruch, aka the Ferret
 Rick Robinson, aka Afterburner
 Randy Mitchell, aka Modi, “Verily, I shall smite thee!”
 Dan Miles, aka Fate
 Dave Disspain, aka DRAKE
 Ken Bond, aka Starflare
 Joe Kobert, aka War Eagle
 Rob Libberton, aka Blacklight
 Steve Racette, aka Glacier, “I’ll grow...”
 Danny Lipsey, aka Crossfire, “Holy Crap! They’re all mech-agents!”
 Clyde Beeles, aka Styng
 Gary Stark, aka Icestorm
 Sean Romans, aka the Monolith
 Tom Filiaggi, aka Cerulean Star, “Three men deep!”
 Bruce Hill, aka Godfather B
 Bruce Marx, aka Thunderbank
 Mike Bishop (RIP), Iron Dynamo, “Rally to me, I shall not fall!”
 Rob Galas, aka Blackbody
 JP Thomas, aka Xeon
 Ben Kern, aka Burnmaster
 Ralph Leal (RIP), aka Nightwish
 Charlette Bishop, aka Auracle
 and
 many, many more along the way.

APPENDIX I: LABYRINTH SOLUTIONS

FIRST SOLUTION



SECOND SOLUTION

SCALE:
1 GRID IS EQUAL TO
10 FEET SQUARE

	DARK DOORWAYS		TREE OF LIFE
	ARCHWAY		SUN
	DOUBLE DOOR		MOON
	STAIRWAY DOWN 10 FEET		ECLIPSE
			STAR
			COMET
			PLANET
			CLOUD
			LIGHTNING
			FIRE

Labyrinth of Tukam
2nd SOLUTION

THIRD SOLUTION

SCALE:
1 GRID IS EQUAL TO
10 FEET SQUARE

	DARK DOORWAYS		TREE OF LIFE
	ARCHWAY DOUBLE DOOR		SUN
	STAIRWAY DOWN 10 FEET		MOON
			ECLIPSE
			STAR
			COMET
			PLANET
			CLOUD
			LIGHTNING
			FIRE



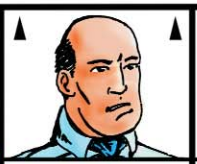



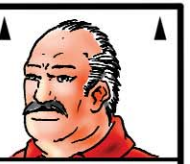









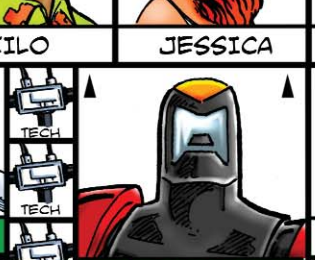

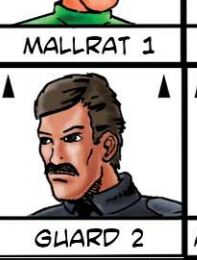
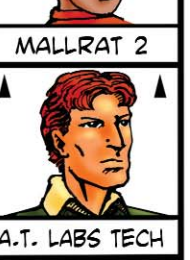





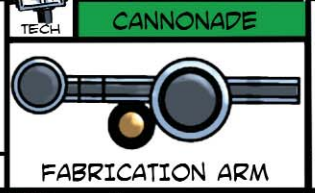
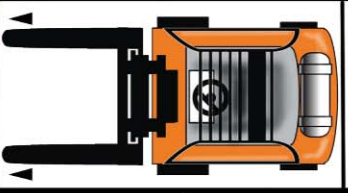










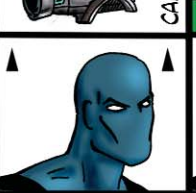
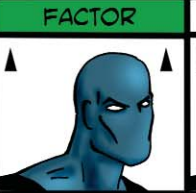
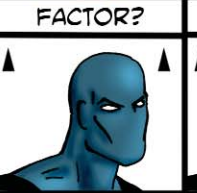



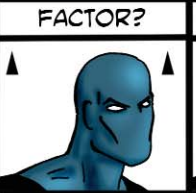
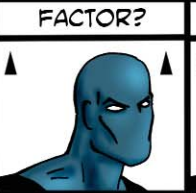
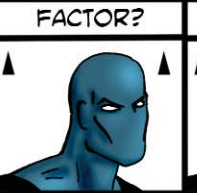




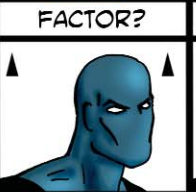
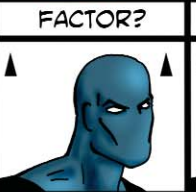
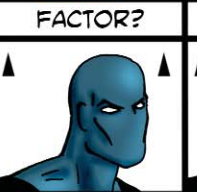
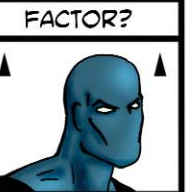



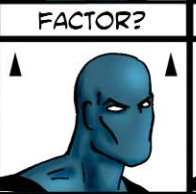
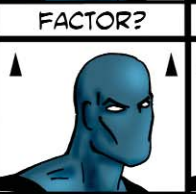
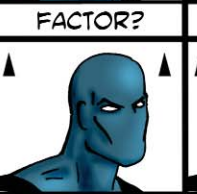

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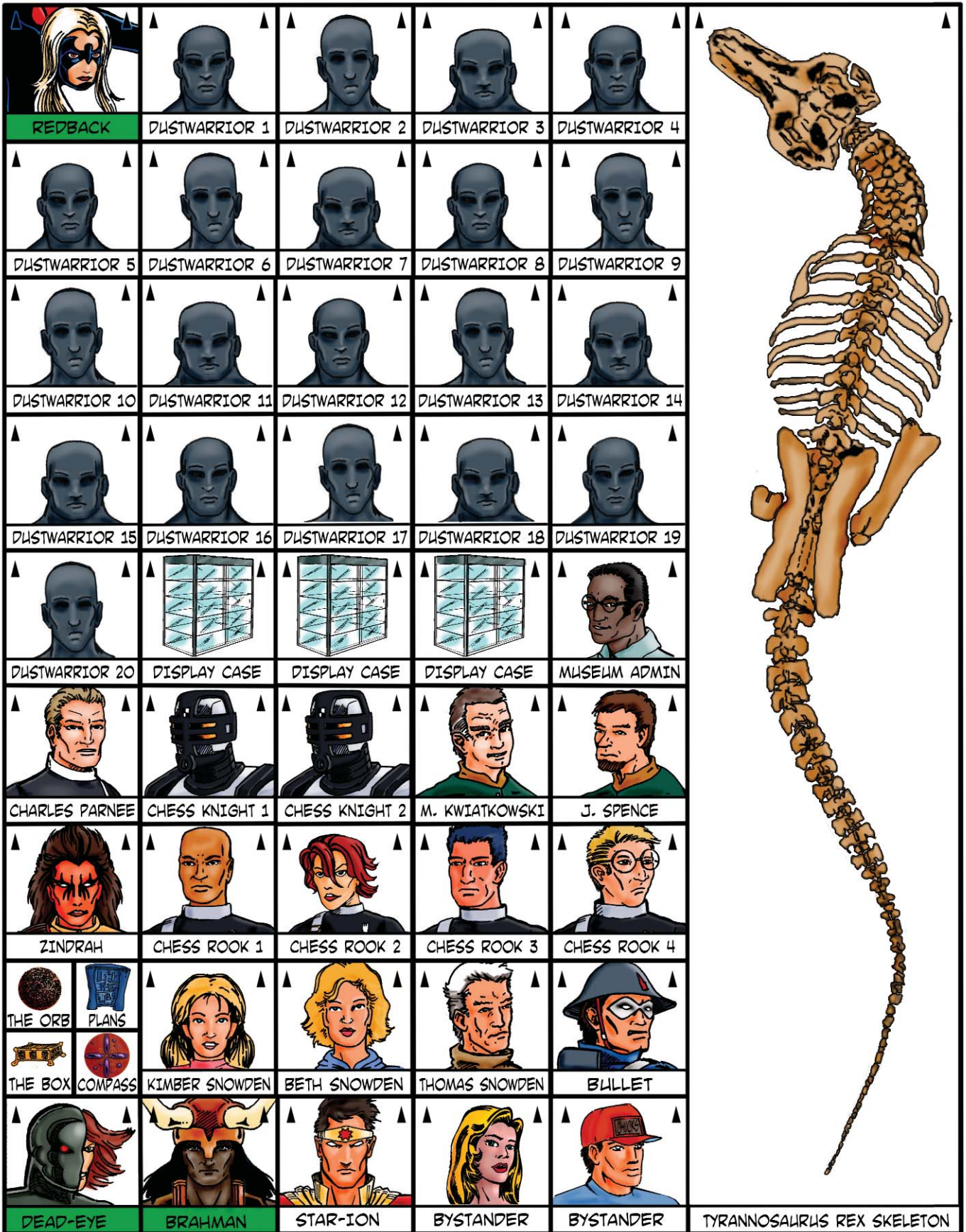
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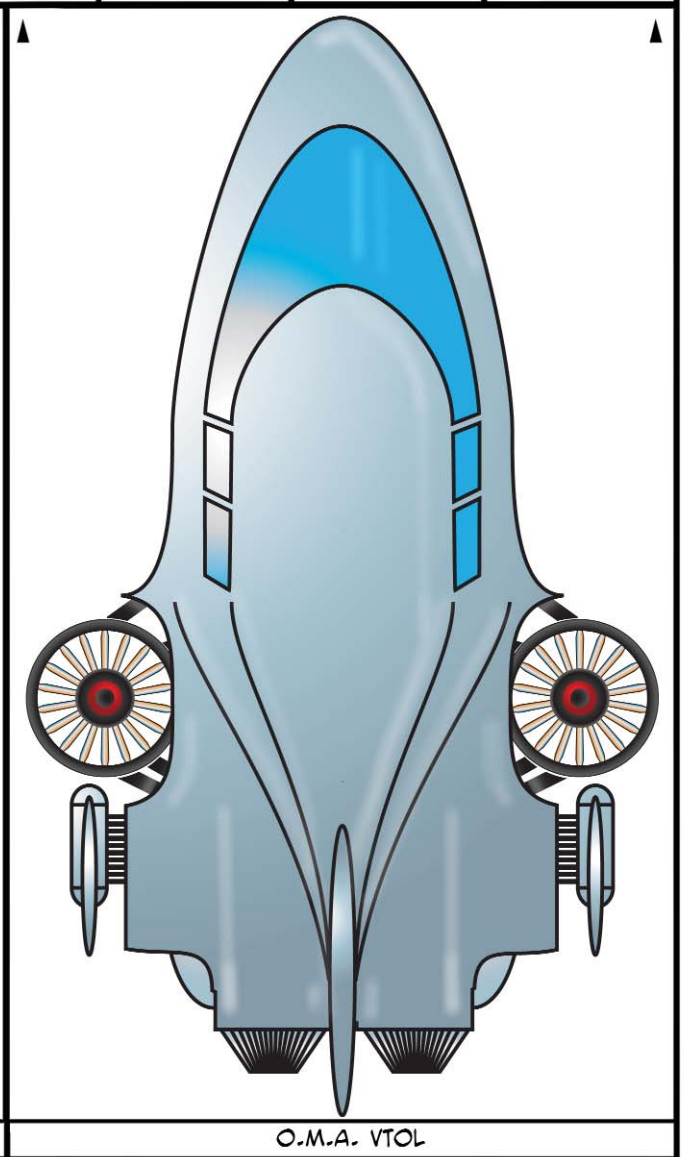
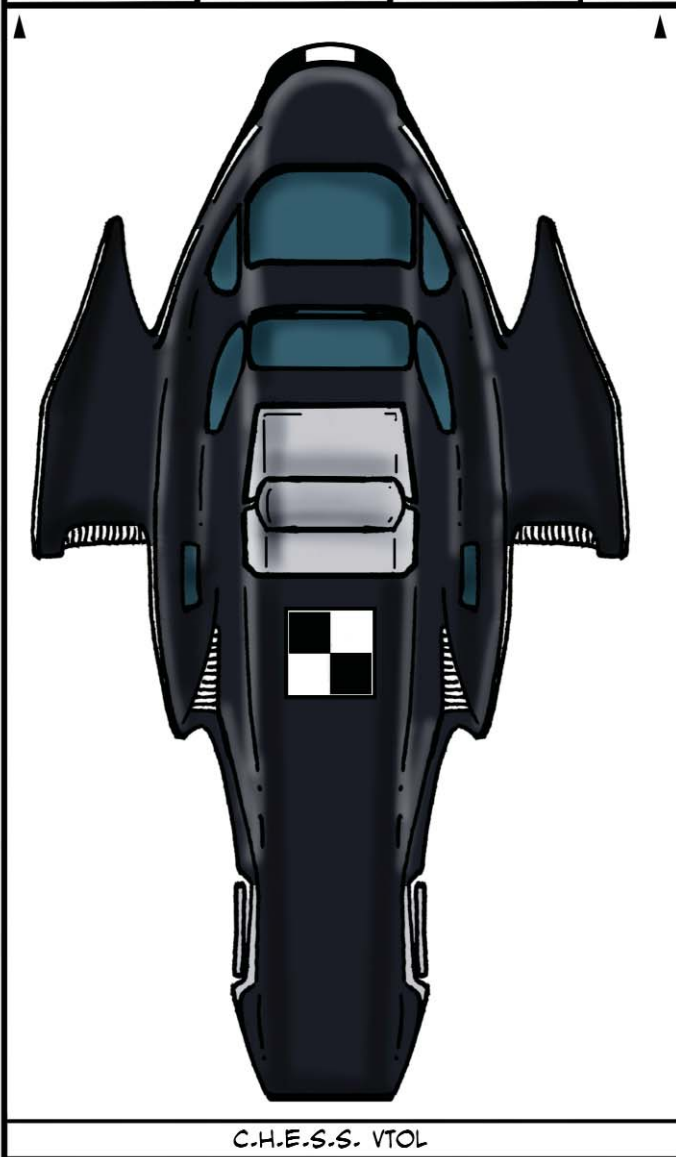
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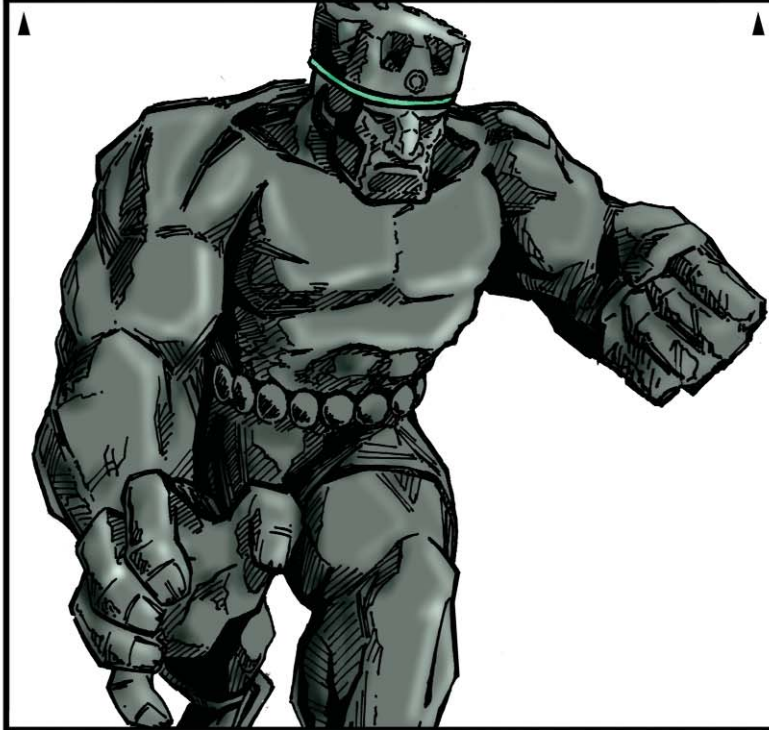
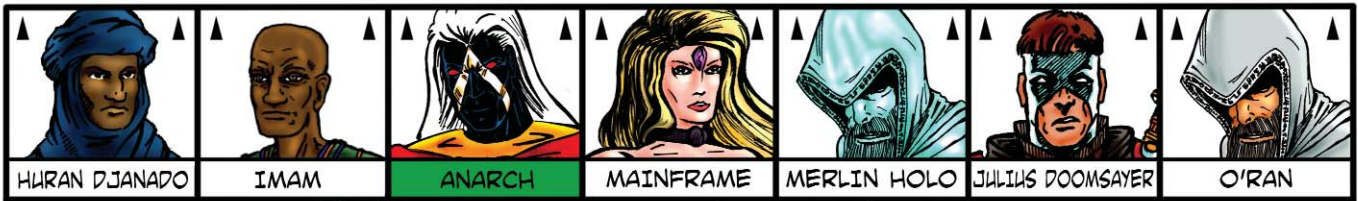
3

LABYRINTH OF TUKAM
3rd SOLUTION

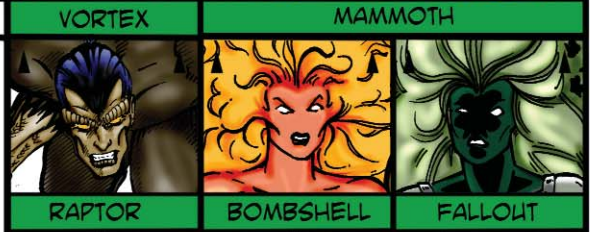
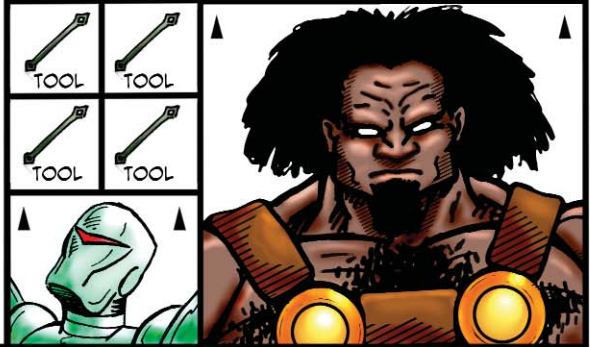
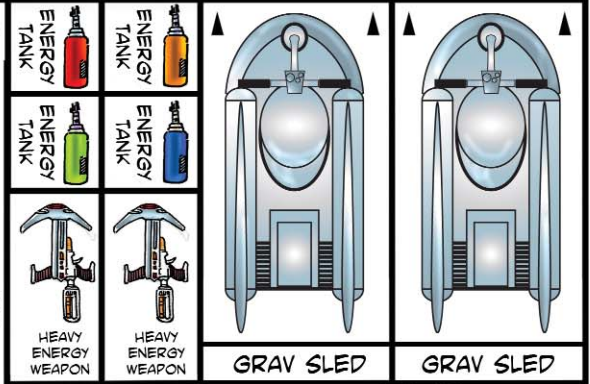
 ABE	 GRAV	 CUSTOMER 1	 CUSTOMER 2	 CUSTOMER 3	 CUSTOMER 4	 CUSTOMER 5
 CEDRICK WILFORD	 BENNY THE RIFLE	 KILO	 JESSICA	 JEANNETTE	 MALLRAT 1	 MALLRAT 2
 DEVASTATIA		 DEVASTATIA	 CANNADE	 GUARD 1	 GUARD 2	 A.T. LABS TECH
 MONEY BAG	 MONEY BAG	 MONEY BAG	 MONEY BAG	 REPORTER 1	 FABRICATION ARM	 FORKLIFT
 REPORTER 2	 CAMERAMAN 1	 CAMERAMAN 2	 CAMERA	 FACTOR	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?
 CARGO PALLET	 CARGO PALLET	 CARGO PALLET	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?
 CARGO PALLET	 CARGO PALLET	 CARGO PALLET	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?
 CARGO PALLET	 CARGO PALLET	 CARGO PALLET	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?	 FACTOR?
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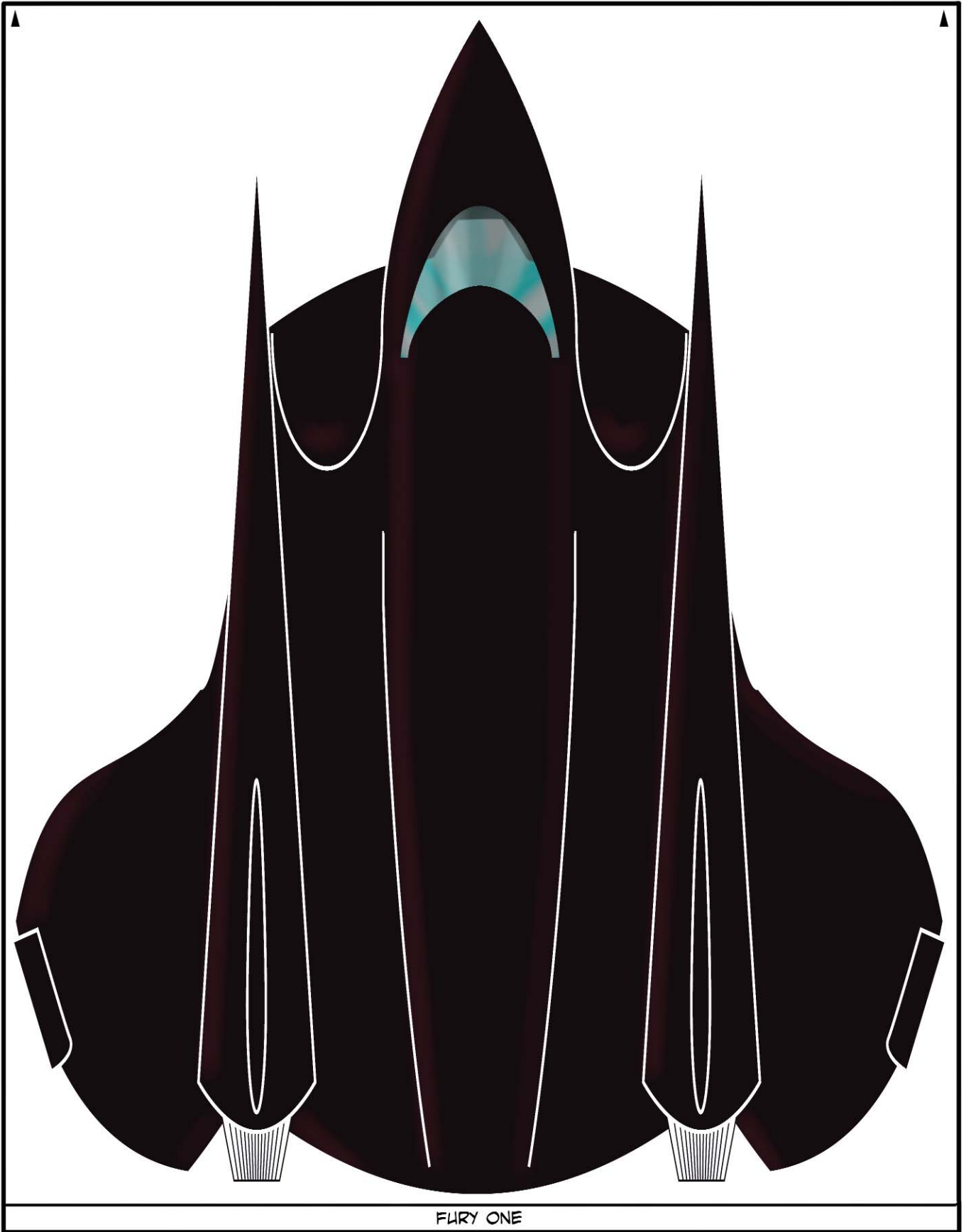




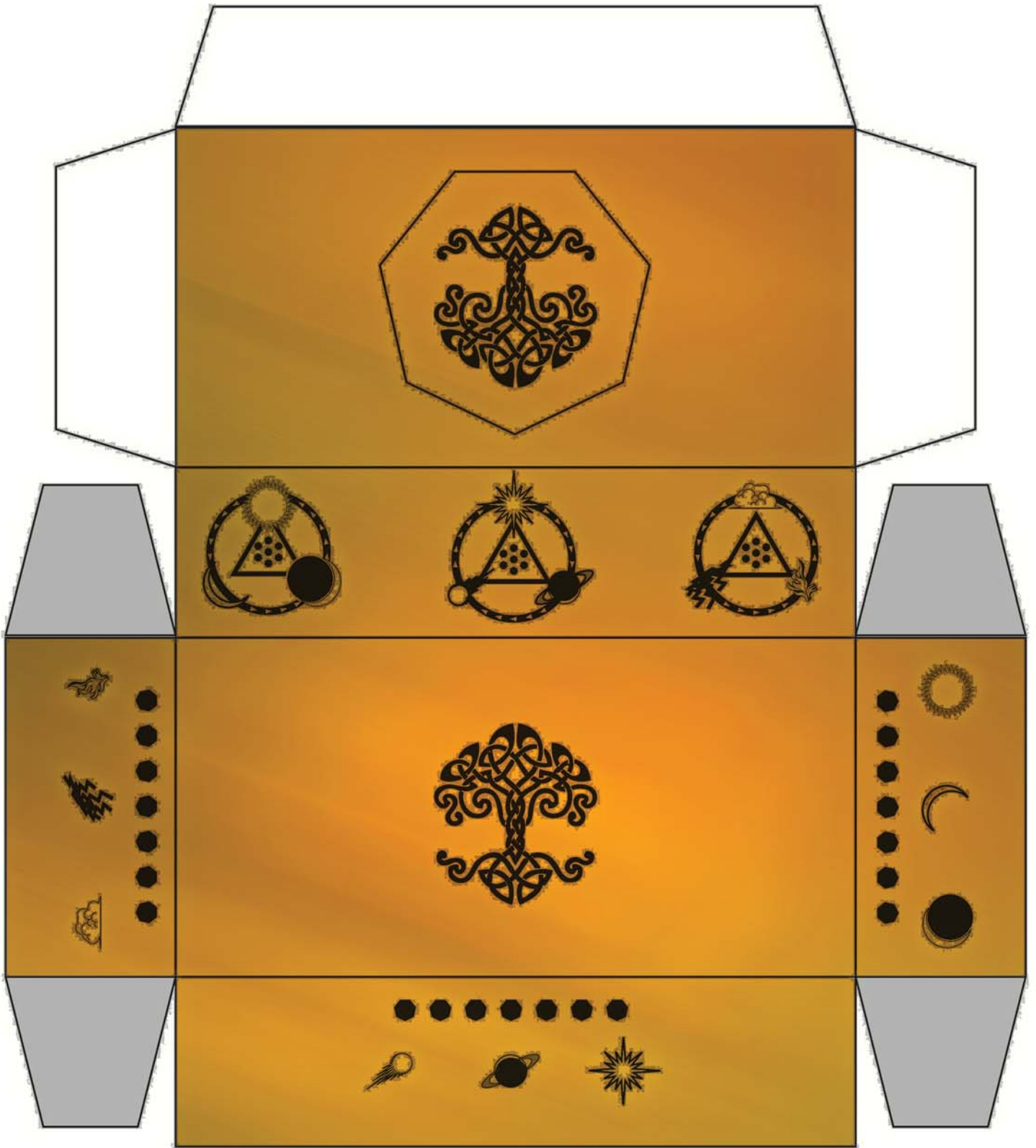


STONE GUARDIAN

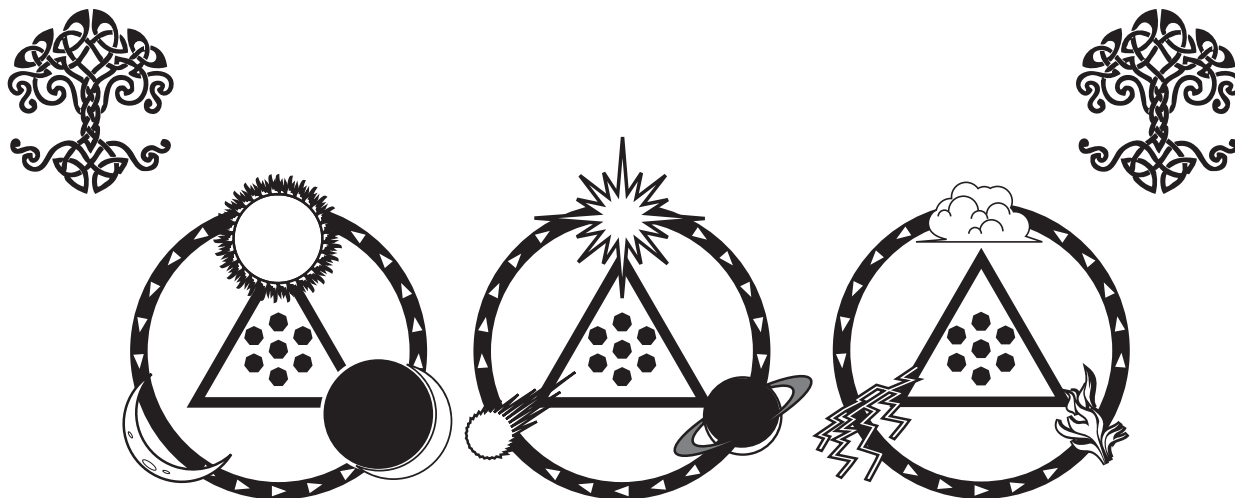




FLRY ONE



APPENDIX II: BOX ASSEMBLY



1. Crease paper and fold on all black lines.
Symbols should be on outside of box.
2. Fold gray tabs inward to ensure they will fold inside the box volume.
3. Place a very small drop of glue on the outside of the gray tabs and fold sides inward.
Make the gray tabs contact with the box sides.
This should hold the box to shape. Remember, THE SYMBOLS SHOULD BE ON THE OUTSIDE.
4. The top of the box and remaining tabs should also fold into the box and may be glued optionally.

