



For 4 - 6 Characters Generated Using 2,000 - 4,000 Hero Points 211

HEROES

ROLE
PLAYING
MODULE

Darkseid™

FOUR HORSEMEN OF

Apokolips



By Troy Denning

ACTION TABLE

Opposing Value Columns

Acting Value Rows	1 to 2		3 to 4		5 to 6		7 to 8		9 to 10		11 to 12		13 to 15		16 to 18		19 to 21		22 to 24		25 to 27		28 to 30		31 to 35		36 to 40		41 to 45		46 to 50		51 to 55		56 to 60		61 to 65		66 to 70		71 to 75		76 to 80		81 to 85		86 to 90		91 to 95		96 to 100		101 to 105		106 to 110		111 to 115		116 to 120		+5																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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+5: One Column Shift for each +5.

C: Cancel. Each +5 row cancels one +5 column.

The Four Horsemen of *Apokolips*

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How to Use This Book

This book is divided into three sections: GM's Introduction, Characters, and Encounters. In any of these sections, text in *italics* is to be read to the players. Any boldface text within these italicised sections are "stage directions" intended to help the Gamemaster with role-playing that character.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The Gamemaster's Introduction provides the Gamemaster with the background needed to run the adventure.

Characters

This section contains information about the major characters, both Player and Non-Player, involved in the adventure. Heroes and villains which appear in the Gamemaster's Manual have the same basic abilities as given in the Gamemaster's Manual except where noted.

Encounters

The DC Heroes Role-Playing system is based on encounters. That is, the players go from situation to situation instead of location to location, as in other role-playing games. Each encounter is broken up into at least three sections: Setup, Players Information, and GM Informa-

tion. Sometimes there will also be Troubleshooting, Rules sections, and/or Sidebars to help the GM run the game.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Attribute Point
AURA	Aura Attribute
AV	Acting Value
BODY	Body Attribute
DEX	Dexterity Attribute
EV	Effect Value
GM	Gamemaster
INFL	Influence Attribute
INT	Intelligence Attribute
MIND	Mind Attribute
NA	Not Applicable
NPC	Non-Player Character
OV	Opposing Value
RAP	Result Attribute Point
RV	Resistance Value
SPIRIT	Spirit Attribute
STR	Strength Attribute
WILL	Willpower Attribute

Four Horsemen of Apokolips

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Gamemaster's Background

Darkseid, Lord of Apokolips, in his search for the ultimate power, has discovered that the key to that power, the Anti-Life Equation, is somewhere on Earth. In his past invasions of Earth he has found himself and his agents thwarted time and again by the Forever People and New Gods of New Genesis and the Heroes of Earth.

He has not given up. This time he intends to invade Earth with greater subtlety than he has used before. This time he will keep his involvement to a minimum and work with new and unwitting agents who are totally unaware of his manipulation of them.

Through these agents, Darkseid will destroy the peoples of the Earth then transform the remains into the image of Apokolips where he can search for the Anti-Life Equation at his leisure.

The Plan

Using a good deal of his powers, Darkseid created a large black book and chose four corrupt individuals in different parts of the world to possess this book in succession. As each individual opens this book, he will be transformed into one of the Avatars of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: War, Famine, Pestilence, and Death. Each of these Avatars will be invested with powers appropriate to his new identity.

Darkseid teleports the book into the library of Libyan Colonel Idris Ashid. Ashid opens the book, is transformed into the personification of War, and quickly overthrows the government of Muammar al-Qaddafi. Ashid then uses the Book to construct a secret desert castle and teleport the leaders of six nations into its dungeon. He has chosen these leaders carefully; they are presidents and prime ministers of nations already on the brink of war with each other.

Ashid then contacts an infamous merchant, Abdul Aziz, and arranges for him to misdirect investigations into the leaders' disappearances. Abdul is a dedicated occultist, however, and once he learns of the existence of a "Book of Power," he covets it for himself. Abdul may be the weak link in Colonel Ashid's plan—a link the player characters may be able to exploit to stop WW III.

Win or lose with Colonel Ashid, Darkseid then teleports to the apartment of a corrupt Chinese bureaucrat, Ling Tse. When Ling opens the Book, he is transformed into the personification of Famine. Ling quickly visits the ailing Chairman Hu Yaobank and arranges to be appointed the Minister of Agriculture. Ling then uses his powers to cause a series of "natural" disasters that will destroy China's food supply, and he uses his authority as Minister of Agriculture to sidetrack relief efforts. Ling has not properly accounted for the jealousy of President Li Xiannian, however. If the PCs do not find Ling themselves, Xiannian may lead them to their target.

After Ling, Darkseid teleports to Panama, specifically the laboratory of Professor Ricardo Mendez, biochemist and deranged scientist. When Mendez opens the Book, he is transformed into the personification of Pestilence. As Pestilence, he quickly finishes research on the Black Virus

and experiments on a nearby village. Unfortunately for Mendez, news of the experiment so shocks President Nicholas Ardito-Barletta that he reveals the location of Mendez' secret laboratory to the player characters. If they act swiftly, they may stop Mendez before he releases his virus on the world.

Darkseid's last stop is Joseph Richard "JR" Richardson III, president of A1 Defense Systems, near Denver, Colorado. When JR opens the Book, he is transformed into the personification of Death. Anticipating a need for gadgetry at this point, Darkseid has planted DeSaad in Richardson's laboratory several weeks ago. DeSaad helps the avatar Death finish work on two top secret weapons, the Megatank and the Doomsday Bomb. Of course, with DeSaad's help these weapons take on an even more lethal character. JR then hires a small army of "workers," brainwashes them into an army, and begins his campaign of destruction.

Timeline

Use the timeline below as a guide to determining Darkseid's location and what he is trying to accomplish at any given time. Because his plan depends upon speed and surprise, he will accelerate this timeline if things are going badly in one part of it.

- Day One:** Create War. Kidnap leaders of U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Israel, Syria, South Africa, and Botswana. Allow tension to build between nations.
- Day Two:** Execute leaders, surviving leaders threaten to start World War III.
- Day Three:** Create Famine. Destroy food supply in China.
- Day Four:** Create Pestilence. Complete work on Black Virus and begin spreading it.
- Day Five:** Create Death. Complete work on Megatank, the Motivator (brainwashing machine), and Doomsday Bomb.
- Day Six:** Unleash Death's army and Megatank on world.
- Day Seven:** After Earth's domination is complete: Begin construction of new Tower of Rage in Antarctica. Search for Anti-Life Equation.

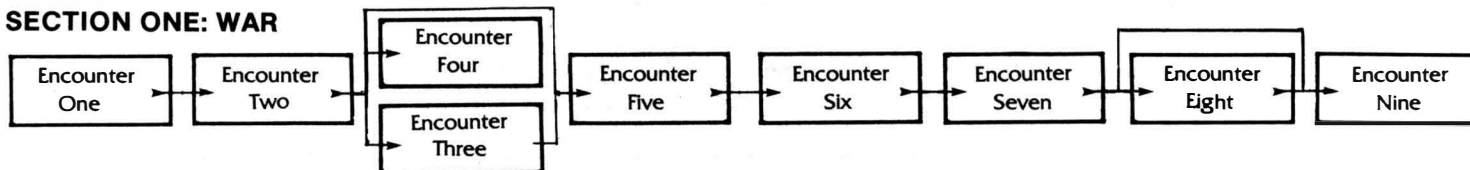
Rollcall

This high-level adventure is designed with these characters in mind: Wonder Woman, Green Lantern (Hal Jordan), Green Arrow, Hawkman, Batman, and Martian Manhunter.

Feel free to use other characters if you wish, but it may prove necessary to alter the statistics of the villains slightly to ensure proper play balance.

Encounter Flow Chart

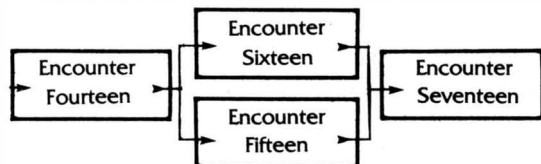
SECTION ONE: WAR



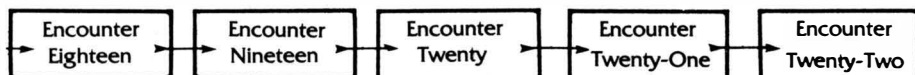
SECTION TWO: FAMINE



SECTION THREE: PESTILENCE



SECTION FOUR: DEATH



New Power: Continuum Control

LINK:..... **WILL**
 RANGE: **NORMAL**
 TYPE:..... **AUTOMATIC**
 BASE COST: **175**

Continuum Control allows a character to tinker with the nature of matter and have some control over the space/time continuum.

As it is an Automatic power, the APs of the power are the RAPs. The RAPs of Continuum Control are the APs of the Power that is mimicked. Continuum Control may be used as one or more of these Powers: Bio-Energy Blast, Damage Transference, Matter Manipulation, Regathering, Regeneration, Time Travel, Teleportation, or Transformation.

It is important to note these two points:

1) Use of Continuum Control takes a phase. A character must use Continuum Control for a phase, and then mimic a Power in the next phase with the RAPs of Continuum Control.

2) Because of the amount of control of the space/time continuum that Continuum Control allows, a character using that Power may violate the 3 actions per phase rule. That is, a character may take his 3 actions, and perform more actions as long as all of the excess actions use the RAPs of Continuum Control to mimic Powers. Thus, a character with Continuum Control could use Bio-Energy Blast, Damage Transference, Matter Manipulation, Regathering, Regeneration, Time Travel, Teleportation and Transformation ALL in the same phase.

The RAPs of Continuum Control are used as the APs of the mimicked Powers. They are distributed as the Player wishes as long as the total APs of all Powers mimicked in a phase does not exceed the RAPs of Continuum Control. For example, a character with 10 APs of Continuum Control could have a Bio-Energy Blast of 6 APs and a Telepor-

tation of 4 APs in the same phase.

The Powers mimicked by Continuum Control function as indicated below.

● **Bio-Energy Blast:** As described in Powers and Skills.

SPECIAL NOTE: If a character combines Teleportation and Bio-Energy Blast on the same target, he will be entering Killing Combat. In this case the target is attacked by the Bio-Energy Blast and (if there are RAPs) the target's molecules are blasted over a distance equal to the range of the Teleportation (assuming the Teleportation was successful). If a character has his current BODY reduced to below 0 in this way, then he is certain to die. If the target character has the Invulnerability power, it is useless as the target's atoms are scattered in space. Recovery Rolls are not allowed, so the character loses BODY until he is dead. The Regathering Power (see below) may be used to regather the scattered atoms of a character who has been Bio-Energy Blasted and Teleported into oblivion.

● **Damage Transference:** As described in Powers and Skills.

● **Matter Manipulation:** As described in Powers and Skills.

● **Regathering:** This allows a character who has been scattered as described in Bio-Energy Blast above to be 'regrouped.' The Opposing Value is the Range APs of the Teleportation, which scattered his atoms when his current BODY was reduced below 0 by the Bio-Energy Blast. The Resistance Value is the BODY of the character being regathered. If there are any Positive RAPs, the action is successful.

● **Regeneration:** As described in Powers and Skills.

● **Teleportation:** As described in Powers and Skills with the following exceptions: The Range of the Teleportation is Normal rather than +7 and the character may

Teleport any character within Range, not just those within ten feet of him.

- Time Travel:** There are two distinct aspects of the use of Time Travel: going forward into the future and going back into the past.

If the target is sent into the future he may take all the actions his character would normally take. The Opposing Value is the INT of the Target and the Resistance Value is the BODY. The RAPs are the APs of time which the target character is sent ahead into time.

When going backward in time, the target's body is considered to be thrown into limbo and his mind is left to observe. The target becomes a phantom that can only observe events and not affect or alter them. The Opposing Value is the INT of the Target, and the Resistance Value is the MIND. The RAPs are the APs of time

that the target character is sent back in time.

In either case, the target has to be brought back by the attacking character or he has to fight the actual Acting and Effect Values of Time Travel (the APs of the Power plus the Hero Points used) with his INT and WILL. The actual Acting and Effect Values are used as the Opposing and Resistance Values in this case.

If a character wants to send himself into the past or future, the Opposing Value is 0 and the Resistance Value is the BODY if the Character is going into the future or the MIND if the Character is going into the past.

- Transformation:** Works in the same manner as Matter Manipulation, except that it also works on living creatures and organic materials.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Abdul Azis

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	3
INT:	2	WILL:	3	MIND:	3
INFL:	3	AURA:	3	SPIRIT:	3
INITIATIVE:	7	HERO POINTS:	5		

SKILLS:

Detective: 12; Charisma: 10; Occultist: 8; Spy: 10; Thief: 17

MOTIVATION: Power Lust

WEALTH: Multimillionaire

JOB: Information Broker

RACE: Human

Abdul is an information-broker with a secret desire to rule the world. Unfortunately, he is too much of a coward to make any serious attempt. Instead, he is looking for a magic way to acquire the power he craves, such as the Book of Power. He uses his private 727 jet to travel the world in pursuit of the Book of Power and for any other business.

Abdul is a short, wiry man with darting eyes who often glances over his shoulder.



Joseph Richard Richardson III

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	3	WILL:	3	MIND:	3
INFL:	2	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	7	HERO POINTS:	5		

SKILLS:

Detective: 5; Military Science: 3; Charisma: 8

MOTIVATION: Greed

WEALTH: Millionaire

JOB: Company President

RACE: Human

Joseph Richard "J.R." Richardson III owns A1 Defense Systems. He tries not to let his greed get in the way of sound business practices.

He speaks in a smooth, self-assured manner. Perceptive characters often notice a gleam in his eye when the subject of money comes up (Perception Check OV/RV:2). He wears expensive hand-tailored three-piece suits.

Standard Soldier (any nation)

DEX:	2	STR:	3	BODY:	2
INT:	2	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	6	HERO POINTS:	5		

SKILLS:

Medicine/First Aid: 2; Vehicles/Land: 2; Weaponry/Firearms, Heavy Weapons: 2

Unless stated otherwise, standard soldiers are armed with automatic rifles.

Automatic Rifle

AV: 4, EV: 6, RANGE: 0-5 / 6-7 / 8

General Rauch

DEX:	2	STR:	3	BODY:	3
INT:	3	WILL:	3	MIND:	3
INFL:	1	AURA:	1	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	6	HERO POINTS:	5		

SKILLS:

Charisma: 10; Detective: 5; Martial Artist: 5; Military Science: 12; Spy: 5

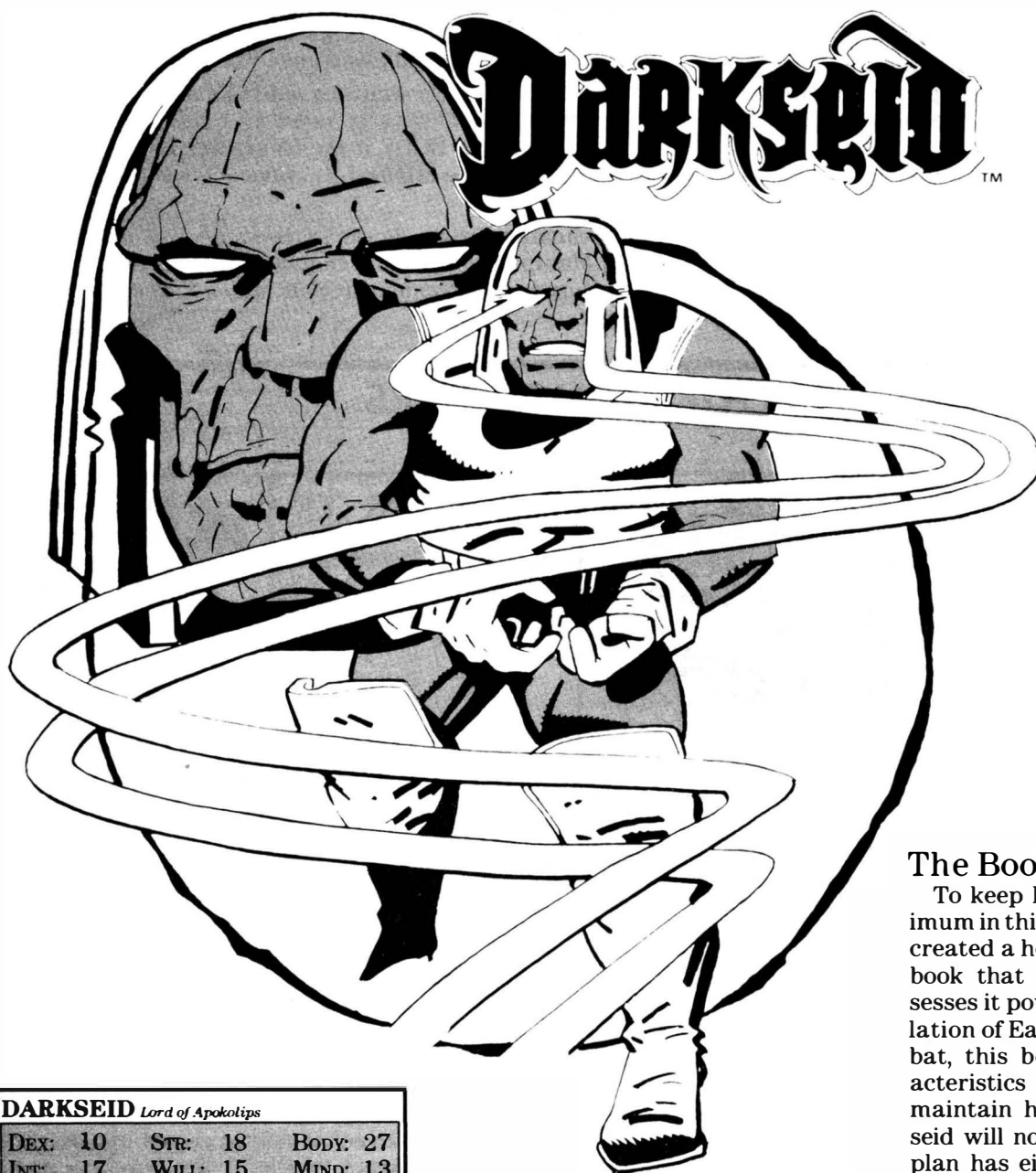
MOTIVATION: Seeks Justice

WEALTH: Comfortable

JOB: Intelligence Officer, high level

RACE: Human

General Rauch is a high-ranking intelligence officer in the U.S. Army. Although he generally tries to avoid dealing with any heroes, he will ask for their aid when he recognizes a job that is too tough for him. He functions as a high-level contact for the player characters with any branch of the U.S. government and with all intelligence organizations throughout the free world.



DARKSEID <i>Lord of Apokolips</i>		
DEX: 10	STR: 18	BODY: 27
INT: 17	WILL: 15	MIND: 13
INFL: 12	AURA: 20	SPIRIT: 18
INITIATIVE: 39	HERO PTS: 180	

POWERS:

Bio-Energy Blast: 20; Continuum Control: 60 (see power description on page 4).

SKILLS:

Charisma: 15

MOTIVATION: Power Lust

WEALTH: N/A

JOB: Ruler of Apokolips

RACE: Humanoid

When the world of the Old Gods was destroyed in the holocaust ages ago, two new worlds were formed from the ashes. The darker of the two

is Apokolips, where Darkseid reigns supreme. At his bidding are the machines, creatures and beings of the world. His creed is one of destruction and total dominance. To help him towards this end, he is in search of the mysterious Anti-Life Equation, which in the past has taken him to Earth.

Special Note: Darkseid's description in the Gamemaster's Book (page 82) does not list the power of Continuum Control. Continuum Control is described in this book on page 4.

The Book of Power

To keep his involvement to a minimum in this adventure, Darkseid has created a heavy, leather-bound black book that will give whomever possesses it powers to destroy the population of Earth. For purposes of combat, this book has the same characteristics as Darkseid. In order to maintain his cover, however, Darkseid will not reveal himself until his plan has either succeeded or failed. Instead, Darkseid discourages player characters from taking it by having the book automatically teleport to the next Avatar when it is touched. Before it vanishes, it attacks the hands of whomever grabs it with an equivalent of 6 APs of Heat Vision.

DeSaad, one of Darkseid's minions, has manufactured a powerful gadget called the Enhancer that gives the book the ability to bestow certain powers on those who open it (see Avatar descriptions below). The Enhancer allows the book to bestow up to 120 APs in various powers upon the Avatars. As the Enhancer is actually a part of the book, it is not listed as a gadget.

DeSaad™



DESAAD *minion of Darkseid*

DEX: 4	STR: 3	BODY: 5
INT: 15	WILL: 12	MIND: 20
INFL: 4	AURA: 6	SPIRIT: 5
INITIATIVE: 23	HERO POINTS: 15	

SKILLS:

Gadgetry: 25; Scientist: 25

DeSaad is Darkseid's right hand man. A scientist and inventor, he specializes in the creation of devices used for torturing and slowly killing his victims. He builds weapons and technological devices for Darkseid's use, and is the creator and operator of the Motivator.

EQUIPMENT

MEGATANK

DEX: 8	STR: 19	BODY: 19
USES: 4	DURATION: 21	
POWERS: Starbolt: 20; Cell Rot: 20; Mind Blast: 20; Poison Touch (gas): 20; Sonic Blast: 25; Heat Vision (Lasers): 7; Energy Absorption: 30; Sealed Systems: 20.		

KILLING GLOVES

DEX: 17	STR: 15	BODY: 15
USES: 10	DURATION: 20	
POWERS: Starbolt: 13		

DOOMSDAY BOMB

DEX: 0	STR: 25	BODY: 25
USES: 1	DURATION: 1	
Explosion of 76 when it pierces Earth's mantle.		

MOTIVATOR *Brainwashing Machine*

DEX: 0	STR: 0	BODY: 3
USES: 18	DURATION: 25	
INITIATIVE: Always wins Initiative is victim is seated in booth. Motivator recharges instantly after uses are completed.		
POWERS: Phobia: 12 — Instills Phobia of displeasing Darkseid.		

The Four Horsemen of Apokolips

DEATH formerly J.R. Richardson III

DEX: 12	STR: 12	BODY: 27
INT: 13	WILL: 13	MIND: 14
INFL: 14	AURA: 14	SPIRIT: 14
INITIATIVE: 39	HERO PTS: 150	

POWERS:

Bio-Energy Blast: 20; Skin Armor: 20;
Cell Rot: 20; Flame Control: 20; Spirit-
ual Drain: 20; Magical Blast: 20

MOTIVATION: Controlled by Darkseid

WEALTH: N/A

RACE: Humanoid

When he opens the Book of Power, greedy industrialist J.R. Richardson becomes the embodiment of Death. Like death itself, he can attack with a wide variety of weapons, and his only goal is to employ his powers as effi-

ciently as possible. He can kill directly by using his Bio-Energy Blast, starve whole nations into oblivion by using Cell Rot to destroy food stores, or use Spiritual Drain to suck away his victim's will to live.

In combat, Death switches from tactic to tactic, trying to keep his foe off-balance by constantly attacking with the unexpected. He spends Hero Points to increase his Acting and Effect Values and to absorb damage whenever possible, using the Last Ditch Defense rules.

Death is a tall, gaunt man who wears a black robe. He speaks with a booming, commanding voice.

Death loses all of his powers once he no longer possesses the book of Power.



FAMINE formerly Ling Tse

DEX: 9	STR: 10	BODY: 13
INT: 13	WILL: 19	MIND: 11
INFL: 8	AURA: 6	SPIRIT: 5
INITIATIVE: 30	HERO PTS: 130	

POWERS:

Air Control: 20; Earth Control: 20;
Flame Control: 20; Cell Rot: 20; Water
Control: 20

MOTIVATION: Controlled by Darkseid

WEALTH: N/A

RACE: Humanoid

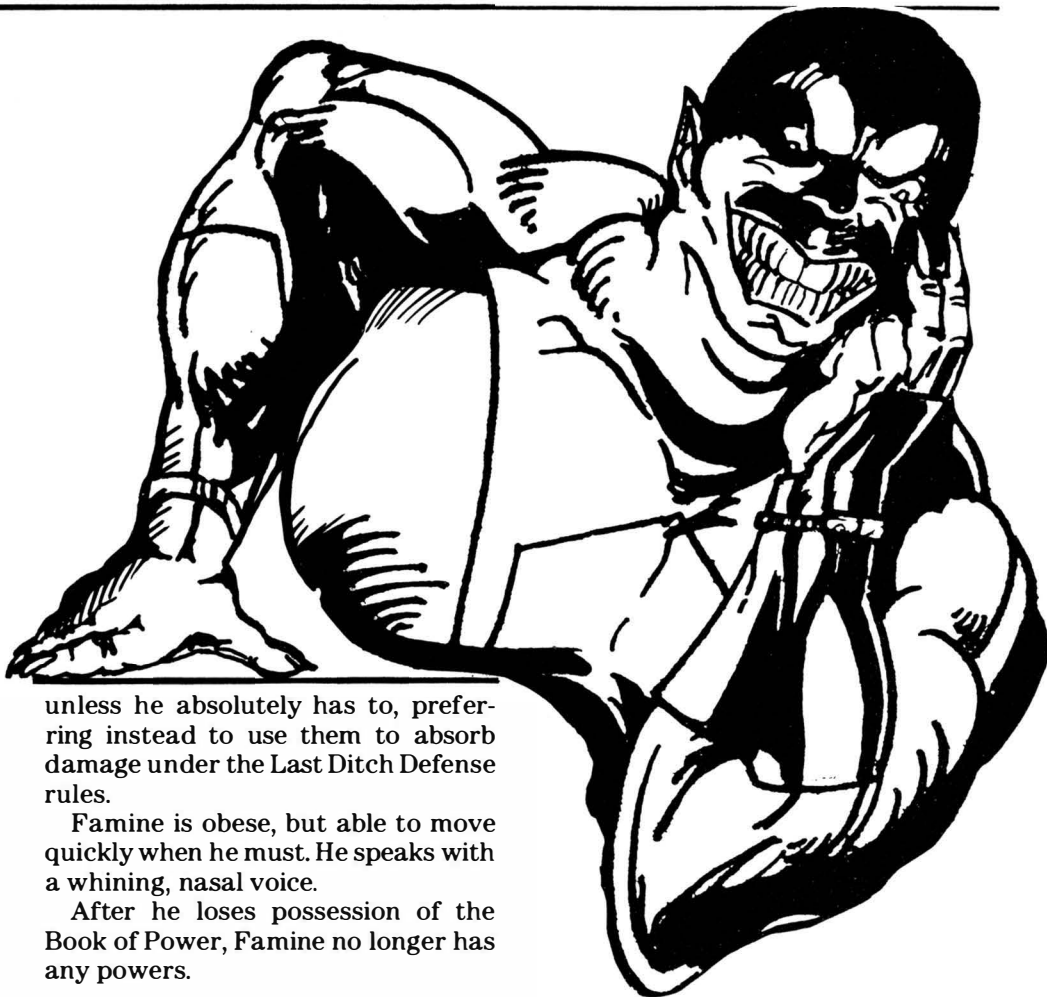
When he opens the Book of Power, corrupt Chinese bureaucrat Ling Tse is transformed into Famine. Famine believes he is motivated by greed; he wishes to destroy all of the food in Asia so that the supply he controls will give him all the power he desires. He prefers to work with subtlety, disguising his loathsome acts as natural disasters.

In combat, Famine tries to use his element control abilities in surprising and unique ways, such as using Earth Control to open a pit beneath his opponents and attempting to close the pit before they escape. He always tries to catch his opponent off-guard. He will not spend Hero Points to increase his Acting or Effect Values

unless he absolutely has to, preferring instead to use them to absorb damage under the Last Ditch Defense rules.

Famine is obese, but able to move quickly when he must. He speaks with a whining, nasal voice.

After he loses possession of the Book of Power, Famine no longer has any powers.



WAR, formerly Colonel Idris Ashid

DEX: 13	STR: 19	BODY: 14
INT: 9	WILL: 10	MIND: 10
INFL: 8	AURA: 6	SPIRIT: 5
INITIATIVE: 30	HERO PTS: 120	

POWERS:

Bomb: 20; Bio-Energy Blast: 20; Flash: 20; Skin Armor: 20

MOTIVATION: Controlled by Darkseid

WEALTH: N/A

RACE: Humanoid

When he opens the Book of Power, tyrant Colonel Idris Ashid is transformed into War. He desires nothing more than the beginning of World War III and will do anything he can to start it.

In combat, Ashid prefers to use Flash on unprepared opponents. On opponents prepared for Flash, he uses Bomb and/or Bio-Energy Blast. For the most part, his tactics are straightforward and deadly, although he is not above luring an opponent into an awkward situation if possible.

If not for his blood-red eyes, Ashid would resemble a normal Arab.

Ashid has his powers only as long as he possesses the Book of Power.

**PESTILENCE**, formerly Jose Mendez

DEX: 11	STR: 6	BODY: 15
INT: 6	WILL: 10	MIND: 11
INFL: 20	AURA: 19	SPIRIT: 20
INITIATIVE: 31	HERO PTS: 140	

POWERS:

Spiritual Drain: 20; Animal Summoning: 20; Vampirism: 20; Animal Control: 20; Voodoo: 20; Magic Blast: 20

MOTIVATION: Controlled by Darkseid

WEALTH: N/A

RACE: Humanoid

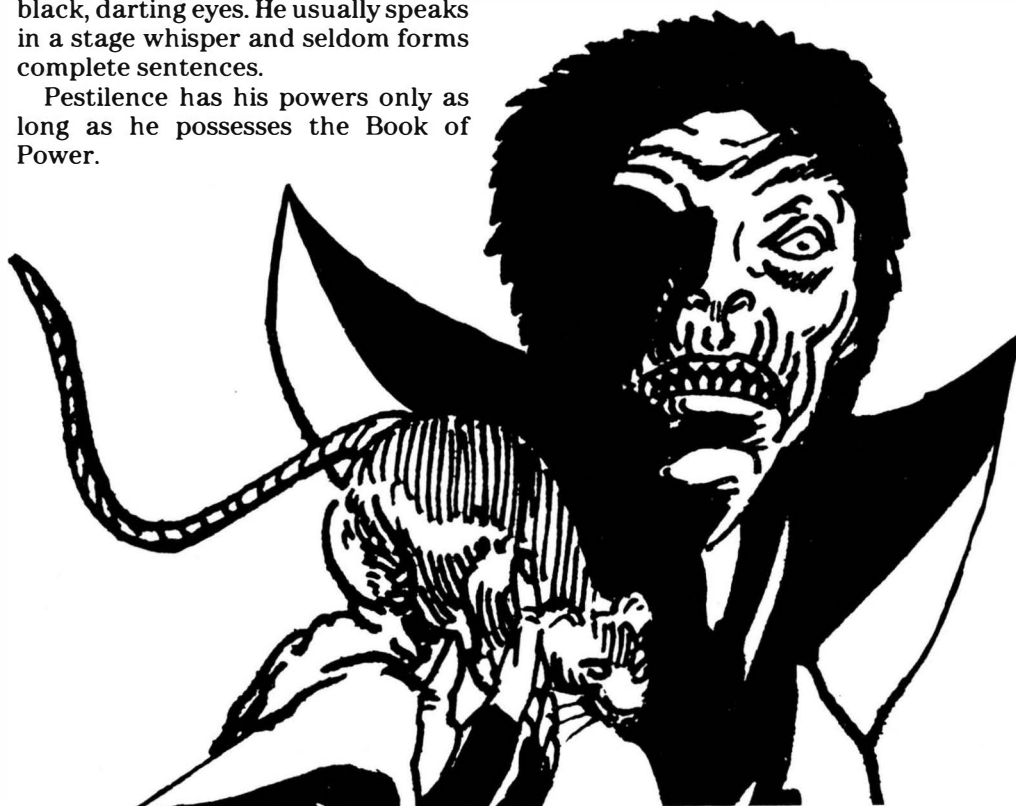
When he opens the book of Power, the insane scientist Jose Mendez is transformed into Pestilence. However, his basic personality does not change. Mendez feels that the world is ignoring his great talent, and he is determined to prove that he is a man to be reckoned with. With the power to make his dreams of revenge come true, Pestilence will stop at nothing.

In combat, Pestilence prefers to use dirty tricks. He often pretends to surrender when in a difficult situation, then uses his Animal Control to arrange a means of escape. He uses Voodoo whenever possible, because his victims almost never have the means to retaliate. If his victims can see him, he likes to use Magic Blast.

Should one of his opponents dare to touch him, Pestilence is quick to take advantage of the error by using Spiritual Drain or Vampirism.

Pestilence has a rat-like face with black, darting eyes. He usually speaks in a stage whisper and seldom forms complete sentences.

Pestilence has his powers only as long as he possesses the Book of Power.



EXTRA

DAILY PLANET*



★★★★★



A Galaxy Communications Company

★★★★★

RED ALERT!

WASHINGTON, D.C. Last night, the U.S. Armed Services was placed on red alert. Moments later, the armed forces of the Soviet Union also were placed on red alert. Analysts are unsure of the reason for the red alerts, as neither country is engaged in any unusual military activity.

Top White House officials refused

to comment on the alerts, and armed services spokesmen would say only that the order had come from the highest authority. There is speculation that the Soviet armed forces were placed on red alert in response to the United State's red alert.

The U.S.A.'s NATO allies are not taking part in the red alert, indicating

that the cause is limited to the United States and its interests.

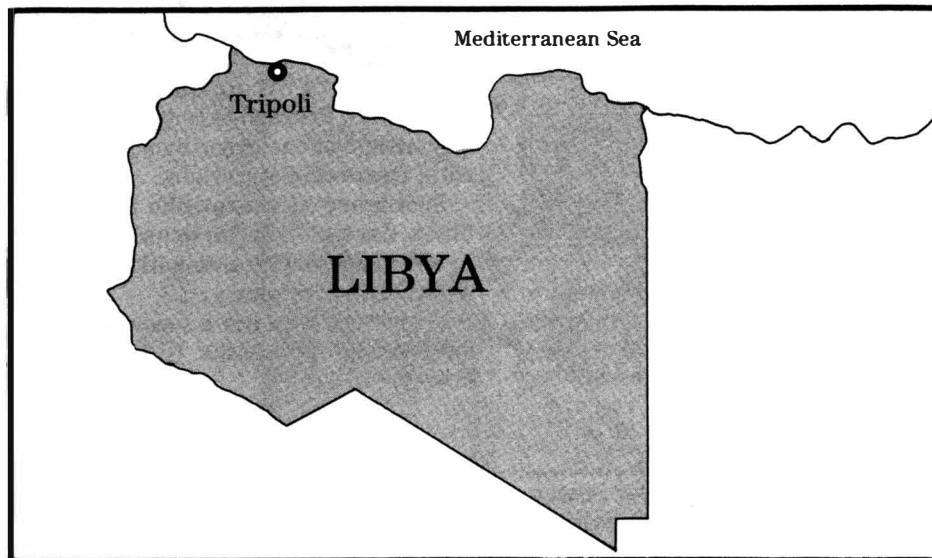
During a red alert, all armed services personnel are ordered to prepare for immediate and impending action. Strategic and tactical aircraft remain airborne throughout, landing only to refuel and for maintenance.

(Continued on Page 23)

Surprise Coup in Libya

TRIPOLI, LIBYA Late last night, the regime of Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi was overthrown in a surprise move by an until-now unknown junior officer, Colonel Idris Ashid. Because the borders are closed, details about the coup are sketchy. It appears Ashid took Qaddafi's regime completely by surprise, as no fight was reported anywhere inside Libya's borders.

The U.S. State Department issued a statement welcoming the new government, saying that it congratulated the brave freedom fighters who overthrew Qaddafi's government.



U.S. Cautions Panama About Germ Warfare

WASHINGTON, D.C. For the second time in less than six months, the U.S. has condemned Panama for conducting research into germ warfare. Panama, traditionally neutral in Central American politics, neither confirmed nor denied U.S. charges.

"Panama is a sovereign nation," said Panamanian president Nicholas Ardito-Barletta. "We do not have to answer to United States or any other nation. We have a right to defend ourselves from hostile aggression, and we

are prepared to do so."

Sources close to the Panamanian government have confirmed that they believe their president has authorized a research program into germ warfare. However, they are quick to point out that they are only quoting rumors; if there is such a research facility, it seems only the President himself knows its location.

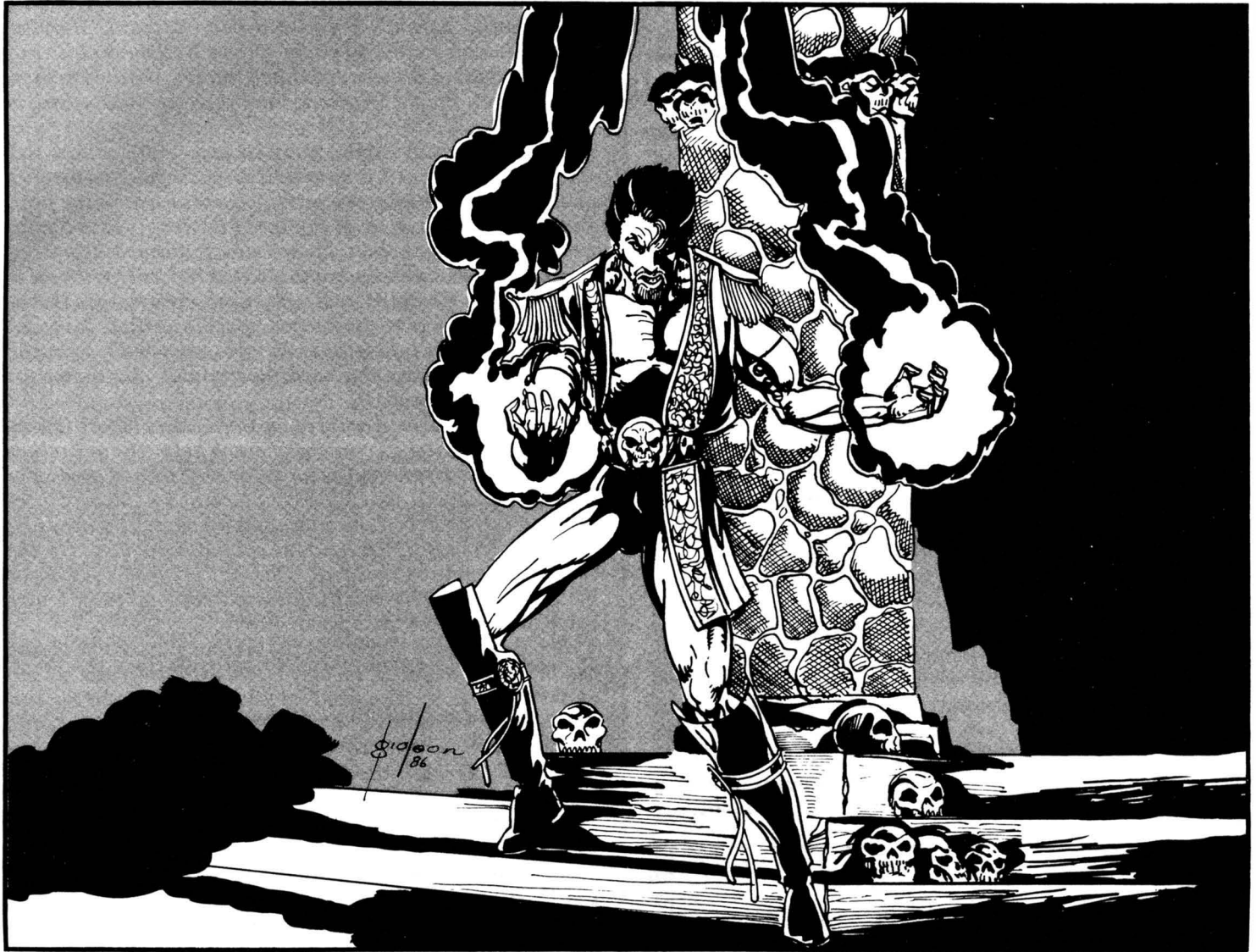
Some observers feel Barletta is running an elaborate bluff designed to scare off aggressive neighbors to the north.

Drought Grows Worse in China

PEKING, CHINA For the fourth month in a row, Chinese officials have reported staggering crop losses due to the drought affecting much of China's farmland. "Our people are on the verge of starvation," said President Li Xiannian, "we cannot take another month of dry weather without losing millions of lives."

The Red Cross is taking food donations on China's behalf.

Section One: War of the World



BALANCING THE ADVENTURE

Follow the procedure below to adjust this scenario for your group of adventurers:

1. Determine your group's total number of Hero Points available. (Don't count Hero Points spent creating the characters.)

- If this total is greater than 865, add 1 Hero Point to each Villain's Hero Points for every two points more than 865.
- If this total is greater than 1,000, also add 4 APs to each of the Villains' powers.
- If this total is less than 550, subtract 1 Hero Point from each Villain's Hero points for every four points less than 550.

2. Determine your group's power base. Find each player character's most effective power, in terms of APs.

- If at least 50% of the player characters have powers of 20 APs or greater, make no adjustment.

- If at least 50% of the player characters have powers of 25 APs or greater, add 4 APs to each of the Villains' powers.

- If less than 50% of the player characters have powers of 20 APs or greater, subtract 3 APs from each of the Villains' Powers.

- If no player character has a STR, WILL, or AURA of 30 APs or more, subtract 3 APs from each of the Villains' Powers.

These adjustments do not apply to Darkseid. His statistics remain constant.

Different groups of player characters may encounter different problems in each of the four encounter sections. It may be necessary to balance the adventure as you play. If, after the first encounter, the player characters have used more than 25% percent of their Hero Points, award them the Hero Points after each section of play. Remember to subtract what you have awarded during the adventure from the total award at the end of the adventure.

Encounter One: Professional Peacemakers

Setup

This encounter starts the adventure. The time is noon Eastern Standard Time (5 p.m. Greenwich Time).

Player Information

After a long night of fighting crime, you've just crawled out of bed and prepared yourself for the day. As usual, the morning paper looks like the neighbor's dog thought it was a steak bone, but it's still legible.

GM Information

Show the players the facsimile copy of **The Daily Planet**. After they have finished reading it, General Marvin Rauch (pronounced "Rock") from the Pentagon contacts them by telephone or radio. He requests that they come to Washington; they are to meet an Air Force jet at the local airport immediately. He indicates only that there is a problem that requires their attention.

Go to Encounter 2.

Troubleshooting

The player characters might not start the adventure together. In this case, General Rauch contacts each player character separately and sends a plane for each. If the player characters are unaccustomed to being contacted by the government, the General explains that he needs very special people for this assignment, and that's why he went to the trouble of finding them. Should the heroes try to investigate on their own, remind them that they don't know what the General wants to see them about. Except for determining that there really is a General Rauch in charge of Army Intelligence, the heroes will learn nothing that is useful.

Encounter Two: Prelude to War

Setup

This encounter takes place in a subterranean briefing room at the Pentagon.

Player Information

True to his word, General Rauch had an Air Force jet bring you to Washington, D.C. At the airport, an unmarked helicopter met you and brought you to a secret briefing room beneath the Pentagon.

A tall, heavily built general enters the room. He wears at least two dozen medals on his spotless uniform, with four silver stars on each epaulet. "Good afternoon, (ladies and) gentlemen. I've asked you here because I'd like you to prevent World War III."

[**Pause a moment, then continue.**] *"As you probably know by now, both the United States and the Soviet Union have put all military forces on red alert. Of course, mutual red alerts are not uncommon, but the situation is serious this time: the President of the United States has been kidnapped from under our very noses, and we have reason to believe that someone has kidnapped the Soviets' premier, Mikhail Gorbachev."*

"Of course, both nations have declared this an act of war and are blaming each other for the disappearances. Powerful political factions inside both nations are calling for an immediate declaration of war, and diplomatic relations already have broken down."

"In addition, several other world leaders also may have been kidnapped. We are certain that the following are missing: Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir; South Africa's Prime Minister, Pieter Willem Botha; and the President of Botswana, Quett Masire. We also believe that Syria's Prime Minister, Abdul Rauf al-Kassam, is missing."

[**Sigh and sadly shake your head.**] *"As you can see, there is a method to this madness. In each case, the leaders of two opposing nations predisposed to war have been kidnapped: the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., Israel and Syria, and South Africa and Botswana. It almost seems as though somebody is trying to start three wars certain to escalate into World War III. Of course, even though this is obviously some sort of terrorist trick, the nations involved will clash unless their leaders are returned promptly; there is simply too much animosity and suspicion for cooler heads to prevail."*

"I'd like you to find and rescue the leaders before it's too late. Unfortunately, I can't be of much help. The only clues we have are two photographs." General Rauch gives you the first picture. It shows the President of the United States in a small stone cell, surrounded by several guards in Soviet uniforms. Each holds a submachine gun. On the back of the picture, the word "Odessa" is typed. "An agent of ours in Istanbul came by this picture about three hours after the President disappeared."

General Rauch gives you the second picture. It shows the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, in a similar stone cell, surrounded by several guards in Syrian uniforms. Each holds a submachine gun. On the back side of the picture, the words "Syrian countryside" are scrawled. "Israeli intelligence came by this in Tel Aviv, five hours after their Prime Minister was kidnapped—which happened, incidentally, at about the time our President was kidnapped."

GM Information

Refer to the Investigation Chart below to answer the heroes' questions. General Rauch functions as a high-level contact for the heroes within Free World intelligence circles and has access to any existing special analysis equipment they desire.

Just as General Rauch finishes answering the heroes' questions, an aid brings him a third picture. It shows Prime Minister Botha in a small stone cell. He is guarded by several black men holding submachine guns. On the back side of the picture is printed the word "Gaborone." General Rauch is able to inform the player characters that Gaborone is the capital of Botswana. The aid says, *"Sir, this is an exact reproduction of a photograph South African intelligence recovered in Cape Town twenty minutes ago."*

If the heroes decide to investigate A1 Defense, go to Encounter 3.

If the heroes decide to rescue the hostages

- in Odessa, go to Encounter 4a.
- in Syria, go to Encounter 4b.
- in Gaborone, go to Encounter 4c.

If the heroes decide to investigate Abdul Aziz, go to Encounter 5.

Clues gathered from Pictures

Characters should roll against their mental stats.

Words on Back: OV/RV: 3

Any RAPs - "Odessa," "Syrian Countryside," and "Gabrone" are all geographic locations.

Guards: OV/RV: 5

Any RAPs - All have racial characteristics of Arabic people.

Physical Background: OV/RV: 7

Any RAPs - This type of stone architecture is common throughout the Middle East and its neighboring environments, from Southern Russia to Middle Africa.

Submachine guns: OV/RV: 5

1-2 RAPs - The guns are of the same make in all pictures.

3+ RAPs - The above information, and General Rauch will tell the heroes that the guns were manufactured by A1 Defense for covert operations; they are the best submachine guns made. Since A1 Defense is a U.S. company, the General (and the CIA) would like to know how the Russians came into possession of these weapons.

Questions for the General

General Rauch will give the heroes the following information if the heroes ask about the specific topics.

Source of Photos

The U.S. agent acquired the photo from a one-eyed Arabic man named Rashid Sihoudo. Israeli intelligence acquired theirs from a one-armed Arabic man called Omar Habash. South Africa acquired their picture from a blind Arabic man named Abu Freiha. (GM Only: These are false identities of Abdul Aziz and will lead the heroes nowhere.)

Fingerprints on photos

CIA reports only one set of fingerprints is common to all photos: those of Abdul Aziz, Arab information merchant residing in Tripoli, Libya.

Air traffic at airports in Istanbul, Tel Aviv, and Cape Town (the cities where the photos were acquired)

CIA reports in two hours that only one plane landed at all three cities: Abdul Aziz' private jet. Unfortunately, no information about air traffic in Tripoli, Abdul's home, is available because of the recent coup in Libya.

Information on A1 Defense

A1 Defense is an American defense contractor owned by John Richard Richardson III. They provide quality weaponry to the CIA, as well as doing a lot of research and development for the regular army. Their specialty is tank warfare, and their most recent contract involves construction of the Megatank (a self-contained, radiation-shielded, nuclear-explosionresistant tank with firepower equal to a conventional battery of artillery). See page 7 for statistics.) Although Rauch cannot provide any more information on A1 Defense, he can arrange for the player characters to meet with "J.R." Richardson.

See Encounter 3.

Location of leaders before they were kidnapped

General Rauch tells the player characters that all leaders were in their private residences.

Troubleshooting

The heroes may fail to pursue any of the leads provided in the pictures. In that case, General Rauch suggests they go to Odessa and see if they can find out anything (see Encounter 4a). In the meantime, he'll analyze the photos. (When the player characters return, he informs them that the weapons in the picture were all manufactured by A1 Defense.)

When they return, the General will give them all the information above as he has had time to have the pictures analyzed.

If the heroes try to analyze the photos themselves, (instead of relying upon General Rauch's resources) the General will tell them that they don't have time, and that their main priority was to rescue the hostages. If the heroes analyze the photos anyway, they will learn the same thing that the General would have told them.



A-1 Defense

Setup

Use this encounter if the heroes go to the A1 Defense Plant to meet with J.R. Richardson.

Player Information

A1 Defense is a sprawling complex on the outskirts of Denver, Colorado. In the distance, the snow capped peaks of the Rocky Mountains rise a mile into the sky, like a row of sharp, enameled canine teeth.

When General Rauch called A1 Defense, the company's president, John Richard Richardson III, eagerly agreed to see you.

"Just call me J.R.," he says, [Wave your hand for the heroes to take a seat.] "That's what all my friends call me, and I'd sure like to think of you folks as my friends. Now, what can A1 Defense do for you?"

GM Information

He confirms that the guns in the pictures are A1 submachine guns, and is quite concerned to think that they have fallen into the hands of the Soviets or Syrians.

Although he intends to be as friendly as possible to the heroes (he would love to do business with them and their friends), the terms of his government contract prevent him from divulging any further information about his company or its customers.

For purposes of resisting Charisma persuasion, consider J.R. Hostile [+3 Column shifts] when it comes to revealing information about new weapons or customers.

Should JR be "convinced" to discuss his business, he truthfully reveals the following about each category on which the heroes question him.

- How A1 Defense submachine guns fell into the hands of the Terrorists?

"I sell to the French (with U.S. government blessings). Often, the French turn around and sell to other nations. These nations include Third World nations such as Argentina, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and so forth, but certainly would not include Russia, nor probably even Syria. If France is selling to Syria and Russia, the CIA will want to know about it, I'm sure."

(If the player characters ask him to investigate, General Rauch reports that the CIA is certain France is not selling to Russia, but that it has been known to sell to Syria.)

- What other A1 weapons might the terrorists have?

"Anything from pistols to tanks."

- Who buys A1 Defense's weapons?

"The CIA, the U.S. Army, and France. Understand, I have no way of knowing to whom they sell. I refuse to sell to other nations because they behave irresponsibly. Moral questions aside, that would eventually draw the wrath of the U.S. government down upon my operation, and that's bad business."

- What is the Megatank?

"Where did you hear that phrase? I'm not at liberty to discuss this."

GM Only: He resists especially hard, pushing his Opposing Value (his INT) up to 6 APs, and become

Opposed to the Character (+4 Column Shifts) trying to persuade him.

If the heroes tell J.R. that General Rauch told them about it, they get a +2 Column Shift bonus to their Acting Value.

If J.R. fails to resist the persuasion, he reveals that it is a huge tank. It can withstand a nuclear explosion as long as it isn't a direct hit, is self-contained to avoid radiation damage to its occupants, has the artillery firepower of five tanks, and the small arms firepower of 100 men. It can cruise up to 90 mph for an indefinite range on its nuclear-powered drive train. They're also thinking of adding a pulse-laser.

- What is the special defense project A1 is working on?

"Who told you we were doing anything special. Of course, I can't discuss such matters."

Once again, J.R. resists strongly, pushing his Opposing Value as much as possible. If he fails to resist, he reveals that it is the "Doomsday Bomb." It was especially commissioned by the U.S. Joint Chiefs and is a secret that only himself, the staff constructing it, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the President know about. Of course, it won't be operational for another five years, but it is a very special weapon. If ignited, it would cause a worldwide combustion that would kill 9,999 out of every 10,000 people. It could ensure that all nuclear weapons were destroyed before they could be used. The idea, he explains, is to use the bomb as a last resort to prevent the nuclear contamination of the world and to ensure that at least a few people survive to rebuild civilization.

Immediately after the player characters leave his office, J.R. asks his secretary to put him in touch with Abdul Aziz in Tripoli. The player characters will hear his request over the secretary's intercom, if they leave his office normally, by walking through the secretary's office. If questioned about Abdul, J.R. truthfully tells the heroes that Abdul is an information broker; he is calling Abdul to see if the Arab can find out how the Russians and Syrians came into possession of A1 weapons.

What JR does not know is that he employs DeSaad, Darkseid's assistant, as primary researcher on the Doomsday Bomb. It was DeSaad who arranged for the terrorists to get the submachine guns. If the player characters do any checking at all they can find out Abdul's address in Tripoli.

Go to Encounter 5.

Troubleshooting

If the heroes miss the reference to Abdul Aziz, J.R. will call them back in the office as they leave.

"Y'know," he says, "It really bugs me that my guns are being used by terrorists. I've got a man on the phone who can find out how they got the guns. His name is Abdul Aziz. He's an information broker: maybe you could work with him."

He will allow the heroes to talk to Abdul on the phone, and will give them Abdul's address in Tripoli.

Go to Encounter 5.

The player characters may try to sneak into the A1 plant at night instead of simply meeting with JR Richardson, in which case they are quickly discovered by several security guards. The FBI computer quickly reveals their identities and J.R. asks to meet them instead of pressing charges.

Rescue Attempts

Setup

Use these encounters if the player characters try to rescue the hostages from Odessa, Syria, or Botswana. The player characters might locate the suspicious locations described below through any variety of methods: physical observation, questioning local residents about unusual activities, checking city records for buildings that might fit the description of the architecture in the photos, etc. It's up to the player characters to think of a way to find the hideouts if they chose not to investigate the pictures. Assume they face an Opposing Value of 5 and a Resistance Value of 5 when conducting these investigations. 1 or more RAPs indicates they have found the hideout as described below.

Whatever method they choose to locate the hideouts, all indications point in the direction of the hideouts described below. These clues might take the form of seeing a truckload of heavily armed men near the hideout, several old residents gossiping about the dangerous strangers who have moved into the abandoned building, or finding that the ancient owner of the property built a dungeon matching the one in the photo.

Player Information — 4a Odessa

Odessa, Russia's principal port on the Black Sea, is famous for the "dachas" (country estates) surrounding it. It is to one of these dachas that your investigations have led, a long-deserted dacha on the shore of a salt lake outside the city. Fresh tire tracks lead through the lake-shore mud onto the dacha's grounds; whoever entered the dacha last did not want to use the front gate.

T-80 tanks

Drivers have a Vehicles Skill of 4 APs

Speed: 6 STR: 9 BODY: 12 Weight: 12

Weapons:

105mm Tank Gun

AV: 5, EV: 8, RANGE: 0-5 / 6-10 / 10-11

There is no information here that will lead the heroes any further in the adventure. See Troubleshooting below.

GM Information — 4a Odessa

Odessa: The heroes encounter 12 men armed with automatic rifles (not manufactured by A1). Use the statistics for Standard Soldiers on page 5.

If the player characters approach in a non-aggressive manner, the armed men order them to leave and mind their own business.

If the player characters attack, the armed men fire at them with automatic rifles.

The basement of the dacha is crammed full of American blue jeans and tobacco, Japanese electronic goods, and European foodstuffs. Odessa is famous within the Soviet Union for its black market; the player characters happen to have uncovered one of the largest black marketing rings in Odessa. The KGB has been watching the villa for some time.

If the players clean out the nest of black marketers the KGB will attempt to capture the player characters using 100 soldiers with automatic rifles, 4 MiG-25 fighters and 3 T-80 Tanks. The player characters will be warned not to start an international incident, and will be guaranteed safe treatment. The KGB will question the heroes at length as to their involvement in this ring (use a Charisma Rating of 8 APs for questioning), then agree to release the player characters as long as they leave the country.

# of Soldiers attacked	AV	EV	OV	RV
100	20	6	17	2
50 (one half)	17	6	14	2
33 (one third)	16	6	13	2
25 (one quarter)	14	6	12	2
20 (one fifth)	13	6	11	2

MiG-25 fighters

Pilots have a Vehicles Skill of 5 APs

Speed: 11 STR: 8 BODY: 13 Weight: 10

Weapons:

Gatling Guns

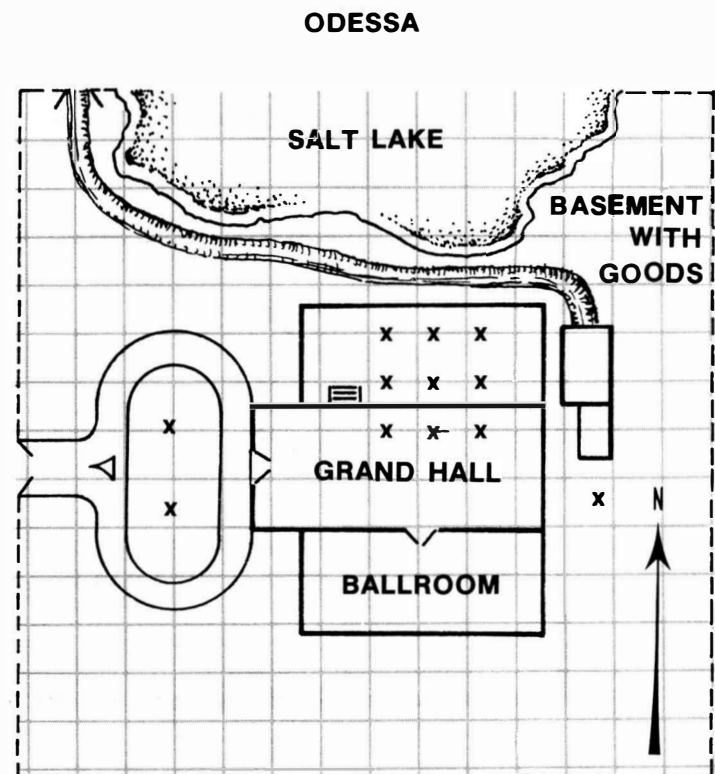
AV: 5, EV: 8, RANGE: 0-5 / 6-10 / 10-11

Air to Air missiles

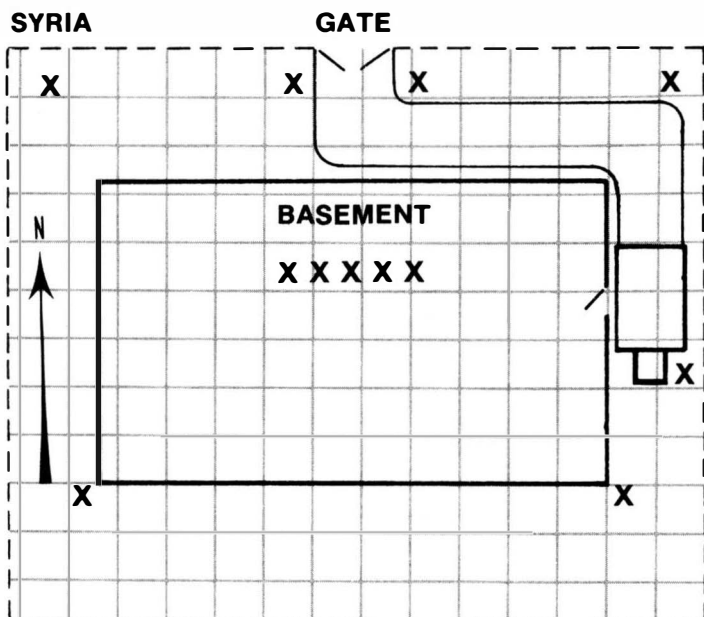
AV: 5, EV: 8, RANGE: 0-5 / 6-10 / 10-11

Maps

Use the appropriate Rescue map for these encounters. Each X marks the location of an armed man.



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Player Information — 4b Syria

Al Ladhiqiyah, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean in Syria, has produced and exported tobacco for hundreds of years. Apparently, its residents now intend to export terror as well. Your investigations have led to a long-deserted plantation outside of town. Fresh tire tracks lead from the front gate toward the manor, but the tracks leading to the gate have been carefully brushed away. Apparently, whoever is inside wants no one to follow them.

GM Information — 4b Syria

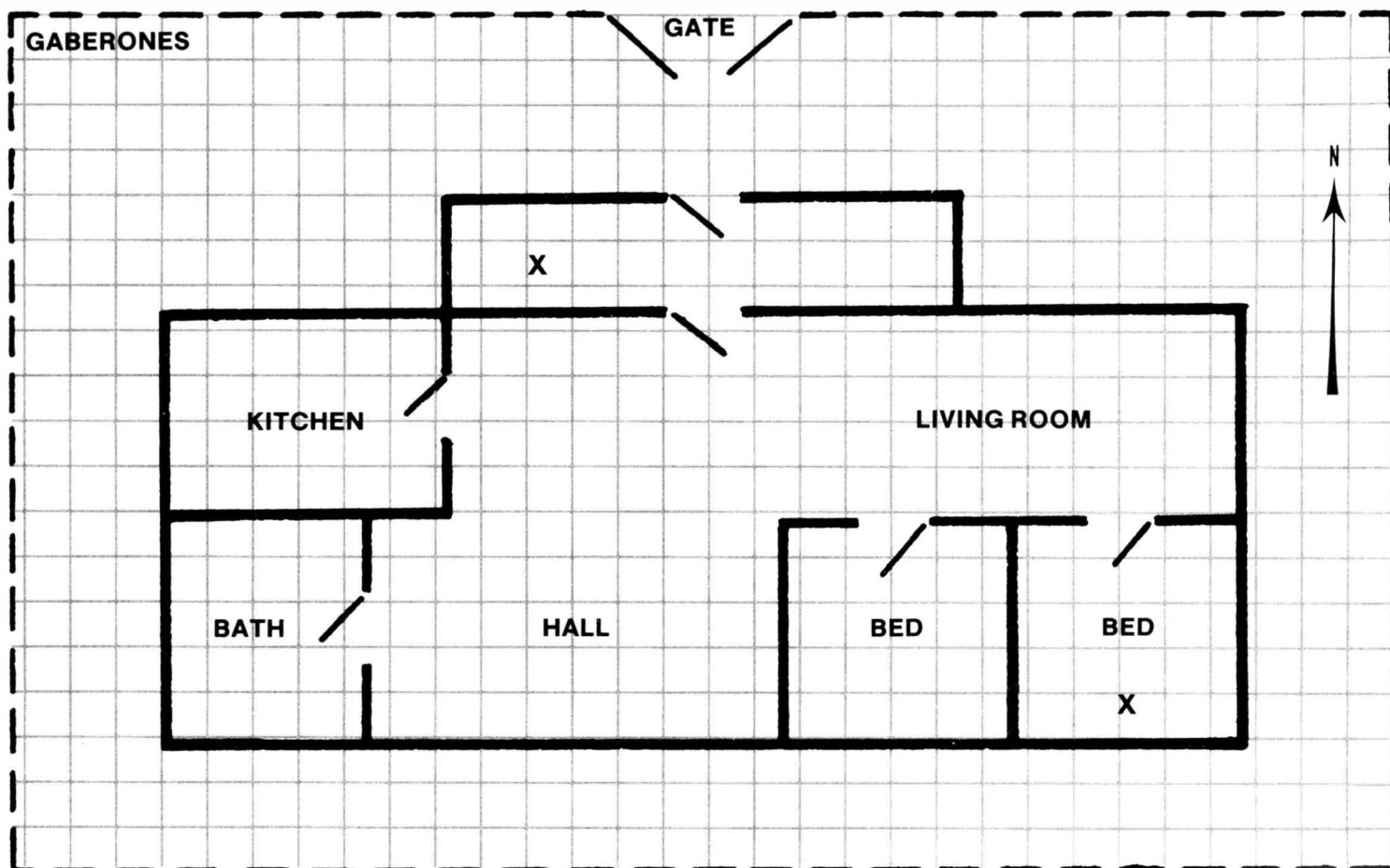
Syria: The heroes encounter 12 men armed with automatic rifles (not manufactured by A-1). Use the statistics for Standard Soldiers on page 5.

If the player characters approach in a non-aggressive manner, the armed men order them to leave and mind their own business.

If the player characters attack, the armed men fire at them with automatic rifles.

Thirty men and women are chained together in the basement of the manor. They all claim to have been kidnapped from European cities. The heroes have uncovered a terrorist kidnapping ring. The Syrian government will allow the player characters to return the captives to Europe, but will not aid them. After the heroes leave, the government releases the culprits with a warning not to get caught again.

There is no information here that will lead the heroes any further in the adventure. See Troubleshooting below.



Player Information — 4c Gaberones

Gaberones is the capital city of Botswana, a small nation of less than 250,000 square miles, mostly Kalahari desert. With less than a million Bantus, Bushmen, and a few Europeans, the entire nation of Botswana has historically desired nothing more than to be left in peace to pursue its destiny. Apparently, something has changed, at least for some of its residents. Your investigations have led you to a long-deserted range 25 miles outside of Gaberones. Fresh tire tracks lead from the front gate toward the main house, and a man with an automatic rifle stands guard at the front door.

GM Information — 4c Gaberones

Gaberones: The heroes encounter 12 men armed with automatic rifles (not manufactured by A1). Use the statistics for Standard Soldiers on page 5.

If the player characters approach in a non-aggressive manner, the armed men order them to leave and mind their own business.

If the player characters attack, the armed men fire at them with automatic rifles.

There are also 4 Rocket Launchers that are in firing condition. One phase after the armed men fire the automatic rifles at the heroes, all four of the Rocket launchers will be fired at them.

Rocket Launchers

AV: 5, EV: 8, RANGE: 0-4 / 5-9 / 10

The fruit cellar of the ranch-house is filled with small arms ranging from pistols to rocket launchers, in various stages of assembly. The player characters happen to have uncovered a group of South African and British mercenaries intending to overthrow the government of Botswana. The Botswanan government thanks the player characters profusely, throws the mercenaries in prison for life, and contacts the U.N. Security Council to protest further South African aggression.

There is no information here that will lead the heroes any further in the adventure. See Troubleshooting below.

Troubleshooting

After these encounters, the player characters should realize that they will get nowhere without using their heads. If they don't go back to study the pictures more carefully, General Rauch contacts them to say that he believes the submachine guns in the pictures were manufactured by A1 Defense in Denver, Colorado. He suggests they meet with JR Richardson and try to find out who might possess the guns.

Go to Encounter 3

Encounter Five: Meeting Abdul

Setup

The player characters are most likely to go to Abdul's mansion in Tripoli and await him there. The text below is written on the assumption that the player characters meet Abdul at his home. If the player characters meet Abdul someplace else, such as in flight to Tripoli from Cape Town, adjust the text accordingly.

Player Information

It is 4 a.m. Greenwich time. Nearly seven hours ago, the U.S. announced it holds the Soviet Union responsible for the President's safe return. The congress has authorized the Vice President to declare war if the Soviets do not return the President within 24 hours. The Soviets have responded by giving the U.S. just sixteen hours to withdraw the accusation, claiming it is "self-serving capitalist propaganda designed to hide the truth about what is happening."

Abdul has just returned to his home. He is a short, well-dressed Arabic man. Despite the hour and his long day, he appears full of energy. He is followed by half a dozen assistants who carry luggage and briefcases.

GM Information

Abdul greets the player characters cheerfully and asks what he can do for them. As soon as they tell him what they want, he says, "Information is expensive, my friends. Perhaps you would care to donate?"

Assuming the player characters give him \$1,000 or more (he quotes this as the minimum price if necessary), Abdul says, "I have nothing right now. I shall put a man on your request immediately."

If the player characters do not object, he gives them the name of a good hotel downtown ("The Scheherazade; tell them I sent you; I will contact you there when I have something.") Abdul then goes to bed and forgets about the player characters; he has no intention of fulfilling their request.

When (if) the player characters press Abdul, he shrugs and says, "I wish I could help you my curious friends. But this is as fast as my people can work. You must understand, in the Middle East things take time. Libya is not like the West—we have no computers that we just press a button and pfooooo! out pops an answer. Besides, there's been another coup—and coups always slow me down. My people are the first to go. Ungrateful ruling dogs; they buy information when they need it, but when they take power, they throw all spies in jail!"

If the player characters indicate they know of his recent trip, Abdul simply shrugs, "Sometimes I carry envelopes. I don't ask what's inside or even who pays me. I just do it and take the money."

Consider Abdul Hostile for purposes of Charisma. When the player characters break through Abdul's resistance (change his attitude to Friendly or Neutral) he says, "By the sands of the desert! I will tell you, if you will just let me live in peace! I'm working for Colonel . . ."

Before Abdul can say any more, the dozen "assistants" and "servants" hovering about whip out scimitars and try to assassinate him.

12 ASSASSINS

DEX:	4	STR:	3	BODY:	3
INT:	3	WILL:	2	MIND:	3
INFL:	2	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	3
INITIATIVE:	9	HERO POINTS:	5		

SKILLS:

Weaponry: 6, Vehicle/Air, Land: 4

EQUIPMENT:

Sword AV: 0, EV: 5

If the heroes save him, Abdul's attitude changes to Awestruck/Enamored. Any attempt to interrogate Abdul that achieves a RAP of 1 or more causes him to reveal everything he knows: *"That ungrateful son-of-a-beggar! To think, I helped that scorpion!"*

"The man you seek is Colonel Ashid, our new Chairman," Abdul spits on the floor. "He seized power yesterday. A few hours later, he called me to an ancient castle out in the middle of the Sahara — I didn't even know it existed — and told me to fly all over the world for him. That beggar's left-hand has kidnapped the presidents of six nations. He intends to use them to start a war, I think. I wouldn't have helped, except he had the book . . ."

[Stop talking suddenly, as if you realize you've just slipped, then continue], *"But all that is unimportant. I'll take you to him, free of charge."* Abdul insists that he accompany the player characters, and so strong is his desire that nothing can change his mind.

If the player characters press Abdul about "the Book," he tells them (falsely) that he referred to a CIA manual explaining the finer points of coups, claiming, "Ashid bought it from some Nicaraguans." Of course, he tells a different story if the player characters force him to tell the truth; *"It is the legendary Book of Power. It bestows great supernatural powers on he who possesses it. Destiny has decreed that I shall be its next owner."* Abdul can say little more about the book; this is all that Ashid told him.

Whether or not the assassins are successful, they attempt to flee to Rome.

Go to Encounter 6.

Troubleshooting

It is not important that the conversation with Abdul occur in his mansion, or even in Tripoli. If the player characters catch Abdul someplace else, the encounter still flows as outlined. The only exception is the reference to the situation between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Players' Information. You may need to adjust the time mentioned there according to when the player characters catch Abdul (see the timetable).

If the player characters are gullible enough to believe Abdul, allow Darkseid's plan to proceed unimpeded until noon, Day 2. At that time, a non-player character casually drops a hint that Abdul is famous throughout the Middle East for the lies he tells.

Encounter Six: To Rome

Setup

Use this encounter if the heroes follow the assassins from Encounter 5 to Rome. After escaping Abdul's house, the assassins go to the airport, steal Abdul's jet, and fly to Rome. In Rome, they rent a van and drive to their hideout.

Player Information

The assassins have parked their van in the garage of a large old house near the Palazzo Farnese, on the Via Giulia. Not quite a block away, the Tiber river winds through the city of Rome, carrying small barges and pleasure boats upon its snake-like back.

Although this house may have been a mansion at one time, it is now run down and badly in need of repair.

GM Information

Ashid has arranged to have five cases of A1 submachine guns and uniforms of several national armies stored in

the basement of this house. As soon as the assassins arrive, they load these items in their van, drive back to the airport, load them into Abdul's plane, and fly to Odessa. In Odessa, they rent another van, bribe a security guard, load the items into the van, and drive it to the dacha in Encounter 4a. The assassins help the black marketeers unload, collect \$5,000, and, if they have not been interrupted by now, return to the airport and fly Abdul's jet to the Desert Castle, Encounter 7.

Anticipating that the assassins would be followed, Ashid arranged this little side-trip to mislead any pursuers.

If captured and questioned, the assassins reveal that Colonel Ashid ordered them to assassinate Abdul if he revealed anything about Ashid. They also can reveal the location of Colonel Ashid's fort but will resist with all their might (by using their Opposing Values of 2 APs and adding the +7 Column Shift modifier against Persuasion.) The assassins describe Ashid as a tall, powerfully built man with the voice of authority and the heart of a snake.

Troubleshooting

The player characters may engage the assassins at any time after they leave Abdul's house in Encounter 5. The assassins will still physically resist the player characters as long as possible. Once captured, they behaved as outlined above.

Encounter Seven: The Desert Castle

Setup

Use this encounter when the heroes locate the Desert Castle, either by following Abdul's instructions or by tracking Abdul's assassins back to the castle.

Player Information

150 miles into the desert, a rocky outcropping rises from the desert sands like an island out of a sea. Sitting atop this strange island is a fairy-tale castle. Its outer walls appear to be of polished granite, while the interior walls are white marble. The keep rises just above the interior walls, its black obsidian walls a dark contrast to the breathtaking castle.

GM Information

Ashid used the Book of Power to construct this castle shortly after he took power. This is where Ashid is holding the missing world leaders.

Ashid is well prepared for visitors. The castle is defended by 400 heavily armed Libyan soldiers. Should the player characters attack the castle from the exterior, 300 will defend the point of attack with A1 automatic rifles, Team Attacking in groups of 10 (the remainder stay at their posts in case the attack is a diversion).

In addition, Ashid has arranged several surprises for anyone attempting to take the castle. Each number on the map corresponds to a trap below. The player characters may discover these traps if they reconnoiter the castle before entering.

1. The Gate Towers. Inside each tower are 100 guards armed with machineguns. If the characters attempt to take the gates by storm, the guards catch them in a deadly cross-fire. Each player character will be team attacked by eight guards.

Machine Gun AV: 5, EV: 8 RANGE: 0-6/ 7-8 /9

On the other hand, if the player characters approach in a non-aggressive manner, the guards allow them to go to number 2.

2. The Twin Tanks. One (regular) A1 tank with a 105 mm Tank Gun sits to either side of the gate. Both open fire (short range, team attack) without warning as soon as the player characters enter.

105mm Tank Gun . . AV: 5, EV: 8 RANGE: 0-5/ 6-9 /10- 11

3. The 155 mm Howitzer. The howitzer opens fire (short range) as soon as the player characters overpower the tank directly in front of it.

155mm Howitzer . . AV: 0, EV: 9 RANGE: 0-7/ 8-12 /13-14

The Acting Value is the Weaponry Skill of the soldier firing the howitzer.

4. Laser Bank. Up to forty guards (inside turret) armed with A1 laser rifles open fire on the player characters as they pass. Each player character is team attacked by five guards.

Laser Rifle AV: 4, EV: 4 RANGE: 0-5/ 6-7 /8

5. Bazooka Bank. Up to 32 guards armed with A1 bazookas open fire as the player characters step around the corner from area three or four. Each player character is team-attacked by four guards.

Bazooka AV: 0, EV: 8 RANGE: 0-3/ 4-6 /7

The Acting Value is the Weaponry Skill of the soldier firing the howitzer.

6. Laser Bank. Eighty-five guards (in gate houses to either side) catch the player characters in deadly cross-

fire of A1 laser rifles. Each hero is team attacked by up to eight guards.

Laser Rifle AV: 4, EV: 4 RANGE: 0-5/ 6-7 /8

7. Anti-aircraft missiles. In each area are four A1 ground-to-air missiles. The guards fire all the missiles when the player characters enter range from the air, team attacking where possible.

Anti-aircraft missiles . . AV: 5, EV: 8 RANGE: 0-9 / 10 / 11

The Castle: The height of the exterior walls is 2 APs and the height of both the interior walls and the keep is 3 APs.

The guards have removed all serial numbers from the weapons; there is no way to trace their path to Ashid.

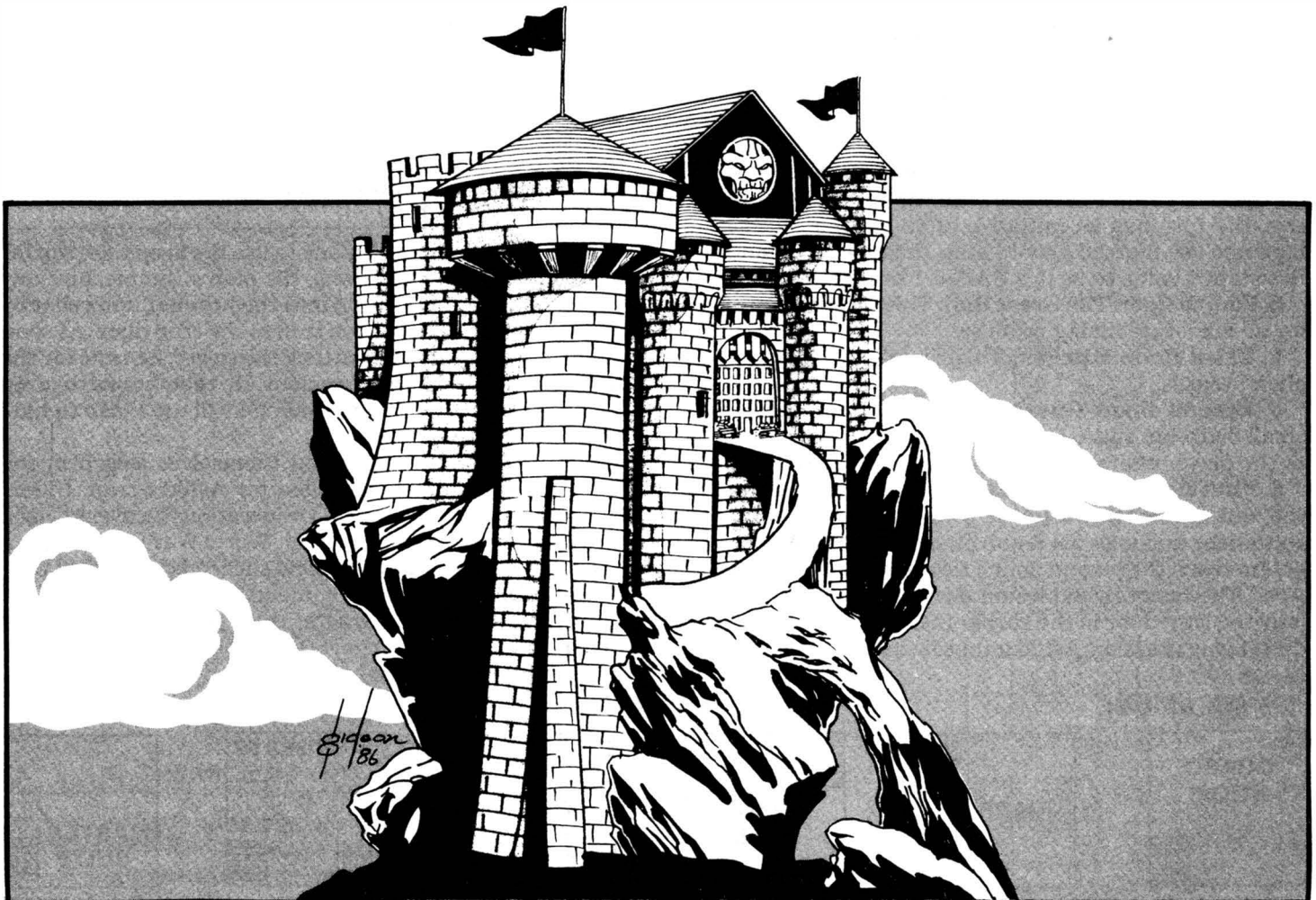
If the guards see that their attacks have no effect on the heroes, they abandon their posts and allow the heroes to go to the next trap.

Once the heroes enter The Keep, go to Encounter 8. If they should happen to explore the bottom of the rose-shaped pond, go to Encounter 9.

Troubleshooting

Should the player characters find a way to enter the castle that Ashid has not covered, the guards react in a confused fashion. Only 10% resist during the first round, 10% more the second round, and so forth. Of course, if the heroes enter at a trap location, they must still face the trap.

If the player characters go back to A1 Defense with news of the weapons they discovered here, Richardson expresses anger and concern. He does not know how his weapons fell into the hands of terrorists. (See Encounter 3.)



Encounter Eight: The Keep

Setup

This encounter assumes the heroes are entering the keep from the drawbridge at its top, which provides the only visible entranceway. Should the heroes enter the keep in another manner, Ashid meets them at the appropriate place. In the latter case, don't use the Players' Information below.

Player Information

A narrow drawbridge leads from the battlements of the interior walls to the keep's only entranceway. Behind the iron portcullis stands a heavy steel door.

GM Information

The keep has six floors. See the description below as the player characters enter each floor.

1. Sixth floor: Guard room. Behind the heavy steel door (BODY: 17 APs) waits War (Colonel Idris Ashid). Ashid stands at the head of the stairs, prepared to use his "Flash" power. With him are a dozen guards wearing sunglasses and armed with Laser Pistols. Ashid intends to use his Flash to blind the player characters, then flee to the fifth floor while the guards attack. As War is prepared for the heroes' attack through the steel door, he will attack them with Surprise. Ashid will be on the third floor at the beginning of the next phase.

Laser Pistols AV: 3, EV: 4, RANGE: 0-3 / 4-5 / 6

2. Fifth floor: Armory. The player characters hear something hissing behind the door when they enter this floor. When he passed by, Ashid lit a fuse leading to an explosive charge in the armory. The next phase a 13 AP blast will rip the 4th, 5th, and 6th floors off the keep if the heroes don't stop it. For purposes of determining initiative, the fuse has an initiative of 33 (player characters may not use martial arts to stop the fuse.) Consider its Resistance Value to be 0; a RAP of 1 or more defuses it.

3. Fourth floor: The Great Hall. This floor is empty save for an elaborate dining room set.

4. Third floor: Kitchen. This room contains only kitchen utensils.

5. Second floor: Guest Suite. This floor contains a small bedroom suite. Ashid uses his Bomb power as soon as the player characters reach this floor. (See first floor.)

6. First floor: Master Suite. Ashid reaches this floor at the end of the second phase after the heroes enter the sixth floor and uses his Bomb as soon as the player characters reach the second floor. (He restricts the radius to 9 APs.) The resulting explosion destroys the Keep, leaving only the trap door in the corner intact. (See below) After destroying the keep, Ashid jumps into the Rose Pond (see Encounter 9).

If the player characters entered the keep through this floor, Ashid meets them here with his Bomb power ready (once again he attacks with Surprise). After setting off the Bomb (restricting its radius to 9 APs), he uses Flash to blind them and jumps into the Rose Pond.

Lying half-revealed beneath the rubble is a partially opened trap-door that leads to the Promethium Cellar.

7. Promethium Cellar. A spiral staircase leads down to a partially closed promethium door. (BODY: 25 APs). Behind the door is a 20' x 20' room, completely enclosed by the super-hard metal-and-plastic alloy, promethium. On the opposite wall is another door.

As soon as any hero tries to open the false door on the far wall, the first door slams shut (with an Acting and Effect value of 25). Any RAPs will hold the door open.

One phase later, the room fills with a dark green sleep gas (AV: 10, EV: 25).

The gas makes a physical attack once each turn (for three phases) on each character. A character whose BODY is reduced below 0 APs goes to sleep until a successful recovery is made.

The Resistance Value for escape by bashing through the wall is 25 APs. If the player characters come up with a particularly clever means of escape (or can Teleport), adjust the values down by whatever amount seems appropriate (see Universal Modifier chart).

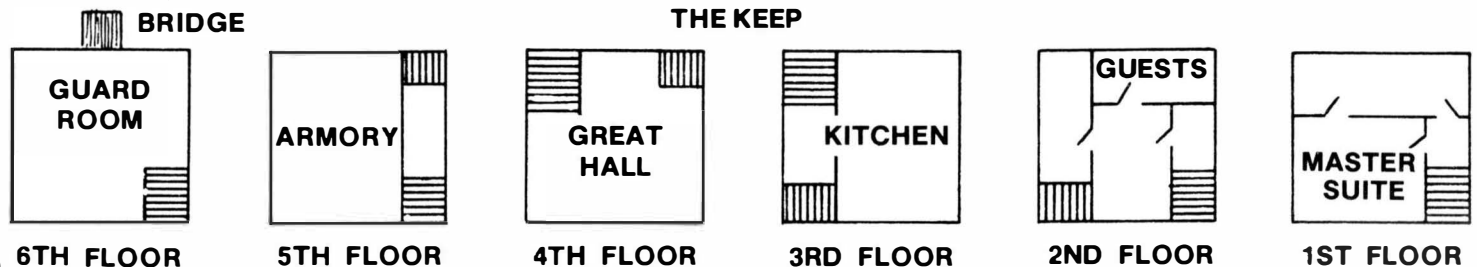
Should the player characters stay in the cellar for more than 1 hour, Ashid executes the world leaders. World War III starts and the player characters cannot stop it. After eight hours, Ashid visits the player characters to brag. (He feels he has paved the way for Arab world domination.) Unfortunately for him, Ashid no longer possesses Darkseid's powers, but he doesn't know this yet.

If the heroes escape the Promethium cellar, they can follow Ashid into the Rose Pond (Encounter 9). If Ashid has already gone into the pond, a Perception Check (OV/RV: 6) or use of the Tracking Skill (OV/RV: 4) will lead the Heroes to Ashid. Go to Encounter 9.

Troubleshooting

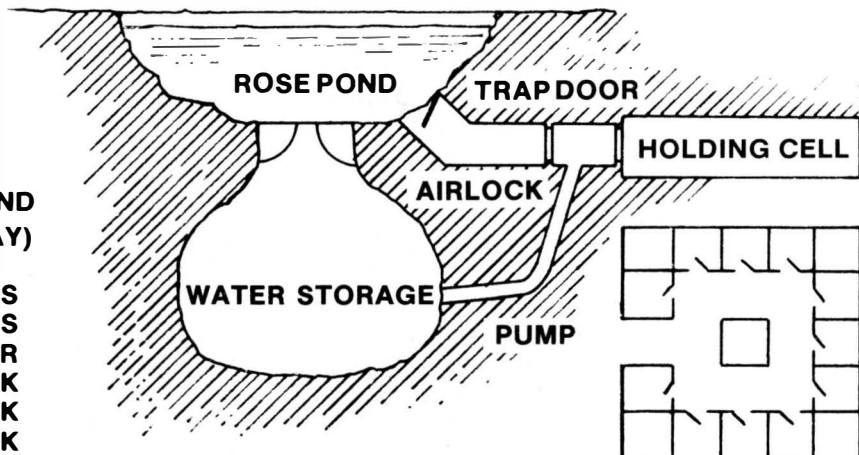
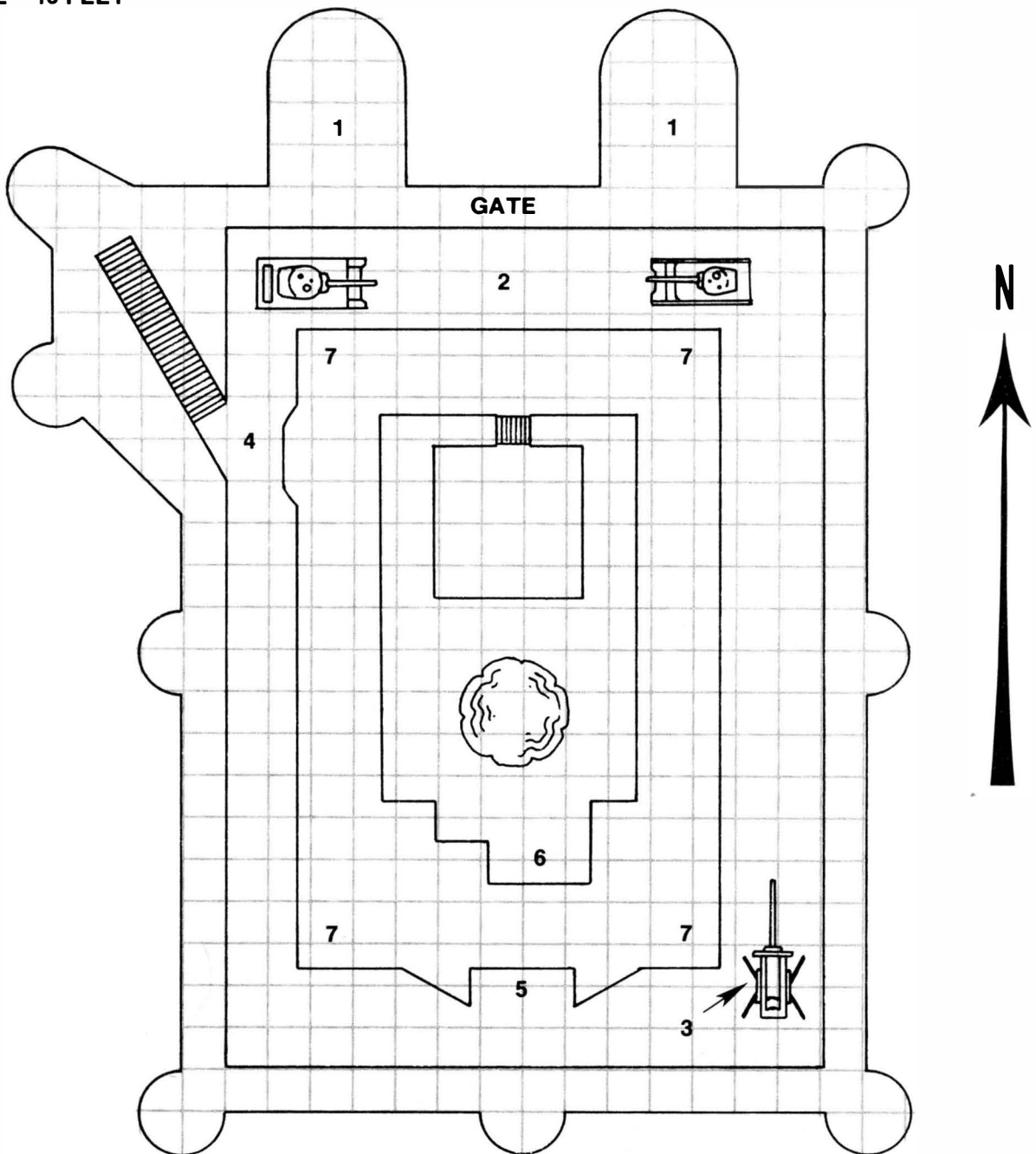
Ashid has planned all along to use the keep as a trap for any Heroes that come along. His plan is simple: lure any super-powered opposition into the promethium cellar by leaving a clear and obvious trail to the trap door. As soon as the player characters attack the tower, he runs for the first floor to reveal the trap door. He then hopes to jump into the Rose Pond unobserved. He will use Flash to hide his escape if necessary.

Player characters who find themselves asleep in the promethium cellar have fallen for Ashid's trap. Unless they can make a successful Desperation Recovery Check and stop Ashid within one hour, World War III starts on a conventional level and Darkseid succeeds in the first part of his plan. This does not mean that all hope is lost, however. The player characters may still stop Darkseid by defeating the following parts of his plan (go to Section 3 - Famine in the Far East).



DESERT CASTLE

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



LEGEND

- 1 THE GATE TOWERS
 - 2 THE TWIN TANKS
 - 3 THE 155 MM HOWITZER
 - 4 LASER BANK
 - 5 BAZOOKA BANK
 - 6 LASER BANK
 - 7 ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILES
- (see text starting on page 18 for details).

HOLDING CELLS (INSET)

Encounter Nine: The Rose Pond (Thoms)

Setup

Use this encounter when a player character submerges into and searches the bottom of the Rose Pond. Player characters looking into the Rose Pond cannot see the bottom unless they have Telescopic Vision, Thermal Vision, Ultra Vision or X-Ray Vision.

Player Information

The pond is 40 feet deep and lined with cobblestones. At the bottom is a passage.

GM Information

The passage leads to an airlock. If Ashid has not been captured or otherwise subdued he will be standing right behind it. Ashid will make his last stand here, standing in front of an electronic door.

During the first combat phase, he uses his Bio-Energy Blast in a multi-attack on all opponents, spending the maximum number of Hero Points to increase his Acting and Effect Values. Ashid uses his Hero Points to absorb damage player characters do to him.

After the first phase, he varies use of his Powers according to need and opportunity. As soon as he has fewer than 30 Hero Points remaining, he presses his hand against the wall near the door and says, *"Hold! One more move and I'll press this button! If you want to see those so-called world leaders turned into ashes and smoke, attack me!"*

The GM should ask the players what they want to do, then count "one-thousand one, one-thousand two, one-thousand three," etc. On reaching one-thousand six yell (as Ashid), *"You costumed clowns are child's play! Send Superman if you want to stop me!"*

No matter what the player characters do, Ashid presses the button and attempts to run into the room behind him. If a hero tries to reach the door before it slams shut, a DEX vs. DEX roll has to be made.

The hero's action would be considered Strenuous, adding +3 Column Shifts to Ashid's Acting Value.

One phase later, if there are no Heroes in the room, Ashid uses a pistol to begin executing the world leaders in this order, one per phase: Syria, Botswana, South Africa, Israel, U.S.S.R., U.S.A. If the player characters do not stop him before he reaches the U.S.S.R., World War III starts. The OV/RV for picking the lock is 17 APs. Smashing a wall to get in has an Opposing Value of 0 and a Resistance Value of 25. Player characters must achieve 17 RAPs before they can open the chamber.

If the player characters do not hesitate, they can follow Ashid into the room. He pulls a pistol and attempts to execute the world leaders in the order listed above.

Resting on a mahogany reading stand in the middle of the room is a large, black volume. Twelve cells line the exterior walls, and in every other cell is one of the missing leaders.

After Ashid is subdued, he falls (or remains) unconscious. Shortly, he begins to mumble, as if dreaming. Soon, his words are audible: *"War! War! Oh please, to your weapons for I... I have failed, master. Mercy. No. Mercy..."* As he utters these last words, his body bloats and grotesquely changes to the form of a black horse and rider. A moment later, there is a tremendous explosion

and it disintegrates (Darkseid has Dispersed it by using Bio-Energy Blast and Teleport simultaneously.)

At this point, Abdul rushes into the room. He is dripping wet and somewhat bruised, but his condition doesn't dampen his enthusiasm. *"A hundred-thousand thanks, my strangelydressed friends. I have dreamed of this moment all my life, and finally Allah has sent you to deliver the Book of Power to me!"* With that, Abdul reaches for the Book and it disappears.

He quickly jerks his hand back, cursing in Arabic. His hand has been permanently scarred where he touched the book. He curses about his hand for a moment or two, then looks skyward and says, *"What do you want of me? Have I not lived my life like a good Arab merchant?"* He falls to the floor and weeps, *"It's not right. I want the Book. I want it! Want it! I deserve it, I deserve it more than the gutter-crawling dog who has it, whoever he is!"*

Abdul knows nothing more about the book, but he will say he believes it will make its presence known again soon. When Abdul finishes, a player character notices these lines burned into the reading stand:

*"From ancient darkness I did come,
Four horsemen at my side,
War, Famine, Pestilence, Death,
This will be our final ride."*

This may help to give the Players a clue to what they have to Battle, especially if they relate the poem above to the stories in the Daily Planet. The next trouble spot is in Section 2: Famine in the Far East.

Troubleshooting

By the time the player characters find the airlock beneath the pond, Ashid realizes they are a bit tougher than he expected. No matter what they do, he attempts to keep them out of the chamber holding the leaders. Failing that, he executes the leaders at the first opportunity.

Should the player characters fail to prevent the execution of the leaders, they still may stop Darkseid by preventing him from completing other parts of his plan. If they are knocked unconscious, they awaken in the Promethium cellar as described in Encounter 8. Read the information in the Troubleshooting section and then go to Section 2: Famine in the Far East.

If Abdul is prevented from reaching for the book, it Teleports as soon as a player character reaches for it (or it is alone).

Hero Points — War

In this adventure, Hero Points are awarded for vanquishing each villain. The GM should immediately award the Players their points before going on to the next section.

Hero Points for any particular section should not be given to the Players if the villain of that section wins.

Note that the points given below are the total number of points that should be given to each Player and are not Standard Awards.

Opposition	20
Critical Points	0
Area of Concern	15
Severity	15
Total Hero Point Award	50

Section Two: **Famine in the Far East**



Encounter Ten: **Morning News**

Setup

After the last encounter in Section 2, the player characters may need some time to rest and recover. This encounter takes place the morning after the player characters met Ashid. They should all be fully recovered by the time they see the morning news.

Player Information

After a long night's sleep, you awake sore and tired from yesterday's activities. The morning news is not good. [Read the following information as though you are a television newscaster.]

"This morning, tens of thousands of Chinese peasants are homeless after the Hwang Ho river mysteriously flooded its banks. Chinese Officials are baffled as to how this occurred, as no rain has fallen in its basin in recent months. They are certain it will ruin the year's wheat crop for China, probably resulting in the starvation of millions."

(GM Note: Read the following if the Heroes encountered the Soviets in Odessa in Encounter 4a) *"In other news, the Soviet KGB reports that it has captured a ring of smugglers operating out of the resort town of Odessa on the Black Sea. The KGB claims to have confiscated millions of dollars worth of western blue jeans and cigarettes."*

GM Information

The player characters may go directly to China, or choose to investigate recent events in China. If they choose to investigate, use the Investigation Chart below. If they go directly to China, refer to Encounter 11.

Troubleshooting

It is possible that the player characters guessed China would be the Book's next target. In this case, they may be in China when the waters begin to flood. If they don't immediately volunteer their help, Ling Tse, the newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture, requests that they go to the flood site to aid the workers.

On the other hand, the player characters may have guessed incorrectly and gone to some other part of the world to search for the book. In this case, they hear of the flood through local news sources. If they do not immediately respond, Abdul contacts them and states that he thinks the Book could be responsible for flooding the Hwang Ho.

Encounter Eleven: **At the Hwang Ho**

Setup

Use this encounter when the player characters reach the mouth of the Hwang Ho river, about 150 miles southwest of Peking in the gulf of Chihli.

Player Information

The Hwang Ho, or Yellow River, starts far in the interior of China and winds its way to the gulf of Chihli in the Yellow Sea. Throughout its course, it provides water for much of China's agriculture. Most of China's wheat is grown within the last 100 miles of its mouth of the Yellow Sea.

Much of this land is already underwater, and more will be submerged soon. The Hwang Ho has literally burst its banks and is flooding fields as far away as the eye can see. About 200 miles inland, the Chinese Army has begun an emergency project to divert the Hwang Ho to a group of lakes to the south. It doesn't appear that they'll succeed in time. Their equipment is not modern enough to move so much earth so fast.

GM Information

If the player characters volunteer their services, the officer in charge, not realizing that they are superpowered, hands them a shovel and directs them to start work on a 40' deep by 200' wide trench that he intends to route the Yellow River into. By the time the player characters arrive, he has succeeded in digging only about 100 yards (5 APs) of the mile-long (10 APs) trench.

Of course, the player characters can probably complete the trench easily (Opposing Value 0; Resistance Values 18; when RAPs exceed 18, trench is completed). Unfortunately, that won't stop the flood. Any player character taking the time to examine the area (Perception Check OV/RV: 2) quickly realizes that the fields are being flooded by salt water! The 22 APs of the sea actually seems to be flowing uphill into the fertile farmland!

Should the player characters try to divert the flow at the mouth of the Yellow River, a 22 AP tidal wave begins to form in the gulf of Chihli. Unless the player characters stop the wave (by undercutting it, for example), it smashes into their handiwork and washes into the fields.

There is more going on here than a natural disaster; the flood is the work of Ling Tse, new possessor of the Book of Power. Ling Tse, known to Darkseid as Famine, is using Water Control to destroy the fields. If the Heroes interfere

Investigation Chart for China

Source	Level	Information
Library	Low	Party Chairman Hu Yaobang has been ill for more than a year. President Li Xiannian has used the opportunity to solidify his political control.
Intelligence (CIA, etc.)	Low	Party Chairman Hu Yaobang rose from his sickbed yesterday to appoint a minor bureaucrat, Ling Tse, as Secretary of Agriculture.
Intelligence (CIA, etc.)	High	Little is known of Ling Tse, but observers believe his appointment is the beginning of a power struggle between unknown party hardliners backing Chairman Hu Yaobang and more moderate elements backing President Xiannian.



with his plan, he uses the full force of his Water Control to attack them. After the player characters have defeated his tidal wave, or after he has flooded the fields (about 1 hour), Ling Tse returns to his house in Peking to rest before beginning the next phase of his food destruction operation.

Ling Tse arranges a new disaster every other hour, in the following order. (Each has an Acting and Effect value of 22 APs.)

1. Typhoon strikes southern shore of China, destroying the rice, sugar cane, and tropical fruits growing in that region. Weather forecasters are baffled as to how the typhoon could have arisen out of a calm sea so quickly.

2. A tremendous fire breaks out north of Peking, sweeping the fields clean of the maize and millet growing in that area. The fire passes through nearby forests without harming them.

3. Terrible earthquakes strike the Wuhan area, destroying the carefully prepared earthenwork dams required to irrigate the rice paddies. Geologists are baffled by the characteristics of the earthquake; it almost seems man made.

4. 22 APs lbs of China's food stores rot overnight; biologists are at a loss to explain this spontaneous cell-destruction.

Ling Tse turns the appropriate force of nature to attack any Hero who interferes with his plans.

Troubleshooting

The player characters should quickly realize two things: First, these disasters are not natural at all. There is something super-powered behind them, and it apparently intends to destroy China's food crop, if not that of Asia. Second, if they are going to find the source of the trouble, they'll have to use their brains, not their brawn.

If the player characters haven't discovered the source of the trouble after the fourth disaster, Abdul (or General Rauch) tracks the player characters down and suggests they talk to Chairman Yaobang about possible sources of the trouble.

Encounter Twelve:

The Chairman

Setup

Use this encounter when the player characters decide to meet with Chairman Yaobang or President Li Xinnian. The encounter flows the same whether or not the player characters come here before or after battling the "natural" disasters destroying China's food crop.

Player Information

You are standing in the world's largest public square, the Tian-an-men Square of Peking. It can easily hold a million people. Directly ahead stands the Assembly of the People, as large as a city block and topped with dozens of red flags.

Apparently, you are expected. A young man steps out of the crowd leaving the Assembly and says, "Please follow me: the President would like to meet you now." He wears the traditional gray uniform of the Chinese communist party.

After checking to be sure you are following, he leads the way inside, through a vast maze of corridors and into a private office. An elderly Chinese gentleman rises from

behind his desk and bows quickly. "I am President Xiannian. You may be seated."

GM Information

Although outwardly polite, Xiannian is suspicious of the heroes (+1 Opposing Value Column Modifier on a Persuasion Attempt by the Heroes.) Xiannian fears that the heroes are yet another ploy to wrestle control of the government from his hands. With the recent appointment of the small-time bureaucrat Ling Tse to Minister of Agriculture, he is determined not to make any mistakes that will cost him more leverage. Xiannian starts the conversation by asking the Heroes several questions:

1. Do they have any political acquaintances in China?
2. Why have they come to China?
3. What do they want in China?
4. (If appropriate) Why do they want to see the Chairman?
5. (If appropriate) Why are they asking about Ling Tse?

Xiannian will then dismiss the player characters without answering any of their questions, saying, "I see. So you have come to China to help. To help whom, may I ask? My political enemies? Do you believe I am that naive? I see their plan: hire a few western Heroes to solve China's problems, then claim the credit and force me from office!" Bynow, Xiannian would be considered Hostile (+3 Column Shift Modifier on a Persuasion Attempt by the Heroes.) Xiannian then asks the player characters to leave the country. (He contacts Washington if they ignore his request. Within a matter of hours, the player characters receive a call from General Rauch asking them, as a personal favor, to leave China immediately.)

The player characters may change Xiannian's attitude from Hostile to Friendly by pointing out that if they save China from the impending crisis, he can claim credit for their actions as easily as anybody. If they offer to reinforce this claim, Xiannian's attitude changes to Enamored. Xiannian's attitude also changes to Friendly if the player characters claim they are suspicious of Ling Tse.

If the Heroes befriend him (anything above Neutral), Xiannian tells them that the Chairman surprised his doctors by finding the energy to make a special trip to the Capitol to appoint Ling Tse Minister of Agriculture. The Chairman had not been out of bed for months before that, and has in fact fallen into a coma since that time. Xiannian provides the player characters with Ling's address and asks them to investigate.

If the Heroes investigate Ling Tse, go to Encounter 13

If the Heroes go to save the people in the flood, go to Encounter 11.

If the player characters are foolish enough to believe Ling in Encounter 13 and attempt to remove Xiannian from office, a dozen standard guards run to his aid as soon as he calls out. Of course, the player characters will probably succeed anyway. In this case, Ling gains total control of the Chinese government and Darkseid succeeds in spreading the famine throughout Asia.

Troubleshooting

If the player characters fail to pick up any of the hints directing them to see Xiannian or Ling Tse, Xiannian finally summons them to his office to have the discussion above. Unfortunately, by this time Ling has destroyed most of China's food supply and the famine will be in full swing within a week. The player characters might still succeed by ruining the rest of Darkseid's plans.

If the player characters don't succeed in befriending Xiannian and don't manage to locate Ling, Darkseid teleports to Panama after destroying the Chinese food crop. Go to Section 4: Pestilence in Panama

Encounter Thirteen: Ling's Palace

Setup

Use this encounter when the player characters come to meet Ling. Ling is always at home when the player characters come to meet him (Darkseid Teleports him back).

Player Information

Ling occupies a spacious mansion near the Beihai Park in Peking. From the grounds of his house, it is possible to see the beautiful Wall of Nine Dragons, an 80' x 15' ceramic bas relief of nine dragons frolicking in the waves.

GM Information

Ling's butler readily admits the player characters and shows them to a parlor furnished with 18th century French furniture. Ling himself joins them within a matter of minutes and invites them into his large sitting room. In each corner of the room is a small fountain. Within each something different bubbles; starting in the lower left corner and proceeding clockwise:

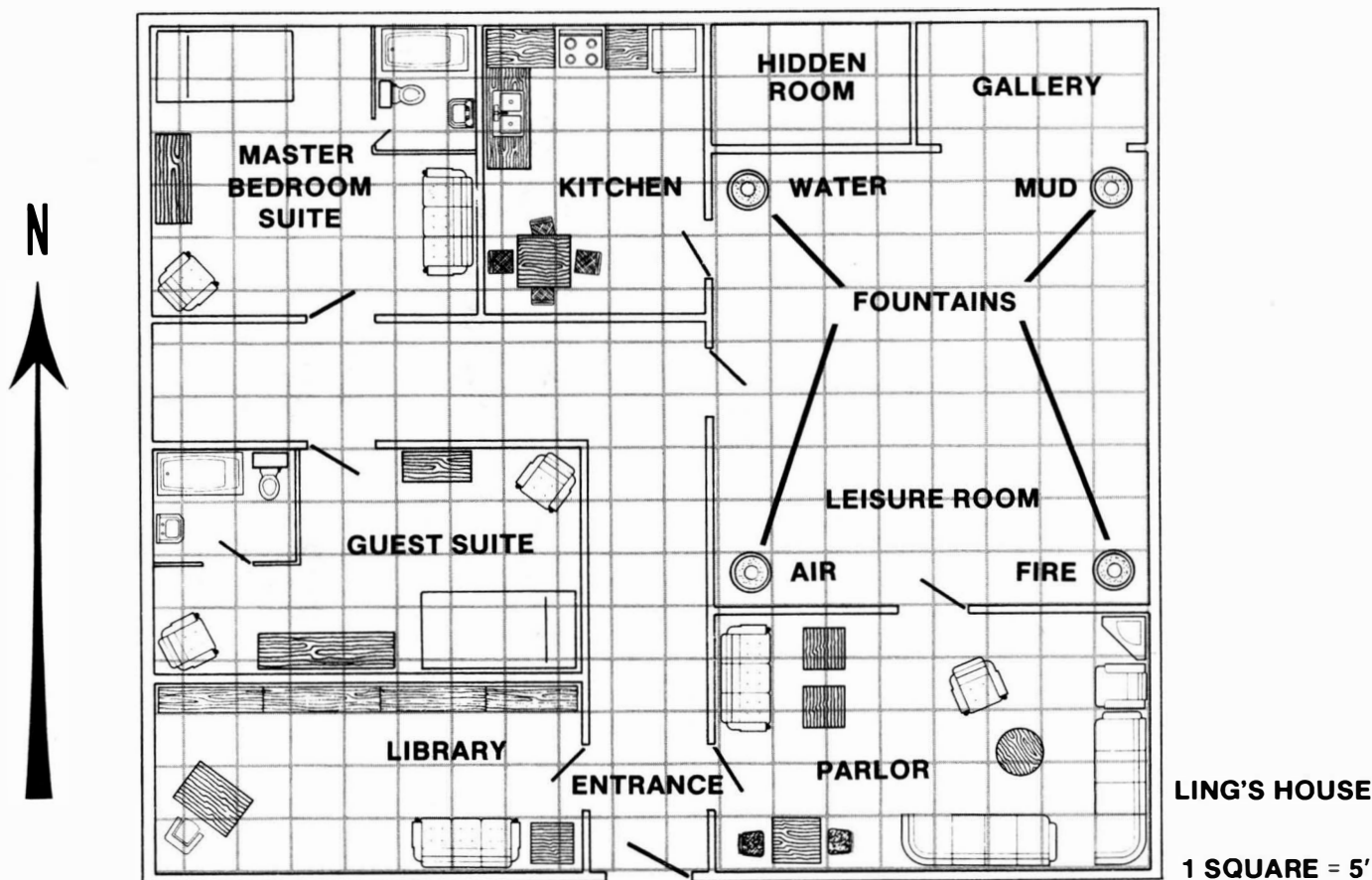
1. A steady stream of air shoots from this fountain;
2. A steady stream of water shoots from this fountain;
3. A steady stream of mud oozes from this fountain;
4. A steady stream of fire shoots from this fountain.

Ling has an assortment of European appetizers brought from the kitchen and offers them to the player characters. Ling seems to take special relish in serving exotic, expensive treats, especially considering he is the Minister of Agriculture in a famine-stricken nation. He often takes a single bite of something, sets it aside and takes a single bite out of something else.

Ling asks the player characters what brings them to China, how he may help them, etc. He readily accepts any offer of aid the player characters make, sending them to Tsinan to drain the flooded lands if they suggest nothing else.

Should the player characters suggest in any way that these disasters are not natural, Ling immediately implies that President Xiannian is employing sorcery or some such device to destroy China's crops this year. According to Ling, the President is so jealous of Ling's recent appointment that he would resort to anything to assure Ling's failure. Ling then asks the player characters to forcibly remove Xiannian from office and imprison him (If the Heroes do this, go to Encounter 12).

If the player characters question him about any mysterious books Ling gladly displays his library for their inspection. He attacks as soon as it is apparent that the player characters know his true identity (as would be true if the player characters entered the house without permission). Ling prefers to use Earth Control to open a huge pit, then seal the pit the next round in an attempt to trap the victim. Next, he attacks with fire, then a cyclone (trying for knockback damage off the Wall of Nine Dragons outside), and finally a wall of water. Although not always necessary, Ling prefers to point to the appropriate fountain when utilizing his Control Powers. For instance, when exercising Flame Control, Ling may point to the flame fountain and have the flames flow from there.



Should he be defeated, Ling falls (or remains) unconscious, then begins to mumble. After a few seconds, he is understandable, "No! It wasn't the fault of your humble servant, master! Please, another chance. . ." At this point, he screams horribly and his body expands into the shape of a black horse and rider, pulses like a beating heart for a moment, then disperses. (Once again, this is Darkseid's work.)

If the player characters search Ling's house (Opposing and Resistance values 5), they may discover a loose light fixture at the north end of the room. If they pull down on this fixture, part of the wall slides aside to reveal a hidden alcove. In this alcove sits an oak reading stand with a large black volume on it. The seven seals which previously held it closed have all been burst.

At this point, Abdul runs into the room, his hands still bandaged from his last encounter with the Book. (He has just flown into Peking on his private 727, then hired a limousine to bring him here. When he heard about the flood, he immediately surmised that the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, Ling Tse, possessed the book.)

"Allah be praised!" he screams. "*Mine at last, mine at last!*" As soon as he touches the book, a tremendous explosion rocks the house. A thick, blinding fog follows. When the fog clears, Abdul lies on the floor, stunned. "*I held it for a full second! Did you see? A full second. Allah be praised!*" Abdul doesn't seem to notice that he has second degree burns all over his body.

Once again, a few lines are burned into the reading stand:

"Again we meet and still you fight
But my victory shall be sweet,
As Pestilence awaits you in the night
In the place where continents meet."

As soon as the Players figure out that this clue refers to Panama, go to Section 4: Pestilence in Panama

Troubleshooting

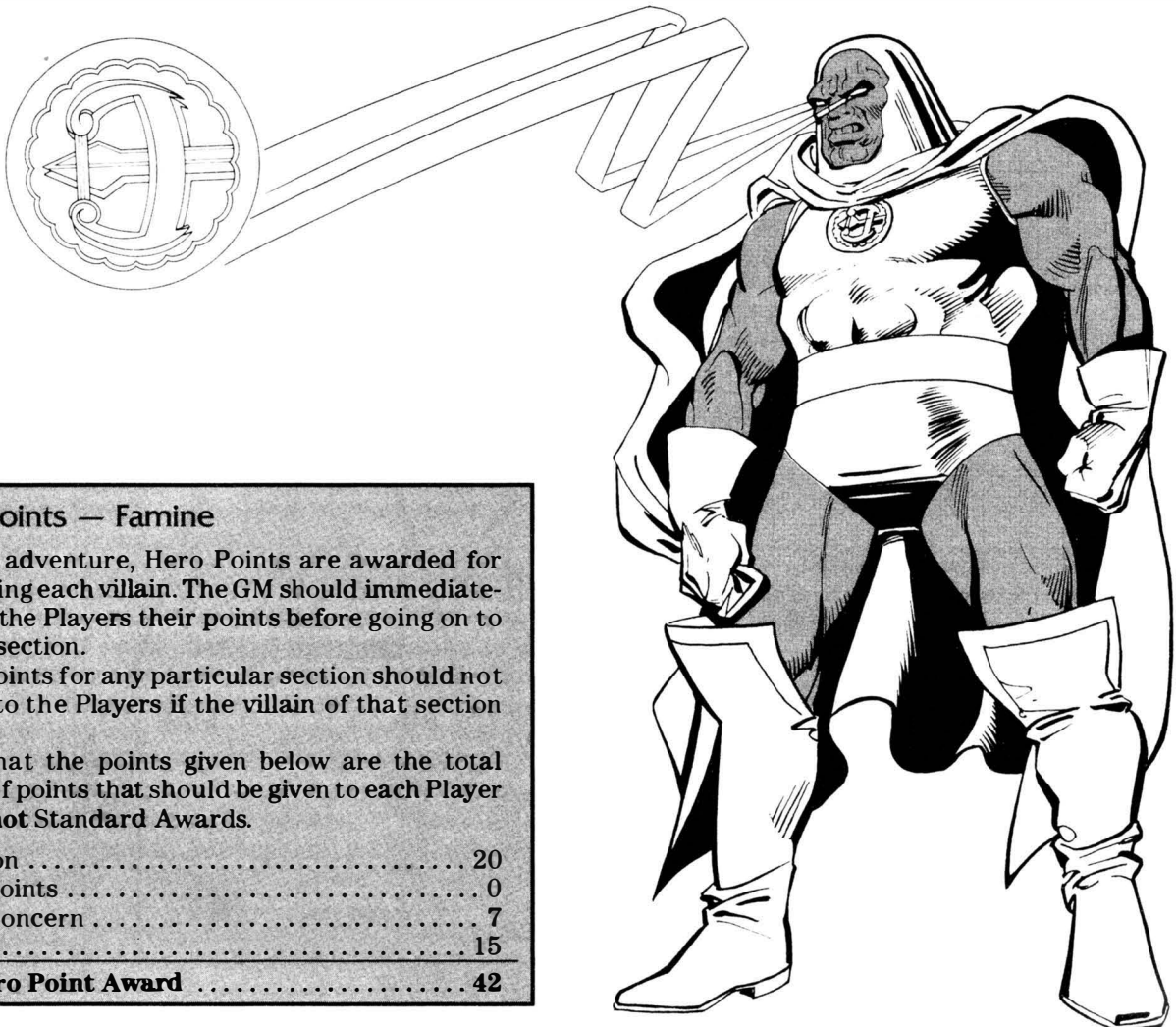
To arrive at Ling's house, the player characters must do quite a bit of detective work. Should they fail to follow the trail to Ling's house, Abdul contacts them and states that he has tracked the book to Ling's house. (He's willing to allow the player characters to dispose of Ling if they agree to turn the book over to him "for safe-keeping.")

Unfortunately, by the time Abdul contacts the player characters, the famine is already assured, and the player characters fail in this section. They might still succeed if they see the clue above and foil other parts of Darkseid's plan (see Section 4: Pestilence in Panama).

The player characters might fall for Ling's story about Xiannian. If they do, go to Encounter 12.

If the player characters prevent Abdul from seizing the book, it teleports the instant anyone else tries to touch it. The Book teleports after five minutes, even if it hasn't been touched.

Should the player characters be knocked unconscious, they awaken in a Chinese prison. Ling is nearby. He gloats about having cornered the food market throughout the entire continent of Asia. He no longer has his powers.



Hero Points — Famine

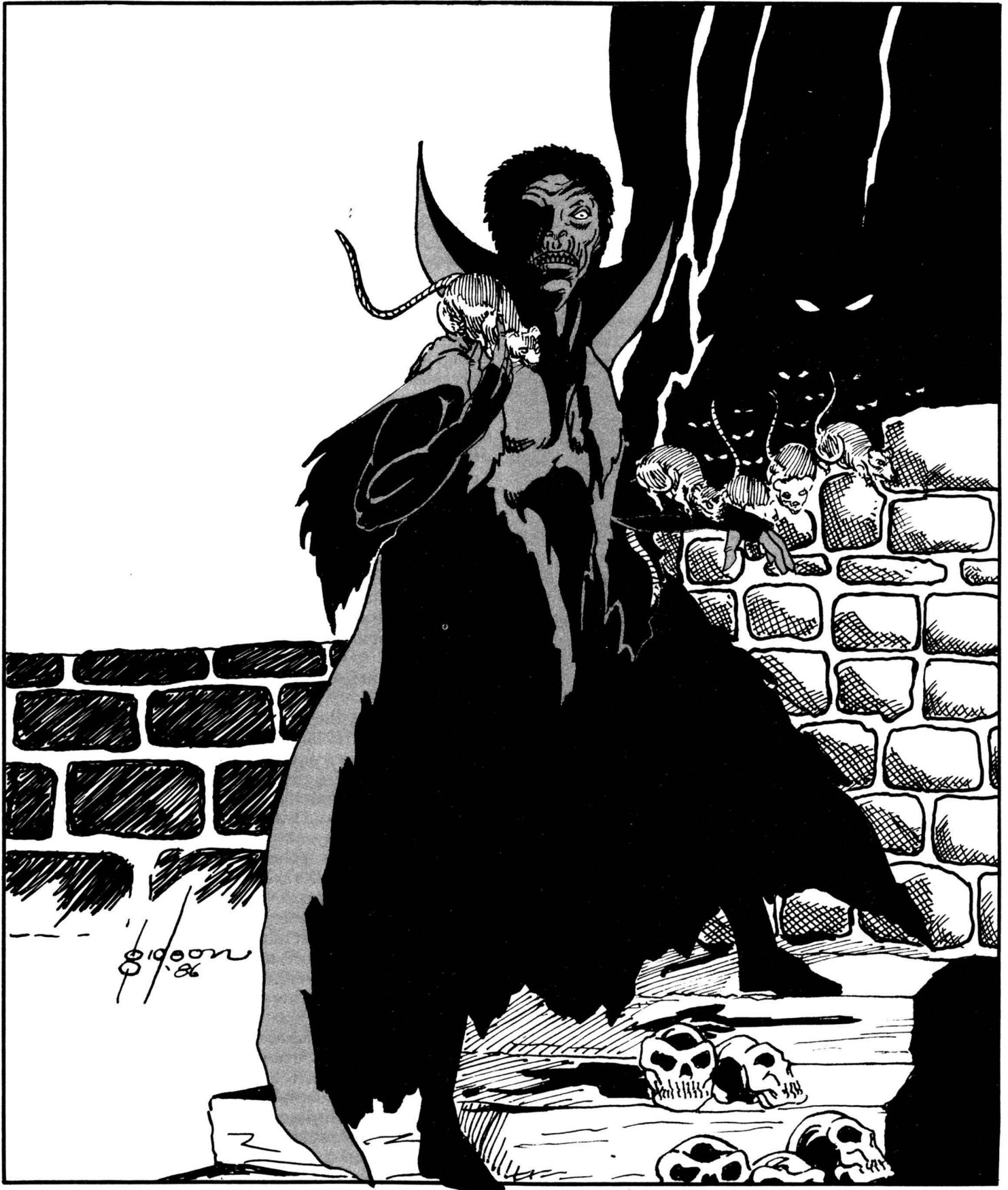
In this adventure, Hero Points are awarded for vanquishing each villain. The GM should immediately award the Players their points before going on to the next section.

Hero Points for any particular section should not be given to the Players if the villain of that section wins.

Note that the points given below are the total number of points that should be given to each Player and are **not** Standard Awards.

Opposition	20
Critical Points	0
Area of Concern	7
Severity	15
Total Hero Point Award	42

Section Three: Pestilence in Panama



The player characters may realize that the newspaper at the beginning of the adventure mentioned three countries, Libya, China, and Panama. So far, they have visited Libya and China; they may realize that Panama is the next victim of whatever is behind all this turmoil.

In this case, they may not have time to make recovery checks before meeting Pestilence, especially if they do a very good job and find him quickly. Be sure that each player is aware of his character's condition before beginning this section.

Encounter Fourteen: Panama

Setup

Use this encounter as the player characters approach Panama.

Player Information

The Rocky Mountains of North America greet the Andes of South America in Panama, a strip of land separating the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Here, the great mountains of both continents rise to only 300 feet, and the distance from coast to coast is as little as 35 miles. Barely 10 degrees north of the equator, the temperature in Panama is rarely below 90 degrees and the land is covered with mangrove swamps and jungle. Mosquitoes fill the air with malaria and fever lurks in every pool of water. Beneath the primeval forests of golden-red mahogany and ceiba trees, lianas and creepers weave an impenetrable net of undergrowth, which hides legions of poisonous snakes and insects.

The capital, Panama city, lies on the Pacific coast. It is a curious mixture of the ancient and the modern. The world's wealth has travelled through Panama since Balboa discovered the Pacific in 1513. More recently, ships have used the Panama canal to carry goods ranging from grain to heavy machinery throughout the world. Ships passing through this canal dock in every major harbor of the world.

GM Information

Now that they've arrived in Panama, the player characters must find the Book before Pestilence unleashes his diseases. They have two options: search the countryside until they find a clue (go to Encounter 16), or seek an audience with President Nicholas Ardito-Barletta (go to Encounter 15). Anything else they attempt eventually leads to one of these options. For instance, if they interview local physicians or scientists, the player characters learn that the president is rumored to be the only man who knows the location of the germ warfare research facility.

Troubleshooting

Unfortunately, Abdul feels that he no longer needs the player characters, so he won't lead them to the final confrontation as he may have in Sections 2 & 3. Player characters clever enough to monitor Abdul's movements, however, learn that he leaves Peking for Panama city shortly after the Book disappears.

If the player characters fail to travel to Panama on their own, six hours later the newspapers will report that an entire village in the Panamanian jungle has died of a strange disease. Go to Encounter 16; remember, the PCs are six hours late, so President Ardito-Barletta is now dead.

Encounter Fifteen: President Ardito-Barletta

Setup

Use this encounter when the player characters wish to meet with President Ardito-Barletta.

Player Information

President Ardito-Barletta greets you in a small, neatly furnished meeting room. "What do you wish with me?" the President asks.

GM Information

If it has been less than three hours since the Book teleported to Professor Mendez' hands from Peking, the president is completely unwilling to reveal the location of the germ warfare laboratory. His attitude toward the Heroes is Opposed to Character (+4 Opposing Value Column Shift Modifier to a Persuasion Attempt. His attitude cannot be changed beyond Neutral). The player characters must use extraordinary means to convince the President to do so. Ardito believes that the player characters are agents working for the U.S. government, which has been pressuring him to abandon the project.

"You do not understand," the President says. "The Panamanian people have no desire to fight a war with any nation. Just the opposite is true; we have carefully guarded our neutrality in all Central American affairs. This weapon will guarantee that we are able to maintain our neutrality by forcing other nations, especially our more rabid neighbors, to understand that to attack us is suicide."

At this time, the player characters cannot convince Ardito that the research poses any danger to his nation or the world. *"It is a sad day when the American government resorts to lies and Heroes to force its will on a tiny nation such as Panama,"* Ardito says.

Between three and five hours after the book teleported to Mendez, the player characters can convince Ardito to reveal the location of the laboratory by informing him of the mysterious deaths in the tiny village of San Andre (see Encounter 16). Ardito will confirm the player characters' story by calling his Minister of Health, then shake his head disbelievingly. *"How could such a thing happen? This was to be a weapon of peace, and now one of our own citizens has unleashed this weapon his nation."* He then tells the player characters where to find the laboratory (see Encounter 17).

While the player characters are with Ardito, Abdul enters the meeting room. Although the President is obviously somewhat taken aback at the unannounced intrusion, Abdul simply holds up his hand. *"A thousand pardons, your majesty. Forgive my tardiness, but my companions did not see fit to await me."* Abdul then asks to be briefed on the conversation this far, and makes a general nuisance of himself by asking questions such as

how long before Mendez completes the virus, where Mendez learned his biochemistry, is the germ warfare to take the form of a virus, etc.

As he does this, he uses his Pickpocketing skill on each of the player characters and the President. He will burn as many Hero points as he can to be unnoticed. He wishes to obtain an unobtrusive bit of clothing or other personal item. After he finishes, Abdul allows himself to be dismissed, although taking pains to appear insulted, *"After all I have done to help you!"*

If Abdul is questioned about how he travelled from Peking to Panama as fast as the player characters, he explains, *"It must have my contact with the book. I remember wishing that I were in Panama, and poof! here I am! It is a good thing, too, or you would have had nobody to keep you out of trouble."* (Actually, Darkseid, sensing that Abdul might prove useful, Teleported him to Mendez' laboratory. Though Mendez was surprised to see a chubby Arab suddenly appear in his secret workshop, he made the best of things and set Abdul to collecting personal items from possible sources of opposition.)

Six hours after the Book teleported to Mendez, Ardito mysteriously dies of a strange disease. He is found clutching a note pad, upon which are written the words "Gaillard Cut." Nearly anybody in Panama can tell the player characters that the Gaillard Cut is an eight-mile section of the canal running through the rugged country of the Continental Divide.

Go to Encounter 17.

Troubleshooting

The player characters may have means to force Ardito to reveal the secret laboratory's location against his will. In this case, the player characters simply arrive at the laboratory before Mendez completes his experiments (see Encounter 17).

If Abdul is caught pickpocketing, he explains that he dabbles in the mystic arts and wishes to make the lucky charm. He will not press the issue if the player characters refuse to give him what he desires.

Of course, if the player characters previously did something that prevents Darkseid from Teleporting Abdul to Panama, Abdul is not here.

Encounter Sixteen: San Andre

Setup

After the player characters have been in Panama for three hours, Mendez (Pestilence) tests a very potent version of the Black Virus (with no incubation period) on the tiny village of San Andre. As the player characters search Panama for clues, they notice dozens of hospital helicopters flying toward San Andre. Use this encounter when they follow to investigate.

Player Information

The helicopters chop their way through the air to the tiny, isolated jungle village of San Andre. They land in a hubbub of activity: dozens of soldiers wearing sanitary white protection suits gather bodies and place them into sealed containers — the containers are placed in special carrier pods on the helicopters and flown away.

You see one of the bodies: the normally dark brown skin is mottled with patches of dull black; the patches seem to pull the skin so tight that the rest of the flesh is torn in places. The lips are pulled back in a grimace of pain, the

eyes bulge with surprise: the disease hit suddenly and the pain dropped him in the middle of the street.

The disease hit the entire town with the same suddenness: everyone in the town died within minutes of the disease's arrival.

GM Information

Mendez used San Andre to test his Black Virus formula and its delivery system, the common rat. As player characters investigate, they notice that, besides the effect of the disease on the skin, the iris of each victim's eyes has turned black. This is because the virus alters the victim's blood chemistry, turning the blood black.

Player characters also notice hundreds of rats in the vicinity. As Mendez hoped, the rats are unaffected by the virus and can continue to spread it indefinitely. Any player character not taking precautions against the disease must make an Action Check. The disease has an Acting Value of 20 and an Effect Value of 11. The player character uses his BODY as both OV and RV. (This strain dies within an hour and does not spread.) Once the disease is contracted, the player character is attacked once a day with an AV of 10 and EV of 10. The disease will rage for 5 days then stop. Characters with the disease are not contagious.



If the player characters think to look in the cities or ports for rats, they quickly discover (Perception Check OV/RV: 7) that all of the rats in Panama are travelling toward one spot: the secret laboratory in the Gaillard Cut. Pestilence hopes to use his Animal Control to slip his rat-carriers aboard ships bound for all parts of the world.

Troubleshooting

If the player characters fail to go to San Andre on their own and have not yet discovered the location of the secret laboratory, the President contacts them to request that they investigate the tiny village. When they report what they have found, he reveals the location of the secret laboratory.

Encounter Seventeen: The Laboratory

Setup

A solitary ship is anchored in Gaillard Cut. This is Mendez' laboratory. Use this encounter when the player characters specifically state that they are studying the Panama Canal for signs of the laboratory, when the player characters have learned the secret laboratory's location from the President, or when they follow the migrating rats to this location.

Player Information

The sea is calm in the eight mile stretch of Gaillard Cut. The only sign of man is the solitary rusted hulk of a ship anchored at a lonely pier.

There is only one sign of life in Galliard Cut: a rat crawls up the mooring line onto the rusty old tanker.

Seconds later he is followed by another rat. And another. And another. And another. . .

GM Information

Mendez is aware of the player characters' presence. If Abdul was able to bring him the personal items Mendez asked for, Mendez begins using Voodoo on the character with the most Hero Points. Describe the attack as if the character is being twisted or smashed by an invisible assailant.

Once the characters are within sight, Mendez uses Magical Blast. When he is in combat, Mendez uses Spiritual Drain and Vampirism.

As the player characters progress through the ship, they may discover some interesting things. Player characters taking the time to search the rooms find:

1. Rec Room: A hastily abandoned game of pool.

2. Showers: Empty.

3. Assistants' bedrooms: The personal belongings of four people, two men and two women.

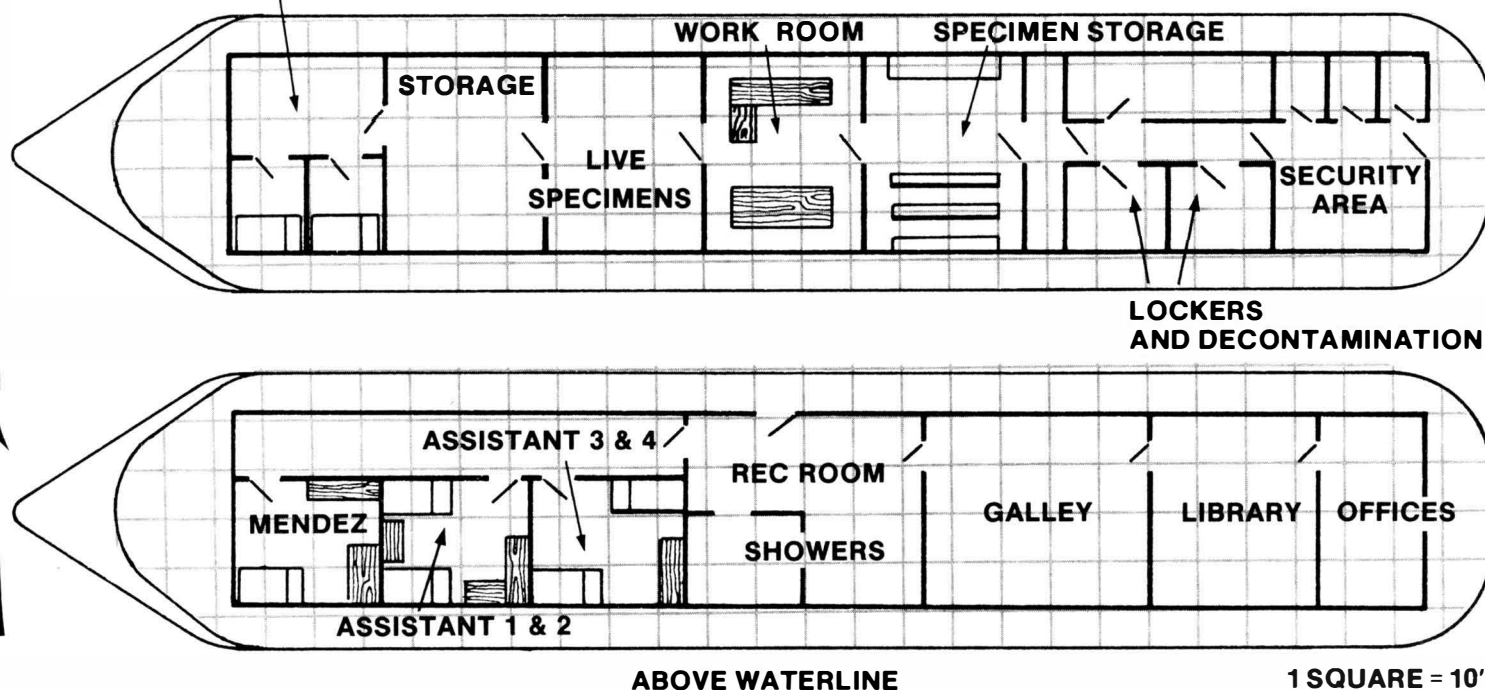
4. Mendez' bedroom: His personal journal. It indicates that yesterday he found the breakthrough he needed to complete the virus. Any player character with Scientist or Medicine skill can attempt to create an antidote to the virus after reading the journal. See notes on the Black Virus below.

5. Galley: Several pounds of putrid-smelling green mold. The mold is simply normal mold; it grew after the food had been left out for some time. (This mold will not be here if the player characters arrive here within five hours of the Book of Power's arrival.) Two hundred rats are searching for food here. Mendez uses Animal Control to force 10 rats to attack each player character as the party passes through this room (Acting and Effect values 10 APs; treat as a single attack).

6. Library: Hundreds of scientific treatises on controlling viruses. There is a charred black spot in the middle of

MENDEZ' HIDDEN LABORATORY

ISOLATION AND OBSERVATORY



the table, in the shape of a large open book. This is where Darkseid appeared.

7. Offices: There are four standard office desks in the room. In the corner is a somewhat larger desk. This desk contains a set of research notes with the cryptic message: "See personal journal. This may be it."

Second Level

8. Security Area: Two security guards in comas. (Darkseid thought it best to silence them.)

9. Lockers: There are two male lab assistants stuffed into the first two lockers and two female lab assistants stuffed into the next two. All are in a coma. (They were in the library when Mendez picked up the book. Darkseid thought it best to silence them.)

10. Airlock: Only one door leading into the airlock may be opened at a time. When the player characters enter this room, Mendez uses the emergency isolation button in the workroom to seal both doors of the airlock. He then starts the airpump; there will not be enough air to breathe within four phases. Without a rebreathing device, each hero will begin suffocating. The heroes have to roll their BODY Attribute against itself (as AV, EV, OV, and RV) once per phase to see if they pass out. If the current BODY level goes below 0, that hero will pass out. This is considered Killing Combat: if the BODY value goes to greater than twice its negative value, the character is dead.

The airlock doors and walls have a body of 17 APs.

11. Specimen Storage: The dissected remains of several species of animals are stored here in jars of formaldehyde. If Abdul was able to deliver the personal items to Mendez, he uses his Voodoo power on the player characters here. He makes a multi-attack by throwing all of the player character dolls against the wall; in addition to taking damage from the knockback, each player character breaks five jars for every RAP. Unless a player character declared that he was holding his breath when the attack began, the player characters suffer a physical attack from the effects of the formaldehyde. The attack has 4 Acting and Effect APs for every ten jars broken (round up). For instance, if there are 40 broken jars of formaldehyde in the room, the player character suffers a physical attack with an Acting/Effect value of 16 APs.

12. Workroom: This appears to be a classical laboratory. It is filled with test tubes, beakers, Bunsen burners, and so forth. As the player characters enter, Mendez is standing at the far end of the room near an open door, holding a beaker filled with a black liquid. During his turn, he uses Magical Blast on the player character who looks the strongest. For his movement, he steps into the next room and closes the door. Mendez uses Spiritual Drain and/or Vampirism if grappled. One doll representing each player character lies against the north wall. The personal item that Abdul stole (or borrowed) from each player character is attached to a doll.

13. Storage Room: This room is filled top to bottom with rats. As the party enters this room, Mendez uses Animal Control to force the rats to attack the player characters. Each player character is attacked by 15 rats (Acting Value 15, Effect Value 2; treat as a single combat). During his movement, Mendez flees to the next room. The rats will not attack if Mendez is unconscious at this point.

14. Isolation and Observation Room: If Mendez is still conscious, he makes his stand at this point. He begins by saying, "So, you disguised dimwits think you can stop me! Hah, hah, I've already won." Mendez holds up the beaker of black liquid. "Take another step, and I'll drop this

beaker." (Use Mendez' Initiative score to determine the beaker's Initiative if Mendez drops it.) Mendez then uses Magical Blast on the player character with the greatest ability to harm him (choose randomly if you're not sure which).

Two 10' x 10' isolation cells stand at the south wall of this room. In one cell is Abdul, conscious but obviously very sick. The irises of his eyes are growing black. He will die within 8 hours if the player characters don't save him. In the other cell, the Book of Power rests on a cedar reading stand.

Mendez' Tactics: If the player characters try to stop Mendez from reaching the Isolation and Observation room, he threatens to drop the beaker. True to his word, Mendez drops the beaker at the first sign of hostility from the player characters. If that beaker reaches the floor, it breaks, filling the air with the deadly Black Virus. All of the player characters are affected (unless they're wearing sanitation suits or have Sealed Systems). Worse, if any opening exists to the outside world (such as through a smashed airlock), the Black Virus makes it to the outside world.

Mendez uses Spiritual Drain and Vampirism any time the player characters attempt to grapple him, and uses Magical Blast if they don't attempt to grapple. Mendez attempts to eliminate the most dangerous opponent first, then proceeds to the next, etc. If one type of attack proves ineffective, he switches to another. Assuming Mendez received the personal items needed to make voodoo dolls, he fights until his Hero Points are expended then "surrenders." (He will fight to the end if he has no voodoo dolls.)

As the player characters question him, Mendez uses Animal Control to force the rats to bring his voodoo dolls to him. A Perception Check (OV: 6, RV: 10) should be made to see if the heroes notice the rats. If they do not, the rats attack with Surprise.

If the player characters fail, they don't notice the rats bringing the voodoo dolls to Mendez until he has them in his hand; begin combat normally. If they succeed, the player characters notice the dolls before they reach Mendez. Mendez begins combat again as soon as it is clear that he has no chance of retrieving the dolls.

If Mendez loses the battle, he falls (or remains) unconscious. He mumbles in his sleep for a short time, then says more clearly, "No—not that, Your worship! Please. . ." He shrieks, and his body expands until it takes the shape of a black horse and rider, pulses for a moment and fills the room with the foul odor of death, then disperses.

Abdul then begs for forgiveness, "Please, my wonderful saviors, forgive this son of a knave. I wasn't myself. My lust for power overcame my good sense, and I betrayed you by stealing your personal items." He glances at the Book. "My desires are a curse. I am through with such base emotions. I shall become a hermit, forsaking all worldly desire in favor of reflection and solitude. A pox on the Book of Power!" Abdul exclaims.

His words are no sooner spoken than a brilliant light flashes, a thunderclap rings the air, and the room fills with smoke. When the smoke clears, Abdul lies dazed on the floor. He is covered head to toe with pock marks. The Book is gone, but these lines are burned into the reading stand.

"Three times we have met, my foes,
And yet you still draw breath.
My fourth Horseman will be your last woe,
For no one has yet beaten Death."
The Heroes should go to Section 4: Death in Denver

Notes on the Black Virus

The Black Virus in the beaker is the latest strain. If it is exposed to the outside world, it infects one person the first AP of time it is exposed, two the second, four the third, eight the fourth, etc. If the player characters are to contain the virus before it becomes a world epidemic, they must find an antidote and make it available to world health organizations before 14 APs (12 hours) pass. During this time, the player characters can do nothing else: they are busy gathering the rare ingredients from all corners of the earth, finding the infected people, and manufacturing more serum.

Player characters who have been exposed to the virus themselves are treated as having the Poison Touch Power (12 APs) used against them.

Player characters can discover the secret of the virus, and perhaps consequently create a serum, by reading Mendez' personal journal (which can be found in his room). Any player character with Medicine or Scientist skill can attempt to make a serum. Opposing and Resistance values are 24. Subtract the RAPs from 25; this is the amount of time required for a person to recover from the virus when using this serum. Unfortunately, however, the ingredients for the serum are not available in great quantities, so it cannot be used to stop the disease once it has spread for more than 14 APs (12 hours).

Hero Points — Pestilence

In this adventure, Hero Points are awarded for vanquishing each villain. The GM should immediately award the Players their points before going on to the next section.

Hero Points for any particular section should not be given to the Players if the villain of that section wins.

Note that the points given below are the total number of points that should be given to each Player and are **not** Standard Awards.

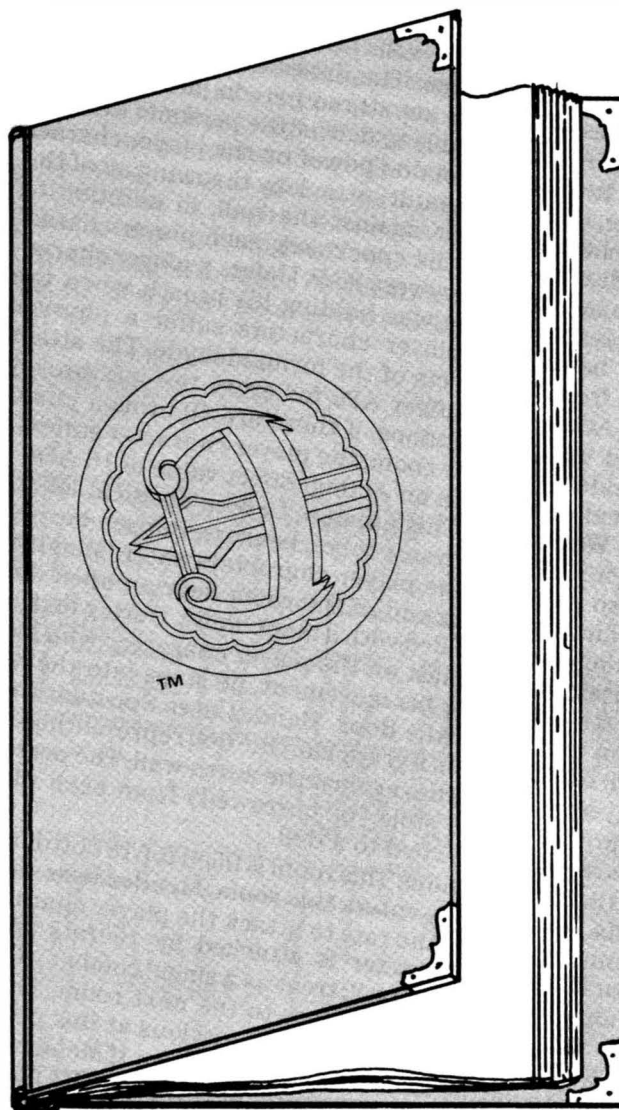
Opposition	25
Critical Points	0
Area of Concern	15
Severity	15
Total Hero Point Award	55

Troubleshooting

The player characters may enter the secret laboratory either through the main hatch, which brings them into the recreation room, or by penetrating the hull of the ship. If the player characters penetrate the hull, ask them to pick a location on its exterior. They will enter the appropriate area inside the ship; if they enter above the waterline they are on the upper level, if they enter below the waterline they are on the lower level.

If the player characters manage to revive and/or question any of the lab assistants, the assistant reports that a large black book appeared on the library research table. Mendez opened the book, screamed in unbearable pain, seemed to undergo some sort of mental struggle, then screamed, "Eureka! I have it!" They remember nothing else.

If the player characters are knocked unconscious, they awaken in an isolation cell with Abdul. They quickly notice that they have been exposed to the virus, for their irises are turning black. Mendez is watching from the other side of the bullet-proof glass (Body of 7 APs). He no longer has his powers, but the virus has begun to spread.



Section Four: **Death in Denver**



After defeating Pestilence, the player characters might guess that the Book of Power has teleported to A1 Defense and proceed there immediately. If so, remind each player of his character's condition before beginning this section (the player characters may need to take time to recover). Player characters going directly to A1 Defense without stopping to recover or doing anything else start this section at Encounter 20.

Most player characters, however, will need to recover after the last battle, may not have guessed where the Book has gone, or will be busy preventing a Black Virus epidemic. While they are going about their tasks, these player characters hear some unusual news over the radio and in the newspapers: A1 Defense is advertising for new employees in every major paper in the West. Even more unusual is the nature of the advertisement. See the A-1 ad, and give a copy to the Players.

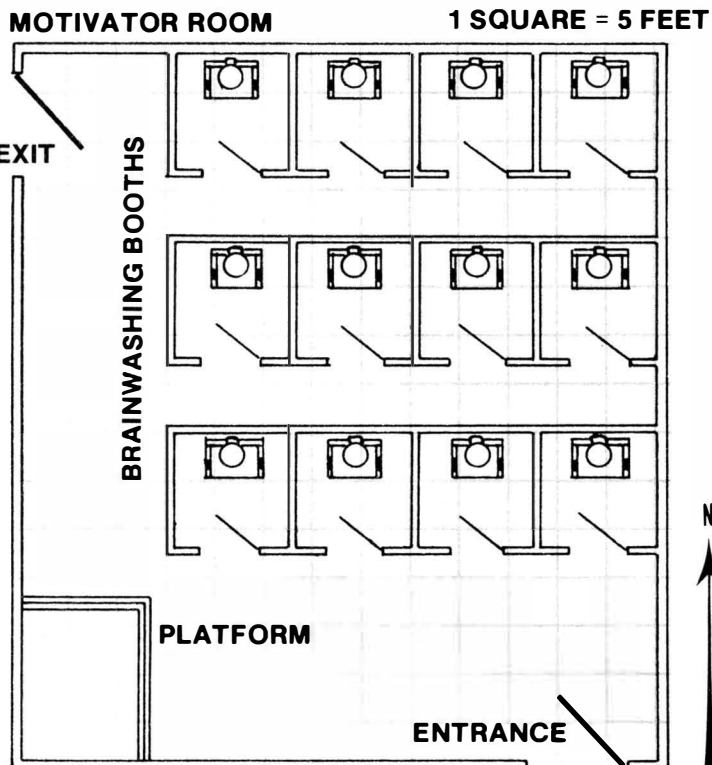
Player characters proceeding to A1 after hearing this advertisement begin at Encounter 18.

Encounter Eighteen: A-1 Defense

Setup

Take a moment to figure out how many hours it requires the player characters to reach A1 Defense after Darkseid Teleported to J.R. Richardson. Remember, a Bashing Recovery check requires a full hour, and a Resting Recovery check requires 24 hours. If the player characters were exposed to the Black Virus, it may be many hours before the serum takes effect and they are ready to tackle another of Darkseid's Avatars. If the player characters had to stop a Black Virus epidemic, they automatically lose 12 hours because of their confinement and must take time to develop and use the serum before leaving Mendez' secret lab, or they'll spread the disease.

If it required more than 16 hours for the player characters to reach this point, proceed directly to Encounter 21.



Player Information

Once again, you are at A1's sprawling plant near the snow-capped Rocky Mountains. A line of eager people runs from the plant's entrance to a point nearly a mile down the road; they are apparently here to seek employment. The people in the line are cheerful and jovial, as if all wishes are about to be fulfilled.

GM Information

The line moves along quickly and efficiently. Any attempt to dissuade the people from entering the complex meets with failure; those in the line are considered Opposed to Character to the heroes, giving them a +4 Column Shift Modifier to a Persuasion attempt; they cannot be persuaded beyond Neutral. They want too badly to believe that they have finally found the perfect job. Even if they knew the truth, many of the poor souls in this line would still take the job.

The line leads to DeSaad's recently completed Motivator (brainwashing) machine. As each person enters the room, DeSaad (whom Darkseid has disguised as a mousy-looking teenager) takes him/her by the arm and leads the way to one of a dozen wooden booths. "Have a seat, my precious," he hisses. "This way to perpetual employment. This is just a little screening device, so we can determine where you'll be happiest." After he has filled each booth, DeSaad turns to the others standing in the door and says, "It only hurts for a moment, heh heh," then pulls a lever. Inside the booth, a metal skull cap quickly latches onto the person's head, gives him an electric shock just for DeSaad's pleasure, then brainwashes that person. Outside the booth, future victims hear only a short scream, then see DeSaad pull the curtain back and lead the "newly hired" into another room.

Normal humans have no chance at all of resisting the attack, and any Hero that allows himself to be placed in one of the brainwashing booths is subjected to a Mental Attack. The brainwashing machine has an Acting and Effect Value of 12. If the RAPs exceed the character's Mind, the character is under Darkseid's control. He must make a successful Mental Attack against Darkseid to do anything that would harm Darkseid, his Avatars, or DeSaad. The RAPs are the number of APs in time the character may act freely.

J.R. stands on a platform to the left of the booths. He is dressed in a long black robe, with the hood pulled up over his head. Should any player character refuse to enter the booth when his turn comes, J.R. points to the booth and says, in a deep booming voice, "Enter." If the player character still refuses, he uses the Bio-Energy Blast (multi-attacking if necessary). At the first sign of resistance, or if the player characters attempt to talk with him, he presses the elevator button and descends to the superbunker (go to Encounter 19). DeSaad goes to the Megatank as soon as he can without attracting the Heroes' attention. (If the player characters attack DeSaad, Darkseid Teleports him to safety.)

Troubleshooting

The player characters may try to arrange things so that one of them enters a brainwashing booth ahead of the others. Neither DeSaad nor J.R. objects. Heroes who are brainwashed may attempt to counteract its effects by making a Mental Attack against the Control Power with the Player character's INT as the Acting Value and the WILL as the Effect Value.

If the player character fails, he is seized by an overwhelming desire to attack his companions and must spend 10 Hero Points to resist it. In addition, any time the party encounters a combat situation, brainwashed Heroes are treated as Controlled by Darkseid as per the Control Power in the *Powers and Skills Manual* of the DC Heroes basic set.

Player characters who allow themselves to be brainwashed, or who pretend to be brainwashed, are assigned duties as infantrymen in one of the Terror Brigades that emerge with the Megatank.

Encounter Nineteen:

Surprise, Surprise

Setup

Use this encounter when the heroes follow J.R. down the elevator into the superbunker. If the player characters infiltrated the plant by pretending to allow themselves to be brainwashed and later search the plant, they eventually find the elevator shaft. In both cases, they find J.R. as described below.

Player Information

The elevator shaft leads into the ground a half mile. There is barely half an inch between the elevator guides and the wall.

GM Information

When the player characters are within one phase's travel of the bottom, they see JR standing at the lower entrance (just inside the Superbunker). Make a Perception check for each player character OV/RV: 13. If there are any RAPs, they will notice J.R. look over their heads and smile.

J.R. has just released the cement counterweight, and it is plummeting down the elevator toward the heroes. Unless somebody stops it, it strikes the player characters with an AV/EV of 18. Use J.R.'s Initiative score to determine whether an unsurprised player character has an opportunity to stop the falling weight before it strikes the party.

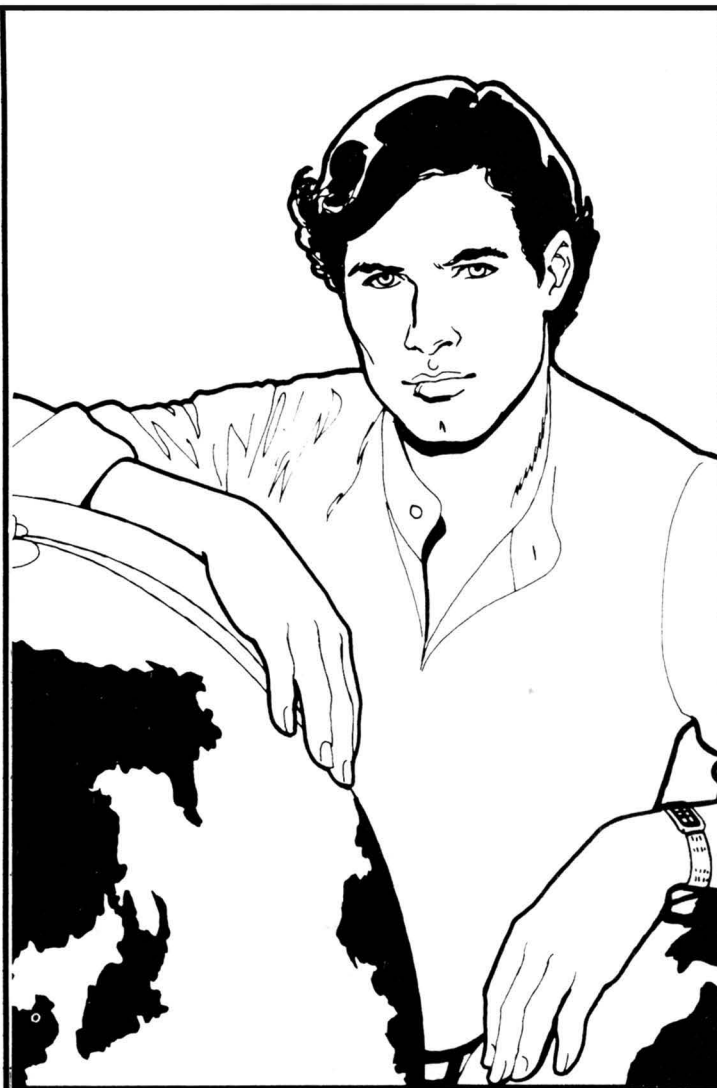
Whether or not the player characters notice the counterweight, J.R. seals the Superbunker.

No matter how quick they are, the player characters cannot prevent JR from sealing the Superbunker. If a player character wins the Initiative and tries to grapple J.R. (abandoning his companions to the falling counterweight), the best he can do is find himself sealed inside the Superbunker with J.R. In this case, J.R. fights until either he or the player character is unconscious, using Spiritual Drain or Magical Blast, whichever is more effective.

If J.R. wins, he proceeds as he had planned (go to Encounter 20); if he loses, the heroes win (see the end of Encounter 22 for a description of what happens to J.R.).

Troubleshooting

Player characters who have infiltrated the plant and believe they are sneaking down the shaft may wonder how JR knew to be waiting at the bottom. The answer is simple: DeSaad knew that some heroes would show up sooner or later, so he installed a detector on the brainwashing machine. J.R. has had the player characters under surveillance since they left the booths.



A-1 Defense wants you!

We need good men and women for a very special job, and we guarantee that we pay more than your present employer.

Apply in person at A-1 Defense; we won't turn you down. If you're out of work, bored with your present job, or were just released from prison, walk, run, or fly to A-1 today!

No previous employment required, no security checks, references or anything else needed. Apply today! You won't be sorry.

All you have to do is to submit to a simple brainwashing that doesn't hurt too much and is not generally fatal and please allegiance to A-1 Defense.

Encounter Twenty: The Superbunker

Setup

J.R. originally designed the Superbunker to house the Doomsday Bomb, both to protect the world from any malfunctions in the Doomsday mechanism and to protect the bomb from defusion attempts. Darkseid has arranged a few small improvements. The Players' Information assumes players all begin the encounter outside the bunker. If any player character starts the encounter inside the bunker, see Troubleshooting below.

If the heroes came straight to this encounter from Panama they quickly learn from plant employees that J.R. has gone mad and locked himself in the Superbunker. In this case he has not yet had time to complete many of his preparations, and the employment ads have not yet hit the streets.

Player Information

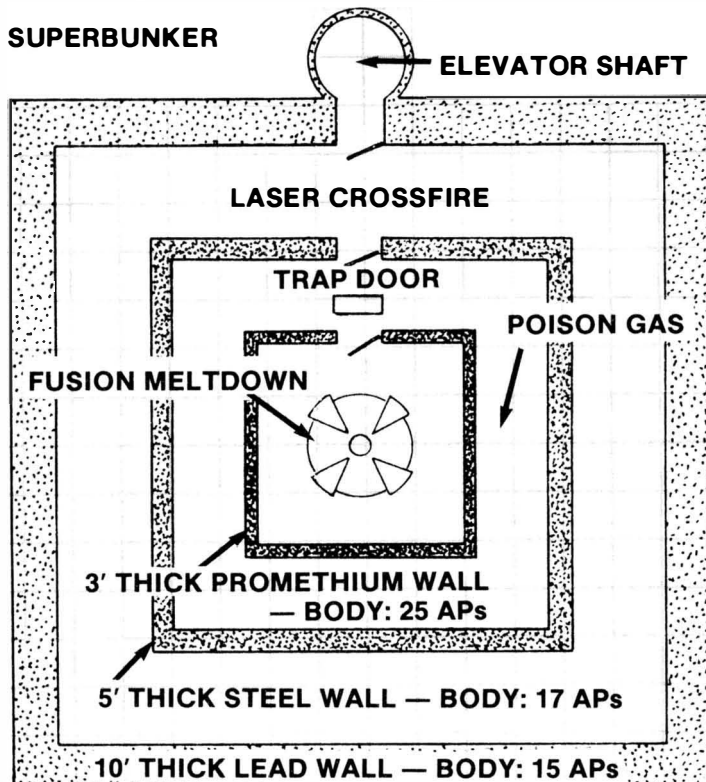
A lead wall stands before you. Somewhere behind it is J.R. Richardson; he is not in his right mind, somehow stronger and faster than a normal human should be, and in the same room with the Doomsday Bomb.

GM Information

The lead wall is ten feet thick. It has a Body of 15 APs. It is impossible to pick the lock: JR permanently sealed it when he closed the door. Once they are inside the first area, the player characters are subject to computer guided laser fire. Each player character is team-attacked by 4 lasers. (AV: 11, EV: 4.)

Unless a player character successfully grappled J.R. in the outer area of the Superbunker, J.R. has already passed through the second wall. This wall is a 5 foot thick steel wall, with a body of 17 APs. This lock has also been permanently sealed to prevent lockpicking.

SUPERBUNKER



When the player characters try to penetrate this wall, they cause the release of a deadly gas in the inner area. As they break through, the gas rushes out. Treat it as a physical attack with an Acting Value of 10 and an Effect Value of 16. (For purposes of this attack, Skin Armor does not add to the Resistance Value, although Force Field does.) J.R. will be gone by the time the player characters reach this area.

The third wall is promethium (25 APs). On each side of the wall is an electric panel, flashing this message:

"Doomsday Bomb Status: Activated.
Condition: Irreversible.
Detonation: One hour."

Beneath the sign is a handwritten note:
"Catch me if you can, mortals!"

Any player character penetrating the promethium wall suffers radiation damage from the fusion reaction. The Acting Value is the number of APs over of 25 that the wall has taken and the Effect Value is 20. If the player characters enlarge the hole, both Acting Value and Effect Values go up 1 AP for each extra AP of damage. Skin Armor does not help against this attack; Force Field does. This is considered Killing Combat.

Richardson left via the trap door in the ceiling and is even now starting the Megatank. The player characters notice the trap door if they look up. (If they do not say that they look up, a Perception Check AV/EV: 2 can be rolled by the GM.)

If the player characters don't stop the bomb within an hour, it penetrates the mantle of the earth and releases a tremendous volcanic eruption that wipes out 9,999 out of every 10,000 people. Darkseid will have succeeded in this phase of his plan.

Any type of physical material contacting the bomb (including Heroes) simply becomes fuel for fusion AV: 20, EV: 40. A Perception Check (AV/EV: 4) will let the Heroes know that it would be dangerous to touch the bomb, and use of the Scientist skill (AV/EV: 5) will tell them why. To stop the bomb, the player characters must take it into space; this probably requires finding a magnetic field generator (S.T.A.R. Labs would have one but it would take a half hour to get it here and set up) or using a force field of some sort. The generator need not be super powerful; a minimum Effect Value of 10 APs would be suitable.

Any player character with Scientist skill examining the Doomsday bomb may realize what it is and what will happen if they don't stop it. For the purpose of determining what it is, the Doomsday Bomb has an Opposing/Resistance Value of 1; any character achieving 1 RAP knows what it is immediately.

Troubleshooting

If any player character managed to slip into the Superbunker before J.R. sealed the first door, J.R. tries to knock the player character unconscious, then proceed with his plan. Keep careful track of the number of phases that pass before the other player characters make their way into the bunker; they may reach J.R. before he has chance to escape. Should the player characters defeat J.R. here, go to the end of Encounter 21 to see what happens. If JR defeats the player characters here, he uses the brainwashing machines on them (see Encounter 18).

Encounter Twenty-One: The Megatank

Setup

J.R. unleashes the Megatank at one of two times: 16 hours after he opens the book, or immediately after the player characters chase him through the Superbunker. The difference is this: if he has the extra 16 hours the Megatank is fully operational. If he doesn't have that much time, DeSaad's crews can't complete all of the work before J.R. starts the tank. See Gamemaster's Information below for details.

The player characters hear of the Megatank within a few minutes of its activation.

Player Information

The Megatank has been operational for only a few moments by the time you arrive, yet already it threatens to wreak incredible destruction. A two-mile-wide path has been evacuated through downtown Denver as the Megatank prepares to level the city.

Even as you watch, a flight of F-16s dives at the Megatank, their guns blazing and missiles streaking through the air. The planes unload enough firepower to sink a fleet. The Megatank plows through the billowing smoke: it hasn't been scratched.

GM Information

The Megatank is indeed an awesome weapon, and Darkseid has added a touch or two. It is equipped with:

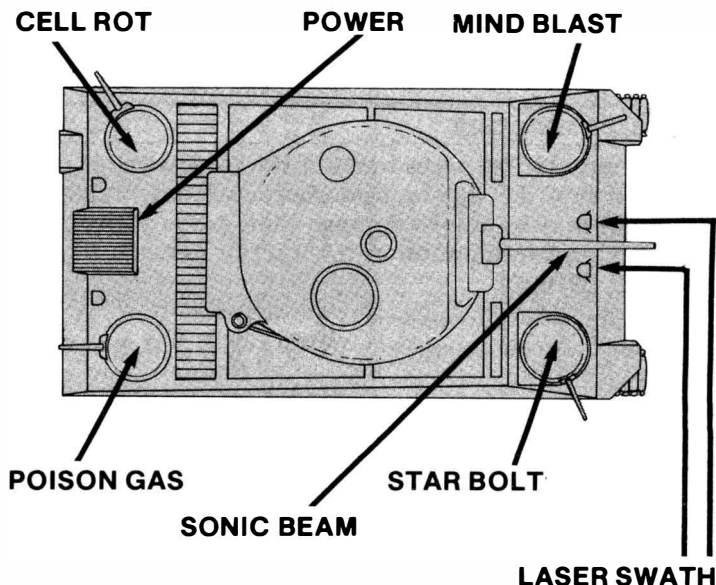
1. Forward right turret: Star Bolt (AV/EV: 20 APs)
2. Forward left turret: Mind Blast (AV/EV: 20 APs)
3. Rear left turret: Cell rot (AV/EV: 20 APs)
4. Rear right turret: Poison Gas (AV/EV: 20 APs).
5. Large center turret: Sonic Blast (AV/EV: 25 APs).
6. Front side: Sweep Lasers (AV/EV: 7 APs).
7. Interior source: Energy Absorption (30 APs).
8. Interior source: Sealed Systems (20 APs).

It is powered by the Book of Power. The Megatank coasts over the ground on antigravity beams, and is capable of a Speed of 8 APs.

If the player characters meet the Megatank less than 16 hours after the Book of Power was teleported to J.R., subtract the number of hours it required them to meet the tank from 16. Subtract this result from the Acting and Effect values of each of the Megatank's powers (but not its speed).

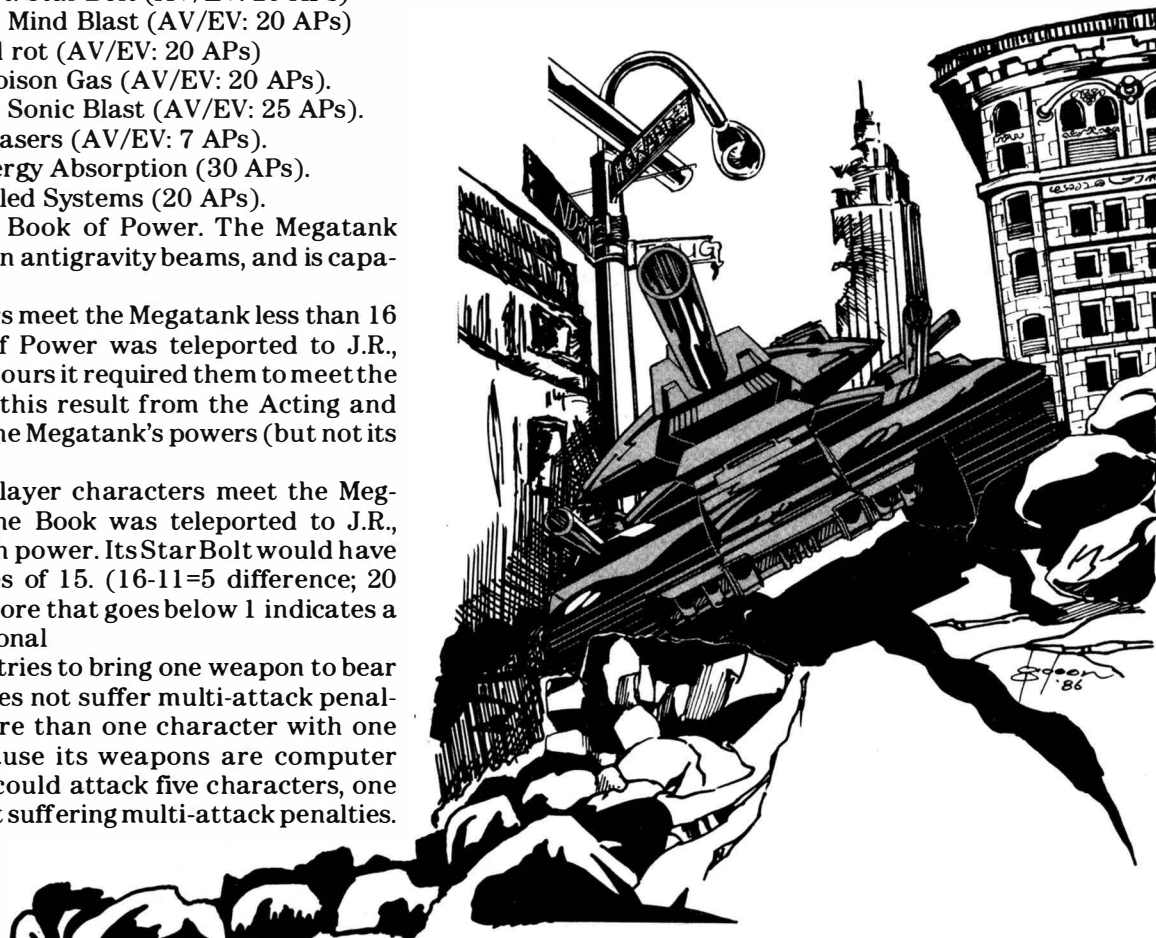
For example, if the player characters meet the Megatank 11 hours after the Book was teleported to J.R., subtract 5 APs from each power. Its Star Bolt would have Acting and Effect values of 15. (16-11=5 difference; 20 APs-5=15 result.) Any score that goes below 1 indicates a power that is not functional.

The Megatank always tries to bring one weapon to bear on each character. It does not suffer multi-attack penalties as it attacks no more than one character with one weapon at a time because its weapons are computer guided. For instance, it could attack five characters, one with each turret, without suffering multi-attack penalties.



MEGATANK

DEX: 8	STR: 19	BODY: 19
USES: 4	DURATION: 21	
POWERS: Starbolt: 20; Cell Rot: 20; Mind Blast: 20; Poison Touch (gas): 20; Sonic Blast: 25; Heat Vision (Lasers): 7; Energy Absorption: 30; Sealed Systems: 20.		



If the Megatank is destroyed, go to Encounter 22. If the player characters fall unconscious, J.R. attempts to have them brainwashed. See Encounter 18.

Troubleshooting

If a character manages to enter the tank without destroying it first, J.R. battles that character individually. A character may be able to damage some parts of the tank by attacking the computer or the interior systems. In this case, roll 1D10:

- 1 Starbolt.
- 2 Mind Blast.
- 3 Cell Rot.
- 4 Poison Gas.
- 5 Sonic Beam.
- 6 Energy Absorption.
- 7 Sealed Systems.
- 8-10 ... Nothing of consequence.

A weapon is destroyed when it has taken more damage than it has APs. Should the characters throw the Megatank into outer space, it simply returns (as long as its Sealed Systems are intact).

Encounter Twenty-Two: Duel with Death

Setup

Use this encounter if the player characters corner J.R., if they have destroyed the Megatank, or if they are fighting J.R. after having resisted brainwashing. J.R. always tries to arrange things so that this battle occurs near the Megatank (he wants to keep the Book of Power near, as he knows that it is somehow the source of his power).

Player Information

J.R. glowers at you. "I am the Horseman of Death," he says in a voice laced with the chill of a crypt. "Feel my power. Embrace Death!"

He leaps at you!

GM Information

J.R. initiates combat as soon as possible. Because he knows what Darkseid will do if he fails, he goes all out. He makes a multi-attack, spending as many Hero Points on his Acting value as possible.

During subsequent attacks, he mixes his attacks up as much as possible, so the player characters never know what he'll use next.

If the player characters win the combat (either in this encounter or another): J.R. falls (or remains) unconscious. He screams once in his sleep, his body expands into the shape of a black horse and rider, pulses for a few seconds, smells like a decaying body, then disperses with a terrible scream that seems to explode from within the Heroes' open minds.

The Book of Power sits on an ebony reading stand in the Megatank. After the battle, Abdul appears out of the nearby rubble. *"You have won, my friends! Congratulations."* He glances toward the book. *"It is most likely safe now. Perhaps I can hold it for just one moment."* Unless the player characters stop him, Abdul grabs the Book and opens it.

He immediately screams in agony, and very slowly (and gruesomely) assumes the form of Darkseid. (If Abdul doesn't pick up the Book, this happens to any player character who does; Acting and Effect Values 60 APs vs

the defender's Physical Stats.) If nobody picks up the Book, it slowly assumes the form of Darkseid.

Darkseid then smiles at the player characters. *"My congratulations. You have foiled the plans of god. Lest you grow impertinent, however, allow me to remind you of something . . ."*

He then makes a multi-attack using several of his powers from Continuum Control (he prepared it before he revealed himself): His Acting and Resistance Values are 60 APs. If anybody has an Opposing Value greater than 30, he burns up to 60 Hero points to enhance his odds.

Character One: Transformed into a boneless blob of intelligent protoplasm.

Character Two: Teleported to Apokolips

Character Three: Time-Traveled forward to the death of the Sun.

Character Four: Dispersed throughout the Solar System.

Character Five: Same as One.

Character Six: Same as Two.

Character Seven: Same as Three.

Character Eight: Same as Four.

One phase later, he returns everything to normal, saying, *"I may have need of you later. That was just a warning: do not interfere with me again!"*

If the heroes defeated two or more Horsemen, Darkseid lets out a booming laugh and takes DeSaad and Teleports away. Abdul is never heard from again.

The final lines of his poem are burned into the ebony reading stand:

"Monsters of horror and pleasure
To devour your soul, and
With the darkness I return!"

If the Heroes lost to three or more Horsemen, Darkseid's plan succeeds. He finishes the poem differently:

"Monsters of horror and pleasure
To devour your soul, and
With the darkness I have come!"

He then warns the player characters that he is the ruler of Earth now. If they ever return, he will turn them into giant amoebas for DeSaad to play with. He then Teleports (60 APs Acting/Effect Value) them to a barely habitable planet at the edge of the galaxy.

Troubleshooting

Should one or more player characters attempt to escape combat, JR tracks them down and initiates combat in 1D10 hours.

If the player characters are not near the Book at the end of the battle, Abdul tracks them down, carrying it in his hands. "Look," he says, "it's just so much foul paper now . . ." Then he is transformed into Darkseid.

Of course, If Abdul isn't alive, he can't touch the Book. In this case, a random passer-by will fill Abdul's role.

Hero Points — Death

Opposition	20
Critical Points	0
Area of Concern	15
Severity	15

Total Hero Point Award

50
There is also a bonus of 50 Hero Points that the players will receive if they vanquish three or more of the villains, making the highest possible game award 247 points.

RESULT TABLE

Resistance Value Columns

Effect Value Rows	x	0	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 6	7 to 8	9 to 10	11 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 21	22 to 24	25 to 27	28 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	51 to 55	56 to 60	61 to 65	66 to 70	71 to 75	76 to 80	81 to 85	86 to 90	91 to 95	96 to 100	101 to 105	106 to 110	111 to 115	116 to 120	+5	
1-2	+1	A	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
3-4	+1	A	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
5-6	+1	A	3	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
7-8	+1	A	4	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
9-10	+1	A	5	4	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
11-12	+1	A	6	4	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
13-15	+1	A	8	6	4	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
16-18	+1	A	10	9	7	6	4	3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
19-21	+1	A	12	11	9	8	7	5	3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
22-24	+1	A	14	13	11	10	9	8	6	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
25-27	+1	A	16	15	13	12	10	9	8	6	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
28-30	+1	A	18	17	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
31-35	+1	A	20	19	17	15	13	11	9	7	5	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
36-40	+1	A	21	20	19	17	15	13	11	9	7	5	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
41-45	+1	A	24	23	22	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
46-50	+1	A	27	26	25	23	21	19	17	15	13	11	9	7	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
51-55	+1	A	30	29	28	26	24	22	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
56-60	+1	A	35	34	33	31	29	27	25	23	21	19	17	14	12	9	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
61-65	+1	A	40	38	36	34	32	30	28	26	24	22	20	18	16	13	10	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
66-70	+1	A	45	43	41	40	38	36	34	31	28	26	24	22	20	17	14	11	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
71-75	+1	A	50	48	46	44	42	40	38	36	34	32	30	27	24	21	18	15	12	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
76-80	+1	A	55	53	51	49	47	45	43	41	39	36	33	30	27	24	21	18	15	13	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
81-85	+1	A	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	41	38	35	32	29	26	23	20	18	13	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
86-90	+1	A	65	63	61	59	57	55	53	51	49	46	43	40	37	34	31	28	25	23	18	14	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
91-95	+1	A	70	68	66	64	62	60	58	56	54	51	48	45	42	39	36	33	30	28	23	19	15	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
96-100	+1	A	75	73	71	69	67	65	63	61	59	56	53	50	47	44	41	38	35	33	28	24	20	16	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
101-105	+1	A	80	78	76	74	72	70	68	66	64	61	58	55	52	49	46	43	40	38	33	29	25	21	17	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
106-110	+1	A	85	83	81	79	77	75	73	71	69	66	63	60	57	54	51	48	45	43	38	34	30	26	22	18	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
111-115	+1	A	90	88	86	84	82	80	78	76	74	71	68	65	62	59	56	53	50	48	43	39	35	31	27	23	19	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
116-120	+1	A	95	93	91	89	87	85	83	81	79	76	73	70	67	64	61	58	55	53	48	44	40	36	32	28	24	20	N	N	N	N	N	*
+5	+1	A	100	98	96	94	92	90	88	86	84	81	78	75	72	69	66	63	60	58	53	49	45	41	37	33	29	25	21	N	N	N	N	*
	+1	A	105	103	101	99	97	95	93	91	89	86	83	80	77	74	71	68	65	63	58	54	50	46	42	38	34	30	26	22	N	N	N	*
	+1	A	110	108	106	104	102	100	98	96	94	91	88	85	82	79	76	73	70	68	63	59	55	51	47	43	39	35	31	27	23	N	N	*
	+1	A	115	113	111	109	107	105	103	101	99	96	93	90	87	84	81	78	75	73	68	64	60	56	52	48	44	40	36	32	28	24	N	C

° For every 5 APs of Effect Value over 120, increase the Result APs by 5.

* Shift the Effect Value up one row for each +5 column and use the 120 Resistance Value. A 120 Effect Value against a 130 Resistance Value is resolved as a 110 against a 120.

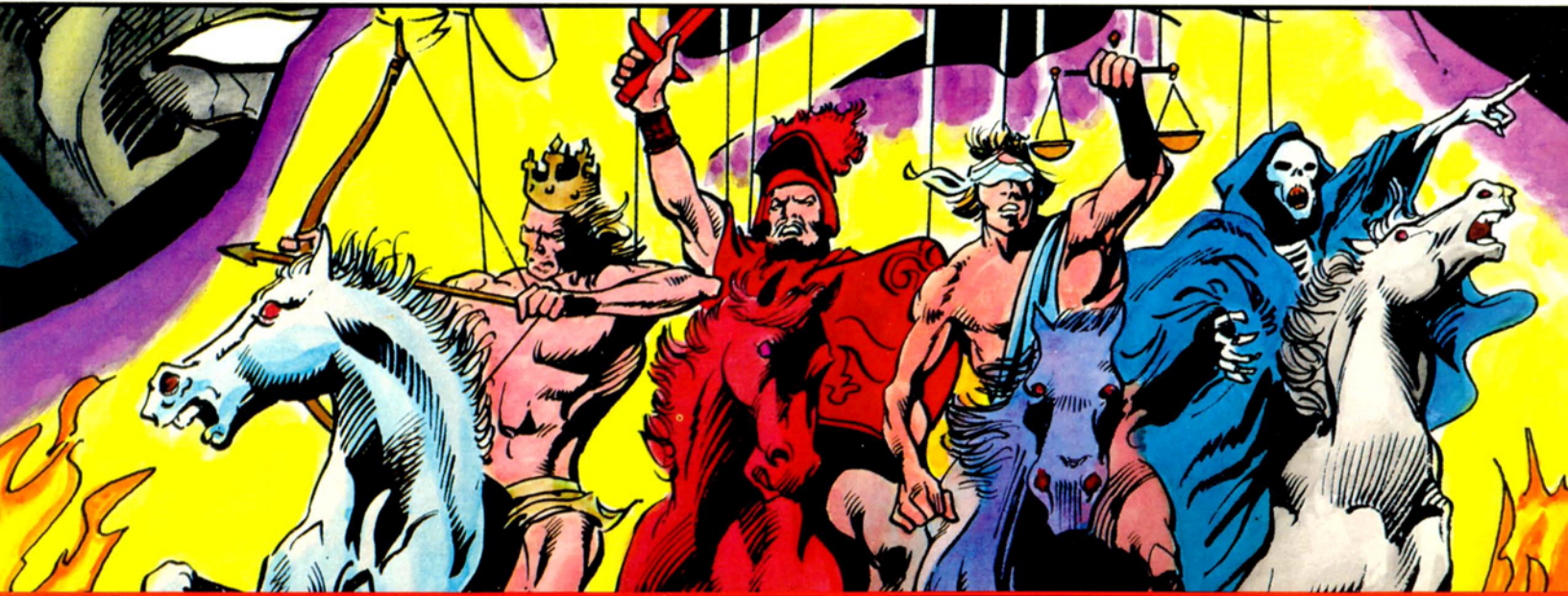
A: All. The Result APs are equal to the Effect Value.

C: Cancel. Each +5 row cancels one +5 column. A 125 Effect Value against a 125 Resistance Value is resolved as a 120 against a 120.

N: No Effect. The action has no effect on the target.

INCLUDED: Action and Result Tables extended to 120 APs.

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