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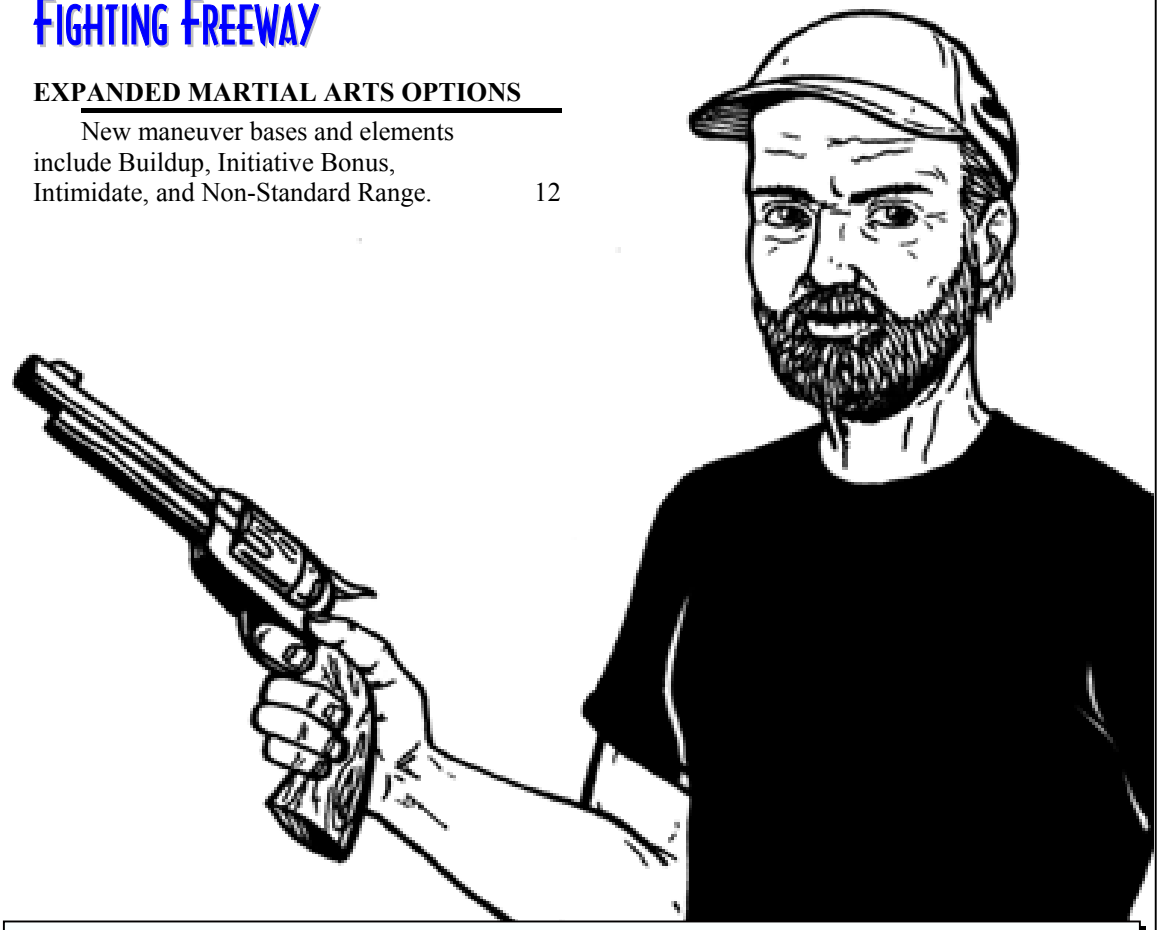

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Temporal Titans and Tyrants by James Jandebeur

The Temporal League (see *Digital Hero #26*), as the covert police force of history, has made a number of dangerous enemies over the years. Fortunately, the more powerful of these are as yet unaware of the exact nature of the opposition, so are unable to destroy the League. The fact that some of them would easily be able to do so is the reason that the League is a covert force.

In addition to its enemies, the League keeps several subjects under observation, hoping to prevent damage to the timeline rather than having to repair the damage. These are generally not time travelers, but have either the potential to become so or the ability to alter their future by sheer power. They are not directly opposed, no matter what atrocities they commit, as long as they commit no crimes beyond those recorded by history. Many League members regret this, but they understand the necessity.

What follows is a list of individuals the League is interested in. The descriptions include current relationships, as well as one or more plot seeds for each. In addition to notes on characters published by Hero Games are three new characters (one Superheroic, one Heroic, and one monster). There is also a new version of Teleios, now calling himself the Superior Man, after he has given finally put aside pride and given himself powers, powers that have made him a threat to the whole of history.

Established Characters

Istvatha V'han: By far the greatest threat to history the League faces, she has significant personal power, natural time-traveling abilities, and virtually unlimited resources. Fortunately, she seems more interested in conquering the Earth and its universe in the regular timeline, so her plots against the history are relatively subtle. If this were not the case, she could easily gather her forces in a time period in which they could not be resisted. Hopefully, this strategy will never change, as this type of attack could not be opposed by the League. Still, she often sends agents to make small changes in order to make her overt invasion plans easier.

Plot Seed: In the year 3000, the Kolvel Engine worked perfectly, greatly improving on the spacewarp drive. Seventeen years later, Istvatha's forces invade, and without the opposition of superbeings, win the war. The heroes need to return to 3000 and find out where the change took place to allow this. See *Galactic Champions* for more information.

Dr. Destroyer: Zerstoiten, as the greatest technological genius of the Champions era, could very well develop a time machine. Psychological profiles reveal he is unlikely to alter the past, as he is intelligent and cautious enough to want to avoid changing his own history. However, he may attempt to raid future eras in the hopes of increasing his technological superiority, and there is always the chance that his arrogance will defeat his genius.

Plot Seed: Dr. Destroyer has been seen in the 31st Century. Have the fears of the League become fact, or is something else happening?

Dr. Macabre: The League primarily keeps Macabre under observation to learn more about the Janus Key. They have been unable to find references to it in other times, and so they gather information on it the one time it has surfaced. The Key is capable of bridging dimensions, and the League is concerned that may include time.

Plot Seed: Information about the Janus Key leads the League to believe it may have been created by a pre-human race. The most likely candidates appear to be the Elder Worm. How does a field team verify this in one of the most dangerous times in Earth's history? What do they do about it if it is true?

Dr. Yin Wu: Yin Wu doesn't seem directly interested in time travel, but his vast mystic powers could alter his own time sufficiently to disrupt history. He is under observation only through historical records, as attempts to observe his demesne have resulted in the loss of several highly trained agents.

Plot Seed: The sorcerer makes a bargain with higher beings for the power to alter the world all at once. The League must discover the provisions of the agreement and reverse it, thus returning the world to its former state.

Captain Chronos: No one is sure why, but the Temporal Oversight Committee has ruled that Captain Chronos is to be avoided at any reasonable cost. If interaction is unavoidable, his purposes are not to be interfered with, and he is to be given any aid he requests. However, he is not to know about the League.

Plot Seed: The team is sent on an easy recruitment mission in the early 21st Century, and shortly after achieving success is accosted by Captain Chronos. He tells them they are the only hope for the timeline, and before they can object, deposits them elsewhen. There they will remain stranded, as they were moved by an outside force, until they accomplish whatever obscure or bizarre mission he gives them.

artwork by Dwight Williams

USING TARAVANE

Taravane has been designed to be easily integrated into any fantasy campaign, be it Swords and Sorcery or Epic High Fantasy. The human-only laws, along with the lack of genre-specific information (such as spells) and minimal references to the events outside the city walls mean that with a few name changes, the city can easily be added to your current campaign. Taravane has also been designed to be useful regardless of what system you use. When necessary, notes regarding the integration of Taravane into your campaign have been added.

The City of Taravane by Parker Emerson

Welcome to the city of Taravane (pronounced TĀR-ah-vān), a human metropolis on the Great Sea, a city of intrigue and conflict, a home to many, and a port-of-call to more. Known as the City Behind the Cliffs, Taravane can serve as both a center of adventure, and as a starting off point for greater exploits.

The History of Taravane

Originally, Taravane was a small pirate haven called Hogan's Rest. The strong winds and slow currents a mile off the coast put Hogan's Rest in the middle of the coastal shipping lanes, while the high-cliffed harbor made it both easily defensible and a safe harbor for ships. Hogan's Rest swelled in size, until it boasted a permanent population of over fifty thousand. Yet with the death of the legendary pirate Targus the Tall, merchant guilds and bordering nations were emboldened to end the threat Hogan's Rest posed to passing ships.

Just over a hundred years ago, a fleet of ships and an army of soldiers laid siege to Hogan's Rest, and the citizens of the city surrendered after two days of bloody fighting. The city was turned into a military protectorate, and renamed Taravane after the Admiral's nephew. The very reasons that Taravane appealed to raiders made it appealing to merchant vessels. With the promise of a safe harbor against the threat of the constant storm of the Great Sea, Taravane prospered quickly, and within ten years its population nearly doubled.

Unfortunately, old habits die hard, and the independent nature of the people of Taravane remained strong. The old rulers of Taravane looked at their newfound riches and understood the value of legitimacy, but they felt the burden of taxes and tariffs, and questioned the reasoning behind being a military protectorate.

Ten years after the fall of Hogans' Rest, a local ship-builder by the name of Garus Trenchild orchestrated a swift and bloodless midnight coup, and by morning had imprisoned the Governor of Taravane, along with the few loyal military leaders. Criers rode throughout the town, telling of Trenchild's rise to power, and of his promise to rule the city fairly for one year, when a more stable government would take over. Trenchild had been well-liked in the days of Hogan's Rest, and the people of Taravane quickly accepted their new leader.

Worried about a return to piracy, the guilds and nearby kingdoms were initially outraged by the uprising in Taravane. Yet as months went on, and Taravane strictly enforced a policy of turning away known pirates and allowed merchant ships to dock in the harbor (in truth, with lower tariffs), the sovereignty of Taravane as an independent city-state was eventually acknowledged by all the coastal powers.

True to his word, Garus Trenchild stepped down one year after True Taravane Eve (as it came to be called), yet was quickly elected as High Guildmaster, and subsequently as High Magistrate. The city has retained the same government outlined by Trenchild, and has remained independent since that fateful evening.

The city has continued to grow, and now boasts a population of a little over 150,000, and exists peacefully as an independent city state and commercial hub.

THE OUTLAWING OF NON-HUMANS

The following section outlines the eventual outlawing of all non-humans in the city of Taravane. If your campaign doesn't have any races other than humans, feel free to ignore it. (Or change all the non-humans to humans and use it as a way to justify the slightly xenophobic nature of Taravanians. If your campaign does use other races, the following section uses orcs, dwarves and elves, but these can easily be changed to whichever races exist in your campaign.

However, just under fifty years ago, three unrelated events would change the city of Taravane forever. In the late winter, when storms ravaged the Great Sea and the Taravanian harbor is filled with stranded ships, the grown daughter of a wealthy noble was attacked and murdered by a group of orcish sailors on leave. A huge outcry resulted, and the orcs were sentenced to death. A week later, however, a group of dwarves got in a drunken brawl with some locals, and while no blame was placed by the law on either party, the brawl resulted in a fire, which burned down a large part of the city, and in which many citizens were killed. And just as the city began to rebuild, an elven mage had a psychotic fit, and in the throws of insanity began killing indiscriminately (including his close friends).

In response to these tragedies, the predominantly human public demanded change, and the High Council responded to the people. One the first day of Spring, the High Council declared that all non-humans would be outlawed from the city, upon penalty of death. All non-humans were evicted, and their property

artwork by Matt Benya