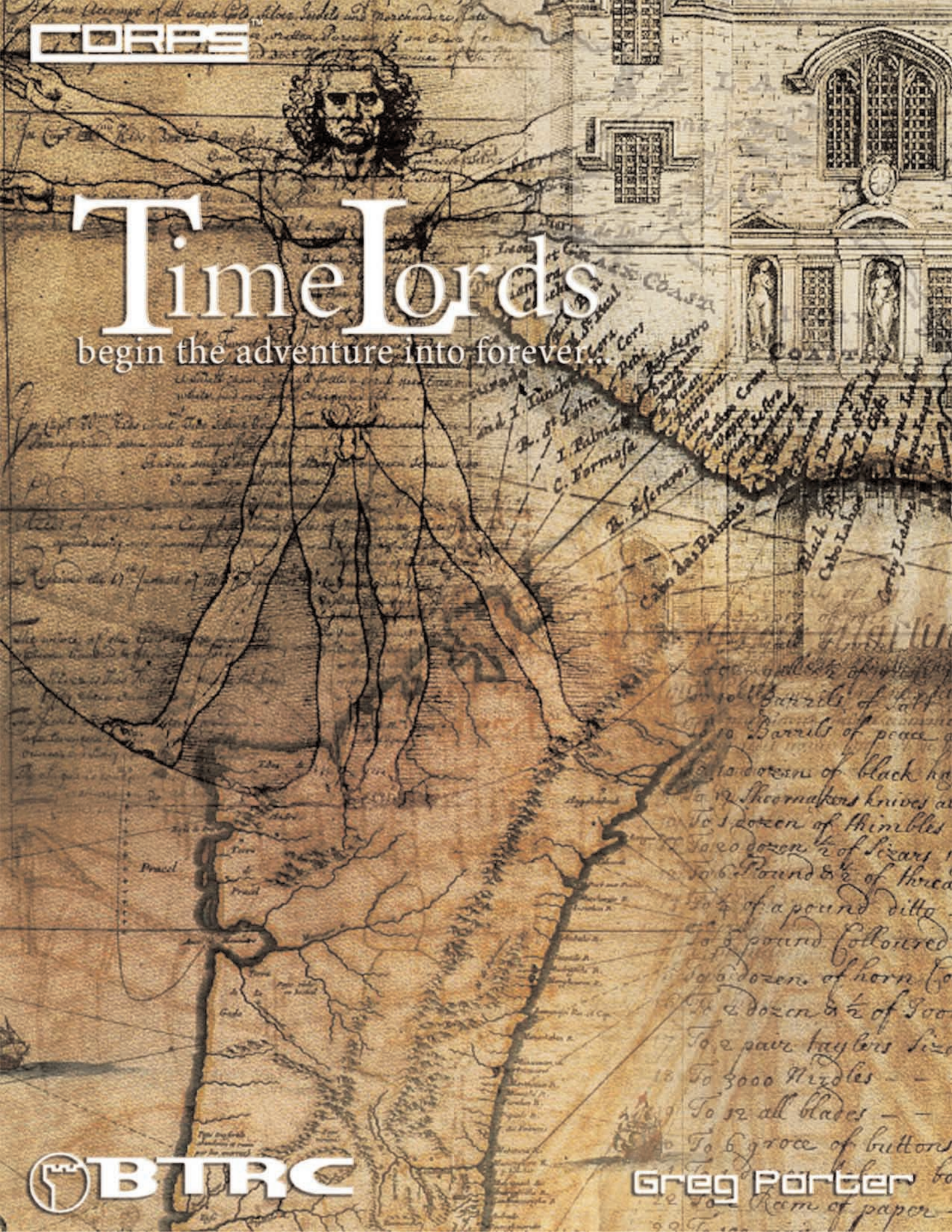
CORPS™

TimeLords

begin the adventure into forever...



BTRC

Greg Porter

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©1983,1987,1990,1994, 2003 by Greg Porter
ISBN 0-943891-43-4
BTRC #7106

Published by: Blacksburg Tactical Research Center
P.O. Box 1121
Collinsville VA 24078

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Dedicated to: Cathy

CORPS edition 1.0, May 2003

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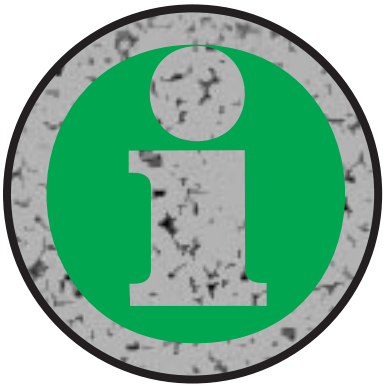

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What is this?

TimeLords is a reissuing of the BTRC's role-playing game of the same title, with new background material and converted over to **CORPS**, BTRC's "house system".

TimeLords is a game of time and dimension travel, eon-spanning adventures powered by an alien artifact whose potential is limited only by your ability to comprehend its workings. With it, you can go not only forwards and backwards in time, but sideways as well, because an alternate universe is often just a timeline where things happened differently than they did in the "real" world...

Game history

TimeLords has been plugging along for over ten years now, BTRC's first role-playing title and one of the first time travel role-playing games. It went through a couple editions and half a dozen supplements, and then sort of fell by the wayside as we worked on newer systems. But, it has not been dormant, just working behind the scenes. Long-time player Eric Baker has become a successful SF author, and has published work based on the **TimeLords** universe. I have also stepped into the fiction field and at this time I'm (still) trying to get **Eternity's Shadow** accepted for publication. This is a novel based around the background of the game, the original acquisition of time travel by humanity and how it shaped history as we know it. Changes to the original **TimeLords** background are largely due to this work, and excerpts are sprinkled throughout.

TimeLords includes all the background material you need to run a time or dimension hopping campaign of *any* type, with plenty of technobabble and campaigning tips to get you through the exceedingly strange and complex nature of the universe in general.

For those just getting started, you'll want a copy of the 2nd edition **CORPS** rules or the **CORPS Nutshell** (see our web site) to generate your characters. We suppose you could use some non-**BTRC** system with the **TimeLords** background, but why? Aside from that, everything you need for a universe of adventure is currently in your hands.

Good luck...you're going to need it!

Greg Porter

Prologue

Time: 2389CE
Location: $Earth_{null}$

Lucifer watched the sky fall and the world end. He had seen it more times than he cared to count, though the gleaming skull held loosely at his side would tell him the exact number if he cared to ask. He stood naked on the mountaintop, waiting and watching. The city, a smudge at the end of the valley, represented just another failure. It stood on a small mountain of its own ruins, two, three and even four story buildings of stone and brick inside its nested walls. Outside, its rocky flanks eventually gave way to treeless pasture and farmland, extending the length of the valley and on terraces halfway up the mountains. Roads paved with stone extended a little ways outside the city before reverting to crushed stone and then to dirt, snaking off in myriad directions. No machines of any kind could be seen, save for the occasional windmill or waterwheel. In a hand he held the only thing of consequence these people made, a knife of iron. *So little, but it is something.*

He shielded his eyes and looked towards the heavens. Above, unseen by day, were the sparks Far-walker called "sun-fire", not stars, but points of light made by unknown but thinking hands. Those hands were more primitive than the Destroyer, but far more advanced than mankind's. Lucifer had seen what was going to happen, if not on this exact world, on others like much it, but forced himself to watch. *Maybe it will be different this time.*

"It begins, old friend." The skull's voice came from no particular direction, and spoke in a language so old it had no name. "The sun-fire intensifies shortly before the hammers fall." A pause. "As always." Far-walker's voice conveyed a sense of regret, though Lucifer knew his teacher was largely incapable of emotion. Lucifer watched the skies intently, though Far-walker could and later would bring forth images far more accurate and detailed. The death of humanity was a morbid fascination to them both...and something more. *There.* A point of white against the daylight blue, then four heartbeats. Point. Spot. Disk. Fireball.

Impact.

The city vanished as the comet hit. The flash of heat hit Lucifer first, vaporizing snow and spalling the rocks around him. Razor-edged flakes bounced off his skin and whined disappointed into the distance. The radiant heat burned off Lucifer's hair but only reddened his skin, and he bowed his head to even the destruction of his coarse black locks. When he looked back up, the pillar of fire and smoke had dimmed to bearable levels and was already pushing at the roof of the sky. Then the shockwaves hit, driving him back a step. First from the comet's passage through the atmosphere, then from the impact itself.

The cloud of debris and choking gas was more leisurely in its passage than the shockwaves, boiling from the impact site like Hell itself had opened. It would soon roar its way up the mountain to where they stood, and into the valleys beyond before it finally slowed in its destruction. Lucifer knew this future all too well. The same was happening elsewhere across the world. Cities died, their smoking pyres blotting out the sun. The next rains that fell would be cold, black and acidic enough to burn the skin. There would be no harvest, not this year or the next. The few survivors he found in the future were little more than animals, afraid to build, afraid of the open sky, inbred and sometimes lacking even language. The angry hands in the sky would continue to hurl rocks and ice, though not with such deadly aim or deliberate malice as this first time. In a few centuries, even the pitiable remnants of humanity would be gone. Lucifer wiped the dust from his eyes, leaving a moist smudge on one cheek. He looked into the empty eyesockets of the skull he held.

"We fail...again. Why do I keep trying?"
"Revenge.", the skull quietly said.
"Revenge."

Lucifer stepped over the ridgeline, picked up a bundle of clothing, and Jumped.

"The road of time travel is full of potholes..."

Zhanken (the Snake)

Basics

History is a fabrication. Not a lie, but *fabricatus*, a made thing. Everything that *is* about the past and probably anything that *will be* in the future has happened or will happen because a time traveller interfered somehow. This is not to say that every single event in human history was directly shaped by time travel. *Just the important ones*. And when you make the big changes, the little changes follow.

History as you know it was shaped to reach a certain goal. Shaped by one man with the ability to travel through time, and the motivation to do something with that ability. He *needed* something, and needed a civilization to build it for him. But no such civilization existed. And when he travelled to the future, he found that the civilization he needed *never would exist*.

You must understand that without outside pressure, humans have no impetus to improve their lot. Ancient man used his intelligence the way a ram uses his horns, a way to compete for mating privileges. The strong, clever man became a leader of men, and then discouraged strength and cleverness in others, lest they challenge his position. Scientific progress was glacial, scientific method unknown. Our time traveller determined to change that, but he had no such knowledge of his own to give. So, he took the meager advances his distant descendants achieved in *their* future, and transplanted them to the past, using history as a machine to multiply the time he had available.

Inventions, discoveries, wars. Kingdoms raised and kingdoms toppled. Assassinations and deaths in the still of the night. Individuals saved from death and billions condemned to it. All to drag humanity kicking and screaming into an era of advanced technology, to build for him what he needed to be built.

But who was he? How did he acquire the power to travel through time, and what gave him the will and ability to survive over ten thousand years in pursuit of a single goal? It's a long story, and it starts ten billion years from now...

A Brief History of the Universe

In the Beginning there was the End. And at the End were the Designers. The race that created the Matrices and most of the other associated technology had another name for themselves, but those who sorted through the mess they left behind found it impossible to pronounce, so they were assigned a more convenient title. The Designers were apparently the very last species in our galaxy to develop intelligence, and they had the misfortune to come by it very late: By the time their ancestors first gazed up at their pale, red sun with curious eyes, the universe had become a dull place. The Milky Way galaxy, long ago stripped of rejuvenating gas clouds, had become a stellar boneyard, populated almost entirely by old red dwarfs and neutron stars, the dying embers of former glory. From their home planet, the night sky was an unbroken black.

When their scientists arrived at the laws of thermodynamics, the implications carried a special poignancy.

Their civilization survived for hundreds of thousands of years. As befitted their environment, they were a slow and careful lot, not given to sudden advancements in any field. Still, over the millennia, they gradually built up to a staggering level of scientific and technological achievement. They developed a workable hyperdrive, rearranged their solar system, and built planet-sized sensor arrays to listen for other civilizations, but found none. They explored the eons-empty ruins of the civilizations they called the Old Ones, races who would not even climb from the primordial ooze until long after Earth's sun was just a memory. Designer physics discovered the ultimate prize: The Grand Descriptive, a set of equations that seemed capable of describing the relative relationships of all that was.

And it all seemed for naught, pointless achievements that would ultimately be remembered by no one. Their interstellar explorations had found only dead stars and frozen, lifeless planets. The great technological ears they had unfurled to the cosmos heard only the uniform drone of interstellar hydrogen, cold, thin and sterile. The universe was winding down, and they were to be the last spectators. The fabric of interstellar space had already unraveled in places, leaving a nothingness that was even less than vacuum. Their sun provided a last oasis, but it too was well past its prime. Their great machine intelligences could predict how long it would take them to exhaust all the readily available fusion fuels, and how long the following era of privation would last until their civilization sank into final oblivion. Their poets composed wistful prose about the shiny young universe they had missed, and horror stories about the inevitable victory of the encroaching night, and the icy grave of hope. But not all were hopeless. Many could not bring themselves to meekly accept the eventual triumph of entropy, and labored to somehow create a better future for their kind.

The Door

The equations of the Grand Descriptive postulate the existence of numerous discontinuities, of several distinct types. Through the application of certain mathematical transformations, the Designers discovered that some of these could be made to do 'tricks', changing position within the Descriptive. At first, it was believed that these singularities and their 'travels' were useless abstractions, and some held that their very existence invalidated the Grand Descriptive completely. At length, however, the same math transforms proved critical in perfecting their hyperdrive theory, demonstrating conclusively that they *did* correspond to physical phenomena, and prompting new interest in their implications.

Eventually, using modified hyperdrives, the Designers were able to 'capture' a Descriptive discontinuity, and hold it, where it could be studied at leisure. The first attempt to manipulate the discontinuity was nearly the last. Feedback between the discontinuity and the containment field resulted in a local breach of the spacetime continuum. However, analysis of the resulting wreckage confirmed the hypothesis being tested: *the discontinuities could be used to manipulate time itself.*

And so they discovered the universe's last and greatest secret. The rest would be mere engineering. Their offspring would have a future...in the past. The Door was open. At the very end of Time, time travel had begun.

Much like the way human physicists vie for time on a particle accelerator, Designer researchers competed for opportunities to tweak the captive singularity in various ways, by gingerly modifying the parameters of the binding fields. And, just as it is with their human counterparts, there were soon many more researchers than time slots. So they conjured up another one. And another. And another.

Eventually, thousands of the discontinuities predicted by the Grand Descriptive (the exact number is lost to us) were under Designer control, on or around their homeworld.

It was found early during the course of experimentation that the discontinuities were the reason for time itself. Time was not a function *of* matter, but a property imposed *upon* matter from outside by the sparsely distributed discontinuities. Having a like "charge", they repelled each other, and were distributed more or less uniformly through space, more densely within gravity wells, less so between stars. Isolating one from the rest of the universe within a modified hyperdrive altered the fabric of spacetime for millions, sometimes billions of kilometers. The Designers wrecked countless solar systems collecting these discontinuities, but there was no one left to complain about it, and the Designers didn't care. *They weren't planning on staying.*

The Designers determined to use time travel to escape the frigid doom overhanging their race. Self-contained temporal manipulation devices were constructed. The term we have for them is Matrix, its exact derivation is unknown. Temporal scoutcraft were constructed, built around these first Matrices. The Designers were concerned about the potential consequences of certain paradoxes (more on this later). So, in keeping with their cautious nature, their 'flight tests' were all brief visits to distant places and remote times. Everything worked perfectly, and the scoutcraft were then dispatched to search for an era suitable for colonization. Not all of them came back. Even for the Designers, time travel had its risks.

Inter-temporal colonization required a compromise. They reasoned that, since they were going to all the trouble of moving their entire population in order to buy time for their civilization, they might as well go back as far as possible. On the other hand, if they went too far back, there would be less of the heavier elements (silicon, iron, etc.) around, and so fewer interesting planets. In the end, they chose a period roughly 15 billion years after the Big Bang. Sound familiar? If not, that's roughly the universal "summer" that we live in right now.

The Designers did not plan to make their escape in great fleets of time travelling space arks, or anything like that. What fleet could hold the populace of a crowded planet? Also, they would need a steady power source until they discovered suitable planets. They had a simple solution to both problems: Through the operation of thousands of stabilized discontinuities, and devices whose parameters we can only guess at, they would bring their entire solar system with them. This was not arrogance. It was merely a measure of their quiet confidence in their utter mastery of nature.

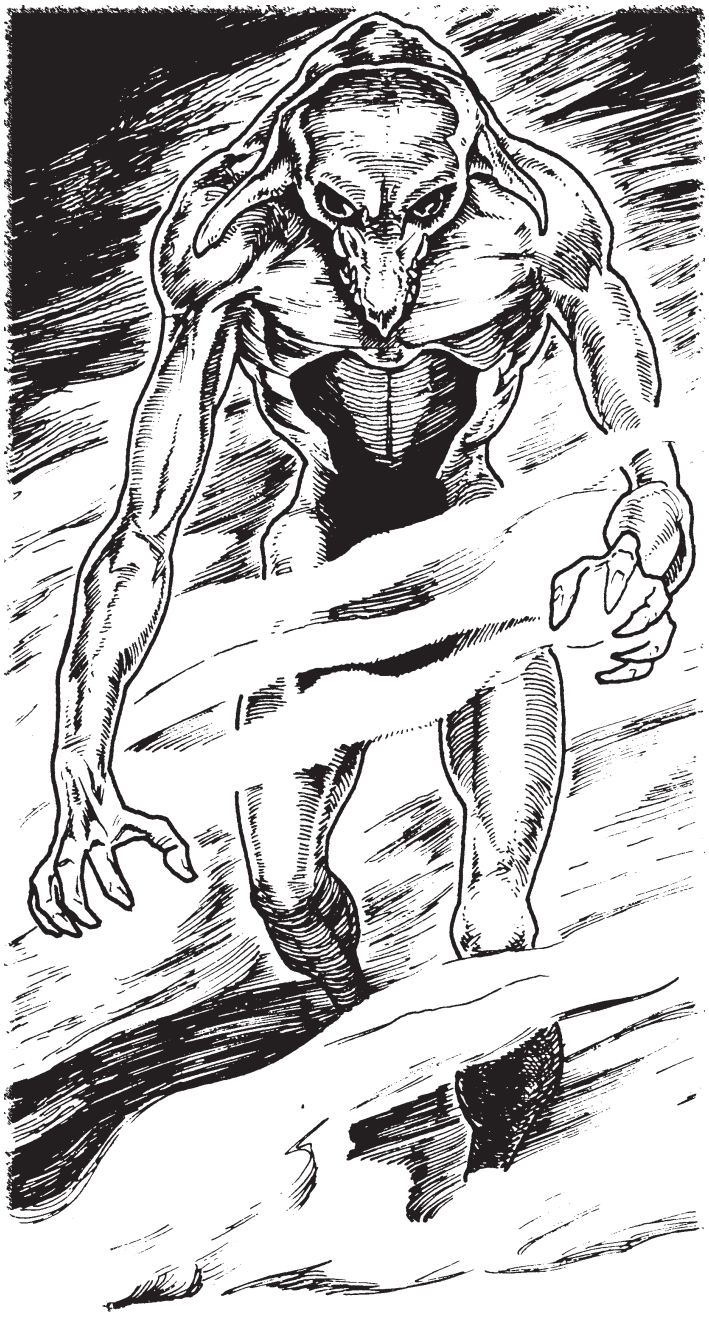
This confidence was apparently well deserved. As far as we can tell, the operation was accomplished without a hitch. The Designer's sun and homeworld phased into the Milky Way galaxy around 10,000BCE by human reckoning.

It was a time of great celebration, and great awe. Not from their own incredible feat of astro-engineering, doubtless the greatest ever achieved, but of the view. There were *stars!* Before they had known only the wide, red, familiar face of their sun by day, and stygian darkness by night. But now the night sky was a velvet curtain, alive with thousands upon thousands of brilliant, dancing points of light, an eruption of nocturnal brilliance unimaginable to any of their kind who had not seen it.

They looked upon their work, and saw that it was good. So they packed away their inter-temporal star moving gear, and settled down to methodically explore the young, vibrant, energy-rich universe which their awesome technology had placed at their disposal.

After a few short journeys into the now-recent past, the ruling entities of the Designers determined that any further time travel would be unnecessary, wasteful, possibly dangerous. So they ruled that henceforth the Matrices would only be used for space travel or other similar functions. They did not provide for any enforcement of this edict. They knew that enforcement was unnecessary. In fact, they made the ruling, as they made all their rulings, without fear of contradiction or argument. Millennia of living with the conformist mindset required for survival on their crowded, resource-poor world had long ago weeded out any trace of societal deviance from the race.

So, it was the sort of thing they were not at all prepared for...



A not so happy ending

The Designer civilization flourished in its new environment. Some things changed, some things didn't. They remained frugal, industrious, responsible, and obedient. But the limitless horizons now before them had *some* effect. Slowly, little by little, they began to become less cautious. A new generation was born and matured, in a world of limitless energy and boundless possibilities, something their elders could never have imagined in their own desolate youth.

Long before their trip through time, the Designers had particularly excelled at cybiotics, the design of technology built by a biological host. This science fit in well with their frugal mentality, as the central philosophy was economy of effort: Why design a machine from scratch, when you can let nature do half the job for you? Living things, after all, are self-motivating, self-replicating, and self-repairing. By the time of their great temporal exodus, they had come to rely on cybiots a great deal. But the future of the science, like the future of the race, seemed in doubt, as, over the millennia, they had exhausted the potentialities of their planet's biosphere. Generations of researchers produced no improvements. The cybiots they had worked fine enough, but there seemed to be nothing left to do in the field.

After the Exodus, that view changed quickly. Their new galaxy was *crawling* with life. Exploration and colonization missions catalogued billions of new species, including a handful of tool users ranging from starfaring societies ("almost" intelligent) to extremely primitive (Stone Age humans). The possibilities were limitless! Cybiotics was reborn. Soon a flood of useful new critters, from the microscopic to the gargantuan, came pouring out of the labs.

Some centuries after the Exodus, the Designer subgrouping known as the Family of Reconstructive Evolutionists came up with a peculiar idea. It was not the sort of idea that members of their species usually entertained, for it was grandiose, and involved the expenditure of a great deal of effort to create something for which there was no demonstrated need. In earlier times, the concept would have been dismissed without a second thought. But times had changed.

Put simply, their plan was to use every trick of Designer science to create the ultimate being possible, a sort of demonstration model of their technology. It would not be just another god-like computer: They already had plenty of those. Instead, their creation would be a creature that would, at least at first glance, appear to be mere flesh and blood. It would be a being one could touch, embrace, shake appendages with, but it would be as brilliant, wise, potent, and indestructible as they could make, a supreme and enduring monument to their technology. It would be used as an emissary to the "lesser races", so that Designers did not have to trouble themselves dealing with what they considered sub-intelligent beings.

Their recipe went something like this: Start with a large tool user of modest brainpower. Discard and replace those simpler parts of the brain whose functions could be easily replaced by technology. Augment the higher centers with a fully interfaced computer, the biggest that would fit in the space available. Then rip out various organs, one by one, replacing each with much smaller micromachinery or custom-designed organs performing the same functions. Use the space saved to install nifty hardware. Armored skin, that could seal airtight against hostile environments, backed by thermal insulation and energy-absorbing pocket universes. Electromagnetic sensor arrays. A closed metabolic cycle, allowing near total self-sufficiency, at least when operating at low power. Organically replaced metal bones, to withstand high gravity. And while they were at it, an internal gravity drive. Perhaps a hyperdrive, laid along the spine...No! A Matrix! Right at the base of the skull, next to the FTL communicator...etc. The resulting construct would be able to toss aside pesky asteroids with induced gravity warps, beat mountains flat with internally mounted probability cannon, instantly access every computer on the homeworld, maintain simultaneous mental contact with thousands of Designers, and travel through interstellar space without recourse to any external device.

After considerable meditation on the subject, the ruling entities approved the project. Their predecessors would have been turning in their graves, but the ever-conserving Designers would have considered burial to be a waste.

We do know something about what the finished product looked like. The basic outline was nothing startling, being similar to the human pattern: It was a four limbed, upright biped. Its head, however, did not look remotely human. A narrow, toothy snout projected from the front of the enlarged brain case. From the end of the snout, where nostrils would be on a mammal, hung a short, flexible trunk, like a tapir's. Above the snout were two eyes, very wide, and pitch black. Loose flaps of skin, like the ears of some dog, hung on either side of the head. It was a large creature, standing over two meters tall. The closest human pronunciation of its species was the "Qual'n", and its primitive homeworld lay several thousand parsecs closer to the galactic core than Earth.

Somewhere in the creation process, an error was made. Some safety check was overlooked, or perhaps some shortcut was taken. Perhaps before the brain was reconnected to the sensory apparatus, it became aware, and spent too long in sensory deprivation. Or perhaps the brain they chose was defective to start with, in some way they overlooked. Xenopsychology was a relatively new field for them. Whatever the case, the finished product still lived up to all their stated expectations. It was brilliant. It was wise. It was patient. It was powerful.

It was also a murderous, xenophobic paranoid.

Psychologically speaking, the Designers were one big happy family. Peaceful and reasonable, they imagined that intelligence and pacifism went hand in hand, and that only sub-intelligent primitives embraced violence. Their culture did not prepare them for a genius capable of genocide.

At first, though, all seemed well. Their creation concealed its madness, patiently making its plans, gathering or subverting Designer power sources and preparing itself, all the while appearing to be the gentle, enlightened demigod they wanted it to be. Only after all its systems were fully operational did it strike. Like most high-tech civilizations, the Designers relied heavily on their version of computers. Imagine the effect when, in one moment, every significant computer on their homeworld shut down. All backup systems failed simultaneously. The paralysis was total. Amid the chaos, the malignant angel they had brought forth struck again.

Within seconds, every Designer within a thousand kilometers died in agony.

Not Enough.

Rising swiftly into the atmosphere, he sensed, calculated, and chose.

Beneath him the planet twitched. The greatest architecture multernity ever knew crumbled to dust before a planet-wide seismic convulsion of a magnitude that any human geologist would declare impossible.

Still, Not Enough.

The bringer of the Apocalypse sped higher. Again he sensed, calculated, and chose.

Folding space around himself as protection from his own handiwork, he gathered his power for a supreme effort, and concentrated. It is not easy to destabilize a small red star. Indeed, it is very, very hard.

But it is *not* impossible.

Leaving a dead planet circling a dying star, The Great Destroyer set out to obliterate the colony worlds.

Vengeance is mine!

Shortly before their destruction, the Designers had discovered humanity. Our species got relatively little attention. We were one of many tool-using species, and specimens were collected and stored in stasis as a matter of course. Sheer chance chose a handful of humans to be taken out of storage for behavior studies. A few were taken to a nearby asteroid for a series of experiments. This family of neolithic humans was placed in a simulated steppe environment and observed for some years. Not quite lab rats, not quite pets, the humans were aware of their limited environment, but powerless to do anything about it. Through the guidance of a limited AI based on a deconstructed tribal elder (an "ancestor spirit"), they learned and were taught, as well as could be expected for superstitious illiterates. To them, the Designers were not gods, but still held in awe and fear. Designer emotions and motivations were alien to the captives, and while the AI shaman had the best understanding of the Designer psyche, human language did not have the concepts necessary to express them to his companions.

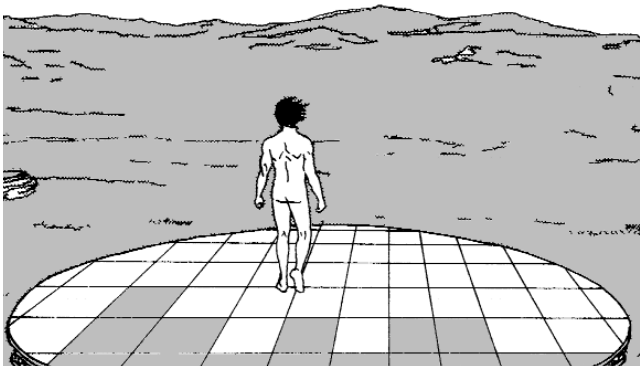
As word spread of the creation of the Emissary, the Family of Designers studying the humans decided to modify the adult male, whose self-designation was Bright-spear, to test if this manipulation of lower life forms was an ultimately profitable exercise. The human was very lightly augmented, stronger, faster, tougher, but nothing so drastic as had been done to the Qual'n. To allow him to interface to their interstellar computer network, they used a surplus Matrix. It was available, and an efficient use of existing resources. An inhibiting system would prevent any other uses. Final tests were about to get underway when the renegade Qual'n, calling himself the Destroyer, arrived at the asteroid colony. No coherent warning had gone out during the homeworld's destruction, so the outpost was unprepared. There was nothing here that could stand in his way, and he knew it, so this time his method was more brazen, more leisurely, and more cruel. He planned to spend a few days killing off the hundred thousand or so inhabitants, a few at a time, by slowly burning out their brains, so that he might fully savor the slaughter. Using the Designers' distinctive mental signature to find his prey, he did not notice the humans.

In an incredible display of hubris, The Destroyer announced his presence and intentions to every soul on the planet. He did this via broadcast over their network, the content of which was, more or less, "I'm going to kill you all, and there's nothing you can do about it". Then, an invisible rain of madness and destruction began to fall upon the colony, intensifying by the minute. Amid the shambles, trapped and forgotten inside the habitat dome, an altered human blindly ran towards his lifemate and infant son, only to see a rift in the habitat suck them into the vacuum of space. Seeing the hungry ground open up and swallow all he loved, his mind filled with thoughts of escape. As he too was sucked towards oblivion, a Designer tech's dying convulsions deactivated the inhibiting system on the Matrix in his brain.

The human's wishes were granted. He was gone.

The Destroyer sensed the Jump and recognized the phenomenon immediately, but had no means of determining its destination. Furious at the escape, he cut short the torment of his victims by vaporizing the colony site, and he then departed to search for other prey.

The human, meanwhile, suddenly found himself elsewhere. He did not know it yet, but he was also *elsewhen*. The experiment had been successful: The Matrix had sensed his distress, and taken him to more congenial surroundings.



This human was *not* a helpless castaway. He was stronger and tougher than any natural human could hope to be. And he carried the crystal skull that was the embodiment of the tribal shaman Far-walker. It was limited in scope and ability, and no longer had access to the vast Designer databases, but it still held secrets that would take millennia for humans to finally grasp.

Even so, what sort of life did Bright-spear have left? He was alone, bereft of family, filled with rage and grief, stranded in a place so far removed from his true home that his language had no words to express it.

There seemed no point in carrying on. At the brink of despair, he remembered something from his childhood. His tribe had been hunters. He knew from the elders' tales that, if a hunter was wise, clever, and brave, he might bring down the mightiest creatures in the world with nothing more than a stone-tipped spear.

At the brink of self-destruction, this idea saved him. It suggested a purpose, a reason to survive, a Cause. He should not die uselessly on this barren world. Somewhere out there lurked the thing that had destroyed everything he cared about. Whatever it was, it had to be destroyed. As far as he knew, there was no one left to do it. He would have to be the hero, the Champion of Goodness and Light, opposing what must surely be the embodiment of Darkness and Evil. He would repay his debts to his friends and family the only way now possible.

"I'm going to get that bastard!"

His ancestor spirit was only able with some difficulty to convince Bright-spear that the Destroyer was far too powerful to challenge, even with the strength of ten men and skin tough enough to turn the sharpest flint. Bright-spear had to find a way to make the tools to make the tools to make weapons capable of defeating the Destroyer. Far-walker did not tell Bright-spear how many thousands of years this would ultimately take. Bright-spear had the time. The Designers had taken away the death-of-winters from he and his family as a routine procedure. He would never grow old so long as the Designer implants in him continued to function.

His thirst for vengeance gave Bright-spear the will to survive, and surviving, he learned. He learned to use his Matrix. Gradually, he learned to influence the destinations of his Jumps, and found that the path of days to come could branch like an endless river. He found that without goading, humanity would never develop the tools he needed. Worse, some side effect of temporal translation made moving advanced items from one time to another virtually impossible. He could move things from place to place, but not from time to time. Fuels and explosives ignited, electrical arcs corroded and pitted delicate machinery, unknown quantum effects ruined transistors and integrated circuits. It was not a deliberate limit built-in by the Designers. *Their* technology wasn't affected, and they just didn't care about anyone else's. He was unable to jump-start his own past with equipment from a possible future.

So he goaded humanity from the rear. From the development of metalworking to writing and mathematics, he Jumped across continents and centuries, finding advances, spreading ideas, pushing tribes, then nations into conflict to spur a need for research and better tools with which to do violence. Sometime during an extended sojourn among the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, he took the name Lucifer.

At the same time, he also began creating allies. Some millennia after the fall of the Designers, Bright-spear made a tentative visit to a world that had been occupied by Designers, *and* was not instantly lethal to humans. There he uncovered dormant Matrices from the wreckage, and learned that his own Matrix obeyed him only because it considered him a subset of the Family that augmented him. Using this authority, he reactivated the Matrices he found. For anyone else to use them, the Matrix would have to recognize them as a subset of *his* Family, and by extension, of the Designer Family. He spread his seed across the centuries, and tracked his children down when they reached adulthood.

These became the first TimeLords. Some of them he had rescued from almost certain death, others were lured by the promise of adventure, wealth, power or immortality, while others were simply 'converts'. Now he had extra sets of hands to do what he called The Work. He scouted out useful futures from the many useless ones, ruthlessly culling and pruning dead-end possibilities, while his children steered the bulk of humanity's potential existence down the highest-tech roads they could find or make.

While Lucifer and the TimeLords could travel through time, they did not have an endless supply of it. Because of the unique nature of the Matrices, the places they visited once they could not visit again. Worse, a threat from without the solar system cut short all human histories in the distant future. Unless humanity could develop the power to counter what was later called the Machine Invasion, there would be no humanity left to build weapons to fight the Destroyer.

Many were the setbacks, the dead ends, the unfruitful timelines abandoned to eventual doom so that more promising ones could be nurtured. Global plagues almost destroyed the Work on several occasions, dropping population and industry, causing uncontrollable social change, and setting efforts back decades if not centuries in some cases.

Eventually, one last useful timeline remained, barely viable, surviving by a thread after a plague called the Red Death. From here, the TimeLords began the final phase of their preparations. New TimeLords were recruited and trained. For equipment, an arsenal of the very best military hardware that could be created was collected, including scavenged, salvaged and jury-rigged Designer hardware. Using multiple-Matrix quadrangulation, a method was devised to locate and track their enemy through space (the Great Destroyer's own Matrix, built into his brain, made this possible). This was done very cautiously, to avoid being detected themselves. Lucifer concentrated his efforts on researching the nature of his enemy.

Finally, all was in readiness. There was no excuse for further delay. From an orbiting base around Mars, they manned their squadron of fighters, and Jumped through space to the Destroyer's distant homeworld. The year was 2278CE. It had been over ten thousand years since Lucifer had arrived back on Earth, spear in his hand and vengeance in his heart.

Meanwhile, the Great Destroyer had not been idle. In the thousands of years since Lucifer's chance escape, he had left a trail of havoc through our arm of the galaxy. After satisfying himself that the Designers had been utterly wiped out, he used his sensor arrays to search out and deal similarly with any other species that might conceivably (given time) be able to challenge his dominance or try to lay a yoke on the Qual'n. When these became scarce, he would satisfy himself with sterilizing any biosphere he chanced across. Fortunately for us, he never did find Earth. No one is really sure why. Perhaps the knowledge was in memory banks that were destroyed with the Designer homeworld. Maybe Earth was a *long* way off and he just hadn't gotten around to it. Or perhaps he did find *an* Earth, but one on a little-known timeline. Why humanity survived past the Stone Age is one of the Great Mysteries.

During the lulls in his stellar wanderings, the Destroyer was worshiped on his homeworld as the Angry God, whom all made obeisance to. While the Destroyer protected his homeworld from all threats, he also stifled its technological development. No one, not even his own kind, would be allowed to develop tools to challenge his dominance. No one *loved* the Angry God, but all *feared* him. Over the long centuries a cult of resistance fighters called the Dead made slow technological advances, and made several futile attempts on the Destroyer's life. They recorded his comings and goings to the distant stars, and harassed the priests of the Angry God when they could

The Destroyer's simple pleasures were rudely interrupted by the arrival of the TimeLords' battle fleet. *Even a paranoid can be surprised.* Though taken totally by surprise, his instinctive reactions allowed him to survive the initial onslaught, and destroy two of the six TimeLords' ships. He was damaged, however, and realized quickly that the fleet was a very real danger to his continued existence. *Escape was imperative*. He could ponder the nature of the threat later, from a safe distance. *He Jumped.*

And so did the fleet. The Destroyer's hyperspatial jump had been a short one, and so it took them only a few seconds to lock onto his new coordinates. They had only discharged half their Matrices in the initial ambush. The Destroyer could Jump multiple times, but at a great toll on his energy reserves. His anger overcame prudence, and he stayed to fight. Battle royal was joined.

Details of the combat are sketchy, for few who fought that day remain alive, and they don't like to talk about it. Suffice it to say that destructive energies were released that day in quantities that would have made the Destroyer proud, if only he'd had the time to appreciate them. Despite this, the engagement was inconclusive. The Destroyer, crippled, escaped with a final Jump through time.

The human fleet could not follow; their mundane technology would be ruined by a temporal jump. Of the TimeLords, the Destroyer had taken a grievous toll; a third of their number dead, and the remainder could not Jump through time to pursue. They retired to lick their wounds.

Morale was at low ebb. After all the centuries of painstaking preparation, bringing to bear the mightiest armaments available, they had failed. Further, the carnage in their ranks was a grim reminder of the risks of a rematch. Death has a special poignancy to TimeLords, because anyone with access to a Matrix is potentially immortal, and so they have more to lose than most. This was the first time in their careers that many of them had bet their lives...and lost. But Lucifer survived, and would not give up. To him, his quest was his whole reason for existence. Most of the other survivors could not see it his way, and there were many desertions. They simply took their Matrices and left.

Meanwhile, the Destroyer was having a crisis of his own. The battle had demonstrated for the first time in his existence that he was vulnerable, in the sense that a surprise attack by the most powerful weaponry in the galaxy could *hurt* him. And he didn't know where the TimeLords had come from. He sensed the Designer technology, and thought perhaps his attackers were their servants. The prospect of losing immortality was as disconcerting to him as it was to his opponents. He decided that what he needed was a fortress, a place of refuge where he could rest, heal, and make plans in safety. But what place can be safe from a Matrix?

To find an answer to this problem, he began an exhaustive search of his own computer augments, which were far more complete than Lucifer's, containing nearly the sum total of Designer knowledge. Every theory, every physical law, every principle of nature had been included in his memory banks. Somewhere within that vast repository of knowledge, he found an answer. He found that it was possible to generate regions of (for lack of a better word) non-space, where certain otherwise universal laws did not apply.

The most important thing was that no Matrix could precipitate into or be detected in such a zone, and no Matrix-related technology would work there. He went to work.

It turned out to be a simple task (at least for a mind of his caliber), though time consuming. Blueprints were unnecessary, he could do the plans in his head. All he needed was parts. Most of the technology he got from ruined Designer bases, which he thoroughly destroyed afterwards to prevent his attackers from recovering any more for themselves. The rest, he stole. He would Jump until he found a suitable high-tech civilization, locate any desirable equipment or hardware, and simply Jump out with it.

If he was not feeling pressed for time, he might stay for a little while and have some “fun”. Those few parts which he could not find, he was forced to build himself.

The TimeLords did not intervene during the years it took to complete this work. They couldn’t. Much of their fleet, which had taken over a century of human industrial output to assemble, had been destroyed in a matter of minutes, and over half the TimeLords had died or deserted. And there remained a strong morale problem. Only Lucifer and a few of his innermost circle remained undaunted. To top it off, the time of the Machine Invasion was fast approaching. The ships that were to be Earth's defenses were in poor shape for another battle. It would require most of the decades remaining simply to repair them. The Destroyer could wait. A new threat had to be stopped before *those* hostile aliens scoured the life off of Earth. A planet's concerns suddenly became more pressing than one man's vengeance on the distant Destroyer.

When the Destroyer had completed his lair, he wasted no time in activating it. His subsequent disappearance from their passive scans caused great consternation among the remaining TimeLords. Had he died? if so, their cause was moot. Had he developed some sort of invisibility to their sensors? That had especially frightening implication, for how could they fight what they could not see? Perhaps he had encountered some race that was stronger than he thought. Did that mean he was no longer a threat? Still, Lucifer would not give up, and more desertions seemed imminent.

It was Zhanken (later called the Snake), cleverest of the TimeLords, who came up with the answer. He pointed out that their sensors had not recorded a Jump prior to the disappearance, and it seemed unlikely that their enemy would conveniently keel over just now. “Since we can’t tell where he is, let’s look where he *was*.” Needless to say, there were few volunteers. So, Azazelo and Lucifer undertook the task by themselves. They jumped into the cometary halo of the Destroyer's solar system during a time when he was invisible to their scans. Still, they were hesitant to get closer. It looked safe. *But then again, traps always do.*

They Jumped closer, made a quick orbital reconnaissance, and Jumped home via a circuitous route.

Returning to their base, they found that the sensors there confirmed their observations of the Destroyer’s disappearance from the known universe. Scraps of information from Far-walker's database hinted at a possible answer. Painstaking analysis of the sensor recordings, and several years of experimental research confirmed the hunch. Their enemy had created a dimensional hole, where Matrices could not reach. After considerable effort, they duplicated this feat, and created their own area of non-space. When they began investigating its properties, they discovered the Destroyer's plan...and its weakness.

No Matrix-related phenomenon functioned in such a zone. The potential implications of this were profound. If as they suspected, most of the Destroyer’s powers stemmed from his ability to manipulate spacetime through his Matrix, then he would be nearly powerless if he could be caught in such a zone. His place of refuge would become his tomb. Unfortunately, the boundary to such a zone was in a sense a temporal boundary, and the side effects of transiting it were identical. The Destroyer could not ravage planets while in his refuge, but neither could the TimeLords use their high-tech armada on him.

Armed with this information, Lucifer was able to re-enlist the aid of a few of the older TimeLords. He also recruited, conned or hired a considerable quantity of new talent, mostly soldiers from low-tech societies, which he planned to use as cannon fodder in the assault. Well-equipped, but cannon fodder nonetheless. The plan was straightforward. As many as possible would Jump to points near where their sensors indicated the “door” to the Destroyer’s non-space region was, and assault it. Needless to say, they knew this threshold would be well-defended, but they were counting on their skills, numbers and surprise to insure that *someone* made it through. They waited until he disappeared again. They Jumped. The Jumps were accurate, and they achieved total surprise on the Qual'n army that guarded the Temple of the Angry God. *Still, losses were heavy*. Most of the cannon fodder did not even make it to the door.

Once inside, the *real* battle began. By the time the first group had blocked the exits, the Destroyer had had time to arm himself in a more conventional manner. While his god-like Matrix-based powers were unavailable to him, he was still *incredibly* strong. This alone was sufficient to kill or incapacitate any of the non-TimeLord troops that made it within melee range. The TimeLords, in heavy armor, fared better, and continued the assault themselves.

The final confrontation was between Lucifer and the Destroyer. Armed with massive melee weapons, Lucifer and the Destroyer hammered each other, battering down each others vastly weakened Designer defenses until Lucifer was able to ram his spear up through the Destroyer's jaw and into his brain. The Destroyer, the murderer of billions, slowly slumped to the ground.

But he did not die. The resistance group known as the Dead had painstakingly manufactured tons of gunpowder in a mine under the ziggurat the Destroyer had built around his refuge. During the battle, they saw an opportunity and set it off. As the TimeLords fled for their lives, the ziggurat slowly collapsed in on itself, burying the Destroyer under a million tons of rock, inside a pocket universe where his powers could not function.

The TimeLord survivors picked up their wounded and dead, and left him there.

Epilogue

With their mission completed, there was little left to hold the TimeLords together. The group slowly fragmented, each going their own way through time and space. Lucifer retired to spend the remainder of his existence in meditation, but like most TimeLords since, he was denied a peaceful end. The human mind is not well-adapted to immortality, and sometimes it just snaps. Zhanken, the Snake, eventually went mad (so they say), killed Lucifer and destroyed Farwalker. Azazelo, Lucifer's bodyguard and the second oldest TimeLord, swore vengeance and now pursues Zhanken endlessly though time and space.

Most of the other TimeLords managed to set themselves up comfortably in various continuums, coping with the stress of immortality with hobbies ranging from gardening to playing god. Most of the subsequent generation of TimeLords (including PC's) have the dubious distinction of being indirect proteges of Zhanken. Aside from the challenges of staying alive, he also specializes in creating new TimeLords. He first locates one of the old Designer Matrices (one of his specialties), then tracks down one of Lucifer's distant descendants. Usually a grandchild is as dilute a genetic code as will be accepted by a Matrix (and he is not above using his *own* children as decoys). He kidnaps a group of ordinary people, usually humans, usually from a moderately advanced culture (his own background). He will transport them to some unpleasant environment (barren desert, chilly tundra, etc.), give them a little speech about the big favor he is doing them, hand them a Matrix, and tell them that using it is the only way to escape the ruthless assassin that he is going to send after them. Frequently, the Matrix he gives them will have its first several jumps preprogrammed for destinations Zhanken feels are interesting, amusing, or just likely to build character. These early challenges are not always combat oriented, but might pit the characters against the environment, or be confrontations with unfamiliar cultures. The ruthless assassin? The one who is chasing Zhanken, of course. By the time Azazelo has caught up with the Matrix with Zhanken's signature, Zhanken will be long gone in a different direction.

Customizing the TimeLords setting

Time or dimension travel is not the easiest type of role-playing game to GM or to play in. You change settings fairly often, and there is not a fixed cast of "good guys" and "bad guys" that you can count on to provide some action or plot manipulation. You have to be flexible, think on your feet, and look at every situation from half a dozen different angles.

The game world as presented in **TimeLords** works, but it may not be for everyone. As you go through the background history and the mechanics of time travel, you may see things that don't mesh well with your style of GM'ing or the preferences of your players. And you'll want to change things.

That's fine with us.

You paid for it, it's yours to do with as you wish. In fact, we've got a few suggestions to radically alter the way things work. Any supplements to the game will follow the established history, but for *your* campaign, think about the following modifications as you read the rules and background:

Time delay. If the Matrix (what you time travel with) has a much longer recharge time than listed, characters might only be able to Jump once per month...or year. Or, you might have to get to certain key spots on Earth in order for it to work because of the confluence of magnetic technobabble. These delays make it more important for characters to make friends and influence people. *You're staying a while, don't piss people off.*

Mysticism. The **TimeLords** universe is pretty bereft of psychic mumbo-jumbo. You could modify the way timelines branch and merge to create alternate histories where myth and legend are *real*, and magic is a true force that can be harnessed for global good *or* ill. And the forces for global ill would be *very* interested in time and dimension travel...

Coercion. A Matrix could coerce players into doing its bidding if it so chose, simply by refusing to Jump until they perform a particular service ("If you do this, this and thus for me, I'll take you back home."). This takes away free will from the characters, but the annoyance factor could drive them to find out *why* they are being manipulated and how to gain control of the situation.

Techno-Mongols. A failing of the original **TimeLords** background is that once characters got a hold of advanced technology it became difficult to create challenging adventures that weren't bloodbaths for the natives. You could go back to this and allow characters to move advanced technology across the timelines,with or without limitation. *Some people just aren't happy without their toys...*

Recollections

Time: not recorded
Location: not recorded

The thing I remember most was the first time I touched cold, dead, human flesh. Each of us has something that colored our first impressions of Lucifer. Mine was walking shell-shocked with him across some medieval battlefield at dusk. Where and when I don't remember anymore. I *do* remember the smell of crushed grass mingled with woodsmoke and the heavy odor of human waste. A moon undimmed by pollution or city lights made ghosts of the scavengers moving through the evening mist. They ignored us, and we them. Lucifer knelt by a shadow in the dark, his steel grip pulling me down with him. The shadow resolved into a human form, eyes and mouth open to the sky. His makeshift armor had been little protection on the battlefield, and he was caked with mud from where he had been trampled after he fell.

"Lay your hands on him." *A statement, a command.* Lucifer didn't often make requests, I was to find. I didn't comply. Timeshocked though I was, I still had a good understanding of all the vermin and germs clinging to the corpse and was of no mind to give them a new home. Lucifer wasn't used to being disobeyed. He took both my wrists and pressed my hands against the corpse, my strength useless against his. My right hand stayed on the cold rubbery skin of the peasant's abdomen, the other slid off half-congealed blood into the slimy wetness of swelling entrails. Already nauseated, I retched repeatedly, on the ground, on the body, on my hands, until there was nothing left but dry heaves.

"Damn you!" I wheezed, spitting out the last chunks clinging to my lips. "Why?"

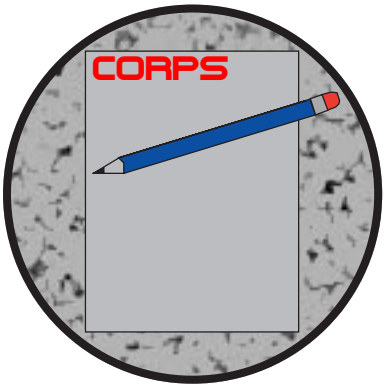
He let go of my wrists and wiped off his hands with a handkerchief before offering it to me. "This is Death. It happens. It has happened, it will happen. Serve me and you will see rivers of blood and oceans of bodies, but you will live forever. Refuse, and I will take you back to your time and place, there to grow old, die, rot and be as forgotten in time as the wretches you see around you."

I numbly accepted the proferred handkerchief as his words circled around in my brain. In the past hour I had been confronted with almost every human emotion and sensation, scientific impossibility proven as fact, but nothing clung to me like the feel of that dead man's skin sliding under my hands. I was young. I had never been so directly confronted with human mortality. If Lucifer was offering an opportunity to cheat the fate of those I saw around me...

Something in me changed in that moment. I wiped myself off with the handkerchief and offered it back to Lucifer. He made no move to accept it, so I let it drop between us.

"When do I start?"

The drawbacks of eternal life were not to become apparent for some centuries...



Character Generation

"Here we are! Born to be kings! We're the princes of the universe..."
Queen

Basics

Your **CORPS TimeLords** character will have all the normal skills and attributes available in the basic rules, but for a **TimeLords** campaign, there are a few twists...

Characters in **TimeLords** can represent one of three types of people:

1. Yourself, a character that represents *your* personal attributes and abilities, thrust into unknown time and space by forces beyond your initial control. This is the **Primary Game**, the game these rules were *really* meant to be used for.

2. A normal character, generated off a varying AP and SP base, a slightly larger than life hero recruited from some portion of history by some time travelling individual or organization. This is the **Secondary Game**, another way to use these rules for a time travel campaign, and an option which characters from the Primary Game will often explore after they have gained some experience.

3. A combination of 1 and 2, where you design up a character that represents you, but as you would have developed in some *alternate* history, someone who has your general stats and abilities, but as they would be focused in that alternate space and time. This is the **Tertiary Game**, a modification of either the Primary or Secondary games, and is subject to the limits or benefits of both.

Primary Game

Virtually all of human history and culture was shaped by the first generation TimeLords, creating the main branches of history as we know it. The first generation in turn, was responsible for the second generation TimeLords.

Your characters will be second or third generation TimeLords, accidental time travellers. You are newly thrust into a multiverse where there are perhaps dozens more with Matrices, TimeLords with more experience and probably less scruples than yourselves. However, just as the first generation's knowledge was an imperfect copy of Lucifer's, so these second generation TimeLords know less than their mentors. Without the central figure of Lucifer to guide and police them or the threat of the Destroyer to motivate them, they are more prone to human frailties. The changes they wreak are often less for a perceived good than for personal benefit. They see the limitless universe as still small enough to be worth fighting over. Temporal lines will be drawn, and crossed. Histories will be altered, cultures raised up in one place, laid low in another. Most of the second generation TimeLords will perish by violence or ignorance.

The Matrices lost by these TimeLords lay dormant in places and times throughout the histories, surfacing at irregular intervals as historical oddities. Those who chanced upon them and could use them almost always end up in a different place and time, and only a few survived long enough to understand the secrets and power that they held. A few Matrices have been seeded into cultures by a surviving older TimeLord, perhaps to cause change, perhaps for entertainment, perhaps to confuse an enemy. Regardless, those who encountered a Matrix on their own and survived long enough to learn how to use it became TimeLords of the third generation. Starting from scratch, they are like Lucifer, alone and ignorant of the possibilities that surround them, and with no choice but to learn or die trying.

You have the opportunity of a lifetime, to take your chances in the infinite unknown, to be a TimeLord. The rewards are immeasurable, but the cost equally high. For when you travel in time, you change it, like it or not. Your decisions will affect not only your own life, but the lives of everyone you meet, and all their descendants.

Once you finish the character design section, your GM should flip to page 85 for Primary Game campaign ideas.

Character creation

You can do things one of two ways. The first is that characters get *all* stats at a 4 (POW at 1). Then they get +10AP, and 50SP, with +2AP and +4SP per year of age past 16, applying aging rolls if needed (basic rules, p.16). With this, try to build a personality that matches who you *think* you are.

What we *recommend* is that all characters get their stats by means of the tests that follow, and get +2AP per year past age past 16 to allot how they wish (with a few exceptions). Characters also get 50SP to start with, +4SP per year past age 16, and this will be done after all attributes are figured. *Be careful*. Do tests in a safe and sane way. *And at your own risk*. *Do not* do anything you think is going to strain something...

STR (Strength)

You can measure starting STR relatively easily, both objectively and subjectively. Start with a character's normal carrying capacity (STR x STR). The amount of lifting or pushing capacity a character has is based on this, and will vary depending on the body part(s) used.

Use of Strength	Capacity
Lift and carry (full encumbrance)	$(\text{Strength}+0)^2$
Push with one leg	$(\text{Strength}+3)^2$
Push with both legs	$(\text{Strength}+5)^2$
Push with one arm	$(\text{Strength}+1)^2$
Push with both arms	$(\text{Strength}+2)^2$
Pull with one arm	$(\text{Strength}+2)^2$
Pull with both arms	$(\text{Strength}+4)^2$

A person leverages about 70% of their weight when doing a pushup, so if you can do a pushup, your $(\text{Strength}+2)^2$ is at least 70% of your weight. This provides a *lower* limit for your STR. Round any uneven amounts to the nearest STR.

Example - You mass 75kg and can do a normal pushup (not too hard). This means that you pushed 75kg x 70% = 52.5kg. This is closest to STR 7 (7 x 7 = 49kg), so this means your STR is at least 5 (because STR 5 + 2 = STR 7).

Similarly, a chin-up requires that you be able to pull your *entire* weight with your $(\text{Strength}+4)^2$. A one-arm chin-up requires that you pull your $(\text{Strength}+2)^2$. If tests give different results, use the average (round down) for your STR.

Example - You can do a normal chinup, which confirms you have a STR of at least 5 (since $(\text{STR } 5 + 4)^2$ can pull 9 x 9 = 81kg, and your mass is 75kg). However, you would need a STR 7 to do a one-arm chinup, and you can't. This means your STR is either 5 or 6. A STR 6 can do a chinup with a total weight of 91kg (remember that uneven amounts round nearest, so 91kg splits the difference between what a STR 5 can pull (81kg) and what a STR 6 can pull (100kg). If the player can't do the chinup with the extra 16kg tied to their feet, they don't get a STR of 6.

⚠ The subjective tests for STR are recommended, and will give more accurate results than just letting people spend AP on what they *wish* their STR was, instead of what it really is. The tests *are* generalizations, though, and the granularity of the system will limit their accuracy. If you use the subjective tests for STR, you ***may not*** raise your STR with other AP available from the character generation process. However, if you determine relative rankings *within* a STR (perhaps by arm wrestling), the strongest person *may* spend AP to get their STR *up to* halfway to the next level.

Player mass (round up)	Normal pushup	Normal chinup	One-arm pushup	One-arm chinup
40kg (88lb)	STR 3	STR 2	STR 4	STR 4
45kg (99lb)	STR 4	STR 3	STR 5	STR 5
50kg (111lb)	STR 4	STR 3	STR 5	STR 5
55kg (122lb)	STR 4	STR 3	STR 5	STR 5
60kg (133lb)	STR 5	STR 4	STR 5	STR 6
65kg (144lb)	STR 5	STR 4	STR 6	STR 6
70kg (155lb)	STR 5	STR 4	STR 6	STR 6
75kg (166lb)	STR 5	STR 5	STR 6	STR 7
80kg (177lb)	STR 5	STR 5	STR 6	STR 7
85kg (188lb)	STR 6	STR 5	STR 7	STR 7
90kg (199lb)	STR 6	STR 5	STR 7	STR 7
95kg (210lb)	STR 6	STR 6	STR 7	STR 8
100kg (221lb)	STR 6	STR 6	STR 7	STR 8

AGL (Agility)
Everyone starts with an AGL of 4. If you made it to college based on an athletic scholarship or play on any college level team in any AGL-based sport, you can put *any* points you would have gotten for AWR into AGL instead. Otherwise, you only get points for this from your age-based gains. A side effect of this is that no non-athlete is going to have an AGL of 6+ unless they are at least 26 or use other extra points to get a higher level.

AWR (Awareness)
Start with an AWR of 4. You get +5AP towards AWR for being accepted at a college that has a selection process. Granted, being in college does not necessarily make you any smarter, but there is presumably a selection process based on academic potential for *most* students, and since you also play role-playing games, we're willing to give you the benefit of the doubt.

You get +3AP towards AWR for each year of study *past* freshman level. Judge this by the course level of most of the courses you finished in your *previous* grading period. The maximum bonus for this is +9AP. You'll be 6AP short of AWR 6 after four years of college.

You get +1AP towards AWR for each year of study towards a degree past a Bachelor's degree, with a maximum bonus of +3AP.

For someone who is just taking community college courses, or Associate level degree programs, you get +3AP towards AWR per year of full-time study you have completed, or +1AP towards AWR per year of part-time study.

This covers the *cognitive* aspects of AWR. If you get to an AWR of 6 or more, your Aptitude goes up, representing the broader knowledge base you have accumulated through numerous course studies. For the *perceptive* aspects of AWR, see the following:

Perception limit	Level of Physical Lim.
20/40 vision or slight hearing loss	-1
20/60 vision	-2
20/80 vision or severe hearing loss	-3
20/100 vision	-4
20/150 vision or totally deaf	-5
20/200 vision or worse	-6
Legally blind	-8
Totally blind	-10

You don't get any points for this, it just is a counter to the intelligence-base part of AWR. For instance, an AWR 6 character with 20/40 vision would have their AWR listed as 6(5). Use only the *worst* of any perceptual limitations, *not* the sum of them. Any character who has a mediocre cognitive AWR for whatever reason *may* get a Physical Ad of "keen senses" if they have *no* sensory limitations, can convince the GM that it is appropriate, and pays the 5AP cost of the advantage.

WIL (Will)
Everyone starts with a WIL of 4. Being able to convince the GM that you deserve an extra 5AP to put towards WIL is perhaps a justification for getting it, since WIL is partially a measure of forcefulness of personality (you can suppose it also means you have a higher WIL than the GM...). Since pain tolerance and mental fortitude are also aspects of WIL, proving that you have some degree of these qualities to the GM is also worth 5AP. Self-destructive and/or stupid ways of showing these qualities simply mean that you may take up to 5AP from points you have towards AWR and put them towards WIL instead, but it does not actually *gain* you any points.

HLT (Health)
Everyone starts with a HLT of 4. You gain or lose AP towards HLT based on your personal habits.

Lifestyle	Character generation effect
Sedentary lifestyle (virtually no exercise)	-3AP, max. starting HLT of 4
Average lifestyle (little exercise)	+0AP, max. starting HLT of 5
Avg. 1/2 hour strenuous activity/day	+3AP, max. starting HLT of 6
Avg. 1 hour strenuous activity/day	+6AP, max. starting HLT of 6
Avg. 2 hours strenuous activity/day	+9AP, max. starting HLT of 7
Avg. 4 hours strenuous activity/day	+12AP, max. starting HLT of 7
Avg. 8 hours strenuous activity/day	+15AP, max. starting HLT of 8

Health	Character generation effect
Lost 0 days to illness in past year	+3AP, adjust max. HLT by +0
Lost 1-3 days to illness in past year	+0AP, adjust max. HLT by +0
Lost 4-6 days to illness in past year	-3AP, adjust max. HLT by +0
Lost 7-9 days to illness in past year	-6AP, adjust max. HLT by -1
Lost 10-12 days to illness in past year	-9AP, adjust max. HLT by -1
Lost 13+ days to illness in past year	-12AP, adjust max. HLT by -2

AP gained or lost here *must* be applied towards HLT. Characters should also list any immunizations or immunities they have, like smallpox, measles and so on. A character who works regularly in a sport that requires long-term endurance (Iron Man, marathons, etc.) may *purchase* a Physical Ad of "high endurance", which gives them a normal HLT, but +2 HLT when it comes to the effects of exertion and exhaustion. This might be listed like HLT 5(7).

POW (Power)

Most modern characters will start with a POW of 1, *and* the character limitation "Natural Debility" in POW, making it expensive to increase. Note that this will hamper characters *badly* in any mystical setting.

On the other hand, the **TimeLords** universe is almost totally devoid of magic, psionics or other paranormal powers, so a POW of 1 is seldom going to be a limitation. The GM may wish to use fringe timelines (p.27) in which things outside the normal realm of human potential are possible. However, whether such abilities work outside that timeline is unlikely. If the overall campaign is going to have a mystical bent by GM fiat, then any character who can claim witches, shamans or other pagan or occult family ties may spend points to negate the debility, and even buy their POW up to 2, but may not have any points towards paranormal abilities unless they can demonstrate them (if they can, we'd *really* like to see it duplicated under controlled conditions...).

Now, this isn't to say that characters won't run into any paranormal powers, just that they are unlikely to have any of their own. In the end, it's the GM's world to tinker with, and if it seems more fun to toss in some alternate universes where hocus-pocus is actually a force to be reckoned with, then it will serve as an interesting counterpoint to any advantage the player's scientific knowledge gives them.

⚠ If a character for some reason can demonstrate a level in *any* attribute that the system does not normally allow them to buy with their base and age-based experience, then the GM should consider whether or not the character has a level of Natural Aptitude in that ability. If so, the character gets this at *no charge*, and the player buys the level in the ability that is indicated, or as close as they can manage.

Attribute costs

As a handy reference, give the players the following numbers for ease of improving attributes or making plans on how to allot leftover AP.

Attribute level	To raise 1 point	To raise halfway
1	3AP	1AP
2	5AP	2AP
3	7AP	3AP
4	9AP	4AP
5	11AP	5AP
6	13AP	6AP
7	15AP	7AP
8	17AP	8AP
9	19AP	9AP
10	21AP	10AP

How to do it

1. Primary Game characters start play with all attributes at a level of 4 (except POW of 1).
2. For STR, you get a level at no cost as indicated by objective and subjective tests, with relative ratings within a group determined by putting AP towards improvement.
3. For other attributes, your life path will either give or take away AP towards that particular attribute.
4. All characters get 2AP per year of age past 16. These may be spent to increase attributes or offset losses from step 3. Leftover points should be allotted to attributes which the character wants to slate for improvement.

Ads & disads

Your characters do not get points for these, either for *or* against them, but the characters are likely to have them just the same. Most players will have a few Psych Lims at some *minor* level unless they are borderline psychotic to begin with, and may have a few minor Physical Lims (eyesight, allergies, etc.). Use the guidelines in the **CORPS** rules to figure the level that is appropriate. Some of the Psych Lims you may not even realize you have, but they're in the adjectives that people use when talking about you: Cynical, overconfident, forgetful, squeamish, and so on. *All* characters in the Primary or Tertiary games get the Timesickness disad (page 22), so when you're done here, check that out.

A good way to do the Ads & Disads is to simply make a list of player's names, and pass the list around. The GM can read off the categories from the **CORPS** rules if people need a little prompting. Each player and the GM writes down what they think the other players *and* themselves have in the way of limitations and advantages, and the level they think it is at if appropriate. When everyone is done, the average result (rounding in the player's favor) is the level of the advantage or limitation. If you think anyone is thin-skinned enough to be sensitive on the issue, the results can be anonymous (and of course, being "thin skinned" is a Psych Lim too...). If everyone comes out unspeakably bland, try again. Role-players usually aren't *that* dull. This time, each player *has* to list something they think is a positive *and* a negative trait about *themselves*. With this as a "seed", pass the list around again. If something an on/off advantage or limitation like Pain Tolerance or a Physical Ad, a character gets it only with a *majority* vote *and* GM permission. You may *not* use any free AP or SP to purchase a character advantage that you did not get any level of or majority vote for, but on the other hand, those advantages which you were rated as having do not cost you any points either.

Skills

Skills are generated on a pre-adult *and* adult basis. First, you spend the 50SP you have for all experience up to age 16. You may spend as you like, provided no skill has a total rating of more than 4 (Primary+Secondary+Tertiary). This is your raw talent at age 16, however, Aptitude for the skills is based on *final* attribute levels you should have already figured out, just to keep things simple. After that, figure your experience on a year by year basis to get the total SP available for later development, based on 4SP per year. Full-time college studies get +4SP each year (total of 8SP per year), but all but 2SP for each year of college must be put towards AWR-based skills that you were studying. Part-time studies get +2SP per year, and all but 3SP per year must go to AWR-based skills you were studying. Years working full time generate normal SP (4SP per year), and half of them must go towards skills related to that job. Any long-term professional training taken during any non-college year will get you +1SP for training of up to 500Cr per year, +2SP for up to 1000Cr a year, +3SP for up to 2000Cr a year, and +4SP for up to 4000Cr per year. *All* SP gained from this training must go directly to the skill being trained in. Time spent just "hanging around" generates the base of 4SP per year, which may be allotted any way you want.

Once you get through this, which can take a while depending on your age, you will have generic SP, SP that must be devoted to certain *types* of skills, and SP that must be devoted to a *particular* skill. You can spend these on anything that you as a person can do or have training in. Your character is now done. Your equipment and money is what you have on you right now, and within reach. *Ready, set, go!*

You may find that you don't have enough SP to purchase all the abilities you have, or *think* you have. One, you may just be overrating yourself. What you consider a minor skill may actually just be a Familiarity. Two, you may have misclassed the skill. You might think that you have a great musical talent, but the level of skill you think is correct costs too much. Maybe after reflecting on the degree of experience you have, it should be considered a hobby instead, which has a -2 Difficulty. This means you may still be good, but only in an amateur sense. This would be something like the difference between playing an instrument for fun, or playing an instrument *and* knowing how to get bookings, *and* work in a studio environment, *and* the ins and outs of touring. One is a hobby and more narrowly focused, the other is a profession and covers more than just using the instrument. Presumably if you want to "go pro" the GM will let you use the points towards the non-hobby skill, so long as you accept the lower score you'll get as a result of the increased difficulty. Last, you may overestimate the diversity of your skill. Maybe a +1 Secondary skill on a lower Primary skill is more appropriate to what you know, and is cheaper in SP than a high level in the Primary skill.

Secondary Game

Your characters are members of a "Time Patrol", some organization that patrols the lines of probability for various reasons. The GM will provide background for the organization if characters are going to be members. A sample organization is listed later in the rules (page 68).

Any organization with the power to travel through time, and the responsibility that goes with it, will be *extremely* selective about who works for them. There will be rigorous standards, specialized training and constant oversight of anyone who is authorized to travel through time. Characters will therefore be a cut above the average, and should recognize this from the start.

Character creation

Characters are based on varying AP and SP, with all attributes, skills, ads & disads according to the normal rules. A pre-generated Time Patrol (The Guardians) is listed later in the rules, and if you intend to use this background you should flip to page 70 to get specific character generation notes. Otherwise, the guidelines below are recommended.

Time Patrol members do have certain limits they must adhere to in order to be recruited. These should be listed in the description of the organization that is available to all players.

Regardless of their background and attributes, field agents will be required to learn a basic package of Primary skills, which must be paid for from their SP total. A useful "Patrol package" is below.

Requirements	Apt. of 1	Apt. of 2
Native language at level of AWR	free	free
Native culture at level of half AWR (round up)	free	free
Related language at level of 4 (-1 Difficulty)	8SP	5SP
Second culture at level of 3	8SP	5SP
Third language at level of 3	8SP	5SP
Third culture at level of Familiarity	2SP	2SP
History at level of 4	15SP	12SP
Survival at level of 4	15SP	12SP
Unarmed combat of some form at level of 4	15SP	12SP
Melee weapon of some type at level of 4	15SP	12SP
Projectile weapon of some type at level of 4	15SP	12SP
Patrol regulations at level of 5 (-2 Difficulty)	8SP	5SP
Professional skill (likely AWR) at level of 6	35SP	32SP

The professional skill must be some skill that will be useful in a Time Patrol sense. This could either be a modern skill like being the team medic, to something as archaic as being a blacksmith or midwife. Any of those skills would help the party blend in or function better while on a mission. Characters whose background has them pulled from the past to become members of a Time Patrol *must* have an archaic profession. A character may have a Primary skill of 1 point less than the required level, provided they have *at least* two Secondary skills at +1 to make up the difference.

⚠ Net gains in AP/SP from just staying alive are possible only in societies where average conditions are good enough that people don't prematurely age due to environmental hazards. With negligible medical care and poor conditions, aging occurs sooner, is more severe, and simply staying alive saps time and effort that would otherwise go towards self-improvement. A Dark Ages peasant can only get so good at scratching a living from the soil, and has little time to devote to other pursuits, even if there was someone available to teach them. This lack of diversity should be noted for any Patrol character from a mundane low-tech background, making exceptional individuals (nobility, etc.) the more likely candidates for interesting characters.

Crossover

In the event that characters from the Primary Game get recruited into a Time Patrol, *all* characters will get an amount of SP necessary to get the *least skilled* character up to minimum levels. Extra SP may be allotted as desired. You can figure that this is intensive training (at least 16SP per year), and characters will be out of action for this long. Aging may be a concern, at GM option.

Example - If it takes 36SP for the *least skilled* character to meet Patrol minimums, *all* characters get to add 36SP in training (everyone trains for about the same amount of time). All the characters go through a two *year* training course before the Patrol even thinks about letting them time travel again. Any SP left over after they meet Patrol minimums can be spent as desired.

Tertiary Game

Your characters are based somehow on you, or an "ideal you", living in a different world than the one you are familiar with. For instance, your characters are based on yourself as survivors of a global disaster, with the experience and skills based on 10 years of experience in the post-Ruin world. Or, the characters are swashbuckling versions of yourself in 17th century Europe.

Character creation

Go through the detail you did for the Primary Game to generate your *personal* stats and skills. Then, figure out how many AP and SP this character is based on as if they had been designed from scratch. Base the SP cost of a character on the straight cost, without taking Aptitude bonuses into account. Familiarities count as being at a level of Aptitude for SP purposes. Whoever has the *highest* total of *AP* gets 5AP to allot however they want. Whoever has the *highest* total in *SP* gets 10SP to allot however they want. Each *other* player gets a number of AP and SP to allot equal to the difference between *their* total and the *highest* character's total (after the extra 5AP or 10SP are added in). The GM may also throw in a free amount of AP and SP to represent experience in the game world.

Example - The character with the best attributes has 156AP spent on them. The next lowest character has 150AP. The first character gets 5 free AP, raising their total to 161AP. The next lowest character gets 11 free AP, making their total 161AP as well.

⚠ This process makes characters that represent the players as the core, but makes the world "fair" in that everyone starts off with the exact same point totals. Sad to say, characters do not get to automatically raise any skills if their Aptitude goes up.

Example - If these freebie points raise your AGL from 5 to 6, your AGL Aptitude goes from 1 to 2. Any skills you had at a level of 2 before are just counted as Familiarity now, but this case is the only exception where you may keep a +1 Secondary skill on a Familiarity (but not purchase new ones).

Characters *must* substitute skills appropriate to their background for ones they have which do not apply.

For instance, a player whose character is based on themself, but in a 17th century Europe, whose character has a skill of 3 with Land vehicles would change this to either a 3 in Equestrian or a 3 in Team handling (wagons, etc.). A character from a pre-gunpowder era might substitute bow or crossbow for a gun skill.

If an equivalent skill is easier, the character *does* get a higher level in the new skill. If harder, they must take a lower level or Familiarity.

Ads & Disads

The following list covers exceptions and clarifications on **CORPS** Ads and Disads in a **TimeLords** game.

Age
Primary Game: You are your chronological age.
Secondary Game: Time travel is still considered rigorous work. Most agents retire from field work before age 70, and certainly wouldn't be recruited for field work past age 50. The GM will decide if advanced technology will increase the age at where aging rolls need to be made.
Tertiary Game: Base on your current age, plus however many years have elapsed from the time regular character generation ended. Aging rolls may be necessary.

Contacts
Primary Game: Not applicable. You don't know anyone who has a broad enough reach in time and space to help you out in a meaningful way.
Secondary Game: A Time Patrol member is a possible contact, as is a historical authority figure in an area where you are based, if this area is often used in an adventuring sense.
Tertiary Game: Characters may have *reasonable* contacts that they can purchase with points available. If the campaign is going to revolve around time travel rather than alternate personas, contacts would be as for the Primary Game.

Enemies
Primary Game: Not applicable. You don't know anyone who has a broad enough reach in time and space to hate you in a meaningful way.
Secondary Game: It is possible to have an time travelling Enemy of any level if you are a Time Patrol agent, but starting characters are unlikely to have one at a level of more than 2.
Tertiary Game: Characters may have enemies at any level, with GM approval, with the same caveats as for contacts.

Height and Weight
Primary Game: Whatever you are is whatever you are.
Secondary Game: Most characters will be required to fall within normal height and weight for their sex and ethnic background. A total deviation of 10% will be allowed.
Tertiary Game: Characters are as in the Primary Game, but up to a 10% change in weight is allowed if desired.

Physical Lims

Primary Game: You are what you are. Players with limiting physical handicaps may find themselves at a disadvantage when designing characters for the Primary Game. There are a number of ways to handle this:

1. Role-play it. With your friends to support you, do the character realistically and use your mind and your companions to work around the limits. Use what you have to the best of your abilities.
2. Figure out the average AP and SP spent on the other characters, and design a non-handicapped character that has your personality based on this amount.
3. Design up a "random person" based on this average AP and SP. This character will be an inhabitant of the first place the characters Jump to, and should have a motivation to join the characters, and skills or talents that will make the characters want to have this "stranger" around.

Secondary Game: No physical limitation of more than 1 point will be allowed for active duty agents. Agents who have suffered non-correctable injuries of more than this are retired to desk jobs or inactive status. With advanced medicine, few problems cannot be corrected to this level, although the means of doing this may preclude missions where advanced technology would be a detectable handicap.
Tertiary Game: You may have limitations as desired, or buy off old ones if possible in the new game world.

⚠ While this game is not available in a commercial Braille edition, permission has been given to the Library of Congress for Braille copies to be made.

Psych Lims

Primary Game: You are what you are.
Secondary Game: No one with any limitation of more than Level 2 would make it past the psychological screening process to get into the Patrol in most cases. Even a positive trait can be a liabilities if taken to extremes. While members may have personal quirks and biases, they are not enough to be a regular detriment to their abilities.
Tertiary Game: Characters may amplify or reduce existing traits by 1 level, or get new ones at a level of 2 or less.

Wealth

Primary Game: Not applicable. You start the game with the money in your pocket, and it is not likely to work where you are going...
Secondary Game: Wealth is probably going to be about average. And, it serves little actual purpose since what you can take on a mission is based on the needs of the mission, not your personal equipment. It can, however, be used to buy items that are brought back from missions for one reason or another, at a standard appraised rate. Most agents do have collections of curios and relics of nominal value.
Tertiary Game: Starting wealth is based on skills and years of experience, as per the basic rules. Points may be spent to increase this.

New character advantages & skills

While the **CORPS** rules cover most contingencies and vagaries of character design and background, particular game worlds may have facets that are unique to them, and uncommon enough elsewhere that they are not in the main rules. A time travel game has a few of those facets. Of the following traits, the ones marked with a "*" were used in the novel *Eternity's Shadow* and can be considered as "official". The others are available at GM option depending on the type of campaign.

Knowing (New skill)*

This is an AWR skill, and represents your ability to sense the minute distortion in the fabric of spacetime that occurs whenever there is a nearby time or dimension travel event. Time travellers haven't really come up with a good word to describe it, but do know it when it happens. Someone who has never experienced time travel *can* have the sensation described to them, but without experience, cannot adequately filter out all the other extraneous sensations of daily life. A simplistic way of describing it is a slight sense of disorientation, or *deja vu*, and a faint flash of light coming from somewhere *outside* your field of vision. The base Difficulty is as for ranged combat, substituting kilometers of distance for meters. Only one attempt may be made per event, and is usually done secretly by the GM. Extra time can be spent to "prepare" the skill, which represents simply meditating in a quiet environment to "listen" better, and the bonus applies only if the character is actually meditating when the event happens. If a character has an automatic success, they have a good idea how far and in which direction the event took place (within a compass point and a range band), but otherwise can't pin it down to more than a general "thataway somewhere".

A person exceptionally skilled at this can see a glimpse of what the other time traveller is seeing, if the "knower" is in possession of a Matrix and the time traveller is using one. It may even be possible to get a glimpse into their thoughts and psyche.

Feeling (New skill)

The remnants of the Designer information network inherent to Designer technology allow Matrices and working technology to share minimal information. This is usually nothing more than an "I'm here" message, but often that is enough. The owner of the Matrix may be able to tell that something is "different", but not much more.

The ability to "feel" the presence of other Designer tech is an AWR skill. The base Difficulty is as for ranged combat, substituting kilometers of distance for meters. The base time increment is 10 seconds, and works best if the character is not distracted (quiet, darkened surroundings are good). If a character has an automatic success, they have a good idea how far and in which direction the item is (within a compass point and a range band), but otherwise can't pin it down to more than a general "thataway somewhere". Failure by more than 5 may mean the character *thinks* they detect something, but is mistaken.

Oddly, this skill is pandimensional. If the character makes a skill roll that would have worked at +2 Difficulty, they can detect such items on *nearby* timelines, provided they would be geographically close to the corresponding point on the other timeline. The character *will* know this if they succeed at the roll, and in fact has an automatic "good" fix on the location if that is their next Jump.

Matrix skill (New skill)*

This WIL skill allows a character to correctly operate a Matrix or other Designer technology that can be communicated with by a Matrix. Until all characters involved in Matrix operation get at least Familiarity with the Primary skill, no "out of combat" bonus may be gained. The skill hierarchy for this particular field is:

Matrix (Primary)
Particular Matrix (Secondary)
A particular Matrix "trick" (Secondary)
Particular timeline (Secondary)
A particular destination (Tertiary)

Timesickness (New Physical Disad)*

Everyone in the Primary or Tertiary game has this (Time Patrol agents got over the problem during training). This is a Physical Lim, which can be bought off like any other with *age-based* experience, so long as the character made at least one Jump during the period the age-based experience was gained in. Timesickness is a penalty to all actions that occurs immediately after a Jump, and is characterized by dizziness, nausea, blurred vision and ringing in the ears. The penalty drops by 1 each 10 seconds after a Jump until it is reduced to zero. To provide a random element of "fun" to a character's early Jumps, the GM should assign a level of this disadvantage equally to all characters (from 3 to 6), and give 2SP per point of it. The amount of points generated by the disad should be made available to the characters at the rate of 1SP per adventure, to be applied to any category the character could spend them on, like skills used in the adventure, but *not* towards buying off the disadvantage.

Example - If the GM assigns a 3 point Timesickness penalty to all characters, this is worth 6SP, so each character gets +1SP in addition to normal experience after each adventure for the first 6 adventures, to allot in any reasonable fashion.

Temporal Sense (New Paranormal Ability)

This is a Detect power that allows the user to identify an object as coming from outside the timestream it currently resides in. An object from a similar "present" would take a +3 Difficulty to be detected, while an object from a phantom timeline would be at -3 Difficulty to be spotted as an anomaly. An object remains anomalous until it has existed on the new timeline long enough to be integrated into the environment. For something like a rock, this could be millennia. For a piece of fruit, it would only be a few weeks. For a living organism, it usually takes about 10% of its normal lifespan for the anomalous elements (blood, bone, tissue) to be replaced by "native" elements. In general, there is +1 Difficulty for each 10% of the time taken for total integration.

A graze or marginal success only lets the character know that the object is out of place. A normal success will give an idea of future, past or sideways, and an automatic success will provide some useful information about the object's home continuum (near or distant past, are the laws of nature any different, was it a phantom timeline, are there any residues which indicate contact with a *third* timeline, etc.).

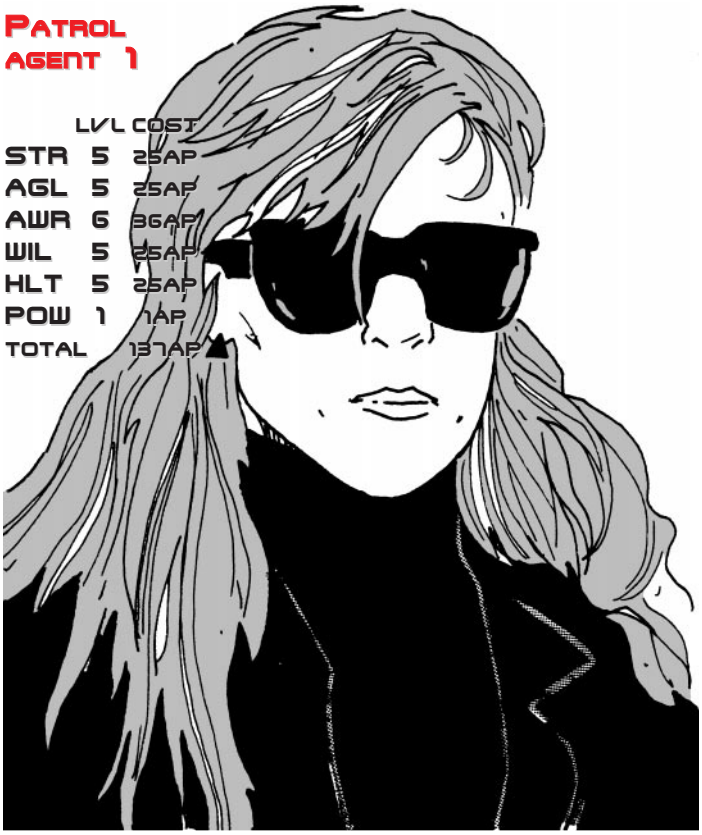
Non-ranged (touch only)	2
Self	2
Invisible	5
Constant	5
Automatic	2
Inherent	5
Requires Difficulty 6 skill roll vs. effective AWR (POW)	-1
Base cost	20SP
Optional modifiers that may be applied	
Requires concentration time (if bought as Conscious)	-1 to -8
Requires concentration time for each use	-2

Characters in a game with paranormal powers may purchase this ability only with age-based SP or with SP that they might have otherwise applied to improving Matrix skill.

Example - Characters in a bar get change from a meal that includes an unusual coin. The character receiving the coin has Temporal Sense, and since it is an automatic power, they get a roll to see if they notice. The character's POW is 2, so their effective AWR with the power is also 2. So, they must make a Difficulty 6 roll with a skill of 2 in order to notice its anomalous nature. If they fail, they will still get other rolls each time they touch the strange coin. If they had bought the power under Conscious control instead of Automatic, they would have to concentrate on the power while holding the coin in order to have a chance of noticing.

Aside from Timesickness and Matrix skill, the only new character trait in the novel *Eternity's Shadow* is the "Knowing" skill, and that is only developed by two of the main characters after several hundred years of experience and several decades of practice. So, assigning arbitrarily steep learning curves on these abilities is quite reasonable.

Patrol Agent 1



"Look, you're coming Uptime with me, one way or the other..."

Advantages	AP	SP
Level 1 Contact - Local informant	0	-5
Pain tolerance	-5	0

Disadvantages	AP	SP
Level 1 Enemy - Various (old investigation targets)	5	0
Level 2 Psych Lim - Macho attitude	4	0
Age - 33	34	68

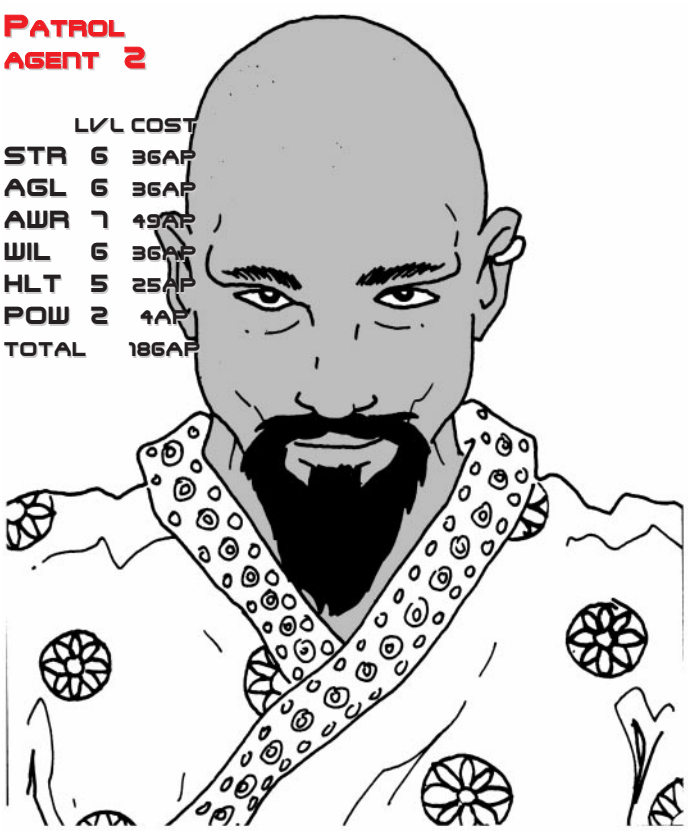
Other	AP	SP
Authorities and Duties	0	0
Starting points	100	100
Total	138	163

Skills	Level	SP	Skills	Level	SP
Projectile weapons	4	15	Area knowledge 1	3	5
Melee weapons	4	15	Area knowledge 2	3	5
Unarmed combat	4	15	Second language	3	5
Survival	4	12	Second culture	3	5
Land vehicle	3	8	Third language	3	5
Water vehicles	2	3	Third culture	3	5
Equestrian	3	8			
History	4	12			
Profession of choice	6	32	+1 secondary skill of choice		1
Related skill	4	12	**Total**		163

Background

This is a generic Patrol agent, such as might be employed to track down fugitives, do minor cultural or historical research, or other tasks requiring the adaptability of a human presence. They may not be experts in a particular field, but have a great deal of flexibility due to their broad training.

Patrol Agent 2



"I am but a humble wanderer, seeking the path of enlightenment..."

Advantages	AP	SP
Level 2 Contact - Local criminal network	0	-10
Pain tolerance	-5	0

Disadvantages	AP	SP
Level 2 Enemy - Long-term temporal enemy	10	0
Level 2 Psych Lim - Cynical	4	0
Age - 30	28	56

Other	AP	SP
Authorities and Duties	0	0
Starting points	150	150
Total	187	196

Skills	Level	SP	Skills	Level	SP
Projectile weapons	4	12	Area knowledge 1	3	5
Melee weapons	4	12	Area knowledge 2	3	5
Martial arts	5	32	Second language	3	5
Survival	4	12	Second culture	3	5
Land vehicle	3	5	Third language	3	5
Equestrian fam.	2	2	Third culture	3	5
Theater	7	45			
History	4	12			
Psychology	5	21	+1 secondary skill of choice		1
Investigative rsch.	4	12	**Total**		196

Background

The same type of agent as the first, but a little "larger than life" due to a higher number of starting points. This agent *is* an expert in a few fields, and while they usually have backup, is quite competent to handle dangerous missions alone. Will usually have above average equipment and backup plans available in case of trouble.

Recollections

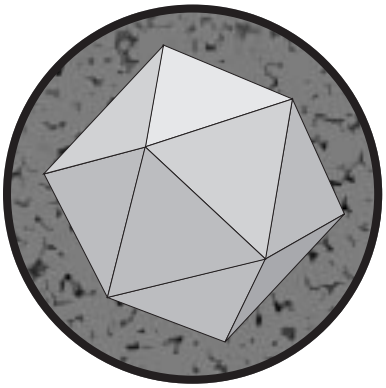
Time: 1942CE
Location: Earth$_0$

We made it back to the road before our luck ran out. The car we were waiting on before pulling out had government plates. Brake lights and smoking rubber. Oops. They must have our description. Elly spun gravel and headed back towards DeeCee. Feds in hot pursuit. There's no place to really lose them. At least they don't have helicopters yet. They just hang on our ass like they were welded there. I can see them talking on their radio. Word is probably out on half the east coast for us. Enough. "Elly, gimme your gun." She doesn't take her hands off the wheel, but just nods at the seat and says 'purse'. I grab it from the seat, find her snubnose and lean out the window. *No more Mister Nice Guy.* Get the driver, the rest of them go bye-bye. Aim, squeeze, ka-Boom! *Jeezus!* Recoil damn near slams the thing back into my face. *I'm weaker than I thought.* Elly yells "Hang on!". I almost get pulled out the window by the force of the turn. *She wasn't kidding.* The Feds pull back a little. They're either afraid of the gun or don't have a suicidal driver like I do. The G-men pick up a friend in flashing blue. I shoot a few more times and put out one of their headlights by accident. I save the last couple shots for an emergency. One of the G-men leans out the window. He's holding something big. I duck in posthaste, yell "Down!", and push Elly's head down. The front and back glass shatters under a hail of fire from the tommy gun, and there's a lot of 'punc! punc! punc!' as the slugs dent the DeSoto. Like I said, built like a tank. Elly's only got her eyeballs above the dashboard, and I'm looking backwards. "Billl...", I hear. "Bih-illl!" Louder, and two-tone. I look forward. Bridge. Roadblock. *Big* roadblock. Coming up fast. I didn't want to have to do this in public, but these guys are seriously pissing me off. I reach into my vest pocket for the Matrix. It's not there. My finger goes through a hole in the pocket. *Damn!*

"Bih-illl, what do I do-oo?" They're close enough that I can spot the shotguns aimed at us.

"Ram the bastards!" There's enough gap that we can probably force our way through. Elly bites her lip and hisses, but I hear the gas pedal hit the floor. I feel around the bottom edge of my suit for a tell-tale lump. *Yes! No!* Damn my good taste in clothing! It won't tear! I point the snubnose at the bottom seam. *Fine Italian workmanship this!* ka-Boom! ka-Boom! Elly just about swerves off the road. I'm even more deaf than I was before. The suit *isn't* bulletproof. I reach through the rips and grab the Matrix. *It's ready.* I look up in just in time to duck back down. *Ka-rash!* Broken window glass bounces around the inside of the car with the impact. The DeSoto swerves as we're thrown forward, and I feel us start to slide. Elly's still hunched down, and just looks at me with that 'anytime, boss!' expression. No time like the present. Or rather, no time like some *other* time. I take one last glimpse up. *Yeow!* I punch us out.

The universe turns me inside out. Sunlight. An explosion and a flash of heat behind me. We nose down and forward, tumbling in space. I see grass, then the sky, then something gray and brown. The DeSoto lands greasy side down on something soft but my face keeps going until it hits the dashboard and bounces. *Ow! My nose!* The first thing I am cognizant of beside the pain is the car horn. It lets out a pitiful dying wheeze like the air being let out of a balloon. Elly is slumped over the bent steering wheel, moaning. A trickle of blood oozes from a nasty cut in her eyebrow and she has two fists of bloody knuckles from where they slammed into the instrument panel. The back of the car is in flames. The gas tank must have exploded when we Jumped. I try to open the door, but it doesn't budge. I shoulder it, and the latch finally gives. I climb out, pulling Elly with me. We clamber out into cold, knee-deep mud. A stone wall in front of us looms up and up, ending in battlements. Around us are discarded shovels and wooden wheelbarrows, and screaming away in the distance, fleeing peasants who must have been mucking out the moat. Moat slash sewer. *Oh, the stench.* We slog our way to the edge of the drained moat. I think they only mucked these things out when the lord and lady were not in residence, so the garrison won't be that big. And here they come now. *Thrill me.* They come out in some disarray, medieval swords and armor that I can't pin down the century of. They look ready to do a spot check on our blood type, when the sergeant bids them hold, goes down on one knee and says "Welcome back, Lord Zhanken." *What have I been up to? And when have I been up to it?*



Temporal Mechanics

"Time is an approximation. Cause and effect are not mandatory. Probability is infinite, but some things never happen. Everything you know is wrong. Get used to it."

Zhanken

Basics

Much of what we think of as "reality" is fundamentally flawed because of the way we view the universe. Our perceptions are locked into a second-follows-second progression of causally linked events, which in turn shapes our language, our culture and the way we think. The actual nature of the universe is so radically different that it is difficult to express the concepts in language, much less understand them. In addition, much of our current understanding of physics is flawed because it fails to take into account the multiple dimensions of reality and their weak but significant interactions with each other. Some of these interactions are rare and are responsible for unexplained events and much of the anecdotal evidence of the supernatural. Other of these interactions are vitally important to time travellers.

The most important thing to remember about the **TimeLords** universe is that time and dimension travel is about matter and energy, *not* psyche, motivation or subjective factors. *People care, the universe does not.*

Okay. A lot of what follows is what we call "technobabble". It is a part of the game universe, just like starships or magic would be in other games. We have tried to make it internally consistent as possible, but time and probability can get extremely convoluted, and if you look at them too closely you're likely to hurt your brain. If you just want to play a game, skip this chapter. If you want to undermine the foundations of the universe, tip it over and make the cosmos beg for mercy, keep going. Just don't look at the physics too hard, and accept it in the spirit with which it is written.

Life, the Universe and Everything

All things have the potential to exist, which would make the universe infinite. However, not all things *do* exist, which makes the universe less than infinite, but more than finite (this is the simplest case of language being insufficient for the task at hand). We'll say the universe is "transfinite" and leave it at that.

All things that do exist do so simultaneously, though the implication of time with the concept of simultaneity isn't entirely accurate either. Of the things that do exist, all are connected by bonds of "probability" with the lowest aggregate state of energy. These bonds of probability are the sub-quantum nuclear force. This is the foundation of what we call "time". The state of being called "you" at any given instant is linked by bonds of probability to the states of being called "you" that are almost identical. The rate of energy transfer between them is dependent on the local field density of the quanta of dimension that the Designers called Descriptive Discontinuities, and which we call "chronons". The stronger the field, the slower the energy transfer and flow of "time". Chronon "spin" makes energy flow along these bonds towards what we call the future. Each thread of "past", "present" and "future" is its own microuniverse, extending from the beginning of the universe to its eventual end. This happens all the way down to a subatomic level, until the random fluctuations of energy become great enough to make cause and effect break down. We see this phenomenon as electron tunnelling or quantum teleportation. At a still smaller scale, energy and probability are a chaotic sea where everything is connected to everything else, a reservoir of infinite energy and infinite possibility that is however infinitely difficult to tap or control.

The "you" that is "now" is entirely separate from the "you" that is "later". It is theoretically possible that in the middle of reading this sentence that you could turn into a toad. In fact, this is what *would* happen if that was the lowest aggregate energy change available. However, the *actual* probability is so remote that the universe would likely end before such an improbable instance would occur. This quantum separation of dimensional states is what makes time and dimension travel possible at all. If time were a continuous function, the energy barrier to break the time stream and insert something new into it would be nearly insurmountable.

Of all the things that exist, we see that they cluster in such a way that "mass", "energy" and other concepts are linked together in a downhill slide towards the end of the universe. This clustering also includes things that are similar but not identical to "you". All the instances of "you" that are not ahead or behind you in time make up what we call a "timeline", a cluster of probabilities flying in tight formation at the lowest aggregate energy state. You share your existence and your consciousness with an immeasurable number of similar and overlapping "you's".

Chronons

A chronon is the fundamental particle that governs dimensional separation. It exists simultaneously in finite space but infinite probability. It is approximately correct to say that a chronon exists across all of time at the same time, but only in a limited volume of space. Chronons are possibly the rarest of fundamental particles. A given solar system may have only two or three.

Chronons can interact with the rest of the universe, but only barely. They tend to occupy space more densely around gravity wells, for instance. Chronons have their own energy field that repels other chronons, and all normal chronons are "positive". They "spin" in the direction of "time". Many of our ideas regarding relativity are linked to the local density of a chronon's energy field. A ship approaching the speed of light bunches the chronon field in its immediate vicinity and alters its apparent flow of time in regard to the rest of the universe. A black hole's gravity well does the same. If chronon field density were to drop to zero, that region of space would instantly experience an infinite amount of "time" as its probabilities would have zero separation, exist simultaneously and then disappear. It is thought that the Designers used this vast source of potential energy and annihilated several suns to power the machinery for their Exodus.

This means that at any given chronon field density, there will be a lower limit to the minimum increment of time that can be measured, regardless of how advanced the technology. The technology to measure an interval this small does not exist until TL22, and is part of the theoretical advances that lead to TL23.

A chronon's simultaneous existence across multiple probabilities means that with a massive expenditure of energy finessed incredibly fine, a macroscopic part of one probability can be substituted for another piece whose total aggregate energy state is about the same. That is, someone could convince the universe that the place where "you" are standing should be replaced with a toad. If it works, the toad's entire probability line gets dragged along with him and so the toad stays a toad rather than turning back into "you" as the next dimensional state of existence takes its place. By its nature, such a manipulation of probability only extends to the edge of *that* chronon's energy field (which could be quite large). This has some interesting and extremely convoluted effects which we'll get into later.

Manipulating a positive spin chronon only lets you move in the direction of entropy, or to the "future". To move against the flow of entropy, one must create an anti-chronon, and manipulate it in the same way. This is what the Designers put into the Matrices.

Sub-quantum Nuclear Force

While we can understand the outward effects of the strong nuclear force that binds atoms together, this force also has a similar weak effect across dimensions and timelines. The effect of any given individual probability is immeasurably weak, but with the vast number of probabilities in any given timeline, the effect thresholds to what we would consider the "normal" level of the strong nuclear force. That is, the only thing that holds mass together is the fact that countless thousands of similar alternate realities exert a small stablizing force on each other. This force is largely responsible for temporal inertia and what we call "timelines". Similar mass on different timelines tends to "fly in formation", making the similar but unique timelines more or less indistinguishable. The subquantum nuclear force also is largely responsible for the "missing mass" of the universe. It holds things together, but we can't detect it yet.

When a time traveller causes sufficient change to split off a significant number of probabilities and generate a new timeline, the total subquantum nuclear force for both branches is reduced, as the sum of multidimensional matter and energy is split between the two. These branches slowly build up new "mass" as their own microuniverse slowly expands in proportion to the overall macrouniverse. The exact rate of buildup is tied to the $e=mc^2$ equation, but in general it takes a few hundred years of "accretion" for a timeline to double its "mass".

Normally, a timeline cannot branch if the resulting timelines would lack sufficient mass and energy to meet the strong force threshold for cohesion of matter.

This lower limit on timeline potential was the major problem for Lucifer and the original TimeLords. He had branched humanity's timeline enough that there was only one timeline left that had a chance of withstanding the machine invasion, and that timeline was too small to be branched further. He had to succeed with the timeline left at his disposal, and the result of that battle would decide whether humanity's most advanced timeline would survive.

Statistically, energy distribution is such that these branches happen anyway as a random phenomenon (probabilistically similar to evaporation), and these unstable probabilities are called "phantom timelines".

Phantom Timelines

Just like a rope may have fuzz around the edge, so do timelines. Since in an infinite universe *anything* is possible, in an infinite universe everything *must* be possible. It doesn't mean it is likely, though. These are *phantoms*, unique or nearly unique timelines that are unaffected by normal temporal conservation, and which fill the space between normal timelines like spider silk. For instance, what if a superbeing from a dying world landed on Earth in the early 20th century? We have 50+ years of comic books dedicated to that one. These timelines are tough to find, tough to visit, but easy to change, since they don't have enough temporal momentum to generate new timelines of their own. They may spontaneously appear, but quickly disappear. Why?

A phantom timeline by definition does not meet the cross-dimensional threshold for the normal level of the strong nuclear force. The timeline literally starts to disintegrate. The matter in the timeline begins to dissolve into undifferentiated protons, neutrons and electrons. How long it takes depends on how much below the threshold the timeline is. It could range from as long as decades to as short as a few weeks, but the process exponentially accelerates as the mass available decreases. The effect begins first in areas of low mass concentration like outer space, or lightweight elements like hydrogen. A star's light may seem slightly distorted, or a comet's tail might begin to disappear. The dissolution of the timeline then progresses to higher concentrations of mass and heavier elements, causing planetary atmospheric effects like massive auroras and decay of the ozone layer. Solid matter will begin to decay next, becoming light and brittle. A loss of the key elements required to sustain life may cause a debilitating and painful death even while a planet still has some breathable atmosphere left. The only possible escape from annhilation is to somehow leave that timeline or to force it to rejoin the major timeline from which it sprouted.

If nothing is done, eventually all matter in the phantom timeline is reduced to elementary particles of negligible energy, its potential gone until accretes sufficient mass for stellar formation to begin anew. Since it would take billions of years for this timeline to be able to support life again, that timeline is effectively dead. However, remember that this effect is limited to the chronon field that supports *that* timeline. The entire universe is not destroyed, just a small part of it.

⚠ Since the bounds of a Matrix are not actually matter, it can survive the destruction of a timeline. Lacking any orders to prevent it, a Matrix will eventually Jump itself to the closest stable timeline to await new instructions.

Since it can't branch, any change that happens on a phantom timeline changes it for good. These lines can also be subsumed into or pass through larger timelines that they happen to intersect. This is worth exploring. The phantom timeline would not intersect a major timeline unless they had a large number of common events to bring them close, and only a few major differences that would keep them apart. This is very rare, but there are so many phantom timelines that it still happens on a regular basis. What happens when they intersect is that the unusual events stay on the fringe of reality and don't actually cause any effect for all but a tiny fraction of the population. This is still enough for it to "taint" the overall timeline in subtle ways. If the phantom is subsumed into the larger whole, a very small amount of the phantom differences will become a part of daily life in the overall timeline. If the phantom passes through and keeps going without being affected, all that remains is a "memory" of the differences. Many supernatural myths and legends can be attributed to these memories or visions of what "was", or "might have been".

For instance, what if there was a phantom timeline about 4,000 years ago in which somehow nearly the entire inhabited region of the planet was submerged in a catastrophic flood? After this timeline passed through, there would be a small fraction of people in every culture that had this common historical feeling, and even if there was no real evidence for it, somehow everyone else would still find it plausible enough to write it down, and later generations would search for evidence that it actually happened.

Phantom timelines can have enough "momentum" to shape history in a certain direction, but seldom cause enough divergence to actually do anything unless they repeatedly loop back and forth across a major timeline. Characters who are already on the fringe of a timeline by nature of their being time travellers (and therefore not duplicated or subject to as much temporal conservation) are much more likely to experience and/or be affected by the intersection of a phantom timeline.

⚠ Phantom timelines were largely ignored by the characters in *Eternity's Shadow*, as they did not have enough temporal durability to guarantee the survival of humanity, which was their major goal. As a result, these timelines are virgin territory. Also, they give the GM a way to occasionally have extremely weird timelines, such as bizarre alternate histories, magic, advanced interstellar cultures, multiple sentient species, and so on.

Example - After some adventuring, characters get lucky and manage to get back to their home timeline. While deciding on how to explain their absence, they become aware that while they appear to be "home", they didn't recall there ever being temples of Zeus instead of normal churches, but everything else seems the same. If they stayed around long enough, the phantom timeline effect would pass. The Zeus worship would fall out of style, and people would note in future years about this unusual practice that never really caught on (aka "the disco effect").

A non-time traveller who is on the fringe and happens to exist in both a real and phantom timeline at the same time may experience flashbacks, hallucinations, or possible pre-cognition as the universe tries to fit both timelines into the same lowest energy state, which happen to overlap for the person who was in both. The mildest cases of this simply provide inspiration for different types of creative work, based on the degree of overlap and the type of phantom timeline. This effect is most likely to happen on individuals who for one reason or another are important on the phantom timeline, regardless of their station in life in the "real" world. And since the person is more firmly grounded in the normal timeline, they seldom realize that what they "see" and "remember" *is* real to their alternate self. The alternate self on the phantom timeline is usually much less affected, but will be subject to moodiness, disturbing dreams and the like.

Example - One might suddenly gain terrible insight into a world like ours, but where monstrous forms from beyond time and space seek to return and cleanse the Earth of the pitiful refuse called Man. In one world, the man grapples with the madness of his visions, while in the other he grapples with the terrible reality, but dreams of a world where the horror has passed them by.

Macroteleportation

Phantom timelines either quickly re-integrate themselves with a nearby timeline or evaporate into nothingness. A side effect of reintegration is the occasional displacement of matter, mundane energy and sometimes temporal energy, keyed to differences between the timelines. Combined with the normal minute differences between otherwise identical timelines, this can make strange things happen, some of which will be witnessed and recorded. A person might see a building where none was before, but by the time they arrive to investigate, it is gone. They might hear a cry for help that occurred in the distant past, or has yet to occur in the future. Ghostly figures from a bygone era might be seen at a weak point in the fabric of spacetime. A person might inexplicably disappear from plain view and never be seen again.

These events are extremely rare and seldom predictable. When they occur, it usually means there is a temporary weak spot in the fabric of the universe that makes temporal or dimensional effects much more accessible or likely, and events that would normally be impossible are now just unlikely. Whether a Matrix is enhanced or impaired by this is up to the GM.

Chronon side effects

All time and dimension travel effects are "local" in scope. Timelines only extend to the boundaries of the chronon that encompasses it. This distance is in turn influenced by local concentrations of mass and energy, and these "bubbles" of spacetime move through normal space and grow and shrink depending on their contact with adjacent bubbles.

There is a chronon somewhere inside Earth's sun, and its radius of effect extends to somewhere between the Earth and Mars. This is surrounded by a larger bubble that covers the rest of the solar system all the way out to beyond the Oort cloud, and whose chronon generally hangs around Jupiter or Saturn, depending on planetary positions.

The following notes apply only to *physically* crossing a chronon boundary, like in a spaceship. Using a Matrix to cross boundaries integrates you fully into a chronon field, just like you had always been there.

When you *physically* cross from one chronon's boundary to another, you automatically enter *all* the timelines in that region, but you remain causally linked to the region you came from. That is, your mass and energy is split between the different timelines just as all the other mass and energy on that timeline is split. When you return, the mass and energy is reintegrated back into the timeline you came from, with memories and knowledge that is based on the largest of the timelines. Confusing? *You bet*. But it works.

For instance, say a Martian climbed into a spaceship and flew to Earth circa 2000CE. When they crossed the chronon threshold between Earth and Mars, the Martian would see several different Earths, one for each of Earth's artificially created timelines ($Earth_{null}$, $Earth_1$, $Earth_2$, etc.). The "split" Martian would not realize this, each aspect only seeing and being aware of one timeline. When they return home, all of these memories and experiences will be reintegrated into one Martian, the largest fraction being completely dominant (the lowest aggregate energy state), the others being at or below the threshold of detection. In this example, the main memory will be of $Earth_{null}$, since that is by far the largest of Earth's timelines in terms of probability energy. But, the Martian might also have dim memories, dreams, visions or nightmares of all of Earth's other timelines. If the Martian had just viewed Earth through a telescope, they would just see the photons coming from the largest Earth timeline, in this case $Earth_{null}$.

But what if the Martian suffered a tragic accident, and the version that landed on $Earth_{null}$ *didn't* return home? Odds are that none of the others would either. The largest of the probabilities erased the Martian, and the others will follow suit. The versions visiting the other timelines would vanish upon crossing the chronon boundary on the way home. If $Earth_1$ had about the same probabilistic potential as $Earth_{null}$, then the Martian might survive the transition, but with memories of $Earth_1$ instead, since that is the largest of the remaining timelines. This would make things very interesting, since while the Martian's memories (and recorded data) will be genuinely from $Earth_1$ experience, everyone back on Mars is still seeing $Earth_{null}$ through their telescopes and will have no way to figure out the differences! Now, imagine the confusion if this ship had multiple crew members, and one died on each of Earth's different timelines. Each would have genuine but quite different memories!

On the other hand, if a human from $Earth_5$ circa 2000CE went to Mars, they would not see $Earth_0$ in the Martian sky. The human came from $Earth_5$, and is causally linked to $Earth_5$. If they looked at Earth through a Martian telescope, they would see the light reflected from $Earth_5$. When they return home, they return to $Earth_5$ instead of being split into all of Earth's timelines.

If you aren't confused yet, wait. This can get *really* weird. *How* weird? A $Earth_4$ human and an $Earth_5$ human who had physically moved to $Mars_0$ would each see a *different* Earth through a telescope. A photograph taken through that telescope with an $Earth_3$ camera would show an $Earth_3$ landscape. And if a Martian spaceship took all three back to Earth, each would see the other person and the camera vanish when the boundary was crossed, yet all would arrive at their respective Earths intact! It would become even more convoluted if the Martian timeline branched while these events were transpiring.

An obvious ramification of this temporal weirdness is that the AI's responsible for the Machine Invasion simultaneously attacked *all* branches of Earth's history, even though when they left our solar system they only remembered and had data from the $Earth_{null}$ attack. All the attacks except the one on $Earth_0$ were still successful, so $Earth_0$ is at the moment the only human timeline that has humans on it past this point. An application of this theory could be used in a number of games where the bizarre and supernatural happens. You can have a telescope that sees a similar but not identical world. A chronon boundary could be on a planetary surface instead of in space, and these effects could happen to anyone who travels across it, possibly only during rare conjunctions of the planets. *Why don't we have any evidence of any of this yet?* No human on this timeline has crossed a chronon threshold, so we don't have to worry about this technobabble becoming obsolete until the completion of the first manned mission to a region that has more than one timeline associated with it...

Like most time travel mechanics, it hurts to think about this one too much. Cause and effect as we understand it are only approximations of how time actually functions. Trust us that it works, even if no one quite understands why. Just remember that it is all science (or pseudo-science at least), so there are no subjective rules or limitations, and the universe makes no distinctions between sentient beings and any other form of matter.

Note - In the **TimeLords** universe, there are three Martian timelines, $Mars_{null}$, $Mars_0$ and $Mars_5$. $Mars_{null}$ parallels $Earth_{null}$, the state of things if no temporal intervention had ever occurred. It is the largest Martian timeline. The other timeline is $Mars_0$, which is related to $Earth_0$ and is the result of Lucifer's intervention at the Pathfinder Base prior to the outbreak of the Red Death (2167CE). $Mars_0$ is the second largest branch of the Martian timelines. $Mars_5$ results from early colonization attempts from the $Earth_5$ timeline. These did not occur until shortly before the Machine Invasion and did not survive. On the $Earth_0$ timeline, regular passenger travel develops between Earth and Mars in the centuries after the Machine Invasion. This involves spatial transfers from $Earth_0$ to $Mars_0$. A side effect of this is of course that all transfers have the previously listed side effects, but aside from the rare case of “space nightmares”, no one ever notices. The Guardian organization on $Mars_0$ knows all the ramifications, but the public is both unaware and generally not capable of understanding the dimensional sleight-of-hand that is going on. $Earth_0$ is not capable of branching for some centuries past the Machine Invasion, but $Mars_0$ still has a bit of temporal potential which it is anticipated will be used as a hedge to insure humanity's survival in case something happens to $Earth_0$.

Using Chronons

Time, like distance, can be viewed as a potential barrier that inhibits interaction. Like all such potential barriers, it can sometimes be tunnelled through or otherwise bypassed.

Any working hyperdrive can exist (or seem to exist) in more than one place at a time, but only chronons exist across time. It is these that lie at the heart of the Matrices. Chronons have no volume, no internal structure, and have no conventional charge or mass. About the only quality they do have is an abstract value called ‘spin’. All this makes them just about impossible to lay hands on unless you do unspeakable things to a hyperdrive engine. Chronon spin is positive or negative, so there *are* ‘anti-chronons’. Normal matter has a chronon number of zero. Like the annihilation of matter and antimatter during the Big Bang, all or virtually all of the anti-chronons were annihilated in the first instants of our universe. Anti-chronons are required to go *backwards* in time, and the Designers are the only ones to ever artificially create them. Chronons are very stable: they won’t decay for billions of years and can only be destroyed by a chronon/anti-chronon annhilation reaction. No one has ever tried this to see what happens...

There are three aspects of chronon behavior that are important to understanding the Matrices (or any of the other time/dimension travel devices that use them):

1. Only particles with a non-zero chronon number can effectively tunnel cross-time. Positive chronon number can be used to move you forward relative to your position in the spacetime continuum, while negative number can be used to move you backwards. Without Designer-created anti-chronons, no other culture is capable of going back in time. However, devices manipulating positive chronon fields are effectively stasis fields, and are barely within the grasp of highly advanced (TL23+) cultures. A Matrix consists of three hyperdrives: one each to manipulate a chronon and anti-chronon, and one for conventional movement.
2. When nudged just right by containing fields, a chronon can be made to correspond, not with a geometric point, but with a usefully large volume of space around it (usually spherical). By adjusting the chronon's energy field, this volume of space can be made to correspond with any other volume of space in the universe. If the chronon 'translates' (Jumps) in this expanded configuration, everything in that volume will come with it, and everything at the destination goes back to where the Jump originated.
3. Near the core of the expanded chronon, quite substantial spatial distortions can be created, with no attendant gravitational stress. Further, such areas invariably display profound suppression of related inertial and gravitational phenomena. This means that you can put a lot of machinery in what appears to be a very small volume, and it won't *feel* like a lot of machinery. The Designers already knew how to locally fold space. The inherent properties of chronons simply enhanced that ability.

The chronons in a Matrix are tightly bound and their energy fields strictly contained. To a given timeline, a Matrix and anything it has moved appear to belong there. The matter and energy signatures of everything except the chronon itself have been artificially manipulated to match the surrounding continuum. However, while the chronons in the Matrix are masked to match the surrounding continuum, they are also residing in their own little pseudo-universe.

This pseudo-universe has a number of ramifications of its own. All chronons in Matrices (and possibly *all* artificially manipulated chronons), share a common frame of temporal reference. One side effect of this is that there is only *one* Matrix and group of time travellers associated with a given Jump.

They appear as individuals on a single thread of a timeline, and are *not* spread across the timeline as clusters of similar probabilities. When they Jump to another timeline, they don't leave behind alternates of themselves who didn't Jump, nor are there alternate histories where a Matrix both stays *and* goes elsewhere.

As time passes on a timeline, the interactions of the time travellers will spread across the timeline extremely rapidly (at a good fraction of the speed of light). It may take an hour or two for the timeline as a whole to "become aware" of the time travellers presence through probabilistic ripples. The people they talk to, the matter and energy they interact with, and so on cascades out like ripples on a pond. So, while time travellers have a small probabilistic presence, they *can* make overall changes. Those changes are just not immediate across the entire timeline like "native" events would be.

If you hadn't figured it out, this also makes time travellers very vulnerable. If they die, they die. *Their individual timeline no longer exists*. There is no alternate timeline where they didn't get killed. There *are* other timelines where that person still exists (the ones before they started time travelling).

Another result of the chronon's shared frame of reference is that you cannot use a Matrix to Jump to anyplace that is out of sync with any other Matrix. You can jump onto the same temporal spot in a timeline, if that timeline still has sufficient energy to branch, and those areas of the timeline aren't already occupied by other Matrix users.

Example - Lucifer, who for this example we'll say is only two thousand years old, has Jumped to a point on $Earth_{null}$ that corresponds to 1800CE. His Matrix's "clock" reads "X". A third generation TimeLord also wants to jump to $Earth_{null}$ at the same date. However, the TimeLords postdate Lucifer's death, which would have been a point on the Matrix "clock" of say "X plus a lot". The two clocks are not synched and Lucifer's has the lower number. The TimeLord cannot Jump to that point in history on that timeline. However, $Earth_{null}$ has a huge amount of branching potential, so what would happen is that the TimeLord would end up at 1800CE on $Earth_{null}$, but would be in a separate "current" of that timestream that would never intersect Lucifer or the side effects of his actions. If a timestream did not have this branching potential, the usual result is that the newcomer will get bumped ahead in time to right after the other Matrix has left. This could be days, weeks or even years. If the third generation TimeLord had Jumped to a point on $Earth_{null}$ that corresponded to 1799CE and waited a year, the fields of the two Matrices would intersect. The later one (the TimeLord) and their Matrix would find themselves shunted onto another branch of that timeline, or shoved to a fringe of the timeline where Lucifer doesn't exist, and where what they do will have no permanent effect on that timeline as a whole (remember that there is only one Lucifer and his effects on the timeline take a while to spread across the timeline). Whether the TimeLord gets branched or fringed depends on whether or not the timeline naturally branches at or near that point.

This means characters with a Matrix can never encounter the previous owner of their Matrix, *or* the next owner. What Lucifer and the original TimeLords did to history is done. You can't meet Lucifer or the original TimeLords earlier in their careers, unless you are stuck in another timeline because someone has taken your Matrix and Jumped out with it.

⚠ Time travellers operate on a common frame of reference to each other, *independent of outside events*. If you and your friend each have a Matrix and you spend a year separated from each other, each of you will experience a year of absence. If you travel and your friend stays in one place, you can't spend a year elsewhere and then Jump to a week after you left. You'll bounce forward to a year after you left, when the Matrices are in sync again.

Since the chronon in a Matrix is linked to the local chronon field, this limitation on Jumping extends to the edge of that field. Jumping to Mars has no effect on where or when someone can Jump to on Earth.

Paradoxes

"Paradoxes? We don't need no stinking paradoxes!" Time travel can't really *change* history. It just creates new versions of it. This is good, otherwise we'd be up to our ears in those messy situations known as temporal paradoxes.

A temporal paradox is a situation where, due to the actions of some meddlesome time traveller (is there any other kind?), it appears that something must have both happened, *and* not happened. Obviously, the implications of such a paradox can be very confusing. Consider the following (somewhat extreme) example.

Suppose, somewhen out there, there is a vicious, twisted fellow who hates his grandfather, to the point of wishing to do him violence. The grandfather in question, however, has long since gone on to his eternal reward, and is thus immune to the evil machinations of his unhinged grandchild...right? *Wrong!* If our hateful protagonist has a Matrix (or some other time travel device) and can use it with some precision, he can go back in time and confront his target anywhen he wants. Let us suppose he chooses a time before Grandpa met Mrs. Grandpa. Grandpa, currently a fit young man, is taking a stroll through the park, when suddenly, from out of the bushes steps a figure in powered armor (never mind how our time travelling assassin got it there). "Eat plasma, Gramps!", cries his psychotic assailant. *Whaump!* Scratch one grandpa. Now comes the confusing bit. Since Grandpa was carbonized before he met the lovely Mrs. Grandpa, his murderer's father could never have been born, therefore his murderer could never have been born, therefore his murderer doesn't exist, and could not have so rudely interrupted his walk through the park on that fateful day. So Grandpa *did* survive to wed Mrs. Grandpa, etc., and so his homicidal descendant was born, did kill him, etc.

Whew.

Fortunately for the sanity of all concerned, temporal paradoxes don't exist. *Period.* Remember that time is only an *approximation* of reality. The assassin exists in space and time *regardless* of his past (or future). As a time traveller, he is inserted seamlessly into any continuum he visits, which for the duration of his stay becomes his "home continuum". There are several things that *could* happen after the assassination, and it might help to think of the timeline as a river and Grandpa as a school of fish.

1. Grandpa is killed. The assassin drops a grenade into the school of fish and gets most of them. The fraction of the timeline that represents $Grandpa_{dead}$ is most or all of it. The links of probability now shift to a lowest common energy state that represents a dead Grandpa. The assassin lives, life goes on for him.
2. Grandpa is killed, but circumstances were such that his death caused a major branching of the timeline, either immediately or somewhere down the line. The local universe branches into timelines $Grandpa_{alive}$ and $Grandpa_{dead}$. The assassin drops a grenade into the school of fish and gets half of them. If the assassin goes forward in time, he will probably end up on the larger of the timelines, and may be happy that Grandpa is dead, or frustrated that Grandpa somehow uncarbonized himself. The river forks, and depending on which way the assassin looks, he either sees a batch of dead fish floating down one fork, or a smaller school of fish swimming down the other. Either way, the assassin lives.
3. Grandpa is killed, but the assassin was on the fringe of the timeline and didn't kill many of the potential Grandpas that make up that timeline. He drops the grenade into the school of fish, but it drifts wide and only gets a few. The assassin watches the ambulance crew sweep Grandpa into a baggie and drive off. He blinks, turns around and Grandpa is finishing his walk through the park.
4. Just like case three, but the assassin is dragged into the phantom timeline created by the assassination. He drops the grenade into the school of fish. It kills a few but he thinks he has gotten them all. However, that particular microuniverse starts to unravel at the seams. Normally, all the remaining similar aspects of the timeline would hold it together, and minor aberrations like the assassination are "smoothed over", but sometimes a microtimeline will split off, even if unable to sustain itself. It may vanish in a matter of hours or days, or be dragged back into the main timeline by the attraction of similar existences.

In all cases, the universe doesn't care who the assassin was. The effects would have been identical if the assassin had been a psychotic who was native to the timeline.

No matter how much time travel goes on, and no matter how heavy handed and unsubtle the time travellers may be, there's always one version of history that they haven't been able to get their grubby paws on. Unfortunately, this is usually the only one where their checks are still good. As the TimeLord Dreamchild says, "You can't go home, but it's always there."

The other paradox is meeting yourself. This isn't a paradox anymore. Once you are seamlessly integrated into a timeline, the universe doesn't care about your identity. If you Jump to where you already are (on a timeline where you don't have a Matrix) you can call yourself on the phone, have lunch with yourself, get a sex change, marry yourself and have kids. Or, you could kill yourself before you get a Matrix. The effects would be the same as killing your grandfather.

One thing you *do* need to watch out for is that the Matrix tries very hard to minimize any change of energy states when it moves matter from one timeline to another, and the nature of the universe tends to do this as well. If you and your friends with a Matrix decide to Jump to someplace where you and your friends already exist, there is a chance that the lowest change of energy states involves transposing you and your friends with your alternate selves at the destination of the Jump. This is all fine for you, since you have a Matrix. But it means you have stranded some other version of yourselves back wherever it was you just came from!

Altering history

If you continue to think of a timeline as a river, you can understand that it takes a lot of energy to make that river branch or change its course. Individual actions may only produce momentary ripples, but enough of them can have a cumulative effect. If our assassin kills his Grandpa, it might not have an immediate effect on the overall course of the timeline, but combined with other minor alterations, it might eventually cause an overall shift. It all depends on how pervasive the links between “Grandpa” and the rest of the timeline were. If causality was such that Grandpa discovered the cure for cancer, then his premature death would cause a shift of a large number of probabilities by a slow cascade effect. A comet smashing into the Earth would immediately disrupt a large number of probabilities just by the quantity of mass affected.

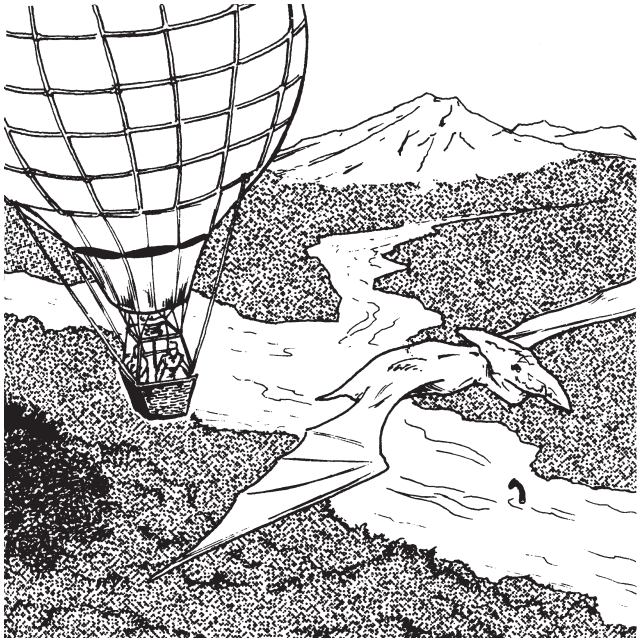
Depending on the nature of the events causing a change, the time over which they are applied and the potential energy available to that timeline, a timeline will either shift entirely as in case one, or branch as in case two.

Exactly what it takes to make a timeline shift is covered in more detail in the **Matrix Operation** chapter.

I want a Tyrannosaurus Rex!

There is more to the extremely distant past than meets the eye. In theory, Lucifer might have gone back to Earth before he was captured by the Designers, but the one who was to be his mate had not met him at that time, nor obviously was his son born yet. He felt that it would not be the same, and never tried. Just as importantly, the Designers were still alive and kicking, and he would have gotten short shrift from them had he Jumped anywhere that they could detect or intercept. Especially when the first thing that would have happened would be a revocation of his Matrix permission via their FTL network. The side effects of *that* on history can well be imagined. There *may* exist an entire history where the Designers quietly and benignly mastered the entire Milky Way, a history in which humans never developed past a bronze-working agrarian level.

Using his authority, Lucifer imprinted every Matrix he got a hold of with a prohibition against travelling back in time past around 8000BCE, a date *after* Lucifer was kidnapped from Earth and the Destroyer went berserk. This information was communicated along internal Matrix channels, and as a result, you just plain can't go there. Period. *If* you were able to get by this, there would be intervals around 10,000BCE into which you still couldn't Jump, because the Designers were using Matrix technology in Earth's vicinity during their initial exploration of this area of space. If you knew where you were going in the interstellar neighborhood, you could find a number of diffuse starfaring cultures towards the galactic core, many of which were wiped out by the Destroyer in later centuries. The remainder steered clear of his homeworld and a region several thousand parsecs in every direction. The smart ones did, anyway. Among other things, this explains why Earth was never visited during its long history. We were outside the Destroyer's sphere of notice, but close enough that it wasn't worth the risk of anyone else visiting us.



If you went back some hundreds of thousands of years, you would find younger versions of the same cultures, or older cultures slowly going extinct. On Earth, humans would be primitive tool users, strong evidence for the "lazy bastard" hypothesis (i.e. if it took 200,000 years to get from spear to bow, how come it only took 10,000 years to get from bow to Moon landing? Someone interfered, that's why.). If you go even further back, humans were just learning to chip stone into tools and harnessing fire for the first time. All the ancient megaflora were there, the mammoth, sabertooth tiger and so on. Beyond that is a matter of the fossil record. Humans evolving, dinosaurs dying, continents shifting, ice ages, the occasional non-catastrophic meteor impact, and perhaps very infrequent visits by aliens from whatever culture happened to exist at the time.

Why didn't the Designers see it coming?

The Designers are/were/will be the most technologically advanced species in the history of the universe. Others may approach knowledge of the ultimate principles (TL23), and one or two may experiment with them (TL24), sometimes with disastrous results, but no one else will achieve the Designers complete and casual mastery of time and space. The Designers had more incentive than most, and they also did not have to worry about any damage they caused to the spacetime continuum in the process, since they weren't planning on sticking around.

You would think that a TL26 society with the ability to move themselves through limitless time and space might have noticed that they became extinct a few short millennia after setting up shop in their own distant past. Why didn't they notice this? There are a few possible explanations, but we will never know for sure...

First, the Designers were plodding and conformist. They were dedicated, resourceful and driven, but not all that imaginative. When they finished moving to our part of the Milky Way, they packed up all their time travel gear and decided that they didn't need to time travel anymore. Being conformist, they all obeyed this ruling, so no one ever went forward in time to check for next week's lottery numbers, stock market picks...or genocidal extinction events.

Second, TL26 can probably implement things we can't even conceive of, much less understand or implement. One of the things it *can* do is alter universal constants. Some think that time travel didn't even exist until the Designers began to experiment with these universal constants. The idea is that as a side effect of an unrelated experiment, they found they could condense out part of the subquantum nuclear force of the universe into discrete quanta called chronons. Until the Designers came along and messed with things, there was only *one* "universal timeline". They explored the Milky Way for thousands of years before their Exodus and never found any evidence of their transplanted sun going nova, no ruins of blasted Designer colonies, no evidence of the Destroyer or time travel, because in that one timeline, these things had not happened. Only by making time travel possible and actually moving themselves back in time did these other futures gain the possibility to exist. In effect, they split the entire universe into the timelines $\text{Universe}_{\text{null}}$ and Universe_{0}. But, having already investigated and seen no evidence of temporal tampering or their own extinction, they didn't look again after they moved.

It is also possible that the multiplicity of branching universes is somehow a side effect of the Destroyer's subversion of the Designer technological infrastructure. It may have been impossible to find a future in which the Designers were destroyed until after it had already happened...

Last, it is possible that the Designers kept some form of temporal interference machinery going just in case someone else was able to move through time. Since the Designers had technological superiority, blocking all access to time travel (including their own) would keep them secure from the only threat they couldn't meet head on. They just never expected that their technology would be turned against them from within. The blocking technology kept their own timelines from branching, so all the Destroyer's carnage ended up as the *only* timelines for the Designers (oops). Once the Designers were gone and their technology wrecked, the timelines could branch again and anyone with the ability to time travel could now do so.

Vignette

Time: 1452CE
Location: Earth$_{cataclysm}$

Lucifer shifted uncomfortably in the saddle of the requisitioned steamcycle. Aside from an occasional chitter from the front wheel, it chuffed quietly down the wide, black road that ran all the way from Dimashq to Al Quirah. There was no other traffic. Abandoned vehicles, burned-out wrecks and cracked bones left by scavengers were his only company. A naptha rifle was strapped across the handlebars, and panniers on the back bulged with unknown contents. A road sign in Greek proclaimed the proximity of Amman, just visible over the next ridgeline, if memory served. These people had carved out the hills so deeply that sometimes it was hard to tell. He thumbed back the throttle and let the cycle drift to a stop in the shade of a destroyed land leviathan. The top of the war machine had ruptured from within like a black fungus, spreading red-brown fragments in all directions. Lucifer peered inside. Unsurprisingly, there was nothing left for scavengers of any kind.

"Is it success, or failure?" Lucifer said to the empty air. Far-walker projected an image from within Lucifer's bag, pivoting the skull's image to indicate what his senses were actually perceiving.

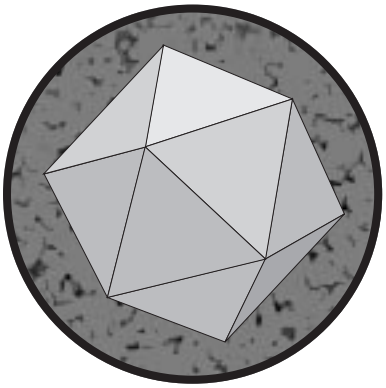
"Both, and neither", Far-walker said. "These people have no hope, if this is the best we can do to save them. They have plundered this future of resources, and though they have a thousand years to prepare, they have left themselves nothing to prepare with." Lucifer rummaged in the front basket for a canteen and splashed his pale skin before taking a long drink. He would never tan or burn, at least not from something as mild as sunlight.

"It seems there is no middle ground. If we give them steam and the knowledge to use it, they rule the world within a few generations. If we hold it back, the knowledge withers and dies, and they do not make it on their own." Lucifer remembered the Greeks, the northern tribes, the kingdoms of the far eastern lands. It was all the same in the end, save for the language spoken by those who ruled. Once the knowledge spread, there was no stopping it. It was like iron, but worse. An iron sword could still only kill one foe at a time. Steam cannons, and then naptha guns could destroy entire cities. No matter how many warlords he killed to slow the pace of conquest, more took their place. And with their own power of the gods, they ceased to revere or respect him. Naptha guns were the first weapon Lucifer *feared*. The small ones did not pierce the skin, but they *hurt*. The larger could do him serious harm, and he was forced to avoid direct confrontation. This vexed him, but he knew men would have to develop far worse if he hoped to defeat the Destroyer.

Lucifer put the canteen away and looked down at the outskirts of Amman with a pair of binoculars. The sight was astounding and appalling. Of the several million the books said once lived here, evidence of no more than a few thousand remained. Cookfires, the occasional scavenger, sometimes the whuff-crack! of a naptha rifle. The once-white steel and cement towers were filled with gap-toothed holes, smoke stains curling up their sides. A few had toppled, spreading ruin over several blocks. Civil war was ugly, but the people had largely survived until the chemical weapons fell from flying fortresses, which were in turn shot from the skies. The world was Greek, but old nations and tribes and peoples kept their home loyalties, some instinctive protection of one's greatly extended family.

"Perhaps," Lucifer said. "This future is smaller than the iron-workers, and smaller still than the mound-builders. They have despoiled their nest, but they can *fly*!" He remembered a month ago, a hundred years in the past and a continent away, riding a great airship for the first time. He marvelled at the engines descended from those of the iron-makers, the skin and frame made from the black oil that oozed from the ground, but which now was scarce and pumped from deep wells in remote places. It was a time of limited prosperity. Too quickly they forgot the horror of their wars, too quickly they remembered old grudges. Men wanted sons, and they bred like hares, expanding until crowded cheek to jowl. Then the wars, and the plagues, the burnings. Three times had they stripped themselves bare, promising "never again" after each. Everywhere he travelled, it was the same. Cities bloated beyond reason, coal and oil smoke rising high into the air, or worse, hanging over the cities like a poison cloud and bringing burning rains disturbingly like those that would fall a thousand years hence. Great mines on land, huge steel platforms at sea, ships of a size beyond imaging to the iron-makers who first gave him steam. A century ago, they were mining the past, hauling wrecks from their harbors for their iron, smelting tailings and digging up destroyed cities for their metals. The making of things from oil was becoming expensive even then. The rich lands to the south of Amman had been abandoned centuries before, the steel wells pulled up and resmelted after the third of the great wars.

But still, *they flew*. They also made books by machine, and almost all could read them. He sought the best books of science available. Each time they fought, they lost many of the tangible things, but they kept their knowledge. This was their peak of learning, the highest the steam-warriors would reach. When the comets came nearly a thousand years hence, they would be little better off than the iron-makers, burning wood and making their oil-plastics from plants. Life would become too hard for them to constantly make war anymore. The enemy hands cared not. The comets fell, different cities, same results. He looked back down at Amman. Their library was second only to Athens, and the greatest by far that survived this war. He would take what he needed, as many trips as necessary. What he would give to the past would be far less. There were too few futures left, and mankind too fickle and violent.



The Matrix

"You can never go home, but it's always there..."

Dreamchild

Basics

The Matrix is *the* piece of Designer technology that allows characters to hop the lines of space and time. Often, the character's lives will depend on its proper functioning, so make sure you pay attention.

A Matrix is a *perfect* Euclidean dodecahedron, about the size of a 20-sided die, and massing approximately .5kg. You *always* know a Matrix when you hold it, as no natural element or alloy can match this density, and the edges and points are *sharp*. Despite its mass and small size, a Matrix floats in water and will seldom if ever sink below the surface of any soft or liquid medium. This is almost certainly a deliberate action by the Matrix itself to avoid potential loss. The faces may appear partially reflective or mottled, but are *always* perfectly smooth. The faces of a Matrix are not *matter*, but discontinuities in the fabric of the universe that shield the chronons inside from the naturally occurring chronon field. Any surface irregularities are a sure sign of damage that undoubtedly damaged the internal structure of the dimensional travel machinery. Being at the core of a matter-antimatter conflagration might do the trick.

A Matrix may "feel" warm or cold depending on its state of charge, but to instruments it will always register *exactly* at ambient temperature, regardless of what that temperature is, and it changes to this temperature instantly.

A Matrix *appears* metallic, but cannot be analyzed by any type of sensor except reflective, gravitational or temporal ones. For instance, you can weigh it on a scale, take a picture of it, or bounce radar signals off it, but you can't find it with a metal detector or take X-ray pictures of the inside.

What does a Matrix do?

The flash lit up Bright-spear from inside and the universe expanded to infinity around him, pulling his perceptions in every direction at once. Then the stars came rushing in again, coalescing back into that primordial flash. The force of the vision left him reeling. When the pulsing spots in his vision cleared, he found himself on a swampy plain, face-down on a perfect circle of steppe several paces across.

Quite simply, a Matrix takes a volume of space centered upon itself, and transposes that volume with a volume of space in a different place and/or a different time. This is usually accompanied by highly visible and audible lightning-like discharges which are fortunately harmless. The radius of the volume transported is almost exactly three meters. Whether this represented some multiple of Designer units of distance, or if it is some function of chronons and limits of Designer machinery is unknown. The computational machinery inside the Matrix takes care of the extremely complicated but mundane aspects of the travel, like making sure you are right side up, matching your velocity and vectors to that of whatever surface you land on, and making sure that the environment arrived in is not immediately lethal to the lifeforms being transported.

This edge of this six meter sphere will slice off anything that isn't a sentient lifeform, regardless of its composition. It is a dimensional boundary, not a physical one. Even Designer structural materials can be severed by a mis-aligned Jump field. The only things unaffected are other dimensional boundaries such as shields or the surface of another Matrix. Sentient lifeforms are either entirely included or excluded, based on the mass fraction inside the sphere at the moment of translation. Thanks to Lucifer, humans fortunately qualify as sentient on the Designer scale of measurement.

The only known "bug" in the Jump effect is that the Matrix does not seem to compensate for violations of structural integrity caused by the Jump itself. For instance, if you Jumped from a room with a ceiling less than three meters high, you would take part of the ceiling with you, ceiling that would *not* be attached to anything after the Jump, and which would be centered directly over the person holding the Matrix. *Beware of parking garages with low ceilings...*

Another side effect is purely environmental. Temperature, humidity and air pressure are not equalized during a Jump. So, sinus headaches, painful ear pressure and boundary zone fog are common and unavoidable side effects you'll have to learn to live with.

What is a Matrix?

What's in a Matrix? We know there must be some kind of hyperdrive-related machinery, but what else? How is it all powered? How does it receive and interpret instructions? And why is it effectively indestructible?

Well, we don't really know the answers to any of these questions for sure. The very nature of a Matrix resists internal inspection. A few TimeLords have made special effort to probe their inner workings, but have met with little success (as far as we know). But, as with most mysteries, we can make a few educated guesses.

Matrices have the uncanny ability to reflect *up to* 100% of any incident energy, whether electromagnetic, kinetic, or whatever, that might conceivably damage them. This allows them to reliably survive all those rude little insults that they occasionally experience, like stupid people with hammers. Or stupid people with H-bombs. We haven't a clue as to how this is done, but, since the Designers apparently did not make use of this exact trick elsewhere, it's probably something that can only be done near a chronon. However it's done, this defense mechanism is not always on. Hold a Matrix in your hand, and it feels like normal (albeit heavy) matter, and exhibits an intuitively reasonable amount of surface friction, reflectivity, etc. How does a Matrix know if it's in danger? We don't know, and the Designers aren't around to be asked.

On a related note, how does it know when the target zone of a jump is too hostile for its operators to survive? Matrices have a reliable reputation for never dropping their owners into instantly fatal circumstances. Since the bulk of the universe is in hard vacuum, this is a statistical oddity, to say the least. Obviously, the Matrices have some sort of sensing apparatus. But how can it function during a Jump?

One explanation suggests that, during a jump, a Matrix can open an infinitesimal window onto the target zone, through which it can measure physical data, sort of like sticking one's toe into a tub to check the water temperature. It then compares the environmental data with its operator's structure, and can then make decisions accordingly. But how does a Matrix figure out where you want it to go in the first place? It is known that the Designers had a method capable of non-destructive, three dimensional imaging at range, with a maximum resolution of less than an angstrom. If such equipment were inside a Matrix, it could take a perfect picture of your entire brain, and then, providing it already had some basic info about that organ, it could theoretically figure out what you were thinking. Thus, "Matrix Skill" is not just you learning to use your Matrix, but also your Matrix learning to use *you*. You gradually learn how to concentrate on your chosen destination, and it gradually learns to pick out the relevant commands from a flood of irrelevant wishes concerning hot steaks, cold beer, and warm members of the opposite sex.

Finally, how is the whole mess powered? The clue here is that Matrixes are *not* penetrated by neutrinos. They are not reflected, they just disappear. It could be that there is some sort of collection grid that picks up the angular momentum (theoretically) dumped by the ambient neutrino flux as it (apparently) evaporates upon striking some sort of dimensional interface. *Maybe*. Or maybe not. A lot of Designer technology is still indistinguishable from magic. Insert technobabble as needed to convince the players that the theoretical underpinnings of Tech Level 26 equipment is going to *forever* be beyond their grasp.

Not all Matrices are the same. Some will not take orders from any humans. Some have broken controls, and will not take orders at all. In their own timeframe, Matrices are *at least* 12,000 years old, and even Designer technology can malfunction on occasion.

Comings and Goings

Most Timelords notice early on in their careers that sometimes their exits and entrances are as quiet as a mouse, while other times they are accompanied by pyrotechnics worthy of a big budget special effects crew. These displays are caused by hypergic potential difference.

Hypergic potential is a highly non-intuitive value, not linearly related to anything in particular. A simple zero time hop across continents sometimes crosses a significant potential gap, while an eon spanning, megaparsec jump may encounter virtually no difference at all.

Just before and after a jump, there is a link between the initial and final frames, that is, where the Matrix is coming from and going to. If there is a significant hypergic potential difference between the two, then there may be a discharge. If so, it will manifest mostly as electromagnetic radiation. Fortunately for time travellers, the wavelength distribution for this phenomenon is not the same as for thermal radiation, allowing an intense and colorful light show with little heat and no hard radiation. In practical game terms, it's just something for the GM to have fun with.

Some TimeLords have claimed that it is possible to control these discharges. Some TimeLords proclaim themselves pacifists, but there is no such thing as an unarmed TimeLord. If nothing else, they have their Matrix.

As we said, the edge of a Matrix's jump field is sharper than any razor, and sometimes does not respect such arbitrary concepts as the outline of living things. If a Jump is executed when something is only partially within the critical radius, then the part within the radius will come along, and the rest will stay behind, whether it is a tank, a tree, a horse, or your old Aunt May (now there's an ugly thought). The situations can range from amusing to the exceptionally gruesome. Most Matrices will default to protect the users. Any creature that is self-aware (usually the same race as the operator of the Matrix) will either be entirely included or excluded, based on the fraction of their mass in the jump field at the instant of departure. Skilled Matrix users can control this effect, or turn it off.

This effect is not very easy to use as a weapon. Your timing must be very good, unless your target is either ignorant or very clumsy. But if you do manage it...well, the effect is usually catastrophic. Consider the effect on a ship (or spaceship) of having a 6 meter hole instantly poked in the hull, or a suspension bridge if one of the towers were to lose its support.

Large groups who habitually time travel together are warned to stand close together, as this particular sword can cut both ways. Also, dissatisfaction with group policy sometimes leads to unfortunate "accidents".

Matrix operation

The Designers operated as Families, extended lineages that specialized in certain fields. Their culture and authority structures followed this pattern. Your access to resources was based on your importance within your Family, a constructive system for a race living on finite time and scant galactic leftovers. The unproductive starved.

While relaxed after the Exodus, the system stayed in place, and by sheer accident resulted in Lucifer being inducted into a Designer family that had access to Matrices. By this chance event, Humans are the only known sentients able to use Designer technology. However, these Humans must be a direct descendant of Lucifer and happen to have identical key genetic sequences. Not all of his children have the right genes, even fewer of his grandchildren, and virtually no one with more diluted genes than that. Theoretically, a Qual'n descendant of the Destroyer could also use Designer technology, but he had no known offspring and no Qual'n TimeLords have ever been encountered.

This means that one (and usually only one) of the characters is able to use the Matrix. Maybe Grandma had an affair she never told anyone about. Maybe you were adopted and your parents never told you.

Within *Eternity's Shadow*, using a Matrix required physical contact. For game purposes, close proximity is enough. Why? Close proximity means that *any* one of the characters could be the one who is key to its operation, and the GM can keep this information to themselves. So if *the* player has to leave the game, the campaign is not disrupted. Likewise, if *the* character happens to get killed (oops), the rest of the group isn't stranded forever. This secrecy also means that the GM can be the one who keeps track of Matrix skill and skill improvement. Unqualified characters can still learn the mental techniques required to specify a Jump destination, and *assist* the qualified character, but without the genetic coding, a character can never get the Matrix to do more than cryptically answer the occasional question.

A Matrix is "turned on" by contact with an authorized user. This links the two in an information-sharing and probabilistic sense and installs chronons and anti-chronons from the pseudo-universe from where they are stored. There can be more than one such user, and the Matrix can keep track of all of them. It can be "activated" (used for time or dimension travel) within minutes of being turned on. A Matrix whose authorized users all cease to exist on that timeline or in a form capable of using it will "go dormant", put its chronons away and await a new user. Without any internal chronons, a dormant Matrix is *not* subject to synchronization. It could lie inside a chunk of rock for millions of years, and when finally activated, it would *then* be in sync with all other active Matrices.

A Matrix is traditionally activated by the simple act of holding it and concentrating on being somewhere else. The bare skin of the hands is acceptable, partly for convenience, and partly for the large numbers of nerve endings in the fingers. It won't activate through gloves or armor. The Matrix has what passes for telepathy, and tries to take you to the place you are visualizing. Your ability to clearly project your intent is learned with time, and is Matrix skill, a *WIL*-based skill that has Secondary skills in particular timelines, and Tertiary skills to a particular destination on that timeline.

A correct Jump is a base Difficulty of 12, and requires *three* things specified to the Matrix via the link it has to your mind:

1. A place (a *specific* location, *not* "France", or "somewhere in the tropics"). This can be objective or subjectively described.

Example	Good	Bad
Base of the Washington Monument	If it exists where you are going	If it doesn't
Latitude & longitude	Most of the time	If this spot is lethal to visit

2. A time (a specific date in a system that the character is familiar with and which the Matrix can correlate to human events in a meaningful way, or an event in an objective reference frame unassociated with a flexible historical event).

Example	Good	Bad
April 4th, 1875	If you are going someplace that uses this system	If you aren't
Two days after the Battle of Gettysburg	If you know the date	If you don't
At the peak date of the arrival on Earth of light from the nova that became the Crab Nebula	If you can identify where in the sky this is	If you can't

3. A probability (a specific, prior cultural or historical context that defines the timeline you are jumping to).

Example	Good	Bad
Home timeline	Almost always	Only if different for one of the controllers
Where Alexander the Great died at age 43 and descendants of Vikings colonized North America	If after both of these events	If before or between them
$Earth_0$	If you know what it is	If you don't

A Jump is measured in "legs", where a leg is the distance to the nearest major branching point that gets you closer to your destination. For instance, to Jump to an alternate present is *at least* 2 legs, going back to the closest *common* past, and then forward to the alternate present.

The base Difficulty to get a Matrix to take you *where* you want, *when* you want and *which timeline* you want is 12, with a 10 second default skill use time. The Difficulty is modified *only* as follows:

Circumstance	Difficulty
Each extra person in the loop	+1
Each person in the loop with a skill equal to half or better of the controller (*at least* Familiarity)	-2 (maximum of -6)
Each "bad" description of the destination	+3
Each AWR impairment of any one in the loop	+1
Deliberately attempting to reach a phantom timeline	+3
Jumping only through space (not time or probability)	-3
Each leg of the Jump after the first	+1
Distractions during the skill use	+3 to +6

⚠ One side effect of the modifiers is that with skilled people involved (up to 3 extra), the *better* the chance of success, but for these other people to get skilled, you need to use them, which temporarily *reduces* your chance of success.

Failing the roll means you Jump *anyway*, it's just to someplace *other* than where you wanted to go. Until you get a lot of practice, blowing the roll is the normal result. Usually, the magnitude of the miss is 1 week and 10 kilometers for a miss of 1 point, and doubled for each point after that, with historical differences varying. For rolls which involve "long shots", add the difference between 10 and the "long shot" number to whatever amount any normal failure was by. Note that if you are trying to Jump *only* through space, you miss *only* through space, with no temporal or probabalistic side effects.

Roll miss by	Time deviation	Spatial deviation	Probability deviation
0	On target	On target	On target
1	1 week	10km	Correct timeline
2	2 weeks	20km	Correct timeline
3	1 month	40km	Correct timeline
4	2 months	80km	Off by 1 timeline
5	4 months	160km	Off by 1 timeline
6	8 months	320km	Off by 1 timeline
7	15 months	640km	Off by 2 timelines
8	2.5 years	1250km	Off by 2 timelines
9	5 years	2500km	Off by 2 timelines
10	10 years	5000km	Off by 3 timelines
11	20 years	10000km	Off by 3 timelines
12	40 years	wrong planet	Off by 4 timelines
13	80 years	wrong planet	Off by 4 timelines

Example - If the characters had a skill of 4, vs. a Difficulty of 14, they would need to roll a 1, followed by another 1 in order to succeed. If their initial roll was a 5, they failed to get a 1 by 4 points, and failed to get the second 1 by 9 points, for a total miss of 13.

A miss means that the characters did not get where they intended, but are off by *no more than the listed amount*. Usually it is just convenient to say the miss was exactly by that much, but if you want to be picky, roll 1d10 and multiply by 10% of the maximum error in each category. Random scatter always errs in favor of character survival.

Example - A miss by 4 for time would be 1d10 times 6 days off target. A miss by 4 for a space-only Jump would be 1d10 times 8 kilometers off target. However, if the characters were aiming for a coral atoll that was the only land within 100 kilometers, they would hit the coral atoll, just not at the spot on the atoll where they were aiming.

A miss by a "timeline" means that you have skipped from the timeline you were aiming for and landed somewhere else, with the temporal and spatial error appropriate. The default human timelines are $Earth_{null}$ through $Earth_5$, and are listed starting on page 100.

Example - Characters try to land at a spot on $Earth_3$, but miss by 2 timelines. So, they either land in $Earth_1$ or $Earth_5$.

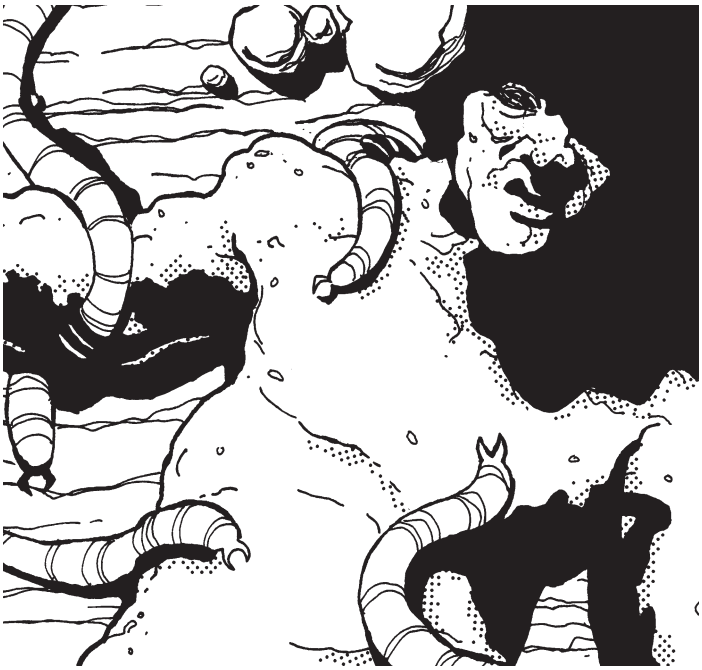
You *can* have historical differences on the timeline you aimed for. For instance, you aim for Victorian England, and get the right timeline, but you still failed the roll. Maybe in this world, China succeeded in avoiding British opium entanglements, and Lincoln wasn't assassinated during the Civil War. Both of these will have major future repercussions, but the level of technology, overall politics and history is about the same outside the effect of those differences.

Option - If the characters specified any "bad" choices in their description, the amount the roll was failed by is *doubled* for that category, *and* the recharge time before leaving that new timeline is increased by 1 Jump. Early on, characters will find themselves stuck for weeks wherever they go.

Example - If the characters failed a roll by 10, they would normally be 10 years, 5000km and 3 timelines off. However, if they made a bad temporal choice (inappropriate to the frame of reference they specified), they would be off by 20 for the time, which is about 10,000 years. So, instead of landing in the Luna Colony 5 years after the Meridian Revolt (which never happened, oops), they end up in mythical Atlantis, circa 8,000BC (because at the time they landed, the Moon was not habitable, so they were bounced to the nearest place that was, Earth).

On the other hand, if characters have one of their descriptions almost perfect, either by planning, luck or experience, the magnitude of the miss is halved, unless one of the other misses would contradict this.

Example - Characters miss their roll to get back to a staging area by 6, which means they are off by 8 months, 320km and 1 timeline. But, they specified the location "just right". So, while they are off by up to 8 months and in the wrong timeline, they missed the destination by no more than 40km. The Matrix will not Jump a group to a place that is instantly lethal, like vacuum, molten lava, etc. However, being in close proximity to places that are instantly lethal is possible and can easily happen. Let's say you wanted to visit Pompeii before it was wiped out, or Minoan Crete, or Krakatoa or Mt. St. Helens, and wound up landing there about a hour before all Hell broke loose. It's not *instantly* lethal, and if you think fast and run faster you can get out of the danger zone. According to the Matrix, you *did* want to go there, *and* be that close. It's none of *its* business if you get toasted...



And remember the notes in the previous chapter on paradoxes? How far you are off in time when you land can be influenced by other time travellers, regardless of how accurately you specify the destination. If you aim for 1900CE on a particular timeline, and the period 1890CE through 1910CE is occupied by prior time travellers already, you are going to miss 1900CE *every time*. On the other hand, if a time traveller is in 1900CE and they are contemporary with you (i.e. their temporal reference frame is the same), then your Matrix and theirs will be synched, and you *will* land in 1900CE.

Matrix side effects

My gun blew up! Something ugly about *temporal* translation is that it adds energy to the system, and "the system" is whatever is moved through time. The effect is not uniform, but it *is* pervasive and affects everything except Designer equipment, which is immune to this sort of nonsense.

These do *not* occur with purely *spatial* Jumps. If you want to Jump from New York to Tokyo with a pistol tucked into your belt, and you don't cross any temporal or probabilistic lines in the process, there are no problems except for legal ones.

In scientific terms, what are the side effects? Most items, especially metallic ones, will have loose electrons shoved around in great quantity, generating lots of electrical arcing and sparking. Fortunately, this is local to the item, but you may get singed a little (it especially hurts if you have metal fillings in your teeth). These arcs will rapidly pit and corrode components such as tiny gears, valves, etc. The effect on modern electronics is predictable: they are completely and utterly destroyed. Batteries fail, rupture or explode, depending on their energy density. Insulating coatings and dielectrics are breached. Anything of the complexity of a transistor or better (TL10+) is ruined beyond repair. TL9 electronics specifically built for the purpose can survive a Jump, but require things like heavy duty spring-wound generators as a power source, or batteries where the chemicals are not mixed until after the Jump.

The effect on molecular structures is the one characters most often run afoul of. Any metastable or high-energy compound will usually have enough energy added to its system that some part of it will "activate". For instance, gasoline will combust with any available oxygen (including that simply dissolved in it from the air). Gunpowder will ignite. TNT will *detonate*. And so on. The biological energy storage of the human body is *also* affected. *This* is the main reason for timesickness. Portions of the body's ATP supply are discharged, giving the symptoms listed under timesickness. If *all* your ATP were activated at once, you'd probably explode, so be thankful the effects are limited as they are...

Among other things, this means most successful TimeLords are accomplished in melee, cautious about where and when they land, and are pretty good about scrounging better weapons as soon as possible after they land. The favorite ranged weapon is the crossbow, since well-designed ones are unaffected by temporal Jumps. Over the years, a few TimeLords have found cumbersome ways to transport repeating projectile weapons, but these are not extremely powerful, and must be loaded *after* the Jump. For instance, a discharged compressed air weapon with *extremely* sturdy valves (Jumping with highly compressed air might rupture the cylinder). Another side effect is that temporal ambushes are extremely difficult, since the ambushed has had time to get local weaponry, while the ambushers are limited to what they can Jump in with.

Altering history

The very act of time travel alters history wherever you go, even if only in a minimal way. Often, however, changes are made deliberately, or by gross negligence or accident. Sometimes these changes "stick", sometimes they just fade into the background as a minor temporal blip. The act of altering history is known as "divergence", and the measurement of temporal change is the "divergence point". The more divergence points that a timeline is subjected to over a short amount of subjective time, the more likely it is to cause major change, and the quicker the change will happen.

Tracking changes

Historical changes will usually have one of two results. First, they may just have no effect, getting subsumed under historical inertia. They occurred, but didn't really change anything. A current historical example might be the Kennedy assassination. What if there was a second assassin on the grassy knoll? Or there wasn't? That would be two separate histories, but as long as the end result was the same (assassination), the course of history goes along more or less the same. Second, any changes made may cause other changes which cascade onward and usually reach a level of stability at some cultural threshold appropriate to the magnitude of the historical change. The history will continue to diverge from the original one at a rate also based on the change. For instance, say there was a second assassin and he got caught, and was found to be working for a foreign government? This would not stop the assassination itself, but the repercussions of the second gunman would be much greater than if he had gotten away cleanly. The repercussions would not likely make US citizens start sacrificing their children to Moloch, however, as it would be totally inappropriate to the change and magnitude of change in that particular history. And if the assassination was prevented? That's another matter entirely.

As a law of temporal conservation of energy, similar timelines tend to clump together like strands in a rope. They are all going in the same direction, but are all taking slightly different paths to get there. Characters landing on a very similar timeline might not even know there *is* a difference for quite a while.

These timelines also tend to overlap on the common areas, with fringes that provide meaningful differences between them. Only if a historical change is enough to differentiate one core history from another will a particular timeline shoot off in a different direction and spawn secondary timelines of its own. Otherwise, that timeline may kink a little, but still tend to follow the path of the similar timelines around it.

Overlapping timelines conserve energy in that most events happen only once, rather than billions of almost identical timelines doing things redundantly, much as it requires less energy to brush your hair many strands at a time, even if they don't *all* lie perfectly when you are done.

Effect	Divergence Points	Time Frame	Description	Example
0	1	1000 years	Negligible change	Un-noticed arrival of time travellers
1	2	500 years	Unnoticed change	UN resolutions
2	4	250 years	Minor, localized tech. or cultural changes	Taboos, improvements of existing tech
3	8	125 years		
4	16	64 years	Minor tech. change	Introduction of new weapon
5	32	32 years		
6	64	16 years	Major specialized change	Calculus, Arabic numerals, Physics
7	125	8 years		
8	250	4 years	Minor multicultural or tech change	Iran-Iraq War, US Civil War
9	500	2 years		
10	1,000	1 year	Major multicultural or tech change	World War II, Black Death, Depression
11	2,000	6 months		
12	4,000	3 months	Pivotal multicultural event	First use of atomic bomb
13	8,000	6 weeks		
14	16,000	3 weeks		
15	32,000	10 days		
16	64,000	5 days		
17	125,000	2 days		
18	250,000	1 day		
19	500,000	12 hours		
20	1,000,000	6 hours	Global, unavoidable, major change	Global thermonuclear war

If a historical change or series of historical changes accumulates a total of 1000 Divergence points, it is almost certain that the change will generate a new timeline that branches from the key event and is independent of temporal conservation effects on its parent timeline. Divergence points last more or less forever, but only points that work towards a common effect are likely to have any effect.

Example - Thousands of unnoticed time travel arrivals will eventually generate a significant effect, but the main focus of that effect is that enough evidence of odd events and inexplicable detritus has accumulated that people now generally believe time travel is possible and that they have been visited by time travellers who have gone unnoticed.

If you are trying to alter or undo previous events, the *actual* effect is reduced by 1 level for each row of difference from the original time increment.

Example - A group of characters by their actions generates a level 7 effect (125 divergence points, base time of 8 years), and they want to go back a few subjective years later and try to counter the damage they have done. Since this is within the window of easy change, they can reduce the divergence effect by if they do some Effect 5 damage control (32 divergence points, base time of 32 years). If they do this *four times* over the next four years (before the next interval), they can undo any damage done, as four Effect 5 events will generate enough divergence (4x32=128) to counter the original event.

Example - If a number of Event 0 actions are used to nudge an asteroid into collision course with the earth, anytime within the next 500 years it will be relatively trivial to use Event 0 events to shift its course out of the way. However, if you wait until 2 years from impact (9 rows of difference), any effect is reduced by 9 levels, so you need to do a Level 9 effect just to get a single point of Divergence in the other direction.

Events *can* cascade if given a little prodding, and sometimes do so without it. For instance, the development of stirrups may have fallen by the wayside because the people who first developed it got trashed in battle, or designed them poorly and tended to get dragged around by their ankles when they fell off. But, centuries later they gave *someone* an edge, and that someone used the edge to make changes of their own, which spawned more changes and so on. So long as these changes all go in a direction that history wouldn't have taken without them, they may have an overall effect that spawns a new base timeline. If they just helped along a course that would have happened anyway, their effect is minor and does not really do anything. A single event *can* cascade in a catastrophic fashion, causing such an overwhelming amount of change that it is impossible to shift history back onto its original course. Sometimes these are natural events. The Black Death of the 14th century, and the Red Death of the 22nd century were key events on those timelines. The triggering event was never known, and the effects were never stoppable. Sometimes these things just happen. Sometimes they are caused by time travellers.

If it helps, think of any given history as a river. When you create a divergence, you split the river's course, but anything less than a divergence just muddies the water.

When there is a powerful change that tends to be an all or nothing situation, it doesn't need to cascade, as it has sufficient momentum to force a temporal branching all by itself. A good example is "Yes, there was a WWII", vs. "No, there wasn't". History *is* going to go two different directions here, regardless of any other changes occurring in the background. When we delve deeper into the changes that have been made to human history by Lucifer and the other TimeLords, you will see that it is quite difficult to spawn a new timeline, and while the immediate results may be to your liking, the changes almost always have unforeseen long-term consequences.

A matter of scale

This scale of divergence is relative to the scale of observation. Obviously, if looking at it from a *personal* level, the death of a single individual (you) has a profound effect on *your* future. On the other hand, looking at it from a *universal* level, the entire history of humanity is little more than a footnote. So, the levels of event significance and divergence can be altered to suit your taste and the scope of your campaign. For instance, if you are running a game where *all* the time travel will take place between 1643CE and 1894CE, then events on Earth will be more significant than if you are running a campaign where all the travel takes place in the framework of an existing interstellar culture. Which also brings up the important point that any given divergence in timelines has *direct* effect *only* within the field boundaries of the naturally occurring chronon field. *Indirect* effects (responding to observed but distant phenomena) happen as they happen.

Example - If Earth and Mars were in separate chronon fields because of distance (and they are), then there would be no *temporal* side effects on Mars from anything that happened on Earth. For instance, you could Jump to a deserted 1000CE $Mars_0$ even if 1000CE $Earth_0$ was crawling with TimeLords.

Example - A change in history on Earth would not effect aliens visiting Earth from a distant star system. *Each* particular history of Earth would have the aliens arrive, and the interaction of those aliens with the different Earths might cause further branching. This in fact is the case of what happened in the 24th century on $Earth_{null}$ through $Earth_5$. If on the other hand, the aliens visited Earth only because they picked up our radio signals, then *only* the Earth timelines with radio signals would get the visits.

What is this $Earth_0$ stuff anyway? The changes made by Lucifer and the first generation TimeLords resulted in seven major histories for humanity, each of which may have several sub-branches. $Earth_{null}$ is the collection of paths taken by humanity had Lucifer never interfered. $Earth_0$ is the path that Lucifer felt was optimum for humanity's long-term survival, and $Earth_1$ through $Earth_5$ were the other major paths that resulted from active meddling. See p.100 for details.

Limits to divergence

The sub-quantum nuclear force limits how many times a timeline can be subdivided. In general, a previously undisturbed timeline has the potential to branch about ten times, gaining further potential branches as time passes for each of the new timelines.

Earth's history from about 8000BCE to 2500CE has ten branches, each of which has a number of sub-branches. The branches that Lucifer abandoned early on have more remaining potential to branch, while those that showed promise have less potential, and many intervals that later time travellers cannot visit due to Matrices already having been there. How many branches are left on a timeline will be up to each GM, as will the places where these branches can happen and places that are effectively off-limits because prior generations of TimeLords were already there.

Cataclysms

On page 99 there is a chart of all the histories and branches that have been created or caused by TimeLord interference. There are also three others that are not listed. These are the "Cataclysms", taken from the Greek *kataklysmos*, a momentous and violent event marked by overhwhelming upheaval and demolition. It is not the best word to describe what actually happens, but it was was the best word available when the first one happened. These timelines may also be called "runaways" or "snowballs" by later generation TimeLords. A Cataclysm is a timeline where a particular change had such a profound effect that it irretrievably altered history into a certain, usually self-destructive direction. This is usually because that culture gains a technology or concept that they are able to use and duplicate, but not able to understand the consequences of.

When Lucifer introduced ironworking long before humanity would have developed it on its own, he advanced civilization several thousand years and the subsequent changes branched history into $Earth_{null}$ and $Earth_1$. However, ironworking was not easy, and required significant time and resources for any culture using it. By the time of the Machine Invasion (2278CE), $Earth_1$ had developed crude steam engines and was on the verge of an industrial revolution of their own. $Earth_1$ also had a long history of slow development and advancement of science and weapons and was aware of the benefits and limits of what technology they had developed.

Before the comets fell on the cities of $Earth_1$, Lucifer kidnapped a handful of engineers and craftsmen, and transplanted them into an earlier era of $Earth_1$, about 1000BCE. Within ten generations, Greek steam galleys had conquered the Mediterranean. As other cultures developed steam power, primitive heavy industry and mining techniques, the world became an extremely violent place. They did not have the scientific understanding behind their inventions, nor an appreciation of Earth's limited resources. Lucifer tried to interfere, to contain the genie, but it was out of the bottle and would not be returned. By the time this culture reached the equivalent of 2278CE, it had been through countless global wars, yet never advanced technologically past TL8. In the process, pollution from wood, coal and petroleum had caused global climate change, and they had actually managed to mine and use most of Earth's iron ore and petrochemical reserves. Even if they had not been wiped out, they would probably have lacked the resources to develop a high-tech culture and would have become more and more metal-poor as generations passed.

That was the first (and only) Cataclysm caused by Lucifer. After that, Lucifer and the original TimeLords were *extremely* careful in the advances they introduced, how and when they introduced them, and then monitored them very carefully for several generations. The potential exists on parts of $Earth_1$ through $Earth_5$ for a few more major branches and the other two runaways. The GM can design these monocultures gone haywire, or leave them as untapped potential. Player characters may not be as careful or have the foresight of the original TimeLords. They could generate a Cataclysm on their own, and maybe have to live with the consequences.

Armageddon

On the timeline chart, humanity's existence as a species largely ends at the line labeled “Machine Invasion”. Among the early TimeLords, Lucifer called it Armageddon. A race of self-aware machines is responsible. They have no direct enmity for humanity, but they think ahead in terms of eons instead of years. Biologic life is wasteful, and planetary resources are more efficiently used by machines. The Earth is seen as a stockpile of materials for *their* future, and the only way to prevent it from being squandered is to remove the species which consumes the non-renewable resources. *Humans*.

The machines have no faster-than-light travel, and operate largely around TL13. They coast between star systems at a leisurely pace, exploring and marking their territory, stopping to rebuild and replicate every few thousand years, spreading their own alien form of civilization, and listening to the radio bands for signs of biologic life that needed to be erased. They left their previous destination for Earth centuries before the Exodus of the Designers. The Designers either did not notice the machines drifting slowly through interstellar space, or did not care to act at that time. The machines would have been no threat to the Designers. Any Designer ship would have been able to wipe out the entire machine fleet with little effort.

While the Designers would not have feared the Machine Invasion, Armageddon *is* a serious hazard for TimeLords. More than one has ended their career at this point. Among the early timelines like $Earth_{null}$, there is still enough branching potential that even third generation TimeLords can land at spots on the timeline, usually just getting shunted to the "edges" or lesser branches. On timelines with less potential, the actual time of Armageddon may be off limits due to previous intervention, but the times afterward are not. Conditions during and after Armageddon are extremely chaotic and violent, regardless of the timeline.

New stars appear in the sky. Primitive cultures will see them as omens and portents, and truly they are. Moderately advanced cultures may see them through telescopes and perhaps even understand the idea of visitors from other worlds, but no attempts at communication will be successful. Cultures with spaceflight capability will detect the fleet months in advance. In these cases, the machines will try to lull humanity with promises of technology and a new era of advancement, with well-practiced explanations for anything that might seem suspicious. *Until it is too late to do anything about it.*

The end begins with a rain of cometary debris, deliberately targeted on the largest population centers, and on those timelines capable of it, spacecraft launch sites. Immediate casualties are enormous. Deliberately placed impacts in the oceans cause waves of colossal height, which destroy most if not all coastal populations. Debris from the impacts is lofted into the upper atmosphere, turning day to night, perpetuated by gaping holes in the Earth's crust that will vomit forth smoke and toxic gas for years to come. The sun will not be visible anywhere but the high arctic regions for several months. Global temperature drops, and surviving crops fail on a worldwide basis. For many of the survivors, the famine begins within a week. Over the coming months, more debris bombards Earth, targeting any areas that show signs of regaining their footing, or gives tell-tale signs of radio traffic or electrical power generation.

Those who remain have exhausted their reserves of food, and are left with cannibalism as their only option. At the same time, the oxygen levels in the atmosphere have dropped because there is little surviving plant life. Sulfur and nitrogen in the air begin to rain out as highly acidic rain, making the air mildly toxic as well as less sustaining.

In all the timelines, there remain a handful of survivors. Low tech timelines will find a few resourceful individuals living in cave complexes, feeding on an ecosystem that manages well without light. On higher tech timelines, a few hidden greenhouses survive, providing food and fresh air for their caretakers, as long as generator fuel holds out and their electrical emissions remain undetected. But in the end, it is not enough. The outside conditions are too harsh, and too few people survive to perpetuate the species. The human population slowly drops over the following centuries, crushed by followup attacks on any site showing signs of reconstruction. The last human dies no later than 150 years after the first comets fall. After this, Earth is largely a silent planet. A few centuries after this, most of the machines have moved on, beginning the long journey to the next star system on their list. All that remains of Earth is a crippled and dying biosphere, and all that remains of humanity is crumbling monuments and bones slowly dissolving under the acid rains.

For TimeLords, the biggest danger from Armageddon is simply landing there and having to wait several days for a Matrix to recharge. No amount of body armor is going to protect you from an asteroid impact or a kilometer-high tidal wave. And if you land there *afterwards*, the survivors are not going to be in a friendly mood. Plus, you'll have a lot of tasty meat on your bones and are almost certain outnumbered and outgunned. *Not* a pretty picture. In addition, on a mis-Jump, the Matrix may drop you into the most habitable area it can find, an area which is almost certainly already occupied by desperate survivors. *This is how TimeLords die.*

The good side? There really isn't one. A consolation prize is that there is more stuff to loot than there are people to loot it, unless of course it's food. Another is that if you know where and when to look, you might be able to pick up a new Matrix. Odds of finding one by accident are slim, but if you investigate all the TimeLords who seem to be missing, and ask the right questions in the right places, you might get an idea of where and when they might have ended up if they mis-Jumped to an Armageddon timeline.

Since the biosphere is more or less destroyed, Lucifer never made any effort to try and recolonize Earth after this point, compounded by the fact that some of the machine invaders remain in the solar system and would be happy to start the process again if they saw signs of renewed life. However, the machines have no way to differential the electrical activity associated with a Jump from normal activity like lightning strikes. This means that TimeLords *can* Jump here if necessary, and possibly even survive in unprotected areas for several hours before atmospheric contamination does them in. Properly prepared,they might even be able to set up a base camp. It is not an option for humanity's long term survival, but it does have adventure potential.

Matrix tricks

A Matrix is basically a captive chronon and anti-chronon in a spatially folded hyperdrive powered by the energy of the quantum vacuum and some other technobabble that you will never really be able to understand. The inside of a Matrix is of unknown size, and contains any function needed for temporal and spatial travel, remote sensing and who knows what else. This remote sensing of the human mind is what passes for telepathy between the users of the Matrix and its guidance computer. Your skill with using the Matrix is learning how to shape your thoughts into something that the Matrix can understand as an unambiguous command to "take me *there*". Sometimes, the Matrix can be programmed to do other things, and sometimes it makes decisions on its own, based on whatever *it* feels is the proper course of action. It is loyal to the Designers, but is also aware they are extinct. Masterless, its motivations for cooperating with Lucifer's descendants are ultimately unknowable.

The overhead of containing and directing the captive chronon take much of the energy produced by the Matrix. What is left is still a considerable amount for such a tiny package, and most Designer technology could conceivably use any Matrix as a power source.

A Matrix requires energy to recharge equal to 100 hours (4 days) per leg of a Jump, regardless of length. Each time a timeline branches is a leg of a Jump, and Jumping to a phantom timeline adds an extra leg to any distance.

Example - Jumping from the $Earth_0$ year 2000CE to a $Earth_0$ year 2001CE (same *basic* timeline) is a 1 leg Jump. Jumping to $Earth_1$ year 2000CE is *at least* two legs, one to Jump *back* to a branching point, and one to Jump *forward* to the year 2000CE on *that* timeline.

Yes, this means that for any ongoing campaign the GM will have to make a branching road map of the known multiverse, or at least as much of it as the characters have seen. Players should be encouraged to try any figure out the structure of the game universe, and use their notes as a reference to keep from making bad Jumps. See page 99.

Using a Matrix for any purpose other than recharging will be assumed to negate an hour's worth of charging if it is used at *any* time within that hour. When a Matrix is charging, it has a duller lustre than normal, and feels "cold" in a subjective sense that is not measurable by scientific instruments. When fully charged, it changes back to an almost iridescent appearance, and feels warmer. The last person to control the Matrix will usually "feel" when it is ready, although early on they might not recognize it as such. Anyone holding it or keeping it in close proximity to their body will also feel this.

The following "tricks" are things that can be done with a Matrix. The ones with an "*" were used in *Eternity's Shadow*. The rest are *solely* at GM option for dramatic or game effect.

Sterilize**

You can kill any parasitic organism, microbe or virus that is inimical to the health of the person using the Matrix, provided that person was involved in the last Jump done. This has an effect over the normal transport radius. This effect occurs *automatically* at each Jump, but may be done manually once you figure out how. Using a Matrix in this way is a Difficulty 8 task. This will cure almost any disease, but will *not* negate toxins generated by the disease. In general, it subtracts 2 from the Difficulty of any HLT task associated with the disease, and automatically prevents contagion or an increase in the severity of its effects. Incidentally, it will also filter out any nanotech that is not Designer-based.

The absolute most important side effect of this function is that it also repairs any *genetic* damage done in the last month or so, *including aging*. A person who travels via Matrix at least once a month *will not age*, and this is the sole reason for the longevity of TimeLords (Lucifer was full of Designer micromachinery, and his biologic systems were always undergoing repair and rejuvenation whether he Jumped or not).

Portal*

When a Matrix is activated, the zone of spacetime affected is finite in three dimensions, and instantaneous in the fourth. In the default setting, the three finite dimensions are the linear ones (height, width, depth), and the instantaneous one is time, resulting in the 'blinking out' of a volume of space. This can be altered, however, to a zone that is instantaneous in one of the linear dimensions, and finite in time. This creates a zone that appears as a flat, circular sheet, and which exists for several seconds, i.e. a Portal.

For +2 Difficulty, you can make an opaque, 3 meter radius circular doorway to the destination instead of a spherical field. This will be centered 3 meters away from the Matrix, in a direction specified by the user. The doorway is bidirectional, for instance, you can stick your head through to see what is on the other side, pull back, tell your friends, then step through. You'll experience double timesickness, though. The doorway lasts 15 seconds. The rate of energy transfer per unit area of a Portal is strictly limited, and is somewhere on the order of 1 watt per square centimeter per second. In terms of light, this is about ten times as bright as a sunny day. In terms of matter, it would drop a 9mm bullet to a velocity of about 10 meters per second. In game terms, weapon fire passing through a Portal is dropped to a DV of less than 1. And of course, if it is a temporal Portal, any explosive device will detonate on contact (from *either* side).

The most important thing to remember about a Portal is that *you can only open one to a timeline where there is an active Matrix at the time you land*. The Matrices communicate and hand off data to allow an object to move through spacetime without actually having a Matrix accompany it (you *can* step through a Portal and leave your Matrix behind). If you try to open a Portal to a somewhere without an active Matrix, nothing happens, but you *do* discharge the Matrix. This in itself is useful (are there time travellers already there?).

Program
For +2 Difficulty *per Jump* you can "set" the next destination of the Matrix ahead of time, and it *will* go there unless the person using it is aware of the programming and tries to counter it. This requires making your skill roll by more than the programmer made theirs. Note that you don't have to successfully use this skill to program a Jump, but failure just means the people using it go *somewhere* and even *you* don't know where.

Disassociate
On a Difficulty 14 roll, you can timeshift the Matrix a miniscule fraction of a second ahead of the character, or push it slightly into another dimensional frame. In this state, it is linked to *that* person, who is aware of it, but not to anyone else, including the other characters. This is the most disconcerting of the Matrix's abilities, as it is the one most likely to be initiated by the Matrix if it feels the characters are best suited to its particular agenda, but are likely to lose the Matrix due to capture. In this state, it simply cannot be detected or affected by anything except equipment that can measure temporal distortion, which is pretty damn rare. Even in this case, it still cannot be affected unless it wants to be. This also includes being used by the owner. Until it rematerializes (or you make a Difficulty 14 skill roll to "grab" it), it effectively isn't there.

Universal translator
In its normal default state, it provides basic translation of words and ideas into the minds of anyone linked to it in the last Jump. This is the "dubbing effect", as characters will "hear" conversations that do not match lip movements, and their own lips will move in patterns that do not match the words in their head. This can be consciously overridden. This was normally used by the Designers when communicating with primitive races and is a trivial use of processor and sensor power that does not affect recharging time. Characters using this ability may not apply points towards increasing any skill in that language, as all the work is being done for them.

Emergency Jump
If a sufficient sense of urgency is felt by the main user of the Matrix and those in the loop, it can make a short Jump using unknown reserves of power. This Jump occurs *immediately,* and has spectacular special effects, even compared to a normal Jump. The normal 3 meter radius of effect does not apply, and the Matrix takes a radius no larger than is required to get the people the user feels should go along, and then only if they are within the 3 meters. This Jump is usually to someplace *relatively* safe, or which meets the conditions of any emergency that precipitated the Jump. High-tech emergency rooms with a high temporal signature, for instance. The fact that this happens to be at the receiving station for a secret temporal police agency is not of the Matrix's concern...

After an emergency Jump, the Matrix is discharged. It is unavailable for any reason for at least 1000 hours (40 days), while it repairs any internal damage, and recharges its emergency accumulators. There is a good chance it will be disassociated during this period. There is also a good chance that the Matrix will also be Sargasso'd on its next Jump due to a temporal reference loss.

"Sargasso" is TimeLord slang for the ruins of an ancient Designer base on a marginally habitable world several thousand parsecs from Earth. Its spacetime coordinates are apparently hardwired into every Matrix, and if a Matrix has suffered some sort of navigational malfunction, it goes to Sargasso for repairs. And it can't leave until it gets them. One minor TimeLord has been able to figure out how to do this. Fortunately, he is there most of the time. Unfortunately, his knowledge of Designer tech makes him reasonably powerful, and a previous accident with it has driven him insane...or allows him to understand Designer technology, no one is really sure. In any case, to ever get their Matrix repaired, characters will have to deal with him, sooner rather than later given the nearly total lack of food and water there. He usually either wants the characters to fetch something for him from elsewhen, or take part in some experiment. Neither task will be as easy or safe as it first appears.

It is a measure of the Designers that these functions were not deactivated, even after they stopped using Matrices for time travel. The idea that they would be misused simply *never* occurred to them. They were the kind of race that after an experiment, would label a *very* sturdy jar "Black Hole Inside - Do Not Open", and then put it on a back shelf in case they needed it later. The raw power and potential for harm or misuse is present in most Designer technology.

Designer Technology

Over the 10,000 years or so of Lucifer's work, a fair amount of Designer equipment was recovered. After the initial attack on the Destroyer, the Destroyer realized the source of some of the technology and did a pretty good job of scorching those sites, leaving few if no sites untouched. Only Farwalker knew the distant interstellar coordinates of many Designer sites, and through him, Lucifer. Some of the first generation TimeLords went on expeditions to these ruins, and the only sites known to second and third generation TimeLords are the ones the first generation passed on the coordinates of. Making a Jump whose distance is measured in thousands of parsecs is not recommended for beginners, and the logistics of setting up base camp on an alien world when you can bring no high tech with you (like spacesuits) is daunting. A very few of the devices recovered are in the hands of TimeLords. Most of the remaining Designer tech is concentrated in the hands of the **Guardians** (page 68).

In any case, of the recovered devices, many have the same limitations as a Matrix: built-in security safeguards prevent use by anyone not a Designer or direct descendant of Lucifer. Virtually none of the devices can be duplicated, approximated or even understood by human science. On the **CORPS** scale, the Designers would be about Tech Level 26 (they would consider anyone at Tech Level 20 or better an “intelligent” species). Consider: the difference between gunpowder and atomic power is about 5 Tech Levels. Consider: the most advanced human societies known in any **CORPS** universe are about 10 Tech Levels *behind* the Designers. You can see that we're lucky if we can figure out which switch is the on/off button.

The only reason humans can work with Designer technology at all is not because we're clever and resourceful, it's because the Designer technology is so smart and flexible that it can figure out what we're trying to do and reconfigure itself to allow it to work. Technologically speaking, our efforts are exactly on a par with trying to program a computer by sacrificing goats to it. We mean well, but we have no real idea why what we're doing seems to occasionally work.

Shields*

*The Destroyer **hurt**. He had known pain once before, far greater than this, but he still hurt. The entire front of his body glowed yellow from energy absorbed into a hundred pocket universes, and a handful had vanished altogether. Heat leaking from the others was mostly carried away by his skin and radiated onto his dorsal shields, but the pain was still intense.*

A shield generator is a massive chunk of hardware (barely Jumpable). Targeted on an object, with enough power input, it will “attach” a shield to that object. To withstand the stress, the object needs to be extremely tough (armor quality steel or better). A shield is a circular energy field ranging from about a meter to several meters in diameter. It has an oily sheen, but is otherwise transparent. What a shield “is” is an energy doorway to a pocket universe. All kinetic energy over a small threshold striking the shield is shunted directly into the pocket universe. A shield absorbs *all* forms of energy. Things like laser beams simply disappear. Projectiles simply stop at the boundary. All their kinetic energy is absorbed, instantly dropping the temperature of the projectile tip to near absolute zero, and the rest of the projectile to subfreezing temperatures. TimeLords have been known to use shields and garden hoses as icemakers...

It's worth noting that impact or momentum fuzes won't go off, and any proximity fuze relying on active sensors (like radar reflections) won't work either, but low power reflection on what the shield is attached to *may* trigger it.

The Designers routinely used shields on their vessels. The Destroyer was specially built with hundreds of tiny overlapping shields, and the TimeLord fleet sent to attack him had cruder versions of the same. A shield will last until the pocket universe has accumulated enough energy to bubble off and form a tiny Big Bang of its own, creating a universe somewhere else, completely separate from our own. The amount of energy needed to “fill” a shield is on the order of several close proximity nuclear blasts. From a conservation of energy standpoint, this is also the same amount of energy it takes to create one in the first place.

Shields are used by scientists on the Guardian timeline (late $Earth_0$) as “blast windows” for extremely dangerous experiments. The actual time travel chambers and most secure entry points are also protected by shield walls or shielded doors.

Shields do not function inside a null field or other pocket universes with different physical constants, but they revert back into existence when removed from those conditions.

Degenerate Matter Converter*

The spear was made for me. Armor steel as thick as a man's wrist. He brings the sword up and down again, hammering nicks into the spear until I get out of the way. I sidestep and rake the point along his side. The tip is a single industrial diamond, plated with degenerate matter. No human could even lift it. It glows and hisses, the degenerate matter slowly destabilizing in the different physics of this pocket universe. It leaves a deep gash across him, showing silver and gold, iridescence flowing in a disturbing way. He swings at me, the heavy blade glancing off the spear and rebounding unexpectedly into my shoulder. It hurts, nothing is broken, but I am knocked back and he is on me again, hammering gracelessly but without respite.

The Designers used degenerate matter as a structural material for high-stress applications. Degenerate matter has a collapsed atomic structure and is normally only stable under extreme gravitational conditions, like those found in neutron stars. The Designers found a way to keep it stable under normal conditions. With a suitable application of energy and enough conventional matter fed into it, a degenerate matter converter will spin out strands of “sticky” degenerate matter. This will adhere to other degenerate matter strands if applied shortly after creation. Otherwise it remains in the form of hair-thin strands. A strand the size of a long human hair will mass a good fraction of a kilogram, and have a tensile strength measured in tons. Degenerate matter strands are *not* able to slice through matter like lightsabers, but they *are* dangerous to handle and are almost as sharp as a knife edge due to their small diameter.

Degenerate matter destabilizes in a null field or other universe with different physical constants. It incandescently ablates into an ionized cloud composed of the elements used in its creation. This is a non-explosive but still quite energetic process.

Datasource*

The Cube talks to me. Far-walker says he can communicate with them, but he never says how. I communicate with them too, or more accurately, they communicate with me. It is never words, or images, or anything that concrete and unambiguous. It comes across as feelings, affinities, concepts. I think I would be diagnosed as schizophrenic by the medical professionals, and if I were mundane, I might even believe them.

Sometimes, if I frame a request just right, I can get one of these cryptic answers. Sometimes the answer is immediate. Sometimes I only get it when I am at the point where I need it. Sometimes I don't get it at all. Do I tell the others the Cube whispers wordlessly to me in my sleep? Maybe when The Work is done.

Maybe not.

A Datasource is *any* Designer information storage device, of which their are many kinds. A Matrix is also a kind of Datasource. Most Datasources are open to anyone who can read them, Designer or not. However, readers for the Datasources are less common, and without access to the homeworld AI network, they probably don't speak English. It is certain that a Matrix *can* read a Datasource and *will* read any it comes into proximity of, but whether or not it would see fit to tell you anything is another matter. Conversion of most Designer information to human language is impossible. Our language does not have the conceptual framework to accurately express Designer thoughts. While they could “dumb down” to be understood, it would be like teaching theoretical physics using baby talk. Most communication between Designer information storage and humans will take place in non-verbal form, such as jumbled hallucinatory images, emotions, affinities and broad concepts. The closest to words you can get is an affirmative or negative response, and even that can have several shades of meaning.

Folded Space Generator*

By human terms, each ship was a miracle of engineering, and a significant drain on planetary resources, designed by the best minds that the TimeLords could scavenge. Atomically compressed matter formed a hull about six meters in diameter and thirty meters long, a dead-black candle with a sun as its flame. Antimatter reactors provided raw energy, producing both thrust and a blizzard of virtual gravitons to compensate for extreme accelerations. A heavily shielded tube down the length of each ship contained a four-dimensional space into which several kilometers of particle accelerator was fitted. Topologically, it was the closest thing to Designer space efficiency they could manage.

A folded space generator is a Designer efficiency measure, a way to create a three-dimensional space with a larger internal volume than external volume. However, the physical constants in this volume are the same, so shields and other Designer technology still function. Mass *is* conserved, and the total mass of the folded space container is the mass of the container and all objects inside it. The size and geometry of the folded space is determined by the length of time the generator is left on, and the power available to it. Humans have not yet managed any configurations other than spheres and cylinder-like volumes. The walls of the folded space are effectively infinitely rigid, and share *some* properties with shields. However, the volume enclosed limits the amount of energy that can pass into or through the folded space, and any excess tends to exit through the doorway to the folded space.

The energy required to generate permanently folded space is immense, and increases with the square of the volume efficiency. The ships used in the initial assault on the Destroyer used this technology to hold particle accelerators several kilometers long within their 30 meter length.

"It"*

The Designers collected the temporal singularities they discovered and made Matrices, jewels strung on a net of astronomical proportions for the purpose of The Exodus. It was not hubris that led the Designers to Jump their entire solar system billions of years back in time. It was just more efficient than doing it piece by piece, a quiet statement of their mastery of technology. And when they were done, they just packed up the equipment in case they needed it for something later. They never threw ***anything*** *away.*

"It" is the quasi-mythical device the designers used to move their entire civilization back in time. According to the best guesses, it is a construct designed to manipulate a large number of Matrices simultaneously. Their combined energy and capabilities are enough to bubble off a large volume into separate reality, and either move it whole into another timestream and integrate it there, or create a separate reality altogether, which is constructed from "nothing" according to the programming it is given. It was almost certainly vaporized in the nova of the Designer's sun, but the knowledge required to duplicate the effect may still exist, and certainly only a fraction of the several thousand Matrices created have ever been recovered.

A few of the megalomaniac second or third generation TimeLords, Faust in particular, see this as a way to create a universe where natural law is bent solely to their whim (since the universe will be designed with that as one of its parameters). That is, they get to be an omnipotent god within that new universe. And as its base timeline branches and generates its own secondary timelines, God will have a bigger and bigger playground, with more and more toys. Some TimeLords oppose this on moral principle, since the toys are going to be sentient beings ruled by a psychopath, and try to keep Faust from accomplishing this. Most others are neutral to the concept, as the megalomanic will be occupied for hopefully eternity, and out of their hair as well. They are marginally concerned about being trapped by Faust to become his playthings in that new universe, however.

Other Technology

For all practical purposes, the technology available to humans will top out at TL14-16, depending on the field of research. Long experience with Designer equipment on $Earth_0$ has given us insights we would otherwise be ignorant of, but we lack the equipment to take advantage of it. Unfortunately for characters, after Lucifer's death, the $Earth_0$ timeline becomes very difficult to access. The Guardians can detect and locate any spatial or temporal disturbances within seconds, and will Portal a response team to the area in short order. Most trips to that timeline are one-way after about 2520CE. It might be a good place to permanently retire (and grow old), but it is not a practical place to go shopping. The best timeline reasonably accessible to the characters is the latter part of $Earth_5$, which reaches TL13 in most fields, and TL14 for some medical technology.

Materials are more advanced, allowing for better body armor and generally lighter and stronger materials. Weapons are of conventional design, though caseless ammunition is now the norm. Energy weapons are experimental. The few in use are not very powerful and are in specialized roles.

Bioarmor*

Strider disliked the living armor intensely. Getting into the suit felt like he was being eaten in a vaguely obscene way, not helped by the fact you had to be naked for it to work properly. The only systems that weren't fried by a temporal Jump or the 'null field' were certain minimal Designer systems, or the slow macroscopic biological ones. The armor was part crab, part turtle, part lungfish and who knew what else. Actually, the suits were mostly human DNA, just highly modified. Which didn't make things any better. It slurped shut and began accommodating itself to his nervous system. The muscles responded with his muscles, the thick bony plates covering them making him look like a B-movie crustacean. He could feel its hearts pumping, and breathed the air it sucked in through filtered vents on its back. Multiple chitinous lenses gave him a slightly distorted view of the outside, augmented at night by biological lamps on sides of his head. The suit had been grown over a composite exoskeleton, which provided a resistance to damage that purely organic tissue could never provide. It didn't feel heavy, since its strength carried them both, but it had momentum.

Bioarmor was developed by the Guardians ($Earth_0$ timeline) expressly for the attack on the Destroyer's stronghold. It has been used since then for other high-risk temporal assignments. Since it is entirely biological, it can survive temporal jumps that conventional powered armor would be destroyed by. Bioarmor is pretty much as described above, an artificially grown, living suit of armor that links with the human nervous system, allowing the human inside to use its abilities.

These abilities are fairly simple, like air filtration and climate control, enhanced strength, short-range ultrasonic communications, and body armor. The strength bonus is usually on the order of +8 STR after the mass of the suit is taken into account (several times normal human lifting capacity). Armor value is typically 6/6, a combination of bony or chitinous plates and a network of composite filaments. Bioarmor is not subject to instantly fatal results because of redundant systems, but it can be weakened by damage and loss of blood. For purposes of taking damage, the armor generally loses STR as half the impairment that the person inside takes, e.g. if a person took a 2 point impairment *through* the armor, the armor would lose a point of its STR bonus.

The suit can run for several days on the contents of its stomachs (HLT of 6 for exertion purposes), but will require air and water much as the person inside does.

Bioarmor requires significant high-tech maintenance. As it is a living organism based largely on human DNA, it is theoretically subject to disease and poisons just as people are. Bioarmor is not known to have been used by any group other than the Guardians.

Clones

It seems like cloning is the perfect way to generate new TimeLords, but it doesn't work. The highest tech regions of the $Earth_0$,$Mars_0$ and $Earth_5$ timelines have the ability to grow clone body parts, but no means exists to move or biologically store a person's memories and knowledge. Rumors of phantom timelines where this can be done have not been confirmed. If it were easy, practical or without severe risk, most TimeLords would have backup copies of themselves “on ice” somewhere. They don't. Another potential problem is that if a TimeLord clone is made without the aid of Designer equipment, the Matrix might see the clone as a “fake key”, a deliberate attempt to bypass the Designer chain of Family authority. And do you *really* want Designer security countermeasures activated against you?

Ephemerals

They would die, most of them, believing in a lie. I could say that they would have died anyway, either on some forgotten battlefield in Asia Minor, of disease, treachery or old age, but those were forces outside my control. I was Strider, the shining knight in white samite who showed them the brilliant gateway. I led them to where they would await the final battle against the Antichrist and his minions. I jumped from my stunned horse as it traversed the Portal and I watched doctors expertly tranq the time-dazed knights. They awoke bathed, shaved and in cleaned and mended outfits, nearly a hundred of them in a climate and access-controlled corner of heaven. They took the technology in stride. Of course heaven would be perfect, the air and water sweet, everything lit by an unearthly glow from above.

To those that had the inclination we gave crossbows. These would survive the transits across the null field, and were more powerful than anything they had ever seen before. We had models of the ziggurat, and we went over the battle plan. They knew that there would be others, even heathens. The heathens had repented of course, and were proving their souls in the crucible of the Lord. At least that's what I said. It was fairly simple. There were people, and there were demons, and in the center of the ziggurat was the Antichrist himself. The knights vied among themselves to see who would be the first to make the Antichrist taste his steel. I told them the field of battle would make the choice for them. That much was the truth, at least.

Ephemerals. You may have read this term a few times so far and wondered what they were. Well, they are *you*, those specimens of humanity who do not have a Matrix, and thus doomed to spend their lives locked to a single timeline. When a TimeLord goes about the business of messing with a timeline, they look at the big picture most of the time, and Ephemerals are, to be callous, expendable.

While the TimeLords look out for themselves, future shaping usually relies on the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. Or, it might just be the greatest good for *me* (the TimeLord), and the Ephemerals are just cogs in the machine.

Part of this is deliberate, but a part of it is also just practical experience. Almost all of the second and third generation TimeLords went through a “make a difference” phase, where they tried to micromanage whole continuums, and almost invariably failed, sometimes at the cost of billions of lives. They have travelled so far, and seen so much, that an individual life is not something often worth fighting for, unless that person is able to make a difference by virtue of their abilities or position (or descendants). Those TimeLords that do care seem to restrict their activities to a limited sphere, so that they can look at things on a small enough scale that individual lives are worth something. Even Ephemerals have this attitude. It's just a human trait. Thousands of people may be dying in a distant country due to ethnic cleansing, but what *you're* worried about is those damn beetles eating up your prize roses.

Sadly though, most of the TimeLords have become elitists. *They* can make a difference, and some have a few trusted companions that help them out, but if you aren't a time traveller, you don't count for much in the grand scheme of things. When the characters begin to acquire real power and experience, they will encounter these problems and hard decisions themselves. How they handle it will vary. Some won't be able to take it, and will retire from time travelling. Others will isolate themselves, or refrain from interfering at all. It depends on each individual group of players and GM.

Vignette

Time: 2532CE
Location: $Mars_0$

Azazelo was predicatable, opening a portal onto the stone platform behind his home. This fit with the Guardians plans. To capture him at home would insure privacy. There would be no embarassment of a public chase, or knowing Azazelo, the near certainty of heavy casualties. They took no chances. Snipers covered his entry point from several concealed locations, and everyone was armed and armored. The feeling was that only a display of overwhelming odds and force would be sufficient to convince the ancient assassin of the futility of resistance.

The capture forces stayed in constant readiness, changing shifts, waiting for Azazelo to arrive. In the meantime, a cursory examination of his home was made. A thorough search would only be made after Azazelo was safely in custody and some indication of any booby traps was made. Their patience was eventually rewarded. The buildup of energies gave them a few seconds before the portal opened and Azazelo stepped through. Just enough time for the waiting delegation to get to their feet and assume position. Commander Greften was on shift and on his feet, lines rehearsed, contingency plans memorized.

Azazelo materialized from the featureless whiteness, sword in hand, alert and ready. As expected. The "honor guard" tensed, but held position. Azazelo slowly looked around, then sheathed his katana with uncharacteristic slowness. "Yes?", he said. Greften replied with just a hint of nervousness, covered by rote repetition of his orders.

"Azazelo al-Qureshi, Guardian Command regrets to inform you that your services are no longer required. You are to requested to report with us for debriefing and to surrend your Matrices to insure safety of the $Earth_0$-$Mars_0$ timelines."

As Commander Greften spoke, Azazelo remained still, and unthreatening. It may have been predictable that Azazelo would arrive here, but not without reason. He shifted his weight imperceptably on the stone slab on which he stood. *Right, left, right, forward, back, left, right.* Transducers under the slab interpreted the weight shifts, and a simple computer implemented a program. Part of it was to light a tiny laser diode on the back of the house. It glowed brilliant red, visible only to someone standing in a certain spot. *System armed.*

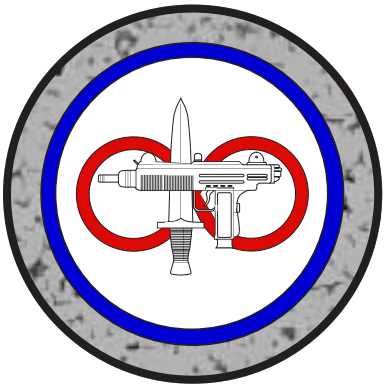
Azazelo raised an eyebrow at the young officer and the armed escort. *They have never fought a real enemy.* "And this is a *request*?", he asked.

"We would like it to be."

Azazelo didn't think so. He shifted his weight again.

Left, back.

The arrival platform was designed to be easily visible from a distance, but only from *specific* vantage points at least a hundred meters off. High explosive charges buried beneath these points detonated, blasting soil, flesh and blood skyward. Potential snipers disposed of, directed fragmentation charges in the house and garden walls went off, filling the air with white phosphorus, tungsten spheres and tiny shaped charges. Secondary explosions, whistling ricochets and screams merged and separated as smoke filled the air. Something plucked at Azazelo's sleeve as it went by, an errant projectile that entered the precisely engineered eye of the storm. Azazelo stood unmoving as the carnage unfolded around him. He silently took one step backwards into the Portal. It vanished three seconds later.



The TimeLords

"Actually, I'm very selfless. We're all going to die, I just want to see that everyone else gets a turn first..."

Zhanken

Basics

You aren't the first ones to travel through time, and odds are very strong you won't be the last. There are any given point in time up to several hundred time travellers. These time travellers are not all in one place, or even on the same time-line, but the internal synchronization of the Matrices and their own unknowable intelligence means that you will eventually encounter some of these other wanderers. When you do, it helps to know the rules.

Over the millennia, through time and space, those who acquired Matrices and lived long enough to make a mark, developed an unwritten code. Not everyone follows it, and most in fact have broken it on occasion, but it is there nonetheless, and knowing how to use it can save your life.

Rule 1 - Don't take someone else's Matrix.
A Matrix is intelligent, perhaps a different kind of intelligence than we are used to, but an intelligence all the same. Therefore, if a previously unowned Matrix comes into the possession of an individual, it may be because the Matrix itself somehow engineered it. Since you use a Matrix to move through time and space, and Matrices can communicate with each other, you don't want to annoy them. Also, one of your enemies might be tempting you with the Matrix as a target, or Zhanken may have plans for the hapless victim and he tends to get cranky when people spoil his fun.

Rule 2 - Leave newbies to develop their own style.
Until a person or group develops the skills and abilities to accurately go where they want, they are "off-limits" for most purposes. They can neither be assassinated nor given direct assistance. Indirect help, extortion or other such tactics are a gray area, and open to individual interpretation. And of course, if they don't survive, there is no onus on popping in and grabbing their Matrix.

Rule 3 - Respect someone else's home turf
Most experienced TimeLords have a patch of spatiotemporal turf that they call home, and consider a sanctuary, laboratory or vacation spot. Going in and trashing this area with thermonuclear weapons and planet-crackers is generally considered bad form (although most such places where you can get a nuke have pretty good defenses against this sort of thing). A few TimeLords have taken the decades needed to create computer fabrication facilities from scratch, *just so they could have high-tech defenses manufactured*. Just because someone spends a lot of time in the 10th century doesn't mean they aren't ready for the worst.

Rule 4 - Use a sigil
Most TimeLords leave their mark on a territory by the use of sigils, some easily represented graphic that exists within a culture that is being tampered with in one way or another. This could be a national flag, corporate logo, religious emblem, etc. Some are obvious, some are not. With experience, TimeLords will learn each other's sigils, and thus know whose "territory" they are in.

Rule 5 - Look out for Number One
Your circle of friends will be very small. *You* have the ability to travel through time and space, to potentially live forever. Your friends, family and others near to you do not, and you can't save them all. Sure, you can move your parents (and children!) to a 24th century retirement that will add up to a century to their life, but you can't protect them from temporal extortion if your enemies find out where they are. Anyone you hold close is a potential victim when you aren't there to protect them, unless they are a TimeLord as well. In some TimeLords, sentimentality turns to callousness. In others, Ephemeral lives lose their importance. They think they can always find a replacement from an alternate continuum, or grant Ephemeral companions the status of "pets", cherished, but not as important as a TimeLord. A few TimeLords hang on to their humanity and retire. They stop travelling, eventually age and die, living a normal life, and use the powers at their disposal only when threatened.

The movers and shakers

Lucifer's interpersonal skills had never been his strong suit. But he'd been around since before the Sumerians invented taxes, and even if he didn't use them, he knew every wile, wheedle, and argument in the book. Over the years and centuries he taught them all to us. Some of the best verbal techniques were the oldest, and the simplest.

"Give me that or I will kill you.", was one of them. It worked.

The following pages give a *brief* description of some of the major travellers roaming the multiverse. Their "status" would be from the temporal standpoint of characters in the game. For instance, due to synchronization, characters could never meet Lucifer in the flesh, unless they saw him *before* they acquired a Matrix of their own, in which case they would obviously have no knowledge of him or his future.

You'll also quickly notice that certain character traits keep popping up, like "paranoid", "psychotic", "loner" and so on, which does make sense in a twisted kind of way.

Imagine *you* are in possession of a small priceless artifact. While you possess it, the wealth of the universe is yours for the taking. You are immortal, and have the power to do *anything* you are willing to see through to the end, no matter how long it takes. You have the potential to become a true master of time and space. You are someone to be *feared*, and *respected*.

Without it, you are little more than flotsam of flesh and bone in the uncharted seas of time, waiting only to be recycled back into the elements from which you came.

It stands to reason that those who treated their Matrices casually, lost them to those who were more ruthless than themselves, and those who took precautions are the only ones who make it into their second or third century.

You'll notice that few of the TimeLords are physical powerhouses. They are very fit, skilled and formidably equipped, well beyond the meager listings given here, but universally, their main weapon is their intellect, and the main defense is utter paranoia, even if it is isn't immediately obvious. They survive because they are *fiendishly* clever and have so many contingency plans that they've forgotten most of them. If you were *able* to catch one of them, *able* to confine them, *able* to tie them to an atomic bomb, and *able* to watch it go off, you might still wake up one morning with a knife in your heart, gurgling out surprised syllables to the *last* face you ever expected to see again.

GM's should take note of this should greedy characters think that a lone, experienced TimeLord is easy pickings in a well-placed ambush. Yes, TimeLords sometimes permanently, irrevocably kill other experienced TimeLords. Sometimes this is expected. Lucifer died not because Zhanken assassinated him, but because Lucifer decided he was through with living and chose to let Zhanken be the instrument of his dissolution. Most other assassination attempts take decades, if not centuries of planning. It is usually only done because of a perceived wrong that demands blood, although some of the older ones do it as a challenge to alleviate the boredom of immortality. *Or just because they are complete lunatics*.

Using the TimeLords

These TimeLords are various personalities that are meant to crop up as props and plot devices for your adventures, behind the scenes manipulators, pursurers, occasional enemies or allies of convenience. Some are long gone and will be encountered only as traces, evidence they once existed. None of them are going to be regular travel companions, or go on adventures with the characters, although they may use the characters as stalking horses, decoys or bait. All of the surviving first generation are loners, their talents and perspectives shaped by long centuries of solitary assignments for Lucifer. Some of the later generation TimeLords started off like the characters, part of a small group, of which the TimeLord is the sole survivor, emotionally battered and unwilling to form attachements to anyone new. However, many TimeLords of *any* generation may lend a helping hand if it isn't too much bother, if only to get anomalous elements out of the way of their current exploits. They may save your life, but that doesn't mean they're your friends. All will be naturally curious and wary about any group that appears in a continuum where they are, and will investigate in person or by proxy (agents, drones, etc.). That travelling monk the characters meet on the road, that crossbow bolt from nowhere that saves their life, the cryptic message found scrawled on a wall, all these could be TimeLord interference in the character's lives. On the other hand, *seemingly* friendly gestures might be part of a setup by Zhanken, or a long-term plot by Faust. And that's the problem. *You don't know*.

A good encounter or two and a bad one on occasion will make characters *really* jumpy about encountering other TimeLords, until eventually they themselves start to pick up some of the eccentricities that mark these powerful individuals. The paranoia of Weasel, the isolation of X, the overwhelming firepower of ForceMaster, the created and trusted companions of Sportswriter, Faust and Appolyon, all these are survival traits magnified by decades or centuries of being one of the most important individuals in the cosmos. They may be crazy, but it seems to work.

Lucifer

STR	18
AWR	10
AGL	7
WIL	10
HLT	7
POW	3

Name:	Lucifer, Lightbearer, Bright-spear
Physical description:	Short male Eurasian, thick-boned, muscular, indeterminate age. Approximately 86kg, 173cm tall. Clothing is whatever suits the current situation. Status: Deceased. Murdered by Zhanken.
Personality:	A nearly immortal man, with a nearly endless, life-consuming mission, which he finally finished.
Origins:	Born into a clan of Stone Age hunters on Earth, circa 8000BCE. Was kidnapped during adolescence by Designer research team. Found a mate and began to raise family within artificially created steppe habitat. Was later implanted with Designer technology, eventually including a Matrix. Escaped through spacetime when colony was massacred by The Great Destroyer. Founded the TimeLords as now known on his quest to avenge murder of his family.
Defining Quotes:	"I...we...*must* do this."
Typical equipment:	Simple clothing, usually white. A shoulder bag, containing the crystal skull that was the shaman Far-walker. Implants include a Matrix, armor and increased strength.
Known skills:	Virtually all, to some extent
Typical haunts:	Travelled a *great* deal, lived a *long* time, so bases were scattered throughout multernity. Some probably vacant and forgotten for millennia.
Hobbies:	Tactical puzzles. Tests of fortitude and self-discipline. Later, meditation. Later still, pushing up daisies.
Distinctive tactics:	Caution. Extraordinarily long term plans. Willing to sacrifice *any* resource to achieve his ultimate goals, including his own children.
Sidekicks:	The entire group of first generation TimeLords, plus miscellaneous cannon fodder.

The Destroyer

STR	30
AWR	20
AGL	20
WIL	10
HLT	20
POW	10

Name:	The Destroyer, The Angry God
Physical description:	Alien cyborg. Approximately 250cm, 250kg. Narrow, toothy snout projecting from an enlarged brain case. Short, tapir-like trunk at the end of the snout. Status: Deceased, crushed beneath temple on his homeworld by TimeLords and native resistance cult.
Personality:	Murderous paranoid, who had the power to get away with anything, and thus had the leisure to toy with his victims.
Origins:	Built by the Designers, who accidentally left him in sensory deprivation for several decades during his construction.
Defining Quotes:	"I am the Destroyer of Worlds! I alone walk the burning paths between the stars! Where I tread I leave nothing but Dust and Ruin!"
Typical equipment:	Tools? Who needs tools? He had internally mounted *everything.* Matrix, hyperdrive, probability cannon, gravitational warp inducer, etc. His stats reflect what he was *inside* the pocket universe where Designer technology did not work or was at reduced efficiency. Outside? He could open a window to the core of the nearest sun and direct the energy as he wished.
Known skills:	Any AWR skill he wants. Has access to more knowledge than most cultures have forgotten. Most physical skills are atrophied, no better than Aptitude+1.
Typical haunts:	Anywhere within five thousand parsecs of his homeworld, seeking out and destroying new life and new civilizations.
Hobbies:	Engaging helpless captives in philosophical discussion before killing them.
Distinctive tactics:	Induce agonizing death in the defiant or disrespectful. Instantly crush anything threatening. Repeat as necessary.
Sidekicks:	Surely you jest.

Zhanken (1st generation)

STR	6
AWR	11
AGL	7
WIL	8
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Zhanken, The Snake
Physical description:	Medium height and build. Not averse to extensive cosmetic surgery if required. Grins a lot. Status: Alive, active.
Personality:	Imagine a brilliantly insane practical joker with absolutely no conscience, mixed with a hunted desperado who longs only for a way to be reunited with his lost love.
Origins:	$Earth_4$, early 21st century. One of Lucifer's later TimeLords. Supposedly went mad and murdered Lucifer, and has been on the run from Azazelo ever since.
Defining Quotes:	“Ha ha ha, joke's on you!" BOOM!
Typical equipment:	Surprisingly little, as he depends on extensive planning and knowledge of his destinations. Often carries a custom black powder revolver (and mixes the powder from its separate components *after* Jumping). Has multiple Matrices, which he refers to as “Cubes” for unknown reasons.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns	6	Computer sci.	11
	Melee weapons	6	Electronics	9
	Martial arts	8	Sec. systems	8
	Acting	8	Survival	6
	Psychology	8	Ar.kn.- Designers	8

Typical haunts:	None, always on the move. Any regular place of residence would surely be targeted by Azazelo.
Hobbies:	Digging up old Designer tech. Creating new TimeLords by kidnapping some suitably helpless but intelligent humans, giving them a pre-programmed Matrix, and sending them off as stalking horses for Azazelo. Rumored to have repeatedly cloned an enemy and put them in various hopeless situations of betrayal and no escape.
Distinctive tactics:	Spectacular destruction on short notice.
Sidekicks:	None, unless temporarily necessary as props or victims.

Azazelo (1st generation)

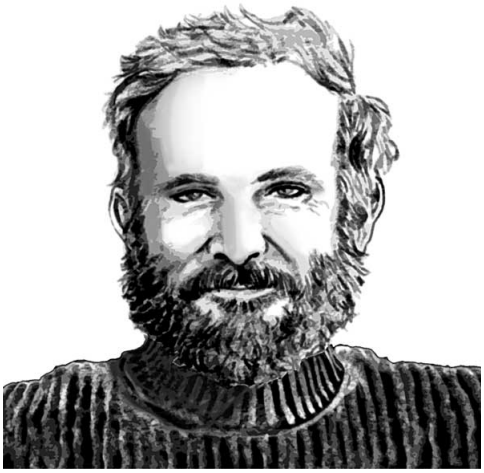
STR	7
AWR	9
AGL	8
WIL	9
HLT	8
POW	2

Name:	Azazelo, He who was Cast Out, The Murdering Demon of the Waterless Waste
Physical description:	Short male of Arabic descent, wearing an eye-patch and loose fitting clothes in black, always black. Status: Alive, active.
Personality:	Relentless pursuer of The Snake. Period.
Origins:	11th century Arabia. Banished into the desert, found by Lucifer, he is one of the original TimeLords. Trained by ninja to be Lucifer's bodyguard and “expediter”, he has gained and maintained a proficiency with virtually all weapons, vehicles and security measures and countermeasures. When Zhanken killed Lucifer, Azazelo vowed to avenge his master. He's still trying.
Defining Quotes:	“I'll see him die...it's only a matter of time.”
Typical equipment:	Lightweight body armor, katana, various concealed weapons, poisons and such.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns.	8	Area kn. - Zhank.	9
	Melee weapons	9	History	8
	Martial arts	9	Tactics	8
	Tracking	9	Invest. rsch.	9
	Survival	8	Psychology	7

Typical haunts:	Anywhere Zhanken has been recently.
Hobbies:	Staying at a physical and mental peak.
Distinctive tactics:	Prefers direct confrontation at close range. The Snake has an uncanny ability to avoid ‘area kills’.
Sidekicks:	None.

Phantom (2nd generation)



STR	5
AWR	10
AGL	6
WIL	7
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Phantom
Physical description:	Caucasian male, indeterminate age, approximately 72kg, 188cm tall. Always dresses informally. Status: Alive, semi-retired.
Personality:	Thrill-seeker with a pathological disdain for authority. Strong streak of cynicism.
Origins:	Survivor of one of the Snake's regular diversions for Azazelo, of the same vintage as Appolyon, Bast, X and Warlord.
Defining Quotes:	"Looks like it's time for some pre-meditated self defense." "By definition, half the population is below average intelligence." "The *perfect* crime is one that no one even knows has been committed."
Typical equipment:	Twenty-first century weapons made from twenty-fourth century plans. Body armor. Numerous multi-purpose tools of varying TL and obvious or disguised nature. Various forged IDs with valid computer authentication in a number of continuums.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns	6	Writing	7
	Melee weapons	5	Military science	5
	Martial arts	7	Lockpicking	5
	Stealth	5	Land vehicles	4
	Security systems	6	Air vehicles	3

Typical haunts:	Early 21st century, $Earth_0$ and close alternates. Spends a great deal of time with Bast. Has limited temporal haunts and prefers areas where he can re-equip shortly after arrival.
Hobbies:	Performing proctectomies on varying timelines. Comparing success percentages with Appolyon.
Distinctive tactics:	Covers his tracks. Precise use of minimum force required to accomplish goals.
Sidekicks:	None, but is known to be romantically involved with Bast. No known spawn. May have a number of Ephemeral contacts.

Appolyon (2nd generation)

STR	5
AWR	9
AGL	6
WIL	7
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Appolyon, The Adversary, The Lesser Destroyer, the Lion of Amsterdam, the Black Skua, Theodore A. Pylon
Physical description:	Caucasian male, indeterminate age, approximately 75kg, 183cm tall. Wears black, has non-functional eyeglasses. Status: Alive, active.
Personality:	Just trying to enjoy himself, but still feels the need to settle a few old scores. Absolutely *ruthless* when frightened (has been known to use tactical nukes and nerve gas).
Origins:	One of Zhanken's involuntary 'recruits'. May be a temporal alternate of Forcemaster, selected by Zhanken to eventually confront and kill Forcemaster as one of his cruel jokes. Appolyon doesn't say.
Defining Quotes:	"The next one of you who draws a weapon on me goes home in an ashtray!" "There is no such thing as 'too much muzzle velocity!'"
Typical equipment:	Detector-sanitary machine pistol with all the trimmings. Body armor. Robot drones. Cranky powered armor. EMP weapons. Attack chopper. Orbital weapons platform.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns	6	Stealth	4
	Melee weapons	4	Air vehicles	4
	Martial arts	4	Military science	6
	Acting	7	Dutch	5
	Physics	8	Japanese	4

Typical haunts:	"Throne of Ash" at Crater Lake, circa 1000AD ($Earth_1$). Frequents 20th-21st century $Earth_0$, with several estates.
Hobbies:	Arranging PR disasters for government agencies ("Nuns and orphans blown up by mistake! Film at 11!"). Counter-ambushing government raids on private citizens.
Distinctive tactics:	Always tries to get forces in place well ahead of time. Prefers AP ammo.
Sidekicks:	Dreamchild, plus a score of carefully screened goons, The Clouds.

Dreamchild (3rd generation)

STR	4
AWR	8
AGL	6
WIL	7
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Dreamchild, the Sweet Raven, Twinky, Sigrid Chaulmers
Physical description:	Young female caucasian, approximately 50kg, 165cm tall. Pale skin, long, jet black hair. Status: Alive, active.
Personality:	Absolutely dedicated follower of Appolyon. Is as deeply in love with him as is humanly possible. Tends to be aloof to others. Mild compulsion with neatness.
Origins:	Created by Appolyon pretty much from the ground up using carefully selected genetic stock and placed in a series of environments designed to produce for him a perfect companion. It worked.
Defining Quotes:	“Polly, shall I kill them?” “Of course I love him...it is the cloth from which I am cut.” “Drone 4...sic 'em!!”
Typical equipment:	The best available at wherever she is at, usually including a mix of armor, lethal and non-lethal weapons.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns	5	Stealth	4
	Autoweapons	3	Paramedic	4
	Land vehicles	5	Military science	5
	Mech. repair	5	Computer sci.	5
	Psychology	5	Dutch	4

Typical haunts:	Anywhere Appolyon goes. The two are almost inseparable.
Hobbies:	Watching Appolyon's back when he gets irrational. Seeing that the lair is kept in shape. Sewing, hand-loading and field-stripping. Working on her car.
Distinctive tactics:	Prefers to let robots do the heavy work. Heavy use of area denial munitions. Usually more interested in frightening people off than in killing them.
Sidekicks:	Spot (a Malaysian clouded leopard), and Minerva (a 300 year old macaw).

Sportswriter (2nd generation)

STR	5
AWR	10
AGL	6
WIL	6
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Sportswriter, Thomas Richard Morrow, Count Poniatowski.
Physical description:	Male caucasian, indeterminate age, approximately 75kg, 178cm tall. Favors vests, capes, canes and hats. *Lots* of pockets. Status: Unknown.
Personality:	Pleasant, easygoing fellow, frequently propelled by circumstance or his idiosyncracies into ‘adventurous’ circumstances.
Origins:	20th century $Earth_0$, another of Zhanken's recruits. Hates Zhanken intensely.
Defining Quotes:	“I did what I could.”
Typical equipment:	Bullpup select-fire shotgun firing alternating discarding sabot penetrators and flechettes. Balisong knives. Grenades of various types. Seldom travels with more than will fit in a backpack, but always has the best medical gear.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns.	5	History	5
	Melee weapons	4	Survival	5
	Martial arts	6	Japanese	4
	Land vehicles	4	Russian	4
	Air vehicles	4	Climbing	3

Typical haunts:	15th century Okinawa (ninja base). Victorian London (city house and country estate).
Hobbies:	Protecting Pacific Island cultures. Redressing historical wrongs as he encounters them. Womanizing.
Distinctive tactics:	Prefers to avoid combat, then relies on his bodyguards or ninja. Prefers stealth over set piece battles.
Sidekicks:	Clarence, an intelligent bioengineered lion. Young adolescent clones of Annie Oakley and Wilt Chamberlain, raised as his own children and experts in firearms, hand-to-hand combat and vehicle operations. Assorted ninja on call if necessary.

Weasel (1st generation)

STR	5
AWR	8
AGL	5
WIL	6
HLT	5
POW	2

Name:	Weasel			
Physical description:	Short male caucasian, thin, indeterminate age. Approximately 75kg, 170cm tall. Favors baggy clothes. Numerous scars. Status: Deceased, died in the first attack against the Destroyer.			
Personality:	Terrified loner. Named for his destructive capacity, which is all out of proportion to his size and demeanor. Not really a bad fellow, just in the wrong place at the wrong time.			
Origins:	21st century $Earth_5$, one of Lucifer's last recruits.			
Defining Quotes:	“Oh no, not again, please dear God, no, no, aaaagghhhh!” BLA-BLAM! BLA-BLAM!			
Typical equipment:	Concealed high volume smoke generator, can be triggered manually, or three seconds after he raises his arms as if to surrender. Wrist-mounted power-holster scatterguns. *Lots* of cerametal knives. Everything built to resist detection by technological means.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	4	Chemistry	4
	Melee weapons	4	Demolitions	4
	Brawling	4	Military science	4
	Land vehicles	3	Survival	4
	Equestrian	3	Running	6
Typical haunts:	Tended to work in late $Earth_0$, Jumping mostly through space rather than time.			
Hobbies:	Staying alive. Trying to guess who of the people in his immediate vicinity wants to hurt him. Morbidly pondering how long he can survive. Running from *anyone* who takes a personal interest in him.			
Distinctive tactics:	Ease away as soon as noticed. Run if someone shouts. Feign surrender and cut or blast his way clear.			
Sidekicks:	None. Seems that everyone who is nice to him either dies soon, or is concealing murderous intentions.			

Bast (2nd generation)

STR	4
AWR	10
AGL	7
WIL	6
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Bast, Songspinner, Morgan Blacksword			
Physical description:	Female caucasian, thin, indeterminate age. Very fit. Approximately 173cm, 57kg. Favors dark, practical clothing. Status: Alive, semi-retired.			
Personality:	Cautious, competent introvert. Easily underestimated.			
Origins:	Late 20th century $Earth_0$. One of several victims of Zhanken's continuing diversions.			
Defining Quotes:	“Camping is just a cold, wet miserable way to die." “It isn't paranoia if they *are* out to get you." “You don't frighten me. I've gotten scarier things than you in my breakfast cereal.”			
Typical equipment:	Masamune katana. Guitar. Tech Level 15 concealed body armor. Full med kit. Knives. Mirrored starlight sunglasses and heavily hot-shotted “stunner” when possible.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	5	Stealth	5
	Melee weapons	8	Veterinary	8
	Martial arts	7	Paramedic	6
	Guitar	8	Medicine	6
	History	6	Welsh	4
Typical haunts:	Next to a warm fire in 5th century $Earth_4$ Wales (with plenty of imported amenities). Observes and tinkers with important historical events circa 0-1200AD. Regular forays to visit Phantom.			
Hobbies:	Blatant vigilante justice.			
Distinctive tactics:	Patience, planning, practical application of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*.			
Sidekicks:	Trained but unmodified female cheetah, combat trained Arabian gelding, numerous Ephemeral friends near her Welsh base.			

Assam Ud (2nd generation)

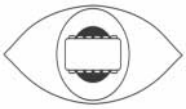
STR	7
AWR	9
AGL	7
WIL	8
HLT	6
POW	3

Name:	Assam Ud, 'Etemporer Magnus', Ulysses McDermont
Physical description:	Very fit male caucasian, dark hair, curled mustache,intense, piercing eyes, middle age. Approximately 103kg, 195cm tall. Dressed to impress. Status: Alive, active.
Personality:	Megalomaniac. Power-obsessed genius who seeks to be recognized as 'Etemporer', supreme ruler, everywhere, everywhen. He's not exactly sure how he is going to do it, but is getting in an awful lot of practice.
Origins:	Late 19th century English adventurer/ soldier of fortune. Claims to have found his Matrix all by himself in eastern India.
Defining Quotes:	"You presume to match wits with *me*?" "I am destined to rule! It is my right!" "Don't think you've won! Your pathetic struggles only delay my inevitable victory!" "Do you play chess?"
Typical equipment:	TL14 alloy sword. Magnetic chess set. Thermos of tea. Whatever equipment he feels he needs to pull of his latest stunt. The Annihilator, apparently some sort of antimatter weapon, which is never around when he needs it.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns	5	History	5
	Melee weapons	7	Sailing	4
	Brawling	6	Greek	5
	Equestrian	5	Latin	4
	Military science	6	Chess	10

Typical haunts:	Any place he thinks is worth conquering, usually low-tech areas where he can make the most of his leadership qualities.
Hobbies:	Commanding the destiny of nations. Seizing unique superweapons. Showing off. Fencing. Playing chess (he's *real* good).
Distinctive tactics:	Use local thugs to do the work. Dare people to stop him. Loves a good challenge.
Sidekicks:	Daniel Sandino, a gutless toady who does his work through the scope of a rifle.

H (2nd generation)



STR	5
AWR	10
AGL	6
WIL	7
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	X, Master of the Clowder, Lord of the Roof
Physical description:	Male caucasian, wiry, long blond hair, indeterminate age. Approximately 76kg, 183cm. Status: Alive, semi-retired.
Personality:	Polite loner, who finds it philosophically unbearable to spend time with anyone who isn't very good at something he thinks is worthwhile.
Origins:	Late 20th century $Earth_0$, one of Zhanken's involuntary diversions.
Defining Quotes:	(shrug)
Typical equipment:	Bass guitar.

Known skills:				
	Projectile wpns	5	Bass guitar	10
	Brawling	4	Musical theory	6
	Air vehicles	7	Military science	6
	Computer sci.	9	History	5
	Electronics	6	Spanish	4

Typical haunts:	Seldom leaves his home, a complex built by unknown means into the top of Mount Everest, circa 2000BCE, $Earth_1$. There is an elevator from the base of the mountain (and stairs). Occasionally visits or is visited by Bast.
Hobbies:	Trying to create an AI capable of composing beautiful music...with transistor age components. Still at it.
Distinctive tactics:	If bothered, lure opponents into his base, and then activate the defense systems. To date, this has yielded a 100% kill rate.
Sidekicks:	A large number of domestic cats and one very tame Siberian tiger. Numerous maintenance and butler droids and home defense 'bots.

ForceMaster (2nd generation)

STR	5
AWR	10
AGL	6
WIL	7
HLT	6
POW	10

Name:	ForceMaster			
Physical description:	Male caucasian, thin, apparent age in the late 20's. Approximately 73kg, 183cm. Wears a baggy, sparkling poncho. Carries a *huge* gun. Status: Missing, presumed dead after simultaneous visit by Zhanken and Appolyon (early in his career).			
Personality:	Dedicated, vindictive vigilante.			
Origins:	Late 20th century USA, phantom timeline. Psi-anomalous individual noticed by alien observers. Captured, taken to secret base for tests. All but one alien called home, remaining one befriended him and gave him access to technology. Somehow acquired a Matrix. Seldom uses it for time travel, but wields enough covert power to be on most TimeLord databases.			
Defining Quotes:	“Humanity is surely destined for greatness ...once they crush those elements seeking to hold them back! Perhaps I can help...”			
Typical equipment:	Chameleon cape, provides near-invisibility when stationary. Anti-vehicle rifle. Backup machine pistol. Vibroblade. Grenades, hovercraft, attack jets, etc.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	7	Stealth	5
	Melee weapons	4	Physics	6
	Martial arts	4	Electronics	6
	Land vehicles	4	Computer sci.	4
	Air vehicles	4	Military science	5
Typical haunts:	$Earth_4$, 1970's to 1985. Underground base in Washington state forests.			
Hobbies:	Terrorizing any individual or group that offends his sense of morals. Preserving humanity at all costs. Apparently aimed an interstellar ramscoop at home planet of potential alien opposition, just in case.			
Distinctive tactics:	Direct fire is God, and my gun has better range than yours. Uses psi invisibility.			
Sidekicks:	Trayguz Bentino, alien surgically modified to pass for human. Whereabouts unknown.			

Warlord (2nd generation)

STR	5
AWR	9
AGL	6
WIL	7
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Warlord			
Physical description:	Short male caucasian, thin, indeterminate age. Approximately 82kg, 188cm tall. Dresses for the period, but prefers to blend in. Status: Alive, active.			
Personality:	Observer, wanderer. Enjoys talking to people to increase his knowledge base, but tends not to interfere in their lives.			
Origins:	$Earth_0$. You guessed it, one of Zhanken's involuntary jokes-in-progress.			
Defining Quotes:	“If someone asks you if you're a god, you say ‘Yes!’”			
Typical equipment:	Body armor. Black powder revolver. Elephant rifle. Lots of recording and surveillance equipment. Combat trained horse.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	4	Mech. engineer	8
	Melee weapons	4	Electronics	5
	Brawling	4	Material science	7
	Equestrian	7	Military science	6
	History	6	German	4
Typical haunts:	Observing famous battles from numerous alternate perspectives.			
Hobbies:	Tweaking events as a real-life board game. Observing the grand panorama of humanity's struggles against itself.			
Distinctive tactics:	Observe. Make subtle changes. Repeat.			
Sidekicks:	None, but very protective of his horse.			

Strider (1st generation)

STR	6
AWR	9
AGL	6
WIL	8
HLT	7
POW	2

Name:	Strider, Randall James			
Physical description:	Heavyset male of English descent with some Amerindian blood. Approximately 95kg, 190cm tall. Dresses as fits the situation. Status: Alive, crippled, retired.			
Personality:	Strong sense of honor. Competently violent when necessary, but not to excess. Will not kill without a good reason.			
Origins:	Rescued by Lucifer from alternate Civil War on $Earth_3$. Instrumental in shaping American Revolution on $Earth_0$. Suffered crippling injuries in final attack on The Destroyer.			
Defining Quotes:	“Does it matter how many lives we save? Is it important how many lives we cannot? To the people whose lives we save or fail to save, the answer is ‘yes’. That is why I do what I do.”			
Typical equipment:	Weapons and tools appropriate to the culture and technological level. No special devices.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	5	Survival	6
	Melee weapons	6	Philosophy	5
	Brawling	8	Geography	5
	Military science	5	Cooking	6
	History	7	Psychology	6
Typical haunts:	Spent significant time personally shaping $Earth_3$ after it was abandoned by Lucifer as unsuitable. Retired on $Mars_0$ with Uma after final attack on The Destroyer.			
Hobbies:	Conversation, philosophy, charity work.			
Distinctive tactics:	Observe, advise, lead by example.			
Sidekicks:	Strider's honest concern for those beneath him makes those who follow him exceptionally loyal, and he has led several armies. But he is willing to and has sacrificed those armies when necessary.			

Faust (2nd generation)

STR	6
AWR	10
AGL	6
WIL	8
HLT	5
POW	2

Name:	Faust			
Physical description:	Male caucasian, stocky, appears to be in mid 40's. Approximately 185cm, 155kg. Sharp dresser. Status: Alive, active.			
Personality:	Sadistic control freak with an excellent esthetic sense and genteel facade. Will offer you an indulgent smile right up to when he has your head wrenched off for interrupting him.			
Origins:	22nd century Earth, timeline unknown. Other than that, unknown.			
Defining Quotes:	“You *will* do what I say. I know where everyone you've ever loved lives."			
Typical equipment:	Interstellar siege planetoid, although of a cruder technology than the one Azazelo is rumored to have hidden somewhere. It would still be a good fight, though. The technology is maintained by slave workers who he occasionally gives a chance to revolt, just to weed out rebellious genes.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	5	Cooking	4
	Melee weapons	8	Art appreciation	4
	Brawling	4	Spanish	5
	Philosophy	8	French	6
	Temporal phys.	13	Japanese	4
Typical haunts:	Wherever his ultimate ambition has currently led him.			
Hobbies:	Reconstructing ‘It’, the device the Designers used to move their solar system back through time. Hopes to use it to construct a pocket universe of which he is the omnipotent intelligence.			
Distinctive tactics:	Temporal extortion, use of threats and intimidation to get what he wants. Won't go out of his way to kill you unless it is the most efficient way to get things done.			
Sidekicks:	Mary, a genetically engineered cannibal bodyguard. Also, engineered wolves of great size and near-human intelligence to act as enforcers on his planetoid.			

Mary (3rd Generation)

STR	9
AWR	7
AGL	8
WIL	14
HLT	9
POW	2

Name:	Mary, 'Faust's psycho bitch', Scary Mary			
Physical description:	Tall female caucasian, muscular, indeterminate age. Approximately 215cm, 140kg. Good looking. Pointed teeth. Status: Alive, active.			
Personality:	Sadistic, but not very ingenious. Capable of elaborate plans under Faust's direction, but prefers a straightforward approach when on her own.			
Origins:	One of Lucifer's descendants, placed into a super-soldier program and modified by Faust. She has been programmed almost from birth to be loyal to him, and is the *only* individual in the multiverse whom he trusts. She has her own Matrix, and will often do lesser 'errands' for Faust when his attentions are more urgently needed elsewhen.			
Defining Quotes:	"Faust dear, do they really need to be *intact* to get this job done for you?"			
Typical equipment:	Enhanced strength, senses and toughness. Implanted body armor and toughened muscles and bones. External body armor if necessary. Carries a TL15 laser rifle when available.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	8	Stealth	7
	Melee weapons	7	Air vehicles	7
	Martial arts	8	Land vehicles	6
	Autoweapons	7	Military science	7
	Physics	8	Art appreciation	5
Typical haunts:	Wherever Faust wants her to be.			
Hobbies:	Protecting Faust and seeing him happy is her mission in life.			
Distinctive tactics:	Fast and furious. Overwhelming firepower applied to best effect. Protect Faust first and foremost. A predictability that sometimes works against her.			
Sidekicks:	None, but may often be in the company of wolves.			

Uma (1st generation)

STR	5
AWR	10
AGL	6
WIL	8
HLT	6
POW	2

Name:	Uma, Rachel Weaver			
Physical description:	Female of Mediterranean descent, 177cm, 58kg, long black hair. Appears to be in late 30's, but with centuries of hardship behind blue eyes. Status: Alive, retired on $Mars_0$ with Strider.			
Personality:	Cynical, pragmatic. Unquestioningly loyal to her father's goals, but quite willing to question his methods and act on her own initiative.			
Origins:	5th century $Earth_0$. Lucifer's first successful TimeLord and the oldest.			
Defining Quotes:	"'Crosswise and perverse?' Pah!"			
Typical equipment:	As required by situation. Usually has a personal log book for recording events. Her records show a personal side to The Work and its cost to humanity.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	5	History	7
	Melee weapons	7	Lockpicking	6
	Brawling	6	Streetwise	6
	Equestrian	6	Stealth	6
	Psychology	6	Survival	5
Typical haunts:	Despite despising the culture, she seemed to spend a lot of time in France. Known to be active in 5th century Constantinople and late 18th century Europe, among others.			
Hobbies:	Wheeling and dealing among the powerful and influential.			
Distinctive tactics:	Let someone else do the fighting while directing from a safe distance.			
Sidekicks:	Often travels with individuals who have training as bodyguards.			

Mistral (1st generation)

STR	5
AWR	9
AGL	6
WIL	8
HLT	5
POW	1

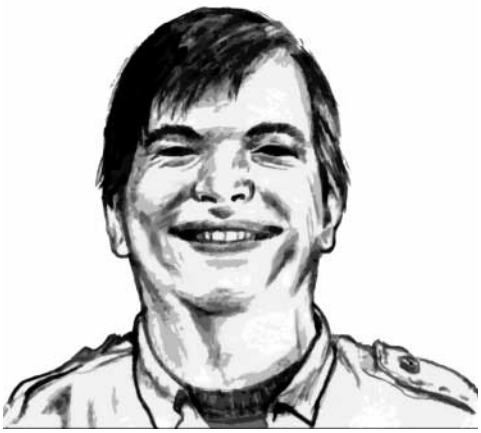
Name:	Mistral			
Physical description:	Female oriental, 176cm, 54kg. Above average appearance. Tends towards tight-fitting silk with loose outergarments. Status: Unknown, deserted after first attack on The Destroyer.			
Personality:	Practical but spiteful. Acts logically but can hold a grudge a long time if offended.			
Origins:	$Earth_3$ or $Earth_4$. Other than that, unknown.			
Defining Quotes:	"Piss me off. Made me really mad, I dare you..."			
Typical equipment:	As required by situation. Usually includes a number of small concealed weapons.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	5	History	6
	Melee weapons	6	Psychology	8
	Thrown wpns.	5	Streetwise	4
	Pharmacy	5	Acting	8
	Chemistry	5	Survival	4
Typical haunts:	Spent a great deal of time among the oriental cultures of $Earth_3$ and $Earth_4$, circa 1000CE and forward.			
Hobbies:	Unknown.			
Distinctive tactics:	Subtle manipulation of key players from behind the scenes, including seduction, blackmail and assassination.			
Sidekicks:	Was romantically involved with Zhanken shortly after he lost his non-TimeLord lover (2167CE, $Earth_0$). Aside from that, none known.			

Kirk (1st generation)

STR	6
AWR	8
AGL	5
WIL	10
HLT	5
POW	1

Name:	Kirk, Raji Scott			
Physical description:	Male African, 186cm, 84kg. Average appearance. Tends towards casual clothing. Status: Deceased, killed in first attack on The Destroyer.			
Personality:	Easygoing but cautious. Capable of remarkable focus if required.			
Origins:	21st century $Earth_0$. Other than that, unknown.			
Defining Quotes:	None known.			
Typical equipment:	As required by situation. His contribution to The Work was mainly in a research and development role, so most of his tools involved data collection.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	5	History	5
	Melee weapons	4	Research	7
	Martial arts	6	Area kn.(Internet)	6
	Running	5	Hobby(SF)	6
Typical haunts:	Spent most of his time in the latter part of $Earth_5$ and the parts of $Earth_0$ prior to the first attack on the Destroyer.			
Hobbies:	Science fiction and memorabilia.			
Distinctive tactics:	Watch, listen, learn. Had a natural knack for precise spatial Jumps, but his temporal accuracy was low for a 1st generation TimeLord.			
Sidekicks:	Was romantically involved with Uma for several years before the first attack on the Destroyer. After his death, she shunned almost all human contact for several decades.			

Roger (2nd generation)



STR	5
AWR	9
AGL	6
WIL	8
HLT	5
POW	1

Name:	Roger			
Physical description:	Male caucasian, 188cm, 74kg. Average appearance. Sharp but casual dress. Status: Missing, presumed dead after suspicious nuclear explosion on $Earth_4$ timeline.			
Personality:	Cautious but generally friendly.			
Origins:	20st century $Earth_0$. Other than that, unknown.			
Defining Quotes:	"I've got a bad feeling about this..."			
Typical equipment:	Light weaponry and body armor. Often has significant humanitarian or medical supplies. Has several well-armed APC's on $Earth_4$ timeline.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	6	Aerospace eng.	8
	Melee weapons	4	Mech. repair	7
	Martial arts	4	Carpentry	4
	Equestrian	4	French	4
	Air vehicles	4	Swedish	4
Typical haunts:	Helping rebuild society and help the less fortunate after war on $Earth_4$ timeline.			
Hobbies:	Reading, collecting rare books.			
Distinctive tactics:	Avoid any fight he can't win quickly and with a minimum of casualties.			
Sidekicks:	Has a number of well-trained mercs at his disposal, some of whom know his true nature.			

Mr. Mayhem (2nd gen.)

STR	6
AWR	8
AGL	5
WIL	10
HLT	5
POW	1

Name:	Mr. Mayhem			
Physical description:	Male caucasian, well-muscled, indeterminate age. Approximately 87kg, 188cm tall. Informal dress that blends in with the situation. Status: Semi-retired, raising a family. Intends to resume travels someday.			
Personality:	Easygoing but will kick your ass if you get in his way.			
Origins:	20th century $Earth_0$, presumably via Zhanken. Other than that, unknown.			
Defining Quotes:	None known.			
Typical equipment:	Will wear best body armor that is available for a given situation. Prefers weapons with high rate of fire or area effect.			
Known skills:	Projectile wpns	6	Mech. eng.	8
	Melee weapons	4	Military science	5
	Brawling	6	First aid	4
	Thrown wpns.	4	Survival(urban)	5
	Equestrian	4	Sign language	4
Typical haunts:	21st century $Earth_0$, with an estate in 18th century North America on the $Earth_3$ timeline.			
Hobbies:	Using his time travel experience to steer technological speculations into practical applications.			
Distinctive tactics:	Prefers to be unpredictable, but has a fondness for using area effect devices in excessive quantity.			
Sidekicks:	None known.			

Bit Players

There are numerous other TimeLords as well. Since Matrices change hands far too often (as least as far as their *current* owners are concerned), some of these individuals may be using the Matrices that will eventually come into position of the characters or the previously listed TimeLords.

If it seems that a *lot* of TimeLords are white males that came from the 20th century, this may be a quirk of Zhanken's. He also tends to choose people who are aware of the possibilities of advanced technology, rather than classifying it as evil or magic, but not so advanced that they wouldn't keep searching for better if they make it back home.

Xenophile (2nd generation)

Description: Male caucasian
Origins: 20th century $Earth_?$
Haunts: The future. A time travelling "first contact" person. Often collecting anthropological info on primitive cultures.
Status: Unknown. Last seen preparing to Jump *into* an alien computer system, where their complete society had moved to in virtual form.

Tourist (2nd generation)

Description: Male caucasian
Origins: 20th century $Earth_?$
Haunts: Everywhere
Status: Missing. Last known fix was pre-Columbian Peru.

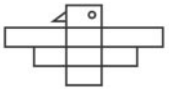
Lefty (2nd generation)

Description: Male caucasian, bionic hand
Origins: 20th century $Earth_?$
Haunts: Distant future?
Status: Retired. Residing incognito on $Earth_0$. Engaged in various intellectual pursuits.

Gaia (3rd generation)

Description: Female Indo-european
Origins: 21st century $Earth_5$
Haunts: Stone Age $Earth_{null}$
Status: Deceased, old age. Covetous shaman stole her Matrix and disappeared in a flash of light (happened to be one of *Lucifer's* cousins).

Ghostwalker (3rd generation)

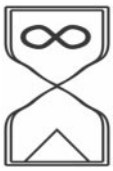


Description: Male Amerindian
Origins: 18th century $Earth_2$
Haunts: 18th century North America
Status: Retired, aging. Has created a series of stable timelines related to $Earth_2$ where European colonization of North America was thwarted (mainly through biological warfare).

Merlin (3rd generation)

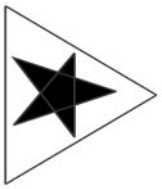
Description: Male caucasian
Origins: 22nd century England phantom timeline
Haunts: 9th century England phantom timeline
Status: Deceased. KIlled by a pagan priest who then used Merlin's imported knowledge (esp. gunpowder) to good effect.

Cassandra (3rd generation)



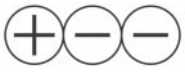
Description: Female African
Origins: 20th century Egypt, $Earth_5$
Haunts: Varies, usually pre-1700CE
Status: Missing, presumed dead. Eschews violence, prefers defusing situations. Last seen in 70CE Jerusalem, $Earth_0$.

Krasnya (3rd generation)



Description: Male caucasian
Origins: 20th century Russia, $Earth_5$
Haunts: Russia, circa 1900-1920CE
Status: Deceased. Made a career of altering Russian histories. Eventually caught a stray bullet.

Tesla (3rd generation)



Description: Male African
Origins: 20th century North America, $Earth_4$
Haunts: 21st century North America, $Earth_4$
Status: Missing, presumed dead. Experimented with interfacing Designer technology and modern equipment. His entire base vanished.

Where in Hell are they?
The Designers left behind thousands of Matrices, of which some hundreds have eventually made their way into human hands. The exact number in circulation is tough to tell, since TimeLords generally don't congregate so a census can be taken.

Regardless, it's a lot, and with regular Jumps being made across the timelines (especially the $Earth_0$ one where you are reading this), then why haven't we seen more actual evidence of their presence?

There are a number of explanations. First, the planet Earth is a vanishingly small piece of the universe, but compared to the three meter radius of a Jump circle, it is *huge*. Most Jumps leave behind traces that are simply never noticed. Of the ones that *are* noticed by their traces, they are completely unexplainable by modern science, and most serious researchers will not bother with them (trying to explain the unexplainable does not further your career). This leaves only "crackpots" to take these things seriously. These are the people who document rains of frogs, crop circles and perpetual motion machines (the latter two of which can be related to Matrix phenomenon or Designer tech). Of the small fraction of Jumps that appear in plain view or leave evidence in public areas, the record-ed evidence will vary depending on the era. Most historians or archaeologists will discount "future artifacts" as hoaxes or site contamination, since the only alternative is "time travellers" (see previous note on crackpots). Documentation from any time before 1900CE is not taken very seriously. News-papers of the 19th century were notorious for fabricating stories to prop up circulation. For appearing in plain sight any time in the instant photography/television era, it gets a little more problematic. This brings us to the second explanation: The Big Coverup.

The governments of the Late Industrial and later eras may not understand or truly believe in time travel, but they can understand an unstoppable delivery system and violation of their national boundaries. They will never publically admit that such is happening, and will use the various "national security" provisions of their respective national charters to suppress the information from getting out to the public. Each nation will suspect the others to some degree, but can't express these suspicions without admitting their helplessness to stop the incursions. During the "Cold War", both the US and former USSR were pulling their hair out trying to figure how "the other side" was transplanting bits of landscape around or delivering "spies" into urban areas.

And since any TimeLord who appears in an urban or public area would immediately flee the scene, few were ever caught. A several month investigation of crop circles in the midwest US resulted in Zhanken being captured by the FBI during World War 2, and he escaped the timeline only by a little assistance from what he assumed was his future self and a local Shaper (Enrico Fermi). The entire affair was so personally embarassing to J.Edgar Hoover that all the records pertaining to it were "lost" shortly afterwards.

Last, until the Guardians are formed on $Mars_0$, no government has the ability to prevent TimeLords from absconding with the hard evidence. The edge of a Jump field will slice through a vault door with ease. For a more subtle approach, Portals can be formed anywhere there is room for one (and their size can be adjusted by a skilled Matrix user). A skilled TimeLord can make a Portal the size of a dinner plate inside a safe, reach through from another place or time, remove a Matrix or other damning evidence, and leave no trace of the theft. The first generation TimeLords were especially adept at precison Jumps and tricks like this, possibly due to their closer genetic ties to Lucifer. This ability to remove the evidence makes it anywhere from embarassing to impossibly frustrating for any government investigator who thinks they have a solid case, either *for* time travel or *against* a captured TimeLord. If a friendly TimeLord removes all evidence from the evidence locker, there is no case, and the prisoner goes free. Even if "national security" laws were used to hold a TimeLord incommunicado, if he or she had a TimeLord friend, it's just a matter of time before the prisoner escapes through a conveniently placed Portal...

Tenacious enough investigators may eventually draw the attention of Watchers, and this person may eventually learn the full truth of the matter, but will still be unable to prove it or make the information available in a form that would cause it to be widely believed.

Vignette

Time: 2532CE
Location: Mars$_0$

They got off silently at Planetary Administration. Someone was waiting there with Far-walker. Lucifer silently put him in the carrying sack and they walked the long stairway up. The building would eventually be on a riverbank, and they planned for it to last that long. There were a few sections of the facility off-limits to citizens, with redundant genescans and coded keyways. Lucifer and Azazelo were walked through.

Fingerprints and DNA could be cloned, but no one could duplicate what Lucifer *was*, and no one could *be* Azazelo well enough to fool Lucifer. They entered the section reserved for the Guardians. Technically, the wing set deep into the canyon wall was the Deep Space Anomaly Observatory, an unusual function in an administrative building. While they did collect and collate information from optical, radio and x-ray observatories throughout the solar system, their reason for being was to keep an eye on the Destroyer. Two observatories on opposite sides of the solar system had small staffs, large computers and a Matrix. The information collected from these was analyzed as best they could and downloaded to the Guardians. With only a hundred or so AU of parallax, human equipment would be unable to give useful precision, but the accuracy of measurement from the Matrices allowed the Guardians to pin down anything with a temporal signature in the spiral arm to the nearest solar system.

"...and the Destroyer has disappeared from his." The shift duty officer handed Lucifer the clipcomp with the numbers. She towered over the two of them, but was still visibly intimidated by their presence. She motioned for a playback in the large holotank. The Destroyer's home system and nearby others were marked by spectral type, with his home system having a bright green dot. As they watched, it displayed what the numbers showed. The Destroyer flickered, faded, and went out. "It didn't look like a Jump." Far-walker was easily heard, and the cloth bag was no impediment to his senses. "In space *or* in time."

"We played back his past Jumps, and it had neither the signature of a hyperspace transit on a chronon, or the chronon manipulation itself." The duty officer continued. "We have scanned everywhere within our range, and he is simply not there." Lucifer squinted at that infinite point again.

"Old friend, what do you say to this?"

"Bright one, I am not sure. I can feel the numbers inside me, and they feel much like the display we just saw. He is no more. But I do not think he would suffer the existence of anything in his space that could annihilate him so quickly, and if he were destroyed, surely the release of his chronons would ripple across our sensors."

"But you say 'he is no more'?"

"The Destroyer has left our universe."

"How?"

"I don't know. That's not one of the knowledges the Designers left me. But I'm sure of it. He's gone."

"For good?"

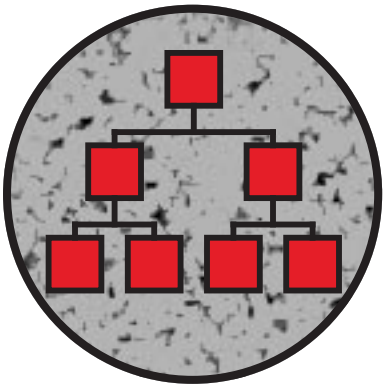
"I don't know. If he can leave, it stands to reason he can return."

"Where? When?"

"I don't know. I -"

"That's three 'I don't know's', old friend." Lucifer pursed his lips and looked at the duty officer.

"You!" She jumped back, surprised. "Find out the readiness of the timeships. Two seats, next orbital shuttle. Fast transport from Romulus Station to the Belt. One spare Matrix from the Vault." Azazelo almost smiled. The fire was rekindled. Lucifer turned to him. "Azazelo, we are going hunting."



Organi-zations

"Look upon my works, ye mighty, and despair..."

From 'Ozymandias', (P.B.Shelley)

Basics

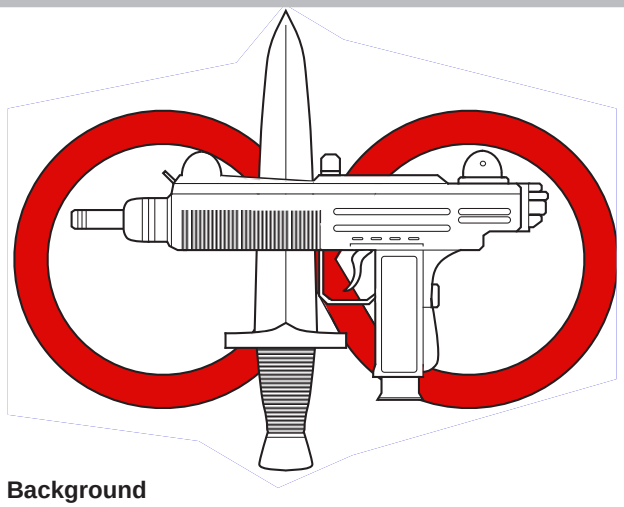
No one is really positive about how much the Designers influenced the development of time travel. It is certain that they *did* have an effect, for many time travellers or organizations with this capability do so because they stumbled across Designer technology. What is unclear is whether or not anyone developed it totally independently of Designer influence. The historical record seems to indicate that *none* of the star-faring civilizations that pre-dated the Designers' arrival circa 10,000BCE had used or acquired time or dimension travel devices, although third-hand TimeLord tales indicate there may have been/be civilizations where altered laws of nature and unique mental powers allowed this effect.

The current consensus is that when the Designers moved their solar system back in time, they did something that significantly altered the nature of the space/time continuum. It may have been the concentration of captive chronons, the amount and type of energy flux involved, or some combination of the above. There is also speculation that some unknown piece of Designer tech is still operating somewhere/when, making temporons easier to catch and hold, a mythical "Matrix Hub" that processes and interprets all chronon use. Without this event, device, or whatever, no one else would be able to duplicate the Designer feat of finding and catching chronons.

In any case, the practical result is that there is only a limited volume of space and time that seems to be able to generate time travel equipment. For the most part, it is the human sector of the Milky Way, any time after about 10,000BCE, and extending some indeterminate distance into the future. The rare travellers who have managed to go thousands of years into the future have often found areas where *theory* of time travel is well known, but the practical application is impossible, indicating that some cultures yet to come will not be able to unlock the door the Designers opened.

In this era where time travel *is* possible, however, organizations and powerful groups have developed and exploited the ability.

The Guardians



Background

The Guardians were a group that was set up on the fledgling Nova Terra colony ($Mars_0$) by Lucifer, beginning around 2205CE. Their original name was the Deep Space Anomaly Observatory, and their purpose was to use a long-baseline Matrix scan to locate any Matrix or chronon manipulation events in their frame of reference, specifically to monitor the Destroyer's comings and goings. Originally, this was done using supercomputers "talking" to Matrices on Mars and the Moon, using differences in the "time" of detection to get a rough distance. Eventually, with the development of FTL quantum link communications, this baseline was extended to permanent manned facilities at the edge of the solar system. This eventually allowed an accuracy to within a planetary orbit at a distance of several thousand parsecs. It could also pinpoint a Matrix use within our solar system to within a hundred meters or less, and they maintain that capability to this day.

After the death of Lucifer in 2512CE, the Guardians went into a kind of hiatus. Well aware of the potential abuse of time travel, they monitored all Matrix use in and out of their space, but had very little ability to time travel themselves. Of the original TimeLords, only Strider and Uma remained in contact with the Guardians in a consulting role. Strider was kept alive by advanced technology and could no longer Jump through time, and Uma, his wife, would not Jump to stay young while her husband began to slowly age. After considering the problem of inbreeding for a time (they were half-siblings via Lucifer, after all), Strider and Uma had two children, Geri and Usal, both of whom had the talent to use a Matrix. They were taught the proper techniques by their parents, who eventually gave them their personal Matrices. These grandchildren of Lucifer were, for a century, the only field operatives the Guardians had. And they were hardly needed in a time travel role. Mostly they used their Matrices to view the various pasts where humanity was not going to thrive anyway. The main use by the Guardians was as instantaneous transport, as they could open up an Earth-Mars Portal and negate the need for an expensive several week trip by fusion torch ship.

They also helped conventional law enforcement (being able to open a Portal to *anywhere* has uses), and for occasional search and rescue missions. Last, they were a key element in the Earth defense fleet. The surviving ships from the assault on the Destroyer and the machine intelligences were still in standby service, having been repaired, refueled and upgraded. They lacked conventional hyperdrives, as they were designed to Jump through Portals. Geri and Usal were the only individuals now willing or able to create them, but to be honest, either Strider or Uma would have gladly taken pilot positions if needed for the defense of humanity.

This situation continued for more or less a century. During this time, the pace of scientific advance slowed to a crawl. The destruction of Far-walker was a major setback, as he was one of the few individuals who could understand Designer theory well enough to communicate how to make use of it with primitive human tools. However, humans by this time had crude hyperdrives, a limited form of FTL communications, and a fair amount of still-working Designer devices to create condensed matter, folded space and other niceties (Consider them a TL15 society with a few exceptions). Aging had been slowed greatly, but not quite halted, meaning that *anyone* could conceivably live for centuries (not just TimeLords). The anti-agathic process was delicate and precise, and became more so as one's chronological age went up. Enzyme, chemical and hormone levels had to be monitored on a daily basis to keep one on the razor's edge between uncontrolled cell division (cancer) and uncontrolled senescence (aging). This process became a birthright for Martians, and was eventually extended to some citizens of Earth as resources allowed.

While science advanced slowly, the ease on industrial resources meant these could be turned towards the recovery of Earth, whose population had still not recovered past perhaps 500 million people after the devastating plague of 2167CE. Earth fell under Martian guidance and nominal rule during the long recovery.

Somewhere around 2670CE the biological sciences made what was probably their last breakthrough regarding Designer science. They found a way to clone Designer-modified human tissues. There were no Designers, nor any Designer-modified humans around, though. But *someone* had preserved tissue samples left over from Zhanken's assassination of Lucifer. With these, they were able to make a *partial* clone of Lucifer's brain. With a computer interface to this, they were finally able to artificially convince a Matrix that they had a genuine user.

The Guardians now had the ability to independently open Portals in time and space, which led to their emergence on the scene as major players.

Now, the fun part

There are one of two ways the Guardians can go. Since their timeline now has enough potential to branch, conceivably they could go *both* ways, but we don't recommend it.

The *Good* Guardians

With the ability to open Portals on their own, the Guardians can now operate as a *serious* law enforcement agency within space. Hostage rescue, *really* surprise search warrants, instantaneous interplanetary transport, the works. They can't go back or forward to change things on Mars for the simple reason that they are using a Matrix on Mars. If they were using it last week, they can't Jump to last week. If they will be using it next week, they can't Jump to next week.

This does not prevent Jumping through time to Earth, provided there are no TimeLords active there to interfere with synchronization. They *are* limited as to equipment they can Jump through time, just like everyone else. Guardian temporal Jumps often are just used to provide advance warnings. Mars and Earth are outside each other's natural chronon fields, so there is no apparent paradox, though it seems that way sometimes. This separation of chronon fields can lead to unusual events. An agent could conceivably Jump back six months to Earth, get on a ship to Mars, and fly home to meet himself before he left. Experiments of this type with inanimate objects have led to side effects severe enough that there is an utter prohibition on even trying it again.

The Guardians are also engaged in experiments to try and find *other* courses of history where humanity can be saved. They know their own particular timeline is *barely* viable, and another surprise like the machine invasion of 2320CE could spell extinction for mankind. There is no paradox inherent to different branches of history existing simultaneously on different timelines, so seeing humanity thrive one way or another is always in the best interest of humans in general. To this end, they explore the main branches of history during times when other time travellers did not, sometimes trying to goad the alternate history in the direction Lucifer intended, sometimes trying to force a major branching of history so that they have a new and uncluttered timeline to work with.

In this work, they will sometimes encounter TimeLords. Sometimes TimeLord help will be enlisted, sometimes not. Some are rogues whose plans are not in humanity's best interest, or sometimes they just resent the Guardians and attempt to thwart what the Guardians are doing. In these cases, effort is made to capture or kill the TimeLord(s) in question. Since all travel is initiated from $Mars_0$ headquarters, pursuit and tracking is extremely difficult. The few 2nd or 3rd generation TimeLords recruited into the Guardians have the unenviable task of tracking down these rogues and/or undoing their damage. With a Matrix and the ability to use it, TimeLord Guardians have a lot more flexibility in chasing someone across time and space. They also have a lot more responsibility, and operate under strict guidelines.

Character creation

The Guardians are an *extremely* elite group. While they have their share of administrators and bean-counters, the field operatives are supposed to be the best at what they do, whatever that may be. Characters built from the ground up must be *at least* as good as the following templates. Physical templates are for professions or missions resolving around endurance, combat prowess or similar mission specialties. Mental templates are for linguists, archaeologists, sociologists or other academic mission specialties. Most missions will have roles for both types of characters, and a few will be exclusively one type or the other.

These packages have varying AP and SP costs, depending on the specialty and gender of the agent.

Agent type	Starting points
Male physical	160AP/120SP
Male mental	150AP/140SP
Female physical	150AP/130SP
Female mental	140AP/150SP

The difference between points available and the minimum cost of the template may be spent as desired. Most players will find suitable character disadvantages to increase attributes or skill specializations by a few points in order to add an individual touch or distinguishing specialty to their character conception. If a skill has increased or decreased difficulty to learn, the character is only required to have it at the altered level (e.g. a physical specialist would only be required to have Martial Arts at a 4 instead of 5).

Male Physical		Female Physical	
STR	6	STR	5
AWR	5	AWR	5
AGL	6	AGL	6
WIL	5	WIL	5
HLT	6	HLT	6
POW	1	POW	1
Total	159AP	Total	147AP

Minimum skills (Primary)	Level
Two from Block A	5
Two from Block B	3
Two from Block C	4
Two from Block D	3
Two from Block E	3
One from Block F	3
Cost for AGL6, AWR5	119SP
Cost for AGL6, AWR6	101SP

Male Physical		Female Physical	
STR	5	STR	4
AWR	7	AWR	7
AGL	5	AGL	5
WIL	5	WIL	4
HLT	5	HLT	5
POW	1	POW	1
Total	150AP	Total	132AP

Minimum skills (Primary)	Level
One from Block A	4
Two from Block B	6
One from Block C	3
One from Block D	4
Two from Block E	4
One from Block F	3
Cost for AGL5, AWR7	131SP
Cost for AGL6, AWR7	122SP

Skill Block A	Skill Block B
Projectile weapons	A Science skill
Melee weapons	A Liberal Art/Academics skill
Unarmed combat	A Liberal Art/Academics skill
Martial arts (+1)	First Aid or Medicine (+1)

Skill Block C	Skill Block D
Land vehicles	An AWR skill of choice (+0)
Water vehicles	An area knowledge (+0)
Air vehicles	An area knowledge (-1)
Equestrian	An AWR environment skill

Skill Block E	Skill Block F
Foreign language	An AGL skill of choice (+0)
Foreign language (spoken)(-2)	A HLT skill of choice (+0)
Foreign language (written)(-2)	

Players are encouraged to compare notes with each other and get GM input on the types of time travel they are going to be expected to handle. For instance, it would be unlikely that a group geared around high-tech skills is going to be assigned low-tech missions. It might happen *on occasion*, but not the *majority* of the time. Characters *should* be able to work together as a unit.

As an option, each player can design *two* characters, one physical specialist, and one mental specialist. This way, there is more “mix & match” potential for the best qualified teams to be sent. A commando raid doesn't mean a player has to sit by the sidelines, for instance. One group of characters can provide backup and support for the other. If one character is injured or incapacitated for a while, the player can still use the other.

Ads & Disads
Characters can have Ads and Disads as appropriate to the campaign and the Guardian standards. These are limited, and the following guidelines are specific to the Guardians.

Age - Character are assumed to have an apparent age of no more than 30. Medical technology can drastically slow aging effects, and combined with the beneficial effects of cross-time travel via Matrix, you can largely ignore age-related penalties. Simply as a game balance issue, AP and SP are not gained or lost based on starting age.

Authority - Characters have Guardian authority to act in the best interest of humanity. Of course, this authority is really only valid on the Guardian home timeline after they were formed. Elsewhere, it simply means you have your organization's blessing to do things that might be considered questionable, so long as it is justified (and it works). Other than that, characters may start with one level of rank.

Ranks are ranged from Fifth to First. Unless they buy more, characters start at Fifth Rank, the bottom rung. In terms of authority in the normal Martian/Earth defense structure, this bottom rank would be approximately equal to a lieutenant. There are *no* non-officers in the Guardians. If you don't have leadership potential, you don't get in.

Characters of lesser rank should remember that while other characters may be friends, rank is rank and orders are not disobeyed just because you find them inconvenient.

Background - At least 200 words of character background is *required*.

Contacts - None to start with. They may be cultivated during play, however.

Dependence - Not allowed.
Destiny - Not allowed.

Duty - Duty is what gets you in trouble if you misuse your Authority. Point structure of Duty is factored into the minimum character template.

Enemies - You can have a Level 1 Enemy that represents a checkered past or someone of importance on $Earth_0$ or $Mars_0$ that doesn't like you (you didn't know it was the Admiral's daughter at the time...).

Extra Limb - Not allowed.

Fame - You can have up to Level 1 Fame, simply because you are a member of an elite organization. If the Guardians are a secret organization, this is obviously not allowed.

Frailness - Not allowed.

Habitual behavior - Discouraged but allowed.

Height/weight - Characters should fall within human norms for their STR. Shorter than normal characters for $Earth_0$ and $Mars_0$ are actually preferred, as this places them closer to human norms in previous centuries. Characters native to $Mars_0$ may have been required to undergo height reduction surgery and intensive weight training to match $Earth_0$ strength and height norms.

Immortality - Not allowed. Available medical science can virtually halt aging and regrow most lost body parts. Body parts with large amounts of nerve cells (spine, brain, eyes, major nerve bundles) can be compensated for by electronic interface to bypass the damaged parts, but this means the agent cannot travel through time anymore. This is the type of injury Strider sustained in the final battle with the Destroyer. Ignore all permanent effects of lethal damage unless the injury is 5 or more points of lethal impairment in a single blow.

Inheritance - Not allowed.

Luck - Characters can be lucky or unlucky.

Natural Aptitude - Normally not allowed on Attributes, because *everyone* would buy it to make their template cheaper. If it makes for a more heroic group of adventurers, each character can have the option of having a Natural Aptitude with a single Primary skill.

Non-combatant - While there may be people with a non-combatant philosophy within the Guardian organization, no field agents will have this trait.

Pain tolerance - Allowed and encouraged.

Papers - Characters will have all documentation for any profession or skill that requires it for free. False papers for a particular timeline will be issued as needed. If a character wants to have a valid alternate identity without the knowledge of the Guardian organization, the point cost for the papers is doubled (they do competent and regular security checks of *all* personnel).

Physical Lim - No more than 10AP or SP of physical lims are allowed. For characters, the only real physical lims are those which modern medicine cannot correct without resorting to technological implants. For instance, Azazelo has managed quite well for several hundred years with only one eye. If a character accumulates more the 10 points of non-correctable Physical Lims during play, they will be retired to a desk job (and given technological fixes for their limitations).

Size - Large variations in physical size are not allowed.

Toughness - Characters of STR7+ may buy a level of Toughness, as can characters with Pain Tolerance. Characters with both may buy two levels.

Tricks - Allowed.

Vulnerability - Some vulnerabilities are not easily fixed, even with TL15 medicine (like adverse drug reactions). Characters may have a lethal or non-lethal Level 1 Vulnerability, but it will count towards the total of any Physical Lims they might have.

Wealth - Pay scale for Guardian field ops matches that for other jobs using the same skills. The travel opportunities, Matrix-based anti-agathic effects and other fringe benefits are not to be ignored. Aside from this, characters can have increased starting wealth. Assume all characters have normal starting wealth as though they had 10 years experience and savings. This is professional skill level squared, times 20Cr, times10 years. The Guardians want people with flexibility, so "professional" skill is the average (round *down*) of the two best applicable Primary skills. Characters who have any levels of rank add 1 to their best applicable Primary skill for purposes of wealth. In return, they bear greater responsibility, especially for the actions of any agents under their authority.

Professional skill	Savings	Starting goods	Goods on credit	Yearly salary
6	7,200Cr	14,400Cr	144,000Cr	43,200Cr
7	9,800Cr	19,600Cr	196,000Cr	58,800Cr
8	12,800Cr	25,600Cr	256,000Cr	76,800Cr
9	16,200Cr	32,400Cr	324,000Cr	97,200Cr
10	20,000Cr	40,000Cr	400,000Cr	120,000Cr

Cost of living is whatever you want to make of it. Assume that each 10,000Cr of goods owned on credit is new, and will cost you 150Cr per month for the next 10 years or until you pay off the principal and interest. Other monthly expenses will be at whatever standard of living you choose. All active duty military personnel have tax-free income.

Using "found" wealth from other timelines to augment your income is a one way ticket out of the Guardians. While personal mementos are allowed (even inherently valuable ones, with permission), these are *never* to go on sale.

Organizational Structure

Internally, the Guardians are run something like a military headquarters. Security badges or the equivalent let people know who you are and where you can go. Functionaries handle the equivalent of paperwork, and there are lots of "little people" whose combined efforts make things work for the "golden boys" who get the credit. Within the organization, personnel are split into five divisions.

Alpha Division

Administrative, payroll, record-keeping. Strictly a desk job. They tend to be self-important and claim they hold everything together against the chaos the other divisions cause. They're mostly right, but they're far too smug about it.

Beta Division

Support staff. Beta covers all the routine and not-so-routine maintenance of the Guardian base. From cleaning the air filters to refueling the fusion plants, Beta handles it. Beta Division is the most informal between ranks, and is pretty tight-knit. They can get away with things that the other Divisions can't. So, unless you want your environment suit to leach chemicals that turn your skin pink and your hair purple, don't give Beta techs a lot of flak.

Gamma Division

Technical support. Gamma takes care of mission analysis and scheduling, and includes an equal mixture of techs for the time travel equipment, and psychologists, sociologists and historians who have disappeared from academic life for a chance to get some hands-on data that no one else in the world has access to. Of course, they have all agreed never to publish the source of their data, or to publish at all for at least 10 years after leaving the service, or else... Gamma tries and largely succeeds in getting Delta the information it needs to do it right the first time, which Delta appreciates greatly, although not publicly. Most mental specialist agents are a subset of Gamma Division.

Delta Division

Active duty agents, mostly career military and from elite units. They work hard and play harder. They don't give the other divisions a tremendous amount of respect, and are the ones most likely to end up insubordinate or disorderly...but not on assignment. Then, they are cool, calm and collected. Almost all physical specialists will be in Delta Division.

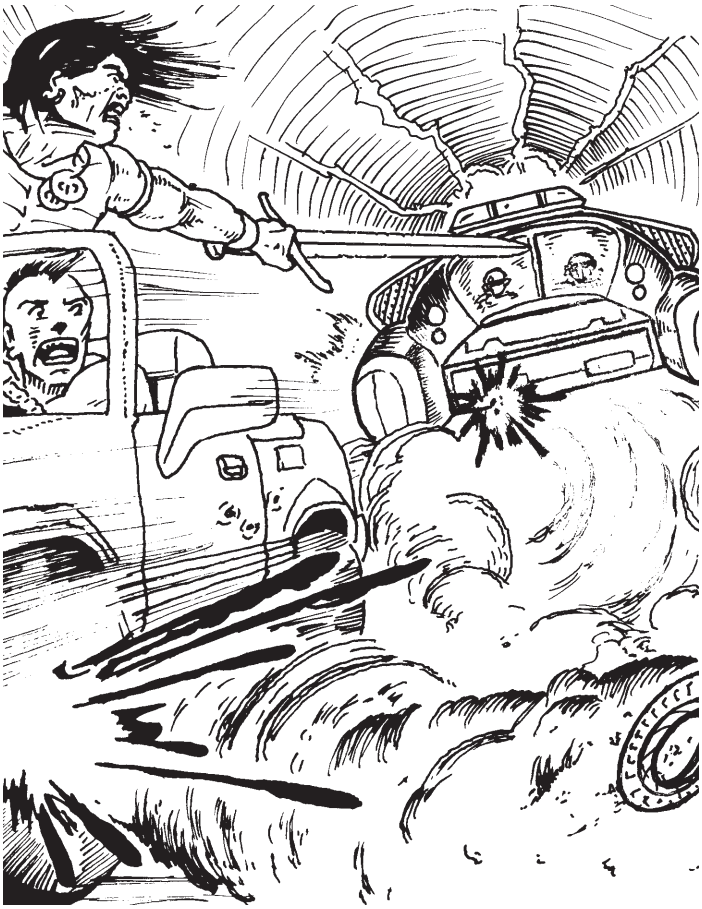
Epsilon Division

Security and investigations, also known as "spooks". Epsilon handles any precautions and investigations of security breaches. They also do interrogation of prisoners, investigation of returned artifacts and items, and most post-mission cleanup tasks. Occasionally Epsilon agents will go on a mission if some part of the assignment is deemed too secret for agents to know everything in advance, or if there is something to be picked up that is too secret to let the characters see. Epsilon agents generally give other groups the creeps.

Physical Structure

The original Deep Space Anomaly Observatory building was built into the side of the Valles Marinaris as part of the Nova Terra colony. As the Guardians took on genuine time travel duties, the entire operation was moved into a separate tributary of the valley, and dug deep into its walls. The only access in and out is through heavily guarded checkpoints, with further internal checkpoints at high-security areas. Shields are liberally used as protective devices for sensitive areas. The most sensitive areas are the fusion plants and the time travel chamber. The latter is completely surrounded by Shields in case someone ever manages to get something *very* dangerous in through the Portal.

The Guardians have a number of spare Matrices and other objects of Designer origin. These are protected in "The Vault". This is a large underground chamber of reinforced cement with an extremely tough vault door. The vault door is *mechanically* locked, and guarded at all times via the *one* underground tunnel that accesses it. The entire volume of the Vault is inside a Designer null field, which prevents the operation of Designer technology, prevents anyone from Jumping or Portaling into it, and acts as a temporal boundary for anyone trying to break into it manually. The guards are in bunkers just outside the null field and are heavily armed. No TimeLords have attempted to circumvent these measures to date.



Duty profiles

Guardian field operatives have a three-part rotation schedule. The first is **field assignment**, whatever that might be, however long it takes, though rotation back home is managed periodically on long assignments. Second rotation is immediately after field assignment, and is **backup duty**. You are available if needed for consultation, briefing other agents, or being debriefed from your previous assignment, but otherwise your time is your own. This is for as long as your last assignment, but not less than a week or more than a month. Last rotation is **emergency duty**. You are in the hot seat. You have to stay within 20 minutes of headquarters at all times, and you can be called for emergency duty any day, any time of day. For academic specialists this is just annoying, as it prevents distant research projects, conference attendance, etc. For physical specialists, things can get a little more exciting, as they may be called for search and rescue, law enforcement or other duties as needed. This rotation is typically a week long.

Mission profilers tend to keep teams together if at all possible, for morale and scheduling reasons. Injury or other conditions may sometimes necessitate temporary splitting of teams, and at least once a subjective year, team members are split up to work with other teams to prevent clannish or competitive tendencies.

Missions

Guardian actions are kept secret from the timelines in which they operate whenever possible, especially considering the fate that hangs over all the timelines they work on. Experience with short-sighted leaders, misguided zealots and panicked, sheep-like populations has taught them that outright disclosure of who they are and why they are here is a "bad idea". This is especially true when you consider that any trip to an alternate timeline can take along evidence no more sophisticated than paper and photographs. Imagine the scene of a Guardian agent being dragged off by the heels while screaming "The aliens are coming! They're going to invade and kill us all!"

So, actions are kept as low key as possible. A typical mission falls into one of three types:

Observation

Agents are sent to an alternate timeline to collect information. They observe their target closely. This could be as small as a single key researcher, or as large as the governing body of an entire country. There are specific things they are supposed to look for, and things they need to notice if they happen, depending on the details of the mission. These missions can be handled solely by research specialists, but they usually include a physical specialist of some type just in case. Little or no overt interference is done.

Example - An observation team is sent to observe government debate on space program funding in preparation for an attempt to shift public opinion. They also monitor private conversations between legislators and collect any information that can be used to influence votes.

GM note - These missions can be the most boring type, unless your players are of the patient, puzzle-solving type. Infiltration-type observation missions can be a little more challenging. This would be more of an extended or deep-cover mission, where the only way to get the observation done is to get *inside* the group being observed. From a gamemaster standpoint, this is best done with no more than two or three players, as cover stories, communication and complications can get too messy otherwise.

Action

Agents are sent to an alternate timeline to do a specific task, often based on data collected by observation missions. Once they complete the task, they head home. These missions are more overt, more dangerous. The units are usually physical specialists, with one or two research specialists if the mission requires it.

Example - An observation team finds evidence that forces are being marshalled to attack the castle of a key person. An action team is sent in to provide warning, bolster defenses and provide tactical advice.

Reaction

Agents are sent in response to something that is happening or has already happened. They can't stop the event in progress, but they can mitigate the effects. Search and rescue, hostage rescue and damage control are typical examples. These teams are almost always pure physical specialists.

Example - The castle of a key person in the past of $Earth_2$ is under attack by forces historically unknown (the observation team failed). A reaction team is sent back to bolster the defenses with advanced quality medieval arms and armor.

Anomaly policy

The Guardians are not *too* restrictive about anomalous goodies lying about after missions. First, they don't take much advanced tech with them (usually body armor). Since they are usually trying to advance the development of other timelines, found items of this type are generally not a bad thing unless of a nature that might cause a Cataclysm. Items they *would* worry about are ones with verifiable details about a timeline's future history, things that an unscrupulous person could conceivably use to alter the timeline on their own. Items of this type generally aren't taken on missions for obvious reasons. This leaves the largest anomaly, Guardian agents themselves. Guardians are *very* gung-ho about recovering their own, but they will do so in such a way as to not alter the timeline if possible.

Timing

You can only open a Portal to a timeline that already has an active Matrix on it. Normally, when a Matrix Jumps a volume from one time to another, the objects in the volume are seamlessly integrated into the destination timestream or chronon field. A Portal more or less hands this responsibility to a Matrix at the destination, a rapid back-and-forth communication between the two Matrices taking care of the quantum bookkeeping details.

Because of synchronization, the Portal you open will naturally be to a Matrix with the same reference frame as you.

There are a few natural side effects of this. The first is that the Guardians can only open Portals unless they want to Jump a complex technical apparatus on a one-way trip. They *have* done this on occasion. Normally, they will have a TimeLord agent Jump to the desired timeline to provide an anchor for future Portals.

The second is that the Guardians have to have an active Matrix on that timeline during any period in which they want to be active. They guard this precious bauble *very* carefully.

Third, synchronization means that time for people on $Mars_0$ passes at the same rate as it does on the destination timeline for scheduling purposes.

Example - Your observation team leaves $Mars_0$ on May 1, Portals to $Earth_4$, and spends a week there. When you come back to $Mars_0$, a week has also passed there. If you stay on $Mars_0$ for a week and Portal back to $Earth_4$, you will arrive on $Earth_4$ a week after you left.

You can see that the Guardians can't just jump all over a destination timeline. They have to set up a “base camp” at the first date they intend using, and then operate on a one-to-one temporal basis from that date forward. They *can* do this in multiple time periods simultaneously, like having a base camp at $Earth_2$, 1900CE, and $Earth_2$, 1950CE. Time for both of these and $Mars_0$ will flow at the same relative rate. If for some reason the 1900CE base camp continued to exist until 1950CE, the timeline would branch to one line where the 1950CE base camp was set up, and to one line where it wasn't. If this timeline did not have sufficient potential to branch, the 1900CE base camp Matrix would bounce itself off the timeline to some analogous place where it *could* exist, doubtless with some localized side effects.

This makes efficient observation missions so important. The Guardians can't just read the newspaper about something that happened yesterday and go back to the day before to stop it. They have to see it coming far enough ahead of time to prepare and send in a team.

And now, the other side of the coin...

The *Bad* Guardians

The "bad" are identical in structure and operations to the "good" Guardians, but they took a different path through history. Once they had the ability to generate Portals on their own, the bad Guardians began to use their time travel abilities with the best of motives, but quickly fell prey to human frailties. They saw the inherent dangers in time travel, and moved to insure that they alone had the power. But like the good Guardians, they also wanted the greatest good for the greatest potential futures, and began to spread their organization to any continuum that could support it. At the moment, this is their own $Earth_0$, $Earth_4$ and $Earth_5$. They did this by Portaling agents, a Matrix and a chunk of cloned Lucifer brain to these timelines, and secretly setting up the power stations and locally available computer hardware to duplicate the setup on $Mars_0$. At the moment, these secondary headquarters lack the precision and response time of the main base, but they will expand as they can. The main limit is that they need to be as far back on these timelines as possible, to give them maximum room to manipulate these timelines before the machine invasion, but far enough forward that these civilizations have the tools needed to set up the base to begin with. The $Earth_5$ base was set up in year 2067CE, while the $Earth_4$ base was started in 2121CE.

The Guardians see *anyone* having time travel (besides themselves) as a potential threat. First, they saw it as a threat to humanity, and as they became more corrupt with power, as a threat to themselves.

The Guardians *actively* hunt down TimeLords. They prefer to catch them alive and take their Matrices, but if necessary, will do what it takes to get the Matrix. These are returned to $Mars_0$, where they are placed in an underground null-field bunker to temporarily deactivate them and prevent anyone else from Jumping in to grab them.

The Guardians eventually used their intelligence arm and instantaneous travel capabilities to gain near total control of Martian and Earth government and policy making, including anti-agathic treatments. "Good citizens" stay young, "bad citizens" are denied the treatments. This is an especially fierce threat on anyone whose chronological age is over 100 years. It also tends to keep the older and more hide-bound of authority figures both in place and in line with Guardian policy. Younger malcontents or those whose popularity is too great to warrant rapid public senescence are exiled to some useless timeline, where they are free to manipulate humanity as best they can. Since the timeline of choice for this is the semi-intelligent city builders of $Earth_{null}$, they have their work cut out for them.

The remaining 1st generation TimeLords actively oppose the Guardians, but are unable to mount any direct offensive on the advanced timelines the Guardians operate from. Guardian triangulation is fast and precise enough that VTOL gunships could be at a Jump site within a minute of arrival anywhere on $Earth_0$ or $Mars_0$. Zhanken and Azazelo have a temporary cease-fire in their personal war, because Azazelo sees what has been done to Lucifer by the Guardians as a greater affront than what Zhanken did.

Uma and Strider took their last hidden Matrix and Jumped into the not-too-distant past, knowing that Strider could be kept alive with less advanced technology, but would not be very mobile. There, they are making plans of their own. Geri and Usal? Depending on how "bad" you want the Guardians to be, they can either be loyal Guardians troopers, the only individuals trusted to travel by Matrix, or they could be "loyal" troopers without a Matrix, but having second thoughts and constantly watched for signs of deviant thoughts or behaviors. They could even be *running* the Guardians. Each having a larger than normal share of Lucifer's genes, they could rule like a brother & sister Egyptian dynasty, creating their own little corps of TimeLord children, loyal to themselves, with ultimate political power and humanity's most advanced technology. How decadent and corrupt this might become is anyone's guess.

Campaigning

You can run the bad Guardians as anywhere from misguided but well-meaning, to criminal plunderers of doomed timelines, to authoritarian, time-travelling fascists.

There are two main choices for a campaign with the evil twin of the Guardians. The first is that they are one of the "bad guys" that TimeLord characters have to be on the lookout for, a bogeyman that is the main reason characters don't want to Jump to advanced timelines. It could also be a central campaign theme. *Overthrow the Guardians*. Until the characters get some experience, they aren't going to play much part in this, but interactions with Guardians agents will always be there as a reminder.

The other choice is that characters could be loyal Guardian agents about the time the agency starts going bad. Characters have to decide what they are going to do, and how. Continue working for an agency which is slowly rotting from the inside, or commit treason and desert? Missions will go on as normal, but on occasion there will be the missions that just seem *wrong*, violations of previous Guardian principles that nonetheless are *orders*. And in a military organization, orders are orders. Obey or get hauled up on insubordination charges. *All* characters could be tank-grown TimeLord children of Geri and Usal, making the whole affair a conflict of rebellious children vs. hide-bound parents. Neither side will really want to kill the other, but they will if they have to.

The Shapers

The Shapers are not a time travel group as such, but they are aware of Lucifer, the TimeLords and the existence of multiple universes. Shapers exist on any alternate that branched from $Earth_0$ after 323BCE. They were created by Lucifer during the heyday of the Greeks as a way to keep humanity on a certain path when Lucifer was not there in person to push things along.

The Shapers are and have always been a quasi-religious group that crossed national and cultural borders, and which by nature tends to restrict itself to people able to exert a lot of local influence. Scientists, diplomats, generals, even philosophers. They have tended to avoid including people with ultimate power like kings and popes, because the temptation to abuse the knowledge is great enough, and having the authority to use that knowledge without fear of reprisal would be too tempting for many.

On any given timeline there might only be a few hundred Shapers. They communicate with each other regularly and keep redundant records in case some are lost. Their power is mostly that of their personal station in life. Resources are the same, *plus* whatever Lucifer or other TimeLords trusted them with. Lucifer literally knew where *all* the bodies were buried, and how much loot they were buried with. Shaper operations *never* wanted for funding if the goal was approved of by Lucifer. Shaper groups are almost always slightly ahead on the technological curve as well. Lucifer could not Jump advanced technology to Shaper groups, but he could provide theory, so Shapers had first crack at making devices based on these theories. In earlier years, their knowledge enhanced their reputation and influence, but it could also backfire on occasion (witch!).

The Shapers worked with Lucifer, and later the 1st generation TimeLords, providing support and intelligence services, as well as spreading knowledge. For instance, while Lucifer could not prevent the decline and collapse of the Roman Empire and the following Dark Ages, he and the Shapers were instrumental in seeing that as much existing knowledge as possible was preserved and scattered across Europe so that it might be available to later generations. Even fewer records would have been saved from the Library of Alexandria had not a pair of devoted Shapers been there to risk their lives and preserve what they could.

With Lucifer and the other TimeLords appearing and staying for perhaps a few months per decade on any given timeline, the TimeLords had an almost mythical quality, enhanced by their apparent agelessness, and the magical means by which they appeared and vanished.

The Shapers also made Lucifer and the 1st generation aware of the existence of the 2nd and 3rd generation TimeLords. Synchronization made it impossible for these groups to intersect, but provided the impetus for the use of sigils, so that the earlier TimeLords would know that changes or previous visitors were themselves or a later generation. Shapers watched the 2nd and 3rd generation TimeLords, and when ordered to, interfered or tried to interfere with them. Otherwise, they simply stayed alert for TimeLord activity and recorded all 2nd and 3rd generation actions so that Lucifer knew how it would affect the timeline. The Shapers also were used as an information conduit by a much older Azazelo to warn a younger Lucifer that Zhanken was going to kill him, and when. Lucifer, for his own reasons, did not act on this knowledge except to keep Azazelo from interfering when that day finally came.

Sometimes there were long gaps in time between contact with Lucifer or the TimeLords, and Shapers tended to fragment, lose their way or distort their mission. On timelines that were abandoned by Lucifer as unproductive, they usually became a cult or forgotten religion. On other timelines, they took other forms. On $Earth_0$, the Spanish Inquisition was an example of Shapers who took a wrong turn, and the Knights Templar an example of Shapers who failed. The group known as the Illuminati is an unknown quantity which has come in and out of the general Shaper fold over the centuries.

Shapers of note throughout Earth history

Socrates (philosopher), 470-399BCE
Hypatia (philosopher, mathematician),370-415CE
Galileo Galilei (scientist), 1564-1642CE
Benjamin Franklin (diplomat, scientist), 1706-1790CE
Enrico Fermi (physicist), 1901-1954CE
Carl Sagan (astronomer), 1934-1996CE
Uri Dshaffar (physicist),1996-2087CE

The Watchers

The Watchers were formed by a rogue Shaper in 323BCE. That Shaper was Socrates, who saw himself as a tool to sculpt humanity, but ultimately unaware of the final shape he was being used to sculpt. He had been shown the machine invasion, though like Lucifer, he did not understand exactly what was happening. At this time, even Far-walker could only use approximations like “sun-fire” to explain fusion engines. The threat of fire from the sky was tangible, but Socrates did not share Lucifer's quest for vengeance. He did not blindly accept that what Lucifer was doing was in humanity's best interest, and neither did his followers. The job of the Watchers was to passively and secretly observe the actions of Lucifer, the TimeLords and the Shapers. They second-guess Lucifer's motives and the consequences of what was, and what might have been had he not tampered with time at any given point in history.

The existence of the Watchers was accidentally discovered by Uma in 1346CE on $Earth_0$. Approximately 300 subjective years old at this point, she also had begun to have doubts about Lucifer's heavy-handed tactics on humanity. In particular, she opposed encouraging the spread of the bubonic plague through Europe as a way to kill off feudalism. While she discovered the Watchers by accident, she deliberately kept that information to herself and they remained hidden from view for another eight centuries.

In retrospect, her secrecy almost resulted in the death of Lucifer and humanity. Watcher influence and records presented to the $Earth_0$ government of 2163CE seriously impaired Lucifer's evacuation of people and material to $Mars_0$ immediately preceding the Red Death that wiped out 99% of Earth's population. The world government (Pax Humana) had only the Watcher side of the story. While the Watchers predictions and assumptions were actually wrong, they had enough evidence to back claims that *their* Earth was being abandoned, and Lucifer's kidnap of hundreds of $Earth_0$'s top minds did nothing to ease the situation.

In the ensuing melee, some needed equipment was lost, Mistral was captured, Lucifer was badly injured by a sniper, and Zhanken was separated from his non-TimeLord lover. He was not able to determine her location until long after she had contracted the Red Death, and was then unable to retrieve her because of synchronization problems with the captured Mistral. In the ensuing centuries, he has never given up on finding a way to save her.

The Watchers are more secretive than the Shapers, and do not try to influence scientific development or public policy. On any given timeline, there only may be a few dozen Watchers, with a few dozen more support people who know something of what is going on, and a large base of people who are potential recruits and information gatherers. The best-known aspect of potential recruits would be Freemasonry, with groups like the Fortean Society, MUFON and other investigators of the strange and bizarre contributing to the secret Watcher database.

Watchers *never* occupy positions of great authority, and this is by choice. They know human frailties, and try to avoid the temptation to abuse any power they gain through understanding the hidden manipulation of human events. If by some chance a member does come into a position of influence, they are forever excluded from the activities of the inner circle. A very few Shapers have also become Watchers after having their doubts about Lucifer, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

On timelines that have been abandoned by Lucifer, the Watchers tend to disintegrate faster than the Shapers. If they endure, it will be as small cults who have probably lost their original vision, and now follow prophecies of doom, gloom and the foretold coming of powerful strangers. They may also continue to exist as a counterpoint to active Shaper splinter groups, factionalism and competition that will have religious overtones. This will often result in the extinction of the Watchers by more powerful Shaper groups.

Watchers of note throughout Earth history

Socrates (philosopher), 470-399BCE
Jean Buridan (mathematician), 1300-1358CE
Benjamin Franklin (diplomat, scientist), 1706-1790CE
Thomas Jefferson (scientist, politician), 1743-1826CE

The Domino Society

The woman who would become Domino and the "founder" of the society, was literally bred for the role, though her mother, would deny that part.

Domino is descended from Kirk, the TimeLord who was one of the few who were with the Mars colony from the beginning and who died in the first battle with the Destroyer. Like many male Timelords, Kirk fathered many children, of which Domino's great grandmother was one of the last. Paying more attention to "the Work" than his kids, as was typical with most male Timelords, the child was raised by her mother; who like Domino herself later, was raised on stories and ideals of the Work.

It was this near fanatical belief in the Work that had Domino's mother join the Guardians. Being a descendant of Kirk and therefore Lucifer, she figured she would be able to become a Timelord. Being weak in the TimeLord genes, the genetic dice crapped out on her and she did not have enough of the genetic code for a Matrix to recognize her. Undaunted, she threw herself into the Work in what ever way was needed. As was customary, she had several of her eggs frozen to be fertilized later. It was shortly after the death of Lucifer that Domino's mother, researching potential donors for a father stumbled across one of the samples of Lucifer's seed. Lucifer had at several times in the past donated to the central Martian sperm bank, using Azazelo's breaking and entering skills to do so anonymously, and Zhanken's computer skills to doctor the records afterwards. Domino's mother stumbled across a minor irregularity in the sperm bank's records, followed it on a hunch using her own computer skills, and eventually figured out what had happened. She covered up the irregularity, doctored the records some more, and used the facility to conceive a child of Lucifer without the Guardians' knowledge.

Domino was thus conceived from Lucifer's seed and Kirk's thinning blood line, giving her a better genetic chance of using a Matrix than even the first generation TimeLords. And she grew up with a mother who spoon fed her on the ideal of the Work. Her schooling included sociology, mob psychology, engineering, historical dynamics and anything that would help with the Work.

It was during her time in college that Domino got her name. She presented her Masters thesis on "Application of the domino theory within confines of a dynamic historical structure." Afterward the name Domino stuck with her as both handle and nickname.

Domino went into the Guardians with her mind set on making the universe a better place. However, by this time the Guardians had become insular and almost a secret police, with strong law enforcement powers and more or less unlimited authority in temporal terms. Being one of the few Guardians who could use a Matrix, her ideas of the Work and uplifting other timelines were frowned upon but initially tolerated. The bureaucracy of any large organization slows things down to a crawl. While she was patient in her attempts to alter timelines, approval to do so was either slow or totally bogged down in red tape.

It wasn't until a clone of Lucifer's brain was developed that could allow the Guardians the use of a Matrix without being shackled to a Timelord that Domino was reassigned to a desk job, basically removing her permanently from the Guardians.

Though now behind a desk, she still had access to most of the Guardians files, databases, papers and theories, and for all intents and purposes files on every known TimeLord. It was enough to keep a researcher happy for years. She dove in and devoured the information. It was after hacking into secured files and finding out that several TimeLords had either been incarcerated, killed or were being actively hunted that she decided to make her break with the Guardians.

Roughly at the same time, her activities came to the attention of the first Martian SI (synthetic intelligence), which for its own reasons was investigating on the same topic. This synthetic intelligence was a copy of a real person's mind, and was an escaped fugitive from the Guardians internal computer network. It was mainly just trying to not be eradicated bit by bit from the Martian global network. It was also aware of a plot by a few of the original TimeLords (forcibly "retired" on Mars) to make a break for it. Breaking into Domino's secure computer just to get her attention, it gave Domino quite a shock, and then some very useful advice. Although Domino was not involved in the subsequent nuclear explosion that destroyed the vault housing the Matrixes, she did manage to track the suborbital trajectory of several of them in the ensuing chaos, picked them up and shortly thereafter fled into time.

Domino realized that creating an organization to uplift technology and/or create new timelines was doomed to failure since she had seen the Guardians stamp out anything with a base and an agenda. The plan of action she decided on was more of a "dis-organization", a loose society of like-minded people who would use the Matrices as they saw fit and create more, and hopefully advanced, divergent timelines. First recruiting from Zhanken's children, she has expanded the society to any potential TimeLord she deems worthwhile.

Domino seems to have a talent for finding "lost" matrixies, where the owner has died and it just sitting around somewhere. She also had occasionally decided that someone who has one is "not worthy" and will simply "reassign" it to a new owner if the current one doesn't meet her standards. Still, those people she takes a Matrix from still have Lucifer's genes, so she will not just simply discard them. More than likely they will be taken to someplace and sometime safe where they can either be turned to her line of thinking, or make a whole new set of TimeLords; i.e. their kids.

The Domino Society has no fixed rules or set meeting places. Their main agenda is the technological uplift of humanity so that it can survive and destroy the Machine Invasion on as many timelines as possible. Occasionally like-minded members can be found at lectures on temporal physics or history, bars and taverns with names like "Tempus Fugit" or "The Watch Stopped" and often at science fiction conventions.

With no set base of operations, Society members have been known to cache equipment that can make it through jumps without frying. Diesel automobiles, vacuum tube electronics, tools and dies for creating black powder cartridges and primers, not to mention books and raw materials that they might need in time of crisis. One such cache unearthed by the Guardians held a steam powered tank designed and made in an Late Atomic Era time line with light, tough armor and a high power steam cannon in the turret; others had tunneling equipment and such to cut long corridors into mountains for people to survive the invasion.

Domino Society members are a constant pain in the posterior of the Guardians and any temporal organization that tries to control 'their' timeline. Known activities are causing or preventing the assassination of world leaders, preventing the sinking of the Titanic (only to sink it again later), and transporting high technology items and ideas to earlier periods in time.

The worst enemy of the Society is its own members. Arguments have turned into long term feuds, one member may decide to throw a monkey wrench into another's grand experiment just because, another may take someone else's idea and run with it. Factions form and dissolve and reform on different lines; friends turn on each other over a matter of opinion, teachers become students to their pupils, and the worst of enemies become lovers. In this floating temporal anarchy, nothing is constant other than change itself.

Domino's search program - Domino had access to most of the Guardians files, databases, theories. And, for all intents and purposes, life history files on every known Timelord, their legitimate children, bastards, suspected offspring and all known information on them as well. Making backups of these, she was able to recover them later and print several copies of such, to be placed in hiding places for safekeeping.

Printed out in standard sized type, the entire list could fill a small library. However, since only three copies of the full text are known to exist, most copies that might be found are fragmentary, and usually for the current era and timeline they are found in. Depending on population density and local tech era you might find anywhere from one to five volumes with all known info at the time it was printed or copied.

Figure that each entry has as much detailed information as can be reasonably gathered from that tech era. A typical example would be: date of birth, parentage, presumed genetic strength on key linkages, recorded date, place and circumstances of death if known, along with any economic, biographical and psychological information that person. Of course, some records might be no more than name, date born, city lived in and date died. It depends on what record keeping was like for that time and how much investigation the Guardians had done before Domino grabbed a backup copy and left.

Example - The hardcopy of the database for the 1830's Earth0 would be about three volumes with about fifty of Lucifer's offspring and partial descendants listed per book.

Example - The scroll in the library of Alexandria (before it burned) contained about hundred of Lucifer's suspected descendants, but only has their name, date of birth and city they were born in.

⚠ It is unknown if Lucifer or the original TimeLords were able to take any advantage of this information archived from the future/a future.

Eugenics program - One of the problems for Domino is so few Timelords willing to help her with her work. Undaunted, Domino has tracked Lucifer's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and while not all of them can use a Matrix, she suspected that those who couldn't might be able to produce children who could; with the right social nudging. While breeding brother to sister was abhorrent even to her, cousins, second cousins, even genetically screened half siblings, were nudged, maneuvered and occasionally kidnapped to help produce viable Matrix users.

One such place is a whorehouse in an 1830's New Orleans, staffed by temporally displaced descendants of Lucifer. Domino has a tendency to check in every so often to check on any children born, steer certain men toward there who have the TimeLord genes, even offer aid to stranded TimeLords who have stumbled across it.

Domino keeps tabs on these offspring, checking and test to see if they have the gift, mapping their DNA vs. other TimeLords and, unfortunately, culling those who have too great a genetic load.

Those who have the gift are steered in the right direction, given education, tutoring, scholarships and what not. Until they reach an age when they are likely to survive the training that will harden them into what she needs. At this point, these people get a rude surprise... Before the Guardians raided it, several hopefuls of her eugenics program managed to make it through her "Ninja boot camp", a enclave of martial artists and such in an Earth2 China.

Domino's methods - The Guardians are trying to create more viable timelines that can withstand the machine invasion. However, in the four centuries years after their creation they have not suceeded; but not for lack of trying.

It took Lucifer thousands of years of as one TimeLord put it,"herding sheep with bulldozers", to get the changes he needed. They Guardians are careful not to cause another 'Catastrophe', often times doing no more than a gentle prod or word in the right ear.

The attitude of the Domino Society is more along the lines of; "put things in a pressure cooker and then work at keeping it from blowing up". This is *way* more involved that your average TimeLord wants to be, however Domino herself has been looking for potential TimeLords to recruit that have the ability to be the power behind the throne, or more than one throne. Tactics include:

Kidnapping: Remove a person from their rightful place in time and put them somewhere else. This is a popular ploy among Society members. Swapping key figures with either more pliable alternates from a different timeline or replacing them all together with near-perfect impostors.

Example - Taking a 22nd century actor who looks the part of a 19th Century despot, train him in his role, change his face through high tech plastic surgery, then swap him for the said despot and have him change the flow of events and hopefully split off a viable time line. And of course, provide the "incentive" for said actor to do this...

Time Trading: This is a great way to build up money fast. Take something that is manufactured for cheap up-time then take it back in time and trade it for something far more valuable then. This can only be done to a certain extent, or it will destablize the economy, but it is usually good for one killing per commodity or good traded in this way. As Mouse said, "TimeLords have no excuse for being poor".

Example - Taking Aluminum back to 19th century Europe and trading it for pure gold.

Tomb robbing is the reverse of this, where you take something valuable from the past and use it to finance operations in the present. Most of the world's famous caches of gold and treasure were plundered by Lucifer and the first gen TimeLords.

Colony Starting: This is a little more involved and a lot more tricky. It involves finding people who will (hopefully) not be missed. Death camp prisoners, ocean liner disaster victims, plague victims etc. Then move them *en masse* to a point back in time and/or off planet, to a place where they can start over and hopefully start building a society again.

The biggest problem is *not* getting the people. It is making sure they are well enough supplied that they don't revert to total barbarism and make the whole project a moot point.

Warmongering - One of the oldest and best methods for getting big results, both good and bad. WWII has been called forty years of technical advancement in the space of six years. That is about the best example of the good effects of a war. The Free-For-All-War of 2089CE is perhaps the worst. Both had major advancements in a short amount of time. the latter though got out of hand and simply ruined all chances of surviving the Machine Invasion.

Successful Warmongers have to keep the pressure on without having everything boil over and all gains from their efforts lost.

Boltholes - One of the few constants among members of the Domino society are boltholes and supply dumps. Being a floating anarchy with little to no support, members who survive the "newbie" phase soon learn to stockpile food, arms and other equipment in both strategic and out of the way locations.

What can be found in boltholes? Food and water, a variety of Jump-stable chemicals, books, maps and references of various types, vehicles, vehicle wreckage, vehicle parts, vehicle fuel of varying types and quality, saddles & tack, blacksmithing equipment, machine tools of various types, electricity generating equipment of some kind, printing presses and paper, firearms and reloading equipment, wardrobes appropriate for the timeline, binoculars or telescopes, medical supplies, toiletries, money in various forms, trade goods, and a variety of alcoholic beverages.

In short, the kind of stuff you would find after dozens of Jumps, where the stuff you weren't going to be using was dropped off, and exchanged for stuff you were going to need. Items may or may not have temporal damage. Modern weapons might not have ammunition, modern vehicles might be in need of serious repair, and so on.

Boltholes can be anything from hollowed out caves in Antarctica to climate-controled security vaults run by a firm in Arizona.

Safe houses - Depending on the era, and who set the safe house up, safe houses can be anything from apartments on extra-long leases to posh country estates with servants who have kept the house up and running for generations. Almost all have have cutting edge security for the era, and if possible, anything that can be pulled through a time portal without damage.

Food, equipment, sundries and local tech goods as well as the obligatory gun safe are the usual accoutrements.

Almost all of these are set up for the extra long haul. Anything after the advent of modern banking, (about 1700CE or Basic Era), seems to be preferred as they can be set up and left pretty much on their own with little to no staff.

What the Domino Society is doing is simply a large scale improvement on things that Zhanken originally thought of. What he did was never necessary on a large scale for the Work (it wouldn't have speeded it along), so it was never "institutionalized" by the other TimeLords.

For some reason late 17th century/early 18th Century England in any number of timelines seems to be popular. Probably because of the banking system and the ability to buy titles and land with large amounts of money.

Boot camps - So far Domino herself seems to be the only one who has set up bootcamps for "toughening up" any TimeLord recruits she finds. All of them are on $Earth_1$ through $Earth_3$, in generally low tech areas, making the "recuits" tougher and more mentally flexable. All of these enclaves are remote and self-sufficient with skilled teachers in everything from martial arts to historical dymanics to diesel mechanics.

After the raid by the Guardians on her "Ninja boot camp", which had been in operation for about a century, she will only set up another camp after she has sufficent raw matierial to train into new TimeLords. The Enclave will be only about ten to fifteen years old before the first wave of recuits come in. She expects that any Enclave now has a life of abiout fifty years, since the Guardians have caught on to her methods.

Post-Machine Invasion boltholes - For the most part, any bolthole or supply dump that made it through the initial onslaught of the Machine Invasion is well undeground, with only a handful of people manning them if any at all. All surface activity is picked up by orbital watchers and can and will be snuffed out mercilessly. With the patience that only a machine could have, caretaker AI's are still scanning for radio signals, emissions from fusion reactors and what not centuries after humanity is extinct. This scanning will detect as artificial the effects of an incoming or outgoing temporal Jump.

There is, however, a short period of a few years, where the amount of random energy emissions and just general debris in the atmosphere mask any comings and goings on the surface. The watchers then are so blind that only the most obvious of artificial activity is detected, meaning that undetected Jumping in and out is possible (though not risk-free).

Safehouses, staging areas and supply dumps set up here are semi-permanent at best. With limited resourses and the constant threat of the Orbital watchers, Guardians, not to mention rival Domino members, these bases are usually set up, used for a short while, and then abandoned. If that seems like a waste, remember any TimeLord worth their salt can set it up so they have money to burn.

The different timelines have different quality boltholes in the post-Machine Invasion era.

Earth$_{null}$: There are no suspected boltholes on this Earth, due to the lack of local technology to help make it. Anyone wanting to do so would have to either spend a century doing so with hand labor, then stock it themselves, or import the labor and technology to make it. So far no evidence of this has been found. There are plenty of natural caves to hide in for short-term refuge (if you know where to find them), but there is zero local infrastructure, so *everything* else has to be imported.

Earth$_0$: Any TimeLord foolish enough to set up a bolthole on this Earth usually is caught any time past the time of the signing of the PAX accord. You have to be extremely lucky *and* clever to pull something off.

Earth$_1$: So far none found, nor suspected when the tech maxed out at Early Industrial Era. Any decent tech or areas for bolt holes were either occupied or compromised by mining operations/ salvage attempts. Caves are available, as on Earth$_0$, but little more.

Earth$_2$: Custom made Jumpable equipment (very rugged). With an Industrial Era base to work from, most post-Machine boltholes here are underground complexes with rugged reliable equipment. A lot of custom made transportable equipment can be gotten just before the Machines hit Earth, so this is a favorite place by Domino members to buy before, stash, then reteive later.

Earth$_3$: This is another favorite staging area from many Domino members. With the late Atomic Era tech and the initial knowledge that the Machine Invasion was coming, many goverment boltholes and shelters were set up. However, most of them were obliterated when their energy signature was discovered. So far only those who went for geothermal energy, fission reactors and extremely well-shielded fusion have escaped notice. Some that survived have been quite willing to relocate their people to other timelines rather than face slow, sure extinction on this one.

Safe houses here are chocked full of machine shops, hydroponics and goods both transportable and non-transportable, some even having plans and designs for higher tech equipment brought in from other timelines.

Rumors persist in both the Guardians and the Dominos of a large complex that is planning a counterattack on the Machines. So far they are merely rumors, but they still persist.

Earth$_4$: Mostly Food and transportable “green” tech items. Do to the emotional backlash in the decades before the invasion, almost no goverment shelters were built. Getting one made using local labor is more difficult due to a general attitude against that sort of secretive, warlike behavior. Still the few that have been used by Domino members are extremely well made and have a very low energy profile due to local ideas on low impact “green” technology.

Earth$_5$: Customized Industrial Era equipment. and damn good hazmat supplies. Not much else unless it is brought in from other Earths. Since most TimeLords don't like to visit there except near the end of the timeline when things are finally getting better, it's a good place to shake pursuit for a while.

Most of the underground boltholes found here are unmanned safe houses. One in a Texas salt dome a kilometer underground proved to be weird mix of half bat cave, half fallout shelter. It has since been abandoned by the Domino member who set it up after the Guardians stumbled across it.

Elsewhere: There are no known boltholes on the Moon or Mars, due to a lack of infrastructure, hostile environment, and no electrical activity in the atmosphere to shield Jumps from detection.

Abandoned boltholes - It is impossible for anyone at the moment to send out a “temporal burglar alarm” if a bolthole is violated, so there is only a minimal chance that someone will arrive at one while you are there. If a bolthole has been abandoned due to Guardian interference or hostile TimeLord activity, there is a good chance it has been booby-trapped with the best local tech available. Depending on the people doing the booby-trapping, this could range from contact poisons to high explosives. *Just because no one is there does not mean it is safe...*

Vignette
Time: 2378CE
Location: Mars$_0$

The remains of the fleet Jumped into the Sol system and limped into Mars orbit. The entire planet knew of their return, and also that of the six ships that left, only four had come back. One was a virtual wreck with an alarming *dent* in one side, and the rest were glowing with dangerous levels of heat and radiation. This eventuality had been prepared for, and a few spare Designer shields and degenerate matter boarding tubes allowed the weary and exhausted TimeLords to debark in relative safety. The surviving ships were parked in far orbit until they could be safely approached again, their computers downloaded and remaining fuel ejected for safe storage elsewhere.

Uma was in a state of shock. The automated medical systems in her suit had kept her alive, but she had still suffered severe trauma and heavy doses of radiation. Even with the best care available she would still be a long time recovering. She drifted in and out of consciousness for three days, two of which she passed in a fog of pain and painkillers as her suit did its best to keep her alive. Even at the hospital she was not able to string words into a coherent sentence until five days after what the news called The Battle. In addition to third-degree burns, blood loss, broken legs, seared lungs and numerous bits of shrapnel, she had taken a heavy gamma dose. Strider took personal charge of the recovery effort. He and Zhanken took turns Jumping her through tiny intervals of time to give her maximum benefit from the Matrix's biological reset systems. This countered most of the gamma dose and secondary injury effects, but the doctors that accompanied them still did their tests with worried looks.

More destructive energies were released that day than at any other time in human history. The Destroyer probably would have appreciated it more if it had not all been directed at him. Lucifer told us what the Destroyer was capable of, but sometimes the mind refuses to create an accurate picture until faced with the facts first-hand. In retrospect we were lucky. Until Weasel's ship exploded we had not done anything significant to the Destroyer. Not the gravity pulsers, the particle cannon, the antimatter projectors or even the Planck Plinker seemed to have an effect. I've reviewed the sensor logs. The ablation rate of her front armor was erratic on the millisecond timescale, but over several seconds of the final approach the average was clear enough. Weasel surely knew that they wouldn't make it. There was no other reason to get that close. The energy of the fuel going off completely vaporized their ship, but for some microseconds the hull held intact and funneled that energy back at the Destroyer like a giant cannon. How he survived that I'll never know, but it did hurt him enough for the rest of us to stand a chance. Someday I'd like to find Weasel and thank him, but right now it hurts too much to contemplate.

"Strider?"

"Hmm?" He looked up from the tablet he was writing on.
"What happened?" Uma looked at herself. A lot of bandages, a lot of pain. A pair of fibercasts immobilized both legs from mid-thigh down. Electrodes snaked under her hospital gown, and bruises around the tubes in her arm implied they had been there a while.

"Your ship took a pretty bad hit. A lot of radiation and collateral effects made it into the crew compartments." He clicked the tablet off and set it to one side. "It was a draw. He ran, but we were in no shape to follow. He outjumped us." Uma sighed. She reached weakly for a glass of water on the bedside table, fumbled, spilled it.

"Damn." Strider got up and got her another, placing it in her hand and helping it to her lips. It made her voice not quite as raspy. "How long have I been out?"

"Most of a week. It was touch and go for a while. Nothing vital was permanently damaged. You'll probably lose a lot of hair, but it will grow back eventually."

"Radiation?"
"Lots. You don't want to know."
"Casualties?"

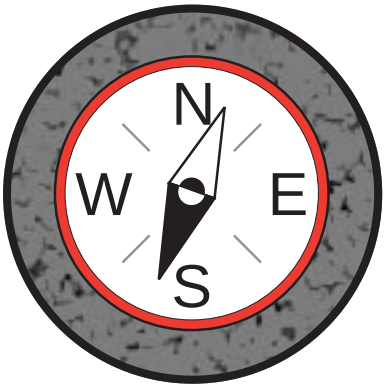
"Crystal and Xith never knew what hit them. Weasel and Mayhem too. The ships will take years to cool off, and more to repair." Strider paused, took the glass from Uma. "Kirk didn't make it. The same blast that almost killed you went through him first." Uma put her hands over her eyes and made a soft, anguished noise.

"Stupid, *stupid* boy. Why?"

"He saved your life. Maybe the rest of us too. The Destroyer is missing a hand and foot because of Kirk. I don't think he was trying to die. We just underestimated the Destroyer. Kirk used the only weapon you had. If he hadn't done what he did, neither of you would have made it." He gently laid a hand on her arm, unprepared for her reaction.

"Don't. Touch. Me." He pulled back as if burned. Her hands came down from her face. The marks of tears were still there, but they had stopped flowing, wouldn't flow again for a very long time. "The Work. The goddamned Work. No room for sentimentality in The God Damned Work." Though puffy and bruised, Uma's face took on a hardness Strider had only seen on two others. Lucifer and Azazelo. *The Work claims more lives, and another soul,* he thought.

"There's going to be a memorial service tomorrow. I'll see that the doctors can get you there if you want." She didn't answer.



Campaigns

"On a clear day, you can kill forever..."

ForceMaster

Basics

There are billions of humans and trillions of intelligent beings in the universe on countless different interwoven timelines. The fact that your characters "just happened" to gain possession of a Matrix may be more than just an accident. The Designers, while brilliant, probably did not foresee their own demise, and if there is another intelligent force behind the use and distribution of Matrices, it has yet to show itself to anyone. Certainly, however, the 1st generation TimeLords were (and are) intelligent and devious enough to make extremely long term plans involving these and other Designer technologies. The characters *may* be part of a deliberate plan, but only as unwitting pawns. Someone may have thought "I can arrange it so that this will be found at about 1902CE, and I can use this discovery to lure Faust to London. Then I can make him think that the people who find it are working for Zhanken, when in reality I have set the hapless fools up to go against their better judgement to 889CE, where Odin will probably be waiting. There, they can settle their old feud while I am off at 2160CE taking care of Phantom and Bast." While the characters may never know the full bit, they *do* have the Matrix, and can use it to gain experience, power and insight into the nature of history, and the role these travellers have played not only in the development of the world as we know it, but in the origin and preservation of humanity itself.

Lucifer had one goal during his vestly extended lifetime: *Revenge*. To do that he needed to create a human society advanced enough to use if not duplicate certain aspects of Designer technology, and powerful enough to survive a hostile robotic invasion whose timetable was both known and unalterable. He managed both, barely. One known human timeline extends past the machine invasion of 2263CE. The rest were not prepared enough, and on them, humanity became extinct. They did not help him achieve his goal, so Lucifer left them to their fate.

You do not have to. If all of history is a river, only *some* of its channels have been worn irrevocably into the rock. It is still possible that with a lot of work, some of the doomed timelines can develop themselves to a level where they can also have a bright future. These alternate timelines are no less real than the ones the characters originally came from, and what higher campaign goal can you think of than saving the world?

One thing often very difficult to understand in any *consistent* time travel game is that not only can *anything* happen, it has also *already* happened in *someone's* reference frame. Time travel almost has to include simultaneous alternate histories in order to make any sense. In **TimeLords**, since the Designers came near the end of time for all practical purposes, we can say that the universe has already ended before you even start the game. Everything that *can* happen *has* happened. From *someone's* point of view our sun has been burned out for eons and we have evolved into something grander or just gone quietly extinct. This really should not bother you from a role-playing standpoint anymore than this exact same potential bothers you in a superhero, fantasy or science-fiction role-playing game, or even your normal Ephemeral life. But lest it put you into a deterministic funk, think of it this way:

History is like a slow river moving through a broad river valley. The water (history) always ends up at the other end of the valley (the end of time), and has lots of smaller tributaries and side channels. Over the centuries, the course of the river changes, and at some point in its lifetime, the river has had its main channel over every single point in the valley at least once. At some point in time, the source of the river will dry up, and the last river channel it cut will be the final configuration. As time travellers, *you* shape the course of the river so that it flows in the way *you* think it should, so that the lives that make up history follow the path that *you* feel is best.

You are not castaways on the sea of time unless you choose to be. Strider said it best: "Does it matter in the end? It matters to *me*..." You have a *chance* to make a difference. *Use it*.

Starting the Primary Game

Probably the most interesting way to play **TimeLords** is to spring the Primary Game on a bunch of unsuspecting players. This is how the very first campaigns were started, and some of the best ones still going on began. The players show up for an evening of fun with a "new system", and you run through any one of the several game beginnings that take the players, what few possessions they drag along, and their immediate surroundings, flung randomly through time and space to unknown dimensions.

And so the characters initially activate a Matrix while they are totally unprepared for any adventuring. It is perhaps forced or tricked upon them by a TimeLord who is fleeing an opponent who will tend to shoot first and ask questions later. This keeps them on the move, whether they like it or not, as this opponent will be tracking down the character's Matrix, thinking it to be their enemy's. Or, the TimeLord could just have made this story up as a good excuse to keep the characters "hopping" for some *other* reason.

After the initial shock wears off, you generate characters using the Primary Game rules, which will take an hour or so, with another half hour for people to inventory possessions and figure out what they have an don't have ("the GM says we have the contents of the back half the cutlery drawer. Bring it out here and we'll see what's useful."), and then start to play in earnest.

Character stats and abilities may be slightly modified as people remember things they can do, or adjust skills to more accurately match their real world level, but overall, the game is afoot.

There is often an extraordinary difference between playing a character that represents you as opposed to any other "game" character. Unlike other games, if *this* character dies, making up a new one is never quite the same. You played a game with your own mortality and lost. As a result, *these* fictional characters have a lot more depth to them than any others ever could, first because you *know* how to role-play yourself.

For the most part, you *know* what you would do, how you would respond, what you would say, and you are equally sure that the other characters are also played with a certain accuracy. Second, this link between the real and game world generates a certain degree of caution. Outclassed characters do not fight heroically as their comrades are cut down, praying for lucky dice rolls to save the day. Instead, they run like Hell, find a safe place to lick their wounds and wonder how they can avoid getting shot/stabbed/beat up so badly in the future.

All too often, the only asset characters have in greater quantity than opponents is brainpower, and this is a little tougher to use than a rifle or sword. If the players are creative in finding ways around their limitations, you *know* that the characters can do so as well. Combined with the streamlined dice system in **CORPS**, you may often be able to go entire game sessions without having to open a rulebook or roll a die. You *know* what the characters can do, and so do the players. If you present an intellectual puzzle for them to solve to resolve an adventure, you don't have to worry about whether or not they can make a skill roll. Present the problem and let the *players* figure it out.

Likewise, since the combat potential of most starting Primary Game groups is very low, you need to take this into account when designing adventures. Sometimes conflict is unavoidable, but in the cases where a fight *will* happen, make sure to keep it reasonable. Characters *aren't* heros starting off. A few 17th century brigands with flintlock pistols and knives is a pretty intimidating sight to a group of people without a ranged weapon and with a knowledge of how little they would be able to do to treat a gunshot wound in that same 17th century.

As characters progress in experience and equipment, threats can slowly be ramped up to provide a challenge, remembering that *most* situations can be avoided without a fight, even if it involves retreat, compromise or even surrender. Even a total defeat is only a temporary setback for someone who has all the time in the world and a universe of possibilities to pick and choose from. As long as you can escape with yourself and your Matrix, a total recovery takes only hard work and time. You supply the one, and the Matrix supplies the other.

Along those lines, a good time travel campaign will have an overall theme, with several separate phases. So far, we've just described opportunities and pitfalls, but as a sampling of these phases...

If the characters survive, they will begin to acquire experience, and in between adventures that just involve surviving long enough to Jump elsewhen, they may actually get involved (gasp!) in some meddling with local affairs, like rescuing, slaying or righting maidens, dragons and wrongs, hopefully using the right verbs with each noun, or at least doing what they think is right to fix what they think is wrong. This should be at least several complete adventures, each of which may be several game sessions. The characters begin to get a feel for how to Jump, and maybe set themselves a long term goal with some chance of success (like getting home, perhaps). They will also go from being helpless sheep to marginally able to take care of themselves, especially if they pool talents. Each character is going to have a strength, even if isn't a game stat. Ignoring *any* resource you have is probably not a good idea.

Eventually, this meddling will set them afoul of some temporal policing agency or the other, which will end in the characters either abandoning a particular timestream entirely to avoid being caught, or joining this agency themselves. This entails a hiatus in which the characters can pick up any number of useful or required skills they may not have had their leisure to do earlier. And, it is professional training at *someone else's* expense. At least one adventure should involve intrigue within the organization. For instance, a training exercise could go sour. This training "down time" and is a good spot to *temporarily* end a campaign, for instance because of classes or vacations.

This training is paid for by a long stint adventuring as members of a Time Patrol, operating from a fixed base to go back or sideways to fix whatever seems to need it. This would be the next phase of the campaign.

The characters could be sent after temporal criminals, rogue TimeLords, expansionist time travelling governments, alien invaders, and of course the occasional incompetent amateurs who got hold of a Matrix and are messing things up everywhere they go... Again, this should be several complete adventures.

At some point, the characters will probably gain enough trust or rank to regain possession of their Matrix (if they lost it), and can do some independent adventuring. It is worth noting that *any* time travel organization, no matter how benevolent, is unlikely to *willingly* relinquish control of a Matrix. Characters *may* have to steal it to get it back, making them temporal outlaws. But this time they are starting fully skilled and equipped, and with potentially more dangerous foes than a pursuing Time Patrol.

These are *other* TimeLords, who may have their own plans, and see the characters as allies or enemies, warning them to not do certain things, or attempting to threaten or convince them to do something else. They will almost certainly run afoul of Faust at least once, probably more than once. If they cause him a setback, he will surely be back for revenge, and if they are outclassed, he may be back just to "play" with them. This runs as long as it works.

Meanwhile, plot threads from early in the campaign can be coming back to haunt the characters, or wrongs they were incapable of righting earlier are now within their grasp. Like the "good" Guardians, they may take it upon themselves to try and save humanity, which will require some extensive work on a particular timeline. This gives the GM a solid "historical" framework that the characters can work within, Jumping back and forth, making changes for good or ill, leading to some final confrontation with the machine invastion of 2380CE. This will take as long as required, or until the characters exhaust the possibilities of that timeline through inept meddling.

If they *win*, they have opened up a high-tech future without the Guardians, giving them the possibility to a) possibly Jump forward a *long* way, and/or b) use that high-technology timeline as the jumping point of a more conventional science fiction or "space opera" campaign. If they *lose*, they can always live with the failure, Jump elsewhen and try again.

At this point, you've done about everything a character could hope to do. They have gone from average people of no consequence, to figures who help shape the entire future of the human race. There isn't a much higher level of accomplishment than that. All good campaigns must eventually come to a close or become parodies of themselves, and this is as good a spot as any.

Figure out where and when your characters will settle down, and how they plan on spending the next few centuries. Add about 50AP and 100SP to represent the level of stats and skills your character will eventually level off at (about 25 years more general experience). It's time to retire the campaign and just get together and go over the high points. The GM tells everyone all the things they never figured out, players try and see what they might have done better, and everyone lives happily ever after. Of course, the players now have a lot of experience and a multiverse with a pregenerated background and cast of interesting characters (including their own), and can always start running their own campaign with *new* players, beginning the myth cycle anew.

Now, this campaign progression may not be for everyone, but it does illustrate one factor that is a *must* for a *good* **TimeLords** campaign. The multiverse is a mindbogglingly huge place, and when it comes down to it, the characters are just chunks of meat with delusions of immortality.

Without an overall campaign theme which has the characters as a *central* part, your games will degenerate into a series of disconnected encounters, puzzles and combats, where nothing the characters do ever makes a difference on the big scale. This is sort of like being gifted with super powers, and using them solely to rescue kittens from trees, ignoring the crimes and injustices that go on all around you.

The characters may not have super powers, but they *do* have the ability to go anywhere, anywhen, make changes and see (and be responsible for) the consequences. The campaign should reflect this power and responsibility, and their challenges should match the importance and risks of using this power.

Starting the Secondary Game

This is more straightforward. Players know the basic background, either the Guardians or some homespun time travel organization, and it is assumed the characters are professionally trained and know what they are doing. The overtones of the Guardians are more of a law enforcement and "help humanity" type, but this does not prevent organizations with a grander scale, like good vs. evil, law vs. chaos, communists vs. oligarchists and so forth. With each side's home turf presumably protected by the inability to move advanced technology across timelines, and a similar inability to arm or equip archaic allies, the manipulation of events can only be implemented with the resources on hand in any given timeline. In the distant past, swords and armor. Later, guns. Still later, cameras and eavesdropping equipment. The social and technological background for an adventure is whatever you want it to be. If you can't make enjoyable adventures from that, you should hand the GM's job to someone else... Characters need to be able to manipulate people and events from any timeline, and do so without compromising the ethics their side claims to uphold. Again, before you start gamemastering for the first session, you should get a long-term theme in mind, something to steer the campaign by, movers and shakers on both sides, their goals and the consequences. This could involve many of the elements listed for the Primary Game.

Secondary game characters are more traditional characters. There is less emotional attachment, more realization that there will be dangerous combats, and the relative ease of introducing new characters if the old ones are lost in action. But this doesn't mean they are throwaways. Players get attached to characters. Make sure everyone is aware what kind of "fates" are temporary, and which ones are forever...

Last, players should have some feel for the elite nature of the force they work for, and the *espirit de corps* should be a constant background item in every adventure. This could be as simple as Patrol policy: "We never abandon our own." The GM should make sure that all the basic information the *characters* need is at the disposal of the *players*. Remember that with something as important as time travel, the character's superiors are going to make sure the characters have everything needed to improve their chance of success.

In a nutshell

Here are a couple campaign "short forms" to give you ideas for your own particular multiversal saga:

Primary Game

1. Characters start off as Primary Game characters, and adventure until they are good enough to start causing trouble.
2. Character's actions cause them to be noticed by a Time Patrol, which then tracks them down and "recruits" them.
3. Characters get training from the Patrol, and work as agents until they are truly professional at working together, planning and each has found a niche at which they excel.
4. Characters get an opportunity to "retire" from the Patrol, and gain/regain control of a Matrix or other dimensional travel technology.
5. Characters choose when, where and what circumstances they wish to adventure in, possibly wreaking major havoc on the space-time continuum, having numerous benign and hostile encounters with other TimeLords and time travellers.
6. Characters engage in a long-drawn out and possibly fatal adventure with an extremely important outcome, which requires heroism and sacrifice to win.
7. Survivors retire, make plans and their players write out a short future history of what their characters plan to do for the next few centuries.

Secondary Game

1. Characters start off as Secondary Game characters. They adventure on structured missions created by the GM, and learn about the nature of time and space, as well as the internal workings of their own organization.
2. Characters stumble across some aspect of Designer technology and/or a Matrix, which may or may not be known to their organization. This fouls up their return home, and they are thrust into a number of adventures with only the equipment they entered the previous assignment with.
3. Characters finally get back to their Patrol, and hopefully retain control of their Matrix, possibly independent of their desire to do so.
4. More challenging adventures ensue, some of which require use of this Designer technology to solve, which may prove more and more difficult to explain back at home base.
5. Meanwhile, a slow insidious threat works to destroy their Patrol, whether forces from without or corruption from within. Characters must either fight it and win, or flee, possibly pursued by their former comrades, branded as renegades or traitors.
6. Using their Matrix, characters stay ahead of pursuit and work either for justice or revenge, and encounter the TimeLord community, some of whom may be helpful, and others of which may have been behind their current problems.
7. Characters engage in a dangerous enterprise to regain the usurped control of their own timeline, its history and their loved ones. If successful, they end up in charge of a reborn Patrol, and retire from field work (except for special occasions). If the campaign continues, players make up new characters for the new Patrol, which in turn must face new challenges.

Playing the original TimeLords

Some of you may want to try a campaign where the characters take on the roles of Lucifer's original companions. This isn't that great an idea for a number of reasons.

First, what has happened is *already* the background of the game. The script has been written, you know the ending, it's just a question of how you get there.

Second, and probably more important, the first generation TimeLords were loners, recruited centuries apart, and didn't interact with each other very much. Not a good combination if you have four players, each one effectively having a different adventure. In terms of the overall plot, they did have quite a number of adventures, but they also had the author on their side to see that they survived...

If you *really* want to have a campaign background that includes the original plot and the original TimeLords, the way to do it is have the characters be a cell of Shapers (see p.76). These are non-TimeLords who know something of what is going on and why history needs to be steered in a particular direction. This can involve occasional time travel forays under TimeLord guidance, intrigue, and conflicts with later generation TimeLords or Watchers. The campaign really becomes like any other one set in a particular mileu or genre, but with the movers and shakers behind the scenes being TimeLords or those who know of them. All the outside trappings and technology of the campaign are about the same, except characters may have slightly more advanced items or knowledge. For instance, it could be a Musketeer-era campaign, where the characters need to protect the King and travel on unusual errands to distant places. Or a modern espionage campaign, where information gathering can be crucial to humanity's future. Or a Knights of the Round Table campagin, where the seemingly immortal Merlin is a century-hopping TimeLord trying to stablize a particular nation's social system to prepare it for trying times to come.

Such a campaign could also turn into a Secondary Game campaign. When whatever work the TimeLord wanted was done, the Shapers would be on their own. There is nothing to say that they couldn't be recruited by a Time Patrol somewhere down the line, their unique talents and perspectives used to handle other temporal missions.

Campaign tools and tips

There are a few other tips and hints a **TimeLords** GM is going to need to know.

Experience with the Matrix

If a Jump is made as part of an adventure, the character controlling the Matrix gets 1SP which must be put towards use of a Matrix. This can be bought as the Primary skill “Matrix use”, the Secondary skill for that particular Matrix or possibly some esoteric aspect of Matrix use. If the characters accurately specified at least two of the three parameters (when, where, which), the controller gets +1SP, and if the skill roll is actually made, the controller gets another +1SP. If the controller gets a total of 2SP or more, anyone else in the loop also gets 1SP. For all characters in the Primary game, the first 2SP must go towards Familiarity with the Matrix.

The table below can give you a guide as to how long it will take a group of characters to reach a given level of proficiency with the Matrix, assuming a WIL Aptitude of 2.

	Gains per adventure		
Skill desired	**1SP**	**2SP**	**3SP**
Fam.	2 adv.	1 adv.	1 adv.
3	5 adv.	3 adv.	2 adv.
4	12 adv.	6 adv.	4 adv.
5	21 adv.	11 adv.	7 adv.
6	32 adv.	16 adv.	11 adv.
7	45 adv.	23 adv.	15 adv.

Cross referencing the SP gained towards the Matrix per adventure with the skill level desired gives you the number of adventures it will take to reach that skill level.

Example - If the character controlling the Matrix stays the same for the first 6 adventures, and they average 2SP per adventure towards the skill, then at the end of this time they will have enough points for a Primary skill of 4, and all the other people involved in the loop will have a skill of 3.

Since for a well-described, one-leg Jump you need a controller with a Skill of 6 and 3 others in the loop with skills of 3 or better, you can make fairly reliable estimates on how long your campaign will run before characters are able to reliably choose where and when they want to go. When this happens, you need to make allowances and start asking the players in advance where they want to go, roll for their Jump at the end of the adventure, and if successful, work their correct Jump into a plot and adventure. If they fail, then you can figure out where they end up and work an adventure around that.

Random Worlds

Since characters in **TimeLords** can literally leave entire worlds behind on a moment's notice, many adventures (especially early on) will be on “disposable” settings, a world where they arrive, have an adventure or two, and then leave. To help the GM in creating the background for such an outline world, the following tables are provided. This is *not* a solar system or stellar generation table. *Don't* use these tables if you are restricting the campaign to the possibilities of $Earth_{null}$ through $Earth_5$. These are all based on current Earth geography, with already-described historical differences.

For **TimeLords**, if you arrive there, it is capable of supporting human life. These tables just give the details of that world. You can use it to flesh out an otherwise dry planetary description from other games, if desired. Just roll 1d10 on each table. If there are results that affect other tables, write them down and apply them to the appropriate roll. If multiple tables modify a third table, the results *are* cumulative.

By the time you get to the end of these tables, you will have a complete world, with enough background and detail for you to find any number of quick adventure possibilities. If you are doing a strictly historical campaign, these may not be as useful, but if you want to generate some really odd alternate historical backgrounds and cultures, these tables will certainly do the trick. However, they only provide the barest outlines, which *you* will need to flesh out for a full adventure.

⚠ Note that the features generated by these tables will have both local and global effects. For instance, if a terrain comes out mountainous, you an assume the characters landed in a mountainous area.

Table 1
This is a basic roll to determine the age of the planet. Young planets are likely to be more active, with lots of vulcanism and mountain building, while older ones will be more stable. Also, if intelligent life has evolved, it is more likely that the older the planet, the older the culture, with correspondingly higher levels of population and technology.

Table 2
This roll will have an effect on how well the characters can get around. For instance, characters of normal Strength will be very strong compared to the average on a low gravity planet, while on a 1.5g world they will be hard pressed to simply walk around. For purposes of atmospheric density, apply the normal **CORPS** rules for stamina purposes. This is just a guideline. If you need a low-g, high-pressure environment to support large flying creatures (say dragons, for instance), go ahead and do it, or make the atmospheric pressure another random roll on this table.

Table 3
The age of the planet has an effect on the dominant terrain type. Note that this is not the *only* type, just the *dominant* type. There will be virtually all types of terrain on any planet, but in different proportions. Take into account gravity effects on culture. For instance, a planet with a thin atmosphere and lots of tall mountains will make many areas difficult to visit (or escape from). The type of dominant terrain will be able to affect climate on both a local and global scale.

Table 4
In areas with few mountains to block air flow or cause turbulence, hellaciously high winds can build up and be sustained for long periods. In mountainous areas, winds can be high, but usually are not on such a continual basis.

Table 5
Usually, in flat areas the weather takes longer to build up, while in mountainous areas the constant turbulence can bring about major changes in a very short amount of time.

Table 6
The percentage of water on a planet will affect all aspects of its development, from evolution to weather to agriculture to technology. For instance, a relatively flat desert planet with high winds might have land-based sailing vessels plying trade routes between oasis cities. Or, a very watery planet might have very little agriculture, but lots of floating cities to alleviate land shortages.

Table 7
This is a rough approximation of the planet's axial tilt, to give temperature variation between the heat of summer and the cold of winter. The results are for equatorial/temperate/arctic regions. This might also apply to a planet with a slightly irregular orbit, where changes between summer and winter temperatures may make certain zones uninhabitable during part of the year, or as part of a larger orbit/climate cycle.

Table 8
This is a measure of how close the planet is to its primary, and how warm it gets during the peak of summer. Like most of the other environmental factors, this will have an effect on culture and technology. Certain areas may be inhabited year-round, but only be accessible during certain seasons because of climate (blocked by ice floes, for example). Again, results are for equatorial/temperate/arctic regions.

Table 9
Planets with less surface water will have less rainfall, and the rains will be on average, father apart. Note that this is an average figure. Obviously, there will be variation over the planet. Areas with slow weather changes are more likely to get more precipitation in one season than another, due to global circulation factors, which can lead in extreme cases to long seasons of dry alternating with long seasons of wet, like monsoons.

Table 1 Geologic activity		Tables 3,10
≤1	Inactive	-3
2	Below average	-2
3	Below average	-1
4	Average	+0
5	Average	+0
6	Average	+0
7	Average	+0
8	Above average	+1
9	Above average	+2
≥10	Very active	+3

Table 2 Gravity		Atmosphere
≤1	1.5g	Very thick
2	1.3g	Thick
3	1.0g	Normal
4	1.0g	Normal
5	1.0g	Normal
6	1.0g	Normal
7	1.0g	Normal
8	1.0g	Normal
9	.9g	Thin
≥10	.7g	Very thin

Table 3 Dominant terrain		Tables 4,5
≤1	Plains	+2
2	Plains, low hills	+1
3	No type dominant	+0
4	No type dominant	+0
5	No type dominant	+0
6	No type dominant	+0
7	No type dominant	+0
8	Mountainous	+0
9	Mountainous	-1
≥10	Very mountainous	-2

Table 4 Average winds	
≤1	0m/sec
2	1m/sec
3	2m/sec
4	3m/sec
5	3m/sec
6	3m/sec
7	4m/sec
8	6m/sec
9	10m/sec
≥10	15m/sec

Table 5 Weather changes	
≤1	20 minutes
2	2 hours
3	5 hours
4	10 hours
5	1 day
6	1 day
7	2 days
8	4 days
9	1 week
≥10	2 weeks

Table 6 Ocean percentage		Tables 7,9,11
≤1	<5% of surface	-4
2	10% of surface	-2
3	20% of surface	-1
4	30% of surface	+0
5	40% of surface	+0
6	50% of surface	+0
7	60% of surface	+0
8	70% of surface	+1
9	90% of surface	+2
≥10	>95% of surface	+4

Table 7 Seasonal temperature change	
≤1	V.large (30°C/50°C/70°C)
2	Large (20°C/45°C/60°C)
3	Normal (15°C/40°C/50°C)
4	Normal (15°C/40°C/50°C)
5	Normal (15°C/40°C/50°C)
6	Normal (15°C/40°C/50°C)
7	Normal (15°C/40°C/50°C)
8	Normal (15°C/40°C/50°C)
9	Low(10°C/25°C/30°C)
≥10	V.low (5°C/10°C/15°C)

Table 8 Average summer temperature	
≤1	10°C/5°C/-10°C
2	15°C/10°C/-5°C
3	20°C/15°C/0°C
4	20°C/15°C/0°C
5	25°C/20°C/5°C
6	25°C/20°C/5°C
7	30°C/25°C/10°C
8	30°C/25°C/10°C
9	35°C/30°C/15°C
≥10	40°C/30°C/20°C

Table 9 Average rainfall per year		Earth equivalent
≤1	≤20cm	North Africa
2	30cm	Southwest US
3	40cm	
4	50cm	S.Australia
5	60cm	
6	70cm	
7	80cm	Midwest US
8	100cm	
9	150cm	Scotland
≥10	≥200cm	Cent. S.America

Table 10 Tech Level		Tables 11,12,22
≤1	TL15+	-3
2	TL14-15	-2
3	TL12-13	-1
4	TL9-11	+0
5	TL7-8	+0
6	TL5-6	+0
7	TL4	+0
8	TL3	+1
9	TL2	+2
≥10	TL1	+3

Table 11 Pop. density		Example
≤1	≤1/km^2	Alaska
2	2/km^2	Wyoming
3	5/km^2	Idaho
4	10/km^2	Oregon
5	20/km^2	Mississippi
6	40/km^2	Georgia
7	70/km^2	California
8	100/km^2	Pennsylvania
9	200/km^2	Maryland
≥10	>300/km^2	Massachusetts

Table 12 Government	
≤1	Tribal
2	Small kingdoms
3	Small kingdoms
4	Small kingdoms
5	Countries
6	Countries
7	Countries
8	Continental
9	Continental
≥10	World

Table 13 Previous civilization?	
≤1	No, go to Table 15
2	No, go to Table 15
3	No, go to Table 15
4	No, go to Table 15
5	No, go to Table 15
6	No, go to Table 15
7	No, go to Table 15
8	No, go to Table 15
9	Yes, 2 Tech Levels higher
≥10	Yes, 4 Tech Levels higher

Table 14 Years since the fall		Table 15
≤1	<200	+0
2	400	+1
3	600	+2
4	800	+2
5	1000	+3
6	1500	+3
7	2000	+2
8	2500	+2
9	3000	+1
≥10	>5000	+0

Table 15 % of population “mutants”	
≤1	<1 in 1000
2	1 in 1000
3	1 in 1000
4	1 in 1000
5	1 in 1000
6	1 in 1000
7	1 in 1000
8	1 in 1000
9	1 in 200
≥10	≥1 in 100

Table 16 Government		Table 17
≤1	Dictatorship	-3
2	Monarchy	-1
3	Monarchy	+0
4	Oligarchy	-2
5	Republic	+1
6	Republic	+2
7	Confederacy	+0
8	Democracy	+2
9	Democracy	+3
≥10	Mercantile	+1

Table 17 Government policy and outlook	
≤1	Hostile to outsiders
2	Unfriendly to outsiders
3	Suspicious of outsiders
4	Suspicious of outsiders
5	Ambivalent or indifferent
6	Ambivalent or indifferent
7	Benevolent tolerance
8	Benevolent tolerance
9	Friendly
≥10	Very friendly

Table 18 Male/female distr.		Table 19
≤1	10/90	+2
2	20/80	+1
3	40/60	+1
4	50/50	+0
5	50/50	+0
6	50/50	+0
7	50/50	+0
8	60/40	-1
9	80/20	-1
≥10	90/10	-2

Table 19 Status of women	
≤1	No direct authority
2	Little direct authority
3	More or less equals
4	More or less equals
5	More or less equals
6	More or less equals
7	More or less equals
8	More or less equals
9	Mostly in authority
≥10	Totally in authority

Table 20 Constellations	
≤1	Normal
2	Normal
3	Normal
4	Skewed
5	Skewed
6	Skewed
7	Recognizable
8	Recognizable
9	Recognizable
≥10	Different

Table 21 Language root	
≤1	English
2	English
3	Germanic
4	French
5	Spanish
6	Oriental
7	Arabic
8	Slavic
9	Unrelated to any
≥10	GM choice

Table 22 Coinage	
≤1	Barter
2	Copper
3	Iron
4	Gold
5	Gold
6	Silver
7	Silver
8	Paper or abstract
9	Paper or abstract
≥10	Electronic

Table 23 Adventure background	
≤1	Cultural interaction/taboo violation
2	Flight from or pursuit of enemies
3	Characters “used” by local authorities
4	Hostile wilderness/survival
5	Exploration/discovery
6	Major historical event
7	Insidious threat/bizarre happenings
8	Mercy mission/damsel in distress
9	Advanced technological artifacts
≥10	Other time travellers

Table 24 Unusual cultural feature	
≤1	Restrictive dress/behavior codes
2	Unusual TL discrepancy
3	Offensive cultural practice
4	Ritualized behavior
5	Militaristic or pacifistic culture
6	Currently at war
7	Unusual flora or fauna
8	Rigid societal structure
9	Multiple intelligent species
≥10	Alternate versions of characters

Table 10
This is just a simple scale of technological development for the world. The level listed does not necessarily run on our timescale or method of chronology, but is to give the GM and players a “handle” to base their perceptions on. Only the most civilized areas will be at the higher of multiple levels listed. Less prosperous areas will probably be at the the lower levels, and any lower TL is possible in remote regions.

Table 11
This is a guide as to how crowded the human population is, on the average. Naturally, there will be areas more or less crowded than this amount (up to 500x in cities). The state figures are based on the 1990 census and lets you visualize how far you could move from a deserted area before running into someone else.

Table 12
The level of technology available will be a major factor in the scale of government possible. The Romans had the best road transport in the world, and possibly the best army, but they still had limits on how far their influence extended. Again, this will represent the majority of what characters may encounter, with varying numbers of the adjacent types usually making up the rest of the governments. For instance, a continuum with lots of small kingdoms might have a few country-level governments, and a large number of small tribal territories.

Table 13
Almost any civilization will have the potential to wipe itself out, or set itself back through its own devices. Even low tech cultures can develop transport like sail ships, and through ignorance spread plagues that decimate the population.

Table 14
If there was a disaster, this is a random roll to determine how long ago this major disaster happened with respect to when the characters appear there. This can be a backdrop or reason for many adventures. For instance, if a medieval society had century-old legends that characters interpreted as coming from a previous, modern society, and then found that certain secret orders or religious sects had “magic” knowledge or abilities, they might interpret this as enclaves of higher technology. Or, it might really be magic...

Table 15
With a radiation, biowar or other holocaust, there may be the possibility of lingering birth defects, or other long-term effects on the population. This might range from benign, like odd birthmarks, to debilitating, such as Alzheimer's disease. Or, they could be useful, like improved night vision, “magical” powers, etc. Basically, a certain fraction of the population will be set apart from the rest for reasons other than simple racial, class, caste or religious differences, visibly or secretly, and this might reflect on the characters (like if one of the characters is one of them).

Table 16
This is a guide to the type of major government in the most civilized areas. The type of government will affect the general outlook and suspiciousness of the population and power structure. This will naturally vary from country to country, and should be rerolled by the GM if inquiries are about areas other than the one the characters are in.

Table 17
Areas under iron-fisted rule, or with other oppressive problems (fundamentalism, racism, etc.) will lead to more suspicion and less openness among the people, while areas with wide freedoms and little conflict will generally be much more tolerant (but not always). Individuals can still “fall through the cracks”. This table could also refer to things like the crime rate. A repressive government might dampen crime, or cause an increase in it, depending on how desperate the population is.

Table 18
This is entirely random, and optional. It could reflect an evolutionary change in the species, a cultural preference that leads to infanticide of a given sex, or a temporary drop in the population due to war or unusual plagues. Some medieval areas were so badly stripped of men by wartime casualties that the Church temporarily allowed polygamy to help rebuild the population.

Table 19
Given the modifiers from the previous table, this can be interpreted two ways. Women in the majority may be able to control society through sheer numbers, or if men dominate society, women are much more expendable. If in the minority, women may rule through control of procreating the species, or they may be so valuable that a male-dominated society constantly fights over them, making them nothing more than property. Very valuable and often influential property, but property nonetheless.

⚠ If you find this table to be politically incorrect, tough. It's based on past and current human behavior and history, whether you like the results or not.

Table 20
The constellations we see now will slowly shift over time. In the distant past, they were different than they are today, and in the distant future will be different as well. This is over a scale of tens of thousands of years, and is useless for dating your position, but it will give clues to whether or not you are in a different continuum, or a temporally displaced alternate, or even on a different planet altogether. Note that characters from the Northern Hemisphere will usually not know Southern Hemisphere constellations, and vice versa, so you can usually throw curves in now and then just to confuse them.

Table 21

This table gives the language for the area the characters are at. Obviously, not all languages or language roots can be included on a 1d10 table, so the GM may have to splice other choices onto the list where appropriate, like Latin, Greek, etc. This item can make a big difference to the background. For instance, a medieval society that spoke Arabic might be because the Arabs were able to move further north than Spain before being pushed back by European forces. Or a post-holocaust world that spoke a lot of Russian would lead one to some obvious conclusions. Characters may or may not be able to understand the language (at GM option).

Table 22

Coinage is largely a function of Tech Level. More primitive societies will use precious metals, while more advanced ones will move to abstracts like paper money, and eventually to electronic credit. This is important, because the characters may or may not have money usable in that society, or may have difficulty exchanging one form to another.

Table 23

Just in case you haven't thought of a good adventure idea by this time, roll twice on this table to get some inspiration. The two results should work with each other. For instance, they could interfere with other time travelers at a major historical event, or they might be pursued by enemies through a hostile wilderness. Elaborations are:

Cultural interaction	The characters inadvertently run afoul of a local law or custom (for better or worse), and have to extricate themselves from the ensuing predicament.
Flight/pursuit	The characters have to chase someone, or are/will be chased by someone for some reason.
Used by locals	Some local authority figure is trying to blackmail or coerce the characters into performing a service for them.
Survival	The characters must struggle against adverse environmental conditions or natural hazards.
Exploration	Hidden secrets, scientific discoveries, or time travel related information is waiting to be discovered.
Historical	A major historical event is the backdrop for the adventure.
Insidious threat	Something unusual is threatening the characters, like background radiation, plague, or magic. Or, events that are totally out of place begin happening (talking animals, ghosts, etc.).
Mercy mission	The characters are prevailed upon to be the "good guys" in defense of a needy individual or group, with little reward except the satisfaction of doing it..
Advanced tech	Somewhere in the adventure are advanced (for that culture) items of technology not available to the general populace.
Other time travelers	Somewhere in the adventure there are other time travelers, castaways or people who can recognize the characters for what they are.

Table 24

This last table is to provide you with a little more in the way of background, ideas or inspiration. If you have trouble coming up with a quick adventure idea, roll once (or even twice) on this table to get an unusual feature of the world the characters have jumped into. Basic explanations follow:

Restrictions	There are cultural or legal restrictions on things that can be done, specific to a given race, class, caste or sex. For instance, women may have to wear dresses, immigrants might need travel passes, there is racial or religious discrimination, gun control, etc.
Tech Level discrepancy	The culture is highly advanced or backward in a particular aspect of the sciences. For instance, a medieval culture that learned how make batteries and electronic vacuum tube radios, or a modern culture that never developed atomic weapons or still held religious dogma as scientific fact.
Offensive practice	This would be a common or accepted practice that "modern", "enlightened" characters would find offensive, like cannibalism, incest, slavery, etc.
Ritualized behavior	The culture may be very formal with required forms of address, bowing to your "betters", lengthy titles or codes of behavior (like samurai), usually with social or legal penalties for failure to comply.
Violent/ peaceful	The culture may have very little experience with conflict and war, or may have it to an excessive degree, like lethal gladiatorial games, open vigilanteism, mandatory weapon ownership, etc.
Currently at war	The culture/nation/region is currently at war. The proximity of the war will be largely dependent on the TL of transport available, and terrain restrictions.
Flora/fauna	The planet has some extremely unusual plant or animal life, like mobile plants, fire-breathing reptiles, sea monsters, etc.
Rigid society	The society is highly stratified (castes, feudal, etc), and the characters will have trouble dealing with any class they are not perceived as part of (and impersonating a class is likely to be a serious offense).
Intelligent species	There is more than one intelligent species on the planet. They might both be native, or this might represent alien visitors or genetic engineering.
Alternate history	The world has an alternate history, complete with corresponding alternate versions of some or all of the characters. This is a good way to reintroduce characters who are killed, while still being able to play "yourself".

Other Worlds

Any other role-playing system you have played in or seen can be a setting for one or more **TimeLords** adventures, whether a space atlas, fantasy world or even an area as small as a city. As long as you can understand how to translate the cultural and technological backdrop, *any* cultural reference work is fertile ground for planning an adventure.

Culture Shock

Both for you and the people you run into. It isn't enough that you're bringing a lifetime of attitudes and behaviors into completely alien cultures, you're probably dressed funny as well. This is mainly the case for the Primary Game. Secondary Game characters have the benefit of advance knowledge of where they're going, and the organization behind them to give them the training and wardrobes required to fit in.

Until you get a *lot* of practice, you're not going to fit into most cultures, and you're just going to have to live with frequent wardrobe changes. Take a magazine from ten years ago and look at the hair styles and clothing. Then twenty years ago. Then fifty. Don't those people look silly? If you end up there looking like you do now, *you* will be the one getting stared at. Unless you dress like the lowest common denominator, odds are your clothing looks wierd. And all your slang is hopelessly inappropriate (or square, grody, whack, zero or whatever). At least profanity is fairly consistent. The most common terms involving blasphemy, parentage, copulation, bodily functions and combinations thereof go back several centuries. Not only that, they are often understandable in several languages. Some things you *can* change, some you will have to work around. The eyebrow ring will probably go after the first Jump. Those electrical arcs dancing around your forehead will see to that. We won't even mention the discomfort of *other* piercings. The GM is well-justified in tacking on extra Matrix Lag (page 22) for such items.

But what if the cultural norm is short hair and yours is long? Or vice versa? What if some members of the character group are treated as social inferiors? What if it is illegal to wear certain colors of clothing or speak certain languages? Or a crime to address someone in a manner not befitting their social station? All of the above actually have historical precedent, and that's just on $Earth_0$. Each of the other timelines will develop its own global and localized cultures. You'll have to be quick on your feet and able to spot subtle cultural cues to keep out of trouble.

These cultural differences can by themselves be the focus of an adventure, though it is not something you should do *too* often, just when it is severe enough or the characters mess up badly enough. It *is* something that the GM should use on a regular basis to give each place and time its own particular feel. As mentioned in the **CORPS** rulebook, fake accents, gestures and affectations by the GM can help convey more about a place and time than maps or plain words ever could.

Through experience, we've found a number of ways to minimize cultural clashes for the accidental time tourist.

1. **Be rich**. People with money can buy clothing to fit the latest style. And if you've got money, strange attitudes are “eccentric”, not “mental illness”. If you have to spend an extended time on a timeline, it's usually better to be rich than poor. Most experienced TimeLords have vast currency reserves, especially in timeline segments they frequent a lot. *“I hear they actually bathe twice a week. Barbaric, but you know how odd the rich get sometimes...”*
2. **Be poor**. If you are living on the fringes of society, society takes less notice of you. You could walk around in many centuries and timelines in a tunic, drawstring slacks and sandals. It would just be assumed you were: homeless, new age, hippie, peasant or beggar, depending on the time and the place. *“Hey! You can't sleep here. Go find an alley somewhere...”*
3. **Hide**. If the situation is bad enough, just hole up somewhere until you can leave. Not a lot of interesting adventure there, but there's always the chance you'll get spotted, and then the fun begins. *“I swear officer, every last one of 'em was wearing the forbidden blue. They must be rebels...”*
4. **Consolidate**. If you all share the same cultural problem, you can be or pretend to be part of a group, profession or belief, you may just be thought of as odd, but not criminally so. Just keep the pretense up as long as you need to. *“Yes, is traditional garb of our native Lithoslavia. We are, how you say? Political refugees. Grateful your people give us asylum, but no jobs here. For a meal, I tell you stories of our struggle for freedom.”*
5. **Intimidate**. In force-based cultures, you can be who you want and act how you like if you've got the force to back it up. No one is going to call you out unless they think they can take you on. *“Yeah, I got orange hair. What of it?”*

History as *we* know it

It is pretty pointless to try for a detailed treatment of Earth's history/histories in this book. People make lifetime careers out of small segments of history, and we could never provide enough detail to provide an acceptable treatment of *any* era.

However, since **TimeLords** is partially about changing history, we *can* make some generalizations about what might happen if certain key events were modified, ideas that might make interesting adventures, even if they are badly mutilated from a historical perspective.

To give you a guide on some actual historical (i.e. $Earth_0$) events you might want characters to drop in on, the next several pages list some high and low points in culture and history. This extends only to the present (more would be telling), but you can make up your own future, or insert hypothetical events from your favorite work of fiction. Events that separate the alternate Earth histories from the one *we* know will follow.

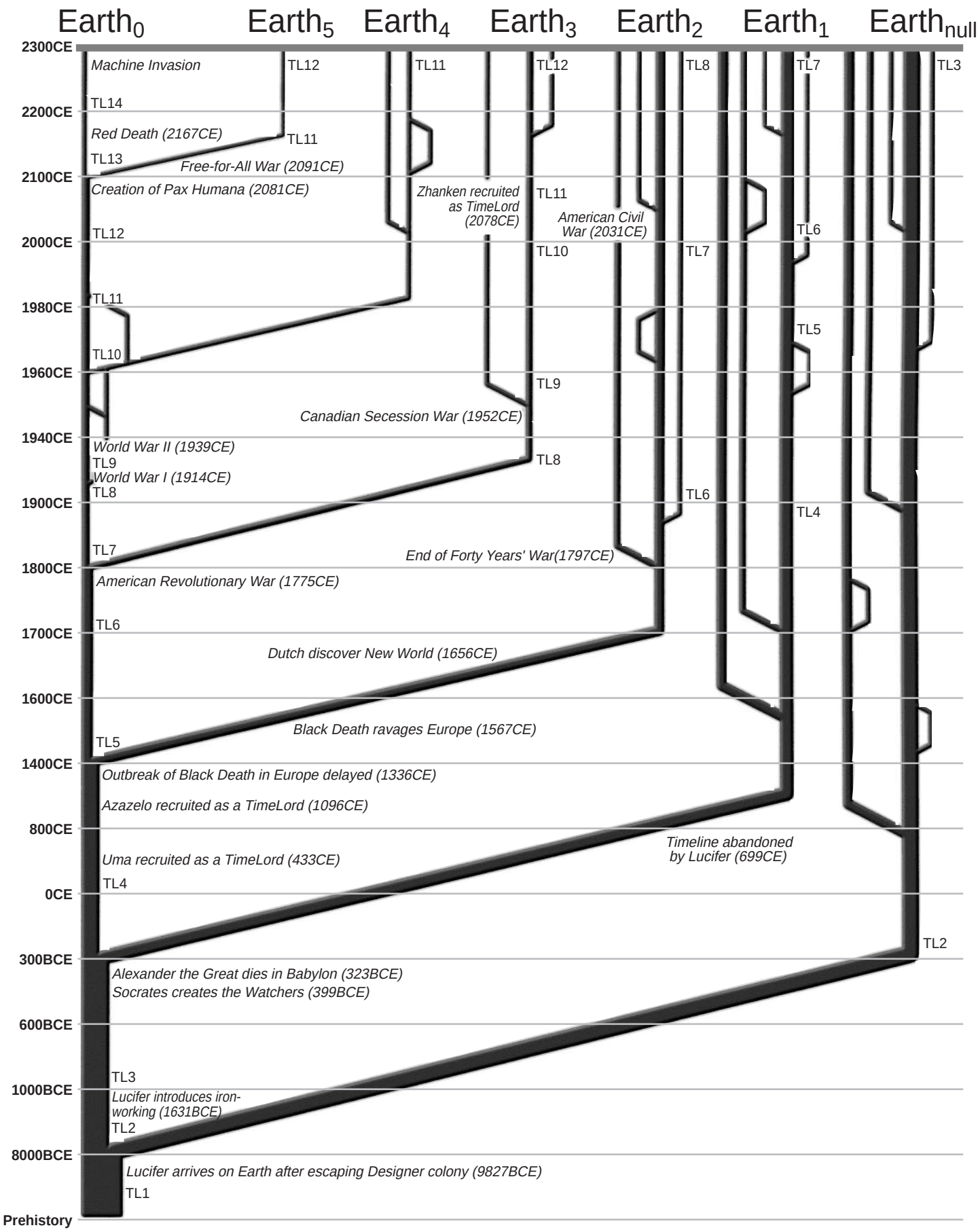
Date	Events
570 million BCE	Precambrian era. Air not thick enough to breathe yet, major life form is algae. Changes - If characters somehow disrupt the region where lower lifeforms begin evolving into higher ones, who knows what might happen?
480 million BCE	Ordovician era. No land plants or animals, but lots of ocean life, some fairly large. No ozone layer, unprotected skin will burn in 5 minutes. Changes - Same as previous.
390 million BCE	Devonian era. No land vertebrates, many land plants and insects (10cm roaches, 100cm dragonflies). Changes - Same as previous.
320 million BCE	Pennsylvanian era. First reptiles, some large enough to eat time travelers. Changes - Same as previous.
190 million BCE	Jurassic era. First mammals, lots of huge reptiles for next 100,000,000 years (brontosaurus, T.Rex, etc.). Good area for hunting, if properly prepared. Changes - Same as previous.
65 million BCE	Tertiary era. Dinosaurs die out due to global catastrophe. Cause postulated as multiple or single large meteor strike. Changes - Same as previous. All prehistoric eras leave open the distinct possibility of leftover garbage and equipment being fossilized, discovered and causing interesting side effects (secret government searches for time travellers?). Mitigation of the extinction might lead to dinosaurs surviving long enough to coexist with mankind.
2 million BC	Quaternary era. Evolution of hominids. Changes - Hominids are barely sentient at this time, if at all. Character interaction with them is likely to cause no changes unless a genetically important individual is affected.
40,000BCE	Last great ice age. One third of globe covered with ice, as far south as Missouri and Germany. Humans develop belief of life after death, with food and weapons buried with the dead. Changes - Language and abstract concepts exist, giving the possibility for character interaction being recorded in the form of oral tradition, cave or cliff paintings, etc. Characters may also influence culture to the extent that a group may rise to prominence or fade away at different times, with unknown long-term effects.
30,000BCE	First trade routes, first fired ceramics (figurines). Changes - Much the same as previous.
20,000BCE	Bow invented in N.Africa or Spain. Changes - The serendipitous discovery of a new technology could easily have been influenced by TimeLords.
8,000BCE	Agricultural communities appear. Changes - The change from hunter-gatherer to farmer was a major change, with cascading effects, most notably the ability to create time for specialized professions by some segment of the population (metalworking, art, philosophy, medicine, etc.).
6,000BCE	First beer made. Changes - Surely someone was bound to discover it sometime, regardless of any intervention one way or the other.
4,500BCE	Copper and bronze tools appear. Changes - Anything that made easier or more effective the production of metal tools, weapons and armor would provide a temporary but unimaginable advantage to the culture that had it.
4,000BCE	Disastrous floods in Mesopotamia, possibly the origin of Biblical deluge legend. Changes - Since so many cultures have this legend, it seems that there were a fair number of survivors. Any group that heeded an advance warning would have a great advantage in rebuilding, both in numbers and resources.
3,600BCE	First taxes. Changes - People are greedy. People in power with an ability to keep records will naturally generate the concept. The most time travellers could do is mitigate the concept (e.g. maximum is a tithe, etc.).
3,500BCE	Invention of wheel, writing. Changes - How useful the wheel is depends on the terrain. The Mayans did quite well without it, for instance. Writing on the other hand opens up a great many doors, and how difficult it is to learn may affect cultural development.
3,200BCE	Beginning of Egyptian dynasties. Changes - Modifying the idea of the god-king and t he Egyptian concept of the spiritual world might have collateral effects on neighboring cultures.

3,000BCE	Beginning of Minoan culture. Changes - Since they get pretty much wiped out a few thousand years later, changes would have to be severe to have lasting effect.
2,700BCE	First pyramids built (Egypt). Changes - Convincing the Egyptians to keep better records of how they were built might save future generations from crackpots and documentary films.
2,600BCE	First recorded use of metal coinage (Sumeria). Changes - A move towards abstract wealth as a means of exchange of goods and services will have a collateral effect on trade.
2,000BCE	Beginning of Assyrian empire. Changes - In their heyday, they were aggressive and vindictive (they rerouted the Euphrates to cover the site of Babylon after they sacked and razed it). Any major influence on Assyrian culture would have collateral effects on all cultures in the region.
1,800BCE	Stonehenge built. Changes - See notes on the Pyramids.
1,600BCE	Refined mercury used in Egypt. Changes - Among other things, it means that they could have made mercury fulminate (a high explosive formerly used in the impact primers of modern weapons) without too much trouble. The nature of liquid mercury makes it fascinating and dangerous to any culture that doesn't realize its long-term toxicity.
1,470BCE	Minoan culture decimated by volcanic eruption. First manmade glass (Egypt). Changes - If the center of Minoan culture had been moved to the mainland as a result of tampering, the culture might have survived a few more centuries than it did.
1,250BCE	Olmec culture in Central America begins, later becomes Mayan empire. Changes - The Olmecs and Mayans were technologically stagnant. Overcoming the social inertia to change this would be difficult, making them likely eventually to fall before any foe with tactical flexibility and a technological edge.
1,200BCE	Beginnings of Greek culture. Changes - For all its reknown as the birthplace of democracy and other concepts, the Greeks were still imperialistic slaveowners. If they weren't, they wouldn't have had the free time to develop the concepts that they are most remembered for. Interference with the underpinnings of Greek culture would have great repercussions.
1,193BCE	Troy sacked during Trojan War. Changes - The forces arrayed against Troy might have made major changes if deployed elsewhere.
960BCE	Solomon is king of Israel. Changes - Anytime a person is important enough that their name is remembered 3,000 years later, you know that any direct change is going to have *some* kind of effect.
800BCE	First Olympic games. Changes - Historical footnote, a source of adjectives and local heros. Actual historical importance minimal.
689BCE	Babylon sacked by Assyrians. Changes - Constantly shifting alliances, familial squabbles and long lines of communications made *taking* territory easier than *keeping* it for any length of time. Changes to any one of these might have given an edge to one side or the other.
671BCE	Assyria conquers Egypt. Changes - The Assyrian empire became too large to manage, and began to crumble from enemies without and conflicts within. Major changes might delay or hasten its downfall, but probably not stop it.
612BCE	Assyrian capital, Nineveh, falls to Scythians and Babylonians, end of Assyrian empire. Changes - A fragment of the Assyrian empire held out for quite some time, but the Assyrians permanently lost their pre-eminent spot on top of the heap.
551BCE	Confucius born, dies 479BC. Changes - Confucius was one of many philosophers during this period of Chinese history. Many were political advisers as well, and their ideas carried considerable weight with the semi-independent feudal lords of territories under Chou rule.
550BCE	Founding of Persian empire. Changes - For the next 200 years the Greeks and Persians ran this part of the world, alternately allying and backstabbing each other. One without the other would have allowed much greater expansion.
509BCE	Founding of Roman Republic. Changes - Founded by a revolt against their Etruscan overlords, the Roman Empire might never have been, had the Etruscans crushed the revolt.
500BCE	First distilled liquor (Pakistan). Changes - How has distilled liquor changed *your* life?
480BCE	Xerxes attack on Greece fails. Changes - This particular campaign between the Persians and Greeks was lost mainly due to tactical errors, something which trusted advisors with advance knowledge might be able to change.
431BCE	Peloponnesian War begins, lasts 28 years. Changes - Athens could have avoided defeat, as the Spartans offered to call it a draw after Sphacteria.
405BCE	Athenian navy destroyed by Sparta, end of Peloponnesian War. Changes - Early on, Athens had naval superiority, and Sparta land superiority, but Athens lost their fleets and their advantage after an ill-considered attack on Sicily in 414BC.
400BCE	Spartans use sulfur and pitch in warfare. Changes - Better delivery systems for incendiary payloads would have made a big change in naval warfare.
399BCE	Socrates drinks hemlock and dies. Changes - Unknown. He passed up an opportunity to escape, however.

384BCE	Aristotle born, science suffers for centuries. Changes - Convincing him to actually observe scientific phenomenon instead of just thinking about them might advance future technology by centuries.
377BCE	Rome rebuilt, with defensive walls. Changes - After being sacked by the Gauls in 390BC, the empire was on shaky ground for a while, but came back stronger than before. The turmoil would have been ripe for major political changes.
332BCE	Alexander the Great enters Egypt. Changes - Alexander conquered a lot of known world before he died at age 33. If he had lived another 30 years and started a dynasty, history might be a lot different, as it might also be had he never been born.
264BCE	First record of public gladiatorial games (Rome). Changes - Gladiatorial contests are an ancient funerary observance in many cultures. In Rome, they evolved into public entertainment. Without the games (e.g. the phrase “bread and circuses”), the Roman citizens on the dole would have been even more unruly. Public gladiatorial games were banned by Constantine roughly 600 years after they first began.
160BCE	Hipparchus born. Changes - Hipparchus is said to be the inventor of trigonometry, and made a number of astronomical discoveries. Any science based on mathematics would be affected by his discoveries.
147BCE	Carthage massacred (10% live) by Roman army. Changes - Who knows what some of those people or their descendants might have accomplished? Note that several nearby towns that switched over to the Roman side were spared, and became part of the Empire.
44BCE	Caesar assassinated. Changes - Probably not many. They went through an awful lot of Caesars.
30CE	Christ crucified. Changes - Varies. Not in the act itself, but those actions leading to the flourishing of Christianity, which might occur regardless of Christ's fate.
61CE	British tribes, led by Boadicea, sack London, are later crushed by Roman forces. Changes - Without a basic overhaul of Celtic culture, they would be incapable of withstanding superior Roman tactics and organization.
64CE	Rome burns. Changes - Like most great fires, it would have happened eventually, and could only be hastened or delayed.
72CE	Masada falls after lengthy siege. Changes - The sheer length of the siege means a number of factors could have prevented its success. Survival of the besieged may have had eventual effects on the Diaspora. The concentration of forces also made it easier for the Roman commander of the expedition to make a bid for power shortly thereafter.
100CE	Paper invented (China). Changes - Paper was much less expensive than other equivalent writing surfaces, making written records more accessible.
120CE	Hadrian's Wall built (England). Changes - The rougher terrain in northern England gave the tribes there an advantage the southern ones did not have. The wall tended to keep them more bottled up, and loss of territory might have been influential in later English/Scots fracases.
164CE	Plague begins in Rome, lasts until 180CE. Changes - Local decreases in population both increased the need for labor (slaves), and decreased the available pool for soldiers. If it had not been as severe, a change in either result could have affected the decline of the Roman Empire.
271CE	First magnetic compass (China). Changes - In general, the Middle Kingdom could have ruled the world if they had wanted to, but they squandered their opportunity, despite having many inventions centuries ahead of the West.
433CE	Attila becomes leader of the Huns. Changes - Attila died in 453CE, and may have sacked more of Europe had he survived into old age.
455CE	Vandals sack Rome. Changes - The barbarians were literally at the gates, and if the Vandals hadn't done it, someone else would have.
537CE	King Arthur dies, possibly legendary. Changes - Stronger in legend than in life, his historical influence is probably overstated.
547CE	Black Death hits Europe, population of Europe halved over next 50 years due to plague. Changes - It was the Dark Ages, there wasn't enough overall organization to be affected. Everyone suffered equally.
570CE	Mohammed born, dies 632CE. Changes - The world would be a markedly different place without Islam, or also if any of its basic tenets had been altered (i.e. what if it had given women more equal status?)
641CE	Great library at Alexandria destroyed by fire. Changes - Preserving it might alter knowledge of history, but not history itself.
732CE	Charles Martel defeats Arabs at Tours (France), furthest advance of Arab armies. Changes - This was a major defeat, and possibly halted the Arab advance into Europe. If the advance had not been stopped, European culture might have become Arab culture.
740CE	Vikings invade the British Isles (Lindesfarne). Changes - Without basic changes in Viking culture, they would be sure to invade and expand. If thwarted in Europe, pressure to move to the west and North America might have been greater.

845CE	First paper money (China). Changes - Another way to represent wealth, based on a worthless item that represents one which people assign value to. A development based on the easy availability of paper.
1000CE	Vikings discover America, Chinese invent gunpowder. Changes - If the Vikings had a self-sustaining colony, American history would have been a lot different, and if the Chinese had developed gunpowder weapons (and used them to expand), Asian history might have been a lot different.
1066CE	Battle of Hastings, Halley's Comet appears. Changes - The Saxon legal system, language and political structure was different than the Normans. English culture and language would be substantially different had the Norman invasion failed.
1095CE	The First Crusade. Changes - The Crusades were probably a bad idea for a number of reasons, although the First Crusade was a rousing success and later ones had their high points as well. If the Crusaders had been defeated early on and the idea abandoned, the manpower available on both home fronts could have generated a number of local conflicts.
1204CE	Constantinople falls to Fourth Crusade. Changes - As a center of culture and trade, Constantinople would have played a major part in world history had it survived.
1227CE	Genghis Khan dies. Changes - As with the other great conquerors who died with unfinished work, things might have been different if he had a few more years, or a less contentious succession.
1346CE	First recorded use of gunpowder in Europe, at the Battle of Crécy. Changes - While its use here was negligible, the development and improvement of gunpowder weapons marks a turning point in history. If none of the early attempts to use it were successful, it might have lain dormant for centuries.
1347CE	Black Death reaches Europe, population of Europe drops by a third over next four years. Changes - The shortage of labor gave peasants new bargaining power as to where, when and who they would work for, and cut down on the authority of the nobility, who now had to make concessions to get the labor they needed to generate revenue.
1412CE	Joan of Arc born, burned at stake 1431CE. Changes - Any woman able to lead an army in the 1400's and dangerous enough to be worth executing at age 19 would have had an effect if she survived.
1452CE	Leonardo da Vinci born, dies 1519CE. Changes - Prolific in a number of fields and extremely intelligent, perhaps he is more important in the later individuals who he inspired.
1455CE	First printing press, Wars of the Roses. Changes - The printing press is an example of a Chinese invention “discovered” centuries later by Europeans, who used it to much greater advantage.
1465CE	Edward IV passes edict forbidding bowling. Changes - Where might we be if it had been more strictly enforced?
1492CE	Columbus “discovers” the New World. Changes - Central and South American history might have been a lot different if the English or Dutch had been the first to land there.
1503CE	Nostradamus born, dies 1566CE. Changes - It might be interesting to know where he got his information from...
1532CE	Pizarro invades Inca nation in Peru. Changes - A little luck and a little superstition went a long way for Pizarro, who is lucky his expedition did not get wiped out. While technologically inferior to European forces, the Incas had a vast numerical advantage, had they chose to use it.
1568CE	First bottled beer (England). Changes - See 500BC.
1588CE	Spanish Armada defeated. Changes - It this event did not mark the start of Spain's decline as a world power, it was at least extremely symbolic. Many factors over a long period of time contributed to the defeat of the Armada, so no quick tampering is likely to make major changes.
1629CE	Massachusetts Colony founded. Changes - Most of the colonization or North America was based on religious intolerance and bigotry, and had the local Indians known what was coming (or been vaccinated against smallpox), it would have taken a lot longer for settlers to get a foothold.
1684CE	Last execution for witchcraft in England. Changes - The last *official* execution. Time travelers be wary.
1696CE	First steam engine (England). Changes - Steam is what powered the Industrial Revolution. Advances in this field would be of great benefit to the nation that had them.
1765CE	Stamp Act passed to tax American colonies. Changes - Convincing the British that the Colonies were more useful if nurtured rather than exploited might have given the British Empire a substantially larger chunk of real estate.
1775CE	American Revolution begins. Changes - Principles the United States government is based on were born out of lofty goals, but also rhetoric, compromise and expediency. Influencing the initial debates might make a difference. Obviously, so would a British victory.
1783CE	Hot air balloon invented (or re-invented) Changes - Any form of air travel, whether lighter than air or heavier than air, wil eventually bring about major changes, if only in the way warfare is handled (observation balloons, etc.).

1788CE	French Revolution begins. Changes - Convincing aristocracies to make major changes is very difficult, and public unrest caused by uncontrollable factors (i.e. the weather) is just one of many fuses for a revolutionary time bomb.
1799CE	Napoleon rises to power. Changes - If the French Revolution had been delayed, or Napoleon had won at Waterloo, his career and thus European history might be different.
1839CE	Opium War, China vs. Britain. Changes - A particularly vile but inventive way for the British to get what they wanted. Affecting tactics and/or strategy of either side would be a mammoth undertaking because of total disregard for lives lost.
1859CE	First practical storage battery (France). Changes - Electricity on demand opens up the possibilities for a number of sciences and practical applications, and the discovery was rapidly exploited.
1861CE	American Civil War begins. Changes - One can imagine a United States without a Civil War, where compromises were made regarding slavery, civil rights and westward expansion, or conversely, where Britain provided active assistance to the Confederacy and allowed it to win a victory or a stalemate resulting in two separate countries.
1866CE	Dynamite invented. Changes - A stable high-explosive is another military tool that would be quickly exploited.
1886CE	First commercial aluminum production. Changes - Aluminum was a precious metal until this time. Its refining requires vast amounts of electricity, so influences on energy production will affect its use.
1895CE	Marconi invents radio (disputed). Changes - Invention of wireless communication occurred at about the same time elsewhere, and its development would be difficult to stop.
1908CE	Tunguska meteor explosion, 12 megaton blast. Changes - If the course of the meteor had been shifted slightly so that it hit a major world capital, it would cause utter chaos.It might also spur development of rocketry and the astronomical sciences.
1912CE	Passenger liner *Titanic* sinks on maiden voyage, over 1,500 perish, including a number of the movers and shakers of the period. Changes - Any of numerous small changes could have averted the tragedy, with unknown results.
1914CE	World War I begins. Changes - Tensions were already high at this point in time, and other triggers might have set it off. Minor changes in mutual defense treaties might have allowed the Great Powers an acceptable way out of the situation, or delayed it, allowing more terrible weapons of war to be developed.
1919CE	Prohibition begins, lasts until 1931. Changes - Prohibition paid for the development of organized crime in the United States. Without it, certain federal laws and agencies might not exist.
1939CE	World War II begins. Changes - The seeds for WWII were planted in the ashes of WWI. Actions shaping major players could be altered much earlier, with significant effect.
1941CE	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, US interns Orientals in concentration camps until 1946. Changes - US Intelligence was aware of the impending attack, but word did not get to Hawaiian forces in time. A substantial Japanese defeat might have allowed the US to remain isolationist, thus affecting both the European and Pacific theaters.
1945CE	First atomic bomb, end of World War II. Changes - If Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not forced a Japanese surrender, the US had no more bombs to use, and would have been forced to engage in an extremely bloody invasion of Japan and/or piece-meal nuking as new bombs were built. The defeat of Japan also allowed the USSR to take over a lot of Asian territory before the final lines were drawn.
1956CE	Hungarian Revolution crushed while Western countries do nothing. Changes - Overt Western assistance might have prompted WWIII. On the other hand, if other satellite nations had rebelled, the USSR and Warsaw Pact might have had a bloody civil war in NATO's backyard, with many ultimate consequences.
1969CE	First manned exploration of the Moon. Changes - If USSR had been successful in its lunar program, it could prolong the “space race”, with lunar colonies, space stations, orbital weapons, etc.
1975CE	Vietnam War ends after more or less 21 years of conflict involving the forces of Vietnam, France, China, Russia and the United States. Changes - The conflict left deep scars of many types. Millions died during the war, and millions more from later repercussions. Who might those people have become had they lived?
1986CE	Chernobyl meltdown, 40,000 evacuated. Space Shuttle *Challenger* explodes, killing all on board. Changes - Russian nuclear accidents are likely to happen. Effects on future generations are unknown. *Challenger* explosion definitely delays US space exploration by several years.
1987CE	**TimeLords** first published. Changes - You wouldn't be reading this if it hadn't.
1989CE	Pro-democracy protesters massacred in Beijeng. Changes - While it captured world attention, they never had the numbers or support to give leverage to their demands. Prolonging the bloodshed might cause Western nations to impose sanctions and China to become even more hard-line in its stance.
1990CE	Elvis is still dead. Changes - Why bother?
2001CE	World Trade Center bombings. Changes - Unknown.
2003CE	**CORPS TimeLords** published. Changes - Don't you dare...


Earth0
Earth5
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1800CE
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1600CE
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300BCE
600BCE
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TL8
TL8
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TL7
End of Forty Years' War(1797CE)
American Revolutionary War (1775CE)
TL6
Dutch discover New World (1656CE)
Black Death ravages Europe (1567CE)
TL5
Outbreak of Black Death in Europe delayed (1336CE)
Azazelo recruited as a TimeLord (1096CE)
Timeline abandoned by Lucifer (699CE)
Uma recruited as a TimeLord (433CE)
TL4
TL2
Alexander the Great dies in Babylon (323BCE)
Socrates creates the Watchers (399BCE)
TL3
Lucifer introduces iron-working (1631BCE)
TL2
Lucifer arrives on Earth after escaping Designer colony (9827BCE)
TL1

Summary
In general, no matter where or when you go, you will always find war, famine, pestilence, death, intolerance, taxes and bureaucracy. You can also find peace, harmony, understanding and compassion, but you have to look a lot harder. Perhaps the best philosophy for potential time travelers to remember is that no matter where you look in history, mankind has been barbaric. Five thousand years ago, we were barbarians. Two thousand years ago, we were barbarians. Forty years ago, barbarians. So, the next time you get ready to look down on some "barbarians", think what people will be calling *you*, a hundred years from now.

The GM and the historian player

You will almost always run into the problem that a player will somehow know more about a given period of history than *you* do. This can be embarrassing and cause players to not enjoy the game as much. There are a number of solutions to the problem.

Let the players know ahead of time that there are many alternate histories, and events might not perfectly match. Let them know that “recorded” history does not necessarily match “real” history. Find out what historical periods the players are personally familiar with, and either avoid those eras (coward!), or check out a reference book from the library so as not to make a fool of yourself. Remember that an alternate history may be slightly different. Don't use this difference just to abuse someone who is knowledgeable about a particular place or time, but make sure that the player is aware that what they know will not be 100% correct.

Time Patrols and their burdens

Think of shaping history as guiding thousands of rats through a maze. You are going to lose some other rats to dead ends, but if you work hard, you can get most of them to follow a path that reaches the goal you have in mind. There are times that you will have to give up on some of the rats so that you can guide more promising ones, or remove from the picture ones that tend to disrupt the progress of the others. Now substitute entire separate human histories for “rats”, and you can see the moral baggage that some of these organizations have to carry around with them. Zhanken referred to it as “herding sheep with a bulldozer” and also that “some of the stupid buggers *deserve* to be run over”.

Time is more or less infinite in all directions, and many of the paths that can be taken through time lead to the extinction of the human species. The goal of most temporal guardians is to guide as much of humanity as possible onto the paths that lead farthest into the future, while the goal of most temporal malcontents is to achieve personal ambitions in their own present, regardless of the long-term consequences.

History as it *might* be

All those events previously listed have already happened. However, that is not all there is to history. The meddling of Lucifer and the original TimeLords created several major branches of history. All but the most useful ($Earth_0$) were eventually abandoned and allowed to progress on their own until they were destroyed by the Machine Invasion of 2380CE. The following pages detail key differences and events on these timelines as a guide for what you are likely to run into. Filling in the blanks is up to you...

The diagram on the previous page shows the rough chronology and relationships between these timelines. The diagram has a lot more information than you see at first glance.

The year scale on the left is in terms you are familiar with. Other timelines may have different chronological scales. In particular, anything that branches before 0CE will almost certainly not use the CE (Christian Era) time scale. Each timeline also has a marker for the approximate point at which it reaches a Tech Level, for purposes of what types of goods and equipment are available. The thickness of the lines represents the potential of a particular timeline. The thinnest of the lines do not have the potential for further branching until their internal reality (for lack of a better term) becomes more developed or stable. At the end of this timeline, $Earth_0$ was the only history capable of defeating the Machine Invasion, and the temporal pruning required to create it left it incapable of branching until 2680CE.

Certain areas on a timeline are “off limits”. It's not a matter of permission, but a matter of *synchronization*. TimeLords have already been active on certain timelines during certain periods, and only Matrices synched with them can go there. Since this will undoubtedly be in the character's distant past... You can Jump to before or after these times, but if you Jump before and hang around long enough, you will get diverted onto a smaller side branch of that timeline, or get bumped to another probability altogether. For group integrity purposes, assume anyone in such a group will get bumped identically, whether or not they are near the Matrix that brought them there (in “reality”, they'd get left behind...). The GM should decide early on which patches of which history are going to be inaccessible to characters.

The unnamed sidebranches off a major timeline are for GM reference, to make up a sub-history as needed. They would be defined as $Earth_{x.y}$, like $Earth_{2.3}$ would be a side branch off $Earth_2$. There are many more than this simplistic diagram shows. An accurate picture would be a four-dimensional sphere, with axes x,y,z, and t (time). A point on that sphere would be a point in space at a particular time, and the direction of the t vector would have something to do with which timeline you were on. If you could actually view it, it would look like thick energy currents (the main timelines) radiating from a central point, with the intervening spaces filled with the finer and finer filaments of lesser probabilities.

$Earth_{null}$

Human development stagnates, with a *profound* lack of scientific development. Cultures either develop into TL2 city-states and primitive empires, or revert back to tool-using tribal animals. At least one branch of this history is a combination of the two, a city-building culture of semi-intelligent primates showing similarities to ant, bee or termite soceities. These are the futures Earth would have taken had there been no outside interference by Lucifer or other TimeLords. Disease and natural disaster balanced human population growth to the point where there was never enough pressure to force technological growth. Cultures are almost exclusively polytheistic and male-dominated. All of these varying histories merge and intertwine in a single thick and confusing mess. Lucifer visitied this timeline numerous times, especially near its very end, and his dozens if not hundreds of efforts to change the final outcome mean that this history is somewhere between a single timeline and hundreds of different timelines flying in close formation. Since $Earth_{null}$ has so little to recommend it, there are plenty of places on it that have never been visited by TimeLords.

Events of note

None, save the discovery of iron-working near the very end.

Notable visitors

Cyrus Martin, 24th century billionaire. Stranded there by Lucifer shortly before 2389CE because he tried to instigate a coup against Lucifer's plan at the Nova Terra colony.

$Earth_0$

This is the root culture to which Lucifer returned in approximately 9000BCE after the destruction of the Designers, and from which he saw the futility of $Earth_{null}$. The major branching point that separates Earthnull from $Earth_0$ is at approximately 1200BCE with Lucifer's introduction of iron-working. $Earth_0$ *always* refers to the timeline which Lucifer saw as the most promising for humanity's survival, and includes the timeline in which you are reading this book. Ergo, history as it is written for you is $Earth_0$. It is a long and tortuous path, with many pitfalls and branches to dead-end histories, but it is in a sense the best of all possible worlds.

Events of note

399BCE

Socrates, a Shaper, creates the Watchers, a group that does not work for Lucifer, but secretly monitors the actions of the Shapers, and the comings and goings of Lucifer.

433CE

Lucifer recruits Rachel, daughter of a Mediterranean weaver, to be a TimeLord. She is the first successful recruit, and takes the name Uma. The two previous candidates did not survive the training process.

2081CE

A combination of political and economic forces results in the creation of the Pax Humana, a global government of moderate effectiveness. This is *not* a TimeLord-engeineered government. Having to serve greatly dissimilar cultural interests, it maintains peace, but also stagnates progress. TimeLord intervention is unable to break through the bureacratic deadlock. The branch of history where the Pax is not created devolves into chaos and war ($Earth_5$), leaving Lucifer little choice but to use the Pax timeline as $Earth_0$.

2167CE

With the creation of the Pax Humana, $Earth_0$ has reached the minimum size for a stable timeline, with further subbranching impossible until sometime further down the line. An Ebola-like virus appears in this timeline's future, of unknown provenance, and there is no way to fork history to create a timeline that will avoid it. Lucifer and the other TimeLords hastily assemble a plan to evacuate key scientists and their famnilies from Earth to the tiny Pathfinder Base on Mars. TimeLords invade the base and shut down its communications in preparation, but the crew manages to get word back to Earth nonetheless. With the assistance of billionaire industrialist Cyrus Martin, the TimeLords acquire the resources necessary to expand the base to support several hundred people, and generate dozens of Portals to move the equipment. By force and subterfuge the unwitting colonists are Jumped to Mars just as the Pax Humana government tries to take action against the blatantly open manipulations of the TimeLords.

The evacuation is successful nonetheless, but 99% of Earth's population dies in the following plague and Zhanken loses his closest companion. The survivors on Mars use every orbital and scavenged resource at their disposal to generate a massive industrial base, and begin to analyze and decipher the Designer artifacts Lucifer has been collecting over the centuries. Mars is occupied almost constantly by TimeLords, but Earth is off-limits because of the small possibility of bringing in a disease that none of the refugees have immunity to. Visits to the ruined Earth during this period by second and third generation TimeLords are suspected but not confirmed.

From this desperate beginning The Fleet is constructed, and for the next century virtually all industry and power available is used to construct the small but massively powerful two-man ships and the tons of antimatter needed to fuel them.

2278CE
The Fleet is used in the pyrrhic attack on the Destroyer. Badly overmatched, two of the six ships are destroyed and the remainder survive only by a stroke of luck. What was seen as quick search-and-destroy mission is instead a major setback. The remaining ships are refitted, and less powerful substitutes for the lost ships are hastily constructed in preparation for the coming attack of the machine fleet.

2320CE
The pre-emptive defense of Earth takes place near Saturn, a larger fleet of machine intelligence sublight ships met by a smaller but more advanced fleet of human vessels. Human losses are heavy, but the invaders are wiped out. Decades are spent rooting the invasion's self-replicating support ships from the outer solar system. It is another century before attention can fully be turned towards getting Earth back on its feet. Various dates are listed for the machine invasion on different timelines because of different encounter dates.

2434CE
The final assault on the Destroyer's fortress is launched from Mars in 2434CE. Strider is a casualty, kept alive only by advanced technology, meaning he can never Jump through time again. He retires on Mars with Uma, where they have two children and a few centuries of prosperity and peace.

2435CE
In a long-planned attack, Zhanken assassinates Lucifer and destroys Far-walker, and escapes to place and time unknown. Azazelo swears vengeance and follows, tracking Zhanken by unknown means.

$Earth_1$

This timeline branches from $Earth_0$ at approximately 323BCE. The major change precipitating this was Alexander the Great. Lucifer interferes and Alexander does not die in Babylon, but returns home after creating the largest empire the world had ever known. Lucifer hoped that a large, efficiently run empire would be able to sustain intellectual growth and technical advances, but despite direct intervention as a wandering demi-god, the empire was too fragile to support rapid change, change which was resisted in the name of stability. The Alexandrian Empire lasted for three generations before a bloody civil war ripped it apart. Balkanization of the empire and wars of conquest and reconquest continued for centuries. Lucifer's creation of a secret religion dedicated to knowledge and reconstruction was only marginally helpful, but they maintained records of his coming and goings for a thousand years before Lucifer finally gave up on the timeline and moved elsewhere.

Left to its own, technology is stifled by wars, with conquest and destruction of infrastructure causing numerous setbacks and deaths of leading thinkers. The empire does not reach the size of Alexander's original empire until nearly 1900CE, and was only at TL4 by this time. By 2331CE, civilization had developed to TL7 levels (early steamships, early breechloading weapons). Society is largely built on a Greek model, with a Greek-speaking Europe, Africa and central Asia. Slavery exists in all countries, either officially or couched in terms like “indentured servitude”. Diplomatic stalemate exists with the Middle Kingdom of China, whose reach extends to Japan, southeast Asia and portions of the western Americas. Colonization of North America is underway, and a state of futile war exists between the Mayan Empire (TL6) and both the Greek (TL7) and Chinese (TL6) empires. Neither can press an advantage on the other's home territory, and the current state of affairs involves trying to oust Chinese and Greek forces from their colonial footholds by supplying North American natives (TL3) with more advanced weapons. The machine intelligences care nothing for any of this, and scour the planet clean of intelligent life with fusion weapons and comet impacts.

Events of note
699CE
Lucifer gives up on the Greek Imperium in Imperial Year 1035. He and Uma were regular visitors to this timeline until then, staying for several months each decade to observe, plan and advise. Both were known to the most powerful leaders of their times. They were accorded a suspicious reverence and respect, and were occasionally subject to intrigue against them by leaders of countries that had not been favored by their advice and knowledge.

Notable visitors
Uma and Lucifer were the main instigators of change prior to abandonment of the timeline. Other TimeLords are certain to have visited intervals in this history.

Earth$_2$

This timeline branches from Earth$_0$ at approximately 1336CE. Having seen the devastation caused by the bubonic plague (aka the Black Death), Lucifer, Azazelo and Uma manage to delay but not stop its arrival in Europe. Many consequences of this delay are not favorable to Lucifer's cause. Without the decrease in population caused by the plague, there is no impetus for the decline of feudalism or the creation of a middle class. The surplus population also makes it easier to continue little territorial wars and political/religious feuds.

Events of note

1567CE

When the plague finally did reach Europe (and the New World via Chinese traders) in 1567CE, it did so with a vengeance. A climactic period known as the Little Ice Age had dropped worldwide temperatures. The plague and poor harvests combined to kill over two-thirds of Europe's population (as opposed to only one-third on Earth$_0$). Virtually all organized power structures collapsed, as did lines of communication. Civilization, such as it was, resumed as a smaller number of countries, each with larger amounts of territory and fewer inhabitants. There are no less than five Popes claiming primacy over three Churches. Needless to say, the disputes were not settled peacefully. And this is just what happened in Europe. India, the Middle East and Far East were also devastated. India was hit hardest, in both 14th and 16th centuries.

As on Earth$_0$, feudal conditions could not survive without the force needed to keep serfs in line, and decreased population density led to a number of independent city-states with a more distributed authority structure. These city-states were typically run by merchant princes, and relied heavily on trade for their wealth. Many maintained their independence when “traditional” countries tried to swallow them up, simply because they were more valuable intact than sacked.

1656CE

The plague, weather, wars and recovery occupied Europe for about a century, pushing back the discovery of the New World by Dutch traders until 1656CE. Valuable trade deals with the Mayan Empire made the Dutch city-states the financial and trade center of the world for decades, until more European diseases finally got a foothold among the native populations and virtually wiped them out.

Blaming the outsiders, the dying Mayans managed to return the favor by destroying all European settlements in South America. The near collapse of the Dutch trade houses put Europe's economy into a tailspin. Blame for the debacle, right or wrong, fell on the failing Italian city-states, and resulted in the Forty Years War.

1797CE

The Forty Years War and its fallout kept the pot simmering until approximately 1800CE, when serious colonization resumed in both North and South America. This time, the natives had an immunity to most European diseases, and a serious axe to grind. They were hostile to outsiders from the start, and while on the wrong side of the technology curve, they were able to slow the invasion enough to force territorial concessions and treaties. These were eventually honored about as much as the United States on Earth$_0$ was honoring its own treaties at virtually the same time.

1862CE

In the formal signing of the Hexate Partioning, North and South America were split into well-defined colonial territories much like Africa was, with a large chunk of the Pacific coast of North America already claimed by a wide-ranging but stagnant Chinese empire. National interests and mutual suspicion hindered the spread of scientific knowledge and commerce in industrial materials. Monarchic governments were still the norm, with Parliaments and other semi-representative bodies playing a large role. National pride, national boundaries and territorial claims dating to before the plague did not help matters.

2028CE

The concurrent development of the steam engine, blast furnaces and metallurgy as a science herald the Industrial Revolution for Earth$_2$. However, by then it was too late for enough progress to be made before the machine invasion.

2031CE

The American Civil War begins. Fueled by vast unredressed economic and political differences between citizens of the east and west halves of the American Commonwealth, the rebellion takes several years before a settlement is reached. It is the first war on this timeline in which ironclad steamships and lighter-than-air observation craft are used. Leftenant Randall James is a rebel spy, badly injured by British infiltration troops when Lucifer comes to his aid. He accepts the challenge and eventually takes the name Strider. He is instrumental in the split between the Earth$_0$ and Earth$_3$ timelines.

Notable visitors

Uma, Lucifer and Azazelo were infrequent visitors until about 2060CE. The cultural side effects of the plague on Earth$_0$ were deemed more worth the time and effort to exploit. Still, on Earth$_2$, significant efforts were made to steer key persons and events, with limited success. For instance, efforts to innoculate native populations prior to arrival of Europeans did not work as well as planned. Strider made numerous visits after the Earth$_0$ and Earth$_5$ split, to try and alter his home timeline after it had been abandoned by the rest.

Shaper groups were badly fragmented during the plague, and belief in Lucifer's goals was dampened by Lucifer's inability to mitigate the body count. Shaper influence was never the same after 1567CE, and covert war with Watcher groups even erupted in some places. The sheer number of "players", alliances and opposing groups made it impossible to put any single group in a commanding position before it could be pulled down by the others.

$Earth_3$

This timeline branches from $Earth_0$ at approximately 1788CE. The major change precipitating this was the American Revolutionary War. Major TimeLord involvement behind the scenes was influential in generating the $Earth_0$ outcome. The other major outcome was defeat of the Amercian forces despite overt French assistance, and a mercifully short French-British war after which the defeated French ceded most of their overseas territories and disappeared from the international scene. A sub-branch of the $Earth_3$ timeline exists where some of the thirteen American colonies made a separate peace, while the others continued to fight until defeated some years later. The autonomy granted in the separate peace made each colony more or less a self-governing portion of the British empire.

In both cases the exploitation of North America and its resources was slowed. Progress was more systematic and gradual, resulting eventually in a British/Spanish partition of the continent along the Mississippi River. Spanish use of the mineral-rich West was haphazard except for mining precious metals, and the entire western half of the country was eventually bought from Spain at bargain prices.

Attempts by Lucifer and the TimeLords to stimulate scientific research were hampered by "old school" inertia among the leading institutions. Independently funded researchers helped create interest in economically profitable technologies, but development was still at least a century behind where it needed to be by the time of the machine invasion. For what it was worth, $Earth_3$ was the first human timeline able to recognize the Machine Invasion for what it truly was and correctly theorize the technologies it used. The outgunned, out-numbered and out-teched Earth Defense Force fights heroically, but is easily overwhelmed, and no one is left to record their valor.

Events of note

1789CE

The American colonists surrender to British occupation forces. Most of the ringleaders of the "insurrection" are rounded up and hanged, including most signers of the Declaration of Independence. Washington and Jefferson are imprisoned for life instead of hanged, only because they have Shaper friends using covert influence. Benjamin Franklin, both a Watcher and Shaper, escapes to France, where he dies of old age a few years later.

1952CE

The Canadian Secession War begins. Not much of a violent conflict, but a great deal of political posturing and some minor skirmishes, eventually resulting in an Independent Commonwealth status for the Canadian provinces.

2078CE

William Jefferson, post-graduate computer scientist, is recruited by Lucifer to be a TimeLord. He takes the name Zhanken, derivation unknown.

2211CE

Political tensions spark a small but vicious high-tech war. Terrorist weapons of mass destruction kill several million people before it ends. An anti-technology backlash stifles research and development, and is partially responsible for the poor state of Earth's space defenses. Temporal sabotage is suspected, but has never been proven.

Notable visitors

Lucifer spent a great deal of effort uptime on $Earth_3$, trying to find a viable branch of history or ways to further push techno-industrial development. Azazelo spent the early years of this timeline in Ottoman Empire, largely removing obstacles to Russian expansion. Uma spent the revolution in France, generating support for the revolution. Strider worked in North America, providing military intelligence and political information, while reining in the hotheads, rogues and criminals that comprised the Founding Fathers. Mistral was in China before and after the temporal split, in a low-probability effort to rouse the potentially powerful Ming Dynasty from its insular torpor. Her effort and all others to manipulate China eventually failed.

$Earth_4$

This timeline branches from $Earth_0$ at approximately 1960CE. The major change precipitating this was the final split between the potential WWII timelines. The most prominent of these was the post-war war called "The Push", in which the barely atomic USA and Soviet Union dropped A-bombs on each other as fast as they could be built (one every few months). Post-war rationing was re-instituted, and a very real anti-communist hysteria swept across America and a war-torn Europe. The few bombs that hit the US mainland were nothing compared to the dozens that fell throughout Europe. There were far too few to cause a "nuclear winter", but industrial output with no concern for pollution, and entire cities burning unchecked for weeks at a time, combined to cause measureable climate change in the northern hemisphere. The Push ended with Operation Thor, a massive bomber operation that dropped nearly a dozen heavy A-bombs and the first experimental H-bombs on a dozen Russian industrial and political targets. The ever-crafty Stalin finally zigged when he should have zagged, and what was left of Soviet leadership rapidly acquiesced to a fairly severe peace treaty.

A collapsed USSR, a flattened Europe and a badly overdrawn USA combined to create a post-war Depression of global scale. Long-term health effects from industrial and radioactive pollution would be felt for generations to come, but global peace, nuclear disarmament and "green" technology were the *eventual* dividends of the war. Unfortunately, none of these were helpful when the Machine Invasion came.

Events of note

1953CE

Zhanken takes on a lover and assistant from this timeline. They are inseperable for nearly eighty subjective years until she is lost in the Red Death epidemic of 2167CE on $Earth_0$.

Notable visitors

This timeline was rejected almost at once by Lucifer. A Cold War $Earth_0$ was preferable to almost all the $Earth_4$ alternatives. Zhanken is known to have spent some time in portions of this timeline.

$Earth_5$

This timeline branches from $Earth_0$ at approximately 2081CE. The major change precipitating this was the creation of the *Pax Humana* government (mentioned on the $Earth_0$ timeline). The branch of history known as $Earth_5$ failed to maintain the peace, and a wide variety of ingenious and deadly weapons were used in a brutal war between the United States and the Peoples Republic of China. With the gloves taken off, and the major powers busy elsewhere, chemical, nuclear and biological weapons were also exchanged between India and Pakistan, three of the CIS nations and the PRC (and each other), Brasil and Argentina, and Malaysia and India. By the time everyone who was going to had died, the death toll had reached over two billion and destroyed much of the worlds agricultural and industrial infrastructure.

Humanity was not back on its feet by the time the machine invasion came. We saw it coming, and had a better defense than $Earth_3$, but not nearly enough.

Events of note

2086CE

Raji Scott, mechanical engineer, is recruited by Lucifer. He is the last TimeLord Lucifer brings into The Work. Raji takes the name Kirk, and serves until he is killed in the first attack on the Destroyer. Uma was romantically involved with him at the time, and was badly injured in that assault. She was extremely withdrawn for some decades afterward.

2089CE

The Free-for-All War begins. Presumably it had goals and objectives, but ended as knee-jerk violent responses to any provocation by any nation on any other nation.

2091CE

The last weapon of mass destruction is deployed in the Free-for-All War, a persistent rice blight that virtually removes that grain from Earth's ecosystem. The total victims of the resulting famine could be numbered no more accurately than "over two hundred million".

Notable visitors

None known. Even TimeLords don't like to visit there except near the end of the timeline when things are finally getting better. If you don't mind famine, disease, brutality and a complete breakdown of the social fabric, it's a good place to shake pursuit for a while.

Thus ends the significant alternate histories of Earth. Only $Earth_0$ extends past the Machine Invasion (for now), and it is up to the GM to flesh out the details if characters are allowed access to humanity's distant future. Also feel free to add your own side branches and alternate histories. It's your game. Use it.

Converting from 2nd edition TimeLords

The previous edition of **TimeLords** used a different game system, so these guides are to convert older characters to the **CORPS** system. Convert characters in the following way. All fractions round down.

Old TimeLords	CORPS TimeLords
Str/2	STR
Dex/2	AGL
(Int+Per)/4	AWR
(Wil+Brv)/4	WIL
(Con+Sta)/4	HLT
Pow/2	POW (use Power/4 if the game world is largely non-magical)
Appearance	An Appearance of 14+ is considered a Physical Ad on WIL for purposes of reaction rolls. An Appearance of 8 or less is a +1 Physical Lim that applies to interpersonal skills, with an additional +1 per 1 point below an Appearance of 8.
Primary skill/2	Primary skill in equivalent field, but not higher than the governing **CORPS** attribute.
Secondary skill/2	Secondary skill in equivalent field, but not higher than normal Secondary skill limits. If it would be higher, any excess level may be applied towards any applicable Tertiary skill.
15-19BP	Frailness of x1.2
20-24BP	Frailness of x1.1
25-39BP	Normal
30-34BP	Toughness of x.9
35-39BP	Toughness of x.8
Limitations	Psychological and physical limitations have the level divided by 2, rounding down, and become an equivalent **CORPS** trait.
Other	Characters may apply half of any accumulated points towards raising a skill or attribute as CORPS AP or SP. These may be put towards ASP instead, with an ASP total of no more than their highest Attribute. Traits and character enhancers like Contacts and Enemies will have to be decided on a case by case basis.

This should make most experienced 2nd edition **TimeLords** characters quite competent **CORPS TimeLords** characters.

Equipment

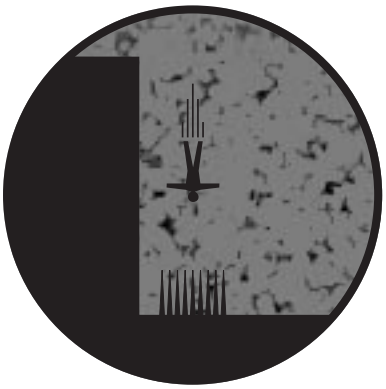
Most **TimeLords** equipment will have **CORPS** equivalents. For projectile/beam weapons, use DV/3(d). For melee weapons, use (DV/4)-1(n). Damage classes I and II count as lethal, classes III and IV count as combination damage, and class V counts as non-lethal damage. The biggest difference in equipment is that characters can no longer shift high-tech items across the timelines, which will be a serious blow to most well-equipped groups. The GM will have to do some serious hand-waving and mumble a lot of technobabble about unforeseen changes in the fabric of spacetime. On the good side, all the enemies of the characters will be in the same predicament.

Most equipment of a mundane kind is going to top out at around TL15 for the best parts of $Earth_0$ or $Mars_0$, significantly lower for the other timelines. The Tech Level scale goes up to theoretical maximum of TL26, but the histories available to characters are never going to see anything close to that unless the tech comes from alien cultures. The researchers on $Mars_0$ have a certain technician-grade ability to tinker with Designer items, but no fundamental understanding of TL16+ scientific principles.

Paranormal powers

Are designed or redesigned using the **CORPS** rules, and are based around the character's ability, without regard to SP cost. Remember that except for phantom timelines and way-out there alternate realities, there are no genuine paranormal powers. A few of humanity's timelines are advanced enough that cybernetics can duplicate some paranormal effects like using implant radios as telepathy, bionic eyes to see in the dark and so on, but these technologies are not transportable across time.

Really, *really* advanced technologies are indistinguishable from magic, and pretty much all Designer tech falls into this category. It can be as powerful or limited as you want, and size and cost are irrelevant. The stuff is mostly indestructable, irreplaceable and unfathomable. It can do what the GM wants or needs it to do, but they should remember that it will probably end up in the hands of someone who knows best how to misuse it.



Adventures

"Camping is just a cold, wet, miserable way to die."

Bast

Basics

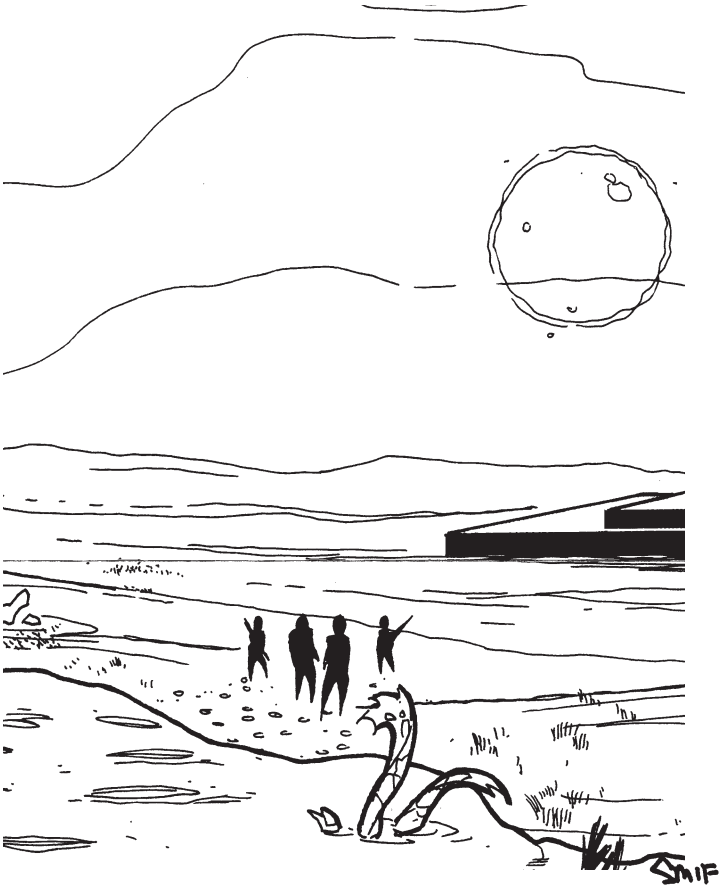
Every type of role-playing game needs a sample adventure or several to kick-start GM's and players, giving you both an idea of the way the game works, and making you think about what you need to work on to make an adventure enjoyable and challenging.

A time travel game covers *all* genres in a way, and thus has a tougher time than most. The following short adventures have been selected to challenge players and characters in different ways, and with a little tweaking, can be used for any type of character generated for this system. Glance through them all before you throw characters into any one of them. You may find that you want to do them in a particular sequence, expand on them, or not use a few of them at all.

Each adventure includes an opening scene to set the stage, the basic plot, characters and pitfalls, and ways to incorporate the adventure into your campaign, keep players on edge, and hopefully have a good time.

Some of these adventures have been adapted from the original **TimeLords** setting, where you *could* move high-tech across the timelines. Obviously, some severe adjustments have been made, but if you have 1st or 2nd edition **TimeLords** or its supplements, some of the following may have a familiar ring to it.

Survival of the fittest



Opening scene

The party appears in the dark, the opening flash showing them to be surrounded by sand and rocks, the perfect circle of the Jump field providing sharp contrast between where you used to be and where you now are. A cool, dry breeze blows in, dissipating the air from the previous location. Shortly, the cool turns to chill as the characters acclimate and their equipment sheds its heat to the empty sky. The sky is clear, and the constellations familiar. The temperature is 15°C(59°F), and if they still work (unlikely), their radios are silent. Looking around, there is nothing but scrub and occasional cacti as far as the eye can see, with a few snow-capped mountains in the distant west, shown by the light of a familiar full moon. A really good rangefinder would peg them at about 75km away.

Backdrop

This is Death Valley, California, the hottest place in the United States. Temperatures here have broken 55°C(131°F) on occasion, and the lowest point is 86m below sea level. It is not a pleasant place. The Matrix will not recharge for at least four nights and three days (100 hours), and there is no one else here, at all. As a frame of reference, assume characters have landed somewhere in the distant past, and you can choose the timeline you want, since they aren't going to be encountering any other humans while they are here.

The baked plains are dry as a bone, and successful survival rolls will only allow the characters to find a sandy area to set up a solar still, or perhaps an overhanging rock ledge to keep out the sun. A really successful roll might allow both to be reasonably close to each other. Either of these will require the characters to be active for the time period where they are making these rolls. Almost all the natural sources of water will be undrinkable due to mineral salts, and will make characters violently ill unless it is distilled first, in which case it will just taste vile. Food will be in the form of a few edible cacti which provide a small amount of drinkable fluid, and perhaps some snake or lizard meat. The only hope a group of incompetent or extremely unlucky or unprepared characters is for rainfall, and to say that there is a 1 in 10 chance per day is being *extremely* generous. Characters who get within a day's walk of the mountains will get a -2 Difficulty on survival skills to find water.

This is where the characters must keep their wits about them and use their collective survival skills. With the Matrix, their best bet is to sit and wait, but if they have a pressing reason, they can always start hiking towards the Sierra Madre, some 75km off. Maybe they think they can't Jump out from the same region they jumped in, but have to move some undefined distance away before the Matrix will let them leave. That would be devious, but you have to implement it gradually from the campaign start to make it work.

Carrot and Stick

If you want to make life miserable for the characters, let them see *some* signs of civilization. If they have a working radio (like a TL8-9 model), they can get broadcasts from the early 1930's. If they don't, perhaps they will see an occasional mail plane fly high overhead. If they try really hard, they might just be able to move and survive long enough to get to some outpost of civilization, but more than likely they will be forced to Jump because of exposure, never knowing that the gas station was just over the next hill...

⚠ Aside from the unrelenting heat, the Death Valley area is home to a variety of desert dwellers who can make life even more miserable than it already is.

Adventure ideas

There aren't a lot. This is a starter adventure for the Primary Game, where the only enemies the characters have to face is their own weaknesses and each other. This is a good early adventure for characters who have not yet settled into a routine, or discovered who is best at what. They have to cooperate to survive, and the lack of intelligent enemies means they can get into a routine without being interrupted.

Death Valley has little to recommend it, except as a place to be mummified. The daytime temperature will reach a mere 45°C(113°F) each day, and drop to 15-20°C each night. Characters who cannot find or make shade during the day will need 4 liters of water, while those who stay still in the shade and fan themselves will only require 2 liters per day. This is the amount needed to *survive*, not to keep from being thirsty. Those active at night trying to make survival rolls will need an extra liter of water for each roll they want to attempt, with a maximum of 2 per night, and only 1 the first night. However, they are assumed to not need any water the first night from their reserves.

Things to do on survival rolls	Difficulty
Make solar stills using plastic and cactus chunks (10 min)	7
(generates 1 liter, +1 liter per day per point roll is made by, but a new survival roll required each day, requires 4m^2 of plastic sheeting and a container for the water.	
Find subsurface water seep (1 hour)	8
(generates 4 liters per day if shielded from evaporation)	
Find edible plant or animal matter (1 hour)	7
(Generates 1kg of food, which also counts as .5 liter of water)	
Defrost a refrigerator to get the water (if first game Jump)	2
(generates 2-4 liters water, plus normal contents of fridge)	

Note - Going to half water rations means that thirst effects start 6 hours after starting, and exertion points are lost at 2 hour intervals instead of 1 hour intervals.

Those who don't have really good tans will find that they are medium-rare after a few hours exposure. Sunburn can literally be a killer in conditions like these, so shade or anything to keep off the sun is an absolute must for the fair-skinned.

ⓘ It isn't necessary to throw the characters into a water-deprivation coma before letting the Matrix recharge, but making it through here should be a near thing, with you as GM not cutting any corners to make life easier for the characters. If you assume they can find or make shade, and try to make their survival rolls by light of the full moon, they'll need about 4 liters per day, per person (assuming they don't exert themselves), a total of say 12-14 liters for the duration. Using average die rolls, a HLT 5 character needs an appropriate Survival skill of around 5 to have a 50-50 chance of surviving three days and four nights here, assuming characters find *something* the first night. If in your estimation the party is going to die of thirst on the first adventure, then a rescue plan of some sort is a contingency you should consider. This could be a grizzled old prospector, or just a plain old torrential downpour in the middle of the night. Of course, this would tend to catch characters off guard in that desert gully they were sheltering in...

The Iceman Cometh

After four nights and three full days of unrelenting heat, the Matrix is recharged and ready to go. The Jump goes off with the usual pyrotechnics, and the characters are instantly chilled. They appear under a bright sun that doesn't seem to make the place any warmer. It looks like the surface of the moon, with grey rocks and boulders as far as the eye can see, and not a sign of life of any kind. While it appears to be morning, the temperature is only around 10°C (50°F), and as the sun rises marginally into the southern sky, it doesn't get appreciably warmer.

The characters are now on the central plateau of Iceland, one of the more desolate places on earth. So much so that it was used as simulated lunar terrain for Apollo astronauts. Alternately the characters could be on an Antarctic plateau, the interior of the Svalbard Islands or someplace equally bleak and lifeless. The only good thing it has going for it is that pooled water is not uncommon, and it is invariably fresh and clear and cold, immeasurably better than boiled cactus sweat or gritty silt from the bottom of an arroyo.

On the other hand, characters without windbreakers or insulating clothing may soon find themselves freezing to death. The extra heat they brought with them from the Mojave will provide protection from this for 2 hours before the ground gets cold (6 if they are smart enough to dig down into the sand to find more warmth from below. During the day here, unprotected characters will burn 6 exertion points per hour (11°C), and 12 per hour each night (2°C). Assume 20 hour days and 4 hour nights. Huddling together for warmth will be enough during the day (+2°C shift per extra person), but doesn't allow anything to get done. At night, huddled characters still lose 6 exertion points per hour. To top it off, there is *no* native food here and characters may be at reduced HLT from starvation or thirst. Characters get to spend two days here, with no food but leftovers from the Mojave.

Things to do on survival rolls	Difficulty
Make crude shelter from the elements (10 min)	5
Make crude blankets for 5°C temperature shift (10 min)	5
(Primary Game characters can often make crude blankets from available material that will give them a 5°C temperature shift)	

If you've read the exposure rules in **CORPS**, you will realize that this means that *unprotected* characters *cannot* survive for long. They can make a shelter from the elements with a little effort that will keep out wind effects, or can huddle together for warmth enough to live, and barely make sure the people with lowest HLT don't slip into hypothermia. If characters have burnable material, they can stay warm for an hour (recovering HLT) for each 2kg of material they are willing to sacrifice.

After four days and four nights of this, people should be pretty miserable, and the Matrix ready to Jump again.

Living Hell

Characters Jump in with a squishy “thwop!”, and are instantly lost in a fogbank as the cold Icelandic air precipitates the water out of the swampy tropical air where they landed. In a minute or so this will clear, showing that they are in the middle of a swamp, and the land they brought with them is slowly sinking into the muck, its edge already crumbling and submerged. Within 5 minutes, characters must abandon ship, as it were, and wade through chest deep water and unmentionable bottom slime to a nearby “island” made of compost on a bed of intertwined tree roots.

At this point, the fiendish sense of humor of the person in charge of this guided tour becomes apparent. From a hot place with no water and some food, to a cold place with no food and some water, to a medium place overflowing with both, but of a quality that you aren't sure you should partake of. Indeed, simply drinking the water is a chancy proposition, a Difficulty 6 HLT roll required each day in which a character drinks it. Failure means intestinal cramps, nausea and diarrhea, for a cumulative +1 Difficulty on anything the character does. They get one recovery chance per day, also at Difficulty 6 (*plus* modifiers on HLT from previous water effects). Boiling the water helps, but nothing here will burn except what the characters have with them, and they probably used most of that earlier. Survival rolls can be made to acquire food, but the GM should make all rolls secretly, and no time bonuses apply. This is a relatively simple Difficulty 4 task, and can be made up to four times per day, each success gaining 1kg of something that is probably edible, if you have a strong stomach. Any roll that equals the random disaster number for this encounter means that tainted food is acquired, with effects identical to drinking the water.

If this wasn't enough, there are also the bugs. They get into *everything*, and half of them seem to have an appetite for human flesh and blood. To top it off, a random crocodile will attempt to drag someone off by the foot during the second night there. All it takes is some already impaired character to blow the WIL roll for staying up very late at night (Difficulty 7), and then there is no one on watch to stop it. The hapless victim will be awakened by a DV1 lethal attack to their leg (possibly made non-lethal by clothing or blankets), and be dragged towards the water at 1m/sec, like it or not. The croc will relinquish his prize only after taking a total of +5 in impairments, easier said than done by a lightly armed party, as he has an inherent AV of 1, and ignores 1 point of non-lethal damage that gets through that due to his Pain Tolerance (i.e. he ignores the first two points of non-lethal attacks, and the first point of lethal ones). On the good side, he is only a Difficulty 0 target to hit in melee because of his size and slowness (Difficulty 4 for the victim to kick him in the snout). If a tug of war ensues, the croc will shake his prize to try and get it loose, doing a 2 point combination attack to the leg in the process.

A combined unencumbered lifting capacity of 100kg will slow him down to 1m each 2 seconds instead of 1m each second. A 200kg capacity will stall the croc completely, but the victim won't be thanking you until their leg heals up.

If he gets his prize completely into the water (which will take 10 seconds if unopposed), he will twist his body in the water while holding onto the leg, an attack capable of tearing the leg loose from its owner in short order, and counting as a lethal DV3 attack every turn until +10 is reached. At this point the limb tears off (yuck!). No normal armor will protect against this unless it is both rigid *and* provides twisting resistance at the joints. Not a recommended way to start your time travel career.

Provided everyone survives the encounter, after four miserable days and nights here, someone in the group will sense that the Matrix is “recharged”, and they can leave. This time, they actually stand a chance of influencing their destination, even if they are likely to fail the roll. They'll probably be someplace more hospitable.

Aftermath

By the time this is over, characters should hopefully get *some* experience towards working together and some Primary or Secondary survival skills. Unless well-equipped and/or skilled to begin with, they will likely be tired, thirsty, hungry, smelly and impaired to various degrees, unlikely to fit in anywhere, and not well equipped to put up a lot of resistance to any attempts to coerce them. This is a good point to Jump them to an adventure where they get a chance to recover, and deal with threats of the intelligent kind, rather than the uncaring wilds. Perhaps someplace medieval, where they can trade pocket change for something resembling the amenities of civilized life.

GM notes

What's the point of all this misery? It's a fairly non-violent way for everyone in a Primary Game campaign to get a feel for each other's strength's and weaknesses. If the characters are involuntary recruits of Zhanken, and are woefully shy of useful skills, having him “abduct” the characters from next to a few vending machines would be an appropriate way to stack their survival rolls, giving them a selection of wet and dry sugar to tide them over, provided they can find a way to bust the machines open. A suggestion might be to have an intact food machine, with the drink machine cut in half by the Jump field. Let *them* figure out how to get at the snacks... They're going to lose the machines and any other fixtures when they sink into the swamp in the last segment of the adventure, anyway.

Like we said, this is a Primary Game adventure, but is suitable as a mis-Jump for *any* group that uses a Matrix, a destination error that forces the characters to work together to find a way out. For Secondary Game characters, it will actually be an “unscheduled” training mission, with each attempt to get home actually moving them to the next destination. Most of the hops will actually just be in space, rather than time, and the character's performance will be monitored for actions and attitudes that might eventually prove troublesome.

Combat - There really isn't any to speak of in this adventure except for the croc, nor any way to introduce it, although characters can go for each other's throats if things get desperate enough.

Foreshadowing - There isn't much to introduce here that can be of use later except the emotional baggage the characters being with them. Events that happen, things that are said, who leads and who follows can all be tucked away for future reference.

Drama - As an opening scenario for the Primary Game you can set up a real-life variant of what the characters have to go through. No, you *don't* stake them out in the sun. Just set out the supplies (or proxies for them) that characters could conceivably have at the start, such as food, water, containers, etc. As supplies run low, make the players pour down the drain (or set aside) what their *characters* would need to survive. See if anyone hoards, or has reserves that they don't tell the others about. See who uses the bottled water to rinse their contact lenses instead of drinking it. See who is noble and who is selfish, who gives, and who takes...

Battle of Tours

Opening scene

The sun shines down from a sky filled with fluffy cumulus clouds, casting a patchwork appearance to the fields that surround the hill you are on. The irregular fields are bordered by low stone walls or rutted paths, and thatched huts dot the terrain. For a change, there is no castle in sight, no "friendly" greeting party, nothing but the warm breeze rustling through the grass. All signs point to a historical Earth, or near alternate.

Backdrop

The characters have appeared in the Touraine province of France, near the city of Poitiers (or Tours), about 200km southwest of Paris (west-central France). The year is 732CE and the probability is likely $Earth_0$. Since the exact events that took place in this region are not perfectly recorded, this capsule will play fast and loose with the facts for adventures' sake. In general, the background is correct. All else should be taken with a grain of salt.

At this point in time, much of the land south of here is held by "Arabs", that is, non-Europeans following Islam, whose armies march at the behest of Caliph Yezid the Second, and who are commanded by the governor of Spain, Abd-er-Rahman. In European terms, godless heathen. In later centuries, many a European army would get their noses bloodied at the hands of these Middle Eastern forces, but the First Crusade won't be for another 363 years.

The commander of the Frankish forces is Charles Martel, later known as Charles the Hammer for the beating of the Arabs he historically delivered in 732CE. He is 44 years old, and his title is Mayor of the Frankish Court, though in reality he is king in all but name. In 725CE, while Arab armies were ravaging southern France, he was out conquering Bavaria.

Divergence

In 675CE, Arab armies made a push northwards and were in this area, at the same time as his grandfather was the local ruler. They were perhaps more open about "pagan" practices then, for this Lord of Tours had a sorcerer living in his castle, an odd gentleman of books and letters who asked for nothing but peace and shelter, and in return worked magic for the good of all. That is, he was probably a retired TimeLord.

As the situation with the Arabs deteriorated, he was called upon to save the people, but he did not. Not until the castle itself was threatened. Then, as the near-victorious Arab army encircled the low walls around the town, he used his "magicks" and summoned an infernal mist.

Translation - The TimeLord reached out with his power and put a Portal or Portals where they would do the most good. Right in front of a massive tank of chlorine gas being used in a WWI assault. The gas jetted through the opening in spacetime and quickly settled around the walls, killing thousands of attackers before they could flee. One entire front of the enemy attack wiped out, city defenders were able to take advantage of the confusion to cause more casualties of their own. When the air cleared, the enemy army had been broken. It was still a functional force, but no longer sufficient to sustain a siege or defeat their opponents on the field. In some disarray, they packed their baggage train and left.

The TimeLord sighed, knowing that such a display of "magic" would only cause people to want him to call on it more often. A quiet retirement shot to hell, he packed his bags and left. The local authorities did not know exactly what to make of the sorcerous tools he left behind. Fear of them was a strong argument for destroying them, but fear of enemy armies was an argument for keeping them around. In the end, a compromise was reached. His entire quarters were walled up, and in the event the contents were needed, they could be recovered. That was almost 50 years ago.

And now, another enemy army is approaching, and a group of strangers have appeared in a flash of light and a circle of strange earth...

The Moslems smote their enemies, and passed the river Garonne, and laid waste the country, and took captives without number. And that army went through all places like a desolating storm. Prosperity made those warriors insatiable. At the passage of the river, Abd-er-Rahman overthrew the count, and the count retired to his stronghold, but the Moslems fought against it, and entered by force, and slew the count; for everything gave way to their scimitars, which were the robbers of life. All the nations of the Franks trembled at that terrible army, and they betook them to their king Caldus (Charles Martel), and told him of the havoc made by the Moslem horsemen, and how they rode at their will through all the land of Narbonne, Toulouse and Bordeaux, and they told the king of the death of their count. Then the king bade them be of good cheer, and offered to aid them... He mounted his horse, and he took with him a host that could not be numbered, and went against the Moslems. And he came upon them at the great city of Tours. And Abd-er-Rahman and other prudent cavaliers saw the disorder of the Moslem troops, who were loaded with spoil; but they did not venture to displease the soliders by ordering them to abandon everything except their arms and war-horses. And Abd-er-Rahman trusted in the valor of his soldiers, and in the good fortune which had ever attended him. But such defect of discipline is always fatal to armies. So Abd-er-Rahman and his host attacked Tours to gain still more spoil, and they fought against it so fiercely that they stormed the city almost before they eyes of the army that came to save it; and the fury and the cruelty of the Moslems towards the inhabitants of the city were like the fury and cruelty of raging tigers. It was manifest that God's chastisement was sure to follow such excesses; and fortune thereupon turned her back upon the Moslems.

Near the river Owar (Loire), the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The hearts of Abd-er-Rahman, his captains and his men were filled with wrath and pride, and they were the first to begin the fight. The Moslem horsemen dashed fierce and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side, until the going down of the sun. Night parted the two armies, but in the grey of the morning the Moslems returned to the battle. Their cavaliers had soon hewn their way into the center of the Christian host. But many of the Moslems were fearful for the safety of the spoil which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering the camp, whereupon several sqaudrons of the Moslem horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it ***seemed*** *as if they fled, and all the host was troubled. And while Abd-er-Rahman strove to check their tumult, and to lead them back to battle, the Warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy, and many died in the flight.*

- Anonymous Arab chronicler

Adventure ideas

This adventure is supposed to be about puzzle solving, creativity, and maybe a bit of fast political footwork, depending on how much you and the players get into that sort of thing. Events are going to be happening outside the perceptions of the characters, and the timetable in which they occur will eventually be important.

First things first. The characters arrive in a shower of electrical arcing and sizzling that leaves them with stunned senses and singed hair. Par for the course. Since all directions look equally good, whichever way they head off will send them in the direction of Tours. After they leave (or if they set up camp), a local will stumble across the Jump site, associate it with the lightning and thunder heard earlier, and rush off to tell someone. Someone more important will investigate. This will be passed up the ladder until Charles Martel hears of it and investigates. Coincidentally, he is closer to the characters than he is to Tours, so news will get to him before it gets to anyone in the town proper.

Setting the stage

The characters tour the countryside, and see some of the refugees passing through. They find that the language spoken here is an archaic French. Decent skills with Latin or French may not get you erudite conversation, but wth lots of hand gestures thrown in, you can probably get fairly compex concepts across. Make the players describe how they will transcend any language barrier.

With a little luck and some simple deduction, they can find out what is going on to the south (*Hmm...peasants fleeing north? Must be war to the south*). This may alter their plans. Somehow, somewhere, Charles Martel and retinue (he *did* bring an army with him) catch up with the characters. Depending on reactions, firepower and diplomacy, he will try to enlist the characters to his aid. He does speak several languages, none of which are modern English (This will be a recurring problem for Primary Game characters until they become multilingual or the GM invokes the optional Matrix power that eliminates this need).

While in his mid-40's, Martel is still leading armies. He is fit and strong, cunning and pragmatic. As a bastard son, he had to claw his way to power. He is used to exercising it and equally used to being obeyed without question. He *looks* like a leader. He can administer what is known as “high justice” (effectively judge, jury and executioner), and uses it without much hesitation. He's running an army, and harsh, unyielding discipline is the only thing that keeps it together.

There is a war going on right now, so his mood is not as good as it might be. You can make Martel a real bastard, using overt threats, or he could be as benevolent as 8th century feudal lords get. During the interrogation of the characters, the GM should make sure to drop enough hints of extratemporal items or temporal tampering to pique the character's interest. By consent or under armed guard, the characters *will* go with him, or lead his forces on a merry chase through the countryside until their Matrix recharges and they Jump out. This could also take a few days. Depending on the previous Jump, it is unlikely that Matrix is recharged by now.

Touring Tours

It may be a day or two on foot to get to Tours. This is as good a time as any to introduce characters to what *real* authority is like. Martel has it, the characters don't. Society is such that you obey your betters without question, and characters may see an example or two of what happens if you don't. Among equals of rank, things are often treated very fomrally, considering each will have a small army at their disposal, and wars can be started over careless (or carefully chosen) words. It should be good preparation for later adventures and encounters with authoritarian societies.

Martel and his particular group seem to be travelling light and, and characters get the impression this is almost an oversized scouting party (though several hundred strong), a quick tour the local situation before getting down to the dirty business at hand. The other fifty thousand or so troops are behind him and are fast-marching to Tours under other commanders. Camp is made with small groups of friendly forces. Characters are treated well, but kept an eye on. If they made a bad first impression or pissed Martel off, they will be kept tied up, otherwise they have the run of camp. After no more than a day on the road, they get within sight of Tours. As they approach, a rider is sent forward with a written dispatch of some type. Having the best command of language, Martel will tell the characters they are going to be brought before the “council of important people” to “render judgement”. Any ambiguities in the translation may or may not be deliberate.

Tours *is* where the battle is going to be fought if at all possible, and both sides know it. Tours is located along the Loire river, in a broad gap between ranges of low mountains. It is a natural route for trade, and the *only* easy route for quickly moving large numbers of troops through the area.

The characters get back to Tours. A walled town of several thousand people, it lies along the banks of the Loire river, and under the shadow of a small motte-and-bailey castle. If this is the characters first encounter with a Dark Ages or medeival city...well... there is no running water, no sewers, few paved streets, and lots of animals. To be blunt, it stinks. After a few days, your nose will get used to it.

Tours has a number of craftsmen, and an open-air market for various foodstuffs and a very small selection of manufactured goods. There is *no* equivalent to an inn or tavern. Eateries and lodging establishments are not a universal concept, another thing characters will need to get used to. Here, guests are expected to have a host that they stay with, which covers both food and lodging.

As they approach the center of town, characters *will* notice things that are somewhat unusual but out of sorts. There will be a few streets paved in stone, clogged gutters that apparently led to underground pipes, what look like dried up public “fountains” (water distribution nodes), and other touches that indicate the presence of a vanished but civilized hand.

Politics

The “council” that the characters are being brought before is a varied group of individuals. There is no clear indication if they are a governing body of some type, or whether they are just individuals with enough clout that nothing important is done without their say so. Martel is aware that at one time there were some “supernatural” goings-on in Tours, and the possibility of further such aid is what has brought him (and the characters) to the city well ahead of his army. Martel is *obviously* in charge. Even without understanding what they say, the body language and tones of voice make it clear who the alpha male in the room is. It is also clear that this council has power or authority which Martel shows *some* deference to. He has the power to override the lot, and everyone knows it, but it would be at some personal cost which he is unlikely to incur on behalf of the characters.

Among the council are two old men, ancient by this culture's standards, and four middle-aged men, one of which is in clerical garb and obviously unhappy. Aside from him, it is difficult to read the body language of the council members. There are guards on the doors, and a handful of assistants of some type, whom the characters will quickly find out are slaves knowing different languages in the hope that a common one can be found.

It is *extremely* important for characters to understand the power structure of the day, and that they are at the bottom rung of that structure as regards their possessions, their freedom and their *lives*. There is no formal “due process”, no rights, and no appeals unless the accused is of a status that the judges don't *want* to have final responsibility for the case. The Magna Carta won't be signed for centuries, and that's another country, anyway. Hearsay may or may not be evidence, and appealing to the self-interest of the judges is perfectly alright. The word of a higher status individual is worth inherently more than that of one of lower status. Women, with few exceptions, are considered property. What little legal protections apply to free men don't apply to women. Verdicts are almost always final, and sentences are carried out more or less immediately. Slavery *is* legal. Money talks.

What appears to be at stake here is some important decision regarding the characters, why, they don't know. It is clear that the characters are seen as different from the run-of-the-mill refugees, even well-off ones if they are well-dressed and/or equipped. Whether Martel informed them of why they are important depends on how they acquitted themselves in the initial encounter with him. Words that sound suspiciously like “conjurer” (conjurer), “sorciere” (sorcery), and “daemon” (demon) are passed back and forth. Questions are posed from the council, translated as best is possible, and *answers* are expected. The assumption *will* be made that the character group has a leader (“You're all equals? Ridiculous!”), and most questions will go to *that* person. There will also be some unsubtle prodding and poking, and general amazement that all the characters have all their teeth. A sure sign of sorcery, that.

If characters are passive and offer no information other than answering questions, the GM is free to make whatever decision they choose. Default would be an even split between burning at the stake or using any sorcerous powers at the group's disposal, and *then* deciding whether to burn them at the stake. The two older members are in this latter camp, and seem to have been eyewitnesses to some very old event in which the characters or someone like them played a pivotal part. Martel, being a practical sort, would break the tie by voting for the latter case as well, which also shields him from having to use any veto power. Characters who make an effort to ingratiate themselves to the council, or provide eloquent (as possible) arguments in their defense, or who can provide a plan of how they can be useful would be able to sway the council towards a more favorable decision, maybe even leaving out that nasty burning at the stake part altogether. On the other hand, characters who are openly disrespectful of their betters can expect short shrift from the council. Nebulous and unproven sorcerous powers are a vague evil, but public affronts to pride and challenges to the established order are *quite* unacceptable. Any result which does not involve immediate gaoling and near-immediate, painful, public execution is *clearly* unacceptable to the clerical type, and if outvoted, he will take the results with little grace and storm out. Smart characters would do well to watch their backs. The more favorable members might be worth approaching privately at some later time. Any other council vote will give the characters varying degrees of supervised freedom, ranging from “near-total luxury” to “live in room A, work in room B, guards at all times”. Only after the council has made its decision do the characters get to find out exactly what they are being asked to do and what they have to do it with.

Vault of the ages

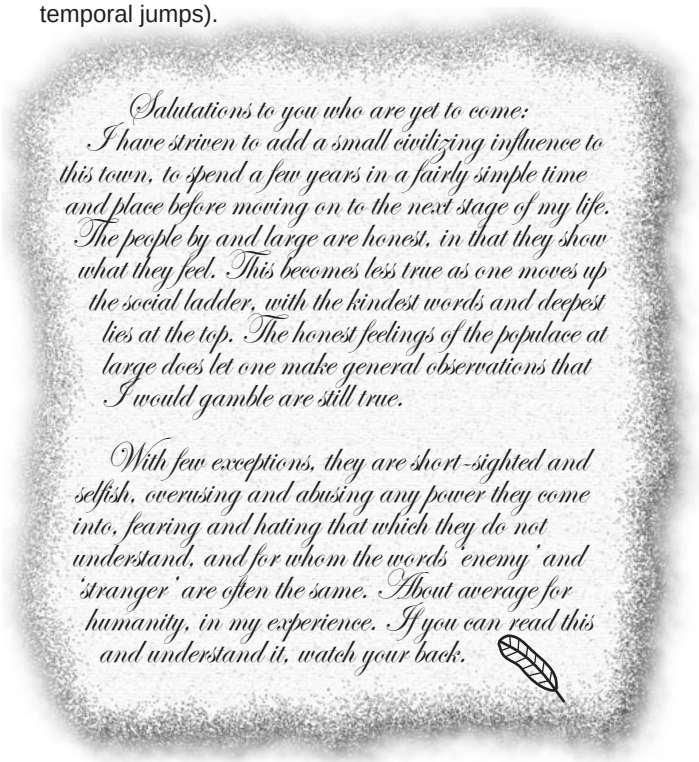
Or reasonably furnished apartment of the ages, anyway. If they haven't already, characters will understand something of what is up when the local mason finishes chiseling the mortar away from a walled-in door. The iron-bound wooden door has a hand-painted symbol on it, the common symbol on $Earth_0$, $Earth_4$ and $Earth_5$ for radiation. There's nothing radioactive here, whoever it was just liked the image and used as a “wizardly sign” (but not a sigil). Set near the latch is what appears to be a modern-style door lock, though apparently made with local materials. The equivalent key would be about twice the size of a modern door or car key. The door *is* locked, but it would only be Difficulty 5 to pick with proper tools. With someone who knew how the lock operated, improvised tools would be at Difficulty 6. If neither, the door *can* be broken down with a small battering ram.

Inside, it is clear that the individual who lived here was of some importance, for the quarters are actually *two* rooms, a smaller which is filled with various “stuff”, and a larger which was actually lived in. It has a bed, desk, wardrobe, small fireplace, various wall hangings and an actual glass window. All would seem to verify the local story that the room has been unoccupied for the last fifty years or so. The dust is undisturbed, and aside from a little dry rot, everything is in fairly good condition.

The group escorting the characters will hover around the area of the main door, except for Martel, who is apparently unafraid for either his body or soul (if the *characters* aren't showing signs of fear, he isn't worried). He will ask a number of questions of the characters, the nature of which indicate both a keen mind and a certain long-term mercenary interest in exploiting the situation (e.g. “Do you know how to make glass like in that window?”).

Any of the other council members will make officious noises after a short while and absent themselves after assurances that no demons will be manifesting any time soon. A double guard will be posted outside the door. Whether to protect, confine or follow the characters depends on the situation. Martel will either himself or through an interpreter strongly suggest that anything of importance be brought to *his* attention. Somewhere in the translation is the implication of either *only* his attention or *first* to his attention, you're not sure which.

Exploring the room turns up a number of items out of place for the 8th century AD. A potential list follows, but most obvious is a handwritten note in fairly standard English under a thin plank on the desk. It was written with a quill pen, the remnants of which are to one side (characters will have noted early on that modern pens are messy casualties of temporal jumps).



There is no signature, but a sigil that looks like a quill pen, slanting from upper left to lower right. The paper (not parchment or vellum) the note is is printed on crumbles to the touch. Without something like an adhesive plastic film to hold it together, it will soon flake to nothingness just from random air currents in the room.

The *players* should quite rightly by this point see what the *characters* are being asked to do. Politics aside, it is a straightforward plot: Using only the contents of the box and your ingenuity, foil the evil villains. Why? First, the characters are more or less prisoners, even if the cage is gilded. Second, an army is on its way, one which may or may not be inclined to taking prisoners (read the Arab chronicler's report). Third, there isn't a single one of the council members who wouldn't trade knowledge of evil sorcerors to the enemy if required to save their own skins. And last, if the characters can decrease the expected death toll (on one or *both* sides) by their actions, do they really have anything *better* to do at the moment? More experienced characters will already have most of the knowledge they need, and should rely more on personal influence and reputation to multiply the hands available to do the work. Less experienced groups will tend to rely more on material goods left behind by the unknown TimeLord.

Speaking of which, roll 1d10 four times on the following table to see what random material was left behind as unnecessary by the TimeLord. If you care, what he (apparently a he) left behind as unnecessary might be an indication of where he went, should you ever pursue that option.

Roll	Item(s)
1	A pair of lead-lined jars containing 1kg of black powder.
2	Pair of TL5 flintlock pistols (use equipment list), about 20 bullets, a lead bar and a bullet mold.
3	Basic medical/first aid text, TL12 vintage.
4	Bolt of ripstop nylon, about 1m wide by 20m long.
5	Small distilling apparatus (copper), and selection of *very* well-aged moonshines (total of 2 liters).
6	Small brass telescope of the collapsing pocket variety.
7	Short sword (use equipment list).
8	TL12 crossbow, unstrung, plus 12 steel quarrels (use equipment list).
9	Usable TL11+ first aid supplies such as sterile sealed bandages, alcohol wipes, suture packs and disposable scalpels.
10	Industrial chemistry text, TL9 vintage.

In addition, there is a selection of mouldering and/or moth-eaten clothing in the wardrobe, a selection of long-expired and possibly dangerous medicines of unknown type, and a barely intact hand-drawn vellum map of the region. Taking the map off the wall would probably destroy it. There are some elemental symbols drawn here and there on the map, which at a rough guess might be sources of ore for that particular element. Any detailed investigation will find that any smelting equipment or knowledge from the time of the map has long since been lost.

You and what army?

The approaching army will be within “field battle” range in about a week, and a few days after that would be able to start laying siege to or assaulting the town. Events will start escalating appropriately. Only refugees of fighting trim will be allowed into town. Local subsistence farmers will either hightail it out or bring as much as they can carry within the walls. Prices for just about everything will rise, and just about everything will become scarce. Hoarding and price gouging will be tolerated up to a point. People will naturally cross that point and be summarily executed as a public warning to the rest. Crowded conditions will make tempers short, and altercations are common.

This is the backdrop in which the characters will be working. If the characters need to go outside town for some reason (e.g. maybe there is a local sulfur source they need to get to), then it will be under escort, and it is quite possible to run into advance elements of Abd-er-Rahman's army.

Within town, the height and appearance of the characters will make them stand out, and the rumor mill will of course know all the wrong things about them. Many will shy away from the characters and ward themselves against evil, while others might seek to curry favor, press sick infants upon the characters for miracle cures, and everything in between. It is *quite* possible that someone will attempt to stick a dirty knife between a character's ribs if the opportunity arises.

All of the favorable council members will at some time or the other manage to get a private meeting with one or the other of the characters. This will be some combination of asking for exclusive or first information (like Martel already asked), personal favors ("I've got this aching joint...") and some assurance that if the worst happens the characters can help that person and their immediate family magically escape. The unfavorable council members are the ones behind the knife in the ribs and will be the first to rat on the characters should it be useful in saving their own skins. Failure to produce any demonstratable results before the enemy army is in engaging range will bring strident calls from the cleric to purge the town of "evil influences", and even Martel will be inclined to sacrifice the characters to an angry mob if no miracles seem to be forthcoming.

There are no reliable figures for the order of battle, and despite its size and importance, even exactly where the battle took place is unknown (which is awfully convenient from a time travel standpoint). In **CORPS** terms, a mass combat between the forces would be as follows. We have broken down the quantities of troops into smaller units to give you flexibility in deploying them.

Army of Abd-er-Rahman
Unit 1: 5,000 elite light cavalry (strength 55)
Unit 2: 5,000 light cavalry (strength 50)
Unit 3: 20,000 elite light infantry (strength 55)
Unit 4: 20,000 light infantry (strength 41)
Unit 5: 20,000 light infantry (strength 41)
Notes: Assume *average* skill is 4-5, *average* DV is 3. Cavalry gets a 1 row shift for mobility advantage

Army of Charles Martel
Unit 1: 3,000 heavy cavalry (strength 50)
Unit 2: 20,000 light infantry (strength 41)
Unit 3: 20,000 light infantry (strength 41)
Unit 4: 20,000 green light infanry (strength 36)
Notes: Better military leader provided nothing happens to Charles Martel. Cavalry gets a 1 row shift for mobility advantage

Historically, the Frankish forces under Martel won. This would be no fun for the characters, so for the scenario, use the strength numbers in parentheses (we're assuming he won *because* of the characters, not *in spite* of them). In a field battle, odds are in favor of Abd-er-Rahman's army, which will rely heavily on harrying tactics by the lightly armored cavalry. Frankish troops mainly were a phalanx upon which the waves of cavalry broke and tried to push over and through, and is noted as a rare instance in which an infantry line held against such a concerted mounted attack. Abd-er-Rahman's men were armed with scimitars, shields (and light lances in the case of cavalry), while the Franks were armed with an assortment of javelins, daggers, swords, shields and axes. In a siege, odds would still be in Abd-er-Rahman's favor, since he wouldn't press any attack until the defenders were half starved and sick from overcrowded, unsanitary conditions. What the characters can bring to this is unknown, save that it will probably require their presence near the thick of things if it is going to have any effect. For personal participation, numerical odds against characters might be determined by which force the characters were with and which group they were facing (while a tech-superior group of characters could engage a much larger force by themselves, sheer odds would likely end up killing the characters). Martel would be in and part of the heavy cavalry group.

Suggestions that might apply to different types of character groups:

Form your own little combat unit. If you have good skills and weapon type/tech superiority, it could be a significant addition (a group of 5 characters with TL-superior ranged weapons and skills and armor of 4 would be a strength of about 30).
Provide better communication capability to gain the intelligence bonus for mass combat.
Come up with something that can be manufactured on short order for the green infantry to use as a weapon type bonus.
Find a way to incapacitate the enemy commander, which would end up giving another bonus for having *double* the Military Sci skill of opponents.

Every group of characters needs an occasional chaotic brush with death to keep them on their toes. A medieval field battle is just the thing. There is opportunity for personal valor, bowel-loosening danger, exhausting personal combat and plenty of ways for ASP to be used should the characters get in over their heads. If the players are of the type that want it, their participation in the battle can be handled using the regular combat system, a skirmish representative of the larger conflict.

Aftermath

Provided characters avoid any GM-generated intrigue before the battle, and the battle itself, there is the post-battle wrangling to deal with. How much of a problem this is depends on whether the Matrix is charged. If so, they might just quietly slip off and never be seen again. Otherwise, how much they personally contributed to the success of their side will be measured by the Guts & Glory part of the mass combat system. Character groups that net *negative* Influence points are in desperate danger of being burned at the stake for being evil, useless and now expendable. Three or less points nets a “You are cordially invited to leave and not return.”, while four or more gets into the grudging acceptance and possibly even a larger reward than simply letting the characters live. This would be at best a share of the loot left behind by the Caliph's army, plus whatever of the previous sorceror's things are not deemed too evil to be allowed to continue to exist. The share of the spoils would likely be *a* horse and tack, plus a variety of melee weapons and some armor not needed by its former owners.

Horses and their equipment are for the Europeans, an extremely expensive undertaking. A well-trained and equipped animal probably has about the same value as a light tank would on today's market. For instance, in the Carolignian Empire, certain military service was compulsory, but only land owners with at least 300 acres (120 hectares) were considered wealthy enough to support a horse, squire, weapons and supplies for a three month summer campaign. People didn't aim to kill horses in war. You kill the rider and take the horse as spoils... The characters being offered *one* warhorse and equipment is therefore a substantial reward in the reckoning of the leaders of Tours, and the equipping of the “leader's” retinue with Arab weapons and armor is small change (padded cloth or hardened leather for torso, arms and upper legs, complete with vermin, plus daggers and scimitars). In addition, Martel has just been exposed to effective, stirrup-using cavalry, and is starting to get ideas on how to use that type of force himself. He is loath to give up *any* of the fine surviving Arab horses, but *one* can be spared.

GM notes

Obviously, this adventure is oriented towards a Primary Game campaign. While it is set on $Earth_0$, events of similar type and importance also occurred on $Earth_2$, though this would be centuries later and involve primitive firearms. Aside from the obvious plot, other options mainly involve around intrigue. The characters would get involved in either as outsiders who can see things from a different viewpoint, or as the object of the intrigue itself. There could be a traitor within the walls ready to sabotage the town's defenses or leak information out to Abd-er-Rahman's army. There could be an assassination attempt on Charles Martel by infiltrators, or on the characters, who would then have the unenviable position of having enemies on both sides of the walls. It is also unlikely but possible that temporal tampering could be going on in the Arab camp. It would not be unreasonable to have a TimeLord wishing a fully Islamic world, and the Arabs *were* scientifically far ahead of Europe at this time. This battle is considered important enough that if the Franks lost, *all* of Europe might have eventually been conquered by Islamic forces. Presumably then, the reason the original TimeLords were not here is that there is an even more important pivot point earlier or later in history, such that outcomes here will only generate localized changes.

Combat - This falls into three potential encounters: First, a one-on-one with a lone assassin or thug who just happens to not like one of the characters. The assassin would be better skilled, but neither is likely to be armored and will have more or less average stats. Second would be an encounter outside the town before the main army arrives. For instance, maybe the characters Jumped in with something bulky but useful, and a horse cart with escort is sent to retreive it. This would be a small skirmish with an advance element of Abd-er-Rahman's army, probably a cavalry unit with light armor, lances and scimitars. Last would be the mass combat itself, already described. Each encounter can be tailored to the abilities of the potential combatants, and it is quite reasonable that in some cases the most prudent course of action is *not* to fight, but to run like hell and scream for help.

Foreshadowing - Not a lot. This may be the characters first encounter with a sigil, and they have a small idea of the personality attached to it from the note he left and the style in which he lived in Poitiers. If there is temporal tampering on the other side of the wall, then the characters may have made their first enemy by thwarting the attack.

Nothing itches under the skin of time traveling characters more than seeing evidence you've been somewhere, and not having actually been there yet. It means that sometime, somewhere, somehow, you will be back in this spot. And, if the evidence shows that something bad happens to you there, it's even worse. Depending on how much you want to give the characters the creeps, there are a number of items that could be in the previous “wizard's” quarters that are suggestive of future character involvement with the circumstances of this adventure.

A skull on a shelf, with a bullet hole between the eyes, wearing eyeglasses belonging to one of the characters. All of the skull's teeth are gone, as is the lower jaw. This could be amusing if the character gets rid of their own glasses to avoid this fate and keeps coming into possession of similar ones.

If the characters have developed any sigil for themselves, there will be a small book of hand-written notes on various sigils, and a character's entry has “deceased” on the “last known status” line.

A grave marker of high status in the church cemetery has a modern English quote on it that is characteristic of one of the characters in the group. Investigation will reveal that the person was a visitor to the wizard who died under unknown circumstances. Any attempts to desecrate the site will encounter a 6 meter sphere of solid rock instead of a coffin. No body, no proof of death...

Drama - This is a pivotal battle as far as the history of Europe goes, and can be considered a nexus or ending point of a leg for any time travel through this continuum. Any characters with knowledge of this period will know this, and be aware that their actions may shape the world of the future in ways unimaginable. Enough movers and shakers are here that the death of some of them is unavoidable, and the actions of the characters will make the difference for not a few. For instance, not only is Charles Martel important in his own right, he is also the grandfather of Charlemagne. Had Martel not survived and tightened the grip on power which he eventually passed to his sons at his death in 741CE, Charelmagne's career might have turned out differently. In addition to this, there will be the problem of dealing with self-important people used to the power of life and death over lesser mortals like the characters. Even if hailed as wizards, the current attitude towards magic is not good, and once the battle is over, any gratitude may be short-lived.

Shore Leave

Most gameworlds where characters operate from a central location but adventure elsewhere will eventually come around to having adventures “at home”, usually some form of local intrigue, internal squabbling within an organization, or that old favorite, springing something on the characters when they don’t have all their goodies. “Shore Leave” is a case of the latter.

Opening scene

Your Guardian team has finally cycled around for some extended R&R, and after taking care of personal matters elsewhere, a vote was taken to spend a few weeks together, but away from it all, in the sunny Caribbean. A little out of the way island, only a few tourists, no publicity, and paid for by the Guardians. No worries, no problems...right.

The characters are in their “present”, taking a well-earned break from the demanding duties of the Patrol. But there can be trouble, even in Paradise.

It's hurricane season. While modern satellite tracking can show the size and course of the storm, nothing can be done about it. Fortunately, it is supposed to miss the island by a wide mark, and the only side effect will be better waves for surfing, although they are still modest by anyone's measure. However, this storm decides to make an unexpected turn and change of velocity one night, and before the characters know it, the storm hits and they're stuck here.

Equipment

How public the Guardians (or any Time Patrol) is varies with each campaign, but regardless, once members are out on the street, they often have no authority except the reputation of the Patrol. If the Patrol is secret, they don't even have that. So, if flying or traveling across international boundaries, nasty weapons are a definite no-no. For reference, Guardian characters would probably Portal into a local HQ on Earth, and then take conventional transport from there to the island. The only weapons allowed onto the island are large diving knives, spear guns or bang sticks. Regulations don't get bent for the characters, and in fact, they will be "encouraged" by their superiors to "take it easy for a while". There are probably not more than a handful of guns on the entire island, like a revolver for the police captain, and a pair of pump shotguns locked up at the station. There has never been any need for more.

Hurricane Ilene

This is a pretty good sized storm, with peak winds topping 30m/sec (too high to stand up against). As the storm arrives during the night, it will quickly take out the satellite links from the small airport and central phone station. The island's generators will lose power about an hour later. The storm will not be a total surprise, it's just that by the time word can get around, it is too late to leave, and there is barely enough time to find cover. The storm will completely pass over the island during the night, with a 30 minute lull as the island passes through the eye.

Characters should be given the opportunity to do stupid and/or heroic things during the height of the storm. Rescuing people from collapsed buildings, trying to get the hospital's generator working, and so on. A quick way to resolve this is assign a Difficulty to the task of 1d10, which the character has a general idea of, and a risk factor of 1d10, which is a Difficulty that that character must roll against with an appropriate attribute (dodging debris, hooking up the wrong wire, etc.). Failure to make this second roll means the character takes a lethal impairment of the difference to a random location. Simply coming through the storm unscathed is a Difficulty 5 AWR task, easy enough unless someone gets a random disaster.

In the morning, the depth of the devastation is apparent. Over 80% of the palm trees and houses are destroyed, and most of the other buildings have suffered some damage. Electricity and phone service are out, but water supplies are still alright. The characters, who are hopefully compassionate at heart, might help look for the dead and the injured, or set up first aid stations or kitchens to feed the homeless.

Relief helicopters and boats won't arrive for about three days, as other islands have been even harder hit. Others only caught the edges of the storm, and are more or less intact.

Trouble in Paradise

Aside from all the characters getting to use survival, first aid and a few other skills, there is one *slight* problem that the hurricane dropped off.

A 10,000 ton freighter, the *Broncol*, was carried by the storm and grounded up on the windward side of the island. Normally, it would have end up on the off-shore reefs, but the storm surge raised local ocean levels by enough to let it over. It is now quite thoroughly stuck, however. Shortly before the hurricane, the freighter was fleeing from a Trade Authority cutter, and dived into hurricane rather than face certain capture. It worked. The Trade Authority vessel stayed clear of the storm, and the Broncol got away. Good thing for the Broncol, for its cargo of smugglers and contraband would face certain imprisonment or worse if captured.

⚠ For many Patrol campaigns, the “rest of the world” is often left vague and undefined. For this capsule, the GM will have to figure out certain political and social background items. For instance, is the Trade Authority national or international? What is smuggled, who buys it, who does it, why is it illegal and what are the punishments? For Guardian campaigns, the TA is the global equivalent of the Coast Guard, and with a global government, mainly concerns itself with contraband and tax evasion smuggling.

The smugglers number about 15, and are well armed, with pistols, submachine guns and assault rifles, and a reasonable (but not unlimited) supply of ammunition. The way they got on the island will not get them off, and they are very loath to leave without their cargo, as it represents a significant economic investment (a few hundred million credits, at least).

Their initial plan is to try and move their ship back out to sea, not realizing that the reefs will block them. With force of arms, they intend to mobilize the island population as a work force to dig the freighter out. In the name of haste, the basic survival needs of the islanders will be ignored, and a few will likely be executed, just out of frustration. The local police are likely the first to go. Characters will be second if the smugglers realize they are Patrol (or other government agents). Those unable to work are hostages to the good behavior of those who remain. The smugglers know they only have a few days to get the ship back to sea before rescue workers start to arrive, and will work the islanders to death if need be.

It will take nearly a day and a half of constant labor to refloat the ship, and another hour or so to find out the bad news about the offshore reef, unless of course, someone told them beforehand that their plan would not work.

When this happens, they have two options. The first is to fix the largest boats that remain on the island, and load their cargo into them. The cargo is several tons, at least, and it may require 3 or 4 boats, or there may simply be no boats left of any size, the hurricane having destroyed them all. The other option is cruel, and should be obvious to many before it is finally implemented. The cargo will be buried on a safe spot on the island, camouflaged, and then everyone on the island will be killed so no one can tell where it is buried. This is several hundred people, but since most of them have already been rounded up as a labor force, it would not be difficult to massacre them *en masse*. Characters will have to intervene to save their skins.

Smugglers

There are 15 smugglers, ranging in skills from 3 to 6 in combat fields. Three are always posted on the ship, one each on the bridge, bow and stern. The bridge guard can see the bow clearly, but the bow guard cannot see the bridge clearly through the bridge windows (base Difficulty of 5 for range, and +1 Difficulty on AWR for obscurement). The bow guard can see the stern guard about half the time (and vice versa), as he paces back and forth (base Difficulty of 6 for range, and +1 Difficulty on AWR for obscurement). The entire ship is dimly lit at night, and the sound of the generator and bilge pumps adds to background noise (+2 Difficulty to sight and sound AWR). The bridge is where the long-range radio equipment of the ship is, but the antenna has been damaged, and will take a few hours to fix. Characters without an electronics background (skill of 4 or more) will not be able to tell this when attempting to use the radio.

On shore, there is one smuggler guard for each 200 women and children (total of 4-5), and one per 100 men (6-7). Each group has two handheld radios, which they can use to communicate between each other and the ship. Half the islanders are locked up in the town auditorium at night, with guards posted outside, and the other half are in the walled area around the hotel's pool. Each group has been warned that if there are problems, the other group will suffer for it.

Given the odds, the islanders and the characters could easily overwhelm them, but no one wants to be the first to die. In addition, there are always a few who will squeal to save their own skins, or out of the mistaken belief that if everyone cooperates, everything will be alright.

Smuggler

STR	5
AGL	5
AWR	4
WIL	5
HLT	5
POW	1

"Nobody moves and nobody gets hurt..."

Skills	**Level**	**Equipment** (one from each column)	
Projectile weapons	3	Colt Python	Body armor (5/5)
Melee weapons	3	Spectre SMG	TL12 grenade
Unarmed combat	4	Uzi SMG	Walkie-talkie
Area. kn. (ship)	4	Colt M-16A3	Bowie knife (+1DV)

Background

Represents the poorly trained thugs who comprise most of the group. The leaders (2 or 3) will have skills and AWR a point or two higher, *will* have body armor plus an extra item, and may also be professional level in a few non-combat skills.

The main weakness of the smugglers is their low numbers. A well-timed, quiet assault on a few key positions could take them out quite easily. The main trick is to quietly get a few and their weapons before the rest start opening fire on defenseless islanders.

Another weakness is that a few of the smugglers may take an amorous interest in any good looking females, and if one of these is a character, it presents an opportunity.

The last weakness is that they don't know there is a team of combat-trained Patrol agents on the island. However, if they find this out, they will probably threaten to kill a few hundred islanders unless the characters surrender immediately.

GM notes

This adventure is suitable for any type of game. Primary Game characters can get sucked into events that happen where they are, while Secondary Game characters can have similar experiences while taking rest and recuperation from their actual duties. Having a character or two with only partially healed injuries adds another handful of sand into the gearbox.

Combat - This adventure was made for combat. Tactical planning, short brutal firefights, improvised weapons, hostages galore, and antagonists who generate little sympathy for making sure they live to see justice. Increasing or decreasing the violence is a simple matter of altering the viciousness of the enemies. If they are mainly bluffing in their threats, they will be more open to negotiation, more defensive. If they are just bloodthirsty scum, they will be more likely to kill hostages to make their point, shoot more often, use torture to get information, and generally make the characters come to them or watch innocent people get brutally killed.

Foreshadowing - Not much. This is an isolated event, with few or no repercussions outside the immediate area. There is some potential that a person here, or their descendants may play a part in a future adventure ("So *you* are the one who stood idly by and watched my father be tortured to death, when it was within your power to save him!").

Drama - The human drama of the hostages and the smugglers will provide fertile ground for any number of options. Family members who are free and allied with the characters may lean on the characters to avoid risky plans, or fail to hold up their end of any plans if an opportunity to help their own loved ones appears. The smugglers may be of divided opinion on how to proceed, and any captured characters may be able to influence things or enhance this division.

Shakedown

The adventures so far have not directly involved any other TimeLords. This is about to change. Faust is more vicious than most, but his methods of operation are typical. Stay at a safe distance and get someone else to do the dirty work.

Opening scene

The group appears in an enclosed, sandy area. On the 20m high ceiling are banks of floodlights, and both it and the walls appear to be made out of roughly fused metal. There is a single door, and it looks as solid as the front of a tank. Nothing happens for about 30 seconds, and then a speaker mounted somewhere in the floodlight array announces in a matter-of-fact voice, "You are my prisoners. You will all drop all your weapons in a pile on the far side of the room. You will then strip and manacle yourselves to the convenient chains on the far wall."

Even if the characters realize they are in a hopeless situation, they are still likely to argue with the voice. An answer is ready. "If you don't, I will simply gas you all into unconsciousness, have someone else strip you, and perform interesting medical procedures on you to vent my frustration at being disobeyed. You have 30 seconds..."

Backdrop

The characters have just learned that Jumps can be altered from an outside source, and destinations can be changed (at some risk). If they did know, they might have been able to detect the tampering before their last Jump and thwarted it. As it is, they are now the prisoners of a TimeLord named Faust, who travels around the multiverse inside a small, converted asteroid. He does anything he wants, and so far has gotten away with it. He a TimeLord who has decided to promote himself to God, and treats lesser mortals with the callousness you would expect from same.

Faust is of average height, but masses at least 150 kilos. Most of it looks like fat, and he would be almost laughable except for his voice and piercing eyes. You know this man is *dangerous.* Heeling to either side are giant wolves. Seated, the head of each one is midway to his shoulders, and they look far too intelligent to be friendly.

Faust wants an object, and he wants the characters to get it for him. He will explain this to the characters in the entry chamber as their clothes (sans weapons) are dumped in piles next to them by a very tall Amazon with pointed teeth, whose name is apparently Mary. Faded surgical scars give the impression she is more than she appears, and she appears to be a really mondo, badass bitch.

Faust answers to no one, and doesn't have to say why he wants the characters to fetch for him, or why he isn't doing it himself, but he does so anyway, because it pleases him.

"You are going to recover the Cross of St. Christopheri for me. Why? Because I am going to program the next two jumps of your Matrix. The first will take you to the continuum and time where it is located, and the second will bring you back here. No matter how long you wait, your next Jump will be back here, and if you don't have it with you, I will kill you one by one in some grisly, artistic fashion." He gives the characters a brief but disturbing smile, and continues.

"I would go and get it myself, but during my younger days I lived in that continuum, blissfully unaware of the existence of the Cross, and now, the entire period when the history of the Cross is known is closed to me. Naturally, I do not trust my Matrix to anyone else, nor do I trust the Matrices of anyone else. So, you *will* do my bidding, or spend the rest of your lives in that miserable little timeline wondering when I will send someone to kill you one by one in your sleep."

Part of what he is telling the characters is a lie, of course. If synchronization would prevent him from going to fetch it, it would stop the characters, too. The problem is, neither he nor Mary can Jump or Portal to the timeline where that artifact exists. No one else apparently has a problem. This flies in the face of Faust's extensive knowledge of Designer technology. This bothers him a *great* deal, and makes him want the artifact even more.
While talking to the characters, he is examining their Matrix, which he finds immediately, regardless of how well it may have been concealed. If the characters by any chance had more than one Matrix...well, they don't anymore. He takes a Matrix out of his pocket, and presses the two together. A small temporal ripple is felt by everyone in the room, and he tosses their Matrix onto the nearest convenient surface.

"Your Matrix is now recharged and ready to go. I expect it may take you a while to get the Cross, but how you do so is of no concern to me. You *will* be back." With that, he turns and leaves. The massive doors shut behind him with a hydraulic hiss, and the manacles on the character's wrists are released from some remote location.

Note - If the characters are in bad shape from mishaps of a previous adventure, Faust may be a genial host, seeing to it that the characters are fixed up. He has excellent facilities, and his medical staff can easily fix virtually any problem that doesn't require replacement parts, and maybe a few that do. While Faust has *no* intention of letting the characters go once they do his bidding, he *does* want the mission completed, and it will take a while. So, characters will get lots of painful booster shots, dental work, the works. Faust will also get complete DNA samples as a side effect, along with fingerprints, dental records, etc.

Partly out of paranoia, but mostly as a mind game, the entire stay of the characters in his ship will be stark naked, regardless of the personal embarrassment or inconvenience this might cause. Since everything the characters say or do is going to be recorded, this kind of psychological pressure gives him an opportunity to get a feel for the characters, should for some reason they manage to get away from him.

⚠ Just in case you were wondering, Faust cannot travel the timelines in his personal fortress, but he can employ it for mundane interplanetary or interstellar travel if he wishes. No one knows which timeline it is based out of or when it exists on that timeline. The rumor given the most credence is that his fortress is actually a construct of some alien race, and exists only in Earth's distant (pre-Designer) past. Certainly no records of its existence or construction have been found on any Earth timeline.

The Cross
The Cross of St. Christopheri is a solid gold cross roughly 30cm wide and 50cm long. It weighs about 20 kilograms, and is encrusted from top to bottom with precious stones. It is the holy symbol of the Order of St. Christopheri, a benevolent religious order in a fringe alternate Earth. It is credited with several miracles, and the only people allowed to see or touch it are the highest priests of the order. Otherwise, it remains on its pedestal in the stone chambers beneath the monastery where it is kept, under constant vigil by two knights of the order.
Unknown to the characters but strongly suspected by Faust, the Cross is more than a priceless treasure. At the center of the cross is a that rarity of Designer technology, a malfunctioning Matrix, whose points extend out the back of the cross so that contact can be made with it. It can't or won't jump through time or space, but it can warp reality around itself, and will do so for *anyone* who can convince it to, not just one of Lucifer's descendants. Since it is malfunctioning, it may never have gotten the order to lock out the past either, making it exceptionally dangerous to humanity in general. Faust is *extremely* intrigued by the possibility of undoing Designer security interlocks, and a partially functional but unlocked Matrix would be a priceless research tool.

If you can communicate with this Matrix, you can warp both large or small-scale probaility around it. On a large scale, only the most general of actions can be enhanced, and that is largely the function of the Order of St. Christoferi. There has not been a plague, drought, earthquake or major flood within 100 kilometers of the monastery for over 200 years. The prayers of the priests and their unknowing skill with the Matrix have kept the region peaceful for as long as anyone can remember.

This is what the characters have to steal and return to Faust if they are to ever continue on their temporal adventures.

Adventure ideas
Faust is basically a bastard. If the characters bring him back the Cross and the Matrix, he'll thank them, take their Matrix as well, kill them and dump them out an airlock (probably in that order), unless Mary wants to save a few pieces for her dinner. If they don't bring it back, he'll kill them anyway, and find some other lost souls to try for him. So, there is a dual adventure here. The first part is getting the Cross, and the second part is getting out alive.

Part 1 - Infiltration
Over a period of weeks or months, a character or characters might be able to become novices or acolytes of the Order, which would not get them anywhere near the Cross, but which at least gives them access in and out of the monastery. Extremely skilled fighters might get a job as guards of the Outermost Circle, which does the same. One problem which will tinge all the plots of the characters is that they will have to make a Difficulty 8 WIL roll to initiate any hostile action against anyone, unless in defense of the Order (a side effect of the Matrix). There are no floor plans of the monastery, and the entire place was designed around the defense of the Cross, with mazes, traps and guards.

Patience - On one day each year, the Cross is brought out for display, where it is shown from the high wall to the crowds below, many of whom have traveled for days to catch a glimpse of it and pray for miracles, which sometimes occur. Preparations for the yearly display are made several weeks in advance, and everyone knows about it, if asked. Trying to take the Cross by force might be easier here than from the vault, but then again, it will be in the hands of someone who knows how to use it. In simplest possible terms, anything attempted against the trained bearer of the Cross takes an automatic +10 modifier to succeed.

Invasion - If the characters work long and hard enough outside the region, they may be able to raise an army capable of taking the monastery by force, especially if they spend several months creating items of slightly more advanced technology, like explosives and crude firearms. This won't be easy and it won't be quick, but it is possible. It will take a dedicated propaganda campaign, and the cooperation of some disgruntled noble who has long coveted the region, but it can be done. The biggest hurdle is of course getting an army motivated enough to engage in violence while under the general peace-keeping effect radiating from the monastery.

Part 2 - Getting away
It is always possible to run into another, more experienced TimeLord, who for a price is willing to use his or her Matrix to take the characters elsewhere. Eventually, they might find someone who can deactivate the second destination, but until then, they have gone from a relatively safe location to the custody of another TimeLord. If they are lucky, they will find someone with a grudge against Faust, but no one will be willing to take him on in his home turf.

The question remains as to why the TimeLord(s) are here at the same time as the characters. A good bet is that they are here for the Cross as well. If the two groups are unaware of each other while plans are being made, some interesting encounters can occur later on. Naturally, the characters can't possibly let someone else Jump out with it, because then they would have no chance of ever getting out of here alive. It could be remotely conceivable that this is a phantom timeline and the only thing keeping it in existence at all is the presence of the artifact. Its removal would either extinguish the timeline or cause it to merge with a similar medieval timeline, resulting in new legends, myths and confused historical accounts.

Time Patrol - Similar, but the characters are spotted by some agency which has this continuum in its care. Since there can be only one probability line with this Matrix, it stands out for anyone looking for anomalous timelines. The characters might be able to go back with the Patrol, but their Matrix is lost to them until they can unlock its destination. This would be a good way for an experienced group of characters to be inducted into a Time Patrol from the Primary Game, while at the same time giving them a good excuse to not use their Matrix for an extended period (and maybe give them Faust as an occasional enemy).

Note - Naturally, if the Matrix in the Cross functioned correctly, they can leave with it. Faust would also know this, and is clever enough to know the characters will realize the Cross is more than it seems. He is taking the reasonable chance that the spatiotemporal Jump function has been disabled somehow, otherwise the Priests of the Order would have accidentally sent themselves on a trip generations ago. He is correct.

GM notes

Due to the possible length of the adventure, the lack of high-tech medical care and the nature of various foes, this adventure is not recommended for inexperienced or unskilled characters. It is more an example of inter-TimeLord politics that characters may eventually get caught up in. Faust might also “hijack” Time Patrol members he is aware of to do his dirty work for him, since they will be reasonably skilled, well-equipped and expendable. Escaping from his clutches might be a way for characters in a Time Patrol to become independent TimeLords.

Combat - Oh, there is plenty of opportunity for this, but it is against people who have done the characters no wrong, nor intend to. The individuals whose throats the characters would really like to get their hands around will make sure to stay safely ensconced elsewhere and elsewhen. Direct confrontation with Faust is out of the question in this adventure, although an opportunity to engage some of his minions may present itself if Faust sends some after the characters. A direct confrontation with Faust or Mary would almost certainly be fatal for the characters attempting it. Someone who has survived as long as he has with as many enemies as he has is either *extremely* good or *extremely* lucky. Rumor is that Faust is both.

Foreshadowing - Faust may be a recurring nightmare for the characters, and encountering him early and surviving the experience may be extremely useful later in the campaign (especially the surviving part), as it provides some small insight into the way his mind works. Encounters with other TimeLords may also provide useful information, or contain cryptic information that the characters may not understand until some later date.

Drama - The first part of the adventure is just plain humiliating and embarrassing, both situationally and from a personal modesty standpoint. If it didn't come across as perfectly clear, Faust doesn't need *all* the characters to get his dirty work done, just some of them. It would be inconvenient if not all the characters were able to “work for him”, but he would doubtless enjoy the pleasure of taking out this minor frustration on one of them by say, oh, snipping off all the fingertips on one hand (consider it a permanent +2 penalty on using the hand for anything but unarmed combat). If characters have heard any tales at all about him, they should be warned that trying to press a deal or even an insult from other than a position of equal or greater strength is a *bad* idea. During their stay, he can be a genial host, but a psychopathic one who holds the power of worse than life or death over every one of the characters. Remember that while he does enjoy his little games, he is not *evil*, just completely and uttery amoral and pragmatic. He will do *whatever* needs to be done to reach his ultimate goals, whether that is saving orphans or flaying them alive.

Crusader

STR	7
AGL	6
AWR	7
WIL	6
HLT	6
POW	1

“It is *not* a profession...it is a calling.”

Skills	Level	Equipment
Projectile weapons	5	Plate armor (AV 3/4)
Melee weapons	6	Broadsword
Unarmed combat	5	Shield
Area. kn. (local)	4	Crossbow (DV 8)

Background

The closest thing this society has to a Special Forces unit. The elite crusaders assigned to protect the relic are selected through an extremely rigorous process, train constantly, and are ever alert for suspcious activity. They are also highly educated, at least in certain subjects, and even if they are not capable of understanding certain technological concepts, they can analyze their potential (and their potential liabilities) in fairly short order. To prevent losing their edge in this peaceful area, they are rotated out every so often to more conflict-ridden sections of the local empire. While as affected as everyone else by the probability warp, they have intensive enough training that they can initiate hostile activity with sufficient need. This is one reason they remain ever vigilant. If they can do it, so can someone else...

Downtiming Base

The sample adventures end, appropriately enough, at the end of time, at least as far as most of human history goes. Again, other TimeLords are involved, but this time the involvement of the adventurers is accidental and incidental. How much can and do they want to interfere in someone else's private feud?

Opening scene

The adventurers merge with reality in a large, well-lit, man-made underground dome. The smell of moist rock and too many people crammed into too small a space for too long a time fills the air. All around the cavern are circles of different earths, wilted grasses, stone flooring and even what looks like metal ship's decking. About a hundred meters away stands a man who is even now calling in your arrival via an intercom (you can hear your arrival being announced over loudspeakers in plain English). While he is not approaching the adventurers, neither does the announcer seem alarmed or upset; simply remaining alert and waiting for the adventurers to get over their timesickness.

Where you are - This is Salt Dome 15. Located somewhere under what used to be Kansas, USA on a fairly advanced timeline. After the Machine Invasion began, several families escaped into this underground facility that was built during a previous war and survived, and expanded it into what it is today. They have neither the population nor the technology to be able to mount a counterstrike against the machines. While they have so far escaped detection, they have been living like rats in a maze for far too long.

Originally set up as a salt mine, the tunnels are carved out of solid rock. Most corridors are set up at right angles to each other forming a grid work of corridors. Every so often areas are expanded out into private rooms or large chambers. It is easy to get lost here as one corridor looks much like another, however most if not all rooms are numbered or named and all corridors have large numbers painted at the ends and in the middle. For mapping purposes figure most corridors are three to five meters across and most private rooms are six meters square, all with an average ceiling of five meters.

What has changed - About six years back, a Domino member by the name of Pseudo stumbled across this base, and has since then used it and its people as a bolthole and stepping-off point for his operations. He has brought food, medicine, tools and most of all hope to these poor souls. They understand that he has some form of "wormhole technology" though they have no idea how it works; they just accept it as a given and are helping him with his plan of getting them out of here and setting up in a colony "elsewhere, where the machines are not a threat."

As for what is happening to the adventurers, they are looked upon as either helpers and/or additional refugees sent here by Pseudo. After the security arrives and shows them their rooms, the adventurers will be pretty much left to themselves. They have free run of the place save for certain off limit areas (do they really need to go *inside* the nuclear reactor?). The population of this base is small, currently less than three hundred people all told, though the last hundred residents have arrived via Jump in the last few weeks.

For the past few months Pseudo has been trickling in people from various times and places that he thinks that would help with his plan.

The Plan - Being a Domino Society member, Pseudo has a massive hatred of the human race being snuffed out by the Machine Invasion. This base, being one of the few that has survived for so long without being detected is exactly what he wants for a decent place to use as a bolthole or place he can eventually use as a staging area for later schemes.

Currently, he is attempting to evacuate the base and set them up in a colony somewhere in an early Earthnull branch. He has gathered technicians, scientists and inventors from Industrial Era areas and times, (those who will not be missed but still have decent qualifications), and brought them here, along with tools, equipment and enough crop seeds to make whatever society that the colony creates at least a Late Basic Era operation.

The biggest work that is going on right now at the base that has to do with the plan is the Rocket.

The Rocket - In one of the main corridors an oddity from a 22nd century amusement park is set up. The Rocket is a magnetically driven thrill ride from a defunct (and now obliterated) amusement park. It looks like a cross between a maglev bullet train and a mass driver, which is pretty much what it is. The spacious seating was for several hundred people per ride, but most of the accelerator chairs are being removed and replaced with ceiling hand rings, air bags and cargo netting. Should the adventurers care to look (or even offer to help with the retrofit), they can easily estimate that the new configuration will be able to hold over a thousand people plus cargo.

Originally the Rocket was held in a storage facility somewhere else on the planet and brought here in sections via a spatial jump to avoid the frying of the maglev coils and other high-tech goodies.

The Rocket being a maglev system is mostly inert coils of wire and ceramic magnets with relatively little electronics in it. What is being done by the inhabitants of the base is rebuilding the magnetic suspension and accelerator that will move the entire bulk of the vehicle down the main corridor at at breakneck speeds and through a Portal that Pseudo will create to transport the rocket and everything inside it elsewhere. It is a cumbersome but clever way to move a lot of people and material through time and space without having to make several dozen Jumps.

Of course if anything goes wrong it will be a too-short ride with the Rocket and its contents smashing into the wall at top speed...

⚠ Using a Portal like this means that due to limitations on exit energy, the Rocket will exit the Portal *slower* than it entered. This means a fairly soft landing, though the Rocket will certainly jackknife and sections will overturn as it is pushed from the rear (hence the airbags, which will deploy automatically upon touching the dimensional interface). The exit Portal will thus remain open longer than the entry Portal, and this may result in increased recharging time for the Matrix used, or possibly discharge the Matrix at the destination of the Portal that is being used for the information handoff.

Influx - After about two days a mass influx of people arrive. They are one and all, out of work New Yorkers who for what ever reason Pseudo thinks they are qualified have been sent here from 1933CE, Earth0. Some have families, some are single women, but most are single men who are grunt laborers with some talent at mechanics or building. Oddly enough, aside from time jump sickness, most don't know and don't care when or where they are, they do know that they promised food, shelter and work after there stay here; though they are bewildered at all this “Flash Gordon” stuff. Once given time to relax and have a meal they are briefed as were the adventurers and told to wait in the main auditorium.

All in all about a hundred people have arrived. All of them save one came through with a mass of others. The exception’s name is Horn.

Horn is a once friend, now rival of Pseudo, and is dead set on trashing the entire operation. Horn looks like anyone else that has just come in from the 1930’s save that he is bald, not wearing a hat and is carrying a duffel bag with something bulky in it. He will slip away from the main group and make his way to an electrical room where he will begin setting up the device.

The device is a powerful but simple Early Atomic Era low-frequency radio. It is set to broadcast using the entire electrical system here as an antenna, just to attract the notice of the Machines that are currently in orbit. If left alone Horn will set things up, wait for the first tremors of the orbital bombardments to begin and then Jump out.

Should the adventurers try to stop him before he sets up the radio, he will run for it carrying the radio with him and will try to lose them in the tunnels (Horn has been here before and knows the maze of tunnels well).

If adventurers confront him after he sets up the radio, he will turn the radio on and not tell them what it is, delaying for as long as he feels is necessary for the signals to be detected. At the first opportunity that he is far enough away from the radio he will active his backup Matrix (anyone who Jumps post-Machine Era does, if at all possible), taking whoever he is near with him. He bears adventurers no personal animosity, but he has little or no timesickness problem, so he will probably just bludgeon dazed adventurers into unconsciousness and then hightail it away until he gets to someplace he can blend in, or wait until he can Jump elsewhere.

Pseudo arrives - About two hours after the last of the previous influx of people arrive (including Horn), another set of would-be colonists arrive. They are farmers from the American dust bowl who took Pseudo up on his offer rather than starve. They are families with a surprising large amount of single women in them. After the disorienting effects of the time jump they are bewildered and somewhat unsettled by the tunnels carved out of rock. However, the man following this bunch seems to be in charge. This is Pseudo.

Pseudo is a tall man dressed like a minister and is actually carrying a Bible in his left hand. The Base personnel here iimmediately recognize him and begin moving people into the Rocket, as though on some pre-arranged schedule. The main auditorium is also being vacated and all base personnel are moving to the Rocket. Numerous announcements go over the public address system, and people with clipboards are checking cargo and people's names against a master list to make sure everything and everyone is properly loaded.

In a perfect world - If everything goes perfectly and to schedule, the Rocket will be loaded without incident, everyone will be settled in and holding on to something or seated. The Rocket will accelerate, a portal will open and Pseudo, the base personnel, the workers, technicians and farmers will ride the Rocket on into a bright green meadow somewhere in the Ohio valley on a Earthnull thread somewhere about 2000BCE. Aside from being scared out of their wits, nothing will have happened to anyone except timesickness and some airbag bruises and they can then unload the Rocket and begin their new life here.

But, as you well know, nothing ever goes as planned. What happens from here can vary wildly. Depending on the gamemaster, it can go too many ways to actually list. Have fun with these few suggestions.

Horn: If Horn is not stopped or captured before Pseudo arrives, he will take this opportunity to take a pot shot at him before warping out. Since he has been here before, he knows where a few caches of firearms for the trip are. Admittedly, they are flintlocks and crossbows, but they can do a nasty job if he gets a lucky shot. There are conventional firearms about, but they are under lock and key to keep new arrivals from deliberately or accidentally causing any problem with them.

The Guardians: The Guardians have not been idle on Earth0 and have seen Pseudo pop in and out of the 1930's. With his last Jump they have tracked him to this time and place, and have sent an assault team to capture him and hopefully correct any potential problems. They are well armed with crossbows (regular and tranq quarrels), batons, swords and a pair of bug suits. All in all there are about ten strike team members. They don't really have the firepower to take on *everyone*, so they will concentrate on anyone they can recognize and anyone who puts up a fight. Those who run and hide can be rounded up later...

Falling rocks: With the radio signal Horn sent, it will be two hours minimum before the rocks begin to drop on the ground above the base. However since the base is a kilometer underground it will take a while before the base collapses and everything goes to Hell in a handbasket. This does not mean that having the ground rumble around you and shake like an earthquake is fun, so people will panic and set things going askew. Earth tremors might also derail the Rocket or otherwise make it temporarily unusable.

Contingencies - Should the unthinkable happen and Pseudo dies here, all is not lost. One of the base personnel in the cab of the Rocket is a potential Timelord. He, (or She) does not know this but has been trained that in the event of Pseudo's death or other emergency that they have to evacuate the base to place their hands on the control panel, (which is a locked steel block holding a Matrix, preprogrammed for the job) and pilot the Rocket into the "worm hole".

After everyone is gone - Hopefully everyone leaves. If not those who stay behind may notice the increase in oxygen in the air. This is because the algae tanks that provide clean air for the base are now being set on a massive growth program. They are being pumped full of CO2 and then allowed to overflow their vats. The idea behind this is, even if Horn did not send the radio signal, the maglev system at full power would light up on enemy sensors and bring down the house on the base, so to speak. The algae is an especially hearty type that can remain dormant for years, spore and generally is damn hard to kill. After the base is compromised this green goo is supposed to seep out and make its way back into the dead biosphere. Given its ability to multiply, it should be covering the Earth again in a few years and with any luck, in a few decades the atmosphere should be breathable again.

GM notes

What happens if - The adventurers go with Pseudo? Pseudo does not necessarily know that the adventurers are TimeLords nor does he really care unless they bring it to his attention. After the wild ride through the Portal into the new colony site, Pseudo will let the former base personnel get things up and running while he kicks back, relaxes and waits for his Matrices to recharge. He is very conscious of the Matrix in the nose of the Rocket and has ordered it to be removed and given to him more or less immediately. His only real concern about TimeLord adventurers is that they don't take any of his colony's stuff when they go, and don't go someplace that could result in his colony being found out. To that end, he is willing to assist programming their adventurer's next Jump, though whether he programs it to where the adventurers want to go is another matter.

What happens if - The adventurers go with Horn? Horn is a selfish son-of-a-bitch. *If* he finds out that the adventurers are TimeLords he will try to take their Matrix away and them stash them someplace reasonable safe where they can't do much harm (to him) and then leave. He may come back later if he has a use for them. If he does *not* find out they are TimeLords, he will simply leave them where he has Jumped (currently a late Renaissance Europe), with little more useful advice than "don't drink the water".

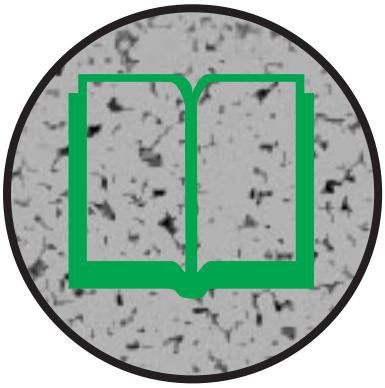
What happens if - The adventurers go with the Guardians? Going with the Guardians is a good way to go from a "Lost in Time" campaign to a "Time Patrol" campaign. However if the adventurers are not wanting to become "Time Cops", they will have their Matrix taken away from them and expatriated either to Earth or Mars in the same era that the Guardians are operating.

Even if they are enlisted into a Patrol, they should not expect to lay hands on their Matrix again for a period of some years.

What happens if - The adventurers Jump out by themselves? If the adventurers Jump out anytime before the Guardians arrive or after the Rocket leaves, they stand a good chance of escaping the notice of the Guardians. However, if they Jump out sometime *within* that window, the Guardians may have gotten a lock on them and will begin tracking them, results of which are best left up to the gamemaster.

If they Jump out *before* the Rocket leaves, no one is likely to interfere or even notice until too late. If the adventurers take anything that Pseudo thinks was vital for the colony, the adventurers will have made a minor enemy, who will *eventually* cause similar grief to the adventurers and make sure they know who did it and why.

If they Jump out *after* the Rocket leaves, it may be under some duress (dodging multi-ton chunks of rock falling off the ceiling will mess up your skill roll something fierce), but will give the adventurers the possibility of salvaging goods they might not otherwise have had access to. All the useful time-jumpable material went with the colonists, but if there was a last-minute panic, a crate or two might have been overlooked.



Bibliography

Basics

No time travel game would be complete without a reference to all the myriad ways to confuse and inspire your journeys into the unknown. Some of these may be out of print and/or no longer available, so you may have to do some scrounging. Those in red involve some sort of Time Patrol, while those in blue involve dimension travel. Ones marked with a • are recommended by the author.

Role-playing games based on time travel

Timeship - Yaquinto Publications, 1983
Time and Time Again - Timeline, Ltd., 1984
Dr. Who - FASA, 1985
Timemaster - Pacesetter Limited, 1986
TimeLords - BTRC, 1987
GURPS Time Travel - Steve Jackson Games, 1991
Time Riders - Iron Crown Enterprises, 1992
Time Lord - Task Force Games, 1993 (import)
Continuum - Aetherco, 1999

Role-playing games based on dimensional travel

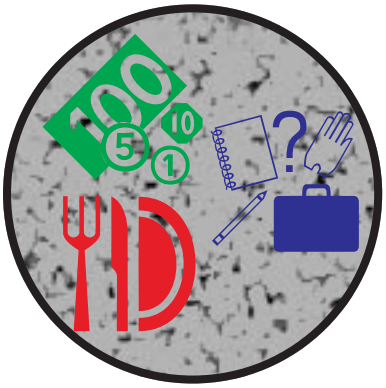
Lords of Creation - Avalon Hill, 1983
Fringeworthy - Tri Tac Inc., 1984
Midnight at the Well of Souls - Tag Industries, 1985
Torg - West End Games, 1990
Nexus - Dædalus Games, 1994

Books & stories involving time and/or dimension travel

- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, by Mark Twain
A Matter of Time, by Glen Cook
All These Earths, by F.M.Busby
All You Zombies, by Robert Heinein
Alternities, by Michael P. Kube-McDowell
Behold the Man, by Michael Moorcock
Bring the Jubilee, by Ward Moore
By His Bootstraps, by Robert Heinlein
Castle Perilous, by John DeChancie
Castaways in Time, by Robert Adams
Changewar, by Fritz Leiber
- *Dinosaur Beach*, by Keith Laumer
Downtiming the Night Side, by Jack Chalker
Hitler Victorious, by Gregory Benford and Martin Greenburg (eds.)
Hobson's Choice, by Alfred Bester
House Between the Worlds, by Marion Zimmer Bradley
Lest Darkness Fall, by L.Sprague DeCamp
- *Lightning*, by Dean Koontz
Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen, by H.Beam Piper
Midnight at the Well of Souls, by Jack Chalker
Millennium, by John Varley
- *Nine Princes in Amber*, by Roger Zelazny
Ox, by Piers Anthony
October the First is Too Late, by Fred Hoyle
Of Time and Third Avenue, by Alfred Bester
Paratime, by H.Beam Piper
Roadmarks, by Roger Zelazny
Rebel in Time, by Harry Harrison
Replay, by Ken Grimwood
Run, Come See Jerusalem, by Charles Merdedith
Terraplane, by Jack Womack
The Compleat Enchanter, by L.Sprague DeCamp and Fletcher Pratt
The Flight of the Horse, by Larry Niven
The Infinitive of Go, by John Brunner
The Man in the High Castle, by Philip K. Dick
The Number of the Beast, by Robert Heinlein
- *The Anubis Gates*, by Tim Powers
The Big Time, by Fritz Leiber (& sequels)
- *The Cat Who Could Walk Through Walls*, by Robert Heinlein.
The Corridors of Time, by Poul Anderson
The Cross-Time Engineer, by Leo Frankowski (& sequels)
The End of Eternity, by Isaac Azimov
The Man Who Folded Himself, by David Gerrold
The Many-Colored Land, by Julian May (& sequels)
The Shadow out of Time, by H.P.Lovecraft
The Sound of Thunder, by Ray Bradbury
The Time Bender, by Keith Laumer (& sequels)
- *The Time Machine*, by H.G.Wells
There Will Be Time, by Poul Anderson
Three Hearts and Three Lions, by Poul Answerson
Thrice Upon a Time, by James Hogan
Time Enough for Love, by Robert Heinlein
Time Safari, by David Drake
Time Storm, by Gordon Dickson
Time Traders, by Andre Norton (& sequels)
Timescape, by Gregory Benford
The Guardians of Time, by Poul Anderson (& sequels)
Time Wars, by Simon Hawke (& sequels)
Up the Line, by Robert Silberberg
What Might Have Been, by Larry Niven (anthology)
Wrong Way Street, by Larry Niven

Movies worth seeing

- *12 Monkeys* - Ultimately depressing but extremely well-done time travel tale.
Army of Darkness - Tongue-in-cheek stab at time travel and anything else that gets in the way.
Back to the Future, parts I-III - Amusing but reasonably handled treatment of time travel and paradoxes.
My Science Project - Time and dimension travel wierdness involving an alien artifact. A fun Primary Game reference.
StarGate - Not time travel, but good reference for the idea of partially understood alien technology. The television show could be used as a model for a primitive Time Patrol.
- *Terminator, I-II* - At its heart a time travel movie, where the fate of the future depends on a few people's actions in the present. The time travel special effects at the start of *Terminator* are as close to **TimeLords** as you will ever see.
- *Timerider* - What if you time travelled and *didn't* know it at first? A good reference for any Primary Game campaign, if only for people's reactions to future tech.



Weapons & Equipment

Basics

This equipment list largely duplicates the list in the basic **CORPS** rules, with a few additions, and notations for how equipment will handle the stress of temporal Jumps.

Equipment will have one of four special notations. These relate to Jumping or Portaling the item through time or traversing the boundary of a null field, and the side effects thereof.

1. The item will be completely and irrevocably destroyed. It may remain intact visually, but the inner workings of the device will be utterly ruined. In addition, if the device uses any form of volatile chemicals or high-density energy storage, those items will ignite, with any logical consequences. A digital watch, grenade or can of gasoline would be a good example. As a simple demonstration to players, take a CD that you have no use for, put it in your microwave, and let the players watch when you turn it on for 5 seconds (don't do it if you're afraid it will damage the microwave).
2. The item will suffer minor damage. It will function at reduced efficiency, if at all, but it will be repairable, provided proper facilities exist at the destination. In addition, if the device uses any form of volatile chemicals or high-density energy storage, those items will ignite, with any logical consequences. A mechanical wristwatch, modern (TL9+) firearm or TL9- electronics (e.g. vacuum tubes) would be a good example. In the case of the firearm, the only serious damage would be to things like small springs, which may not happen the first Jump, but will happen eventually.
3. The item will suffer little or no damage, *if* volatiles or energy storage associated with the device is removed before the Jump. Otherwise, the effects would be like #1 or #2. A archaic (TL8-) firearm, gas-powered camp stove, or flashlight would be a good example. For instance, a flintlock pistol would fire if Jumped, not harmful in and of itself, but side effects depend on which way it was being pointed at the time...
4. The item is unaffected except for surface phenomenon like minor pitting or discoloration. Clothing, body armor, food or melee weapons are good examples of this type of item.

Other notes

Prices are set in Credits, which don't actually exist, but are roughly equivalent to modern US dollars in purchasing power. The purchasing power of credits is also roughly 5Cr for an hour of unskilled labor, 10Cr for an hour of skilled labor or 20Cr and up for an hour of highly skilled labor, presuming there is not an over or under-abundance of labor of that type available. This should allow you to make conversions for systems with non-standard economies (barter, hyperinflation, etc.).

Money itself may not translate across timelines well. The money will not be damaged unless you are dealing with electronic currency. But, the units of exchange will not be easily transferrable. Just try walking into an American convenience store with a big wad of Indonesian *bhat*, Norwegian *kroner* or Italian *lira* and try to buy something. In lower tech societies (mostly TL7-), the units of exchange have inherent value, like copper, silver or gold, and so using unfamiliar units is just a matter of verifying their purity and weight to get a guide to their worth. You can still expect to get the raw end of the currency exchange, however.

On the good side, intact currency from a previous spot on the *same* timeline *may* have collector value far beyond its face value. Unfortunately, this is often linked inversely to its usefulness on the timeline where you got it. That is, if there was a lot of it to begin with and it was widely accepted, then collectors in the future will have a lot more of it lying around, and its value will be less from a collector's standpoint. As a *guesstimate*, value for good condition currency or coin will be half the face value, times (1d10 plus multiples of 50 years that the money has been out of circulation). Rolls of 9 or 10 mean roll again and add it to the multiple. Double the total for money in mint or near-mint condition, and double it again if the money is nearly pure gold, silver, or platinum.

How much does it weigh?

Just in case you need to start carrying vast amounts of wealth across timelines, here is what 1kg will get you in various real-world valuables. Anything that is not inherently money (like diamonds) will be subject to losses in resale of up to 50%.

≈30,000,000Cr in 1 carat brilliant cut diamonds(TL7+)(but they may be subject to pitting from temporal Jumps)
≈75,000,000Cr in 2 carat brilliant cut diamonds(TL7+)(but they may be subject to pitting from temporal Jumps)
≈250,000,000Cr in 3 carat brilliant cut diamonds(TL7+)(but they may be subject to pitting from temporal Jumps)
≈110,000Cr in United States $100 bills (TL8-12)
≈22,000Cr in United States $20 bills (TL8-12)
≈600Cr in United States $20 gold pieces (TL8)
≈40Cr in United States silver quarters (TL9)
≈3Cr in United States copper pennies (TL7-12)

How much is a quarter worth?

One thing that will occur in any Primary game is trying to use coinage in a vastly different era than its origin. In simple terms, inflation. While the equipment list prices can be measured in credits, or a rough equivalent in hours worth of labor, *actual* prices in that continuum are likely to be much different. While paper money is pretty worthless outside its time and place of origin, copper, silver and gold have been used for currency for a *long* time, and people cared more about the purity of the metal more than whose face was on the coin in question.

As a *rough* guide, use the table below to convert equipment list prices to "period" prices (at least for $Earth_0$). This will be most accurate for goods and services that are "common", or have equivalents in most timelines. Food, clothing, tools and weapons, for instance. The sample items on the table have prices taken from period catalogs or advertisements, just to give rough examples. There are also plenty of exceptions the GM can throw in as needed. Like the discovery of silver in the New World vastly increasing the money supply (and inflation) in Europe between 1500CE and 1600CE. Or, a US$20 Federal Reserve Note looks enough like a US$20 Silver Certificate that you wouldn't quickly notice the difference. So, you could take a 1999CE twenty dollar bill to 1946CE and spend it, even though it isn't legal currency yet. Just hope no one notices. Or, coins made of metals not used for coinage in a timeline may have less (or *more*) value. For instance, nickels might be next to worthless. On the other hand, a handful of nickels would be enough to turn a chunk of ordinary steel into *stainless* steel. How much would *that* be worth to a medieval armorer? Or, some coins are made of aluminum. Aluminum was discovered in 1854. Until an economic means of refining was developed in 1886, it was worth its weight in gold. Aluminum coins disposed of in that interval would be worth far beyond their face value, provided you could find someone to take them.

Year	1Cr buys	Salary comparison	Wage comparison
2000CE	1.0Cr	≈10,000Cr	5.0Cr/hr
1990CE	1.6Cr	≈6,300Cr	3.2Cr/hr
1980CE	2.5Cr	≈4,000Cr	2.0Cr/hr
1970CE	3.3Cr	≈3,300Cr	1.7Cr/hr
1950CE	5.0Cr	≈2,000Cr	1.0Cr/hr
1925CE	10Cr	≈1,000Cr	.50Cr/hr
1900CE	12Cr	≈800Cr	.40Cr/hr
1850CE	14Cr	≈700Cr	.35Cr/hr
1800CE	17Cr	≈600Cr	.30Cr/hr
1600CE	20Cr	≈500Cr	.25Cr/hr
1300CE	25Cr	≈400Cr	.20Cr/hr
1000CE	35Cr	≈300Cr	.15Cr/hr
0CE	50Cr	≈200Cr	.10Cr/hr

Example - Characters arrive somewhere circa 1600CE. Pooling their loose change together, they have about US$1.50 (1.5Cr). This will be worth about 30Cr in terms of buying power.

How do I spend it?

The modern concept of fixed prices is just that, modern. In most of the world for most of history, prices are what the market would bear, and were negotiated on a case by case basis for each transaction. That is, haggling. For the average person, the only real vestige of this left in the Western world is the give and take process when you try to buy a new car or wheel and deal at a flea market or yard sale. Most of us would never dream of going into the grocery and haggling with the checkout clerk over the price of a kilo of apples, but by and large, that's how it would be done in most of the pasts your characters will visit.

Haggling is both an art and a science. The seller appraises the buyer's apparent wealth and knowledge of the item. The buyer feigns disinterest and disparages the quality of the goods, and so on and so forth. Even the sheer enjoyment of the verbal sparring can play a part in the final price.

In game terms, you can play it out. This may be fun with some groups, but not others. Let the players who enjoy it, do it. It is a good way to introduce local gossip and rumors that the characters may need to know. If you just want to get the transactions over with, roll 1d10. If characters are obvious strangers to the area, add 1. Likewise if they have obvious trappings of wealth. Any result more than a 5 increases list price by 10% per point, and anything less than 5 decreases list price by 10% per point. Yes, this is slightly skewed in favor of the seller, but that's what you get for not haggling...

Pistols	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
Hand cannon[3]	12mm	4	+1	-1	7	5	2.1kg	-	1	1i	9	70Cr	Germany
Cavalry pistol[3]	12mm	5	+1	0	5	6	1.5kg	-	1	1i	8	75Cr	Any
Derringer[3]	11mm	3	+2	-1	1	7	.4kg	-	1	1i	7	60Cr	USA
Colt 1873[2]	.45 Colt	5	+1	1	3	8-11	1.2kg	-	2	6i	7	160Cr	USA
Colt Police Revolver[2]	.32 Colt	3	+1	1	2	8-9	.7kg	-	3	6i	8	120Cr	USA
Government .45[2]	.45 ACP	4	+1	1	3	8-9	1.4kg	.3kg	4	7c	7	280Cr	USA
Walther P-38[2]	9mm	6	+1	2	3	9-11	1.0kg	.2kg	4	8c	6	660Cr	Germany
Gov't Longslide[2]	.45ACP	6	+1	2	3	10-12	1.5kg	.3kg	4	7c	7	690Cr	USA
Colt Python[2]	.357 Mag	7	+1	2	3	10-12	1.1kg	-	3	6i	6	395Cr	USA
Beretta 92F[2]	9mm	6	+1	2	3	11-12	1.2kg	.2kg	4	15c	6	720Cr	Italy
Calico M-950[2]	9mm	7	+0	2	7	11-12	2.6kg	1.6kg	4	100c	6	190Cr	USA
Grendel P-10[2]	9mm short	4	+2	-1	2	11-12	.5kg	-	4	10i	4	135Cr	USA
IMI Eagle[2]	.357 Mag	8	+1	2	4	11-12	1.7kg	.3kg	4	9c	6	860Cr	Israel
Casull .454	.454 Casull	12	+1	2	3	11-12	1.5kg	-	2	5i	7	780Cr	USA
Glock 19[2]	9mm	6	+1	2	3	12	.9kg	.3kg	4	17c	5	720Cr	Austria
H&K USP[2]	.40 S&W	8	+1	2	3	12	1.1kg	.3kg	4	13c	7	860Cr	Germany
FN P96[2]	5.7mm	8	+1	1	3	12	1.1kg	.2kg	4	25c	5	450Cr	Belgium
Entires C9[1]	4mm railgun	10	+1	1	4	14	1.7kg	.6kg	4	100c	4	1050Cr	-
Punisher (stun)[2]	20mm	10	+1	-1	3	15	1.3kg	.2kg	4	5c	4	280Cr	-

Machine pistols	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
Vz-61 Skorpion[2]	.32 ACP	4	+1	1	4(7)	10-11	2.0kg	.4kg	20	20c	5	360Cr	Czech.
Beretta 93R[2]	9mm	7	+0	2	3(6)	11-12	1.2kg	.3kg	6	20c	6	1130Cr	Italy
MAC-10[2]	9mm	7	+1	0	5(8)	11-12	3.5kg	.6kg	18	32c	6	245Cr	USA
MAC-11[2]	9mm short	5	+1	0	5(8)	11-12	2.1kg	.5kg	20	32c	5	190Cr	USA
Ares FMG[2]	9mm	7	+0	1	3(7)	12	2.2kg	.3kg	11	20c	5	510Cr	USA
Glock 18[2]	9mm	7	+1	2	3	12	1.2kg	.6kg	20	33c	5	980Cr	Austria
PolSci CQuel (stun)[1]	5mm	5	+2	0	1	13	.6kg	.1kg	12	300c	2	1100Cr	-
Synerg 12/2 (+1 to hit)[1]	12mm	16	+1	2	5	14	2.0kg	.2kg	6	15c	4	900Cr	-

Submachineguns	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
Sten[2]	9mm	6	+0	0	10	9	3.5kg	.7kg	9	32	7	110Cr	England
Thompson[2]	.45 ACP	6	-1	2	11(14)	9-12	7.2kg	2.3kg	12	50c	6	430Cr	USA
Uzi[2]	9mm	7	+0	2	8(11)	10-12	4.1kg	.6kg	10	32c	6	270Cr	Israel
Beretta 12S[2]	9mm	7	+0	2	8(11)	10-11	3.8kg	.6kg	9	32c	6	245Cr	Italy
Ilarco 180[2]	.22LR	5	+0	3	14	11-12	4.3kg	.9kg	20	165c	6	410Cr	USA
Spectre[2]	9mm	6	+0	2	5(8)	11-12	3.6kg	.7kg	14	50c	6	470Cr	Italy
H&K MP5/10[2]	10mm	8	+0	3	8(11)	11-12	3.5kg	.7kg	15	30c	7	590Cr	Germany
Reaper[2]	10mm	5(+1)	+1	3	5(8)	12	3.0kg	.7kg	10	40c	6	1300Cr	Italy
FN P-90[2]	5.7mm	9	+1	3	7	12	3.2kg	.4kg	15	50c	5	320Cr	Belgium
Sauer-Bosk (+1 to hit)[1]	3mm rail	16	+1	3	8	15	3.0kg	1.0kg	10	100c	4	1750Cr	-

Civilian shotguns	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
Blunderbuss[3]	12ga	8	+0	0	9	6-7	2.6kg	-	1	1i	10	55Cr	Any
(00 Buckshot)		3(+0)		0									
Fowling piece	12ga	8	+0	1	15	6-7	5.0kg	-	2	2i	9	315Cr	Any
(00 Buckshot)		3(+0)		1									
Winchester 1901[2]	10ga	10	+0	2	15	8-9	4.1kg	-	1	5i	9	195Cr	USA
(00 Buckshot)		3(+1)		1									
Remington 870[2]	12ga	10	+0	2	13	10-12	4.1kg	-	2	7i	8	410Cr	USA
(00 Buckshot)		4(+0)		1									
SPAS 12[2]	12ga	11	+0	2	13	11	4.8kg	-	4	7i	7	635Cr	Italy
(00 Buckshot)		4(+0)		1									
Striker[2]	12ga	10	+0	1	14	11-12	5.0kg	-	2	12i	7	145Cr	S.Africa
(00 Buckshot)		4(+0)		1									

Civilian rifles	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
Matchlock musket[3]	16mm	8	-1	1	16	5	6.1kg	-	1	1i	11	120Cr	Any
Kentucky Rifle[3]	12mm	10	+0	3	17	6-7	4.1kg	-	1	1i	10	140Cr	USA
Sharps 1874[2]	.50-70	12	+0	2	15	8	4.0kg	-	1	1i	9	180Cr	USA
Weatherby Mk.V[2]	.460 Mag	26	+0	5	15	10-12	4.8kg	-	1	2i	9	1980Cr	USA
Ruger 10/22[2]	.22LR	6	+0	2	13	11-12	2.5kg	.2kg	4	50c	5	165Cr	USA
Ruger Mini-14[2]	5.56mm	16	+0	4	13	11-12	3.3kg	.4kg	4	30c	7	600Cr	USA
Browning M78[2]	6mm	20	+0	5	13	11-12	3.9kg	-	1	1i	7	820Cr	USA
Remington BR7[2]	7mm/c	21	+0	5	10	13	4.0kg	.2kg	4	10c	6	1890	USA

Military rifles	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
M-14[2]	7.62mm	17	-1	4	15	9-12	5.1kg	.7kg	11	20c	8	800Cr	USA
Colt M-16A3[2]	5.56mm	16	+0	4	14	11-12	3.9kg	.5kg	6	30c	6	870Cr	USA
Ultimax 100[2]	5.56mm	16	-1	4	16	11-12	6.2kg	1.8kg	9	100c	6	750Cr	Singapore
Steyr AUG[2]	5.56mm	16	+0	4	10	11-12	4.0kg	.7kg	11	42c	6	750Cr	Austria
H&K G3A3[2]	7.62mm	18	+0	4	13	11-12	5.2kg	.8kg	10	20c	8	910Cr	Germany
FN-FAL[2]	7.62mm	17	+0	5	15	10-12	5.0kg	.8kg	11	20c	8	860Cr	Belgium
H&K G-11[2]	4.73mm/c	15	+0	4	10	12	4.3kg	.4kg	10	50c	6	900Cr	Germany
AK-47[2]	7.62mm	14	+0	3	10(13)	10-12	5.3kg	.9kg	10	30c	8	400Cr	CIS
AK-74[2]	5.56mm	14	+0	3	14	11-12	4.2kg	.6kg	11	30c	6	300Cr	CIS
Walther WA2000[2]	.300 Mag	23	-1	6	16	11-12	8.3kg	.4kg	4	6c	8	4430Cr	Germany
Kalashnikov AK-9[2]	7mm	20	+0	3	10	12	6.5kg	1.1kg	10	70c	6	550Cr	CIS
Aratech 7c[2]	7mm/c	21	+0	4	9	13	4.2kg	.6kg	10	50c	6	1160Cr	-
Novafire II[1]	7mm laser	34	+0	4	9	15	7.3kg	4.0kg	10	50c	3	7000Cr	-

Military shotguns	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
USAS-12[2]	12ga	11	-1	1	16	11-12	6.5kg	2.0kg	6	28c	7	1200Cr	USA
(00 Buckshot)		4(+0)		1									
Witness Protection[2]	12ga	10	+0	1	7	11-12	2.1kg	-	1	3i	7	500Cr	USA
(00 Buckshot)		4(+0)		1									
Eisensturm (+1 to hit)[1]	16mm	18	+0	2	10	14	3.8kg	.9kg	6	50c	5	655Cr	-
(flechette)		8(+0)		2			4.5kg	1.5kg					

Machineguns	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
.45/70 Gatling[2]	.45-70	11	-2	3	18	8	38.1kg	7.2kg	10	200e	8	970Cr	USA
Lewis Gun[2]	.303	17	-1	4	18	8-9	11.8kg	1.3kg	9	40c	9	800Cr	England
MG-34[2]	7.92mm	19	-1	4	18	9-10	18.0kg	6.0kg	15	200e	8	1040Cr	Germany
M60 LMG[2]	7.62mm	19	-1	4	18	10-11	16.3kg	5.8kg	9	200e	8	970Cr	USA
Browning M2[2]	12.7mm	36	-2	10	36	9-12	60.0kg	20.0kg	10	200e	10	2500Cr	USA
Maskei[2]	15mm	69	-3	6	27	13	81.5kg	63.7kg	10	200e	9	4330Cr	USA

Heavy weapons	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra clip	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
RPG-7[2]	85mm	427/7E	-1	1	14	10-11	9.3kg	2.3kg	1	1i	7	135Cr	CIS
LAW 80[1]	94mm	513/8E	-1	2	19	11-12	8.8kg	-	1	-	5	250Cr	England
Stinger (skill 1)[1]	70mm	22E	-2	7	22	11	18.3kg	13.4kg	1	1i	8	2000Cr	USA
Oerlikon KAA (AP)[2]	20mm	57	-3	26	36	11	109kg	21.0kg	17	50c	11	7820Cr	Switz.
Tronskaal (skill 1)[1]	95mm	590/9E	-1	4	12	14	7.1kg	-	1	-	6	650Cr	-

Archaic weapons	Caliber	DV	Initiative mod	Range mod	Size	TL	Mass	Extra arrow	Rate of fire	Clip	AV	Cost	Origin
Bow (STR 4)[4]	-	2	+1	2	9	5	.9kg	.1kg	1	1i	4	60Cr	Any
Bow (STR 5)[4]	-	3	+1	2	9	5	1.2kg	.1kg	1	1i	4	75Cr	Any
Bow (STR 6)[4]	-	4	+0	2	9	5	1.5kg	.1kg	1	1i	4	100Cr	Any
Crossbow (STR 8)[4]	-	8	-1	3	13	5	3.2kg	.05kg	1	1i	4	360Cr	Any
Crossbow (STR 8)[4]	-	8	+0	3	13	10	2.2kg	.05kg	1	1i	3	360Cr	Any

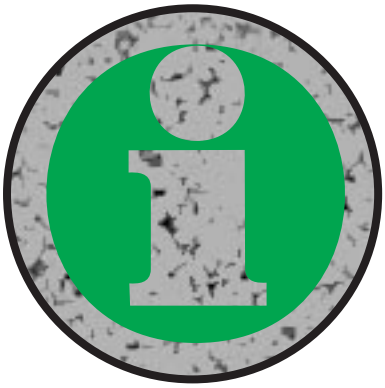
Assume any TL12+ weapon can mount a laser sight or equivalent for a cost of 200Cr and .1kg

A bow can be held ready for 10 seconds, +10 seconds for each extra point of STR. The Difficulty to reload a crossbow is its STR+3, and can *only* be accompliished through using extra time modifiers.

Melee weapons (skill modifier)	Damage	DV	Initiative mod	Length	Size	TL	Mass	Prim.	Sec.	Tert.	AV	Cost	Origin
Small knife (-1)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+0/+0	+0/+0	2	0	6	.1kg	Melee	Knife	-	4	5Cr	Any
Hunting knife (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+1/+0	+0/+0	2	1	3	.3kg	Melee	Knife	-	4	35Cr	Any
Bowie knife (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+1/+1	-1/-1	3	3	3	.4kg	Melee	Knife	-	5	65Cr	Any
Short sword (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+2/+2	-2/-1	4	4	3	1.1kg	Melee	Sword	-	10	145Cr	Any
Broadsword (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+3/+2	-2/-2	4	5	3	1.6kg	Melee	Sword	-	10	195Cr	Any
Scimitar (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+3/+2	-2/-2	4	5	3	1.6kg	Melee	Sword	-	10	195Cr	Any
Katana (2h)(+1)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+3/+2	-2/-1	4	6	4	1.3kg	Melee	Sword	-	10	1750Cr	Japan
Greatsword (2h)(+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+4/+4	-3/-3	5	13	4	3.6kg	Melee	Sword	-	11	450Cr	Any
Rapier (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+2/+2	-2/-1	4	5	5	.7kg	Melee	Sword	Fencing	5	120Cr	Any
Epee (+0)[4]	lethal(c/p)	+0/+1	-1/-1	4	4	5	.5kg	Melee	Sword	Fencing	4	80Cr	Any
Hand ax (-1)[4]	lethal(c)	+2	-1	3	4	3	.7kg	Melee	Ax	-	8/2	30Cr	Any
Battle ax (+0)[4]	lethal(c)	+3	-3	4	7	3	2.0kg	Melee	Ax	-	14/7	255Cr	Any
Mace (+0)[4]	lethal(b/p)	+3/+3	-2/-2	4	4	3	1.6kg	Melee	Club	-	11/6	195Cr	Any
Flail (2h)(+0)[4]	comb.(b)	+4	-3	4	5	3	2.7kg	Melee	Flail	-	10/5	325Cr	Any
War hammer (+0)[4]	lethal(b/p)	+2/+2	-2/-2	4	5	4	1.0kg	Melee	Club	-	10/5	225Cr	Any
Billy club (+0)[4]	comb.(b)	+1	-1	4	3	3	.3kg	Melee	Club	-	2	65Cr	Any
Large wrench(2h)(-1)[4]	comb.(b)	+2	-3	4	9	5	5.0kg	Melee	Club	-	14	30Cr	Any
Brass knuckles (+0)[4]	comb.(b)	+0	+0	1	1	4	.3kg	Unarmed	Punch	-	4	20Cr	Any
Sap glove (+0)[4]	non-lethal(b)	+1	+0	1	1	8	.3kg	Unarmed	Punch	-	2	30Cr	Any

Armor	TL	Armor Value	Protects	Mass	Size	Cost	Special notes
Heavy clothing[4]	2+	0/1	All but face and hands	1.2kg	-	80Cr	All thrust/puncture count as AP
			Legs only	.4kg	-	30Cr	
			Torso only	.3kg	-	20Cr	
			Arms only	.3kg	-	25Cr	
Padded cloth[4]	3+	1/2	All but face	6.2kg	-	120Cr	All thrust/puncture count as AP
			Legs only	1.8kg	8	40Cr	
			Torso only	1.5kg	12	30Cr	
			Arms only	1.2kg	8	40Cr	
Hardened leather[4]	3+	2/2	All but face	4.6kg	-	300Cr	Lethal thrust/puncture count as AP
			Legs only	1.4kg	4	100Cr	
			Torso only	1.1kg	6	70Cr	
			Arms only	1.2kg	4	100Cr	
Mail[4]	4+	2/4	All but face	31.0kg	-	1200Cr	All thrust/puncture count as AP
			Legs only	9.0kg	4	400Cr	
			Torso only	7.0kg	6	300Cr	
			Arms only	8.0kg	4	400Cr	
Plate[4]	4+	3/4	All	44.0kg	-	600Cr	All bullets count as AP
			Legs only	12.6kg	-	200Cr	
			Torso only	10.0kg	-	150Cr	
			Arms only	11.2kg	-	200Cr	
Flak jacket[4]	9+	2/2	Torso only	3.8kg	14	80Cr	All melee thrust count as AP
Level I vest[4]	10+	2/3	Torso only	1.1kg	3	150Cr	All melee thrust count as AP
Level II vest[4]	10+	5/5	Torso only	2.5kg	4	500Cr	All melee thrust count as AP
Level III vest[4]	10+	18/3	Torso only	8.4kg	7	800Cr	
Level IV vest[4]	10+	18/3H	Torso, upper legs	11.5kg	14	1000Cr	Hardened against AP attacks
Motorcycle helmet[4]	10+	3/1	Head (2/0 on face)	1.0kg	-	80Cr	All bullets count as AP
Metal helmet[4]	8+	4/1	Head (not face)	.9kg	-	20Cr	
PAGST helmet[4]	11+	8/1	Head (not face)	.7kg	-	60Cr	Hardened against AP attacks
Vacc suit[3]	11+	2/3	All	35.0kg	-	20KCr	All melee thrust count as AP
Armored vacc suit[3]	12+	4/3H	All	40.0kg	-	40KCr	Full value vs. most attacks
Battle dress[4]	13+	25/3H	Torso	10.0kg	-	2000Cr	Typical AV for light powered armor
			Head	2.0kg	-	500Cr	
			Arms only	11.0kg	-	2500Cr	
			Legs only	12.0kg	-	2500Cr	

Equipment	TL	Mass	Size	AV	Cost	Special notes
Small pack[4]	4+	1.5kg	12	1	20Cr	Holds up to Size 10 of items
	9+	1.0kg	12	1	40Cr	
Medium pack[4]	4+	4.0kg	50	1	60Cr	Holds up to Size 45 of items
	9+	2.5kg	50	1	100Cr	
Large pack[4]	4+	6.0kg	100	1	80Cr	Holds up to Size 90 of items
	9+	4.0kg	100	1	130Cr	
Camping sundries[3]	4+	1.0kg	10	1	35Cr	Toiletries, mirror, etc. for 30 days
	9+	.5kg	5	1	35Cr	
Waterskin, 4 liter[4]	2+	4.4kg	5	1	15Cr	Will last an average person 1-2 days
Trail food, 1 day[4]	4+	1.0kg	10	1	10Cr	Can be stretched twice as far if resting
	9+	.8kg	8	1	10Cr	
Oil lamp (rating 2)[3]	3+	.6kg	5	1	15Cr	Holds .2 liters oil, burns for 4 hours
Carbide lamp (rating 4)[3]	8+	.3kg	5	1	20Cr	Holds .1kg carbide, burns for 10 hours
Flashlight (rating TL/3)(u)[2]	8+	.6kg	5	1	20Cr	Holds .3kg batteries, burns for TL hours
Lightstick (rating 2)[2]	11+	.1kg	2	1	2Cr	Loses 1 point of rating each 3 hours
Blanket[4]	2+	1.2kg	5	2	15Cr	Provides a 5°C temperature shift
Sleeping bag[4]	8+	3.0kg	15	3	50Cr	Provides a 10°C temperature shift
Sleeping bag[4]	10+	2.5kg	10	2	150Cr	Provides a 20°C temperature shift
Emergency blanket[4]	11+	.1kg	2	0	10Cr	Provides a 5°C temperature shift
Mess kit[4]	4+	.7kg	10	3	15Cr	Suitable for cooking for 2 people
Mess kit[4]	9+	.4kg	5	2	15Cr	
2 person tent[4]	6+	6.0kg	20	3	40Cr	Minimal protection from the weather
2 person tent[4]	10+	2.0kg	10	2	150Cr	Fully floored and waterproofed
Portable computer[1]	12	3.0kg	5	1	2000Cr	Capable of executing programs of skill 6
Automobile tools[4]	9+	10kg	20	5	200Cr	Adequate tools for most parts replacement
Electronic tools[1]	10+	2kg	8	1	200Cr	Adequate tools for most parts replacement
Lockpicks[4]	5+	.1kg	2	1	100Cr	Suitable for locks of its own Tech Level
First aid kit[3]	7+	1.0kg	8	1	100Cr	Adequate for 5 First Aid rolls
Disguise kit[4]	4+	2.0kg	10	1	200Cr	Sophistication varies with Tech Level
Multi-tool[4]	9+	.2kg	3	2	70Cr	Count as inadequate tool for almost anything
Rope, 50m[4]	3+	4.5kg	15	1	25Cr	Holds up to 150kg safely
Rope, 50m[4]	9+	3.5kg	15	2	150Cr	Holds up to 1000kg safely
Large book[4]	4+	4.0kg	25	6	200Cr	Large spellbook, illuminated Bible, etc.
Medium book[4]	7+	1.0kg	5	2	50Cr	Textbook, reference book
Small book[4]	7+	.3kg	2	1	10Cr	Novel, small role-playing game
Writing tools[3]	4+	.1kg	1	0	10Cr	Pens, pencils
Saddle & tack[4]	5+	25.0kg	70	2	400Cr	Styles and accouterments may vary
Saddlebags[4]	5+	10.0kg	35	2	100Cr	Holds up to Size 15 in each of two pockets
Formal clothing[4]	3+	3.0kg	20	1	500Cr	Suitable for most formal outings
Work clothing[4]	3+	2.0kg	10	1	80Cr	Denims, T-shirt, sneakers, etc.
Personal sundries[2]	2+	.3kg	3	1	100Cr	Wristwatch, wallet, keys, etc.
Binoculars[4]	7+	1.0kg	5	1	100Cr	Bonus to AWR for spotting things
Rifle scope[4]	8+	.4kg	3	1	200Cr	Variable from 3x to 8x power
Night vision goggles[1]	11+	.9kg	5	2	7000Cr	Cuts off periph. vision (count as rear hexes)
Night vision glasses[1]	13+	.3kg	2	1	500Cr	Negates all darkness penalties
Small electronic gadget[1]	10+	.2kg	3	0	50Cr	Calculator, small radio or tape player
Medium electronic gadget[1]	9+	1.0kg	8	1	150Cr	WWII handheld transceiver
Large electronic gadget[1]	8+	5.0kg	20	1	300Cr	Old shortwave radio
Suitcase[4]	8+	5.0kg	50	2	50Cr	Lockable, holds up to Size 45 of items
Steamer trunk[4]	8+	10.0kg	110	2	100Cr	Lockable, holds up to Size 100 of items



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