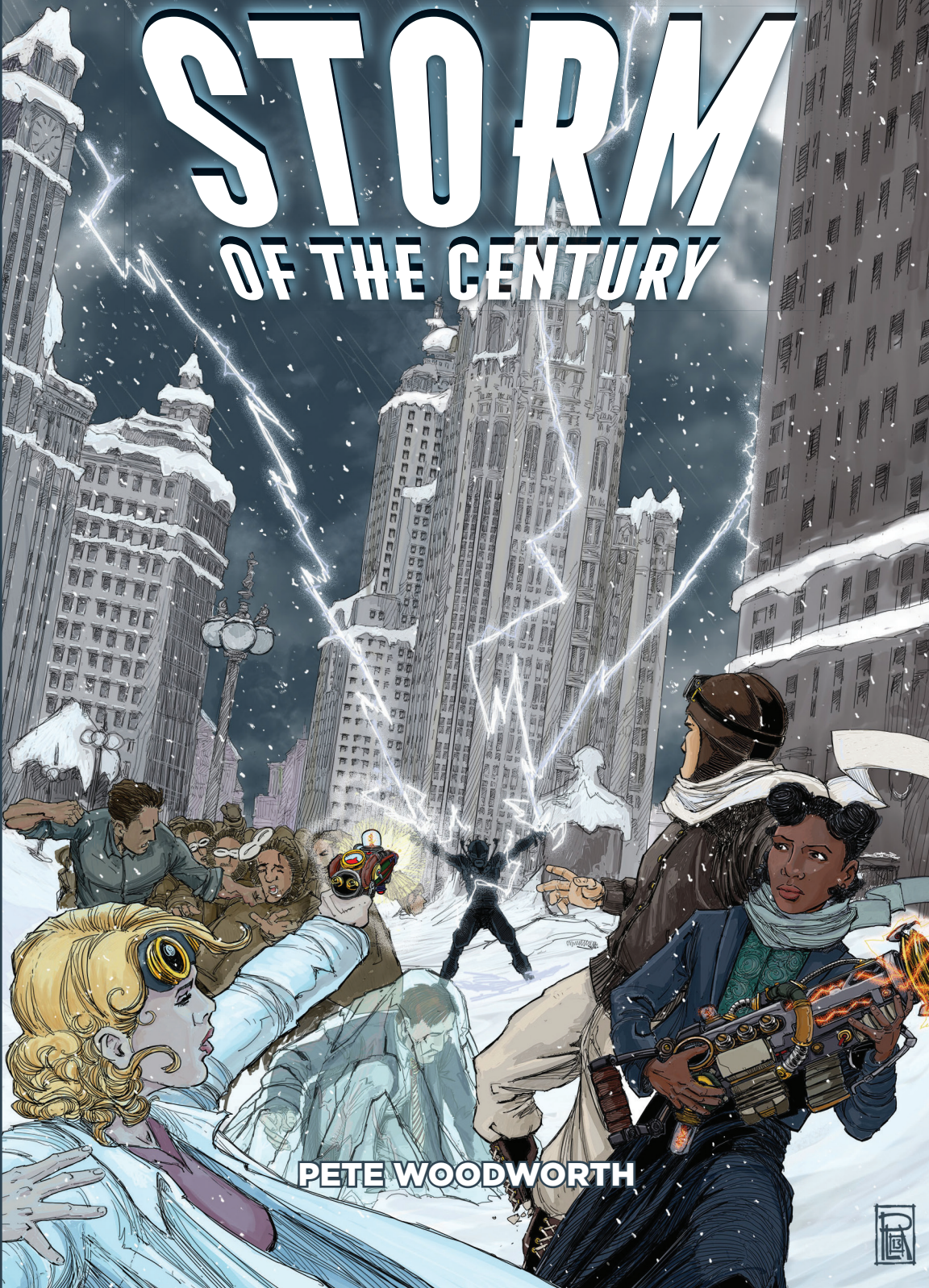


SPRIT OF THE CENTURY™ PRESENTS

STORM OF THE CENTURY



PETE WOODWORTH



A THRILLING (AND CHILLING) TALE OF METEOROLOGICAL PERIL!

When two of the Century Club's most dangerous foes join forces, Summer turns to Winter overnight in the Windy City!

Will the brave heroes of the Century Club unravel the mystery in time to save the city—and the world—from the dawn of a new Ice Age?

It's up to you!



**An adventure for
Spirit of the Century!**



**EVIL HAT
PRODUCTIONS**



SPIRIT OF THE CENTURY™ PRESENTS

STORM OF THE CENTURY

A THRILLING (AND CHILLING) TALE
OF METEOROLOGICAL PERIL!

FEATURING DARING ACTS OF WRITING FROM
“STORMIN’” PETE WOODSWORTH

THE DEATH-DEFYING EDITING SKILLS OF
TOM “EATER OF WORDS” CADORETTE

THE RAZOR-SHARP SYSTEM INSIGHTS OF
“SWASHBUCKLIN’” BRIAN ENGARD

THE UNCANNY LAYOUT WORK OF
FRED “THE HAT” HICKS

THE UNBELIEVABLE PENSTROKES OF
**RICH LONGMORE,
ALIAS: “THE SWAGGER!”**



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ADVENTURE AWAITS!

“Storm of the Century” is an adventure for SPiRiT OF THE CENTURY, in which the Centurions match their wits and might with an evil villainess who has unleashed a diabolical plot to enslave the world by enveloping it in endless winter. Set in Chicago, one of the most iconic cities of the Pulp Era, the action will take the Centurions all across the Windy City and beyond as they race to stop the sudden onset of a new, catastrophic Ice Age, and discover a dastardly conspiracy reaching all the way to the highest levels of government!

To play “Storm of the Century,” you’ll need to have a copy of SPiRiT OF THE CENTURY. It is designed for novice and experienced Centurions alike, with challenges and encounters that can easily be scaled to suit various power levels. Existing characters from an ongoing campaign can either be hooked into the adventure, or simply dropped in, *in media res*. If your group does not already have characters created, and you are all really eager to dive into the action, some pre-generated characters have been provided, developed enough for a quickstart or pick-up game, but with room built in so that players can customize them to suit their preferences.

As with other SPiRiT OF THE CENTURY adventures, “Storm of the Century” does not have a strict time or plot line that must be followed, but rather presents a number of different possible goals and challenges to tailor the scenario for your group’s preferences. A basic sequence of events is suggested, but its structure is loose and flexible enough so that you can move events around, combine them, or even add new ones. Fans of straightforward pulp action can punch their way through squads of Storm Troopers and topple the dreaded Cryonic Spire with some high-altitude heroics, while noir aficionados can investigate and unravel the conspiracy surrounding the insidiously controlled Electro-Men, as devotees of the mystical pit themselves against the ruthless Yeti shamans who might have been pulling the strings all along.

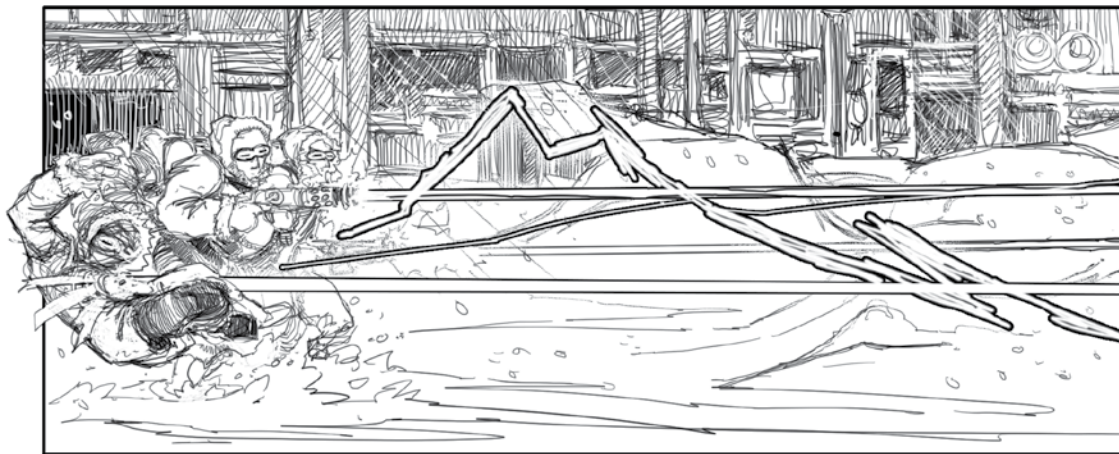
Outside the wind howls maniacally, snowdrifts pile up to impossible heights, and the temperature plummets to a deadly cold level. It is only a matter of time before Chicago, then North America and maybe the entire planet, is engulfed by the relentless onslaught of the freak blizzard, the sun forever lost behind the icy-white skies of a never-ending winter.

As usual, once again it’s up to the Centurions to come together and sally forth to save the world!

WINTER IS C... UH, ALREADY HERE!

It's not unusual for winter to be bitter in Chicago—unless it suddenly takes place in the middle of June! Blue summer skies abruptly turned slate gray and then midnight black, as a freak snowstorm blasted the city, instantly burying its streets under several feet of snow in a few short hours. Frightened citizens turned on their radios only to hear their dazed Mayor pleading for calm in a monotone voice, asking everyone to remain inside until the storm passes. Those in the know are especially puzzled, as a number of city officials—including the Mayor and the Police Commissioner—are behaving quite strangely, refusing to take a number of standard emergency measures as they divert their efforts to strange, seemingly inconsequential tasks.

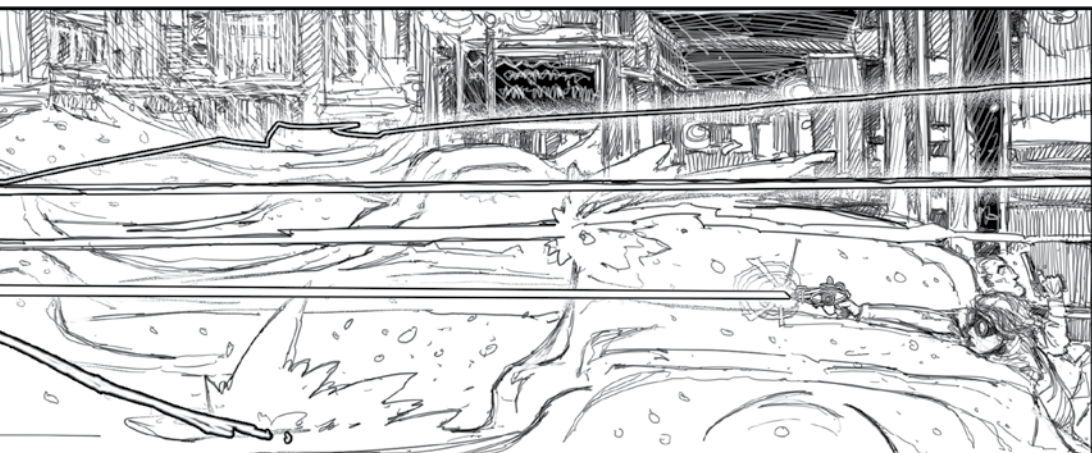
Naturally, a freak blizzard in the middle of June is just the kind of thing that the Century Club is bound to investigate, and the adventure opens just after the all-hands message has gone out, calling all Centurions in the city to meet at the Club and join forces to investigate this strange phenomenon. In particular, the local Centurions will undoubtedly look to the work of Hail Mary, the Club's world-famous adventuring meteorologist, to discover what is behind this unnatural, catastrophic storm. As written, the story assumes that Hail Mary is out of town—even though she isn't available, her work might help the Centurions figure out a way to beat back the disastrous weather.



Just as soon as they gather, every radio station in the city begins broadcasting a message from the nefarious Professor Jacqueline Frost, the world's greatest cryonics scientist: unless her demands are met, the storm will continue to spread until the entire world is blanketed in a new Ice Age. Still burning to prove herself after being snubbed by the Club years ago, she calls out the Centurions directly, and wastes no time in targeting them. To emphasize her villainous intent, her minions attack the Century Club, leading to a frantic race to escape before the entire building is encased in ice.

Once on the outside, the heroes will have to work fast to locate the source of the storm and find a way to stop it before it kills thousands and destroys the city—not to mention bringing Professor Frost to justice. Hail Mary's research on the Atmo-Ray can help spur the heroes to action if they get stuck for ideas, but otherwise they are going to have to depend upon their wits, fists, and courage to save the day. There's precious little help available, with little chance of outside reinforcements being able to penetrate through the deadly storm. The Centurions are the world's only hope to stop the madwoman's evil scheme for world domination.

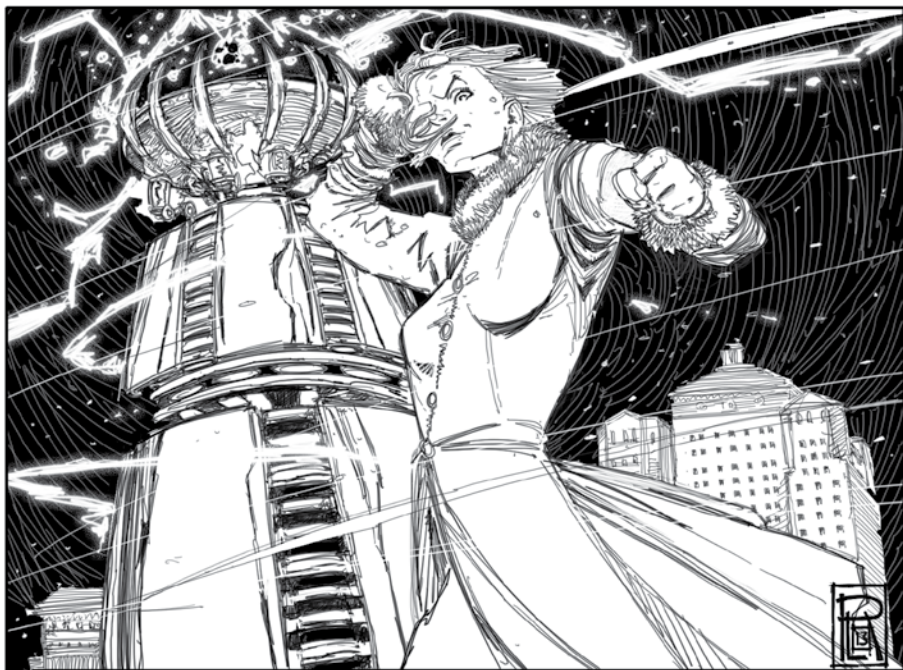
Along the way they will have to deal with threats ranging from crack mercenaries and canny savages, to prehistoric beasts and mind-controlled innocents, and of course, the many perils caused by the storm itself. And as if that's not enough to keep them occupied, a mysterious Shadow Centurion bent on revenge oversees the Professor's insane plot, while unbeknownst to all, heroes and villains alike, a sinister and mysterious faction waits in the wings to exploit the situation for its own twisted agenda...



EYE OF THE STORM!

Being at the epicenter of Professor Frost's dastardly plan places a heavy burden upon the heroes' shoulders. While Centurions from around the world race towards Chicago to lend their aid, the city is all but cut off from the outside world by the vicious storm, all roads and rails into or out of it impassable, with air travel an obvious impossibility. The Windy City has been plummeted into chaos, its leaders either co-opted or cowed into submission, its citizens trapped and helpless... it's up to the heroes to set it right!

What follows is a description of a series of challenges the heroes must face, and goals for them to accomplish. It's likely that your group may play through some while skipping others. Those you do play through might not occur in the order presented here, but that's okay! These challenges and goals are all just potential ideas for the adventure, things that may or may not happen depending on what's important to your group and your characters. Like most SPIRIT OF THE CENTURY adventures, "Storm of the Century" works best when the players' decisions steer the plot in directions that interest them, often resulting in events and consequences that no one in the group could have anticipated—always an awesome thing when it happens!

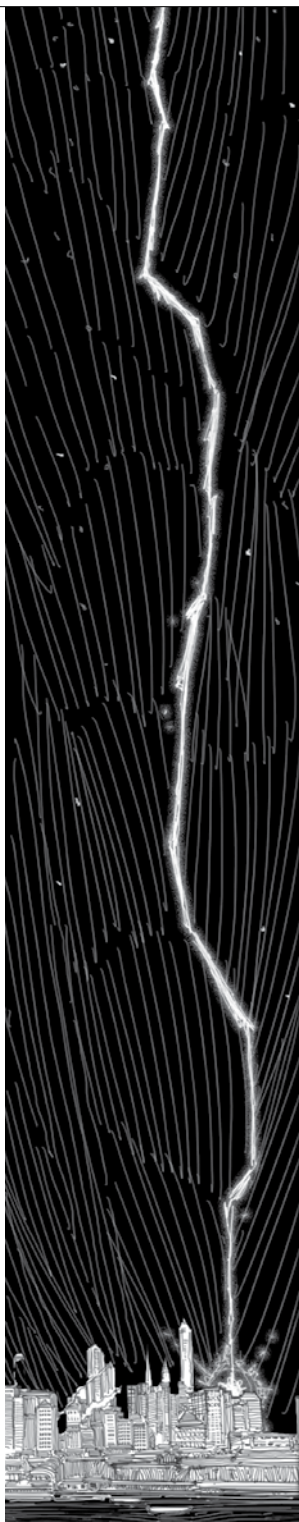


ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Throughout this book the GM (and we'll assume that's you) will find sidebars containing encounter groups for the various challenges presented. These groups are divided into Easy, Moderate, and Hard encounters. Whenever you don't have a specific challenge in mind, use one of these to push the PCs into action and move the story forward.

An Easy encounter is a good way to showcase how skilled and awesome the PCs are, a Moderate one will test their strengths and abilities, and a Hard one will require them to really work together and find clever solutions in order to succeed – or to run away! The encounters can be adjusted to the composition of individual teams as well. If the Centurions are all dedicated combat specialists, a group of enemy brawlers that would be Moderate for most teams might be Easy for them, while a team that favors brains over brawn might find the encounter to be Hard instead (unless they can also think their way out). It won't be too hard for you to figure out adjustments for the group, but it's best to take it easy early on until you can gauge what really challenges them, and then hit them in full force later.

You can also modify the encounter groups listed, adding or removing enemies to scale the difficulty for more or fewer players. The encounter groups assume a team of three or four Centurions, so add another bad guy or two for more, and remove a like number for fewer characters. You can also blend encounter groups together to create mixed encounter groups, good for throwing the players a curve, though that will usually increase the difficulty of the encounter. Generally speaking, two Easy groups added together are equivalent to a Moderate group, two Moderate groups equal a Hard group, and two Hard groups will almost certainly be too much for any team of Centurions.



CHALLENGE: SNOWED IN!

The action begins in the middle of an emergency meeting at the Century Club, soon after the onset of the storm but before the full extent of the danger becomes known. The temperature has already dropped well below freezing and the snow is piling up: it's obvious that something bizarre and unnatural is happening. Whether the PCs are locals or visiting members doesn't matter, as the Centurions have called all hands on deck to discuss the sudden storm and investigate how to counteract it. While speculation is rampant, there is little in the way of hard facts, as the Centurions haven't yet been able to bring their full resources to bear.

Natives of the area should have a few moments to talk to established friends and allies, while visitors can get to know a little about their comrades, but the important thing is to have the PCs learn about Hail Mary, the Club's resident meteorology genius. If it's an ongoing game and she hasn't appeared before, you can introduce her by explaining that she has only recently departed to study typhoons on the Indian Ocean or the siroccos of the Sahara Desert. If the PCs don't already know her or about her expertise, have one of the locals comment that "it'd sure be good to have Hail Mary around" to help in understanding this dangerous weather aberration. This should sow seeds to point the PCs in the direction of her work later on, particularly if they are stuck for ideas on how to combat the storm.



The key to this scene is pacing. You will want to give the players a few minutes to slip into character and perhaps begin sketching the broad outline of an investigation, but not so long that conversation begins to drag or the PCs feel like they've exhausted all of their leads. The easiest way to do this is to interrupt a conversation with the radio broadcast by Professor Frost, followed almost immediately by the sudden appearance of a bunch of bad guys bent on doing the PCs harm. Here's the text of the speech—feel free to edit or embellish it as suits your dramatic style or past run-ins with the Professor dictate:

Greetings. You may know me as Professor Jacqueline Frost. The press has slandered me in the past, calling me a “mad scientist” and an “arch-criminal,” when truly all I have ever wanted is to share my science with the world. But I have suffered enough at the hands of the foolish and the shortsighted... if you wish me to play the part of the villain, then so I shall! Unless the League of Nations recognizes my authority as the supreme ruler of North America, with full authority over the United States, Canada and Mexico, in mere hours the entire continent will be covered by a tremendous blizzard as a new Ice Age begins! My demands are non-negotiable. I await your answer... but for the sake of your people, answer quickly! I'll be waiting, Centurions.

A beat or two after the broadcast ceases, Professor Frost's minions strike the Club. With so many Centurions around, beating back the first wave shouldn't be too hard—it's really the shock that matters for this first encounter. But if the PCs hang around, it should quickly become clear that the Century Club has been specifically targeted for a siege, and that even their combined talents won't hold off the enemy forever—especially when the Cryonic Flash Cannons begin firing, encasing the building in sheets of ice! Having decided they can't take the Club by force, Frost's minions switch tactics and attempt to trap the remaining Centurions inside.

It's time to get out fast before the ice seals them in for good! We recommend you keep most if not all of the other Centurions bottled up in the Club, or otherwise out of the action. Not only will this underscore the danger of the scenario and provide a foundation for a great rescue mission later, but it also keeps the PCs

CENTURY CLUB ASPECTS

TRAPPED LIKE RATS!

FULL OF OLD SOUVENIRS

“THE ICE IS THICKENING!”

CLEVERLY HIDDEN PASSAGES

at the forefront of the adventure, while emphasizing the sense of a desperate underdog struggle in the heart of the enemy's stronghold.

You can also accomplish this by limiting the number of Centurions present, or have them nobly offer to help distract the enemy long enough for the heroes to get out. You can also show other Centurions being flash-frozen or otherwise captured during the breakout run, giving the heroes a close-up view of what their enemy is capable of without subjecting them to such effects directly... yet.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS FOR THE OPENING SCENE

Easy Encounters

- A Storm Trooper sentry
- A lone Ice Tribesman
- A group of four to six Electro-Men minions
- Three or four Ice Wolves

Moderate Encounters

- A squad of four Storm Troopers
- A group of three trained Electro-Men bodyguards
- A band of six or seven Ice Tribesmen

Hard Encounters

- A team of eight Storm Troopers
- An Ice Tribesman on an Ice Mammoth
- A pack of seven or eight Ice Wolves
- Four or five Ice Tribesmen, each with an Ice Wolf
- Two or three Storm Troopers with Blitz Cannons or Frost Projectors

HAIL MARY

Doctor "Hail" Mary Sinclair is a brilliant scientist and one of the world's foremost meteorologists. But to the average person, she is famous as "The Woman That Weather Can't Kill." In the past, she has survived being lost in a blizzard for days, carried off by a flash flood, struck by lightning no fewer than six times, and even swept up in a tornado, buffeted about within for over a mile before it dropped her —completely unharmed—in a pasture.

Truth be told, she's a bit embarrassed by her celebrity status, and greatly prefers to be called Dr. Sinclair, or better yet Mary, instead of her popular nickname. She does take advantage of the acclaim, however, as a means of promoting her work on predicting dangerous weather patterns around the globe.

Although she is not a combatant and plays down her heroics, she is utterly fearless in the field, and will not hesitate to brave hazardous conditions in order to help someone in need—or further her research. Her current project is the Atmo-Ray, a device that would allow communities to blast away dangerous weather patterns like lightning storms, tornados, and possibly even hurricanes.

Note: It is assumed that Hail Mary is not present for the action of the story—only her research and some of her equipment—but should she appear in other stories or the PCs find some way to get her involved, her statistics are provided below. If you wish to include her, say by having her frozen in one of Frost’s traps or arriving late in some unorthodox vehicle that can brave the storm, it is important to recognize that, given her expertise, she can easily upstage the PCs. While it might be tempting to use her as a *deus ex machina*, we recommend that you resist the urge—it’s very frustrating for players to feel as though they’re secondary characters in their own story.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

“YES, IT DOES IN FACT STRIKE TWICE” • WEATHER EYE • NEVER
A DULL MOMENT IN SCIENCE • LET’S TAKE A HANDS-ON
APPROACH, SHALL WE? • TOUGHER THAN I LOOK

SKILLS

Superb Science
Great Academics, Engineering
Good Athletics, Endurance, Survival
Fair Alertness, Investigation, Empathy, Pilot
Average Contacting, Drive, Rapport, Resolve

STUNTS

Academics: Walking Library (SOTC 117)
Empathy: Uncanny Hunch (SOTC 144)
Science: Doctor (SOTC 191), Scientific Genius (Meteorology) (SOTC 193),
Scientific Invention (SOTC 194)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Fate Points: 2
Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

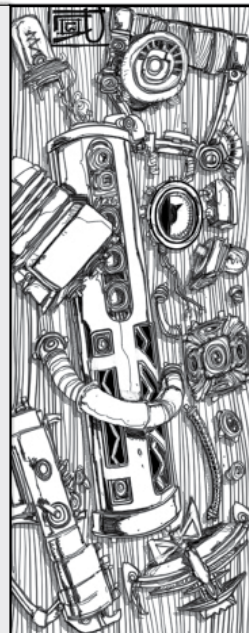
CHOOSING GOALS

Of course, once the PCs have managed to escape the Century Club, their trials are only beginning. The city is paralyzed by the storm, the weather has cut off contact with the outside world, and the dangerous conditions will make getting around extremely difficult unless the PCs possess some truly unusual gear—which is very likely as they’re Centurions. Use of that gear, however, will undoubtedly attract a lot of attention, and they can be sure that Professor Frost will take the problem of Centurions roaming around loose very seriously, especially if word reaches her that they managed to get Hail Mary out safely too.

Looming over all of this is a strange, gigantic antenna that has mysteriously sprouted from the top of the Chicago Board of Trade Building, replacing the giant statue of Ceres that normally adorns the rooftop. The weather patterns swirling above and around the building indicate it might be the heart of the operation. Casual inspection by the PCs will also discover that the building is a veritable fortress. A direct ground assault means fighting their way inside and then up through 44 floors likely filled with enemies; an aerial attack seems near-suicidal because of the tremendous storm winds being generated by the tower. Make no mistake, while the heroes are in the right spot to bring the whole operation tumbling down, they’re going to have to play it smart.

SURVIVING FAILURE

It doesn’t have to be a do-or-die situation where one loss means the Centurions “fail” the adventure. While failures and defeats must have consequences, if taken out, the heroes shouldn’t be killed outright unless their actions truly warrant it – and failure is always an interesting twist for the players to deal with. Professor Frost desperately wants to prove how superior she is to the Centurions, after all, and so has given standing orders to capture the heroes instead of killing them if at all possible, if only so she can gloat properly before disposing of them. Not to mention that a group of defeated heroes being dragged before the villain in chains is also a classic staple of pulp adventure, so much so that some groups might actually try that as their method of entry into her sanctum!



Venturing outside for even a short amount of time also gives more insight into the strange assortment of enemies the PCs are up against. The fearsome Storm Troopers are easily the most ubiquitous threat, seasoned troops equipped for the cold and outfitted with a mix of conventional arms, Dr. Frost's cryonic weapons, and strangely enough, even some of Der Blitzmann's electric devices. Combined with their fanatical devotion to the new world they are helping to usher in, the unpredictable nature of their equipment makes them very dangerous enemies indeed.

Recently thawed ice tribesmen stalk the streets as well, guiding massive Ice Age war beasts as they prowl in search of offerings for their "goddess." But perhaps most strangely of all, a number of influential citizens seem to have already gone over to Professor Frost's cause, including some that the heroes would have otherwise believed were of unimpeachable character. Clearly there's more afoot than the Centurions can see on the surface, but just how far does this conspiracy go?

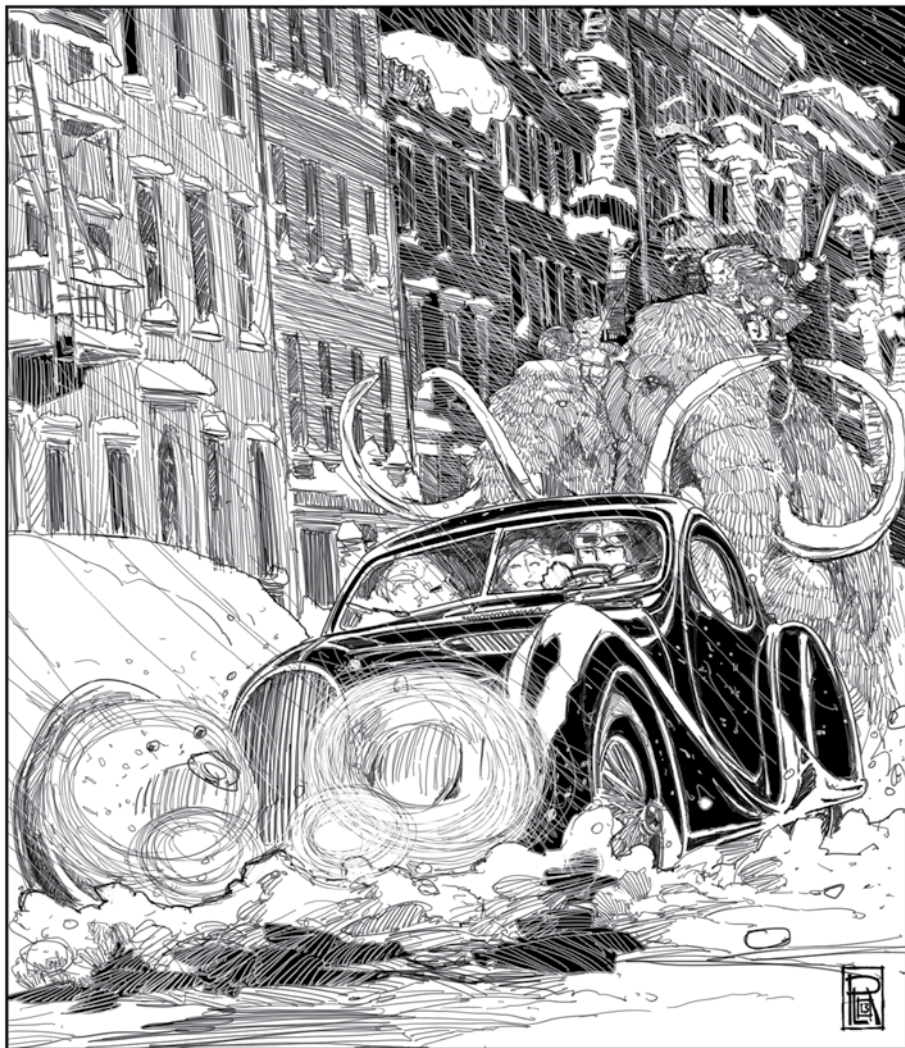
At this point, the heroes need to figure out what they want to accomplish, and fast. Some of the more straightforward or hotheaded types will probably want to launch a direct assault on the skyscraper in an effort to knock out the strange antenna. A bold plan to be sure, but also a foolhardy one unless the PCs take some time to learn what they're up against, or even whether taking out the antenna is a good idea to begin with (as most any technologically inclined hero is likely to point out).

Others may wish to try to rescue the endangered citizens of Chicago, or even stage a mission to lift the siege at the Century Club and break their comrades free. Here are a few goals you can suggest to the heroes if it seems like they're losing a sense of direction or momentum.

- Find a way to help civilians flee the city and escape the storm, or find them secure shelter.
- Uncover the reason behind the strange behavior of some of the city's influential citizens.
- Disrupt the Electro-Conditioning Suits and free Der Blitzmann's unwilling servants.
- Dig up information regarding the mysterious antenna atop the Chicago Board of Trade Building.
- Rally resistance against the Storm Troopers and other enemy forces.

CHALLENGE: STORM FRONT!

One of the key elements of this adventure, if not the most important, is the storm that has Chicago in its icy grip, a considerable threat on its own. Fortunately, given the city's traditionally fierce winters, most of the citizens are prepared for the intense cold; once the initial shock of a blizzard in June passes, they dig out their winter clothes and hunker down. However, being prepared isn't nearly the same thing as being able to ignore the weather altogether, and as the storm increases in intensity throughout the adventure, it's important to make it a major factor in the story's drama in order to drive home just how massive and threatening the weather is becoming.



Simply getting around in the weather is increasingly difficult—this is no gentle snowfall, after all, but a howling blizzard that is getting worse all the time. Going any substantial distance outdoors on foot requires a Survival check to avoid either getting lost or suffering from additional cold weather exposure (see below); assuming the characters have suitable cold weather gear, this begins at Fair (+2) difficulty and should increase as the storm's intensity rises.

Driving checks are required, even for short drives, and always have a difficulty of at least Good (+3) unless the vehicle is especially weather-appropriate, which brings it down to Average (+1). A failed Drive check may result in getting lost or finding that the character's preferred route is now impassable, forcing them to dismount or go a different way (one that might also lead them to run into an enemy patrol). After a full day or so of the storm, it's fair to declare that Drive checks are simply no longer allowed, at least unless the heroes take some sort of action to clear the way—there is simply too much snow on the streets for conventional vehicles to get around. This timeline can be adjusted depending on how long you anticipate the heroes will take to defeat Professor Frost, but regardless of the timeframe, the pacing should build steadily toward creating the impression that the city is being blanketed by a relentless storm, with no end in sight.

Piloting is a slightly different case. Flying around a big city during extremely windy, whiteout conditions is a recipe for redecorating a skyscraper with aircraft (and Centurion) parts. Barring some seriously high-tech gadgets that somehow offset such intense weather conditions, heroes are looking at a base of Great (+4) difficulty for Piloting checks just to get around without crashing or suffering other major difficulties. Any kind of fancy flying such as landing on a rooftop, strafing a building, or other hotshot maneuvers will also have their difficulty adjusted upward accordingly. Naturally, storm aspects and compels will play a big factor here as well, and should come into play constantly—it's not impossible to fly in this weather, but it sure helps to have one heck of an ace behind the stick!

When imposing penalties and harm based on the weather, keep it simple. Using the storm's aspects and compels is a good start for creating complications during any outdoor scene. Not only can they work against the heroes, they also offer clever Centurions a chance to exploit the conditions to their benefit. As with any aspect usage, discourage them from recycling the same tricks over and over again. If they use an aspect like **Howling Winds** to help spring an ambush a couple of times, eventually their enemies should adopt tactics that prevent this aspect from being used.

When considering how the weather will affect skill check difficulties, consider just how much more challenging the storm would make an action, and adjust the difficulty by +1 to +3. If you think it would be more of an increase than that, it's probably better to say instead that the skill simply can't be attempted until the hero takes some action or utilizes some gadget that changes the circumstances—the storm makes it impossible in the current conditions.

Exposure is also a concern, especially for ill-prepared Centurions. Any time the heroes are outside, there's a chance that the storm will “attack” them, threatening to ruin equipment or injure characters with frostbite or worse. Don't hesitate to use the storm to threaten PCs and place aspects on locations, but also don't forget that PCs can make use of storm aspect compels as well. For this purpose, treat the storm as a character, with aspects as outlined in the “Putting a Face on the Storm” sidebar below. For most types of threats, use the current rank of its Storm skill as a static difficulty for Endurance checks to avoid injury or damaged equipment—it begins at Fair (+2) and steadily increases as the storm worsens, thanks to its special Rising Storm stunt. Proper protective gear can provide helpful aspects, as well as a narrative justification for compels and attacks not happening as often provided the heroes mind their precious gear.

Last but not least, it's important to remember that while the storm is a major factor in the adventure—always present, even if only because it's howling outside the window—it shouldn't be an excuse to batter the PCs so badly they dare not step outside, but instead a chance to keep things dramatic and exciting. Sure, failing a Pilot check could mean the Centurions crash into the side of a building and perish in a fiery inferno, but where's the fun in that? Maybe they still crash, but in so doing the plane happens to plow right into a Storm Trooper stronghold, and now the heroes face a desperate fight against the enemy troops while both sides race to flee the area before the plane's gas tank explodes.

Make the storm a threat, certainly, but one that makes their adventures more challenging and unpredictable instead of simply shutting them down at every turn. Storm aspects and compels can flavor scenes and complicate the Centurions' plans, but don't forget they can use those factors to their advantage as well, particularly if they're running low on fate points or setting up cunning ambushes on their enemies.

PUTTING A FACE ON THE STORM

The following serves as the storm’s “character sheet” for the purposes of attacking the PCs, placing aspects and using compels. Note that it is not complete, as the Storm skill covers most any situation that arises, and it does not have Stress as the PCs cannot inflict harm on it in any conventional sense – if they want to disperse it, they will need to use clever planning and story mechanics rather than simply firing guns or waving fists into the wind!

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

HOWLING WINDS • BLINDING SNOW • DEADLY COLD • SLIPPERY FOOTING • WAIST-DEEP DRIFTS • “IT’S NOT DESIGNED TO WORK IN THESE CONDITIONS!” • DARK AS MIDNIGHT • UTTERLY RELENTLESS

SKILLS

Fair Storm+

STUNTS

Storm: Rising Storm+

Fate Points: 2

Any time you see a + next to a skill or a stunt, it’s something new in this adventure. See page 48!

GOAL: RAID HAIL MARY’S TOWNHOUSE!

Everyone loves a good battle against impossible odds. However, if the Centurions want to have more of a fighting chance of stopping Professor Frost and her evil scheme, getting to Hail Mary’s townhouse is probably one of the best ideas the heroes will come up with, where she has a basement laboratory in which she keeps her research notes and experimental technology. Almost immediately after escaping the Century Club, a technologically inclined hero is likely to have the idea occur to them; if that’s not enough, a pragmatic hero may realize that if Professor Frost hasn’t already sent forces to confiscate her notes and devices, she certainly will soon.

In particular, Hail Mary has been working on the Atmo-Ray, a weather disruption device designed to protect cities from tornadoes, hurricanes, and other meteorological disasters. While it’s fairly obvious that it’s still in the planning stage, having her notes and the blueprints for the device in hand is better than having nothing at all, or worse,

HAIL MARY’S TOWNHOUSE ASPECTS

“WHAT HAVE WE HERE?”

UNDER HEAVY GUARD

STACKS OF RESEARCH

SO MANY WINDOWS!

ROOFTOP SKYLIGHT

having it fall into Professor Frost's clutches. If the heroes recover the notes and blueprints, understanding them will require a Fair (+2) Science check—actually fabricating the device will require special materials (see **Goal: Build the Atmo-Ray!**), as well as a Good (+3) Engineering check. This also assumes that portions of the plans haven't been stolen or destroyed by Professor Frost's minions, which can raise the difficulty accordingly (see below).

Of course, Professor Frost is no fool: she knows that Hail Mary's work is one of the greatest threats to her plot, and will send forces of her own to secure the building and obtain or destroy what she can of Mary's work. That means it's certain to be heavily guarded, but if the Centurions act quickly they can still make it before the place is thoroughly ransacked. Hail Mary's townhouse is located on a surprisingly humble street in the famed Lincoln Park neighborhood and, as expected, Professor Frost's forces are already on the scene. A squad of Storm Troopers stands guard outside, while another squad is inside actively searching the house. Fortunately, the gusting winds and driving snow favor a stealthy approach, provided the heroes aren't actively trying to call attention to themselves, requiring only an Average (+1) Stealth check to approach the house unseen. Of course,

exactly how they want to proceed from there depends on their style.

The heroes can opt to simply take the soldiers head-on, using the blizzard as a screen for a surprise attack, but unless they are especially quick and quiet, any combat will alert the other squad inside the house, either prompting them to come outside and join the fight, or allowing them to set up a nasty ambush with aspects such as **BOXED IN** or **BOOBY-TRAPPED**, escalating the difficulty of

ENCOUNTER GROUPS IN THE STORM

Easy Encounters

- Getting the drop on a pair of Storm Troopers
- An Ice Tribesman and his Ice Wolf
- A malfunctioning Electro-Man flunky

Moderate Encounters

- Crossing paths with three Storm Troopers
- A band of four or five Ice Tribesmen out hunting
- Three Electro-Men who have set up a crude trap

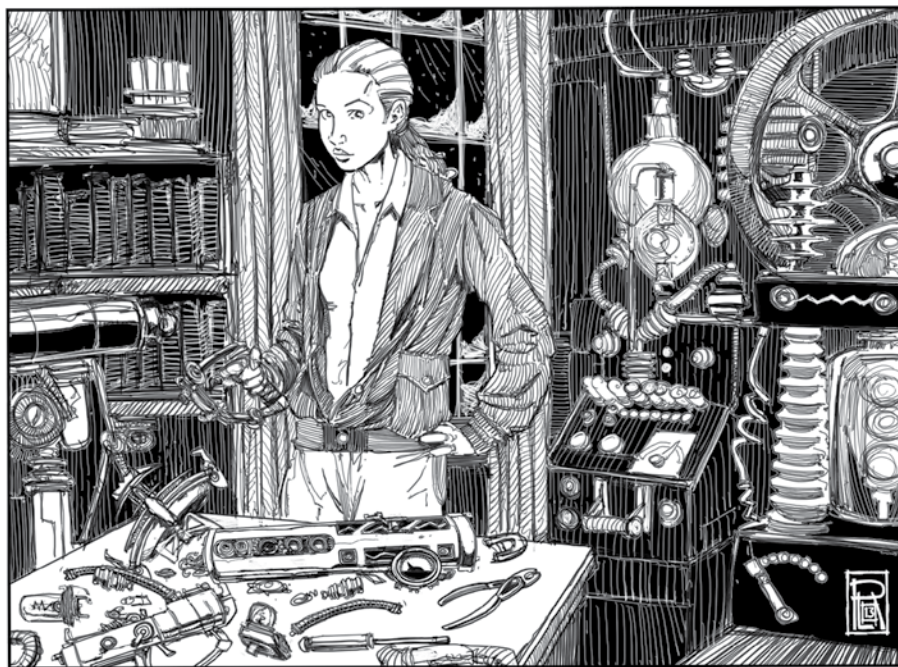
Hard Encounters

- A wounded Ice Mammoth on a rampage
- An ambush by five well-placed Storm Troopers
- A pack of ten Ice Wolves and their Ice Tribesman handler

the encounter from Easy to Medium. Alternatively, the Storm Troopers could begin destroying Hail Mary's work when they hear the heroes intruding, increasing the difficulty of the required Science and Engineering checks to build the device due to missing portions.

As there are no back or side entrances to the building, the only other approach is to make a rooftop entrance; crossing snow-covered rooftops will require a Fair (+2) Athletics check to avoid a nasty fall, but fortunately Hail Mary's place has a huge skylight, so it only takes an Average (+1) Burglary check to break in if they make it. Once inside, they have to either use some fancy sneaking maneuvers to avoid the Storm Troopers, or try to take them out and risk raising the alarm and bringing in the squad outside to join the fray.

If things get really out of hand—for example, the PCs use explosives, flashy gadgets or other decidedly unsubtle tools—then it draws the attention of a band of Ice Tribesmen down the street... and their pet mammoth. Heroes who exit by way of the front door might just hear a tremendous trumpeting as the rampaging beast rumbles down the street, knocking cars aside and trampling utility poles as well as anything else in its path. Standing and fighting will be at least a Medium difficulty, or maybe even Hard if there are still Storm Troopers active when the Ice Tribesmen arrive.



CHALLENGE: INNOCENTS AT RISK!

Sooner or later some of the heroes are likely to wonder why civil authorities haven't done more to respond to the crisis, or why the Mayor and others seemed to be acting so strangely when it began. Now that Professor Frost has revealed herself as being behind the menace, it seems like a fair bet that she's responsible for their bizarre behavior—but how?

There are two answers to that question, neither of them particularly pleasant. The first is a simple if brutally effective technique: in order to ensure the compliance of certain officials, especially those whose actions would require more finesse than the Electro-Suits provide (see below), Professor Frost has captured and flash-frozen those dearest to them and is holding them hostage. The horrifying thought of a helpless loved one being shattered is enough to break the will of even the most resolute, and it also means that the heroes will need to rescue the victim in jeopardy before they have any hope of getting aid from that particular individual. It's also possible that the mad Professor has even kidnapped one or more of the heroes' loved ones, especially if they are well known or have tangled with her before, leading to a dramatic rescue scene early in the adventure!

The second is that Professor Frost's ally, the Shadow Centurion known as Der Blitzmann, has developed special Electro-Conditioning Suits that use electrical pulses to control the unfortunate wearer's body, effectively operating them like sophisticated marionettes through brute muscle mastery. The suits and their electrodes can be concealed under normal clothing, though the wearers will be notably warmer than normal with a faint scent of ozone accompanying them at all times, which emanates from the battery pack worn at the base of their spines. These subjects are still in control of their minds and can even attempt to blurt out brief bursts of uncontrolled speech, though the painful shocks their controller can administer are an almost-sure guarantee that the Electro-Men will say only what they are instructed or allowed to.

Electro-Men can be actively controlled from a unit roughly the size of a handheld radio, typically operated by a nearby Storm Trooper, or they can be left in a reactive state, where they are programmed to reply to specific situations or stimuli with basic physical responses: fight, flight, performing a rote action, and so on. Even when actively controlled their movements lack sophistication, appearing jerky and violent, but they make up for it with raw physical power, as the electrodes stimulate their muscles to high levels of performance that often belie the subject's appearance. A few unfortunate souls have also been fitted with

experimental versions of the suit that include head electrodes, controlling the wearer's thoughts via electrical stimulation and suggestions passed through radio waves. This head rigging is very obvious, however, making it unsuitable for activities requiring discretion, and has proven to be very harmful to a subject's health and sanity.

Electro-Men can be used in a variety of ways. They make excellent troops for massed attacks that don't require much in the way of tactics or skill, and can be used to soften up enemies before encountering Storm Troopers or other more sophisticated enemies. They actually present more of a challenge in this regard than one might suspect: as they are heroes, the Centurions will have to find a way to subdue them without causing any more harm than necessary. After all, there are innocent people inside those suits; if the heroes don't realize this right away, you can have one of the first Electro-Men cry out for help even as he attacks.

CHALLENGE: STORM TROOPERS ATTACK!

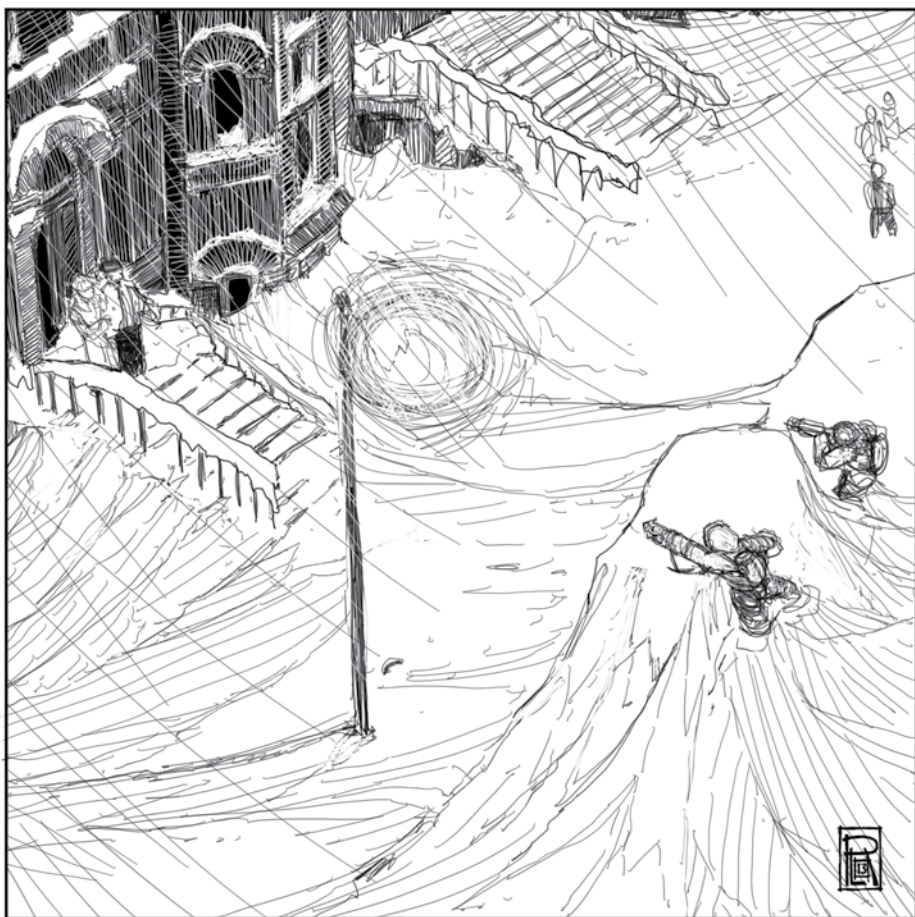
Chances are good the heroes will encounter the Storm Troopers early on, but if they don't, they're in for a bit of a shock. Unlike the goons that a lot of villainous types hire by the dozen, the Storm Troopers are hardened mercenaries, trained well to working together as a unit. While their numbers aren't large, there are enough of them to get the job done. They deploy intelligently, taking out their targets with precision strikes, and use ambushes and booby traps to offset their numerical disadvantage whenever possible.

Dealing with the Storm Troopers on a personal level is difficult—most of them are grizzled veterans of many years as soldiers-for-hire, leaving little to work on in terms of empathy, intimidation, or personal connections to exploit. While they are mercenaries, they have been offered incredible sums of money to take part in the scheme, some in advance and far more promised if it succeeds—so bribing them is just shy of impossible. They do understand when they are out-matched and will retreat or surrender if the alternative is death, though interrogating them may prove frustrating, as an individual doesn't know much about the overall plan outside of his small piece of it.

They are not machines and do have weaknesses; it's just going to take a bit more effort to discover them than it would with lesser minions. They tend to stick closely to their part of the plan, for example, and are trained to expect conventional responses—heroes that use unpredictable tactics, outlandish gadgets or paranormal abilities will definitely throw them off their game. Being mercenaries,

a shift in loyalty can also simply be purchased by heroes with sufficient Resources, though buying off large groups of Storm Troopers will likely be prohibitively expensive even for very wealthy heroes—they've been promised a huge payday already, and won't change sides for chump change.

With that in mind, Storm Troopers are good enemies to send at the PCs whenever they are getting a little bit cocky, as the way the mercenaries operate will force most groups to think things through instead of just charging in and swinging. Rather than making straightforward attacks, they will attempt to fire and maneuver as much as possible, dropping aspects on targets in order to soften them up for fellow Troopers, and otherwise using teamwork and tactics as much as possible. The heroes should be able to simply wade in and dispose of them in a round or two only because they got the drop on the Storm Troopers, otherwise their impact as enemies is diminished.



GOAL: BUILD THE ATMO-RAY!

Assuming the heroes decide to go with Hail Mary's prototype weather disruptor, the Atmo-Ray, they still need to find some way to assemble the right materials to put it together—and with time ticking away fast, the more help they can get, the better! The longer it takes to put the device together, the deeper the snow gets, and the closer Professor Frost comes to realizing her twisted ambitions.

This is a good opportunity to encourage the heroes to get out there and perform some rescue missions, particularly if they already have established connections such as scientists, gadget-makers and other practical types. If no such figures have been established previously, a suitable list of possible candidates can be obtained with a Fair (+2) Contacting check to remember some of the local luminaries in those fields, and where they happen to live or keep shop. Professor Frost will keep tabs on anyone who might be able to hinder her efforts, so feel free to post guards or even subvert some of them as Electro-Men to keep the heroes on their toes!

Rescuing the researchers to help build the Atmo-Ray will typically pit the heroes against the elements first and foremost. Unless the Centurions have a truly unusual method of transportation that is capable of ignoring whiteout blizzard conditions, they're going to be making some challenging checks for skills like Drive, Pilot, or Endurance if they go on foot (see **Challenge: Eye of the Storm!** for more about the hazards of the weather). Assuming they make it intact, what they encounter will depend on how well known the person being rescued happens to be. If they are someone who is known to be connected to the Centurions, they may have a squad of Storm Troopers assigned to guard them, or they may have been subjected to an Electro-Conditioning Suit, forcing the heroes to restrain them and deactivate it without inflicting any serious harm on their ally. Lesser-known individuals may not be specifically under guard, but the heroes may still encounter roving patrols of Ice Tribesmen and their animals along the way, or find their target has been subjected to Electro-Conditioning.

Much the same goes for gathering the requisite materials for the Atmo-Ray. Fortunately Hail Mary's device doesn't need terribly exotic parts, but unless one of the heroes has a workshop or is otherwise blessed with access to an abundance of raw materials, the Centurions are going to have to gather some supplies. There are a number of possibilities—warehouses, research laboratories, manufacturing plants, and so on—and this is a good time to let the heroes be resourceful. If they want to go to a university, there just happens to be a lab there that might have

what they need; whereas if they know some guys on the docks, they might be able to pick up what they need from a recent shipment.

Depending on where they go and how they go about it, anything from Burglary to Deceit to Contacting to Rapport can be used for these scenes, providing a good opportunity for some of those skills to come into the forefront after so much running and gunning in the early parts of the adventure. (See the “Rare Materials” sidebar below for some instant hooks.) If you want to keep them on their toes, an Easy encounter or two—or the possibility of a Hard one if they blow crucial Stealth rolls and the like—should keep them sharp.

RARE MATERIALS

Here’s a quick list of some possible materials and assistance options, and some associated skills to acquire them. These skills and difficulties are guidelines: the heroes can always try different approaches, and clever plans may lower difficulties or add free useful aspects to a scene.

- Warehouse full of high-tech machine parts:
Good (+3) Burglary check
- Passing as a Storm Trooper to raid an equipment stockpile:
Great (+4) Deceit check
- Names of prominent local researchers and engineers:
Fair (+2) Contacting check
- Reverse-engineering captured enemy equipment:
Good (+3) Engineering check
- Follow the trail of a top secret chemical supply transfer:
Great (+4) Investigation check
- Communing with local spirits for mystical guidance:
Good (+3) Mysteries check
- Calling in a favor with a reluctant scientist:
Fair (+2) Rapport check
- Buy up a supply of vital machine parts:
Great (+4) Resources check
- Lift just the right key from a university night watchman’s pocket:
Fair (+2) Sleight of Hand check
- Follow an Ice Tribesman back to his den to locate his stash of artifacts:
Good (+3) Stealth check

Assuming they have access to the necessary materials, it will take a lone scientist a few days to complete the blueprints and build the device by alone. Each talented scientist or engineer—translated as Good or better in the relevant skill—that the heroes manage to rescue and bring to help will reduce the time to build the device by 1 time increment (SOTC 227), starting at a few days and going as low as a few hours. Some of the heroes can help too, of course, provided they have the proper skills, but doing so necessitates that they do nothing but help for the required time—hardly the most exciting way to enjoy the adventure. If they wish to volunteer, encourage them to go with their comrades to round up more help first, then join the effort when everyone is assembled, thus cutting down the amount of time they will be out of the action.

CHALLENGE: DER BLITZMANN STRIKES!

Already an infamous figure in the international scene, it is nonetheless surprising for those Centurions who have tangled with the madman in the past to see Der Blitzmann involved in this sort of orchestrated attack. Outside of employing the occasional gang of hoodlums to act as accomplices to his bizarre heists, Der Blitzmann has always operated alone in the past. Indeed, after his last stinging defeat at the hands of a brave group of Centurions, there was some speculation about whether he would ever dare to resurface. Unfortunately for the world, that defeat instead inspired him to make a breakthrough that has taken his technology in directions even his deranged mind had never before conceived.

Realizing that his electrically-powered weapons were only capable of doing so much to advance his cause, Der Blitzmann took a new approach to his technology. At first, he hoped to gain tremendous physical power through selective electrical stimulation, but then it hit him: if electrical impulses control the muscles, then he could effectively control the actions of others simply by placing the proper devices at strategic points across the body. He could even attempt to control people's minds by modulating the electrical activity in the brain, although doing so would be difficult and pose terrible risks to the subject's memory and health even in the short term—considerations that received very little, if any, attention in the madman's mind.

Impulsive as he is, Der Blitzmann would probably have squandered these brilliant new inventions on a shortsighted bid for power had Professor Frost not come along and made him an offer: support her global domination plot and rule the conquered continent as her lieutenant.

At first he chafed at the idea of working under another—especially a woman—but when she revealed her plan he grudgingly had to admit to its genius. Under her patient guidance, his Electro-Suits have been deployed at a time when doing so will cause maximum chaos, allowing the conspirators to take direct control of those key individuals they could not influence through kidnapping, bribery, or simple intimidation.

So far, combined with the chance to test some of his weapons technologies the early successes of the plan have kept him satisfied, though it remains to be seen what will happen as it continues to move forward. Der Blitzmann's patience, never a resource he has possessed in tremendous quantities, was sorely tested by Professor Frost's methodical preparations; now that the operation has been launched, the chances of his ego and impatience causing him to strike out impulsively will increase dramatically. Savvy heroes may be able to exploit just those traits to derail the scheme at a critical moment, or even turn Der Blitzmann against his ally, though the latter would likely convince him even more that he should be in charge, encouraging him to exploit the chaos that follows for his own benefit.

Der Blitzmann is a good threat for the heroes to encounter as they attempt to win almost any important objective, as he will gladly do battle with the Centurions as a way of testing all of his new advancements. The mere sight of him, particularly at the head of a group of advancing Storm Troopers or Electro-Men, is also a good way to get the players moving and motivated, or surprise them with a more powerful antagonist than they were expecting. Shortsighted as ever, Der Blitzmann can potentially be lured into rash confrontations by a clever team, though unlike some of his previous escapades, he will not hesitate to retreat if things really turn against him, making it possible for him to show up several times during the adventure.

As Professor Frost is likely to be more of an intellectual showdown than a physical one, Der Blitzmann makes a good penultimate opponent for action-oriented groups, allowing more physical heroes to get in a vigorous round of punching, gunplay, or whatever their thrill happens to be before the final confrontation goes forward. Capturing the mad German will take him out of the fight, but he doesn't know how Professor Frost's tower works, nor does he command the loyalty of her troops to any great degree. He could, however, potentially help the heroes deactivate the Electro-Conditioning Suits if properly motivated (or tricked).

CHALLENGE: ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN!

Alerted to a sudden drop in global temperatures, a mysterious force wastes no time in traveling halfway across the world to find the source... and exploit it for their own nefarious purposes. The Yeti—or Abominable Snowmen, as they are more popularly known—are an ancient and cruel race that once ruled much of the snowbound world during the last Ice Age. When the ice melted, they were forced to abandon all that they ruled over, retreating to the highest snow-capped mountain peaks. Great heroes of old used powerful magic to bind the savage tyrants into what was meant to be an endless slumber, and those few Yeti that escaped the wrath of the warming world were soon reduced to either the reclusive primitives of modern legend in hidden cave dwellings, bitterly remembering their lost glory and dreaming of the day the world would be coated in ice once more.

The binding magic depended in part on the world remaining inhospitable to their kind, which was simple enough until Professor Frost's plan knocked everything out of balance, bringing about the release of a very powerful Yeti: Yah'nu the Wicked Wind, High Shaman of the Lost Empires, and Priest of the dread Ice Emperor Wa'ru, the Great Devourer. Believing the Time of the Great Cold has finally returned, Yah'nu has used his wicked magic to awaken the powerful warriors entombed with him. With his ancient and mighty Staff of Endless Winter, Yah'nu cast a powerful ritual enabling him and the warriors to travel in great haste to the source of the Great Cold. Yah'nu intends to add his magic to the strange forces at work to ensure that the world continues to freeze, so that his Great Emperor might awaken to rule over all once more.

The Yeti are a wild card in this adventure, a factor that neither the heroes nor their enemies had the slightest idea would be involved. In that regard they make an excellent last-minute twist, assuming the heroes defeat Professor Frost and Der Blitzmann. Just when everything should be returning to normal, the Abominable Snowmen make their move and force the heroes into yet another desperate situation. They are also a nice surprise for mystically inclined characters, presenting an unexpected test of their abilities in what might otherwise seem to be an action-science adventure. As only a handful of Yeti are in the city, they are best used sparingly, darting out for surprise attacks when the heroes (unwittingly) threaten their schemes, or stumbled across as they try to set up their mystic ritual. While few in number compared to many of the other enemies presented in this adventure, they make up for it with individual strength, sly cunning, and mystic powers.

If left unchecked, the Yeti, under Yah'nu's guidance, will attempt to set up a number of focusing crystals at high points around the city that correspond to mystical "ley lines" of geomantic energy, seeking to create a focusing field to augment Professor Frost's Cryonic Spire by intensifying the cold created even further. If they are successful, even deactivating the tower will not stop the mystical process, much to Professor Frost's genuine surprise. Instead, a howling gale of pure wind and snow will materialize above the Board of Trade Building as winter energies are channeled from beyond. Without the tower to mask it, however, the location of their crystals will become much more obvious, allowing the heroes to investigate and uncover the Yeti presence if they haven't already discovered them.

The Abominable Snowmen will fight fiercely to protect the crystals, using stealth tactics and vicious ambushes to supplement their impressive physical strength. They may even cow some of the Ice Tribesmen and their pets into helping them, as the Ice Tribesmen regard the Yeti as something between demons and gods and will go to great lengths to avoid angering them.

Searching for the lair of the Abominable Snowmen leads back to the anthropology wing of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, as Yah'nu and the other Yeti mystically transported there after homing in on some Yeti relics the museum unknowingly collected during an expedition to Mongolia. These items were marked "Unknown" and stored while archaeologists and anthropologists debated their possible origins; after encountering the Abominable Snowmen, a character who passes a Great (+4) Academics or a Fair (+2) Mysteries check might be able to make the connection between some of the markings on their equipment and the mysterious pieces that arrived in the Field Museum. Alternatively, the heroes could try to actively follow a Yeti, a Superb (+5) Stealth check (or similar Survival check to track one), or deduce where the mystic center of their focusing ritual must be in relation to the crystals with a Good (+3) Mysteries check.



GOAL: TAKE DOWN THE CRYONIC SPIRE!

Sooner or later, the heroes are going to have to take on the challenge of the Board of Trade building—the Atmo-Ray won't do any good if Professor Frost is still generating more blizzard conditions! This means that they need to take out her Cryonic Spire before they can try to stop the catastrophic storms. Unfortunately, the structure is sturdy enough to withstand most long-range attacks (not that it's possible to take a long-range shot in this weather). It's also worth noting that most scientifically minded heroes might suspect that simple brute force solutions could create more problems than they solve, at least for Chicago. It might stop the storms... or cause the sudden release of cryonic energies that could flash-freeze all of Chicago!

If they're going to shut down the Cryonic Spire, the heroes are going to have to get up close and disable it manually at the control panel located on its base. How they intend to do this, of course depends on the talents of the Centurions and what they have endured up to that point. Some groups may try a stealthy approach, others might take it head on with guns blazing, and a few try to figure out ways no one would have anticipated. The heroes might be storming the building at the head of an army of freed Electro-Men and rallied police officers, or they could be desperate and alone, taking their one and only shot. They might start off trying one tactic, such as infiltration, only to wind up in a running gun battle halfway up the building after giving the wrong passphrase to a Storm Trooper.



THE STRAIGHT-UP BRAWL

This is the most action-oriented possibility, but it presents the most problems, as a direct assault is one possibility for which the enemy is certainly well prepared. The bulk of Professor Frost's crack Storm Troopers are dug in around the building, with reserves waiting inside to respond to emergency calls, while whole packs of Ice Wolves have been let loose on some floors, where they prowl in search of intruders. The massive, open trading room floor even has a pair of mammoths loose on patrol, no doubt to the surprise and dismay of would-be invaders.

Of course, just because the enemy is prepared doesn't mean the heroes are doomed. A hard-hitting team just might be able to bash through the defenses and fight their way up to the roof, so long as they don't stay in one spot long enough for the defenders to coordinate and swamp them. In addition, if the heroes have rallied any kind of civilian support or rescued their fellow Centurions, those extra numbers can go a long way toward making this approach less of a suicidal gamble and more of a pitched battle, especially if the heroes use these reinforcements well to create diversions, tie up enemy reserves, and so on. After all, what's the point of raising an army if you can't use it?

However, it should be clear from the outset that even with outside help, this is perhaps the hardest, riskiest approach to taking the tower. Likewise, you shouldn't be shy about throwing waves of enemies at the heroes whenever appropriate, especially if they take too long in one spot. If they pull off this method of attack, it should be because they moved boldly, fought cleverly, and probably used more than a little overwhelming force—but it should never be easy.

CRYONIC SPIRE ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Moderate

- Six Storm Troopers
- Ten Ice Tribesmen
- Five Ice Tribesmen and five Ice Wolves

Hard

- Ten Storm Troopers
- Two Ice Mammoths with Ice Tribesmen handlers
- An Ice Mammoth and six Ice Wolves
- Fifteen Ice Tribesmen



From the GM's perspective, it might also seem daunting to try to cover 44 stories of fighting, as some groups might expect each floor to present a brand new combat encounter, but it doesn't have to be that protracted. One way to keep it fun and avoid the action bogging down floor after floor is to mix in "flavor sequences" with the straight-up fights. Think of these as chances for the players to show off, relax and enjoy what their characters are really good at—a montage sequence where each player gets to narrate exactly how their character is the decisive factor on a particular floor. No rolls, but possibly rewards for players who narrate especially fun or effective scenes—aspects to carry with them into future scenes, for instance, or fate points for complicating those scenes by activating their compels.

DECEIVE, INVEIGLE, OBFUSCATE

Particularly talented liars, disguise experts, and other fast-talkers can try another way in—trickery! Naturally patrols, passphrases, and other security measures are in place to catch heroes who simply try to sneak in, or beat up a squad of Storm Troopers and put on their uniforms. But a clever team of sneaks can still find plenty of ways to penetrate the building's security without guns blazing. Perhaps the best ploy is to rig up and pretend to be Electro-Men returning from some menial task—provided the Centurions aren't too recognizable, the Electro-Men aren't given much scrutiny, especially if one of the characters manages to pose as the Storm Trooper controlling them. However, that shouldn't rule out the heroes trying to pass themselves off as Ice Tribesmen, or any other outlandish schemes they might come up with either!

Make sure to set skill check difficulties commensurate with the amount of thought and preparation the heroes put into it. Clever plans and good preparations start difficulties at Average (+1) or Fair (+2), while crude or sloppy plans begin at Good (+3) or Great (+4). Try not to set too many difficulties beyond that level, however—this approach requires a lot of skill checks, so many difficult ones are likely to have the same effect as a few extremely difficult ones. For instance, it would be a Fair (+2) Deceit check to impersonate a Storm Trooper if they've studied them for days and put together convincing uniforms, but just throwing a bearskin rug over your head and grunting isn't going to convince anyone that you're an Ice Tribesman without a Great (+4) Deceit check or better. Heroes can wing a certain amount of it—making it up when things go off the rails is a lot of the fun of an infiltration approach—but if they just walk up to the

door and try to make it all up on the spot, it's going to be nearly impossible. Clever schemes can earn the PCs aspects they can invoke, possibly even for free, while less imaginative or heavy-handed approaches don't earn such benefits.

CRYONIC SPIRE DECEPTION SCHEMES

What follows are some sample actions and difficulties for infiltration and deception efforts. As always, the amount of preparation the heroes put into it, the cleverness of their approach and the quality of their role-playing can adjust these difficulties.

Moderate

- Bypassing most interior door locks:
Fair (+2) Burglary check
- Noticing a patrol suddenly changing course:
Good (+3) Alertness check
- Coming up with a lie that satisfies a suspicious Storm Trooper:
Fair (+2) Deceit check
- Moving through shadowy offices without being detected:
Average (+1) Stealth check
- Climbing up into an air vent:
Fair (+2) Athletics check
- Grabbing the handcuff key without the Storm Trooper noticing:
Average (+1) Sleight of Hand check

Hard

- Passing as an enemy (without uniform):
Great (+4) Deceit check
- Crossing a well-lighted area with no cover:
Superb (+5) Stealth check
- Opening a secured safe or high priority lock:
Great (+4) Burglary check
- Taking out a lone sentry before he can make a sound:
Superb (+5) Fists check
- Hypnotizing a guard to allow your team to pass:
Good (+3) Mysteries check
- Befriending one of an Ice Tribesman's animals:
Superb (+5) Survival check

You should also present the heroes with a constant stream of low-level puzzles and problems (see below), spiked with the occasional nail-biter to make sure they don't get overconfident. Challenge their disguises, force them to fast-talk suspicious guards, throw patrols where they least expect them, and otherwise force them to think on their feet—and make sure to reward clever roleplaying and ideas with bonuses as necessary. After all, if a group picks an option like infiltration, it's because they want to have to figure their way through a gauntlet of puzzles, deceit, and split-second decisions. It doesn't always have to be an all-or-nothing risk—a lone suspicious guard also fits neatly in a broom closet if nothing else works—but the consequences should be apparent, or this approach rapidly becomes little more than a series of quick skill checks and all sense of threat is lost.

DAREDEVIL HEROICS

Of course, guns blazing and sneaky disguises aren't the only way for the PCs to make their way up the Board of Trade Building and assault the Cryonic Spire. Some of them might attempt to bypass the problems inside and climb the building itself, while others might attempt an aerial landing, cross on a tightrope from a nearby building, or who knows what other daredevil scheme? Such schemes should not be punished out of hand; after all, *SPIRIT OF THE CENTURY* is a pulp game, where even ludicrously bad ideas have a chance of succeeding out of sheer moxie if nothing else!

Your natural impulse might be to swat these ideas down when the players bring them up, if only because they seem like “cheating.” After all, if the building is supposed to be a huge fortress full of enemies, bypassing that whole setup might seem like the players are skipping a vital part of the adventure. But remember, there is no “right” way for this adventure to run, and if the players figure out a clever way to make it to the roof without having to deal with Professor Frost's army, let them try it!

The biggest obstacle to most of these schemes is the weather itself, as described in the **Challenge: Storm Front!** section earlier. Climbing a 44-story building is difficult enough on a sunny afternoon; attempting to scale even a section of it in subzero temperatures during a howling blizzard is well past the edge of possibility for most people, even heroic figures like the Centurions. Likewise, flying, parachuting, tightrope-walking, or other aerial and acrobatic endeavors face frankly terrifying difficulties. Being so close to the origin of the storm, the

winds are nightmarishly fierce, and most everything is covered in a sheet of ice. It's not impossible, but it will certainly be a legendary feat if they pull it off!

If the Centurions are serious about pursuing these or other extremely daring plans, make sure that they understand the risks involved, as well as the likely difficulty range of the skill checks they will have to make. However, when modeling difficulties, remember that *SPIRIT OF THE CENTURY* is a game of pulp adventure—base your difficulties on what's interesting in the fiction, not what's plausible in a real world sense. You shouldn't be showing the players huge difficulties with the intent of them acting as *de facto* denials to plans you don't like, but just to give them a sense of what lies ahead (and maybe build some good anticipation for the daring to come). If they're still willing to take those risks, well, that's what being a Centurion is all about!



CHALLENGE: DEFEATING PROFESSOR FROST!

Professor Frost will most likely be found monitoring the controls of the Cryonic Spire, or issuing another demand to the frightened world by means of a small broadcasting shed near the base of the Spire. As the rooftop is guarded by a small army of her best hirelings, including Der Blitzmann (unless he was eliminated in an earlier scene), the deranged scientist is quite confident in her security, and will gladly banter with the heroes even as they engage her underlings, taunting them about their inferiority, assuring them that her plan will bring the country to its knees.

Unlike many other villains, however, Professor Frost has little interest in sticking around to duke it out with the heroes. While impending defeat will send her into a rage, she hasn't gotten as far as she has as a criminal mastermind by sticking out a lost cause. That's one of the other reasons she's brought along Der Blitzmann—not that she would tell him so. Unless the heroes have already dispatched Der Blitzmann in an earlier encounter, Professor Frost will spur him on to attack the Centurions when they come to deactivate the Cryonic Spire, but will take flight the moment it looks like the fight is turning against them. If Der Blitzmann is not an option for whatever reason, she will usually hold back one or two of her hirelings, throwing them in as a last-minute distraction to keep the heroes away.

If necessary, she will attempt escape by using a handheld frost blaster to create a thick wall of ice around her—flash-freezing any nearby heroes—before escaping in a cleverly hidden roof hatch, perhaps stopping long enough to do some final bantering with the heroes. By the time the heroes break through the wall, she'll be long gone, heading down through the Board of Trade Building and vanishing into the storm, although you can bet she'll be plotting her revenge before long...

Or at least, that's her plan. Whether or not you want her to succeed or even attempt to escape is, of course, entirely up to you. Well, you and the heroes, as it's possible that they will think of some way to capture her or cut off her escape that is as ingenious as it is unexpected—Centurions are unpredictable that way!

ROOFTOP BATTLE ASPECTS

MERCILESS COLD

"SO. MUCH. POWER!"

UNPREDICTABLE WINDS

HEART OF THE STORM

WIDE OPEN, NO COVER

A VERY LONG WAY DOWN

It's also possible that, after all they've been through to confront Professor Frost, having her slip away at the last moment would be an anticlimactic and unsatisfying ending for your heroes, especially if it's a one-shot adventure, and you don't intend to return to these characters again. While the villain slipping away to fight another day is a staple of pulp stories, it's always better to do what will be more entertaining for your group than stick to a literary convention if it makes the players unhappy.

If you do wish to have Professor Frost stand her ground and fight to the bitter end, statistics have been presented for her at the end of the adventure. She's quite clever, naturally, and will use her minions, her gadgets, and the storm itself to her best advantage, preferably by spending several rounds moving into a strong position, creating aspects she can use to her advantage while the heroes duke it out with her minions.



CONCLUSION

Unless the Yeti are in still in play—and thus disabling the Cryonic Spire doesn't instantly stop the storm—the adventure is likely to wind down quickly. Professor Frost and Der Blitzmann have either fled or been captured, while the heroes might have a bit of mopping up to do regarding stray packs of Ice Tribesmen and their animals, or a few holdout Storm Troopers, the threat has largely passed.

All that doesn't mean the adventures won't continue, of course! The Ice Tribesmen and their animals present a particularly thorny problem, not to mention fascinating subjects for study—after all, unlike the mercenary Storm Troopers, the poor primitives really had no idea what they were being forced to do. More compassionate heroes will want to find a way to help the tribesmen because “it's the right thing to do,” while academics will want to help if only to have the opportunity to learn more about Ice Age cultures.



HAIL NO!

If you believe the device of Hail Mary's notes and her Atmo-Ray might not work for your group, feel free to modify her as needed or even replace her entirely. Virtually any genius-type character can take much the same position in the adventure with relatively few modifications, including established NPCs in long-running games, or even one of the heroes if they normally fill that role. It can be useful to have a character to act as a “mouthpiece” for the GM to speak to the characters if they fall into a rut or seem to be losing direction. Regardless of who steps up, however, the GM should be careful not to make the other heroes feel as though they are playing second fiddle to this “star.” They should always feel as though they part of a team working together to battle a terrible threat, and not simply a delivery system for someone else's brilliant ideas.

MOOKS, CRITTERS, & NE'ER-DO-WELLS

As the “Storm of the Century” envelops Chicago, all manner of nasty menaces run wild in the streets, from Storm Troopers and Ice Tribesmen to Shadow Centurions and the dreaded Abominable Snowmen!

New stunts and other rules are marked with a “+” sign when listed.

New rules can be found on page 48.

Stress boxes and such are presented according to standard SPIRIT OF THE CENTURY rules. Many people have found they want to speed combat up with shorter stress tracks and rules similar to those found in the DRESDEN FILES RPG. Drop two or three boxes off all stress tracks and use DRESDEN style consequences if that's to your liking!



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SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

SKILLS

STUNTS

GADGETS

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐ ☒ **Composure:** ☐☐☐☐☐ ☒

Fate Points: 5

DER BLITZMANN

Der Blitzmann's statistics have been modified slightly from those presented in SOTC (page 400), to reflect his involvement in the "Storm of the Century" plot. In particular, he does not have access to his usual Lair for this adventure, but his Tesla suit is deadlier than ever, and research in Electro-Conditioning has hardened his mind somewhat with regard to mesmerism and mental trickery.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

MAD SCIENTIST • ELECTRICAL MAYHEM • TESLA'S TECHNOLOGY •
"NEED MORE POWER!" • THE VOLT IS A HARSH MISTRESS • GERMAN •
SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES • "I'M THE ONE IN CHARGE HERE! ME!" •
ELECTROSHOCKED

SKILLS

Superb Science
Great Fists, Guns
Good Resources, Endurance, Alertness
Fair Academics, Athletics, Drive, Might
Average Investigation, Deceit, Intimidation, Engineering, Resolve

STUNTS

Engineering: Tesla Suit (Personal Gadget x2) (SOTC 147); Universal Gadget (SOTC 148)

Resolve: Inner Strength (SOTC 186)

Science: Scientific Genius (Electricity) (SOTC 193); Scientific Invention (SOTC 193); Weird Science (SOTC 194); Mad Science (Electromorphic Fields) (SOTC 194)

GADGETS

Tesla Suit: As described in SOTC 400, but replacing the Tesla Cannon:

Blitz Cannon: Gun w/Special Effect (shoots electricity), Upgrade (+2 stress on a successful hit, regardless of whether target is grounded), Upgrade (hits up to three targets in close proximity with a single attack, though this renders it unable to fire for three rounds as it recharges), Alternate Use (may be used with Fists as well as Guns, though not for multiple targets).

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 3

STORM TROOPER

The dreaded Storm Troopers are the backbone of Professor Frost's plan. Though commanded in the field by Der Blitzmann, the Storm Troopers are loyal to Professor Frost above all else, having been handsomely paid for their work so far and promised fabulous rewards in her global regime to come. They are highly trained, humorless, and consummate professionals, though their strict adherence to orders can sometimes put them at a disadvantage against more cunning or unpredictable enemies.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

TO THE LETTER • HARDENED MERCENARIES • ARMED TO THE TEETH • "HALT! SURRENDER OR BE DESTROYED!"

SKILLS

Superb Guns
Great Athletics, Weaponry
Good Alertness, Stealth, Survival
Fair Endurance, Engineering, Resolve

STUNTS

Guns: Rain of Lead (SOTC 158), Stay on Target (SOTC 157)

Engineering: Personal Gadget (Frost Gun *or* Shock Blaster) (SOTC 147)

GADGET

Shock Blaster: Gun w/Special Effect (shoots electricity); Upgrade (+1 stress on a successful hit, unless target is insulated or otherwise well-grounded).

Frost Gun: Gun w/Special Effect (shoots cold rays); Upgrade (Flash-freeze+).

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 1

AREN'T YOU A LITTLE SHORT ON STORM TROOPERS?

It's important to remember that while Frost has hired a small army to carry out her plans, she doesn't have access to endless legions of crack soldiers, which is why she deploys those she does have on lightning raids, while using supporting elements such as Electro-Men and her Ice Tribesmen to sow chaos and blunt enemy attacks. As such, Storm Troopers should not be thrown at PCs by the bushel. They're typically encountered in small squads, and unless the PCs work to get the drop on them, they will be well positioned to repel a straightforward attack. If you want to throw lots of disposable enemies at them, it's probably better to use pressganged Electro-Men instead. Alternately, you could create weaker versions of Storm Troopers and make this version the "elites," but we recommend that you do not flood the city with them, else it will dilute their impact.



ICE TRIBESMAN

Early in her career, Professor Frost realized that her knowledge of cryonics could also be used to thaw out creatures trapped in ice for centuries or even millennia. When word came of the discovery of an entire Ice Age village, apparently flash-frozen in an ancient disaster, she spared no expense to secure the site. She then thawed out the natives and used a combination of personal charisma and modern technology to present herself as something akin to a divine figure to the superstitious savages. Ice Tribesmen understand only a few simple phrases in English but do not speak it, communicating instead in a guttural tongue that is as much grunts and shouts as words. They are clothed in furs and leathers, and carry primitive but extremely effective bows, spears, and daggers.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

NATURAL AMBUSER • STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND •
BONDED TO THE WILD • FERAL CUNNING

SKILLS

Superb Weapons
Great Alertness, Survival
Good Athletics, Guns (Bows), Stealth
Fair Endurance, Empathy, Fists

STUNTS

Alertness: Danger Sense (SOTC 121)

Survival: Animal Friend (Ice Wolf *or* Mammoth) (SOTC 201), Animal Companion (Ice Wolf *or* Mammoth) (SOTC 200)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 1

YETI WARRIORS

The Yeti have been asleep for millennia, bound by ancient magic to make them slumber in vast vaults beneath the mountains—yet a few escaped the magic. Some of those that escaped descended into feral barbarism, exemplifying the popular notion of “Abominable Snowmen,” wilderness-dwelling savages long associated with the term. Others hid themselves away in secret mountain enclaves, keeping the ancient ways alive, waiting for the day when they would rise to reassert their brutal dominance over the world once more. The Yeti that have made their way to the Windy City are far from the primitive savages known in popular lore, but are every bit as strong and tough as one might imagine. They disdain the use of weapons, preferring to use their bare hands to dispatch foes—and they are capable of doing so with ease.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

“FOR THE ICE EMPEROR!” • HULKING KILLER •

HATEFUL FANATIC • BORN TO THE COLD

SKILLS

Superb Might

Great Endurance, Fists

Good Alertness, Stealth, Survival

Fair Endurance, Engineering, Resolve

STUNTS

Might: Herculean Strength (SOTC 171), Wrestler (SOTC 172)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 2

ICE WOLF

The Ice Tribesmen weren't the only things that Professor Frost thawed out—she also found a number of Ice Wolves in the village as well. Though the savages treat them like modern people treat dogs, they are much larger, more feral things closer to wolves than dogs. They can be found in the company of the tribesmen or in a large pack of their own with just a single handler trailing behind. They are extremely fast and work well in groups, anticipating enemy movements, using their numbers and coordination to take down enemies quickly.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

WOLFPACK TACTICS • KEEN SENSES • RELENTLESS HUNTERS

SKILLS

Superb Alertness, Fists

Great Athletics, Investigation

Good Endurance, Resolve

STUNTS

Alertness: On Top of It (SOTC 119), Run Interference (SOTC 120)

Fist: Teeth+

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 1



ICE MAMMOTH

One of the biggest surprises uncovered in the frozen village were the wooly mammoths the tribesmen had apparently domesticated. Professor Frost has put little effort into studying the beasts, except to notice that some of the tribesmen seem to have bonded with the giant creatures, and can ride and direct them like most people do horses. The mammoths are not naturally hostile, but tend to charge when startled, making them incredibly dangerous to everything in their path.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

THUNDERING CHARGE • EASILY PROVOKED •

THE BIGGER THEY ARE ... • ... THE HARDER THEY STOMP!

SKILLS

Superb Endurance, Might

Great Alertness, Fists

Good Athletics, Resolve

STUNTS

Endurance: Huge+

Fists: Charge!+, Tusks+

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ **Composure:** ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 1



NEW SKILLS

STORM

This skill is used to represent the action of Professor Frost's freak storm during a given scene, particularly as relates to dangerous or aggressive situations. It is not normally rolled, though it can be, but rather its rating is used as a difficulty for other actions that the storm might influence in that scene.

NEW STUNTS

ENDURANCE

Huge: Mammoths are really, really big. (The name is a dead giveaway, frankly.) A mammoth can attack anyone in its own or an adjacent zone with a Fists attack. It can also take an additional moderate physical consequence.

FISTS

Charge!: Once the mammoth gets its ire up, there's no stopping it! It can charge through enemies, making an Athletics roll to sprint, and then make a Fists attack against every creature in any zone the prehistoric creature passes through or enters.

Icebreaker: Yah'nu knows the ways of ice, and uses that knowledge to exploit weaknesses in his enemies. Against any enemy who has suffered stress from the storm in the last hour, or is still suffering a consequence dealt by the storm, he inflicts +1 stress with his fists. Against targets currently suffering from the Flash-Frozen consequence, he inflicts +3 stress—and might even cause a target to be taken out!

Teeth: Whenever the Ice Wolf deals Health stress, it deals +1 stress.

Tusks: Whenever the mammoth deals Health stress, it deals +1 stress.

STORM

Rising Storm: As the adventure progresses, raise the rating of the Storm skill one level to reflect the storm's increasing intensity, up to a maximum of +6. Use it to control the story's pacing and challenge level—for a slower build-up or weaker Centurions, it's recommended to use an afternoon or a day per increase, while a faster pace or more powerful heroes should find it going up every few hours or even an hour per increment.

NEW UPGRADES

Flash-freeze: This weapon can lock a target in ice. Any target taking stress or consequences from attacks with this weapon also gains a FREEZING aspect with a free tag on it as if the attacker had performed a maneuver. Consequences and taken out results indicate the target is partially or fully encased in a block of ice.



SAMPLE PLAYER CHARACTERS

It's possible that your players will want to jump right into the action without spending a lot of time coming up with characters beforehand. That's fine! If that's what your group wants to do, here are five partially generated characters. Each consists of three aspects, three skills, and a single stunt. If you need more than three, feel free to modify these to create even more.

Note that these characters are a little more detailed than an on-the-fly character usually starts out. If you'd prefer to cleave a little closer to that method of character creation, drop one aspect, both of the Great skills, and the stunt. Remember to reduce starting Fate points by 1 for each aspect dropped. Presto, instant heroes!



THE CRUSADING PUGILIST

The crusading pugilist is a square-jawed champion of the downtrodden and disenfranchised, using his knowledge of the “sweet science” to right wrongs and bring the guilty to justice. Though unmistakably blue collar—and distinctly uncomfortable in high-falutin’ situations—he is a dedicated hero, unafraid to follow the trail wherever it may lead. No matter the odds, he always comes out swinging.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

PEOPLE’S CHAMP • BLUE COLLAR POWERHOUSE • “AND STAY DOWN!”

SKILLS

Superb Fists
Great Endurance, Might
Good
Fair
Average

STUNTS

Fists: Brawler (SOTC 150)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 3

THE INTREPID REPORTER

The intrepid reporter is a gadfly with an amazing ability to sniff out a story and an uncanny knack for following trouble to its source. She's picked up skills most detectives would envy, has contacts all over town, and can get most people to open up in just a few minutes of conversation. Of course, she's made some enemies along the way, but that can be useful too: when the no-necks with the heaters start coming after you, you know you're on the right track.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

ALL THE RIGHT ENEMIES • "ONE MORE QUESTION!" •

NOSE FOR TROUBLE

SKILLS

Superb Investigation

Great Contacting, Rapport

Good

Fair

Average

STUNTS

Contacting: I Know A Guy Who Knows A Guy (SOTC 132)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 3

THE SHAMAN ARISTOCRAT

The shaman aristocrat was the scion of an old noble family who enjoyed a life of globetrotting adventure, until he was lost in a blinding snow-storm while climbing in the Himalayas. After being nursed back to health in a remote monastery, he was introduced to the monks' arcane philosophy, and departed a changed man, a mystic seeking to bring enlightenment to the world. He still travels the globe, searching out new mysteries to decipher and philosophies to learn before returning to civilization to share some of his finds with universities and museums.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

MERELY A VESSEL FOR THE ANCIENTS •

"THIS ONE TIME, ON SAFARI" • OLD MONEY, OLD SOUL

SKILLS

Superb Mysteries

Great Academics, Resources

Good

Fair

Average

STUNTS

Mysteries: Fortuneteller (SOTC 176)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 3

THE HOTSHOT PILOT

As soon as he was old enough to see above the dashboard—with the aid of a few encyclopedias on the seat, mind you—the hotshot was behind the wheel of a car every chance he could get. He's a capable enough driver, no question, but once he saw his first air show he knew it was his destiny to fly in the skies behind the stick of the fastest plane he could find. He managed to fast-talk his way into a steady stream of pilot gigs ever since; employers who doubt his young face are quickly persuaded by his amazing ability to fly anything with wings and an engine.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

NEVER SLOW DOWN! • “DID YOU JUST DARE ME?” •

BABY-FACED HOTSHOT

SKILLS

Superb Pilot

Great Drive, Rapport

Good

Fair

Average

STUNTS

Pilot: Barnstormer (SOTC 179)

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 3

THE SKEPTICAL SCIENTIST

The skeptical scientist is a regular on the lecture circuit, where she is famous for debunking all manner of bogus mystics, grifter psychics, and other flimflam artists. As a Centurion, she knows that there are genuine instances of paranormal phenomena in the world, which only makes her more determined to weed out the phonies. Of course, not every fraud goes quietly, especially when they've been working a mark for a while—but those that try to push her find she's as handy with a pistol as she is with a cutting remark.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

“LET’S HAVE A CLOSER LOOK, SHALL WE?” •

THE LIGHT OF REASON • DEDICATED RESEARCHER

SKILLS

Superb Science

Great Empathy, Guns

Good

Fair

Average

STUNTS

Empathy: The Skeptic’s Ear (SOTC 141)

This stunt normally requires at least one other Empathy stunt, but was included here for color (and because it does not threaten game balance). If more stunts are added to the character, the first additional stunt must be an Empathy stunt.

STRESS

Health: ☐☐☐☐☐

Composure: ☐☐☐☐☐

Fate Points: 3

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