

# HALLOWEEN HIJINKS

## A TRIO OF MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS FREEDOM CITY MINI-ADVENTURES

BY D.T. BUTCHINO

Halloween is a spooky time for everyone, including superheroes. What horrors lurk in the shadows on this most festive eve? Will the heroes of Freedom City be able to stop them in time?

*Halloween Hijinks* is a series of three Halloween-themed mini-adventures for the *Mutants & Masterminds* Superhero RPG. Each adventure is intended for a group of four to six power level 10 heroes, although the Gamemaster can scale the adventure to make it suitable for higher or lower level heroes by increasing or decreasing the power levels of the challenges as appropriate.

The mini-adventures are set in Freedom City (described in the second edition of the *Freedom City* campaign sourcebook available from Green Ronin Publishing). Although Freedom City is useful for running these adventures, it is not required. All the necessary material is included here and in the *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook.

Text presented in boxes such as this one is for the Gamemaster to read aloud to the players to introduce a particular scene or element of the adventures. Feel free to paraphrase or modify the introductory text as best suits the game you're running.

Players intending to play in these adventures should read no further. The rest of the text is for the *Gamemaster only!*

## EPISODE ONE: FULL MOON FEVER

The police are baffled by the sudden disappearance of rap mogul T-Rip and call the heroes in to help find the recording star. What starts as a search for a man turns to terror as they come across T-Rip's monstrous alter ego, the savage man-beast T-Wolf! Can they survive this brutal encounter? Or will they just be another meal for the beast?

### SCENE ONE: STAR ON THE RUN

You respond to a call from Detective Marcus Hackett of the FCPD who asks you to come down to the Ross-Hildor Hotel on 58th Street. When you arrive, you're escorted in to Room 331 where Detective Hackett awaits you. The room is a deluxe suite, set in a classic roman motif, and looks like a hurricane blew through it: furniture is turned on end, there are some scrapes on the walls and pillars, and the balcony window is smashed.

"Sorry for the short notice," the detective says with a nod. "We have an odd case here and I immediately thought of you. Have you guys ever heard of the rapper named T-Rip?"

The detective looks over his notes and continues. "According to what I've gathered, T-Rip was here to promote a new CD he was coming out with and was staying in this room. According to his manager, he was having problems with some gangs in his hometown; they had threatened to take him down once and for all. We think that may be the case here ... maybe some juiced up freak or super-merc abducted him and may be holding him for ransom. There are obvious signs of a struggle," he says, motioning to the scrapes in a nearby pillar. "And, according to someone a few rooms down, there was some weird growling noises and screams. Heck, the person wrote it off to T-Rip watching a horror flick on the plasma. If you want, go ahead and take a look around ... any help you guys could give us would be appreciated."

**Knowing T-Rip:** If any of the players have Knowledge (pop culture), they may make a check to see if they know anything about the rapper:

**DC 10** He's recorded three platinum albums and gone to #1 on the rap charts with his breakout hit "We B League."

**DC 15** Originally from Freedom City, T-Rip made a big splash in New York when he appeared at the American Rap Awards a few years back. Since then, he's appeared in three motion pictures, several TV series and still has time to record and tour.

**DC 18** While on his first tour in Europe, T-Rip was hospitalized for an accident that killed all but him. Rumor has it that fellow rapper, Big Money T, put a hit out for him ... but nothing was ever proven.

**Investigating the Room:** The heroes have an opportunity to investigate the room, as the detective gives them carte blanche to look things over, as long as they turn any evidence over to the FCPD. Please refer to the following chart as the players make Investigate or Search checks:

Search	Investigate	Discovery	Mislead*
DC 15	DC 10	Looking over the scrapes, the look more like claw marks and aren't clean cuts but ragged tears.	Looking over the scrapes, you think they could have been made by some kind of forked weapon.
DC 18	DC 13	You find some blood in the bedroom. Looking at the stain, it looks like it is from a significant wound	You find a bloodstain in the bedroom. From the looks of it, someone was killed here.
DC 22	DC 17	Looking over the glass by the window, it appears the glass broke outwards, away from the room rather than into the room.	Looking over the window, you surmise someone broken the glass out to escape or cover their tracks.
DC 25	DC 20	You find a tuft of fur on the balcony; it's brown and thick.	You find a scrap of paper with a phone number on it. The number is for a fan T-Rip met the other night. She has no idea T-Rip is even missing.

\* In the event someone rolls a 1 but still succeeds in the making the DC, they come to an erroneous conclusion.

**Mental Powers:** Some heroes may have powers that let them see the past. The best use of these powers is to give a vague recollection of the events that transpired. For example, someone may get the following impression:

"Your vision is hazy, but you sense that T-Rip was indeed here ... but there's a moment of intense pain, followed by horror ... and then it seems to leave the room, out the window."

Anyone with tracking abilities (be it the feat or a power) might be able to pick up a trail once the tuft of fur is found. Have the player(s) make a Survival check (DC 18). If failed, the trail is too cold. If successful, they'll track the abductor to Liberty Park. Characters may also deduce that the park may be a good place to hold up as well (Investigate, DC 20).

## SCENE TWO: OF WOLF AND MAN

As the heroes enter the park, make a Notice check for them and read the following to the players whose heroes succeed:

As you enter the park, you hear a slight moan behind some bushes. Looking over, you see an older man in beat up clothes stand up, rubbing his head. He looks at you, a bit startled at first, but quickly realizes that you're not what did this to him.

If the heroes talk to the old man, read the following to them:

The old man seems a bit startled, but asks, "Y-you're them heroes, right?" He rubs his right arm, which, now that you look at it, seems to have a nasty gash on it. "Wish you guys were here a little bit ago ... some nutcase in a monster costume came through here and knocked me clean off the sidewalk. Can't even walk through the park these days without someone trying to do something to ya."

If the players take a moment to help the old man, reward them with a hero point, as they're acting heroic. If they ask the old man if he has an idea where the guy went, he motions into the heart of the park, but he can't be positive.

As the heroes head deeper into the park, read the following:

As you walk through the park, you notice that it seems to get darker the further you go in. Looking around, you see that there are several lights smashed on the walk and an occasional wastebasket that seem to be knocked over.

Make Notice checks for the heroes. For those who succeed, read the following:

As you walk the path, you hear a growling noise amongst the foliage ahead of you. In the blink of an eye, a large, humanoid creature with dark brown fur and a wolf's head appears. It growls in your direction and lunges at you!

Anyone not noticing the creature is surprised. The beast is in full control tonight, attacking anyone he confronts. He doesn't use much for tactics, mainly just growl and attack. If he receives more than 3 bruises, he'll attempt to flee, circling back and attacking the heroes one on one. Once beaten, he reverts back to his normal form, the rap star T-Rip!

## T-WOLF

For T-Wolf's stats, use the Savage Man-Beast Archetype on page 222 of *Mutants & Masterminds*.

During a European tour through Norway, rap sensation T-Rip was attack by a strange beast before police shot and killed it, leaving only a normal man behind. Unknown to him at first, the creature was a true werewolf. With its bite, the creature passed on its curse to a new age. After a few transformations, T-Rip learned what he had become and, instead of telling someone about it, he attempted to contain the beast. He's been successful for a while, but finally lost control tonight.

## AFTERMATH

As the police come and take T-Rip into custody, read the following to the players:

As the FCPD puts T-Rip in the police van, the rapper turns to you and screams, "You should've killed me while you could! It'll be back ... and it'll be hunting *you!*" As the officers close the door, Detective Hacket approaches the heroes and says, "T-Rip was abducted by himself ... who'd have thought, huh? Well, great job guys. Thanks for the assist, I don't think we could've done it without you."

## EPISODE TWO: THAT OL' BLACK MAGIC

With a strange call from one of their friends, the heroes began a manhunt through Freedom City. But they also find the villainous Doctor Faust and members of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign attempting to raise an unspeakable horror into the world. Can the heroes save their friend and stop the dark magic? Or will they fall victim of the corrupt sorcerer's plans?

### SCENE ONE: A CALL IN THE NIGHT

One night, the heroes return to their base to find a voice message waiting for them. Paraphrase the following to the players:

As you get in from your last supervillain showdown, you notice that you have a message waiting for you. Playing it back, you hear a familiar voice cut in and out through bursts of static, saying, "Can you ... me? I think something's up ... followed these guys down ... Hill ... llo? Can you ..." The line goes dead after that.

The call is from a friend or loved one of one of the heroes. The idea choice is someone likely to investigate odd happenings, like a reporter, police detective, or such. In a pinch, anyone curious enough to check out something strange and get accidentally caught-up in it will do. Attempts to call or contact the person who left the message turn up nothing and initial investigation shows he or she has been missing since shortly before the message was sent.

The heroes may go about their investigation many different ways. If they have Gather Information or the Contacts feat, they may call in a favor or two to triangulate the signal from the phone (DC 16), if the base has advanced communications equipment, the heroes may track the phone with a Computers check (DC 15) or, if there's a mentalist in the group, they may attempt to find the person. Alas, thanks to the magic being used, the latter effort will not work (a spell shields the person from mental contact). Once the heroes have succeeded in their search, they will find that the last known transmission was at Lantern Hill Cemetery.

### SCENE TWO: BEACON IN THE DARK

As the heroes arrive at the Lantern Hill Cemetery, read the following:

As you arrive at the cemetery, you notice that nothing seems out of the ordinary. Within moments of stepping on the cemetery grounds, you begin searching for any clues.

Make a Notice checks for the heroes. To anyone who succeeds, read the following:

As you're looking around, you see a man dressed in colonial garb beckoning you towards a large mausoleum marked "Tallman". Within a blink, the man seems to just vanish, leaving you looking at the grim structure.

The mausoleum is where Doctor Faust can be found, as well as some cultists from the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. Instead of intervening, Lantern Jack (*Freedom City*, page 141) has led the heroes right to the hideout in hopes of them saving their friend. If you have *Freedom City*, you can hold Jack in reserve as a *deus ex machina* to help out the heroes if they get into a jam. Otherwise, the ghost is just a mysterious presence behind the scenes.

Once the heroes enter the mausoleum, they'll easily find (Search DC 9) a secret door that hides a staircase going down. Echoing up are muffled screams and chanting. As the heroes go down the steps, read the following aloud:

You walk down the stone staircase, trying to keep an eye on the ever-brightening light ahead of you. Reaching the bottom of the staircase, you see two men dressed in dark robes with a yellow sigil on their back. Beyond them, you hear the chanting become faster and more intense.

Unless the heroes are attempting to be stealthy, the cult members at the door will more than likely notice them. If so, one attempts to hold off the heroes while the other goes to alert the cult. The battle should be relatively simple if that does occur, though the players only have a round until the rest of the cultists are summoned to the entrance. If the heroes manage to either be stealthy or subdue both guards, they will be able to get a better view of their surroundings. Read the following to the players if they manage to spare a few seconds and take a look around:

Taking a look around, you see dim light coming from an old, stone hallway, the same hallway that there seems to be chanting coming from. Besides that, the area is relatively dark and musty. Looking further towards the light, you see a dozen people all dressed in the same robes as the men at the door. They all seem to be focusing their attention towards a single man garbed in white and black, leading the chant. Behind him is <insert NPC name here>, tied and gagged with a look of horror on their face.

The heroes have stumbled on something bigger than they may have realized. Unknown to them, they only have five rounds before this particular ritual is complete and one of the Unspeakable One's minions comes through a portal to ravage the Earth. Any heroes with Knowledge (arcane lore) may make a check (DC 18) to decipher the ritual, but time is short. Though not a member of the Brotherhood, Dr. Faust is all for causing as much supernatural mayhem as possible. If the heroes are too late, they'll have to save their friend from a beast of infernal proportions.

During the chaos, Dr. Faust attempts to escape, hoping to return another day to cause more mystical havoc. If stopped, he could be forced to banish the creature, but it would come at the cost of his freedom.

## DR. FAUST

For Dr. Faust's stats, use the Corrupt Sorcerer's stats on page 214 of *Mutants & Masterminds*. For his spells, use the following list: **Emotion Control 18** (Fear Only, -1), **Hellfire Control 18**, **Obscure 9** (all senses), **Plant Control 18**, **Stun 18**, **Summon Demon Minions 18**, **Telekinesis 18**, **Telepathy 18**, **Transform 6** (any).

Former assassin Taylor Jensen was sure that he'd seen his last days. Shot and losing blood quickly, Jensen stumbled into an occult bookstore and, in a fit of desperation, shot the shop-keep. Hiding in the private collections room, he could hear a voice beckoning him towards an old tome. "Taylor Jensen," it said, "Together we could take over the world." That was enough to convince the assassin. Taking the old tome, Taylor dizzily shot out a window, forever disappearing. Six months later Doctor Faust made his first appearance.

For The Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign cultists, use the Cultists stats on page 226 of *Mutants & Masterminds*. For the demon that appears, use the stats for the Dragon on page 233 of the same book.

## AFTERMATH

Read the following to the players if they capture Dr. Faust:

After the villains are defeated and the mess is cleaned up, Dr. Faust turns to you and says, "A lovely party you had ... we'll have to do this again sometime. Maybe next time we'll do it on my terms?" With that, he chortles a bit before being forced into the squad car.

Read the following to the players if they let Dr. Faust go free:

As you set Dr. Faust free, he turns briefly and bows, saying, "I've always come to trust the kindness of heroes. We'll do this again sometime real soon ... only, let's do it at my place. The drapes look better and we won't be bothered by the smell." With that, he chortles a bit and disappears in a blink.

## EPISODE THREE: UNIVERSAL DONOR

During one evening in late October, the heroes are all plagued with disturbing nightmares about a creature invading their base. When they awake, one member finds the dream was a reality, as the hero is slowly becoming a vampire! Now the other heroes must rush to find a cure for their ailing teammate, as well as stop the creature of the night that's preying on them. Will they save their friend in time? Or will they all succumb to the vampire's bloodlust?

This adventure should ideally be run over the course of a few days of game time. If you intend on using all three of these adventures in succession, it's best to start with the **Prologue** of this adventure and mix scenes in and around the other adventures.

Also, the victim of this adventure is a hero within the group. While it would be easier to run using a NPC hero or supporting character, it's more fun (and terrifying) when a player gets to take on the role. Pick a player in the group and explain to him what happens gradually, providing him with the templates below. If you prefer, you can still run the adventure using an NPC hero or a supporting character in the series as the victim, giving you greater control over the victim's reactions during the story.

### PROLOGUE: AT FIRST BITE

Read the following to the players:

After a busy night in late October, you relax in the comfort of your own bed and settle down for the evening. As soon as you close your eyes, you hear a ruckus outside of your door. Listening closer, it sounds as though a pack of wild animals have managed to get in and are tearing the place up. What do you do?

When the heroes leave their room to investigate, there's a pack of large wolves waiting for them. The wolves have torn up the area outside the bedroom and look at the heroes as if they were lunch. Though the heroes may believe it's real, it's in all actuality a nightmare dredged up by Baron Dimitri Von Drakus, the villain of this adventure. The players should think it's really happening to their characters, at least till the end of the **Prologue**. Make a few rolls here and there and apply some scratches and bruises, but no serious harm should befall them. If the heroes sleep in separate domiciles, they each experience this dream, including any dependents (who may suffer a worse fate than the heroes, but they have no recollection of this dream when they awake). As the battle winds down and the heroes defeat most of the wolves, read the following to them:

The last of the wolves leap out of the window and you open your eyes, waking in a cold sweat in your bed. There are no noises outside, nor any evidence of the battle you could've sworn just happened. Looking at the clock, you realize only twenty minutes have passed since you went to bed. It was all just a bad dream.

The heroes will sleep the rest of the night fitfully, though, when the next they meet, they may share the fact that they all shared the same dream, including Drakus' target, who has actually been bitten and may not realize it.

### VAMPIRISM & YOU: THE FIRST BITE

During the first bite, the victim should feel some strange cravings for barely-cooked meat, have minor problems with light in general and be a bit more aggressive. This should be subtle and not overly obvious at this point. After the first bite, there are no powers that accompany the transformation.

### SCENE ONE: TWO CAN BE AS BAD AS ONE

At this point, it should be a few days, giving the heroes time to fight a few villains or solve some minor crimes (such as the events of **Full Moon Fever**). Once again, after the heroes settle down for the evening, they're visited by a nightmare, this one a bit more vivid and fearful and starring the victim. Paraphrase the following to the players, using the victim's description and name where necessary and noted:

You lay down for the night, still a bit troubled from the nightmare you had a few nights ago, but not enough where it's kept you up. As you shut your eyes, you hear a loud thumping, much like a heartbeat. The sound seems to be coming from right outside your door. What do you do?

Again, the players are in the dream realm, sharing in the same dream as the victim. If the heroes investigate what's beyond the door, paraphrase the following to them:

You open your door and walk directly into <victim>'s room. The room seems relatively normal with the exception of a kind of haze around the entire scene. Ahead of you is your friend, with a dark figure looming over the bed. It quickly looks at you, narrowing its deep red eyes, and shoots out the window, vanishing into the haze.

At this point, the vampire has caused the second bite and fed a bit more. If the heroes investigate to see if their friend is okay, read the following to them:

You go to look over your friend, but as you get to their bedside, they quickly sit up and look at you with wolf-like eyes and a maw of teeth. In a blink, you awake in your bed, again in a cold sweat and shivering a bit. Unlike last time, you look to the clock and it's almost six in the morning, though it only feels like you went to sleep an hour ago.

The victim has received the second bite and is slowly succumbing. The heroes should realize something strange is up with their teammate, as, like before, they've all shared the same dream. Anyone with Knowledge (arcane lore) can do some research (DC 15) to deduce they're dealing with a vampire. If they botch the roll, feel free to throw something else in the mix; perhaps there's a myth about a dream-stalking werewolf, or maybe it's some kind of boogiemani from another world.

## VAMPIRISM & YOU: THE SECOND BITE

After the second bite, the victim should begin to act strangely. They'll conceal the bite (though it should be someplace other than the obvious spot, such as the wrist), be extremely aggressive, look at raw meat like they were starving and tend to avoid natural light whenever they can. In most instances, they act as though this is natural, as they're a bit enthralled by the vampire and want to protect him. In addition to this, they also begin seeing some of the perks of being bitten:

- +5 Strength
- **Super-Movement 1** (Wall Crawling)

## SCENE TWO: DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME

Again, it should be a few days, allowing the victim a chance to show some of the changes. By this point, the heroes should realize something weird is up with their teammate and it could be linked to the dreams. Allow the group to make some plans, but make sure the victim understands this is the last night and will cause full conversion to a vampire.

## BREAKING THE THRALL

If there's a mentalist in the group, they may attempt to break the enthrallment the Vampire Lord has over the victim. To do this, make a power vs. power roll using the hero's Telepathy or Mind Control rank against the Vampire Lord's Mind Control rank of 8. If they score higher, they break the enthrallment.

After the planning is done, the heroes may prepare to spring their trap. Feel free to modify the following as appropriate for the players:

After a full day of plotting, you await the chance to save your fellow teammate. As you monitor their room, you see a bit of fog roll in through an open window and slowly take on the form of a handsome man in a black suit and cape. He grins slightly and leans in for the final bite.

If the heroes are in the room, allow the Vampire Lord a Notice check opposed by the heroes' Stealth or concealment. If he spots them, he'll stop what he's doing and hiss in their general direction before making a break towards the window. In any event, the heroes will have to battle Von Drakus for the life of their teammate.

## BARON DIMITRI VON DRAKUS

For Baron Von Drakus' stats, use the Vampire Lord Archetype on page 225 of *Mutants & Masterminds*. He should also have **Telepathy 8** (AP: **Mind Control 8**, Only Bite Victims -1). If you have access to *Ultimate Power*, you may want to add **Dream Control 8** (see *Ultimate Power*, page 150) to the vampire's powers to explain the dream sequences. If you don't have it, assume it's simply an aspect of Von Drakus' Telepathy.

## VAMPIRISM & YOU: THE FINAL BITE

If the vampire lord manages to get in that final bite, the victim will become a full vampire. Immediately after the transformation, roll a contest of Will saves. If the victim wins, they retain some of their independence but gain an insatiable thirst that seems temporarily quenched by the taste of blood. If the victim loses, they become a thrall of the Vampire Lord and do his bidding. The only way to save them is by breaking the thrall or killing the Vampire Lord. In addition, they also gain all the remaining powers and drawbacks given for the Vampire Lord archetype as well as the Animal Empathy, Fascinate (Diplomacy), and Fearless feats.

## AFTERMATH

If the heroes defeat Von Drakus, they'll have to end his undead existence to restore their teammate. Anyone with Knowledge (arcane lore) may make a check (DC 15) to properly dispose of a vampire. As soon as the vampire lord is dead, the victim reverts back to their normal form. If by chance they don't kill Drakus and attempt to imprison him, he may use his link with the victim to try and enthrall them again, basically starting the adventure over again.

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