

# VAULT 13

A GURPS POST-NUCLEAR ADVENTURE

## TIMELINE

### **2052: The Resource Wars**

Due to the dwindling supplies of Oil, Timer, and other natural resources, the modern nations begin a futile grab for the last precious drops. Many third-world nations go bankrupt and civil-war spreads like a plague. The UN is disbanded. The US closes it's borders to the flood of immigrants. Europe and the Middle East begin a bloody war. Neighbor battles neighbor. Tensions are high.

### **2053: The New plague**

As many nations prepare for war, a new strain of socially transmittable virus begins to spread across the world. Rumors persist that it was genetically created. The first ever national US quarantine is placed in effect. Science searches for a cure.

### **2054: The Vaults**

A small nuclear exchange in the Middle East brings the threat of Nuclear war to the minds of the world. Soon afterward, the US begins an ambitious project. In key population areas of America, city size bomb shelters are to be built. This project code named "Safehouse" progresses at a great rate due to advances in construction technology.

### **2057: The FEV-1**

A small group of scientists in Southern California searching for a cure to the New Plague genetically engineer a new virus. This designer virus, when introduced into an organism, would eradicate all forms of viruses and leave the host completely unharmed. When tested on laboratory animals, the virus stimulated growth of brain tissue and increased muscle mass. Prolonged exposure lead to progressive enhancement. This virus was named the FEV-1 or Forced Evolutionary Virus - 1.

As a side note, it is mentioned that the virus had unpredictable effects under high radiation.

**2059:** Anchorage Front-line. The US begins an armored campaign in the newly occupied lands of Alaska. The Alaskan pipeline no longer provides US with fuel. Many military vehicles are rendered inoperable without fuel.

**2060:** The traffic on the streets of the world stop moving. Fuel becomes to precious to waste on Automobiles, so gasoline is not made available to the open public. Electric cars begin to be manufactured, but the factories can only produce small amounts while conserving fuel. The US economy teeters on bankruptcy.

**2063:** The completion of the Safehouse project. These huge shelters nicknamed "Vaults" are completely self sufficient and are made to house up to 1000 people for 10 years. Siren "Shelter drills" are put into effect across the country.

**2065:** Due to enormous demands for electricity, a nuclear reactor in New York City almost goes critical. The near meltdown brings into effect electricity rationing.

**2066:** The US begins a long and bloody war with China.

**2071:** The government relocates the FEV project into a newly formed secret installation in South-Western California. The goal of the project is to make the virus safe for human use.

### **2075: Playing God**

The scientists working with the FEV began testing the virus in a human host. The experiments are conducted in small quarantined towns in Northern America. The populous begins introducing the FEV into their systems. The subjects become healthier almost overnight as all cancers and illnesses are broken down and devoured by FEV-1. After two months, all this changes. The subjects experience abnormal brain tissue growth that causes insanity in many patients. Unusual deformities slowly follow. Some subjects experience infertility or a severe form of leprosy; some even experience altering skeletal growth.

The Virus, which is carried by white blood-cells, is found to actually latch itself onto the host's DNA spiral causing unpredictable mutations.

The scientists begin working on a FEV-2.

### **2076: The Panic**

The News of the FEV experiments somehow leak. The information is slowly pieced together by the News Media. The governments of the world fear what the US is up to. Speculating anything from trying to make a breed of super soldier, to trying to make Hitler's master race, they begin to panic.

### **2077: Armageddon**

It is not known which country pressed the button first. On October 23, 2077, dozens of 20 kiloton warheads are on their way to their US targets.

The Shelter Drill sirens begin to wail. Many US citizens ignore the warning believing it to be just another false alarm. The few that heed, are sealed within their sheltering vaults.

The Americans, unable to stop all the incoming missiles with satellite defenses, launch a counterstrike at the offending country. Other countries, seeing the US's missiles on their way, fire their warheads as well. What ensues is two hours of nuclear bombardment upon the earth's surface.

The effects are far worse than most imagined. The earth's faults shift violently. California is ripped from the mainland. Mountain ranges thrust themselves through the soil. Whole lands are submerged under floods of water.

A week after the initial blast, a black rain begins to fall. Plants and animals both go rapidly into extinction.

But, it is the unexpected that has the greatest effect upon the world. The military base where experiments on the FEV-1 were underway was all but obliterated. But the canisters holding the virus were still within, and they lie cracked and spilling their contents into the air.

As the virus is swept up upon the nuclear winds, the radiation causes the virus to thrive and multiply. Within a month, the virus is in every non sealed water supply around the world.

The secret military base housing FEV-2 remains intact. The base itself doubles as a Vault, and the Soldiers and Scientists sealed inside go about their pre-apocalypse duties.

### **2080: The First Effects**

The first effects of the virus are seen in the survivors. Widespread mutations occur with animals and humans alike. Those that survive the effects of the mutations, are permanently changed by the virus. New species are created almost overnight.

### **2082: Back to the Drawing board**

Five years after the Armageddon, some aspects of the world begin to calm down. Radiation and poison levels are still too high for normal human survival.

Deep within the bowels of the Secret Military base, the Scientific research team undergo a change in their current plans. They now believe it is their duty to help humanity survive this apocalypse. They begin working on a new form of FEV, one that is to change the course of humanity forever. They could make humanity stronger, smarter, and resilient to diseases. They would change the very makeup of mankind to adapt him to this new world. They sought to become the saviors of the human race.

The scientists segregate themselves from the soldiers and pursue their mad dreams in secret.

### **2088: The Revolt**

The soldiers in the military base begin to see their numbers dwindling. One fateful day, a soldier makes his way into the scientist's private labs and sees what is truly going on. The soldiers are being used

as test subjects for the scientist's new evolutionary virus. Many of the subjects are dead or on their way to dying.

The remaining soldiers, realizing what is about to happen to themselves and possibly to all humankind, take up arms. In a huge firefight, they exterminate every last one of the scientists. During the fight, a canister of viral agent is ruptured. Fearing contamination, the soldiers seal up the scientist's section of the complex.

A month afterwards, the survivors realize that simply sealing up half of the base was not enough to avoid contamination. They decide to seal the entire base. Since the radiation levels had dropped to a level where they could survive outdoors, the soldiers embark into the wastes of the new world. They take with them all they can carry from the storehouse of weapons and the passkeys to the base so no one could re-enter and spread the lethal virus.

### **2089: Fortress in the Wastes**

The soldiers prove to be a tough bunch. They trek south of their old home until they find a small concrete building that had withstood most of the initial blast. Throughout the year they make the building into a place to live.

One day, a band of looters attacks the place. Though the soldiers come out of it unscathed, they realized the need for protection. They begin renovating their building into a larger fortress. After many months of augmenting their home with metal and concrete, their new fort can repel any roving band of marauders of wild animals.

### **2090: The Brotherhood of Steel**

The soldiers began to call their group "the Brotherhood of Steel". The Brotherhood becomes very alienated with the world. They refuse to let outside elements, such as mutants or other outsiders, integrate into their group. They believe themselves to be the last bastion of true humanity, thus segregating themselves from others not "pure" like themselves.

### **2134: The conflict of the Brothers**

After 44 years and two generations later, the Brotherhood has formed a religion around their old technology. With the scattered knowledge of their past, they continue to engineer items and weapons all but vanished from the world.

A faction of the Brotherhood of Steel believes that it is time to change their ways of seclusion. The group's ideas are totally rejected by the Ruling Council. This group, after long arguing and finally drawing blood, are exiled from the Fortress. They head east and build a small town for farming and trade. Unbeknownst to the Brothers of the Fortress, this group takes with them the passkeys to the forgotten military base carried in a metal chest.

### **2138: Rise of the Mutants**

A lone mutant surviving in the wastes has banded together a literal horde of mutants. This mutant leader appears like a true human, but due to his mutated quad-helix DNA, he is far less subject to the effects of radiation and aging. His horde sweeps through smaller settlements, taking anything they can carry and destroying all they can't. The mutants come by the newly built village of the former Brothers of Steel. The town is not prepared to handle a danger of this magnitude. The mutants overrun the town; plundering it then burning it down. The Leader of the mutant band finds incredible weapons and armor from the town. He decides to plunge West, to ransack the temple these people belonged to.

Upon finding Fortress Claw, the Mutant Leader gives the signal to attack. This time the Brotherhood was not unprepared. After losing two-thirds of their number, the mutants retreat back to the wastes. With them, they carry a prisoner seized during the firefight. This prisoner, after torture and interrogation, reveals that the sacred chest carried by the mutants holds the keys to "an ancient empire where god and man once became one".

### **2139: The Master**

After many months of searching, the mutants find the location of the Forgotten Base. Using the passkeys, they open the seals of the base. As most of the horde ransack the weapons and food, the

Leader and a few others make their way into the sealed scientist's laboratories. Here they find several large canisters. The prisoner spoke of these as "having divine powers of destruction". Eager to learn the secret, the mutants brake a canister open, and are startled when the liquid inside began spraying out, drenching the group. The mutants fall to their knees clutching their throats, then fall to the floor twitching in agony. All the mutants, save one. The leader undergoes a kind of transformation when he is immersed in the fluid. His senses become more acute and he has dreams of the future. He finds himself staring at the room with new eyes, longing for knowledge.

He coerces the other mutants in his band to enter the room as well. When they are all in, he breaks open another canister, spraying them as well. Most die almost instantly like the others, but 1 out of 5 seemed to undergo a similar effect as he had. Those that survived were subtly changed too.

The virus infected fluid becomes like a narcotic to the mutants. After weeks of prolonged exposure, physical changes begin to follow the mental changes. Every mutant grows in height and increases dramatically in muscle mass. They also become more aggressive and more blood-thirsty.

The leader begins to have more powerful dreams and becomes mentally unbalanced. His dreams show him ruling every creature that dwells on the surface of the world. He vows to make his dreams a reality. He assumes the name "Master" and begins steps to fulfill his prophecy.

### **2140: The New Recruits**

The Master, with his ever increasing intellect, finds a link with super-mutations and pure-strain humanity. The more mutated a being, the less likely the virus will transform them so.

The Mutant leader also realizes the nature of his mutated followers. The "Gift" as he calls it, does make one strong, resilient, and fierce, but is also a tremendous shock to the subjects nervous system. Unlike the unaging Master, his followers life spans were cut in half; most would die of age in less than 20 years. His followers were also sterile, unable to produce offspring. To achieve his dream of world conquest, he will need to find many "Untouched" humans and quickly.

The Master and his gang of super-mutants begin once again raiding settlements, but instead of just looting, now then take as many hostages as they can. The prisoners are then taken back to the base and immersed in the viral-fluid. Those that survive are inducted into the Master's army. With the high-tech weapons and armor found within the base, his group is almost unstoppable to the small and scattered settlements.

For the next twelve years, the Master and his growing group are an ever-present threat to those dwelling in the wastes.

### **2152: The Dark God**

A vile cult of humans worshipping a god of war and death occupy the ruins of a town within the Master's territory. On their holy day, the priests of their dark temple give prayer and sacrifice to their god. The Master and a group of mutants burst into the ceremony. Instead of running in fear, the cultists fell to their knees and began praying to the Master and his minions. Like Cortez with the Aztec, the Master took advantage of his situation. Stating that he is their god of war, he demanded their complete obedience. The cultists, seeing their beliefs embodied in the being before them, swear loyalty to their god.

Instead of throwing this whole group to the Vats, the Master had bigger plans for these. They were to become his spies; his eyes and ears in the human settlements.

For the next few years, the cultists spread into human society bringing small technological gifts to the scattered towns in a show of their good will (these trinkets were of course from the Master who had thousands of devices in his secret base.) The cultists would infiltrate towns, slowly gaining followers and spreading their corruption, then send word to the Master. When the Master's mutants arrive at the town, the cultists make sure the town's arsenal is sabotaged and the people are caught off guard.

The Master's mutant numbers began to increase. Those cultists who do well in the Master's eyes are rewarded by becoming Super-Mutants themselves; a level all cultists wish to attain.

### **2155: A Vault Discovered**

A caravan of travelers is ambushed by a group of Mutants. These travelers wear strange clothes and talk with odd accents. More than that, they appear to be carrying new technologies and they are all most definitely Untouched.

The Master himself interrogates these people. They claim to be from the ruins of a great city to the West. They also mention something about a Vault that they came from. Intrigued with this discovery, the Master and a large band of Mutants and cultists head towards these ruins. When they arrive, even the Master is amazed at the expanse of the ruins. Miles and miles are covered with toppled buildings and devastation. There also appears to be humans and mutants dwelling within.

The human cultists infiltrate the ruins and soon discover the location of this Vault. It had been opened for quite some time, but most of it's former occupants remain there for shelter and safety. The Master and his followers raid the discovered Vault taking many as prisoners; killing more than capturing. Inside the Vault, the Master discovers an important piece of information: There are more Vaults buried beneath the ground or under mountains; some might still have occupants.

The Master sets up another base of operations in the newly captured Vault. From here he will set out to find the other hidden Vaults and "Enlighten" those within, adding their numbers to his growing army. Above the entrance to this new base is a large Gothic-style church still mostly intact. Inside this Citadel, the cultists establish their own base, spreading the word of their bloody god to the vagrants and gangs living within the ruins of the city once known as Los Angeles. The cultists become known as the Children of the Citadel.

### **2156: Conquests**

Records in the Masters new base tell the location of three separate vaults. Although the records make mention of other existing Vaults, their locations are vague and indecipherable. Gathering his forces, the Master marches toward a new Vault.

The Vault discovered is still unopened, the massive Vault doors sealed tight. Using advanced explosives, the Mutants are able to burn a hole through the Vault door. The occupants, having nowhere to run to, take up weapons and fight off the raiders the best they can. Casualties are high on both sides, but the Mutants prove to be the stronger. Those humans left are taken to the vats for their conversion. The Vault is ransacked and left to the desert.

The second Vault discovered had been opened recently, but few of the original occupants remained within. They put up no fight. (Those who left the Vault became the founders of the Hub).

The third Vault was the farthest South the Mutants had traveled before. Their directions to the Vault led them to the ruins of a small city. This city was occupied by ghoulish mutants and strange creatures. When the ghouls first see the Master and his group, they attack in number. As the ghouls begin to drop to their deaths, they realize the folly of their action and retreat to the shadows. The Master and his band discover that the Vault beneath the city had been completely abandoned and burned out decades ago. Angered, the Master lets loose his Mutants who rampage through the ruins, killing all they see. This violence is only stopped when the self proclaimed ruler of this town "Necropolis" stands forward and addresses the Master. The Master threatens to destroy the entire city unless the location of the Vault dwellers is given. Much to his dismay, the Master learns that these ghouls are the descendants of the Vault dwellers; the result of a defective radiation screening. The Master decides to leave the ruins alone on one condition: That if someone is seen who has just come from a recently opened vault, they are to inform the Master immediately and under penalty of outright destruction. The Master decides to leave a small garrison in this place to serve as an outpost.

With this, the Master returns to his base in LA. His first in command is sent to the secret base to control the Vats.

### **2161: Today**

The Lieutenant who controls the Vats has taken a more covert stance in the acquisition of new recruits. The Mutants now attack and capture caravans from the Hub and any small groups of travelers. The groups are made to look as if they just disappeared into the desert. The routes of the caravans are relayed to the Lieutenant by the Children of the Citadel who have a temple in the Hub. A stronghold was secretly recently built by the Mutants near the Hub. From here they launch their raiding parties.

Deep within his base, the Master continues to pour over the computer archives, plotting, planning, and waiting. He feels the time to launch his plan is almost at hand. All that is needed is a sign...