

Millennium City

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

Millennium City is the second setting source book for the Champions line, and the first book to outline a single city in detail. Millennium City is The City Of The Future. Instead of putting a nebulous "it exists in the US somewhere-ish" feel to the city Hero Games did something different, they blew up an old city (Detroit in this case) and built this one on the ruins, much like real history does. Darren Watts fully explains his reasoning in the author's introduction.

Before the book even begins it sets the tone of the city with a Typical Morning Routine introduction that a typical citizen undergoes. It's a nice touch.

Chapter One - It Shall Rise Again. The History of Millennium City is covered in the first chapter. Starting with the early history of the area, through European settling and on into the formation of Detroit itself. The next section goes into Detroit during the Golden Age, The War (World War II), the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the into the Destruction Of Detroit itself in the early 1990s (effectively, a very short lived Iron Age Detroit). And then it describes the Millennium Project, the rebuilding of the old city into the new city.

Some nice touches to the chapter include an excerpt from then President George Bush's speech regarding Dr. Destroyer and the subsequent destruction of Detroit. It adds a lot to bring the city into history and making the Champions Universe a bit more real. Each of the three "Ages" also come with a detailed description of the major Heroes Of Detroit and how they affected the city and its history during the periods which they were active.

Chapter Two - The Lay Of The Land. Here we go into the geography, layout and features of Millennium City. Starting off with some general geography of the Great Lakes region, then moving onto the seasons, geology, elevation, flora and fauna of the city and surrounding area. After that the chapter delves into the city proper covering the various neighborhoods, surrounding suburbs and business districts. From the towers in the middle of the city that house the corporations that helped fund and build this city, to the parks, the remains of the old neighborhoods that still show through and some of the surrounding areas. It's all here in decent detail. The third part of this chapter covers the government of both the city and county. It gives full descriptions of not just the Mayor and City Council but some of their motivations and ambitions as well helping to make them come to life.

Chapter Three - A Day In The Life. The City Of The Future is what you would expect: walkways between buildings so pedestrians don't have to go to street level from the skyscrapers to get around,

the People Mover, which is a fancy word for light rail or subway, the automated centrally controlled computer that drives all the cars inside the city remotely to reduce traffic jams and accidents. After transportation we get information on what people do for fun in this shining city of the future. Starting with the media there's a rundown of the major television and radio networks at play in the city, city newspapers, major magazines and a section on how the World Wide Web plays a part in the city. Lastly in the media section is a Superhero Celebrity, Cavalier, and how his status as a Hero-For-Hire affects the city.

The next section covers what to do and where to go to have fun in the city. Covering fine arts, museums, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and public events. The nice touch here is a side bar covering the musical history of Detroit and after that Millennium City a bit. You simply can't have a bit without saying something about Detroit Rock City after all.

The last part of the chapter covers the major subcultures that occur in cities and superhero games everywhere. The academic world, business and financial world (with a write-up of the famous super intelligent gorilla Dr. Silverback), financial services, the media culture, the computer culture, the martial world (with martial artist hero Nightwind), the military/mercenary/terrorist world, the mystic world and lastly the super world. This is the part where detailed information on the major corporations that played a part in the cities rebirth are given, both as entities and some information on the people that run them. Side bar information in the chapter includes marketing companies and various lawyers that work within the city.

Chapter Four - Crime And Punishment. Here we get a good solid look at the governmental policing forces that work within the cities boundaries. Starting with a good solid section on the Millennium City PD (MCPD), covering the regular officers, the major sections of the force and a devoting the most space to the Metahuman Activities Response Squad (MARS) unit, which handles people like the PCs and the criminal element they fight. Other law enforcement agencies are covered in less detail, including the FBI (with two Super Agents), Department Of Superhuman and Paranormal Affairs (DOSPA), PRIMUS (the US Governments superhuman police force, with a write-up for one of their super-agents), and UNTIL (the UN superhuman policing force). The last very short section covers the fire department and medical response within the city as well as some information on dealing with disasters.

While most of the chapter is dedicated to law enforcement the chapter does end with a section of the major criminal groups at work within the city - covering both past and present.

Chapter Five - Hot Spot For Cool Heroes. This section goes into much more detail on some of the cities major features and places to visit. Starting with the Barlowe Hotel (high class hotel of the rich), Belle Isle Planetarium, Aquarium and Science Center, Dr. Silverback's Lab, the Harmon Estate (home of Defender's secret ID), The Horizon Casino (owned by the local Indian tribe), Leo's Bar (henchman hangout), The Magic Lantern Bookshop (should Mystic Heroes need some help), the Geo-Thermal Power Plant, Mercy Hospital, the University, the Yacht Club, the City Zoo, Ninth Precinct House (why this is here and not with Law Enforcement I'm not sure, but it's the cities main police building), The Grove (rundown suburbs left over from Detroit), and two corporations the Pharos Building and Mind, Inc.

Not just descriptions of the buildings and places, they also come with information on who is in charge at each one, with mini-write-ups, and how to get the PCs involved with any of the people there.

Chapter Six - The GMs Vault. The last chapter is the insider information for the GM. The truth behind all the gossip in the first five chapters. It includes Plot Seeds for the characters described in the first part, and any skeletons they may or may not have in their closets. Also provided are more villains for

your game. Six more members of the mentalist organization PSI, and five new villains for your game, Freakshow (fear inducing mentalist and murderer), Hazard (lucky mercenary), Jade Phoenix (martial artist supreme), Signal Ghost (a high-tech thief), and Wayland Talos (weapon smith of the underworld).

The very last part are seven in depth plot seeds to involve not only the people in the city but the features of the city itself in your campaign, ending the book on a good note. The Bibliography is short, but nicely comprehensive in providing places to look to get more into the city and get a general feel of this high-tech city of the future.

The Downside:

If the book has one downside it's including stat blocks of character write-ups in the middle of descriptive text. It breaks the flow and feel of the book to suddenly have a character to read in the middle of the history or organizations sections. The books overall organization could have moved the write-ups themselves to a short chapter just before the GMs Vault and kept the feel of trying to introduce someone to a city much better.

The book is also fairly short for trying to detail an entire city, especially a futuristic city with technological marvels to show off. But not disastrously so.

The Otherside:

The book, despite the interruption of System specific material (character write-ups) in the middle of descriptive texts, is a good resource for non-Hero Gamers to get a modern or futuristic city base started. From the high-tech traffic control to the over abundance of technology introduced into everyday life.

In the final analysis, the price tag for what you get from the book really can't be beat. Some good solid information on city infrastructure, city civics and the many many plot seeds and ideas to work with make the book a solid purchase. The nicest touch is that including history for the last century throughout the book means it can help with campaigns set in Detroit from the 1900s up the 1980s very easily. If you need a modern Comic Book City this is it.

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