Black Bullet

The year is 2031, and mankind teeters on the brink of destruction.

A parasitic virus with unknown origins, known as "Gastrea", has reduced humanity to a fraction of its former greatness. Only three things prevent the eventual extinction of humanity.

The first is the existence of a precious, prievously unknown, metal dubbed 'Varanium'. The metal both wards off the creatures of the Gastrea virus and proves significantly effective when employed as a weapon against them. The few remaining cities left on Earth have been surrounded with pillars of Varanium dotted around the landscape in concentric circles.

The second is the 'Cursed Children'. Children born with the Gastrea virus, always female, who possess incredible powers and abilities as the result of the infection. Recruited to serve as mankind's final defence against Gastrea infilitration and incursion they are dubbed 'Initiators', each placed in the care of a partner, a 'Promoter' who must work alongside his Initiator to defend what little remains of the world, a thankless task - facing not only the knowledge that they risk their lives in the defense of man, but their very soul, for the Gastrea virus that infests them slowly eats away - until they are man no more, but monster.

The third is you.

You have been called, should you choose to accept the call, to protect what little remains of humanity in this universe. Fear not, however, for while the monsters you face are unfathomably evil and unquestionably powerful, you keep whatever powers you already possess, and may purchase from other powers below using 'Choice Points', of which you now have 1000.

Just remember:

"He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you."

ORIGINS

DROP IN

You won't assume any identity. No unfortunate memories clouding your judgment, muddling your mind. No timer dictating how long you have left. No allies save those journeying with you and those you make. The powers you use won't be associated with the Gastrea Virus. Your nature as a nobody is a benefit here, not a hindrance. They'll call you hero.

INITIATOR

You don't understand why they hate you for something that wasn't your fault. You don't know why they call you a monster. You can't understand why you never knew your parents – why you were abandoned. You understand that without focus – without maintaining control of your emotions – your eyes are red. Reviled. You see the way out – you will fight. But not alone.

PROMOTER

A member of a Civil Security agency, you still remember the war. The voices in your mind cried out for vengeance. With your family gone, murdered by the Gastrea before your very eyes, you've been determined to never be so powerless again – and now you have power, in the form of an Initiator companion. What you do with that power is up to you.

All origins are free. Initiators gain a free Promoter companion, a regular human with superior analytical and combat skills and a mind of steel – but merely a fleshy human. Promoters gain an Initiator companion – a young girl with incredible powers but still just a little girl. Use your current gender and body unless you are an initiator, in which case you're now a ten year old girl.

AREA

1

CAIRO, EGYPT

Suffering considerably less than most other cities in the great Gastrea war, Cairo has become an economical powerhouse and one of the largest remaining cities left in the world. It has one of the highest standard of livings available in the new world, boosted considerably by its use of Cursed Children as prostitutes, slaves, entertainment, products and soldiers.

2

DETROIT, AMERICA

Considered an important technological hub in the new world, Detroit has managed to carve out a niche for itself in the production and use of cyborg augmentations due to the information and personnel it retained from the New Human Creation Plan. It puts these advances to good use, ensuring both the city and those willing to pay have no lack of 'loyal', enhanced Initiators.

3

TOKYO, JAPAN

Facing some of the most significant damage from the Great Gastrea War, Tokyo has slowly begun to rebuild. While Cursed Children can still expect to live a life of poverty and suffer from frequent mob lynchings and other attacks which the government ignores, it is still unarguably one of the better places to be a Cursed Child, if only due to the ignorance of the government.

Roll 1d3 to determine your location, or pay 100 CP to choose.
DROP IN may choose for free.

ABILITIES

LET'S GET TACTICAL
Your uncanny ability to analyze the battlefield even while in the worst of situations has saved your life - and the lives of others - on more than one occasion. You have an instinctive knack for determining the best approach to any given fight and isolating any opponents vulnerabilities and weaknesses.
Costs 100 CP

FLIGHT OF THE COWARD
You learned ten years ago that sometimes not every fight could be won, and you've taken that lesson to heart. You possess considerable talent at disengaging from encounters and bringing your allies with you. Sometimes retreat won't just be an option - but so long as it is an option, this ability serves you well, keeping you alive.
Costs 100 CP

COMBAT TECHNIQUES
At some point you've picked up the ability to use special techniques that allow you perform blatantly reality warping stunts such as splitting a steel bar in half with a butterknife. Unfortunately, you need to loudly recite a long declaration of intent and concentrate first - the more powerful the effect, the longer it takes, so lower power is oft better.
Costs 300 CP

BONDS THAT BIND
You find combat much easier when fighting alongside close allies. You can instinctively determine your close allies next moves and better coordinate with them, and vice versa. Your sheer synchronisation in the heat of battle has lead some to suspect you and your allies might actually be only one mind among many bodies.
Costs 300 CP

FINISHING BLOW
In order to minimize risk and end a battle quickly you've managed to perfect an ability allowing you to greatly magnify the power of any given attack in your arsenal, but only once per day at most. It's also extremely draining, at best rendering you temporarily combat ineffective and at worst resulting in unconsciousness for days.
Costs 600 CP

SHARING IS CARING
You can now share one power that you possess with a single companion [chosen when taking this perk] This doesn't need to be a power from the selections provided here. The shared power can be changed once at the start of every jump - but the recipient may not be changed, even if they die. Don't lose your ally, or you lose this perk.
Costs 600 CP

100 CP Powers on this page are free for Promoters.
All others are discounted [50% off] for Promoters.

ABILITIES

ROACH
Your flesh is harder than most, and your wounds quickly regenerate at a speed that allows you to quickly recover from all but the worst of injuries. While you can take a considerable number of bullets or some seriously heavy blows, you have a vulnerability to Varanium, and weapons constructed from it bypass this perk.
Costs 100 CP

RABBIT
You're incredibly agile and strong. Your kicks pack an punch and your punches have quite the kick – you're strong enough to easily use an anti-materiel rifle, but your kicks are powerful enough to render it unnecessary. Not only can you jump incredibly high, you can also double jump. Don't think too hard about it. May or may not increase fertility.
Costs 100 CP

OWL
Your vision is improved to ridiculous levels and you gain the ability to see in the dark. The incredible detail lets you bypass all but the best illusions and camoflauge. You're also extremely effective with any kind of ranged weapon, be it a simple bow and arrow or a railgun – when you take aim, people start taking cover, or they start dying.
Costs 300 CP

DOLPHIN
You have improved intelligence – you almost certainly won't make dumb mistakes like accidentally using high explosives in a stealth mission. You haven't poured molten lead into your eyes recently, but if you had you'd probably be fine anyway. You've got echolocation allowing you effective blindsight and can 'see' through walls.
Costs 300 CP

SPIDER
You gain the ability to naturally stick to surfaces, as well as the power to generate a sticky webbing from your fingers at will. While useful for swinging, it's even more useful when you consider that the webs are effectively monofilament wires. Finally, you feel a kind of tingling whenever you or someone you care about is in danger.
Costs 600 CP

MANTIS
Your ability with any kind of blade is nigh precognitive – expect to easily be able to deflect firearms and defeat CQC experts in close combat while you've got a blade or two in your hands. Parrying is reflexive for you, and you've managed to deflect attacks even you didn't even see coming, that's how good you are.
Costs 600 CP

100 CP Powers on this page are free for Initiators.
All others are discounted (50% off) for Initiators.
May or may not result in developing cute animalistic features.

ITEMS

VARANIUM WEAPONRY
Provides you and your companions with a supply of Varanium based weaponry. Think swords made of the stuff, and varanium bullets [guns are provided]. One 'weapon' for yourself and one for each companion is provided. For an additional 100 CP, you can upgrade your existing weapons with a Varanium alloy.
Costs FREE, 100 CP Upgrade

CYBERNETIC UPGRADE - WELLES
An explosive installed within your cranium allowing your superiors easier control and neutralisation of assets, and allows for simple disposal once asset exceeds use by date. For an extra 100 CP includes an integrated cybernetic loyalty assurance module, compelling you to follow orders from designated inviduals, and you cannot harm them.
Costs 100 CP [Free unupgraded for Initiator]

CYBERNETIC UPGRADE - SHENFIELD
You've been upgraded with a cybernetic neural interface that allows you to remotely interact with machines. With this, you can control remote 'Electronic Eyes', floating UAVs [four are provided free] with sensors but no weapons, and sentry guns, turrets and the like. You could theoretically modify other machines to work with this upgrade.
Costs 300 CP

CYBERNETIC UPGRADE - KENTARO
These enhancements are designed to secrete pheremones that allow for the user to deceive Gastrea into believing that the enhanced individual is one of them. Was officially discontinued after it was discovered that prolonged use resulted in the user degrading into a temporary berserk state. Quite popular for use in Cursed Children pit fights.
Costs 300 CP [Discount: Initiator]

CYBERNETIC UPGRADE - HEINLEIN
This experimental procedure drastically increases the subjects strength, endurance, agility and perception, as well as durability. Boosters in the legs allows for rapid flight, and a prototype railgun is installed. Replaces limbs and eyes with mechanical ones. Comes with free trenchcoat and shades. Augments are obviously visible.
Costs 600 CP

CYBERNETIC UPGRADE - EISENHARDT
Installs a set of prototype magnetic field generators within the users body with neural linkage, allowing the user to manually generate and manipulate magnetic forces with the users mind, power proportional to will. Tiring, but allows for generation of walls of matterless inertia and flight due to integrated Varanium within the subject.
Costs 600 CP

You may replace your HEINLEIN upgrades visible components with the power of magical nanomachines at the end of the jump, restoring you to your original form and returning your limbs and eyes, at your discretion.
Heightened aggression from KENTARO is dependent on willpower. User typically only attacks those they consider enemies, but may disregard safety.

OFFERS

With either you or your companion facing a countdown much shorter than your time here, it seems that time is not on your side. Fate, however, might just be. Two... entities... have elected to offer you their aid in writing history. Be wary, however, for their price is not measured in mere choice points.
Is your future your own?

RANK ONE

The first entity, a winged, masked man silver in skin who elects not to name himself, offers to rewrite fate in your favor. Should you accept, not only will you and your companion survive, you'll destroy the Gastrea threat once and for all, ensuring the safety of mankind.

When you initially arrive you'll, by something that couldn't be called mere chance, save an important member of a global conspiracy – a global conspiracy dedicated to the complete and utter annihilation of all Gastrea – and the Cursed Children.

As a result, you'll quickly find yourself leading what remains of mankind as IP Rank One. You'll take back the world from the Gastrea, and the fear and hatred people once held for initiators and promoters will be replaced by awe and respect for you.

And for you alone, for in the end, ten years from now at the conclusion of the war, only you and your companion alone will remain as Rank One. The other Cursed Children and their promoters will fall, they will all fall.

But they won't remember those you let die – who you killed – they'll remember you as a hero, and the conspiracy will ensure a vaccine is produced for the hero that is Rank One – and only you

Somehow, your reputation as a hero will carry on into other worlds you visit, and any humans there will instinctively see you as a hero, a saviour.

THEY WILL ALL BURN

The second entity, a young blonde girl calling herself 'Lucy', offers to not only provide you with a guaranteed method of saving your companion and yourself, but to assist you in saving those you deem worthy.

If you take this option, however, then society will fall. The cities will inevitably be destroyed, their people massacred by the Gastrea, with few survivors. And it will all be your doing.

By siphoning the varanium from a monolith, you'll be able to utilise it in a vaccine of sorts to prevent Cursed Children from ever turning, and furthermore it'll dramatically increase their power...

Of course, since this will inevitably result in the destruction of all mankind, you'll quickly become public enemy number one, but Lucy assures you that your success is near guaranteed – you will succeed, and to aid you in your task, public enemy number two and his partner will assist you. They will join as you as companions following this jump.

Lastly, your 'win' condition changes. You will not leave this world in ten years – you will leave when the last bastion of civilisation crumbles, and those few who you deem worthy, the Cursed Children, will follow you to your next world, but no further.

Perhaps they'll finally find the peace they deserve there, but this world holds nothing for them. Let it burn. Let it all burn.



ITS OVER. TIME TO GO HOME

Perhaps you failed, fell. Maybe you just no longer wish to continue. If you died or became a Gastrea, this option is chosen automatically.
But even after all you've done, don't be too hard on yourself.

After all, you can still go home.

I CHOOSE TO STAY

Are you sure? What's left here for you? What now? You're no longer needed here, are you? And if you are, what makes you think this world is still worth fighting for? What can you accomplish now that you couldn't in 10 years?

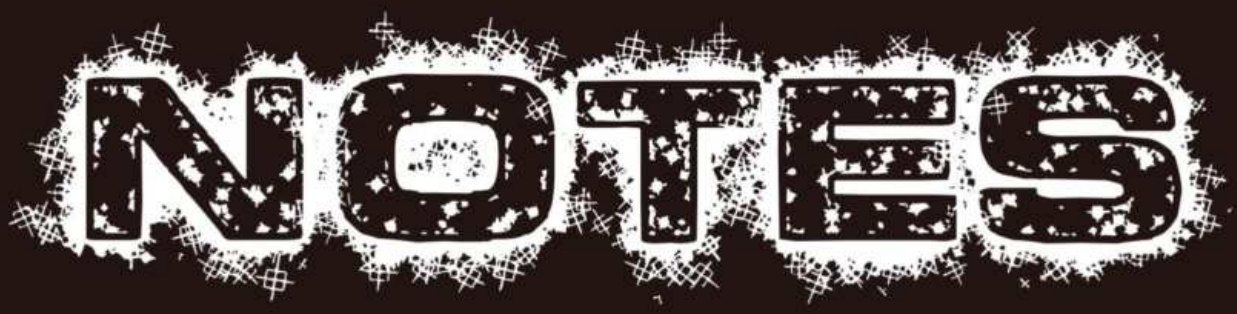
Is this really what you want?

CONTINUE

Other worlds await you. If you so choose, you can continue your journey.
Of all the worlds you could end your journey with, don't make it this one.
There are better worlds than this. There have to be.

Choose to continue.

Regardless of your choice, the disadvantages you've accumulated in this world disperse – you find your memories to be less intrusive, you'll no longer be hated for what you are instead of who you are, and you can have any cyborg augmentations or animalistic features fade physically, restoring you to your 'normal' form, while still receiving their benefits, at your discretion.



"Sharing is Caring" may be taken more than once, but only once per given companion.

Taking the first entity's offer grants you a vastly improved singing voice as a side effect.

Taking the second entity's offer grants you increased profiency in edged weapons, and you'll find that you look much better while wearing a trenchcoat.

The time an Initiator has before they succumb to the virus from now is dependent on how much they fight and other factors. For the purposes of this CYOA, consider it whatever you please - but remember, it's less than 10 years. If you don't find a cure or equivalent, you or your companion (unless you're a drop in) will perish.

Whether there is a cure or not is up to you, effectively. I've deliberately left it unstated and the setting hasn't determined it yet. Maybe the only way to save the Cursed Children is to take the second entity's offer. Maybe you'll find a cure in time to save most of them and your companion. Go with whatever makes you happy.

Powers that help you develop tech or so on can help, just be aware that being an Initiator or Promoter is effectively giving you free 'PTSD' 'Hated' and 'Ticking Time Bomb' disadvantages - and disadvantages tend to override advantages. They'll certainly mitigate the effects to some extent, but being charismatic won't help as much as usual dealing with the hate you'll receive, and an iron will or equivalent will aid you against PTSD - but it won't stop it completely.

You receive a free Varanium weapon (or have one of your weapons upgraded with varanium alloy), as do all of your companions.

If you want, you can change your age and gender to anything reasonable as an Initiator or Drop in for free. No 100 CP tax.

You can choose to replace the free companion with a companion you already have. They gain all the advantages - and drawbacks - and memories that the companion would possess, much as if you had chosen the role yourself.

Your companion (the free, provided one or whoever you choose to replace them) gains 1000CP to spend as you see fit on powers and items.
They gain discounts and free powers as normal for their type.
This is for non-drop ins only, since they do not gain the companion.