

The Core

It's the year 2003, and strange happenings abound. From the mass deaths of several people in a single area who have pacemakers, the shuttle nearly crashing, and bizarre bird 'attacks' that seem to be more swarms of confused birds. Soon, a simple college professor will discover something that will shock him to near hopelessness. The Earth's core has stalled, and will soon stop entirely, removing the Earth's electromagnetic field and completely wiping out modern technology, as well as destroying all life on its surface in about a year.

While he initially believes humanity is doomed, he introduces his findings to Dr. Zimsky who just may have a way to save the planet using technology developed by his estranged colleague Dr. Brazzelton. Who has been developing a ship capable of traveling through the mantle and potentially the core of the Earth, allowing a slim chance that humanity can restart the core via strategic usage of nuclear weaponry. Joining them are Commander Iverson and Major Rebecca Childs, astronauts who will be their pilots, and Dr. Serge Leveque, a French weapons specialist. Together with the might (and funding) of the U.S military they plan to save the world with none the wiser.

You will now be part of this crew, either as one of those sent into the core itself, or as part of the ground crew. You'll spend the next ten years here, even if you fail to save the world. Good luck.

+1000 Choice Points

Location:

You can freely choose where you wish to start in this world. It matters little as the American military will likely be by within a week or two to pick you up.

1 - Boston, Massachusetts
Where one of the first major effects of the core stopping will occur, causing numerous people at the Earth Day festival with pacemakers to die. If you have any electronic parts, you might wanna move away.

2 - Trafalgar Square, London
The historic tourist landmark, soon it will be the site of an attack by crazed birds who have their sense of direction scrambled by an EM pulse. You might want to take cover, it doesn't seem like people here have heard of using the brakes even when a bird breaks into their car.

3 - University of Chicago
Oh, this is where Dr. Joshua Keyes works. Are you perhaps a colleague of his, or maybe even a student? Maybe one of his doctoral students? Either way, he will soon be picked up by the FBI, and some time later you likely will as well.

4 - Salt Flats, Utah
The location of Dr. Brazzelton's compound, where he researches to make a ship capable of traversing the depths of the planet. While he's figured out an engine and the shell of the ship, he's yet to perfect his fabrication methods. In a week or two he will be visited by the military, and this will rapidly become the HQ for the mission to the core.

Origins:

Choose a single origin to represent if you are part of the ground crew supporting the Virgil, or going down with the ship. Gender is the same as the previous jump, age is 18+2d6. 50CP to change.

Terranaut

Technically all members of the crew are Terranauts, but this is for the two who could be considered outliers. You are similar to Joshua Keyes and Rebecca Childs, while you may hold a humble (or not so humble) job, your skills are far beyond that to the point people may suspect you are from some kind of government agency. With this, you will be part of the Virgil crew in some capacity.

Specialist

The rest of the crew of the Virgil, while less impressive in general, are certainly exceptional in their fields. Dr. Zimsky is one of the foremost specialists on the planet, Dr. Brazzelton designed Unobtanium and the rest of Virgil, Serge is a high-level weapons specialist, and Commander Iverson is an astronaut. You are among their number, and will be sent down with Virgil.

Ground Control

Of course, there were hundreds of other people working in the background of the project. You might be one of the NASA operators under Stick who work as mission control, a member of the military under Lt. General Purcell, or maybe another hacker brought in to support Rat in suppressing information. Unlike the other two origins you will not be joining the crew on the Virgil, instead staying in the HQ.

Perks:

All Origins receive discounts on their perk lines, with their 100CP purchases being free.

General

Professional Training [50 CP] - There's a reason you were recruited for this mission, after all. At least I hope so. Each purchase of this you gain professional training in a career of your choice, from engineering to physics, weapons design to a career soldier, anything from astronaut to teacher. You aren't the best in your field, but you're good enough for this mission.

Terranaut

High Pressure Camaraderie [100 CP] - While friendships do tend to form in high pressure situations, with you it is practically guaranteed. When things get down people who work with you rapidly get closer together, forming long-lasting friendships assuming everyone survives. The people around you also form friendships among themselves much faster as well. Gives a bit of skill at keeping tempers from flaring, but don't expect miracles.

Make the Shitty Call [200 CP] - In the words of Commander Iverson, a real leader is one who knows how to make the shitty call, to go against their own instincts or desires and potentially condemn a man to death in order to complete the mission. You now have this mental fortitude, able to do what needs to be done instead of waffling. This also gives you a sense if the situation is truly that dire, or if things will work out if you don't make the shitty call. No more killing your family shortly before being rescued.

Improv Mastery [400 CP] - Sometimes things go wrong, and your plan fails. Maybe the core of the planet has a different density than you predicted and your nuclear warheads won't work? Now instead of freaking out you have the ability to rapidly adapt your plan to fit the new situation, or form entirely new plans. Maybe if you deploy them in a certain way it'd still work? Or maybe a clever use of the last bits of your ship's power can somehow save your life?

Not How Bombs Work [600 CP] - Of course, all the improv in the world won't help if you do the math wrong, or if physics itself is against you. Putting the core of a nuclear reactor right next to a bomb won't actually increase its explosive yield, no matter how hard you might hope. But…what if it did? With this, you can nudge physics or the laws of reality in order to make something impossible, possible. You cannot use this too often, and it has to make some kind of sense. Such as utilizing more nuclear fuel in order to make a bomb bigger, or welding power lines to a material that converts heat to energy.

Specialist

Bravest Thing I've Ever Seen [100 CP] - You've got courage beyond what a normal person does, that's for sure. Whether it be using the oxygen you need to breathe as fuel, or walking through literal hell to turn a mechanism in order to save the world, you are willing to go the distance in order to accomplish your goals. Just keep in mind this doesn't help you actually survive, maybe get a contingency or two.

Never Taught Virgil to Fly [200 CP] - Don't you hate it when you build something to exact specifications and then suddenly something you couldn't possibly predict messes things up? While this doesn't help stop those things from occurring, it does make it so that whatever you build that encounters them actually survives. You might need to do some spot repairs and maybe something important gets jammed, but you don't suffer catastrophic failure and fixing it is always possible.

You're Scary Sometimes [400 CP] - Are you sure you aren't Sherlock Holmes? Well, okay, you aren't on his level, but your reasoning and deduction skills are quite advanced compared to most people. You could deduce why you were brought in on a consultation gig just by studying those who came in with you, or remember a random fact you heard over three months ago even while your world was being changed in a major way.

Nobel Prize Winners Anonymous [600 CP] - The entire Virgil team, from builders to those who came up with the plan, were all certified geniuses. Even at that lofty peak there are some who stand above, like yourself. Choose a single skill and you find yourself absolutely amazing at it, knowing everything a person would need to be a true expert in 2003 as well as the ability to make leaps in technology others haven't seen yet. Perhaps you're an engineer ahead of your time like Dr. Brazzelton, or a hacker without peer like Rat. This also enhances your ability to continue your education in that field, learning things that incorporate that skill from the future far faster.

Ground Control

Formal Complaint [100 CP] - Don't you just hate it when someone does something obviously illegal and nothing seems to happen to them? With this, you no longer suffer that problem. You can file a formal complaint against them with their superiors, who will review the situation and lay down the law if needed. They will not consider any outside connections, only concerned with the law.

Quiet! [200 CP] - You have an air of authority about you, people will just seem to defer to you in most situations. Though this is only if they shouldn't outrank you in the first place, those directly under your purview are more influenced than normal. You can project this authority in your voice, for example instantly silencing a room full of your panicking subordinates with a single word.

Sabotage from the Inside [400 CP] - You are the ultimate whistleblower or saboteur. While this won't help you get hired by organizations or joining certain groups, once you are inside this will shield you from a lot of the consequences of doing internal sabotage or leaking information. As long as you make the most basic precautions to protect your identity they won't actually link you to the acts of sabotage, though they may have suspicions.

Beyond Authorized Limits [600 CP] - Your subordinates and followers now have a tendency to go above and beyond when you give them a goal, exceeding what you desired or envisioned by great amounts. Perhaps you wanted a machine that creates earthquakes and they ended up making something capable of stopping the planet entirely? As you might imagine by the example, not all of these are positive, with weapons being far more deadly than you may have anticipated. Thankfully you can keep them reigned in with close supervision.

Items:

You get a single discount for each price tier of item, with 50 CP and 100 CP items being free.

General

Rat-Hacked Phone [50 CP] - This baby is the iconic Nokia 3310, one of the greatest cellphones of the early 2000s. Iconic in appearance and memetic in its durability, yours has further been modified by Rat, who managed to get you free long-distance. While you don't have a phone bill, you instead can make a call from anywhere as compensation, and we do mean anywhere. Bottom of the ocean in a metal tube? You've got a signal.

Unlimited Supply of Hot Pockets [50 CP] - The government offered you anything, and you asked for this. You now have an unlimited supply of hot pockets, eating them seems to increase your focus like a weaker adderall and no matter how many you eat you never seem to put on weight. You also get a complete box set of Xena: Warrior Princess on VHS as a bonus.

Terranaut Suit [50 CP] - The suits given to the crew on the Virgil built to withstand the crushing pressures deep in the core, and capable of withstanding heat up to 4,500F. You can temporarily go above that but you aren't entirely immune from the heat, and your suit will slowly degrade. You get a set of nine (one for you and each of your companions), as well as blueprints to make more.

Rat's Nest [100 CP] - Congratulations Jumper, you now have your own apartment! It may not be in the best neighborhood, but nothing less than a full SWAT team will be able to break inside so don't worry about security. More important is the abundance of computers and servers located inside, making it perfect for any hacking endeavors you may decide to take up! People will find it harder to track any signal that leads back to this apartment as a bonus.

Virus-Bot [100 CP] - The program Rat created in order to suppress information regarding the stopping of the core. It's a computer virus designed to hunt for specific keywords across the whole of the net, infest the associated system, and completely wipe out the files. At base you're limited to a dozen keywords, and obviously how useful this will be will be directly linked to how good you are at designing ways to penetrate systems. Thankfully any upgrades to the source code will be replicated across all versions of the virus, even if they aren't connected to anything.

High-Frequency Resonance Tubes [200 CP] - Dr. Brazzelton's 'engine' for his future ship, a combination of high frequency pulse lasers with resonance tube ultrasonics that results in a rotating laser array that is capable of completely dusting a hole in a canyon wall. And nearly anything else, as well. At least, on the surface. Where it is intended to be used under the ground, it is able to soften and melt rock for the easy passage of the Virgil. You get your own set of these tubes that are easy to mount on nearly any vehicle, as well as the blueprints to make more.

High-Yield Nuclear Warheads [200 CP] - Now how'd you get your hands on these? You have a set of five 200-megaton nuclear warheads, bombs far more massive than anything we see today. While they work perfectly fine as weapons of war (with all the drawbacks of normal nuclear weapons), they seem to work better than you'd expect when you use them 'constructively'. Like creating an artificial river or restarting a planet's core. Not only will the effect be much greater than it should, the resulting fallout will also be marginal. They will be replenished monthly if you utilize them in a constructive manner, and yearly otherwise.

15 Billion Dollars Funding [400 CP] - You ever have a dream project, an idea you were certain would be great but you were kept back by the most important resource of all, money? Now you no longer have to worry about this. Any project you start will receive the equivalent of $15 billion USD (in 2003 money, adjust for inflation appropriately) as start up funding no questions asked. This must be an actual project, not something like "what would happen if I retired early" and trying to funnel funds away from your project for personal expenses would see the funding instantly revoked.

Unobtanium Recipe [400 CP] - The shell of Dr. Brazzelton's future ship, Unobtanium. A series of crystals combined in a tungsten-titanium matrix at supercooled temperatures, this wonder material is capable of withstanding enormous pressure and heat, growing stronger as more pressure is applied to it and converting heat into an energy source. It can still be overwhelmed if it goes too deep too fast but as long as there is a gradual buildup of pressure it is borderline invincible within the Earth's core, though a few rare substances can damage it. You get the recipe for this material, as well as a few sample pieces. It's not actually known as unobtanium, it's real name is just 37 syllables long and it makes for a good shorthand.

DESTINI [600 CP] - A device created by the U.S. government with Dr. Zimsky, after hearing word that their enemies were creating a machine to trigger targeted seismic events, stands for Deep Earth Seismic Trigger Initiative, or DEST-INI. A large surface ability to trigger its own targeted seismic events (earthquakes) anywhere on the planet of its location by beaming high-powered electromagnetic waves down deep earth fault lines. It will no longer destabilize the core unless massively overloaded, but still has the enormous energy draw of the original, requiring a significant portion of the U.S. energy grid in order to fire. You gain a set of blueprints to build more, and if you go to a setting with multiple inhabited planets you may choose which one to set this up on.

Virgil [600 CP] - The completed version of Dr. Brazzelton's dream ship, essentially a combination of a train and a submarine made of unobtanium with lasers along the front and along impellers in the side. The impellers are used for steering it under water or lava while the lasers render (and keep) rock soft enough for it to easily 'swim' through, with navigation done by a very powerful MRI-based camera. Powered by an experimental nuclear reactor, it is divided into six compartments. The Locomotive, Navigation, Living Quarters, Engineering, Bomb, and Weapons Control compartments. You have your own copy, with your own outfitted to hold nine people at once instead of six. The nuclear reactor will never run out of power, but you lack the means to reproduce the lasers or unobtanium without the relevant item purchases. This also comes with all the flaws of the first, but any improvements are kept permanently. If destroyed, you will obtain a new one a month later. You also have the blueprints to make more, if you desire, though you'll need replacement materials.

Companions:

Fellow Terranauts [50 CP, 300 CP for 8] - Sure would be nice to have some familiar faces, wouldn't it? With this you may bring a companion along on your journey with 600 CP of their own, and they may optionally join as a member of the Virgil with the ship being expanded to have more room for all of you, though bringing an additional 8 people at once may result in it being fairly cramped. Even if they take a Terranaut or Specialist origin they may choose instead to be part of the ground crew.

A New Friend [50 CP] - Someone here caught your eye? Maybe you need a talented engineer, or you just have a like for a Hillary Swank lookalike that is Major Childs. With this, you are guaranteed a favorable first meeting and multiple interactions after, and you'll find it much easier to get closer to them, but ultimately convincing them to come with you is up to you. Obviously this will be much harder if the planet isn't saved.

Drawbacks:

I was kinda hoping to have sex [+100 CP] - Good news Jumper, you will not have to worry about getting laid while trying to perform your duties. Why? Because it is impossible for you to have sex until after the world is saved! No matter what you do you will either find yourself interrupted, find all potential partners unwilling, or even be unable to get it up until after the issue with the core is resolved. If the mission fails, you will still regain your ability to have sex, but at that point you probably have bigger issues.

Wrestling a nuclear bomb [+100 CP] - Damn, you're quite clumsy aren't you? Especially in high stress situations. You seem to trip over nothing and if you aren't careful you may end up trapped or in a dangerous position. Maybe you'll trip when an emergency eject triggers? This isn't guaranteed to kill you, but will maybe make your survival a bit more of a gamble.

Addiction [+100 CP] - You're addicted to something, and that addiction might be hard to fulfill where you are going. Maybe you crave hot pockets, and they didn't exactly pack them along with the Virgil. Or maybe you're just a long time smoker, but unfortunately both the HQ and the Virgil itself don't allow smoking, and taking a smoke break is out of the question.

Failure of DESTINI [+200 CP] - While the movie leans towards no, ultimately we never find out if refiring DESTINI again would restart the core. While normally in this jump it would have a 50/50 chance of working (with the other half being the immediate cessation of the core's spin), that chance is now 0. No more safety net. Hopefully you don't fail, Jumper.

Unsung Heroes [+200 CP] - At the very end, despite the government trying to cover up everything, Rat would release the documents on Project DESTINI as well as the Virgil Mission to various news agencies around the world, revealing the United States nearly causing the destruction of the world as well as the identities of all of those who died over the course of the mission to save the world. Now, he will no longer do this and the government will successfully cover everything up, blaming the strange occurrences on freak weather accidents and an 'orbital wobble'.

Hollow Earth [+200 CP] - The original script for The Core was more closely based on Journey to the Center of the Earth, with appropriately fantastical elements such as dinosaurs. Things that you will encounter, it turns out that at least part of the Earth near the core is hollow and contains dinosaurs! You'll have to work together with the crew to survive this new challenge, as well as find a way to get Virgil back on track before they trigger Plan B.

Only Hope [+300 CP] - Let's face it, some powers or items in the world would make the mission to restart the Earth's core much more trivial. So how about we up the stakes a little? Any outside perks or powers that are superhuman, or any items that would allow you to restart the core, reach the core, or escape the planet will all not be available for the duration of the jump. Your only hope is the Virgil mission.

On the Rails [+300 CP] - A lot of people die over the course of the mission for various reasons, and several of these deaths can be avoided even without the use of out-of-context abilities. Now, nothing you do can prevent these deaths. Your death is not scripted, but are you so willing to let others die for your own gain when you could save them?

Realistic Physics [+300 CP] - Are you sure about this? Infamous for its less than stellar science, this instead imposes the force of your original reality's physics onto the setting. What this means is that if something makes no sense for our world, it will no longer work. Using nuclear bombs to restart the core? No longer possible. Unless you have some other method of restarting the Earth's core, the electromagnetic field is doomed. On the plus side, the danger of solar winds is perhaps a bit overstated so it isn't like all life will be destroyed immediately. But life will get significantly harder. Combined with other drawbacks your death is near certain. Items and perks you have are unaffected unless you take **Only Hope**, in which case nothing that wouldn't make sense in your home world will work.

Ending:

Well, you've hopefully saved the planet and survived the remainder of your time here, possibly as a hero. Or maybe you've been sheltered in some kind of deep bunker after your failure. Either way, your journey is over.

Go Back
Miss your home? You can return to your original world with all the things you've gathered in your adventures so far.

Stay
Wanna see how it plays out, huh? It is around 2013 when you're supposed to leave, maybe you can guide the future in a way you'd prefer.

Continue
Yeah, this was fun, but it is time to move on. To the next world!

Notes

-What if Virgil fails?
As long as you don't die this portion of the chain continues, but if you lack something like a spaceship or a bunker things may be borderline impossible.

-Item Imports
You may freely import an item into something similar, for the Virgil you would need either a submarine or a train. A sufficiently long enough sub or train may dramatically expand its size, but it will still work normally.