

# DIRE STRAITS

A METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA Module, #KDJ1

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Based on the METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA setting by  
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## INTRODUCTION

*A great cold has come to your village, killing the crops and bringing suffering to your people. No one has ever experienced weather like this and the village elders are worried. They have sent out many groups, including yours, to explore your world, Warden: seeking food, shelter, and the cause of this deadly cold. You must hurry... your people may not have much time.*

This module is an introductory adventure for the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Metamorphosis Alpha system. It is intended as a challenge for 4-6 player characters. The estimated play time is 4 hours.

### \*\*\* IMPORTANT \*\*\*

Anyone intending to referee this module should read it in its entirety before play; however, anyone wishing to play a character in the adventure should read no further or face the wrath of the...

Game Gremlins\*.

\* As most players know, Game Gremlins are those vicious little beasts that enjoy jinxing your dice to roll the lowest number possible at the worst possible time, whispering devilish ideas to torment your characters to your game referee in his sleep, and generally taking whatever steps necessary to insure the party's failure if not their deaths. And they do all that without even being mad at you, so I would stop reading if I were you.

## ADVENTURE FORMAT

Based on a game system developed in the late 1970's, the format of this module harkens back to the earliest

days of adventure writing styles. As such, you will not find any blocks of text to be read to the players. Instead, you as referee will be given a description of a room or situation (potentially containing information of which the characters are unaware) and it is left up to your discretion to determine what information to convey to the players and how to convey it.

There are several formatting conventions followed by this document. All mutation names appear in *italics*. Additionally, whenever a creature is described in the text, the relevant creature statistics are included in the following format:

**Name (number):** AC; MV; HD; hp; AT type (WC, DMG) and/or *combat mutation*; *other mutation 1*; *other mutation 2*; *defect mutation*; CN; CR; DX; MR; LP; RR; ST.

where

*name* is the name of the creature,  
*number* is the number of creatures appearing (not required if only one creature is present),  
AC denotes the creature's armor class,  
DX denotes the creature's dexterity,  
MV denotes the creature's land movement in map spaces per combat turn followed by the creature's movement in yards per combat turn in parentheses (this may be followed by other types of movement if applicable),

HD represents the creature's hit dice,  
hp denotes the creature's available hit points,  
AT lists the various attack options available to the creature which may include mutations usable in combat,

WC denotes the weapon class of the attack,  
DMG denotes the possible damage inflicted by the attack which may be separated by slashes (/) if different for humanoid beings/mutated creatures/true humans,

CN denotes the creature's constitution score,  
CR denotes the creature's computer recognition score (see **MUTANT-COMPUTER INTERACTION** in the **APPENDICES**),

DX denotes the creature's dexterity score,  
MR denotes the creature's mental resistance score (if different for attack and defense, the scores will be separated by slashes with the attack score reported first),

LP denotes the creature's leadership potential score,  
RR denotes the creature's radiation resistance, and  
ST denotes the creature's strength score.

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## **BACKGROUND**

For centuries, the inhabitants of Habitat Level 2 of the *Warden* have enjoyed ample amounts of simulated sunshine and good weather, with very mild seasonal changes. This has all been due to the tireless efforts of a single robot, Habitat Control Droid, serial number HCD-31E5F3, or simply Hayseed (as he was known to his human supervisors so long ago). Until recently, Hayseed spent his days monitoring and repairing the hidden environmental control center for the level.

Only one week ago, a wolfoid pack stumbled upon the hidden entrance to the environmental control center. Unfortunately, the force field that protected the entrance had been weakened over the centuries as irreplaceable parts failed and it proved no match for the brute force of the large humanoids. The beasts eventually reached the main control room of the center and encountered Hayseed. Hayseed was not built for combat and could not hope to match the ferocity of the wolfoids, but he did manage to escape the pack and leave the control center in the hopes of finding aid. With very little knowledge of the current flora and fauna of the habitat level, Hayseed wandered aimlessly searching for help until being captured by a young grabber. The grabber's digestive glands were not fully developed and it was unable to digest Hayseed's metal body quickly but it refused to release the poor robot since it detected the heat from Hayseed's broadcast power converter.

Entangled by the grabber's limbs, Hayseed has been forced to wait as the weather worsens due to the incompetence of the wolfoid leader at the control center. His only hope now is a group of heroes to rescue him and help him save the habitat. Fortunately, one such group recently left a small village...

## **SYNOPSIS**

The party is sent to find a solution to the terrible cold plaguing their village. They quickly stumble upon the young grabber that has taken a robot, Hayseed, captive. After defeating the grabber and rescuing Hayseed, they learn that he has been responsible for the weather for hundreds of years until recently, when a pack of wolfoids took over the environmental control center. The party should then attempt to retake the control center for Hayseed and restore the normal weather patterns. After defeating the wolfoid pack, Hayseed will restore the weather and the party will return home as heroes.

## **WELCOME TO HABITAT**

Habitat is the only human village on Habitat Level 2. It houses approximately 150 humans and mutant humans, with a small percentage of mutant animals and plants living there as well. The village sits on the shore of Lake Refuge, which provides the villagers with a supply of fish

to supplement the produce from their fields. The villagers live a primitive life; their homes are log cabins, their clothing is woven plant fibers, and their most advanced technology is a bow. The technology wielded by their ancestors is unheard of except in vague rumors and a few rare artifacts occasionally shown to them by the village shaman.

This entire level is the known world to the people of Habitat. They refer to it as *Warden*. The map on the following page is a duplicate of one found in the village church, the repository of the villager's knowledge. There are rumors that doorways to other worlds (i.e., other levels) may occasionally be found on *Warden*, but no one in memory has ever entered one of these doors and returned to tell the tale.

## **THE OLD TIMES**

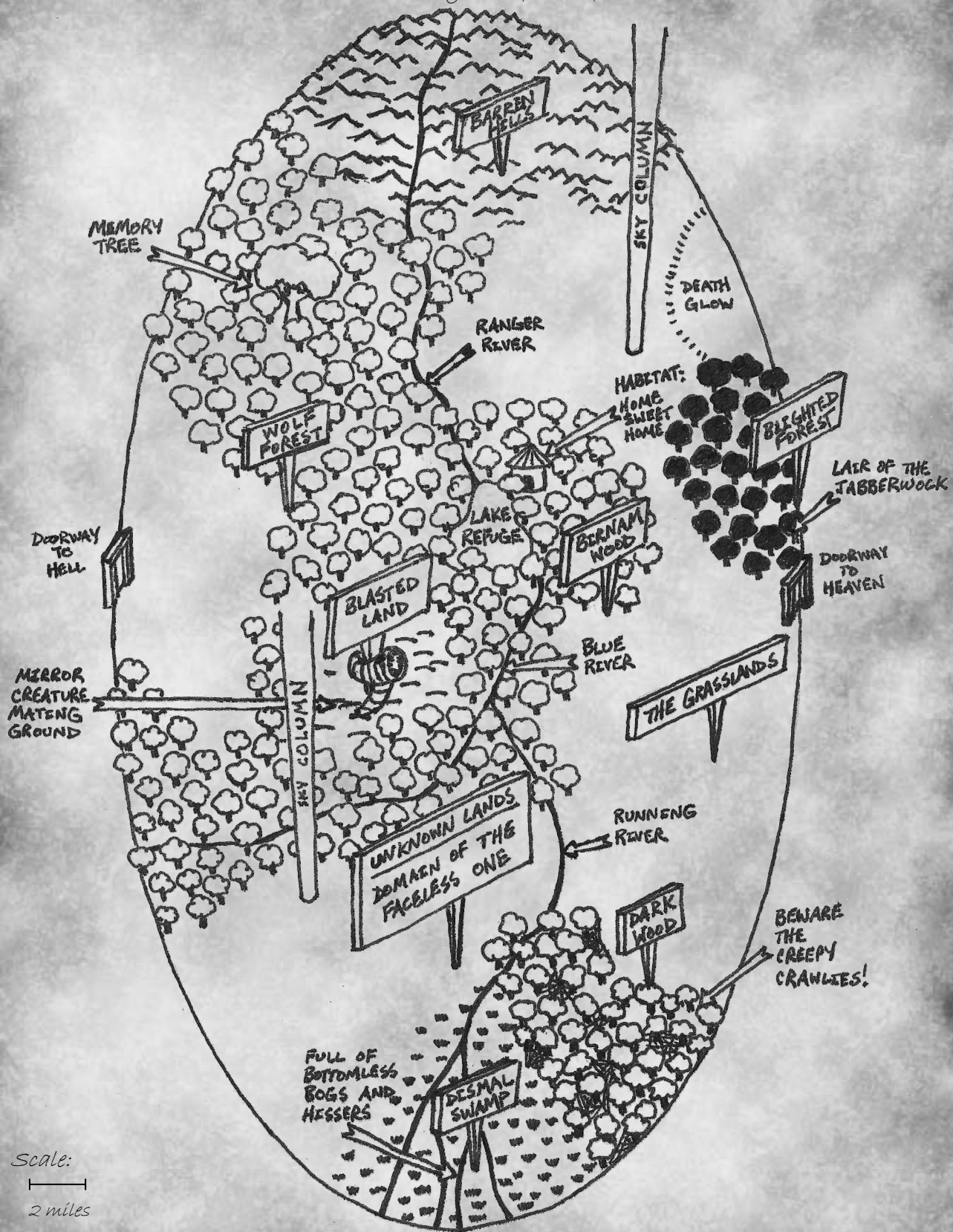
The village shaman tells stories of the Old Times, when Man lived a life of leisure. The people lived as royalty, not on *Warden*, but in the Garden of Eden, having their every desire met by fantastic tools given by God, some of which the most devout can still use today. (This is usually where the shaman displays an artifact of the ancients to the wonder of the crowd.) But over time, the people became arrogant: believing that with their marvelous tools, they were God's equals. God became angry with the people, and sent his angel, Radiation, to reap his divine retribution. Yet God still loved Man, and choose to have mercy on His creation. Instead of utterly destroying Man, God scattered the people, forcing them to leave the garden and their tools behind. He sent them to the Barren Hills of *Warden*, to live a humble life toiling in the wilderness – focusing on their faith instead of their tools. The people eventually followed the Ranger River to Lake Refuge and there built the village of Habitat, where Man lives to this day.

## **START**

As mentioned in the **INTRODUCTION**, the entirety of Habitat Level 2 has been subjected to freezing weather, much worse than any experienced before and much too early for the level's light winter. (The current season is late summer.) The village is in dire straits; the cold weather has killed most of the crops from the fields and the village's elderly, sick, and young have begun to die from the intense cold. Ice is forming around the lake and although it has never happened in the past, if the cold continues, the lake may freeze entirely. Additionally, the weather has apparently killed many of the smaller creatures of the level, forcing the larger predators to become more aggressive and dangerous.

The village elders decide that something must be done to change their situation or the village may not survive. They call a village meeting, explaining that capable young people are needed for an urgent mission. They then select 20 volunteers (including the characters) to

The Known World of Warden  
(as described by the explorer, Yrek)



Scale:  
|-----|  
2 miles

search the level for food, shelter, and the cause of this unnatural cold. These volunteers are further broken up into teams to more effectively search. The characters' team is assigned the task of following the Ranger River to the Barren Hills in the hopes of finding shelter from the cold or helpful artifacts left over from their ancestors' pilgrimage to Habitat so long ago (see **THE OLD TIMES** above).

Besides their heavy fur clothing, each character is equipped with plant fiber armor, a wooden shield, a spear, sword, or mace (player's choice), a bone dagger, enough dried jerky (or appropriate rations for a mutated animal or plant character) for one week, a fur bedroll (with arm straps to be worn on the back), a water skin, flint and tender, and a large belt pouch. Each true human in the party may also upgrade his equipment to one of the following (his choice):

- duralloy shield,
- heavy mace (wielded with two hands),
- heavy sword (wielded with two hands), or
- bow with quiver of 20 arrows.

Additionally, each true human is given a dose of Berserk, 3 Heal Pills, and a dose of Speed (see **NEW ITEMS** in the **APPENDICES**).

The leader of the party (usually a pure human) is given a slug projector (similar to a small rifle roughly the size of a sawed-off shotgun) and carefully taught to use it with the Prayer of Loading, the Mantra of Targeting, and the Prayer of Humble Jam Clearing. The slug projector only has 7 dum-dum rounds, but is a valued holy relic to the village.

## STUCK IN THE MIDDLE...

By the early afternoon after leaving the village, the party has rounded Lake Refuge and traveled several miles along the Ranger River. Have each player roll 1d10. Add 1 to the result if the player's character has the *heightened vision* mutation. On a result of 10, the player's character has noticed the glint of metal in a willow tree approximately 30 feet ahead of the party's route. (It is the metal body of Hayseed hidden in the leaves of the grabber.)

If the party attempts to communicate, Hayseed will inform them of the danger and ask for their help. (Note that at this point, Hayseed is only able to see straight down so he cannot see the characters and will not treat a mutant any different than a pure human. Consult **THE METAL MAN** for more information about his social interaction with the characters.)

If the party continues along the route, the grabber will wait until they are under its limbs to attack (allowing it a chance of surprising the party). At that point, Hayseed will be able to see the party and will attempt to warn any pure human of the danger, but unfortunately, it will be too late.

**Grabber, Young:** AC 7 (main trunk); MV 0; HD 5; hp 23; AT vine grab (WC 3, see following); *dissolving juices* (DMG 2d6); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 9; MR 12; LP n/a; RR 12; ST 18.

The grabber has a number of manipulative vines equal to the number of characters in the party plus 3. One vine is currently holding Hayseed and will not be used in combat. Each vine will attack an individual party member and is considered WC 3. Extra vines will attack the characters that have dealt the most damage to the grabber (or randomly if the grabber has not been damaged). At the end of a combat round after a successful attack, a vine will pull a character to its glands of dissolving enzymes (causing 2d6 points of acid damage) unless the player successfully rolls a special Strength ability roll. If the player rolls less than his Strength score minus 8 (and minus a cumulative penalty of 4 for every vine past the first) on 1d20, he succeeds in preventing his character from being pulled. However, even if the character succeeds, the grabber may automatically attempt to pull him to its glands the next combat turn (without requiring an attack roll). A "grabbed" character only has a 25% chance of having an arm unconfined (increase this percentage by 5% for every additional arm past two). A player may free his character from a vine during his combat turn by succeeding in the Strength roll mentioned previously, but may not perform any other action.

A grabber's vine may be targeted instead of its trunk. An attacking vine has an AC of 4 due to its quickness and only 4 hp. A vine holding a character does not have the same range of movement so it has an AC of 8, although there is a 30% chance that a missed attack on the vine will hit the held character.

## THE METAL MAN

Once the grabber has been killed, the vine holding Hayseed will loosen and he will fall to the ground. Although not horribly damaged, Hayseed's body does show the results of his exposure to the grabber's digestive fluids; his external cover is melted and has a rough texture in several places. Additionally, there is an ugly melted opening about the size of an egg in his left side through which his internal circuitry may be viewed. Hayseed's broadcast power cells have been damaged by the grabber's digestive acid and he has been operating using his emergency power cell for the past 10 hours, leaving him only 2 more hours of operation.

Hayseed is very grateful for his rescue and will attempt to enlist the party to help regain the environmental control center from the pack of wolves which invaded it. (He does not perceive wolfoids as being sentient; see below for more details.) He is completely willing to share his story as described in the **BACKGROUND**. Not only is control of the level's environmental control center required to restore the climate, but the repair facility located inside is the closet location that Hayseed can use to repair himself.

He also has information about the *Warden* which the characters may find very interesting... the prime one being that the *Warden* is a ship traveling the stars, not a world. The following are a few additional facts that may arise during conversation:

- A. The *Warden* is a colony ship which left the Trans-Plutonian Spaceyards in 2290.
- B. Hayseed was designed specifically for use on the *Warden* and was built in 2289 by Rossum's Universal Robots Corporation.
- C. The current year is 2525.
- D. The *Warden* is 50 miles in length, with a width of 25 miles, a height of 8.5 miles, and 17 levels.
- E. The *Warden* left the Sol system with 1.5 million colonists and 50,000 crew members. (This may be the most shocking of all to the characters; they have lived all their lives without seeing more than 200 people.)
- F. The party's current level aboard the *Warden* is Level 11, Habitat Level 2. (Hayseed is not programmed with a full diagram of the ship so he cannot provide information concerning any other level.)
- G. A disaster of unknown origin struck the *Warden* in 2319.
- H. Although the ship's basic data stores can be accessed from the proper computer terminals, communication with the ship's artificial intelligence has been severed on this level for some reason unknown to Hayseed.
- I. Hayseed was placed in emergency control of the environmental control center by order of Level Officer, Lt. Mike Donnigan, in 2319 before he and other personnel left the complex to determine the ship and crew status.

Hayseed has been programmed for habitat control as well as diagnostic and repair procedures for himself and environmental control equipment. Although able to communicate with any crewmen or colonists onboard *Warden*, his programming only requires him to follow orders given by a crewman wearing a command, engineering, or horticulture band. Additionally, he cannot allow a human's life to be endangered through his actions or inaction.

Hayseed's programming has not adjusted to the new inhabitants of *Warden* so his reaction to the party follows

the pattern described under **MUTANT-COMPUTER INTERACTION** in the **APPENDICES**. In the case of mutant animals, Hayseed considers them to be wild animals of the habitat or pets of human(s). Although he may hear questions or comments spoken by the mutant animal, he will address any responses to the human who he believes is responsible for the animal. For example, suppose Spot, the mutant dog, asks Hayseed the current time. Hayseed would respond by asking Rick, the human he believes responsible for the animal, to inform his pet that the time is 2:36 PM. If no humans are present, Hayseed will not respond, although he may take requested actions (such as if Spot asked him to please move 5 feet to his left).

As a Habitat Control Droid, Hayseed is equipped with the following:

- A. Humanoid body type with two arms and legs.
- B. Broadcast power cells (currently damaged) enabling Hayseed to draw energy from the ship's hull or other broadcast power generators.
- C. A power cell, providing Hayseed with power for 12 hours of continuous operation if no broadcast power is available. (Ten hours have already been used.)
- D. Coupled lenses effective as magnifiers with a 50 power range in the microscopic and telescopic fields.
- E. Upper and lower light spectrum receivers, able to view into the infrared and ultra-violet ranges.
- F. Variable programming circuits with verbal programming adapters for changeable programs.
- G. Audio and radio transmitters and pickups effective for up to 60 kilometers (37 miles).

Although not equipped for combat, Hayseed will assist the party in combat when able. Note that like all other properly functioning robots on *Warden*, Hayseed will never kill any type of life, but may attempt to subdue an aggressive life form.

**Hayseed:** AC 2; MV 6 (12); HD 20; hp 47 (normal 80); AT punch (WC 1, DMG 1d2 subdual) or weapon; CN n/a; CR n/a; DX 10; MR n/a; LP n/a; RR n/a; ST 12.

## THE CONTROL CENTER

The environmental control center is located near the river, approximately one hour of travel away from where Hayseed is rescued. (Therefore, Hayseed is left with only one hour of power after traveling here with the party). The center is buried under a small hill in order to cause the least amount of disturbance to the habitat's environment. The center consists of four levels. The first level, or main level, is at ground level for the habitat and provides the main entrances to the center as well as the main core of the center's functionality. The second level comprises the living quarters for the crewmen stationed at the center. The third level contains several horticulture

labs and the fourth level provides access to the habitat level's transportation sub-system. There are three outside entrances to the complex. They are designed to blend into their surroundings and are known to Hayseed. Two allow access to the main level while a third is an auxiliary emergency entrance which leads to the second level.

The wolofoids gained access to the center through the main entrance. Hayseed will recommend the party attempt to enter the center through the auxiliary entrance since it opens into the second level of the complex which the wolofoids may not yet have explored. Additionally, it provides a route to the robot repair bay and veterinary clinic that does not pass the main control center, where presumably the wolofoids are located. Despite his suggestions, tactics are beyond Hayseed's programming so he is willing to follow any other plan the party may devise. (However, it is recommended that the referee subtly direct the party toward the auxiliary entrance since that is the more interesting route.)

Unless otherwise specified, the ceiling within the control center is 8 feet high, with doorways being 7 feet in height. Circular lights embedded within the ceiling illuminate the center. Lighting within a room can be controlled by voice commands addressed to the computer (i.e., "computer, light on", "computer, light off", or "computer, reduce light by 50%"). The corridor lights are not controlled by voice commands; instead, the lights turn on and off as individuals move through the corridor. Except where noted, doors are controlled via motion sensors and open/close based on the proximity of individuals. Locked doors are AC 5 with 200 hit points.

In the complex, Hayseed will not allow the party to pillage and loot their way along... he is responsible for the equipment in the center and it may only be used by authorized personnel. He may "loan" a discovered item to a character if the item is needed to remove the wolofoids from the complex, but will expect its return after the wolofoids have been defeated. Additionally, without a convincing argument, Hayseed will not allow the party to break down any locked doors to restricted areas.

## ***MAIN LEVEL***

The main level of the environmental control center provides the main entrances to the center as well as containing the main control center, the garage and maintenance bay, and the veterinary clinic. The invading wolofoids have spent much of their time attempting to learn the controls of the environmental control center and have explored every little – believing they have plenty of time to learn the complex's secrets.

## **1. OUTSIDE ENTRANCES.**

There are two entrances to the main level of the environmental control center. They are concealed within shallow caves and surrounded by vegetation. Although a road once lead to the large garage entrance, it has long been obliterated by forest growth.

Beside each entrance is a 3 x 8 inch rectangular bright green screen used to scan access control bands. A horticulture, security, command, or engineering band will open the doors. Additionally, a fine black mesh rectangle (speaker) and green button are located next to the scanner screen. Pressing the button causes a loud beep to be heard over select internal complex speakers, followed by either "main entrance" or "garage entrance" in a woman's voice. This announcement cannot be heard outside and will only be heard in the **CONTROL CENTER (3)** and **SECURITY OFFICE (4)** on the **MAIN LEVEL**, and the **AUXILIARY CONTROL CENTER (M)** on **LEVEL 2**. These rooms all have computer terminals that allow communication via the speaker (and hidden microphone) to the outside. A hidden camera also allows the operator to see the person outside. The outside person's comments can only be heard by the operator if the visitor presses the button while speaking.

One of the doors of the main entrance has been cut away by the wolofoid alpha male's vibro blade. The two wolofoids in the **FOYER (2)** are keeping a watch through this opening and will notice anyone approaching.

## **2. FOYER.**

Currently, two wolofoids stand guard in this small foyer. They are armed with light bows (with quivers containing 10 arrows each) and axes and wear plant fiber clothing and armor.

**Wolofoids (2):** AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16 each; AT ax (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d6/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or light bow (WC 1, DMG 1d6) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, 110); *physical reflection* (all); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

If the party approaches the entrance from the outside, they will be noticed, and one of the wolofoids will race to the **CONTROL CENTER (3)** for reinforcements. He, along with the rest of the wolofoids, will return in 3 turns. The remaining wolofoid will watch the party and if they continue to approach the entrance, he will spring from cover and fire his bow when they are 25 feet away (counting on surprising the party). On his next turn, he will use his *radiated eyes* mutation before scurrying back behind the cover of the remaining door. He will then switch to his axe and attempt to hold the characters at the entrance until help arrives. If he is reduced to 4 hit points, he will attempt to flee to his pack mates inside



the complex. (Probably a bit late for fleeing, but it is at this point that he understands how badly he has been wounded; remember his *no sensory nerve endings* defect.)

If the party encounters the wolfoid guards when exiting the complex, the guards will be surprised and attempt to flee at the first opportunity (they assume that their pack mates have been killed by the characters).

There is little of interest in the foyer other than the words painted above the doors to the interior of the complex. They read:

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL CENTER  
Authorized personnel only.

### 3. CONTROL CENTER.

This large circular room serves as the heart of the environmental control center. All along the walls are computer equipment, monitors, and access terminals. Additionally, large monitors hang from the ceiling in the center of the room displaying the current environmental status of the level. The computer systems in this room control the environment for the whole level and are the source of Habitat's problem. Additionally, one of the work stations will allow communication with visitors at the entrances [see **OUTSIDE ENTRANCES (1)**].

The wolfoid pack have taken this room as their lair. There are one wolfoid per party member (excluding Hayseed) and the alpha male in this room. If the pack has not been summoned by the guards in the **FOYER (2)**, the wolfoid alpha male is currently working on one of the terminals while arguing with one of his pack mates over the correct settings. The other pack members in the room are simply lying around watching their leader experiment. The pack may be surprised by the character's entrance on a result of 1-2 on 1d6.

The wolfoid alpha male is armed with a vibro blade which he used to gain access to the complex [see **OUTSIDE ENTRANCES (1)**]. Its hydrogen energy cell only has enough power remaining for 5 minutes of use (30 combat turns). Like his pack mates, he is wearing woven plant fiber armor, but is also equipped with a light wicker shield. The rest of the pack is armed with axes.

**Wolfoid, Alpha Male:** AC 4; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 22; AT bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or vibro blade (WC 9, DMG 12/10/12) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (all); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 12; CR n/a; DX 13; MR 13; LP n/a; RR 11; ST 13.

**Wolfoids (1/PC):** AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16 each; AT ax (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d6/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (all); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

The wolfoid pack will attempt to flee outside if the number of wolfoids still alive is equal to half the number of party members still alive.

If during combat a wolfoid is hit with an energy attack, the referee may want to have the energy reflected by his *physical reflection* mutation hit a control panel and cause a minor explosion and shower of sparks. Later, the party can learn that the panel was an auxiliary control or some other system not required to control the level's environment, but it should let the referee worry the players and have some fun.

Defeating the wolfoid pack essentially ends this adventure for the party. They may need to check other areas for wolfoids as part of a "clean-up" operation, but basically, they have won the day. Consult the **CONCLUSION** for more information.

### 4. SECURITY OFFICE.

The door to this office has been cut open by the wolfoid alpha male's vibro blade. There are letters written in black on the door and by examining the pieces, the party can determine that it once read SECURITY. This small office contains a desk holding a computer console and terminal, an office chair, and a case with a one foot inset on the top containing several weapons (most unrecognizable to the party members). If a party member reaches for a weapon, it will become immediately apparent that they are protected by a force field (which explains why the wolfoids were unable to take them). The field will only be disengaged if a person is wearing a command or security access control band. The weapons include the following:

- a paralysis rod (black rod 3 feet in length with insulated handle at one end and a 1-foot electrode at the other),
- a paralysis dart projector (metallic blue color and with the basic shape of a pistol although somewhat larger due to bolt-action feed),
- 10 paralysis darts,
- 2 portable hand dart chargers (metallic blue boxes with buttons and display screen),
- a third stage slug projector (recognizable to party as duplicate of one given to them by village),
- a spare clip for third stage slug projector,
- a third stage gas ejector (metallic green color with the basic shape of a pistol with a clip forward of trigger), and

- a spare clip for third stage gas ejector.

It is not intended for the party to bypass the force field and gain access to the weapons. They are included in this adventure merely to taunt them.

The computer console may only be accessed with a command or security control band. Hidden speakers and a microphone within the computer may be used to communicate with a visitor at one of the entrances [see **OUTSIDE ENTRANCES (1)**].

The desk has two drawers, neither of which is locked. One drawer contains a Perma-Pen and a brittle notepad with several pages ripped from the top. Although so brittle with age that it is unusable, the notepad does have some interesting writing on the top-most page. The page has doodles of a man in a suit holding flowers, a cube, and a scratched-out drawing as well as a note reading "19:00 – dinner with Kathy" and a series of numbers in the lower-left corner, "735282." A Perma-Pen is the future version of our modern pen; however, instead of using ink, the pen is actually a small laser that can burn writing onto paper, plastic, wood, or fabric. It has safety features that prevent the pen from writing on any other material or heating the material enough to cause a fire. The other desk drawer contains an unopened bag of Wonder Cheesits. The bag proclaims Wonder Cheesits to have a bang of cheese flavor with every bite. The treats in the bag are long past their shelf life. They are now green, hard blobs. If eaten, they taste horrible without any bang of cheese flavor at all and act as strength 8 poison.

## 5. ELEVATOR.

This elevator is very similar to a modern elevator. The number pad lists the 4 different levels of the complex. Next to the elevator number/door control is an access control band reader pad (3 by 8 inch white rectangle). Level 3 contains the horticulture labs and requires a command, security, engineering, or horticulture control band to access. Level 4 provides access to this level's transport sub-system. Unfortunately, it has been locked down and requires a command control band to access.

An agreeable "ding" will sound if a party member selects levels 1 or 2 from the control pad and the elevator will travel to the appropriate level. If level 3 is selected from the control pad, the band reader will change color to light green. If the appropriate access control band is not scanned by the reader within 30 seconds, a negative "buzz" will be heard, the reader will change color back to white, and the elevator will not move. Of course, scanning the appropriate band will sound the previously-mentioned "ding" and the elevator will travel to level 3. Selecting level 4 has the same effect as selecting level 3 except that the reader's color changes to blue and red instead of light green.

## 6. CONFERENCE ROOM.

This room is dominated by a large table surrounding by comfortable chairs.

## 7. WOMEN'S RESTROOM.

This room is the women's restroom. It has the same basic functionality of a modern restroom/lavatory. The door to the restroom has the universal depiction of a woman's silhouette (which may not be recognized by the party). The purpose of this room may be quite a puzzle for the party since none of the characters have ever seen or heard of a restroom. They could potentially mistake the restroom stalls as refreshment areas (for drink or washing) or even strange cooking areas (using the toilets as pots).

## 8. MEN'S RESTROOM.

This room is the men's restroom. It has the same basic functionality of a modern restroom/lavatory. The door to the restroom has the universal depiction of a man's silhouette. The purpose of this room may be quite a puzzle for the party since none of the characters have ever seen or heard of a restroom. They could potentially mistake the restroom stalls as refreshment areas (for drink or washing) or even strange cooking areas (using the toilets as pots).

## 9. STAIRWELL.

The door to the stairs is clearly marked STAIRS. From this level, they lead down to the lower three levels. Note that the doors to level 3 and 4 are locked. Access to level 3 is only granted to individuals with command, security, engineering, or horticulture control bands. A 3 x 8 inch light green rectangular scanner next to the door on level 3 enforces this restriction. Due to a current lock-down state, access to level 4 is only granted to individuals with command control bands. A 3 x 8 inch red and blue rectangular scanner next to the door on level 4 enforces this restriction.

## 10. VETERINARY CLINIC.

This area of the complex served as a veterinary clinic for injured animals of the habitat.

## 11. EXAMINATION ROOM.

Each of these rooms served as examination rooms for animals requiring treatment. The smaller rooms were intended for the wolves and smaller-sized animals of the habitat while the larger room could be used to treat horse-size patients.

The small rooms are dominated by large examination tables. Generally, examination supplies were kept on



carts and wheeled into these rooms when needed so there are no other items to be found here.

The large room contains a metal cabinet that has been broken open. The contents of the cabinet's upper shelves (basic medical supplies such as bandages, blankets, antiseptics, syringes, and medications not requiring refrigeration) are strewn across the floor. The lower portion of the cabinet contains two small metal carts (used in other examination rooms when needed).

## 12. EXAMINATION ROOM.

This examination room is a duplicate of its brother [see **EXAMINATION ROOM (11)**] with one rather large exception. A wolfoid is lying on the floor next to the cabinet amid several empty and partially-empty medicine bottles. He broke into the medical cabinets in the clinic and began to take medications randomly, causing him to behave in an unpredictable fashion. Currently, he is merely lying in the floor shivering, occasionally whimpering, and staring at the ceiling. However, if the player characters attempt to interact with him, his condition will change every 6 turns (i.e., 1 minute) based on a 1d6 roll and the following table:

<u>d6 Result</u>	<u>Wolfoid Action</u>
1	Enter a berserk state where he foams at the mouth, temporarily receives a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a -2 penalty to AC, and attacks the closest person
2	Stare in a daze at the ceiling lights
3	Run away while yelping
4	Become fascinated with the feel of objects and people
5	Act normally
6	Chase tail

If able to act normally, the wolfoid (called Ruff) will not be aggressive since he realizes he is out-numbered by the party. Instead, he will attempt to communicate with the characters in the hopes of slipping away and alerting his pack in the **CONTROL CENTER (3)** at the first opportunity. Although loyal to his pack, he may inadvertently let slip information about them to the characters if they are clever. Additionally, if convinced that his pack has been defeated and/or driven away, he may attempt to join the characters' "pack." If allowed to join, he will be a loyal party member, although he may challenge for pack leadership if he perceives the current leader as weak.

The drugs in the wolfoid's system will wear out in roughly 10 minutes, after which time, he will fall into a deep sleep for one hour.

The wolfoid is armed with a sword and wears plant fiber armor.

**Wolfoid:** AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16; AT bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, 110); *physical reflection* (all); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 9; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

## 13. STORAGE ROOM.

This room contains two large refrigerated cabinets and a de-activated medical robot. The cabinets have been broken into and cold air blows out of them into the room. Syringes, medicine bottle, bandages, cotton swabs, and other medical supplies lie scattered throughout the room. The medical robot will activate if anyone touches it and orders it to activate. (Hayseed knows this information.) The robot's primary programming is focused on veterinary medicine, but it can treat any wounds party members may have received. For every 10 minutes spent treating wounds, the robot heals 3d6 points of damage. Note that the maximum amount of treatment time that is beneficial to an individual is 30 minutes. Additionally, the available medical supplies are entirely used up after the robot has healed 60 dice of damage. At that point, the medical robot is still able to heal 1d6 points of damage per visit using basic medical principles, but cannot heal any more damage without more supplies.

The veterinary robot is not programmed with a personality so it will not interact with the party on any kind of personal level. It's interaction with mutant party members is very similar to Hayseed's interaction as described in **THE METAL MAN**.

## 14. FREIGHT ELEVATOR.

This elevator is intended to transport bulky equipment that cannot fit in the standard **ELEVATOR (5)**. It has the same functionality.

## 15. GARAGE.

This large room is the maintenance garage for the complex. There were several different vehicles stored here at one point, but they have all been taken for various reasons and never returned. Two large cabinets have been broken open and their contents are currently being examined by 2 wolfoids.

The wolfoids are armed with axes and wear plant fiber armor. They are not expecting trouble and focusing on their new toys so they are automatically surprised by the party.

**Wolfoids (2):** AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16 each; AT bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or ax (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d6/1d8) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (all); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

The cabinets contained spare parts, various tools, and a hydrogen energy converter! Of course, Hayseed will not allow the party to take any of these artifacts out of the complex.

## 16. ROBOT REPAIR BAY.

This room contains all the equipment necessary to diagnose and repair most robotic problems. A slightly-raised dais on the floor may be used to perform a full system scan of a robot. Additionally, the room contains a computer console and desk and two large storage cabinets. The storage cabinets contain repair tools as well as robotic spare parts. Using this facility and the characters' assistance, Hayseed can repair all damage he has suffered within 30 minutes.

## 17. EMERGENCY SHOWER.

This room contains an emergency shower and a large cabinet. The shower could be used if an individual was exposed to hazardous material. The cabinet is not locked and contains some very basic solutions for treating chemical exposure and protective clothing.

## LEVEL 2 – LIVING QUARTERS

The second level of the environmental control center consists of the living quarters for crewmen stationed at the complex as well as the auxiliary control center. The wolfoids have only performed a cursory examination of this level and have not returned since.

### A. ACCESS TUNNEL ENTRANCE.

The entrance to the complex's access tunnel for level 2 is located in an alcove behind a waterfall on the Ranger River. A metal gate once blocked access to the tunnel leading to the complex but it was apparently left open long ago and has rusted in place. A careful examination of the gate will reveal tufts of black hair or fur clinging to protrusions on the gate... hair apparently left by a passing animal. Additionally, a musky animal odor can be detected wafting from the tunnel.

### B. ACCESS TUNNEL.

This tunnel leads from/to the auxiliary entrance for the environmental control center. A piercer has made his home in the first half of the tunnel and does not like visitors. He will attack anyone who comes around the

tunnel curve and will pursue them to the tunnel entrance if the intruder attempts to flee.

**Piercer:** AC 5; DX 15; MV 4 (8); HD 8; hp 24; AT bite (WC 2, DMG 1d6) and claw (WC 3, DMG 1d4 + 1d6 quills) and claw (WC 3, DMG 1d4 + 1d6 quills) or *sonic fear blast* (MR 14); *chameleon power, quills*; *regeneration* (3 hp per round); CN 17; CR n/a; DX 15; MR 10; LP n/a; RR 16; ST 16.

His first attack will be his *sonic fear blast*. He is weak from hunger and actually does not want a confrontation with the party, but instead is attempting to drive them away from his lair. His *chameleon power* has already been activated and calculated into his AC. If reduced to 12 hit points or less, he will attempt to flee away from the party. If forced to flee down the access tunnel, he will stop before reaching the glow mold at the **AUXILIARY ENTRANCE (C)**, at which point he will be cornered and will fight to the death.

### C. AUXILIARY ENTRANCE.

This is the auxiliary entrance to the environmental control center. The floor and lower walls of the access tunnel before the door are covered with glow mold (see below). Lying atop the mold is a human skeleton, all that remains of a *Warden* crew member and the first victim of the glow mold. The auxiliary door is locked but may be opened by presenting a horticulture, security, command, or engineering access control band to the 3 x 8 inch rectangular light green scanner located next to the door.

Glow mold appears as a light-brown mold that begins to glow green it detects the heat of living creatures within a yard of it. The green glow is actually intensity 8 radiation. This radiation will be present as long as a living creature remains within a yard of the moss.

The skeleton is wearing a *Warden* nylon jumpsuit as well as a horticulture (light green) access control bracelet. Unfortunately, the radiation from the glow moss has altered the radiation signature of the bracelet and rendered it useless. The decomposition of the body has effectively ruined the jumpsuit as well, although if examined carefully, a name tag is still readable. It reads, "Simpson, Kathy." Lying next to the skeleton is a light stick (see **NEW ITEMS** in the **APPENDICES**). The power cell for the light stick has been completely drained.

When the party reaches the door, Hayseed will ask the party to wait for a few minutes. He then enters the complex, returning approximately 10 minutes later with guest badges for all the party members. [At this point, Hayseed should have approximately 50 minutes of power remaining, and 30 minutes of that must be used to repair himself at the **ROBOT REPAIR BAY (16)**, so the party only has 20 minutes to reach the repair bay.] As he hands the guest badges out to the characters, he

instructs them to wear the badges at all times within the complex and informs them that the badges are only valid for four hours. Once the four hours have expired, he must either create new guest badges at the **AUXILIARY CONTROL CENTER (M)** or the **CONTROL CENTER (3)** on the **MAIN LEVEL**, or escort them out of the complex.

#### **D. BARRACKS.**

This room served as the barracks for all crewmen stationed at the complex. The doors are locked and may only be opened by the access control bracelets worn by the crewmen assigned to this barracks or by a command, security, or engineering control band. The footlocker in front of each bed contains personal items of the crewman assigned to the bed.

#### **E. LAUNDRY ROOM.**

This is the laundry room. Futuristic washers and dryers as well as a few chairs can be found in this room. Although the characters have never seen a laundry facility, it should not be too difficult for them to determine the basic functionality of the washers and dryers since many of the machine labels include words such as wash cycle, dry cycle, light wash, heavy wash, drying time, etc.

#### **F. GYM.**

This is the complex's gym. It contains various weight-lifting equipment as well as tread-mills and exercise bikes.

#### **G. LOCKER ROOM/SHOWERS.**

This room contains several rows of lockers as well as two benches and three shower stalls. All of the lockers have been opened and are empty.

#### **H. ELEVATOR.**

This elevator is very similar to a modern elevator. The number pad lists the 4 different levels of the complex. Next to the elevator number/door control is an access control band reader pad (3 by 8 inch white rectangle). Level 3 contains the horticulture labs and requires a command, security, engineering, or horticulture control band to access. Level 4 provides access to this level's transport sub-system. Unfortunately, it has been locked down and requires a command control band to access.

An agreeable "ding" will sound if a party member selects levels 1 or 2 from the control pad and the elevator will travel to the appropriate level. If level 3 is selected from the control pad, the band reader will change color to light green. If the appropriate access control band is not scanned by the reader within 30 seconds, a negative "buzz" will be heard, the reader will change color back to

white, and the elevator will not move. Of course, scanning the appropriate band will sound the previously-mentioned "ding" and the elevator will travel to level 3. Selecting level 4 has the same effect as selecting level 3 except that the reader's color changes to blue and red instead of light green.

#### **I. KITCHEN/DINING HALL.**

This room is a combination kitchen and dining area. The cabinets in this room have been opened and the pots and pans that they once contained have been strewn about the floor. Several different types of food items, some opened, can be found here, including a variety of Soylent Green packaged meals, Vita-Aid nutritional drinks, Deli-Meal sandwich packs, and even Serre Chaude-brand red and white wines. The food and drink are well past their expiration dates and act as strength 10 poison if ingested.

#### **J. WOMEN'S RESTROOM.**

This room is the women's restroom. It has the same basic functionality of a modern restroom/lavatory. The door to the restroom has the universal depiction of a woman's silhouette (which may not be recognized by the party). The purpose of this room may be quite a puzzle for the party since none of the characters have ever seen or heard of a restroom. They could potentially mistake the restroom stalls as refreshment areas (for drink or washing) or even strange cooking areas (using the toilets as pots).

#### **K. MEN'S RESTROOM.**

This room is the men's restroom. It has the same basic functionality of a modern restroom/lavatory. The door to the restroom has the universal depiction of a man's silhouette. The purpose of this room may be quite a puzzle for the party since none of the characters have ever seen or heard of a restroom. They could potentially mistake the restroom stalls as refreshment areas (for drink or washing) or even strange cooking areas (using the toilets as pots).

#### **L. STAIRWELL.**

The door to the stairs is clearly marked STAIRS. From this level, they lead down to the lower two levels or up to the **MAIN LEVEL**. Note that the doors to level 3 and 4 are locked. Access to level 3 is only granted to individuals with command, security, engineering, or horticulture control bands. A 3 x 8 inch light green rectangular scanner next to the door on level 3 enforces this restriction. Due to a current lock-down state, access to level 4 is only granted to individuals with command control bands. A 3 x 8 inch red and blue rectangular scanner next to the door on level 4 enforces this restriction.

#### **M. AUXILIARY CONTROL CENTER.**

The auxiliary control center is clearly marked as such on the door. The computer terminals in this room allow access to the main functionality of the environmental control center, although several sub-systems cannot be configured from this room. The environment for the habitat could be properly maintained/controlled for up to a full day from this room if necessary.

#### **N. FREIGHT ELEVATOR.**

This elevator is intended to transport bulky equipment that cannot fit in the standard **ELEVATOR (H)**. It has the same functionality.

### **CONCLUSION**

After the party has defeated all of the wolfoids in the complex, Hayseed will once again control the environment on this level and within a few hours, the level will be experiencing "normal" weather. Although Hayseed cannot allow the characters to stay at the complex, he and this facility can be a valuable resource for the party in later adventures. He may allow them access to the medical facilities in times of emergency and he will also be willing to recharge power cells for the party using the tools in the garage. Additionally, Hayseed has access to the horticulture labs on level 3 and is willing to provide the characters' village with enough fruits and vegetables to replace what was lost to the cold.

The party will return to the village as heroes with a remarkable new story to tell and a valuable new friend.

## APPENDICES

### A. WOLFOIDS

As an option to your game and in order to differentiate wolfoids from any other mutated beasts found on board *Warden*, you may want to emphasize the pack instincts of their wolf ancestors. For example, when two or more wolfoids attack a single opponent in melee, describe how well each wolfoid synchronizes his attack with his pack mate and jumps to an endangered mate's defense, granting the wolfoids a +1 bonus to attack rolls as well as to their AC for each wolfoid past the first to a maximum bonus of +3.. Additionally, when attacking or fleeing combat, wolfoids should do so as a group, following their alpha male. (Essentially, if a party can force an alpha male to flee, the rest of the pack will likely follow.)

Although intelligent and loyal to their pack mates, wolfoids tend to be very savage. They think very little of punching, clawing, or even biting at times to show

dominance, and due to their *no sensory nerve endings* defect, they have little empathy for the physical pain of others. They simply do not have a point of reference for physical pain. Wolfoids believe that their inability to feel pain is a strength of their race and shows their natural dominance over other life forms.

### B. CRITICALS

Another optional component for a game is to add critical successes and failures in combat for the artifacts on board *Warden*. After all, these items are incredibly old and it seems reasonable for them to occasionally malfunction. It is also reasonable to assume that these items are so well-designed that they may occasionally out-perform themselves.

When using one of the weapons listed in the following table, a critical success occurs when the highest possible value is obtained on the attack roll. A critical failure occurs when the result is the lowest possible value. Each item lists its own success/failure effect.

ARTIFACT	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL SUCCESS EFFECT	CRITICAL FAILURE EFFECT
Gas Ejector	18	3	The impact of the dart causes the victim to reflexively inhale deeply, adding 1d6 hours to the duration of the tranquilizer.	A defective dart becomes jammed within the ejector and breaks the tranquilizer containment, causing the user to be affected as if he had been hit by the dart. Additionally, it requires one combat turn to remove the defective dart and allow the ejector to fire again.
Laser Pistol	20	1	If the victim is not wearing body armor or if his armor has already been hit, then the beam kills him. If the victim is wearing body armor that does not cover his entire body, the beam luckily hits exposed flesh and causes 15d6 points of damage. If the victim is wearing body armor that covers his entire body, the beam hits a particularly sensitive and weak area, causing 8d6 points of damage and reducing the available protection from laser strikes by 2. For example, a victim wearing heavy body armor that hasn't been struck by a laser beam previously will receive 8d6 points of damage from this strike and his armor will only be able to take one more hit before allowing the wearer to receive third degree burns from a laser strike.	A microscopic fracture of the focus lens causes the pistol's energy to reflect back to the energy cell, resulting in deadly feedback. The pistol begins to emit a high pitched whine and will explode in 1d4-1 combat rounds (a 0 result means it immediately explodes). The explosion causes 5d6 points of damage to anyone within 5 feet.
Paralysis Dart Projector	20	1	The dart strikes extremely close to the victim's nerve center, adding 1d6 hours to the normal duration.	A malformed dart breaks the firing pin of the projector, rendering it useless until it can be repaired.

ARTIFACT	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL SUCCESS EFFECT	CRITICAL FAILURE EFFECT
Paralysis Rod	20	1	The rod strikes and discharges extremely close to the victim's nerve center, adding 1d6 hours to the normal duration.	A malfunction in the charge control completely drains the rod's power cell.
Protein Disruptor	18	3	The victim is killed. Additionally, all previous shots by the disruptor have unknowingly been draining only a percentage of what they normally drain. Therefore, the disruptor has enough energy for one shot more than expected.	A microscopic fracture of the focus lens causes the disruptor's energy to reflect back to the energy cell, resulting in a deadly explosion. The explosion causes 10d6 points of damage to anyone within 5 feet.
Slug Projector	20	1	The pellet strikes a particularly sensitive area and causes 1d6 points of additional subdual damage.	The pellet jams in the projector. It requires a full action to clear the barrel and prepare the projector to fire again.
Sonic Metal Disruptor	18	3	The metal completely shatters. Additionally, all previous shots by the disruptor have unknowingly been draining only a percentage of what they normally drain. Therefore, the disruptor has enough energy for one shot more than expected.	A microscopic fracture of the focus lens causes the disruptor's energy to reflect back to the energy cell, resulting in a deadly explosion. The explosion causes 10d6 points of damage to anyone within 5 feet.
Vibro Blade	20	1	The blade causes double the normal amount of damage.	A minor power surge causes the device to momentarily shut down for 10 seconds (one combat turn).
Vibro Saw	20	1	The saw causes double the normal amount of damage and severs an appendage. For humanoid opponents, roll 1d10 to determine which limb is severed: 1) head, 2-3) right arm, 4-5) left arm, 6-7) right leg, 8-9) left leg, or 10) reroll. The blood loss from a severed appendage causes 10 points of damage automatically each combat turn.	Feedback to the power cell causes the vibro saw to explode, disintegrating the wielder's hand in a flash of pain and light. The wielder takes 20 points of damage, but does not have to worry about blood loss; the wound is cauterized by the energy explosion.

### ***C. MUTANT-COMPUTER INTERACTION***

Many of the artificial intelligences aboard the *Warden* are designed to interact with humans but have not adjusted to the new live forms now on board. Generally, an artificial intelligence (such as a robot) recognizes humans as either colonists or crewmen. (Crewmen have access control bands.) It does not recognize a mutant animal or plant as human and therefore, does not recognize him or her as sentient. It usually considers such a mutant an animal that has escaped from one of the habitat levels or various science labs, or a pet of a human. If a mutant animal attempts to communicate with an artificial intelligence, the A.I. may act in unpredictable ways to this paradox. It may simply refuse to believe its sound sensors and ignore the animal. It may actually attempt to converse with the mutant. Or it may simply attempt to resolve this logical impossibility by destroying

the animal. The exact reaction is left up to individual referees to decide.

Mutant humans may be treated as human or animal by an A.I. A new ability score is used to determine if an A.I. recognizes a mutant human as human: *computer recognition*. The computer recognition score is calculated by adding mutation modifiers for the mutant's mutations and defects from the following table to a base of 2 (for simply being a mutant). If a mutation is not listed on the table, then it has a modifier of 0.

<b>Mutation/Defect</b>	<b>Modifier</b>
Chameleon Powers	+2 when active
Dual Brain	+4 if two heads; +2 otherwise
Multiple Body Parts	+4 per extra appendage; +2 per extra part other than appendage
Multi-Armed (D) New Body Parts	+4 per extra arm range of +0-4 (referee's option)
Out-Sized Body Parts	+2
Partial Carapace	+2
Poison Claws or Fangs	+1
Poor Dual Brain (D)	+4 if two heads; +2 otherwise
Quills	+2
Shorter	+1 per foot in height below 4 ft.
Skin Structure Change (D) Taller	+1 +1 per foot in height above 7 ft.
Total Carapace	+3
Wings	+4

In order for an A.I. to recognize the mutant as human, the player must roll above his character's computer recognition score on 1d10. This roll is normally only made during the first meeting with the A.I. Subsequent meetings are based on this initial result.

For example, a mutant human with a *partial carapace* has a computer recognition score of 5. An artificial intelligence will only recognize the mutant as human if the player rolls a 6 or higher on 1d10. If the mutant had 4 arms (*multiple body parts*) instead of a *partial carapace*, his computer recognition score would be 10 and he could never be recognized as human.

## ***D. COMBAT CLARIFICATIONS & OPTIONS***

The rules concerning combat are scattered throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Metamorphosis Alpha rules and are not always clear; therefore, this section of the appendix is devoted to clarifying the combat rules and adding a few optional rules concerning movement as well.

Assuming the possibility of surprise exists, the first step in a combat encounter is to determine if anyone is surprised. Surprise checks may be rolled for individual players or the party as a whole. Generally, a surprise check is only rolled once for creatures controlled by the referee. A character is surprised on a result of 1-2 on 1d6. A surprised character cannot take any actions during the first turn of combat (i.e., the surprise turn). Note that mutations such as *heightened hearing* and *intuition* prevent a mutant from being surprised.

Additionally, if a surprised character has a dexterity score greater than the dexterity score of his opponent plus 3, then the surprised character may act at the same moment as his opponent during the surprise turn.

A turn of combat represents roughly 10 seconds of time. During a combat turn, a character may draw a weapon and attack or move, move and attack with an already drawn weapon or mutation, flee, or some other equivalent action. The order of action for the characters in combat is determined by their dexterity scores. The character with the highest dexterity performs his action for the turn, the character with the second-highest dexterity performs his action, and so on. For characters with equal dexterity scores, the controlling players should roll 1d10, rerolling ties, and then declare their characters' actions in the order of highest result to lowest.

Generally, a character may move at his normal movement rate and perform one action per turn. However, there are occasions when he may wish to retreat from combat or move closer to a combat without attacking or performing another action, yet stay alert and prepared to defend himself. In such a situation, the character may move at his evasive movement rate. If he wishes to throw caution to the wind and race to a location as quickly as possible, he may run at twice his normal movement, but his reckless flight grants opponents a +2 bonus to combat rolls to hit him until his next turn and any opponent he passes who has not yet attacked during the turn and has a melee weapon may immediately attack the running character.

Another maneuver in combat is the charge. When charging, a character moves at his charging movement rate and attacks an opponent with a melee weapon, dealing double the normal amount of damage if successful. To charge an opponent, there must be at least 6 yards (3 map spaces) between the opponent and the charging character. The path to the opponent must be an unobstructed straight line. Additionally, his charge grants opponents a +2 bonus to combat rolls to hit him until his next turn and any opponent he passes who has not yet attacked during the turn and has a melee weapon may immediately attack the charging character.

## ***E. NEW ITEMS***

### **Berserk:**

This concoction, made from the enzyme secreted by the passion weed, increases an imbiber's aggression and strength to an extraordinary level. Berserk is a light brown in color, has the viscosity of cough syrup, and burns slightly when swallowed. A standard dosage is 8 ounces. It only affects true humans. Thirty seconds (3 combat rounds) after ingesting a standard dose, a true human will enter a berserk state. Although he retains the



ability to differentiate between friend and foe, the human will engage the closest opponent in melee combat and continue to do so until the effects of the drug expire or all opponents are defeated. Berserk grants a +1 bonus to all melee attack rolls and any successful attacks with unpowered weapons by the enraged imbiber cause an extra die of damage. Unfortunately, the imbiber is so enraged that defense becomes a secondary concern and his armor class suffers a +1 penalty. The effects of Berserk expire after 5 minutes (30 combat rounds), at which point, the human falls unconscious for 2d10 minutes.

#### **Heal Pill:**

A hard cake made from several ingredients including the blood of a piercer, a Heal Pill heals a true human of 2 + 1d4 points of damage 10 seconds (1 combat round) after being ingested. Unfortunately, it only affects the metabolism of true humans. A Heal Pill tastes very sweet with a slight tangy after-taste.

#### **Light Stick:**

This device is a plastic cylinder 10 inches in length and 1.5 inches in diameter. One end of the cylinder has an insulated grip with a single switch. At the end of the grip is a plastic loop which can be pulled out to attach the light stick to the user's wrist, an available hook, etc. The switch has 3 unmarked positions: "beam", "torch", and "off". The "beam" setting causes the light stick to act as a modern day flashlight, shining a beam out of the cylinder opposite the grip. The "torch" setting causes the entire length of the light stick outside of the grip to light up, increasing visibility in darkness up to 30 feet away in a radius. The light stick may operate up to 10 hours on one chemical power cell. The complexity of a light stick is 9 and the danger category is 4.

#### **Speed:**

Speed is an elixir created from the fragrance glands of the dream bush. It can temporarily increase a true human's dexterity by 2 points. It has no effect on mutated beings. The dexterity bonus takes effect 5 minutes after drinking 16 ounces of Speed and lasts for 30 minutes. Once it expires, the human's dexterity will be decreased by 2 points for an hour.

### ***F. AUTHOR'S NOTES***

This adventure was designed for convention play. As such, I made certain design decisions which may be helpful to referees or other module writers to explain.

One of my first design requirements was the length of time: 4 hours. That is the standard game time slot at most conventions I have attended. Based on previous experience, the number of encounters in a convention

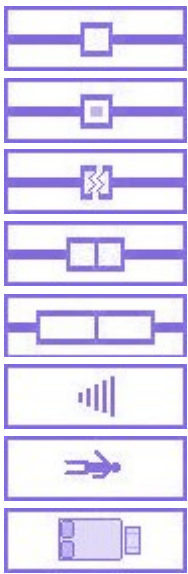
adventure should fall somewhere within 4-6 encounters. (This number varies based on the game system and the role-playing opportunities in the adventure.) Therefore, depending upon the path followed by the party, this adventure has a minimum of 3 hostile encounters, a minimum of 2 role-playing/puzzle solving situational encounters, and a maximum of 5 hostile encounters.

Another requirement was the use of iconic Metamorphosis Alpha elements. A referee can never be certain the experience of convention players with the game system (especially if it is roughly 30 years old!) so it is very important to expose the players to the game/setting elements that make the system unique. Essentially, give them a free sample and let them decide whether they'd like to sit down for a meal later. I decided that the main elements that identify Metamorphosis Alpha as a unique system were:

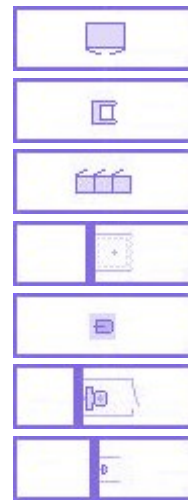
- a setting where characters adventure on a lost starship without realizing it is a ship (and later, may try to regain control of the ship),
- mutants/mutations,
- the radiation system,
- the combat system,
- ancient, mysterious technology,
- access control bands,
- the poison system, and
- wolfoids (as iconic creatures).

I also gave serious thought to including another iconic creature, androids, but felt that androids did not integrate particularly well with the simple adventure plot I wanted to follow (in order to meet my first requirement). I would have preferred to delay the potential revelation by Hayseed that the *Warden* was a ship until several adventures were completed, but I was once again limited by requirement #1. (By the way, this revelation is not guaranteed. In one play-test, the party was very focused on saving their village and the characters' interaction with Hayseed only vaguely hinted at the truth of the ship; hints which they never questioned further.)

My final requirement was to insure that the adventure had plenty of room for expansion. For those referees that would like to use this adventure as a basis for a campaign, I believe the ground work has been done. There are numerous questions left unanswered by this adventure which could be expanded upon by a referee, some subtle (what do the numbers on the paper in the security office mean?), many not (just look at the locations on the level map).



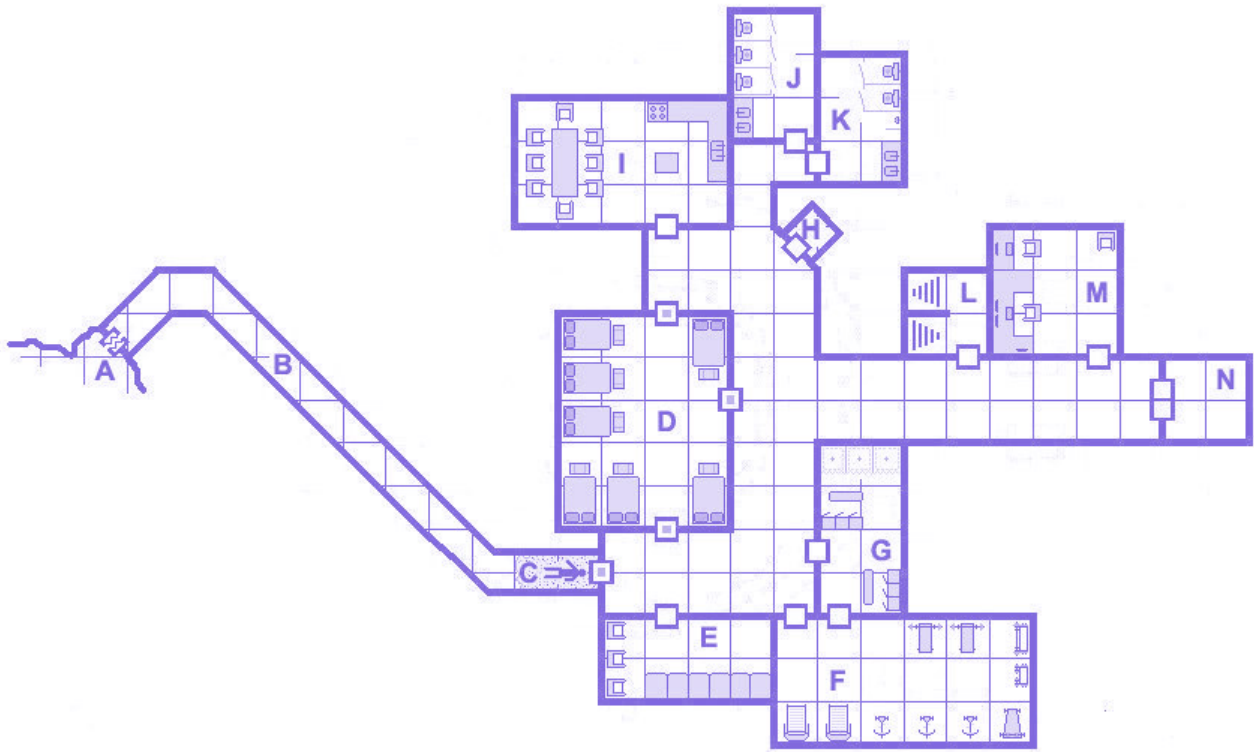
DOOR  
 LOCKED DOOR  
 BROKEN DOOR  
 DOUBLE DOORS  
 GARAGE DOORS  
 STAIRS  
 BODY  
 BED & FOOTLOCKER



CABINET  
 CHAIR  
 LOCKERS  
 SHOWER  
 SINK  
 TOILET STALL  
 URINAL STALL



ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL CENTER  
 MAIN LEVEL  
 SCALE: EACH SQUARE = 5 FEET



ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL CENTER  
 LEVEL 2  
 SCALE: EACH SQUARE = 5 FEET