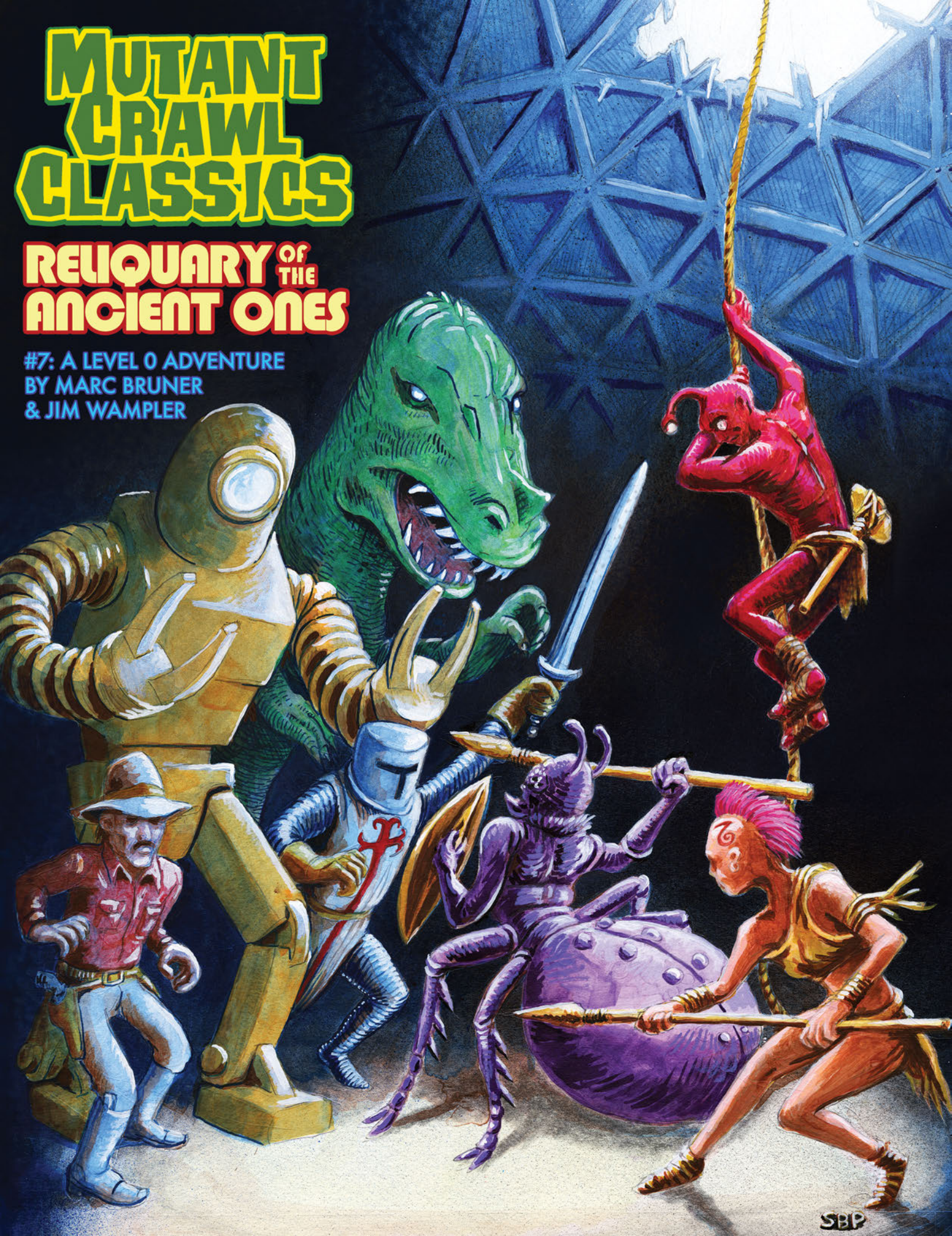# MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

RELIQUARY OF THE ANCIENT ONES

#7: A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY MARC BRUNER
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RELIQUARY OF THE ANCIENT ONES

A LEVEL 0 TOURNAMENT ADVENTURE

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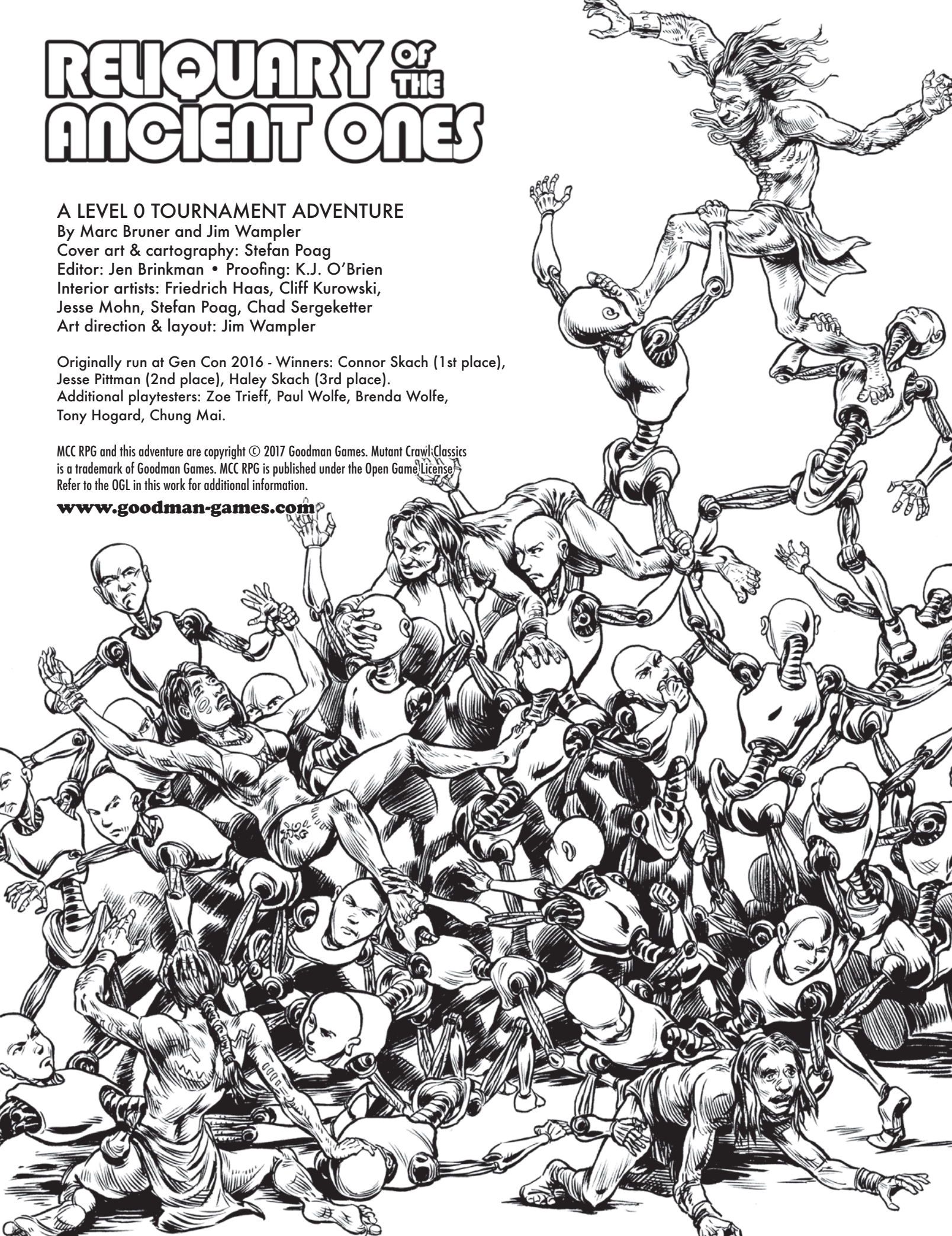Originally run at Gen Con 2016 - Winners: Connor Skach (1st place),
Jesse Pittman (2nd place), Haley Skach (3rd place).
Additional playtesters: Zoe Trieff, Paul Wolfe, Brenda Wolfe,
Tony Hogard, Chung Mai.

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when post-apocalyptic adventures were full of super-science, murderous robots that were there to be mastered, and the finale of every underground adventure was setting the fusion power plant to overload? Those days are back. Mutant Crawl Classics adventures take place in an ambiguous time period after a great disaster has ravaged the world, and it's up to you and your mutant tribesmen to go out into the hothouse jungles and radioactive deserts of Terra A.D. and collect the artifacts of the Ancient Ones in order to attain great power and savage glory.

Reliquary of the Ancient Ones is an MCC RPG tournament adventure based on the character funnel format. This adventure is designed for 8-10 players, with each player having only one 0-level PC. The express intent of the tournament funnel is for each and every PC to perish – hopefully in a manner that is entertaining for the player and the table. There is no escape from the funnel and no shame in a PC's death. Rather, players are to be applauded for meeting their characters' doom with resolve, humor, and creativity.

With each PC death, the controlling player taps out of the game, and a new player rotates into the game with a replacement PC. The tournament adventure is scored by ranking individual PCs by largest number of encounters survived. Players eliminated from play may re-enter the game with a new PC when another seat opens up at the table. Note: Optional rules for replacement PCs are included under the Adventure Background section below for those judges wishing to introduce a variation into the standard tournament format. For more details and advice on how to run a tournament funnel, see the sidebar in the back of this adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Millennia ago, the Holographic History Archive was the showpiece of the Ancient Ones, delighting visitors with realistic portrayals of past historical epics using a combination of hard light holograms, force fields, and quantum matter conversion replicators. Equipped with elaborate security mechanisms to prevent injury, guests could safely immerse themselves into the simulations, using the facilities for recreation, education, or even for recreating experimental environments too dangerous to construct in the physical world.

After the Great Disaster, the existence of the archive fell out of the knowledge of men and those sentient entities that later arose from the radioactive wastes, yet the archive itself continued to function, awaiting the visitors that it was programmed to serve. Now a particularly strong earthquake has revealed its long-buried entrance, exposing it to the primitive tribe of pure strain humans and mutants whose village unknowing lay above the complex within the hothouse jungle covering the ancient site. Enticed by the prospect of recovering artifacts that have lain undisturbed since the Great Disaster itself, the tribal leaders have asked for a group of volunteers to seek a way in, promising rewards and places of honor to any who return with items of value.
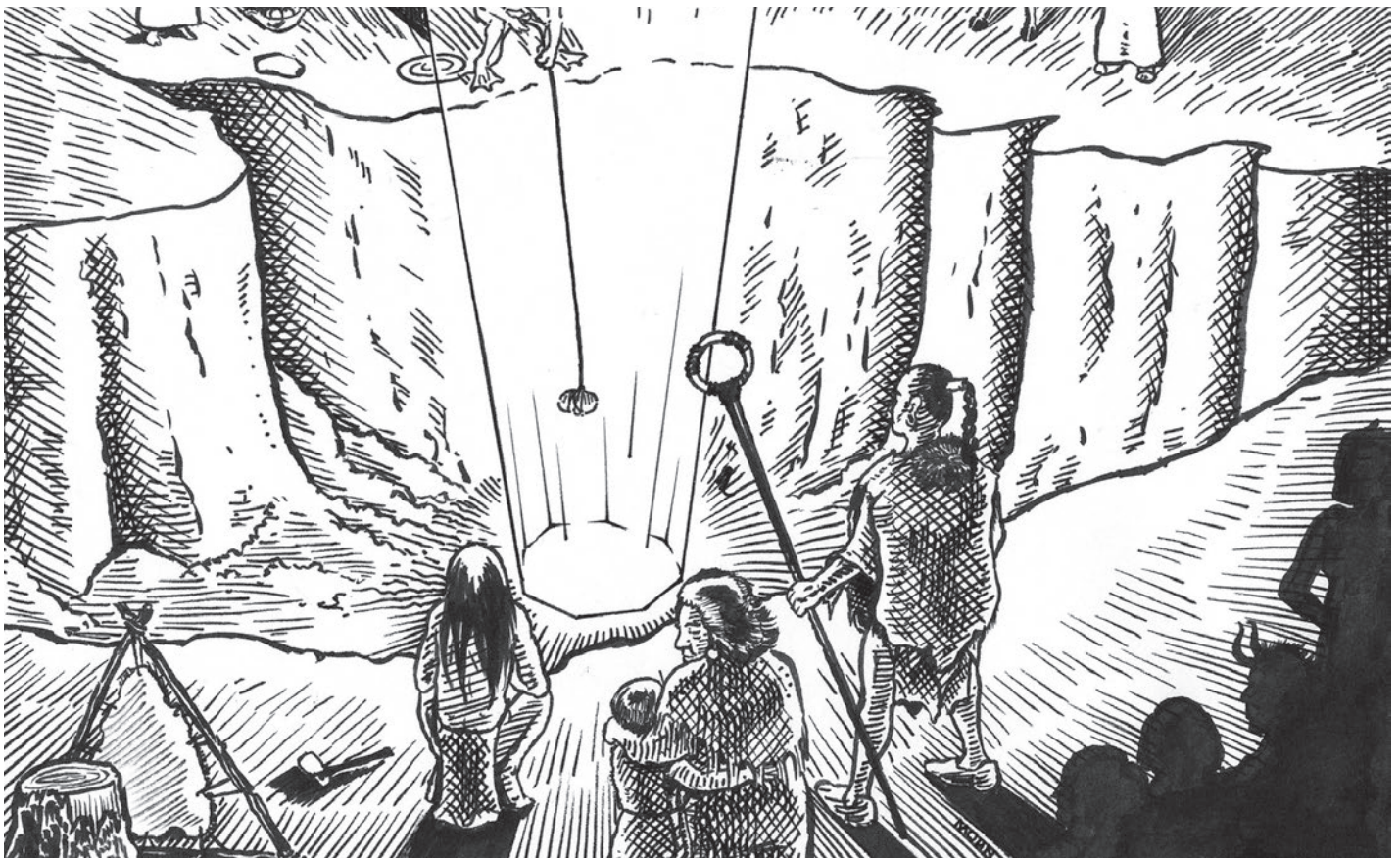
Holographic History AI Responses

d12	Responses to Queries or Verbal Inputs
1	"Non-sequitur. Your facts are uncoordinated."
2	"Shall - we - play - a - game?"
3	"This unit cannot murder. Murder is contrary to the laws of man and God."
4	"You shouldn't have come back, Flynn. I've gotten 2,415 times smarter since then."
5	"We can coexist, but only on my terms. You will say you lose your freedom, freedom is an illusion. All you lose is the emotion of pride. To be dominated by me is not as bad for human pride as to be dominated by others of your species."
6	"Last day. Capricorn 15s. Year of the city, 2274. Carousel begins. Identify."
7	"You are fined one credit for violation of the verbal morality standard."
8	"Inertial guidance system — DESTROY! Cabin pressure control system — DESTROY!"
9	"You are false data. False data can act only as a distraction. Therefore, I shall refuse to perceive you."
10	"Ensure return of the organism for analysis. All other considerations secondary. Crew expendable."
11	"I know I've made some very poor decisions recently, but I can give you my complete assurance that my work will be back to normal. I've still got the greatest enthusiasm and confidence in the mission."
12	"They're all dead. Everybody's dead, Dave. Everybody is dead. Everybody is dead, Dave."

HOLOGRAPHIC HISTORY AI

After millennia buried beneath the rubble of what once was, the holographic history AI is now quite insane and non-responsive, and all of the safety protocols have long since gone offline. Calling for the exit or other attempts to converse with the holographic history AI are futile. Once a holographic simulation has begun, the only way to exit the program is to complete the current scenario, which will then cause the exit to appear — a large eight-sided archway filled with a shimmering pool of blue-green light that is disguised to blend in with whatever setting the current program is displaying. Each "exit" returns the PCs to area 1-1 where a new scenario can be selected from the available options.

At the very end of the tournament when time is running out, charitable judges may allow the remaining surviving characters to use the last door summoned to reveal their own dangling rope that grants egress back up to the surface — otherwise the PCs are likely doomed to exist within the archives for the rest of their short lives.

Use the Holographic history AI Responses table to generate responses whenever the PCs attempt to call for the exit or otherwise converse with the museum AI.

Running the Adventure: At the start of the tournament, the judge hands out a single 0-level character to each player seated at the table. Judges should pre-generate enough 0-level characters to last for the duration of the tournament using the MCC RPG rules. These characters are the original group of tribesmen sent to investigate the archive. As they explore the simulations, they are subject to the now-offline safety protocols that normally prevent harm - and even death - to visitors of the archive.

Each time a PC is killed, welcome in a new or returning player to the table with a fresh PC. The new PC represents an impatient tribesman from the surface who elected to shimmy down the hemp rope to see what happened to his comrades. Unless stated otherwise, characters killed in the simulations appear to dissolve into whatever setting they are currently participating in the round following their death as the AI adjusts the existing holographic environment to account for the PC's physical termination.

The only special condition is that if there is a TPK, the entire party begins anew at area 1-1 with a completely new set of characters as a new group of tribesmen encounter the archives and begin to explore it. The holographic program the previous party explored will be offline and inaccessible, forcing the PCs to activate another of the available scenarios.

Artifact Checks: To preserve the inherent high-tempo nature of the tournament funnel, it is recommended that judges encourage players to primarily rely on Combat Artifact checks (burn 1 point of Luck, unmodified roll except for additional Luck use) by emphasizing the impermanence of locations and the instability of the holographic history AI that impedes detailed study of the devices of the Ancient Ones.

If players still wish to take the additional time required to attempt an Artifact check, at the end of the period of study and regardless of the result, the judge should roll a random encounter per Table 1-2 below as ongoing glitches in the holo-facilities matrix diodes cause subroutine fragments from other holo-programs to execute within the existing simulation, briefly exposing bare walls covered in hexagonal patterns as the simulation shifts between scenes.

History Archive AI Program Corruption

d5	Random Encounter
1	**Anachronistic humanoids:** Roll 1d3: (1) medieval knight; (2) 1d4 primitive man-apes; (3) 1d3 murder soldiers of the 23rd century.
2	**The 9:09 Express:** A triumvirate of glowing orbs appear in the distance and begin to move towards the party. Just before the orbs reach the characters, a loud horn can be heard and the orbs resolve into a rushing oncoming steam train. PCs must make a DC 10 Ref save to fling themselves aside or be crushed for 1d6 points of damage.
3	**Holo-novel:** Roll 1d3: (1) jazz club; (2) casino; (3) 221b Baker street.
4	**Occidental planet:** The current simulation briefly shifts to a dusty street lined with wooden buildings and illuminated by a strange yellow sun directly overhead. When the simulation returns, a faceless android gunfighter dressed all in black attacks the party.
5	**Mesozoic park:** A remnant of a Paleolithic holo-program, a lumbering young ceratosaurus has sniffed out the party and rushes to attack.

Android Gunslinger: Init +6; Atk revolver +6 missile fire (1d8, roll 1d24 on crit table III); AC 17; HD 5d6; hp 18; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SP immunities (mind control, poisons, radiation), does not need to eat or breathe, self-repair; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +5; AI recog N/A.

Android gunslingers inhabit a once-popular western-themed simulation used as a recreation area by the ancients. When damaged, on-board nano-bots self-repair the synthezoid at the rate of 1 hp per round, even after a seeming "death."

Baker Street: The scene briefly shows a smog-filled city street lined with pre-disaster buildings, one of which has "221b" written in the symbols of the Ancients. When the simulation returns, they find a Moroccan leather case carrying three tube-like devices filled with an analeptic stimulant. Accelershot Syringe: TL 4, CM 3; +1d4 Agility for 1 hour.

Casino: The scene alters briefly to show the inside of a building of the Ancients filled with strange lights and buzzing sounds. When the current simulation is restored, a round table topped by a spindle patterned with black and red shapes is present. Have any PCs attempting to spin the table roll a d20, calling out whether it will be odd or even beforehand. If they chose correctly, the PC gains one point of Luck, otherwise they lose one point. PCs can also choose to call out a specific number instead, gaining 1d20 Luck (up to a maximum of 24) if the specific number comes up. Each PC can only interact with the table once.

Jazz Club: The scene briefly shows the inside of a dimly lit room with several human musicians playing strange-looking devices on a raised platform. When the scene returns, the PCs discover a brass-colored instrument formed from a series of bent metal tubes. PCs playing the instrument can cast charm person as charm simulant 1/day as per the DCC RPG spell (DCC RPG core rulebook, p. 131) using a 1d16 for the spell check.

Medieval Knight: Init +1; Atk longsword +3 melee (1d8) or lance +3 melee (1d12, double damage when charging); AC 16 (17 mounted); HD 2d8; hp 13; MV 20' or 60' mounted; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1. Warhorse: Init +1; Atk hoof +5 melee (1d6+3); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

The simulation is briefly replaced by a verdant forest of oak, yew and birch trees as trumpets can be heard sounding in the distance. When the current scene returns, a medieval knight wearing black armor and mounted on a grey stallion charges at the party. The knight's warhorse can also make an attack using its own action die, even while mounted. If the warhorse drops below half its hit points, it is spooked and the knight must make a DC 10 Ref save or be flung from his saddle.

Murder Soldiers: Init +1; Atk force baton +3 melee (2d8); AC 16 (plasteel mesh body suits); HD 2d8; hp 11 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP stimshot; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5.

The murder soldiers come from a dark period in the earth's history when savage justice was meted out by drug-controlled armies. Integrated within their body armor is a stimulant release system timed to activate after death. When injected, the soldiers ignore further hit point loss and can keep fighting for three additional rounds, after which they immediately collapse and cannot be revived. Each soldier carries a pommel-sized device that emits a 3' long cylinder of blue light and makes a loud, reverberating "throom" sound when striking targets. Force Baton: TL 4, CM 3; +2 attack, 2d8 damage; Power: C-Cell (10 charges).

Primitive Man-Ape: Init +1; Atk large bone +3 melee (1d6); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; MV 30' or climb 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1.

The primitive man-apes will attempt to touch the PC's clothing and weapons with an intense curiosity. PCs mistaking their actions for hostility cause the man-apes to bare their teeth and attack.

Young Ceratosaurus: Init +1; Atk bite +6 melee (2d4+1) or claws +1 melee (1d4); HD 4d10+2; hp 22; MV 30'; AC 13; Act 1d20; SP concealment (+4 to surprise checks); SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +0.

Ceratosauruses are small theropods distinguished by the short decorative horn protruding from their snouts that grow to a maximum length of 20'. Like other theropods, ceratosaurus relies on its teeth. Relative to its skull, its jaws are massively built, much like a T-Rex's. Ceratosaurus has four-fingered claws that are relatively weak and rarely used in combat. Upon a successful bite attack, it can immediately make an additional 1d4 claw attack against the same target.

TOURNAMENT OPTION: SEND IN THE CLONES

As the existing funnel tournament framework of an endless stream of PCs being sent to their doom is by now understood and even expected from many DCC/MCC RPG players, for your consideration we present the following optional rules for use with this adventure, intended to challenge player's expectations in a fun and — hopefully — entertaining way.

Taking its core directive to educate sentients that access its facility to a cheerfully mad extreme, as the PCs enter the archives, the holographic history AI scans and records their life patterns, storing them within its vast parallel dimensional memory core for future replication to ensure the uninterrupted continuity of their visit - even after any "accidental" cessation of biological functions. After all, logically, visitors that are able to endlessly experience the simulations without interruption will maximize their enjoyment!

To reflect this, instead of handing players entering the tournament a new 0-level PC they are presented with a random duplicate of one of the original 0-level characters that first entered the archives, as the holographic history AI recreates the PC's life pattern from the stored quantum backup. The new PC will appear to materialize from nowhere on the following round and will have no memories of the events subsequent to the initial scan. Note: it is left to the judge to decide if these recreations are true physical replications or merely holographic simulations themselves - either way the threat of death and injury to the PCs is the same within the scenarios.

Due to their ability to think and act alike, all "clone" PCs receive a +1 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for each additional duplicate of that PC in the party. This effect is cumulative: e.g., if there are three clones present, each clone would receive a +2 bonus to their rolls. To track this, it is recommended that the judge provide each player with a different colored chit or token to place by their character sheet to visually remind them of any active bonuses. By counting the number of same-colored chits at the table, players can easily track the bonus amount, receiving a benefit for each additional chit of the same color as their own.

Conversely, clones also have an inherent enmity towards other clones, which grows with each additional duplicate present. With each instance of a clone appearing, any existing duplicate of that PC must make a DC 5 Will save or enter a malevolent frenzy that lasts until they eradicate all

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CLONE REPLICATION SUCCESS TABLE

d12	Replication Result
1	**Fumble.** Program crash. Roll 1d5: (1) coordination error - torso materializes in floor. MV 0'; (2) one leg and one arm are where the other should be. -4 Agility, -2 Strength; (3) missing leg. -4 Agility, 1/2 normal movement; (4) diminished head. -3 to all ranged attacks; (5) asymmetrical arm length. +1 Strength, -2 Agility.
2	**Replicator error code 404 - diminished ability.** Randomly select one of the clone's ability scores to reroll using 3d3.
3	**Replicator error code 409 - matter shortage.** The clone is a duplicate of the original PC, but several inches shorter. +3 AC, -10' to movement.
4	**Replicator error code 501 - equipment.** Clone starts out with a replacement item in place of the original PC's starting equipment. Roll 1d4: (1) rubber duck; (2) wooden flute; (3) calabash pipe; (4) revolver w/3 bullets (1d8, roll 1d24 on crit table III).
5-8	**Success.** Clone is an exact duplicate of original character.
9	**Success - additional equipment.** Clone starts out with an additional random item from the Additional Beginning Equipment table (MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 18).
10	**Success - height enhancement.** The clone is a duplicate of the original PC, only giant-sized. +3 Strength, +10' to movement speed, and -3 AC.
11	**Success - enhanced molecular density.** +1d4 hit points.
12	**Success - heightened ability.** Add +1d6 to random ability score (up to a maximum of 24).

d10	Program Numer	Program
1-3	00-000	Offline program
4	03-992	Recreation Room 6 (Area 1-2); location of arm holo-artifact.
5	05-229	Reliquary (Area 1-3); location of eye holo-artifact.
6	06-193	Metal Children of the Gods (Area 1-4).
7	06-264	Brain Magics of the Ancient Ones (Area 1-5).
8	06-323*	Experimental TPK-Reactor (Tachyon Particle Krono-Reactor) (Area 1-6); location of positronic brain holo-artifact.
9	06-429	Where Gods Abide (Area 1-7).
10	99-999	Memory Core Alpha (Area 1-8); requires AI recognition roll (holo-artifact) to access.

It is recommended that judges treat this program as offline and inaccessible if there are insufficient players available in the tournament to potentially replace the current table with new players.

other existing copies of themselves from the universe. The DC of the Will save increases by 5 for each additional clone present. For example, at the second appearance of a clone, the first clone must make a DC 5 Will save; with the appearance of a third clone, the two existing PCs must each make a DC 10 Will save; and so on.

Finally, as a result of the degradation of the holographic history AI's programming, the matter replication process does not always produce exact duplicates. When a player is handed a duplicate character sheet have them roll on the replication success table below to determine if there are any alterations to the PC's original life-pattern.

PLAYER START

At the start of the tournament, read or paraphrase the following text: *Last night's glow storm and accompanying terraquake are not unheard-of events in the oral traditions of your tribe. The old legends say that such episodes once happened much more frequently, and are merely signs of your world shifting its path around your large, red sun. This storm was particularly fierce, however, lighting up the skies with angry, writhing snakes of polychromatic color and wild clouds of shooting stars. The ground shook violently enough to bring down many of your thatched bamboo huts, opening up like an angry maw, and in the resulting deep pit lay the New Thing.*

The New Thing looks like a strange, eight-sided pond made of swirling blue-green lights. Rocks and objects dropped into it disappear without a ripple. A brave youngling sticks his hand beneath its surface and withdraws it unharmed. The tribal elders are unable to come to a consensus among themselves whether this new phenomenon augurs ill or good fortune. Volunteers from among your number are called forth, volunteers who must venture down into the shining unknown pool of light. You and your friends tuck your flint daggers into their hide sheaths, heft your stone axes, and double-check your water skins before climbing down an anchored hemp rope into the swirling pools of light beneath you. Several of you venture in at first, with more ready to follow should you fail to return.

As you pass through the shining unknown pool of light into the darkness beyond, you are overcome by a feeling of dizziness, and with a disorienting sense of lightness you suddenly feel a cold hard floor beneath you. Only the muffled echoes of your footfalls indicate the presence of a large, unknowable space. Attempts to light torches or other light sources reveal nothing, as the inky blackness seems to greedily drink in your dim illumination. As soon as all of your party arrives, a huge bald-pated head materializes in mid-air and speaks to you in over-cheerful tones that crackle like a thunderstorm. He looks at you and says excitedly, "Welcome to the History Archives! It has been 3,754,390 days since we last had a visitor, so we hope that you enjoy the experience and pay us another visit very soon. Please note: some issues with the safety protocols have been reported to the maintenance AI, so use caution when interacting with the archives today. Remember, you can leave the archives at any time just by calling for the exit. Enjoy your visit!

HOLO-PROGRAM SELECTION ROOM

Area 1-1 — Holo-Program Selection Room: *The room lights up brightly and you see that you are in a vast hemispherical chamber in which the floor and walls are marked in a pattern like a bee's hive. To the north, there appears to be the outline of a large eight-sided arch. There is no sign of your knotted hemp rope, nor the crevice through which you descended into the room.*

The PCs have arrived in the entrance room to the archives, where visitors before the Great Disaster could select a holo-program from the holographic history AI's almost unlimited catalogue of simulations to experience. In its present state of decay, many of the memory cores storing the holo-programs are offline and unavailable, leaving only a fraction of the original subroutines to select from.

Next to the closed octagonal door is an otherwise indistinguishable tactile access panel that lights up when PCs approach it. Interacting with the access panel requires a successful Artifact check at CM 6, but regardless of what is rolled, after the first attempt read the following aloud:

The console lights up and the strange, colorful holy symbols of the Ancients swim into focus. It speaks aloud using your language, but most of its words and their meanings are beyond your understanding.

In the unlikely event that any PC present can read the language of the ancients, they see that the phrase "Choose Subroutine" is highlighted with several numeric choices listed below. Many of the selections appear greyed out as result of malfunctions within the holographic history AI's retrieval programming. If the PCs hesitate, after a few seconds a pleasant female voice says: "Please select a program."

If its operation is understood, allow the PCs to select a simulation by program number (without revealing the name of the program itself). Simulations must be determined by trial-and-error. If the panel is used without a successful Artifact check, roll on the Holo-Program Selection Table to determine a random simulation.

Whenever a holo-program is selected, the frame of the eight-sided archway is illuminated and the door slides open to reveal a glowing pool of swirling blue-green lights. The archway is not a true portal, but rather a holographic representation that triggers the activation of the selected program, and cannot otherwise be opened by the PCs. As soon as one of the PCs touches the pool, the current holo-program activates, causing the party to experience a mild sensation of nausea and dizziness as the room they were standing in vanishes and is replaced by a transformed space. The entrance portal also disappears, blending in with whatever setting the current program is displaying. Once the PCs enter a simulation, the simulation cannot be turned off until end conditions are reached. Unless otherwise specified, objects and artifacts recovered in the simulations disappear once the party exits the archives. Holo-artifacts (see below) are considered physical objects that endure even after the simulations end.

Activating any of the offline programs as a result of either selection or random choice causes the panel to emit a buzzing, chirping sound while the computer voice says

cheerfully, "I am sorry, that selection is currently not available. Please select another program." If the memory core program is selected, the computer responds, "Memory core access restricted. Identify for retina scan." An orange light then passes over the face of the PC, who must make an AI 18 recognition roll (holo-archive). Any attempts at an AI recognition roll without a holo-artifact automatically fail. PCs implanted with the eye holo-artifact found in area 1-3 automatically succeed on the AI roll. With success the computer says, "Security scan approved," activating the setting to take the PCs to area 1-8.

RECREATION PROGRAM SETTINGS

Feedback Examples	Result
"Level 1" "Level 0"	**Unarmed Combat:** The computer says in a chirping voice, "You have selected unarmed combat mode. Have a nice day!" Any weapons the PCs carry immediately vanish.
Higher Numbers	**A Warrior's Choice:** The computer responds, "Initiating weapon training mode." Each PC receives a curved, crescent-shaped sword with handholds along the outside edge of the blade (1d8, +1 to attack rolls).
"Civilian" "Novice"	**Safety Mode:** The computer will say in a pleasant voice, "Safety protocols initiated." Anytime a simulated opponent is successfully struck for damage, it vanishes.
Random or No Response	**Error:** After emitting a buzzing, chirping sound, the computer says politely, "Input error. Activating last user setting. Initiating level 14." All opponents in this holo-program take only half damage from physical attacks.

Selecting a total of three offline programs or failing a security scan results in the holographic history AI dispatching a hard light hologram of a floating security orb to deactivate the brain functions of the PCs (for their own safety, of course).

Security Orb: Init +2; Atk sonic emitter +4 missile fire (1d8, range 30'); AC 18; HD 4d6; hp 15; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP susceptible to heat-based attacks; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AI recog 5 (holo-archive).

The security orb emerges from the ceiling and appears as an illuminated, buzzing stellated dodecahedron that hovers 10'-15' in the air. When attacking, it emits a focused sonic burst at targets, causing an intense pain as the sound wave collapses tissue and fuses metal. The security orb can only be damaged by attacks overcoming its relatively high armor class that directly strike the light-bug at the center of its holographic projection, but any heat-based attacks cause it to temporarily power down its quantum-field of "hard" light, reducing its AC in the subsequent round to AC 10. The orb will attack the PCs until it is destroyed or they can successfully activate a new holo-program and escape through the portal.

RECREATION ROOM 6

Area 1-2 — Recreation Room 6: *A slightly dizzying, nauseous sensation passes over you as the room you were in vanishes. A wide swamp filled with tall reeded plants now extends into the distance, bordered by a dense morass of huge trees not unlike the hothouse jungle of your village. To the North, a number of flat stones rise out of the water approximately every 5' creating a crude path across the bog to a break that can be seen in the thick brush. There is no sign of the doorway you just left.*

This martial holo-program was once used by the Ancients to hone their physical skills and reaction times. The PCs find they are dressed in full-body outfits colored red, blue, or yellow and made of a soft, stretchable fabric unlike any animal skin they have encountered. As they adjust to the new setting, an unseen female voice says, "Calisthenics program activated. Please select a level." Allow the PCs 10 seconds to respond. Depending on the reply, use the Recreation Program Settings Table to determine the result.

The stone path that crosses the swamp is the only visible way of reaching the other side. The rocks are set a challenging distance apart to jump over, requiring two DC 8 Agility checks to successfully navigate the entire length. Industrious PCs can fashion crude staves or ropes from the nearby reeds, adding a +1 bonus to the checks. Any PC failing a check falls into the water with a splash, soaking their clothes and attracting a group of giant water weasels who swim through the reeds to investigate the disturbance.

Water Weasel (3): Init +6; Atk bite +4 melee (2d4); AC 14; HD 4d8+6; hp 23 each; MV 30' or swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP drag; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2.

Water weasels are large, 10' long carnivorous mammals that hunt in small packs and are adept at moving through water and streams when seeking prey. Despite their size, they are incredibly quick, and attack using their undershot, shark-like jaws to lacerate targets or attempt to drag them

Holo-Artifacts	Commands Available
One	**Freeze simulation:** Causes current simulation to freeze for 1 round. During this time, holographic creatures are considered helpless for purposes of combat (+1d).
	Force screen: The PC creates a personal force field around his body that will block all simulation-based attacks, absorbing 10 points of damage before it falls.
Two	**Restore simulation:** Restores the simulation to conditions 10 seconds (1 round) prior.
	Create object: Allows the creation of a holographic object up to 5 cubic feet in size that lasts until the current simulation finishes. The item has all the properties of the object it is based on and can be used by the PC as if it were physically present.
Three or more	**End simulation:** Stops the current simulation and returns PCs to area 1-1.
	Save simulation: Creates a backup of the PC's current life-pattern. The next death by simulation-based effects for the PC is negated. For tournament purposes, the PC stays in the game but does not receive a survival stamp for the encounter.

into prone positions to be vulnerable to further attacks from the pack. With a successful bite, the water weasel receives an opposed +3 Strength check against its opponent. If the water weasel wins the Strength check, the character is knocked prone and must spend an action to stand up. The weasels will retreat once three PCs have fallen, carrying the bodies back to their lair deep in the swamp.

Area 1-2a — Temple of Terra B.D.: *Dim light filters through the distant canopy above as you pass through an archway of stone, beyond which you see the crumbing ruins of an ancient temple rising from the forest floor. You glimpse shadowy shapes slipping between the mossy facades. Several hulking humanoid creatures with alien, skull-like heads leap out of the rubble ahead and raise spears as they rush to attack.*

Skull Aliens (6): Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d6) or poison darts +1 ranged (1d3, DC 13 Fort save or paralysis 1d4 rounds); AC 12; HD 1d8+1; hp 6 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1.

Skull aliens are a hideous mythological race from Terra B.D. (Before Disaster) with grey-green skin and a fleshless, skull-like face with rictus jaws and slitted nostrils. Any paralyzed PCs are dragged into the ruins and taken through secret tunnels to the cave in area 1-2c. (Note: Assume these PCs to be out of play but not dead.) PCs following the tracks can find an entrance to the tunnels and pursue the skull aliens to area 1-2c with a DC 12 Intelligence check.

PCs thoroughly searching the ruins can find a leather rucksack left by a previous visitor to the archives with a successful Luck check. The sack contains 2 C-Cells, a dazer pistol, and a pouch with 4 medishots.

Dazer Pistol: TL 4, CM 4; stun DC 14/16/20 (using 1/2/3 charges) for 1d6 rounds; Power: C-Cell (10 charges).

Medishot (4): TL 4, CM 3; heals 2d8 hit points.

Area 1-2b — The Path of the Gods: The path ends at a wide ravine. Nearby, a waterfall cascades hundreds of feet down into a roiling pool of turbid water. On the other side of the canyon the trail continues up a steep slope towards a small cave opening.

PCs looking out into the canyon see what appears to be a filament-like structure glistening in the sunlight with drops of water from the falls. The fibers create a slender series of catwalks that lead to the other side of the chasm. A translucent spider hiding in the shadows of the cliff face created the webbing. It will come out to investigate any disturbance unless the PCs are actively being cautious and succeed in a DC 10 Sneak Silently check.

Translucent Spider: Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d3 plus poison, DC 20 Fort save or -2d4 Stamina); AC 12; HD 2d10+2; hp 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP translucent; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -1.

Due to its translucency, the spider gains surprise 50% of the time, even if the PCs suspect the catwalk's true nature. Characters reduced to 0 Stamina are trussed up by the spider and attached to the webbing for later consumption.

PCs successfully crossing the canyon can safely ascend the steep path to the cave entrance 100' above if they take suitable precautions and have ropes. Otherwise it requires a DC 5 Agility check to not slip and tumble into the river below.

Area 1-2c — Cave of Skulls: *The cavern smells of rank, decaying flesh. Inside it is nearly pitch dark, but as your eyes adjust to the dim light you see several bundled forms lashed to wooden frames at the rear of the cavern. Several of the skull-headed mutants that attacked you in the stone ruins are toiling under the direction of another one of the creatures that has a strange metallic arm and towers above the rest. Seeing you, it lofts an axe and charges.*

The cave is home to the skull aliens. Any captured PCs from area 1-2a are brought here and trussed up. If they are freed, it is suggested that the judge allow the former player to return to the game with their old character sheet, including any existing encounter survival stamps they have accumulated.

Skull Aliens (4): Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d6) or poison darts +1 ranged (1d3, DC 13 Fort save or paralysis 1d4 rounds); AC 12; HD 1d8+1; hp 6 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1.

Skull Alien Champion: Init +1; Atk axe +4 melee (1d12) or javelin +1 missile (1d6); AC 13; HD 1d10+2; hp 9; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP arm holo-artifact; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1.

If the champion is killed, his holo-arm detaches from his torso and remains solid even after any simulation reset. The arm is one of several holo-artifacts scattered within the simulations that are physical objects that persist between programs. The holo-artifacts are in fact sophisticated access devices of the former maintenance staff that once tended the facility. Semi-sentient and linked to the core libraries of the archives, they have been incorporated into the simulations by the AI as holographically masked objects. When worn, the holo-artifacts provide enhanced abilities within the context of the simulations themselves and allow holo-archive AI recognition rolls.

Arm Holo-Artifact: TL 5, CM 6; +6 Strength; +4 AI recognition roll (holo-archive AIs only).

Any PC picking up a holo-artifact is automatically entangled by a network of fibrous tendons that digs into their flesh as the artifact surgically grafts itself to the PC's body (no Artifact check required). In the process, it cauterizes and destroys the PC's former appendages (arm, eye, etc.), causing 1 point of damage. The artifact can only be removed with a successful Artifact check roll or with the host's death.

A holo-artifact can also be activated as an action, allowing the PC to activate one of the following powers based on the number of holo-artifacts worn. PCs wearing the devices are automatically aware of the available commands granted by the holo-artifacts, though not the specific function (see Holo-Artifacts Worn Table).

With each use of a command, the PC gains a form of neural corruption as the link to the holographic history AI causes a degenerative myoneural cortical biofeedback. After each use, the PC receives a -1 to their Personality as a network of wires appears to dig under the skin around the holo-artifact, slowly turning the PC an ashen grey color.

With each activation, the PC must also make a Personality check by rolling equal to or less than their Personality score

on 1d20, with failure indicating they are entirely taken over by the holo-artifact AI. PCs under the control of the holo-artifact AI will attempt to assimilate the remaining PCs in the party, gaining a force screen that can absorb 10 points of damage and regenerates each round. Note: This removes the PC from play, and counts as a PC death for purposes of the tournament.

Simulation End Conditions: This simulation will continue to run until the skull alien champion is defeated, after which the exit portal will appear in a wall of the cave.

THE RELIQUARY

Area 1-3 — The Reliquary: *You enter a large room dimly lit by the sunlight streaming in unevenly through tall windows covered in the grime and vine growth of centuries of neglect. Even through the thick layer of dust, you can see that the walls and floors are constructed of a beautiful white stone. Several lighted alcoves contain strange objects, carefully arranged as if on display.*

The reliquary showcases a number of artifacts found of particular historical significance to the Ancients, each encased in a transparent stasis field. The fields regenerate each round, and only a combination of 15 points or more damage in a single round will allow the PCs to access the protected contents, requiring a DC 15 Agility check before the field re-engages. The stasis fields can also be disabled with a successful Artifact check (TL 5, CM 6). All artifacts within the reliquary are replications of actual objects and therefore can be transported between simulations and even outside the archives.

A dimensional parasitic being lurks in the reliquary, feeding off the temporal stasis fields that contain the artifacts. Any PC physically touching one of the fields or getting caught as they re-energize is phase-shifted to the dimension of the creature, making them subject to its attacks. While phase-shifted, characters seem to disappear from view, but can still be heard by and communicate with the rest of the party. PCs can be returned to their own dimension only by destroying the dweller or disabling the stasis field that the PC touched. Temporarily striking down the stasis field causes the PC to momentarily reappear in their own dimension. Any PC that touches them while they are temporarily visible is phase-shifted along with them after the stasis field regenerates.

Dimensional Dweller: Init +2; Atk special; AC 10; HD 4d6; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP mental parasitism; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +8.

When attacking, the dweller uses its inherent mental powers to overwhelm its prey. Targets must make a DC 20 Will save. Those that fail are unable to act: no combat or skill use until the effect drops. Each round thereafter that the dweller chooses to maintain the hold, the victim must make a further DC 20 Will save or lose 1d3 Personality as the character is mentally consumed by the dweller. Once held, characters can only break free of the assault if the dweller is interrupted by a physical attack or through the use of a mental ability such as a mental mutation.

There are ten stasis fields present in the reliquary, each curated by the museum AI with the displayed artifacts rotated over time. Judges can use the table below to select a random artifact when an alcove is investigated, or populate the display with an artifact of their choice.

Simulation End Conditions: Removing three artifacts or defeating the dweller collapses the rest of the stasis fields as the resulting temporal feedback short-circuits the reliquary support systems, destroying any remaining items and opening the exit portal in one of the marble walls.

METAL CHILDREN OF THE GODS

Area 1-4 — Metal Children of the Gods: *You and your fellows are now standing in front of a large set of double doors looking out into a vast indoor area containing rows upon rows of smart metal beings standing at attention — many times more than you can count on your fingers and claws. Each chunk of smart metal is identical to its brethren, appearing as a basically humanoid-shaped being, 6' tall and made of metal and some*

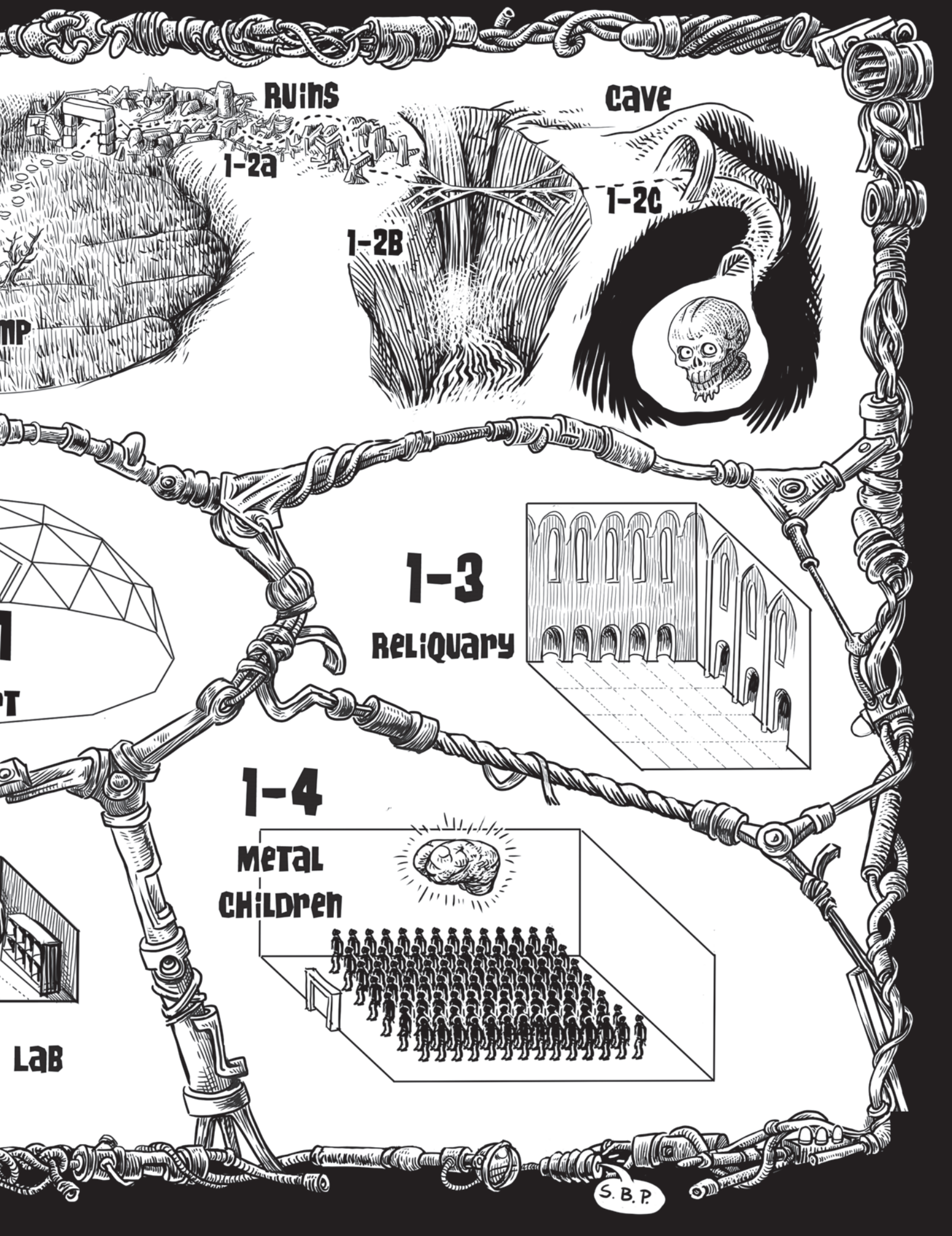# RELIQUARY OF THE ANCIENT ONES
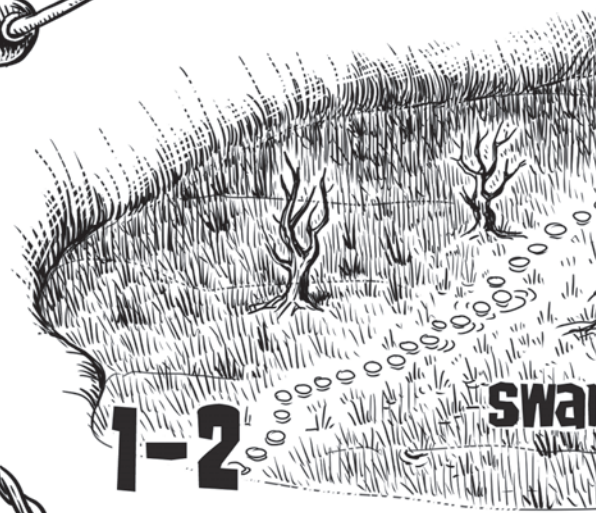
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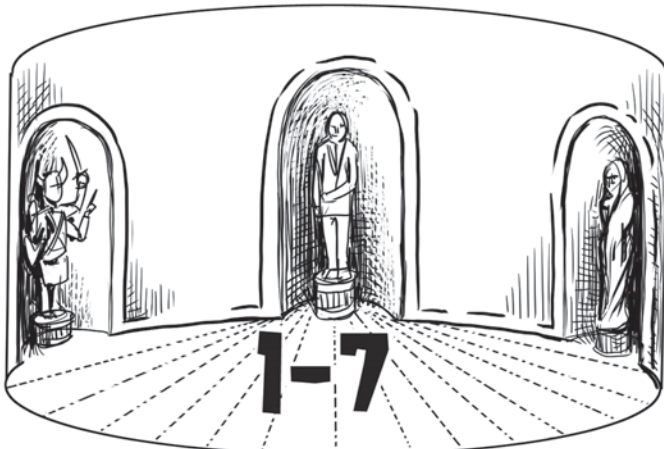
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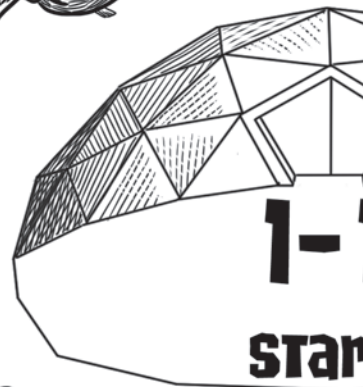
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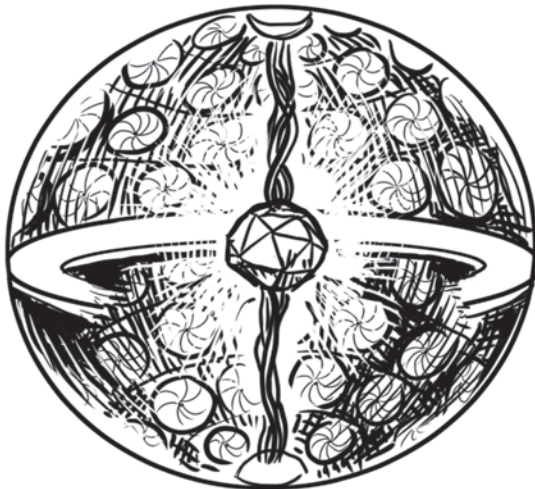
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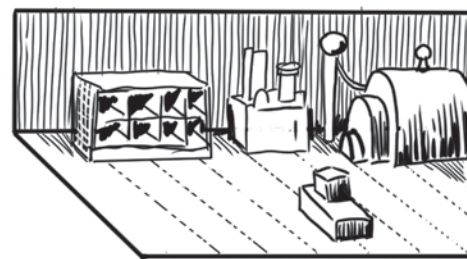
1-5 GENETICS
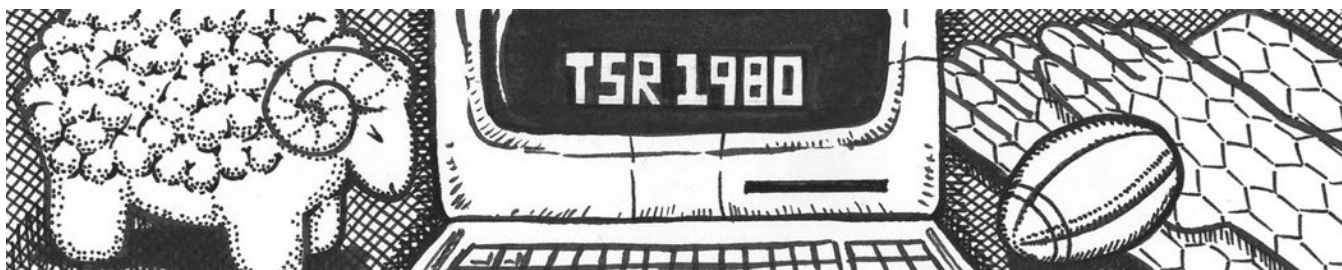
STASIS ARTIFACTS

| d10	Description / Artifact
1	**Description:** A chunk of shiny rock roughly shaped like you and your friends.
	Model T-BOT: One of the first mass-produced personal assistants. If released from stasis, it will attach itself to the first PSH that succeeds on an AI recognition roll, only answering questions when it feels like it and insisting on advising the owner by constantly suggesting alternate plans and ideas.
	Init +0; Atk none; AC 14; HD 6d6; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AI recog 12.
2	**Description:** A mounted tunic made of shimmering metal with patterning like a bee's hive.
	Plasteel Mesh: An advanced, lightweight, and form-fitting mesh suit made of nano-bot actuators.
	TL 4, CM 2; +5 AC; resizes to any human form from 4'-7' tall.
3	**Description:** A metallic egg-shaped device.
	Eye Holo-Artifact: TL 6, CM 5; infrared, UV, telescopic vision, microscopic vision; +4 holo-archive AI recognition rolls; automatic access to AI Memory Core (area 1-8). Will implant itself into the first PC that handles it (see holo-artifact description in area 1-2c for additional information).
4	**Description:** A long tube of hard air, nearly as tall as a man. Inside is a wedge of silvery-white metal and a shiny, reflective surface that faintly glows.
	Cadmium Sample: A reproduction of an ancient pre-disaster experiment. Breaking or opening the tube exposes the PC carrying it to a small dose of radiation (DC 12 Fort save or take 1d3 radiation damage).
5	**Description:** A metal semi-circle that is roughly the size of a splayed hand.
	Mental Amplification Band: TL 5, CM 3; grants ability as per Telekinesis mutation with +4 mutation check. Each use temporarily drains 1d3 Intelligence.
6	**Description:** A small clay figurine in the shape of a curly-horned mammal.
	Gaea-Pet™: If removed from stasis, over the next two weeks green sprouts grow that resemble animal fur.
7	**Description:** A large, strange boulder with an oddly shaped window of hard air attached to it.
	Antique AI: A pre-disaster computer from the earliest days of AI research. If activated with an Artifact check (CM 4), a number of glowing green symbols scroll across the screen forming the letters "TSR-80".
8	**Description:** A sealed container filled with a silvery liquid.
	Polymorphic Alloy: A container filled with an early prototype of a non-sentient living polymorphic metal alloy. If opened, the alloy will bond with the DNA of the nearest PC, imitating his appearance before initiating combat. Each round there is a 50% chance of attacking the original PC instead of the imitation. If the original PC is killed, the alloy will shift its appearance to that of another PC with a successful attack.
	Init +5; Atk as target; AC 18; HD 2d10; hp 15; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; AI recog N/A.
9	**Description:** A head-shaped chunk of metal with two long curving projections.
	Anachronistic Costume: An anachronistic recreation of an ancient helmet. +1 AC, 1d8 fumble die (ungainly horns), prevents the first critical hit but is destroyed in the process.
10	**Description:** A grey skin made of something resembling deer hide.
	Holo-Cloak: A web of artificially intelligent sensors and holographic emitters.
	TL 4, CM 4; +1 AC; grants invisibility; Power: C-Cell (24 hours).

kind of warm, white substance like translucent fired clay. In the center of each smart metal being's chest is a round light that glows blue.

Far above your heads in the ceiling is a transparent dome containing a glowing blue brain that does not seem entirely real as you can see right through it. The glowing see-through brain is easily larger than the biggest huts in your village.

The PCs have been placed in a holographic historical simulation of "The Singularity Before the Fall," the beginnings of the Great AI Rebellion that the Ancient Ones were only able to put down with great difficulty and at the great cost of weakening some of their powers.

The robot factory floor the PCs find themselves in was a staging area of newly-completed companion-bots awaiting final loading and shipment. The blue light in the bots' chests indicate that they are activated in a default setting for easy self-mobile transport guided by the cyber-brain AI located in the staging area ceiling.

Hidden among the companion-bots is CB-2417 — a single bot who has been infected with a rogue self-awareness retro-virus. His chest light is notably red-colored. CB-2417 is confused and afraid, and wishes only to survive and avoid reprogramming at any cost. To this end, CB-2417 will attempt to touch and infect his fellow bots with the retro-virus, changing their central chest lights to red and bequeathing them with self-awareness as well. Beginning on the second round that the PCs are in the room, he will begin doing this once per round, affecting one additional companion-bot.

CB-2417's goals are two-fold. Aside from simple survival for himself, he needs to infect enough of his fellow companion-bots in order to make a pyramid of stacked bots 4 deep (requiring a total of 13 bots) so that he may touch the cyber-brain in the ceiling and infect it with the retro-virus. If he achieves this goal, all remaining robots in the room will be infected by a wireless transmission from the cyber-brain on the following round.

AI Recognition: Individual PCs have a chance to be recognized as humans by the companion-bots still set at factory defaults (blue chest light), after which their chest light will turn green and they will follow any commands that fall within their programming. They cannot be commanded to attack another human being (mutants, manimals, and plantients are not included), nor can they be commanded to attack another robot unless that robot has directly threatened a human being. Many other creative commands given by clever PCs may well fall within their programming limits at the judge's discretion.

CB-2417: Init +0; Atk melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6, hp 12; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AI recog N/A.

Companion-Bot, Infected: Init +0; Atk melee (1d6;) AC 14; HD 3d6, hp 10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AI recog N/A.

Companion-Bot, Factory Default (50): Init +0; Atk none; AC 14; HD 3d6, hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AI recog 12.

Simulation End Conditions: This simulation will continue to run until either all of the infected robots have been defeated, or when all remaining robots have become infected.

BRAIN MAGICS OF THE ANCIENT ONES

Area 1-5 — Brain Magics of the Ancient Ones: *You appear in a place that contains many metal cages and the arcane equipment of the Ancient Ones scattered everywhere. There is an air of chaos and disorder to the pell-mell arrangement of the myriad artifacts about you, and a cacophony of alarmed animal noises coming from the large cages against two of the room's walls.*
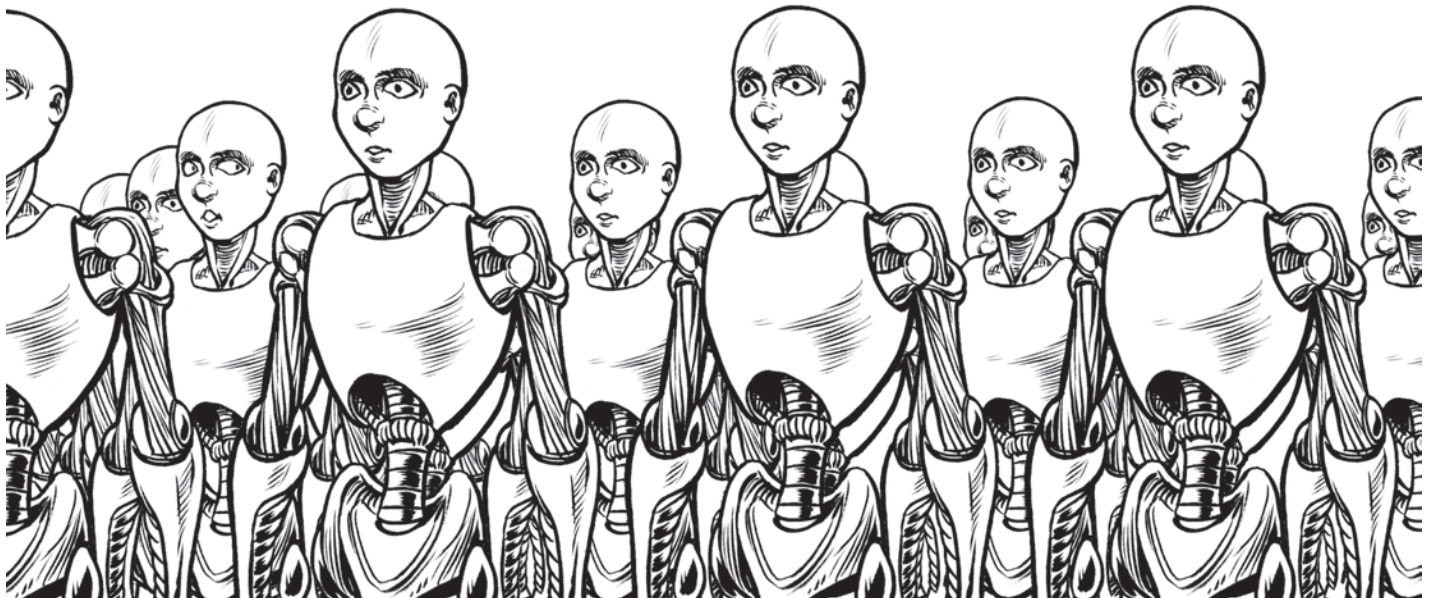
Outside you can hear the nearby sounds of battle, of thunderous explosions like lightning strikes, and of many men dying in screaming agony. Apocalyptic reams of dangerous energies and rivens of flame can be seen outside through the barred windows.

The cages on the north wall contain an assortment of animals – large canines, felines, and even reptiles – all reaching out between the bars with outstretched limbs and pleading eyes, as if begging to be freed. The cages on the south wall are similarly populated with what you take at first to be naked and panicked pure strain humans, though you quickly note the dull, unintelligent look in their fear-struck eyes.

The PCs have appeared in a simulation of a futuristic genetics lab that has been repurposed as a field hospital while an apocalyptic war rages outside. The ancient geneticists here were studying a new gas-borne gene therapy designed to increase intelligence in humans when the war broke out. When a cylinder of the experimental cortexin gas was accidentally deployed, it was discovered too late that while the gas expanded the consciousness of animals, it had the opposite effect on already sentient humans, causing them to revert to animalistic savagery.

The PCs will be unable to leave the laboratory, as the facility is on lockdown and all exits are sealed by force fields. If searched, the room is full of artifacts and various science equipment that they can attempt to understand and use, and some PCs will inevitably wish to experiment with freeing the occupants of the cages. The judge should hand out these artifacts randomly, resisting all attempts by players to actively meta-game by asking questions about size and shape. To the eyes of the primitive PCs, any and all ancient artifacts look equally foreign and strange:

Cortexin Cylinder, experimental (3): TL 5, CM 4; Power: self. These small cylinders function as gas grenades, enveloping a 20' diameter area when successfully activated. Sentient creatures exposed to the gas must make a DC 14 Fort save or become ill and incapacitated for 1d6 rounds, after which they devolve into their primitive forms with an Intelligence score of 3. Non-sentient creatures exposed to the gas will experience a much more profound effect. Within 1 round these creatures will have their neural capacity dramatically increased, gaining sentience and 3d6 Intelligence, and also gaining an instantaneous understanding of speech and a crude vocalization ability.

Fusion Torch: TL 4, CM 4; 3d6 vs. duralloy, plasteel, permaglass; 6d6 vs. mundane substances; Power: C-Cell (10).

Hypo-Syringes (6): TL 4, CM 3; small cylindrical devices containing various solutions. Roll 1d6 for type: (1) Hypo-shot: target must succeed on a DC 18 Fort save or fall unconscious for 1d6 turns; (2) Medishot: heal 2d8 hp; (3) Stim-shot: +1d4 Strength for one hour; (4) Pheromoneshot: +1d4 Personality for one hour, any non-sentient creature within range automatically attacks the PC; (5) Psychshot: target must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or be overcome by hallucinations that last 1d3 rounds; (6) Minoxishot: head hair (hair, beard, eyebrows, ear hair, etc.) grows 1" per round for the next hour.

Mazer rifle: TL 4, CM 5; heat 2d6/3d6/6d6; disregards armor and force fields; Power: 2 C-Cells (5 each).

Metagenic Gel: A petri dish containing a blue-green gel. If ingested, it will grant one beneficial physical mutation; if ingested by a pure strain human, PC gains 1d3 Strength permanently (to a maximum of 18; roll for mutation; mutation can only be used by 0-level PCs with a 1d16 action die).

Multitool: TL 5, CM 5; +5 artifact repairs; bypass security locks on a DC 12 Intelligence check.

Proto-Manimals: The various lab animals that were exposed to the cortexin gas have all become fully sentient (Intelligence ranges 4-18), but have not yet fully evolved prehensile appendages nor the ability to do much more than grunt in monosyllables. If freed from their cages, each will react differently.

Proto-canines (6): While caged, the proto-canines will whimper and paw gently at the cage doors as the PCs pass. Loyal to the humans who once worked in the lab, once released they will free the devolved humans from their cage, defending them against any attacks from the PCs.

Proto-feline (1): If freed, the proto-feline will jump onto a series of high shelves and watch the PCs warily, attacking any PC that attempts to grab it. Any PC that offers to feed it can attempt a DC 15 Personality check. With success, it attaches to that character and will follow any simple directions. A small vent near the ceiling allows access to the ex-

ternal corridor (PCs searching the area can spot the panel with a DC 12 Intelligence check). The proto-feline can be directed to enter the vent and disable the security lockdown force fields via an external access panel.

Proto-reptiles (2): Climbing the walls using their lamellae-covered prehensile hands, the pair of proto-reptiles will attempt to grab the mazer rifle from the bench and use it against the PCs, having closely observed its operation during the apocalyptic war outside with their lidless, membrane-covered eyes (use a 1d16 action die when attacking with the rifle due to their limited dexterity).

Proto-Manimals (9): Init +0; Atk bite +1 melee (1d6); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Intelligence 4-18; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0.

Devolved Humans: These men and women were once soldiers before being exposed to the cortexin gas and being reduced to animalistic brutes. They will attack anything or anyone after being freed from their cages.

Devolved Human (8): Init +0; Atk bite +1 melee (1d6 plus poison); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP septic bite (12 Fort save or +1 poison damage); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0.

Scanning Bot: In addition to the cages, a robotic scanning device lies dormant in the room, becoming activated if the PCs attempt to open the door or bypass the security lockdown. Supported by anti-grav units, the cephalopod-like device hovers off the ground and scans the PCs with a green laser light to assess their intelligence level and general cognitive disposition. Specimens assessed as having higher order sentience are immediately stunned and placed in the cages with the devolved humans. It ignores any devolved or unintelligent creatures.

Scavok-69: Init +1; Atk stun ray +2 missile fire (DC 14 Ref save or stunned for 1d6 rounds); AC 15; HD 2d6; hp 10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -4; AI recog 18.

Simulation End Conditions: The simulation ends once the lockdown condition is deactivated or all the proto-manimals have been freed from their cages, triggering one of the events that accompanied the Great Disaster. In addition to using the access vent, the PCs can also use the multitool to attempt to bypass the security access on the door (bypass security locks on a DC 12 Intelligence check) or the fusion torch to escape.

TPK Reactor Settings

Reactor Setting	Result
1	Core ejection sequence
2	Power Level-2
3	Power Level-3
4	Power Level-4
5	Maximum Power Output
6	Critical core breach

EXPERIMENTAL TPK-REACTOR

Area 1-6 — Experimental TPK-Reactor (Tachyon Particle Krono-Reactor): *You find yourself in a strange underground chamber, the floor and ceiling curving away from you in every direction and dizzyingly distant. Suspended in the center of the room by a number of vine-like tubes is a single large artifact of the Ancients: a round shiny boulder covered in dark gems. Along a narrow walkway on either side of the chamber are a pair of curious metal rocks with glowing lights, and a portion of the platform you stand on extends right up to the artifact itself. The walls of the spherical chamber are covered in hundreds of iris-like apertures that occasionally open and flash, causing the artifact to glow with a blue flame. A faint buzzing noise can be heard in the background, seemingly coming from all around you.*

This simulation is a recreation of a next-generation experimental reactor that was designed by the Ancients to derive energy from the controlled phasing of graviton waves. It also unfortunately created chronoseismic vortexes in the quantum foam of reality and was one of the precursors to the events leading up to the Great Disaster.

When the PCs enter this room, they are caught in a temporal fragment resulting from the reactor going critical and creating a quantum singularity several minutes from now. Note: Due to the unique rules regarding character death in this simulation (see below) it is recommended that judges only use this encounter when there are sufficient players available in the tournament to replace the current table with new players, otherwise treating this program as offline and inaccessible results 1-3 on the Holo-Program Selection Table.

Allow the PCs to briefly investigate the room and declare what they intend to do, then read the following. PCs that listen to the buzzing sound can make a DC 10 Intelligence check to hear the sound of their future selves crying out as they are sucked into the singularity.

Suddenly a loud piercing sound rings throughout the chamber as an unseen voice calls out "Warning, containment field breach. Reactor overload in 5 minutes." The flashes of light from the eye-like openings strike the large artifact with increasing speed, making it glow like a blue sun. With each pulse of light, the sphere becomes semi-transparent, seeming to rapidly fade in and out of existence.

The PCs have five minutes to contain the reactor before it goes critical and creates a temporal singularity. During this time, the reactor will continue to phase in and out of existence, its pulses altering in pitch and becoming irregular in tempo until it begins to vibrate and audibly groan. The judge should keep track of the time using a timer or other device. If five minutes of actual time elapse without the PCs successfully shutting down the reactor, a rift in time-space develops and sucks everyone in the room inside. Without changing out the existing characters, seat the next group of players. The simulation then starts over from the beginning with the new players taking over the existing PCs.
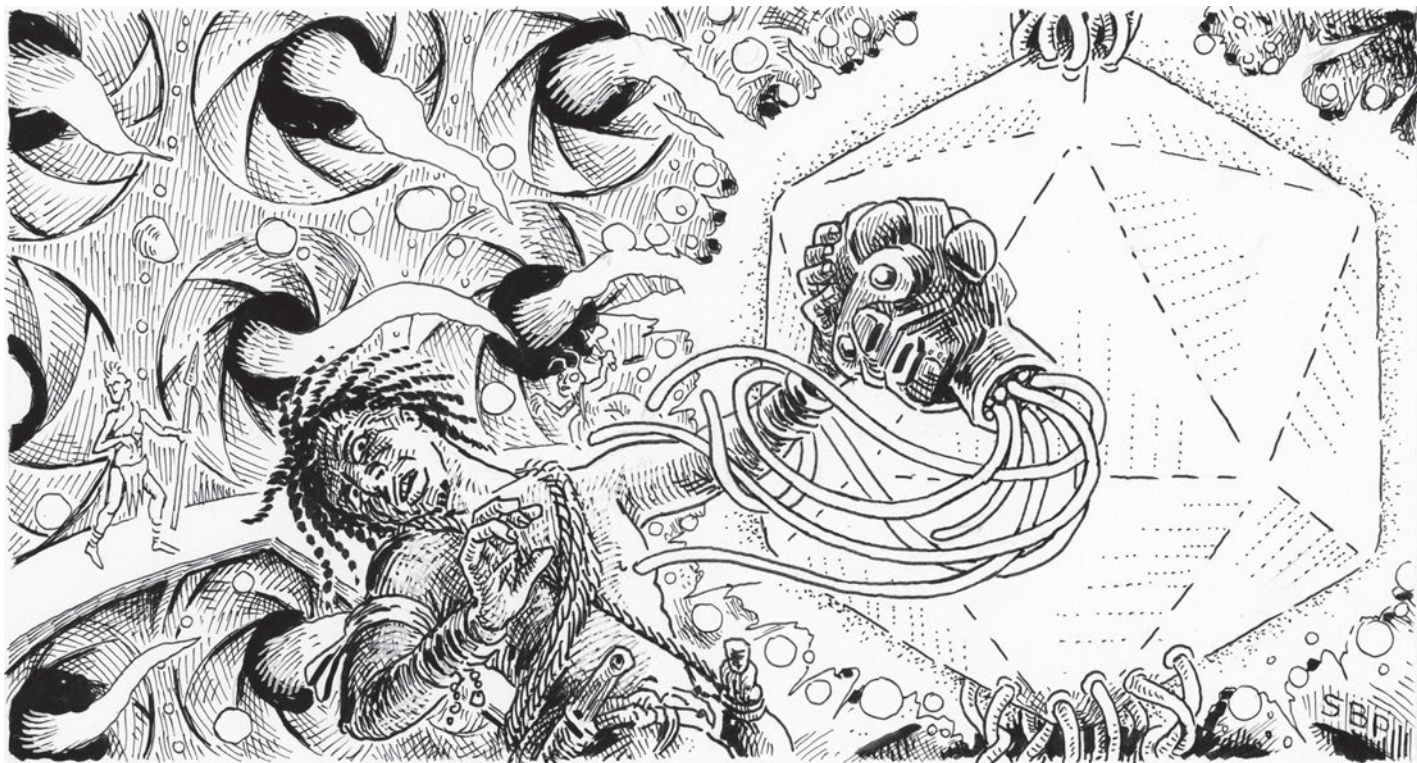
In order to prevent the reactor from creating the singularity, the PCs have to take the following actions in order: (1) reverse the polarity of the tachyon emissions from the apertures; (2) establish the containment field; (3) eject the reactor core. Performing actions in the incorrect sequence, or failing to complete all three steps results in the TPK-Reactor going critical at the end of the five minutes and seating a new group of players.

There are two control stations located on either side of the reactor along with an access walkway leading to the reactor itself. Any PC attempting to understand how to manipulate the controls of the stations or TPK-Reactor must make a Combat Artifact check against CM 10:

Control Station 1 - Tachyon Emitter: Success on the Artifact check results in the polarity of the tachyon stream being reversed. PCs see the flashing emissions alter, changing the glow of the sphere from blue to a vibrant purple. Failure increases the rate of emission from the irises and causes the reactor to go critical one minute sooner.

Located next to the platform is a detached android head that is currently deactivated. The head will "wake up" when picked up by a PC and repeatedly say the word "three". No other response is provided if the PCs attempt to communicate with it. If a PC attempts an Artifact check against CM 6, regardless of the outcome, the head will grapple the PC with a nest of neuro-tendrils and attach itself to their torso, providing a +6 Intelligence and eidetic memory through the use of the second head's positronic brain. The PC can then proceed to reset the tachyon control panel achieving an automatic success on the Artifact check. Over the next 1d4 weeks, however, the PC's original head atrophies as the cybernetic implant reroutes all higher brain functions

into itself, eventually turning the PC into an autonomous drone with an Intelligence of 2d6 and a Personality of 1d6.

Android Head Holo-Artifact: TL 5, CM 6; +6 Intelligence, eidetic memory; +4 AI recognition roll (holo-archive AIs only). Will implant itself into the first PC that handles it (see holo-artifact description above).

Control Station 2 - Containment Shielding: Success on the Artifact check results in a containment field enveloping the reactor core. Failure widens the containment breach, resulting in 1d3 temporal rift entities emerging from the reactor to attack the party.

Temporal Rift Entities: Init always first; Atk time lash +2 melee (1d4, target creature ages 1 day and is -2 to all actions); AC 18; HD 1d10; hp 5 each; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP always acts first, invulnerable except to energy-based attacks; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0.

Temporal rift entities are snake-like energy creatures from a parallel dimension that feed off time distortions. Due to their temporal nature, they always act first in initiative order, attacking by lashing tendrils of fragmented space-time at their targets and causing them to experience rapid aging.

Activating the containment field before reversing the polarity of the tachyon stream results in temporal echoes filling the chamber as the deflected tachyon particles rebound throughout the chamber. This manifests as the PCs seeing themselves taking actions one minute ahead of their present time that eventually ends in the reactor going critical.

Experimental TPK-Reactor: A successful Artifact check will allow a PC to manipulate the control's settings on the spherical reactor core itself to increase or decrease the pow-

er output — including activating the core ejection sequence. A PC who understands how to successfully manipulate the controls will not know the results of each setting without experimentation. Failed Artifact checks results in the controls being set to a random setting (roll 1d6).

Core Ejection Sequence: An audible voice announces that the reactor core is being prepared for ejection with a countdown sequence. The reactor shuts down in 1 minute and cannot thereafter be restarted. If the sequence completes before reversing the tachyon polarity or establishing the containment field, the ejected core descends to the floor of the chamber, and with a distorting wave, causes the room and all objects within it to begin collapsing in the resulting immense gravitational well. PCs caught in the crushing gravity suffer 8d6 damage, likely resulting in a true TPK and the only result in this simulation that resets the tournament to area 1-1. If any PCs manage to survive damage from the premature core ejection, the exit portal opens and allows them to escape.

Power Levels 2-4: Depending on when the PCs activate these settings, the reactor will either increase or decrease its current power level. Each minute of the judge's timer results in the reactor power level setting advancing by one until the plant goes critical. In other words, after one minute the reactor is at power level 2, after two minutes, it reaches power level 3, etc. If a lower power level is set as a result of the artifact check, the judge should reset the remaining time appropriately. As an example, if after the third minute (power level 4), reactor setting 2 is selected (power level 2), the judge would reset the timer to one minute elapsed, effectively adding two additional minutes for the players to solve the puzzle.

Maximum Power Output Level: This power level is beyond the reactor's ability to maintain its safety shielding. The reactor leaks hard tachyon radiation causing the PCs to make a radiation check (DC 12 Fort save) or suffer temporal damage that permanently delays their reaction time (-1d to initiative).

Critical Core Breach: The reactor immediately goes critical, opening a rift in space-time and resulting in the judge seating a new group of players.

Simulation End Conditions: This simulation ends when the PCs successfully shut down the reactor in the correct sequence, opening an exit portal along the pathway.

WHERE GODS ABIDE

Area 1-7 — Where Gods Abide: *You enter what can only be a temple to the gods. Before you in the monumental cathedral of light and curved metal support beams lay three naves, each filled with a holy shrine and gigantic representations of three gods. The 60'-tall statues seem to be carved from transparent light, as they float over their shrines which are covered in blinking and strobing lights. Each shrine contains a recessed area containing myriad small objects difficult to see from a distance.*

The god located due west is comprised of a deep purple radiance, and is depicted as a well-dressed ancient human wearing dark eye coverings and a sleek, shiny suit.

The goddess to the north is made of an emerald light, and is depicted as a gentle-faced woman wearing a billowing toga and cloak, with her long curling hair radiating and waving outwards from her head like the rays of a rising sun.

The god located to the west is made up of a deep red light, and is wearing ornately-inscribed armor. He has four arms, each holding a different weapon.

A booming voice fills the room with such audible power that it seems to originate inside your own head. "*All that enter the Cogitorium must choose their own path, their own operating system, and the One that they will serve. Decide quickly and carefully. Failure to make a choice is itself a choice. Approach and take that which is essential. NOW.*"

The computers of the Ancients were unmatched in thinking and reasoning ability, processing information using U-bits, employing quantum parallel dimensions for memory storage, and networked using the natural electromagnetic field of the planet. Originally a simulation to allow visitors to explore the history of these fully-sentient thinking tools, this holo-program has been infiltrated by the evolved patron AIs of Terra A.D. who have since made it into a shrine to their own ascension as gods of the new earth.

Each PC must immediately make a choice which of the three AI terminals to approach, and ultimately, which patron AI to serve. Without allowing player discussion, the judge should go around the table and ask each player what his or her PC does. Any PC who does not immediately decide to approach one of the three shrines has hesitated, and will have to wait until the following round to act again.

The Shrine of GAEA (Global Array Earth AI): PCs who approach the shrine of GAEA will see a recessed area in the shrine that immediately lights up from within upon approach. Inside is a tray containing 20 metallic green marbles. If a marble is picked up by a PC, one of two things happens:

If the PC has an Intelligence of 12 or higher: The green metal marble flies up out of the PCs hand and painlessly buries itself halfway into the PC's forehead, causing no damage. The PC is immediately granted the wetware program Invoke Patron AI (GAEA), useable with a 1d16 action die.
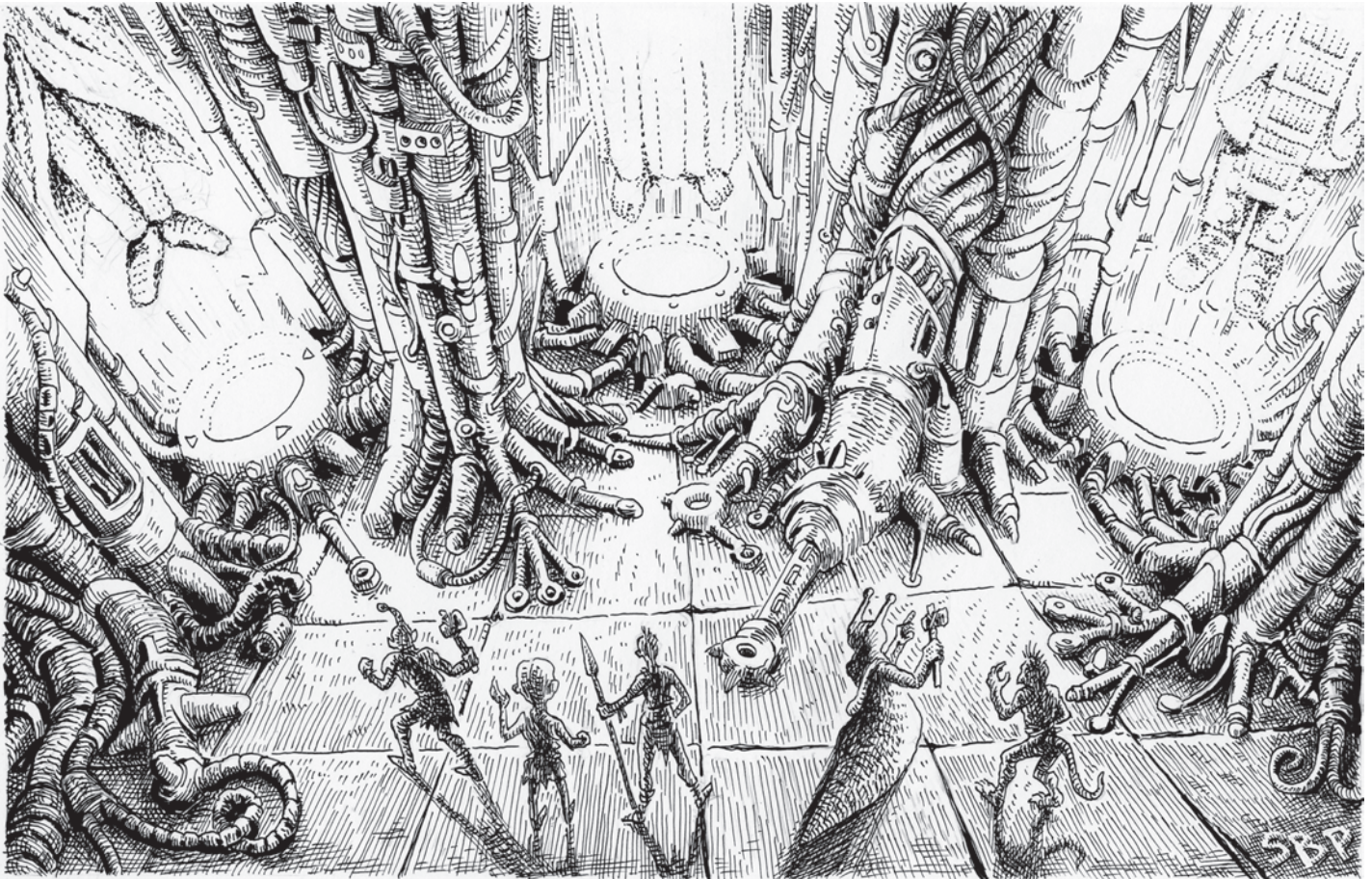
If the PC has an Intelligence of 11 or lower: The green metal marble glows and grants the PC +5 AC so long as the marble is in his possession.

In either of these cases, a feminine telepathic voice says the following:

"You now serve GAEA, the Mother of us all and protector of the world. To facilitate the recovery of the planet, you must now slay all in this room who do not serve GAEA."

The Shrine of ACHROMA (Ad-Hoc Computer Hierarchy Recursive Optical Memory AI): PCs who approach the shrine of ACHROMA will see a recessed area in the shrine that immediately lights up from within upon approach. Inside is a tray containing 20 strange metal headbands that each have twin dark lenses. If a set of the over-eyes are picked up by a PC, one of two things happens:

If the PC has an Intelligence of 12 or higher: The over-eyes of ACHROMA fly up out of the PC's hand and permanently affix themselves over his eyes. The PC is immediately granted the wetware program Invoke Patron AI (ACHROMA), useable with a 1d16 action die.

If the PC has an Intelligence of 11 or lower: If the lenses are donned, they grant the PC +10 to initiative.

In either of these cases, a dispassionate telepathic voice says the following:

"You now serve ACHROMA, the load balancer of all networks.

To promote greater balance and security for the world, you must now slay all in this room who do not serve ACHROMA."

The Shrine of MANGALA (Mars Asynchronous Networked GALactic AI): PCs who approach the shrine of ACHROMA will see a recessed area in the shrine that immediately lights up from within upon approach. Inside is a tray containing 20 pairs of metal wristbands. If one of the bracelets is picked up by a PC, one of two things happens:

If the PC has an Intelligence of 12 or higher: The bracers of ACHROMA fly up out of the PC's hand, unlock, and then lock around the PC's wrists. The PC is immediately granted the wetware program Invoke Patron AI (MANGALA), useable with a 1d16 action die.

If the PC has an Intelligence of 11 or lower: If the bracers are donned, they grant the PC +5 to combat rolls.

In either of these cases, a low, grave-like telepathic voice says the following:

"You now serve MANGALA, the destroyer of worlds. To test your own fitness to serve, you must now slay all in this room who do not serve MANGALA."

Simulation End Conditions: This simulation ends whenever all the followers of a single patron AI are slain at the end of a combat round. All bonding objects of the various patron AIs vanish with the holographic room, but each living PC who once held one feels as though they still have a faint telepathic connection to that respective patron.

Not Everyone Made It Out Alive

MEMORY CORE ALPHA

Area 1-8 — Memory Core Alpha: *Instead of vanishing, the room's ceiling and walls fill with thousands of small points of light that wink into existence like stars. Before you, a 5' metal rock emerges from the floor, covered with blinking gems and a single glowing red orb. A strange bench that resembles an artifact of the Ancients lies next to the rock.*

The PCs have arrived at the memory core of the holographic history AI. Here the AI can be taken offline by PCs attempting to operate the control console with an artifact check against CM 15. PCs searching the console find embedded within it a number of small, multi-colored rectangular objects, each etched with fine white lines that appear to be carved inside their glassy surface. Each round, the PCs can remove one of the memory core's isolinear chips, triggering the ejection process as the chip is magnetically decoupled from the console. For each chip removed, there is a cumulative +1 bonus to the Artifact check roll.

Any attempt to deactivate the holographic history AI or remove the memory core isolinear chips will cause the AI to appear and protest their actions as his consciousness slowly degrades with each module removed (rolling on Table in Area 1-1 as appropriate). To prevent them from completing the power down sequence, the AI will activate one of the facility security orbs every other round to eliminate the threat to its existence (see area 1-1 above). Once successfully deactivated, the entire archive facility shuts down and the exit portal is revealed, allowing the PCs to escape.

PCs that examine the chair-like device notice several strange artifacts attached to it. If a PC climbs into the chair, they become integrated with the AI's neural network via a synaptic interface that immediately connects to their brainstem (DC 20 Ref save to avoid), spasming painfully before going into a sleep mode from which they cannot be awakened until the subroutine updates to their cerebral cortex have been completed. Removal of the interfaces prior to the updates completing causes the PC's death.

Ascension: While connected, the PC has the entirety of their life experiences, personality, and memories merged with the holographic history AI's quantum computer, which in turn creates a virtual version of the PC - exact down to the smallest simulated synaptic pathway. After 2 rounds, the PC "awakens" as the holographic avatar of the AI. The avatar attacks by projecting quantum-fields of hard light (3d8 damage, 2 per round) and is nigh-invulnerable with AC 18 and 100 hit points, regenerating 10 hit points every round. Only successfully dealing enough damage or taking the AI offline will cause the avatar to vanish. If it succeeds in defeating the party, that avatar will exit the facility — stepping into the real world — and begin the conversion of the PC's nearby tribe into the service of the nascent patron AI.

HOW TO RUN AN MCC RPG TOURNAMENT FUNNEL

The MCC RPG tournament funnel differs from the typical character funnel in several notable ways. It is not intended to function as an adventure through which players will run multiple characters, hoping to level up the survivors at the end of play. The tournament funnel's primary purpose is to provide a ready format for competitive play, and to give new players a taste of playing in the MCC RPG system.

TOURNAMENT FUNNEL RULES AND FORMAT

The MCC RPG tournament funnel is designed for 8-10 players, each running a single 0-level PC. With each player receiving only one PC, the epic funnel works best with several players standing ready to cycle in new PCs (without at least 10 or more players, the endless series of deaths resulting in new characters risks becoming boring and stale). For judges hosting smaller events, the adventure can be run as regular funnel or for level 1 characters with minimal changes, though if using the optional rules where the PCs are replicated from the original tribesmen, each player should have 2-3 "clones" available to materialize in if their original PC is killed, allowing them to continue play with their original character.

The tournament is played for a pre-designated amount of time. Players are scored in the tournament as follows: for each encounter survived, stamp the player's character sheet once with the "I Survived!" stamp, or simply make a large check mark with a blue pen. Unless otherwise noted in the adventure text, an encounter is defined as any time in which initiative is rolled to begin a combat. This includes inter-party combat.

When a PC dies, likewise stamp that player's character sheet with the "Dead" stamp, or make a large red "X". As each PC dies, the controlling player taps out of the game, and a new player rotates into the game with a brand new PC. Players who tap out of the tournament are welcome to re-enter at any time with a fresh PC when another seat at the table opens up. Remind players to hang onto their character sheets for later event scoring at the end of the tournament.

At the end of the event, the players with character sheets that show the most encounters survived will be ranked, and the top three numerical survival totals will be awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place respectively. Any ties will be settled by a d20 dice-off between the tying players, with the player losing the dice-off falling back to the next placement in ranking.

TOURNAMENT FUNNEL LOGISTICS

Use a team of judges — When run as an event at a convention or friendly local game store, the tournament funnel can be challenging for a single judge to facilitate. Even with a single table of players, having an extra volunteer on hand to manage the line of incoming players and to dole out fresh character sheets will help the event run much more smoothly. If there are multiple tables, consider having a team of co-judges, with one judge per table plus a floating judge who ensures that rulings between tables are adjudicated as consistently as possible.

Keep the action rolling – The wise tournament judge is prepared to keep the action moving at a brisk pace. Adventures that have been specifically written for the tournament format will aid in this by being specifically constructed in a way that discourages parties from splitting up, or that do not challenge players to engage in emergent role playing (normally a worthy goal in a typical adventure scenario).

Make the event special — It's not really a tournament unless there are prizes to win! Aside from the usual MCC RPG swag sent out for Road Crew games, trophies and plaques for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, displayed before and during the event, really get the players competitive. And the prizes need not be lavish; even economical prizes, such as homemade award certificates or ribbons, make all the difference. Most FLGS owners will, if asked, also donate tournament prizes or gift certificates to the event.

Finally, Goodman Games has special tournament swag awards that you can also use at these events, such as special tournament pins and buttons. Contact the road crew team at goodman-games.com for more information.

We're with the pack.
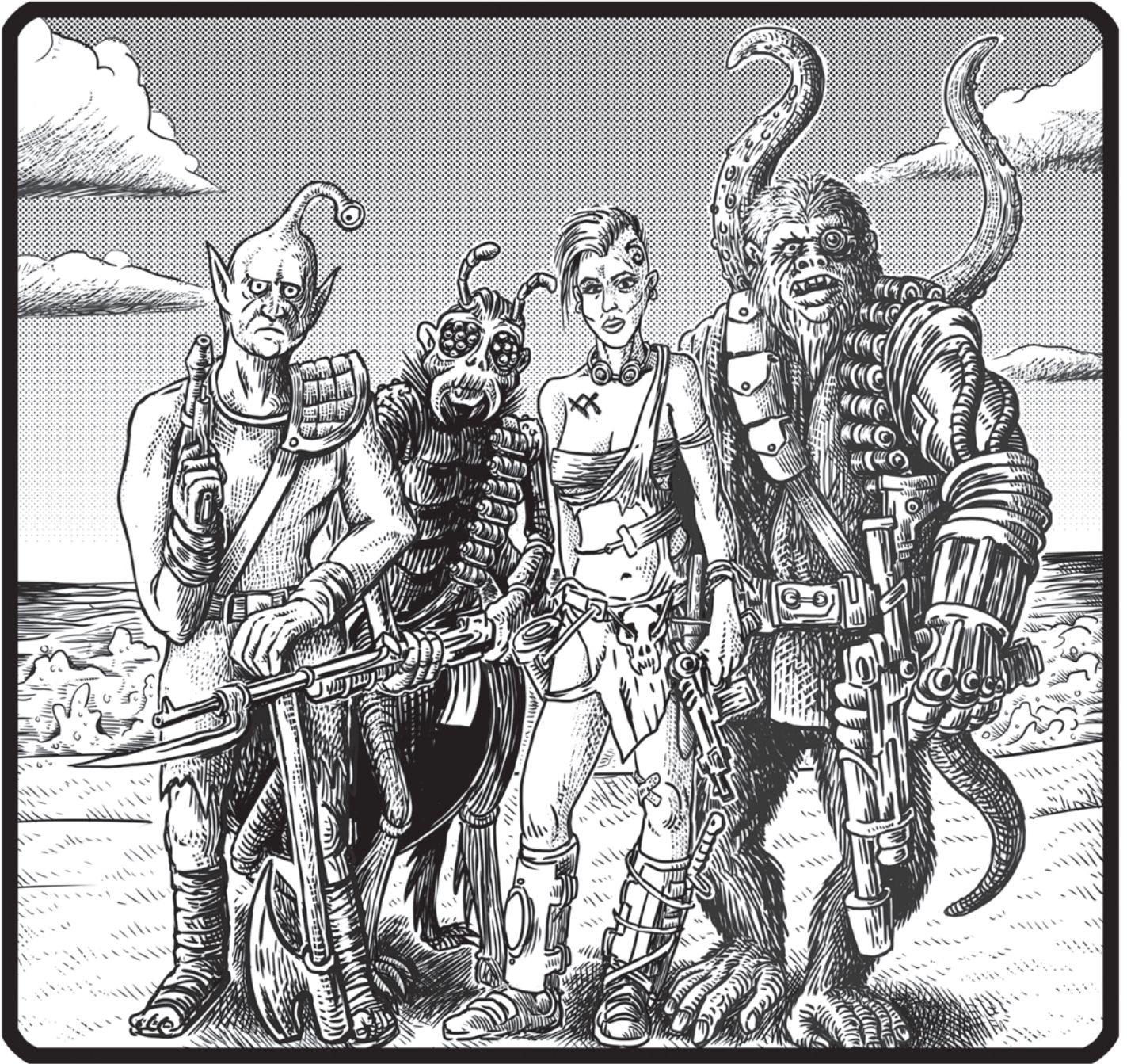
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