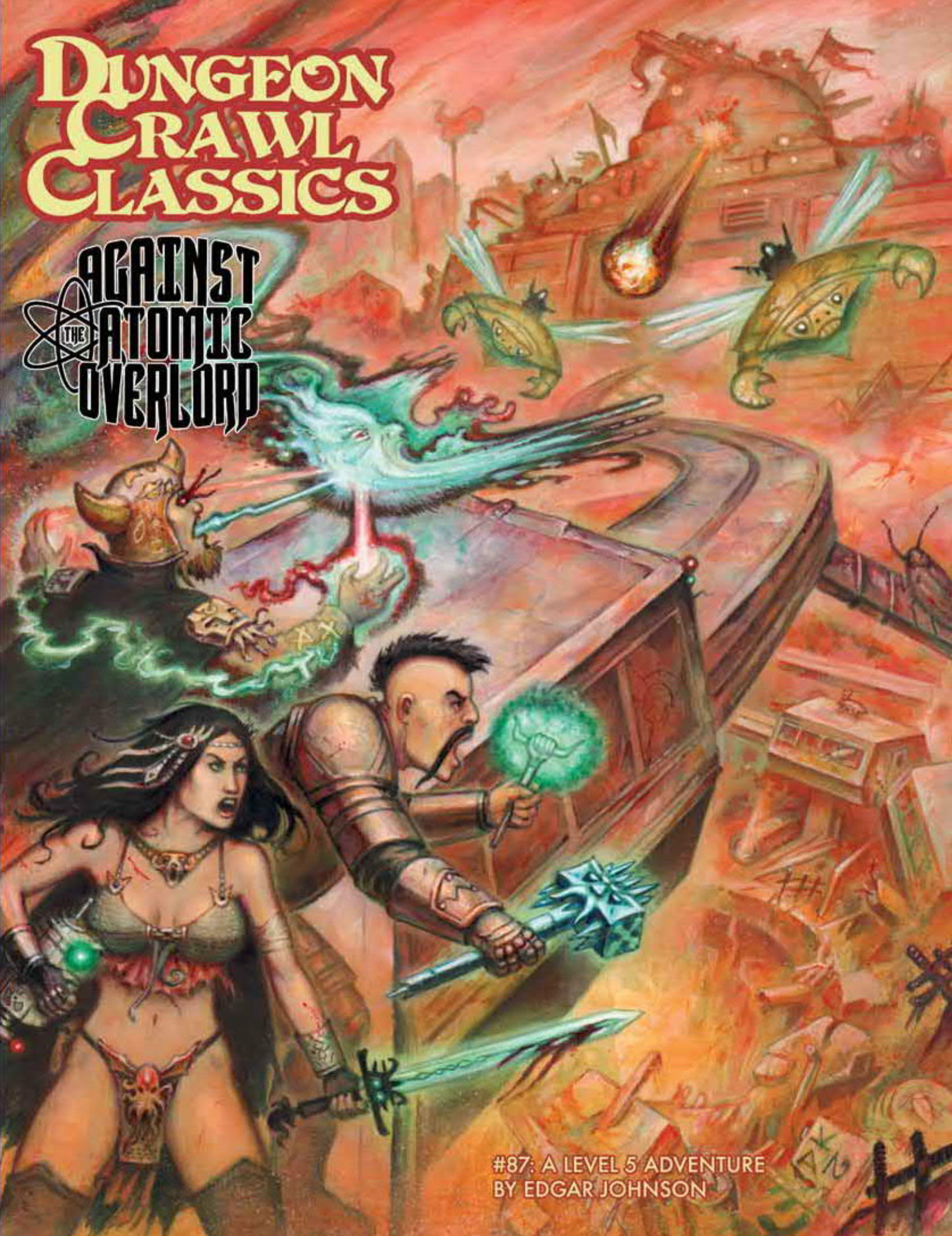


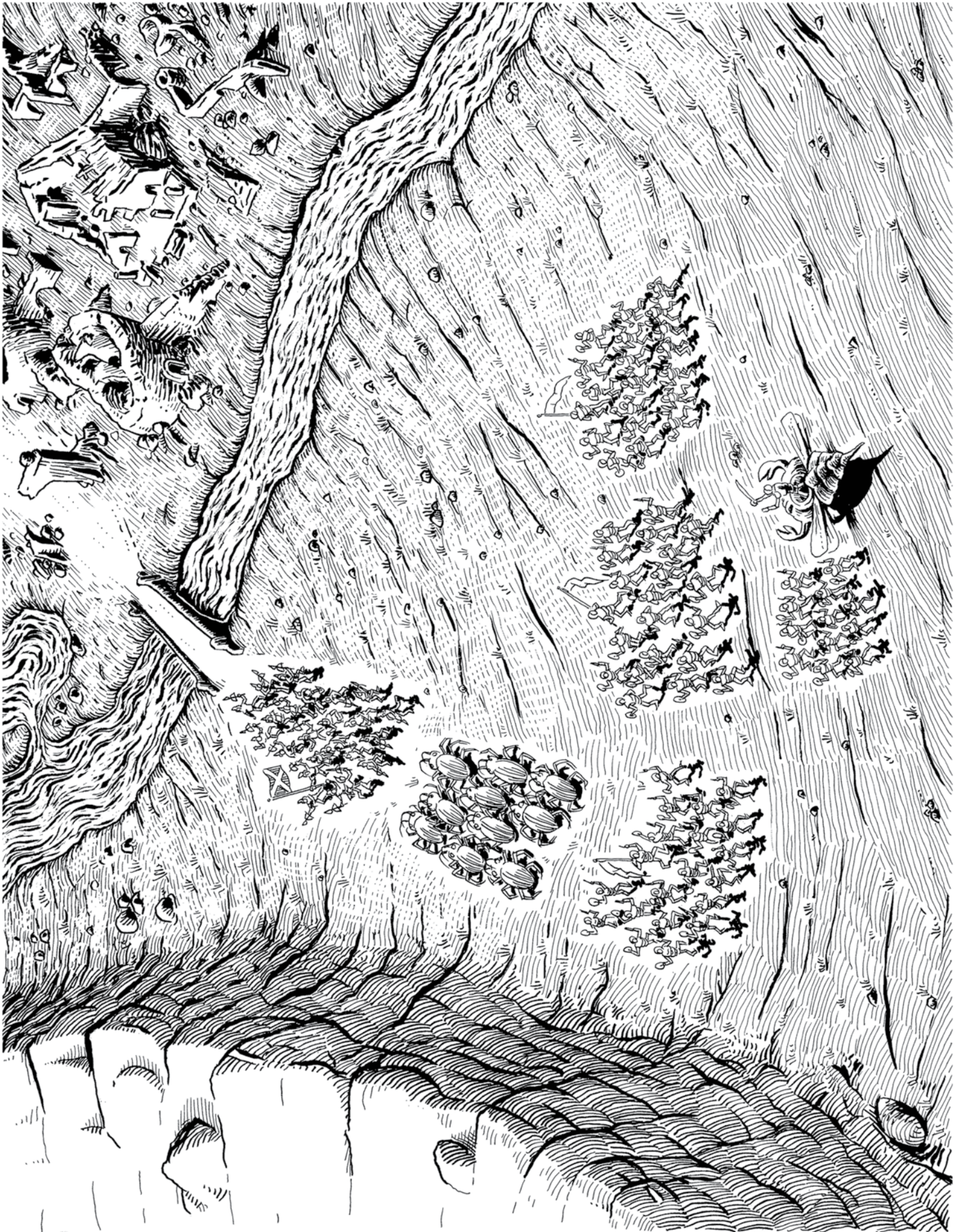
DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

AGAINST THE ATOMIC OVERLORD



#87: A LEVEL 5 ADVENTURE
BY EDGAR JOHNSON

HANDOUT A



AGAINST THE ATOMIC OVERLORD

A LEVEL 5 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



After being transported to the hitherto-unknown planet Mezar-Kul, the adventurers find themselves embroiled in a war between Itai the Oracle and its hardy band of strange and savage humanoids, and the Overlord, a mighty necromancer secure in its fortress of blackened metal. Against the grinding offense of the Overlord's troops, the plight of Itai and its guardians seemed hopeless; but then it was contacted by a spirit of the void – Atraz A'zul, Mother of Spiders – who made a bargain with Itai. In exchange for everything Itai knows, Atraz A'zul sends help in the form of the adventuring party. The powers of their spellcasters can unlock the power of an ancient weapon, and defeat Itai's greatest enemy.

To succeed, they must navigate a warzone while avoiding its many dangers, find a potent weapon and bargain with its alien guardians, and slay the Overlord in its colossal metal fortress.

Against the Atomic Overlord is designed for six to eight 5th-level characters, including at least one spellcaster.

GETTING TO MEZAR-KUL (AND BACK)



The judge should transport the party to Mezar-Kul by means that make sense within her own campaign. Here are a few ideas to consider:

- A wizard drafts the party to fulfill a patron's quest. She promises them rich rewards, and offers a substantial retainer. They arrive on Mezar-Kul via the *planar step* spell, and are given means to return.
- One of the party's wizards finds a grimoire filled with speculations about a hidden world, and a ritual to create a gateway leading there. This "found" item has, in fact, been planted by a powerful patron.
- A mysterious tower appears nearby. It is actually a rocket ship sent to ensnare adventurers and bring them to Mezar-Kul.
- The party finds a device capable of transporting them to Mezar-Kul.

However you choose to get the party to Mezar-Kul, start with the "Player Beginning" section. Also consider how the party might return. Examples: Allying with Da'brok the alien scientist, who has a spaceship of his own; or having a spell or scroll of *planar step*, a technological or arcane portal, or some other contrivance for the players to access.

BACKGROUND



Mezar-Kul is a ravaged land, the site of an endless war with no clear winners, and host to hordes of horrible mutant creatures of incredible size and ferocity, all vying for their next meals. These creatures are

SUMMARY OF ADVENTURE ELEMENTS

Against the Atomic Overlord is a combination hex crawl and dungeon crawl that follows a plot path, but also allows for sandbox play. Keyed encounters in separate areas of the hex map contain plot points, but the abundance of un-keyed terrain means that players may make choices outside of the areas elaborated here. To adapt to player decisions that go beyond the written adventure, keep some things in mind:

- **The factions** act consistently in their own interests. Use what you know about them to decide what they do, both in regard to each other and in reaction to the PCs' progress through the adventure (see Appendix A).
- **Most of the dead city's denizens inhabit the Undercity** (Areas 2, 3, and 4), fortifying and defending strongholds, and using key terrain features to protect themselves (e.g., guarding bridges and other chokepoints). Improvise these locations as needed.
- **The surface is mostly deserted**, but there are possible encounters with representatives of every faction, wild creatures, and artifacts of the war (e.g., landmines, toxic substances, and pockets of mutagenic radiation). Some are included, but judges may wish to add to them (see Appendix C).
- **A monorail system** runs through the eastern region of the hex map (see sidebar: The Monorail, page 12). It is easier and safer to ride the monorail than to cross the ruins. Vor the Teknikat (Appendix A) controls the monorail and its stations, and knows what occurs there.
- **To "win,"** the PCs must locate the Great Egg (Area 4-6B) and deploy this device near the Overlord's megatank fortress (Area 5-1A). Itai the sentient AI (Area 2-11) can provide directions. Da'brok the alien scientist (Area 4-1) can tell them how to change the device to heal the planet instead of corrupting it totally. The monorail's Gold Line (Area 3-12) is the easiest delivery method.
- **Activating the Great Egg** requires spellcasters (see "Triggering the Great Egg," page 17).
- **Magic can interfere with the technology.** If a spellcaster uses a spell, have that PC roll a DC 13 save modified by his or her Luck. If it fails, nearby devices (or creatures) are affected (e.g., blowout, shutdown, damaged, runaway effect, etc., depending on object's function).

survivors, whether because of fighting ability, telepathic and other mental powers, or simply because they run fast and hide well.

The dead city is the site of an ancient missile strike. A high line of cliffs bisects the city, east side divided from west. A river flows through the city from north to south, hugging the east (low) side of the cliffs.

In the western region, a huge, still-radioactive crater and a field of blasted rubble, covered in rank, mutant vegetation and populated with creatures out of nightmare, stand testament to the power of the Ancients' martial prowess. Mutagenic radiation creates a hellscape of disease and corruption.

The east region was partially shielded by the cliffs. Many tall buildings were reduced to ruins, but some of the lower and hardier structures remain, and much of the city's monorail system still stands, many sections fully operational. On the northern edge of this region stands the metal fortress of the Overlord, a now-decrepit mobile command post and remnant of the war.

Among the southern ruins of this region, and along the monorail lines, the minions of Vor the Teknikat, a maker of living constructs, contend with the other factions, especially the hated Overlord (see sidebar: Factions of the Dead City).

At the far eastern edge of the city, Da'brok the alien scientist lives in a hidden missile silo containing the Great Egg, a device the PCs must possess to fulfill their quest.



ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter	Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	C	8 kozaks with overseers	3-2	C	6 to 10 feral korgu
		6 malga		T	irradiated water
		25 Urah	3-3	C	2 gorva
1-2	C	1 warlord with overseer	3-4	C	0 to 16 feral korgu
		12 kozaks with overseers	3-5	C	chance of feral korgu
2-3	T	fire bomb	3-7	C	zarn
2-5	C	6 or more Urah	4-1	C	Da'brok
2-6	T	electrical grid			12 korgu
2-8	C	6 or more Urah	4-6B	P	the Great Egg
2-9	C	12 Urah	5-1A	C	megatank
2-10	C	20 Urah			4 + 4 screamers
2-11	T	knockout gas			2 clubbers
	C	20 Urah	5-1B	C	2 warlords
2-14	C	4 feral korgu			16 kozaks with overseers
3-1	C	nanoplasm			

FACTIONS OF THE DEAD CITY

The four factions of the dead city have different interests, philosophies, and tactics. They are described in detail in Appendix A, and summarized here. Judges should keep the following in mind as they role-play the various factions:

Itai the Oracle and the Urah

- **What:** Sentient artificial intelligence and genetically engineered humanoid guardians.
- **Want:** To end the war through triggering the Great Egg.
- **Where:** Stronghold under western cliffs (Area 2).
- **Play Style:** Itai is wily and manipulative; the Urah adapt quickly in combat, using both formations and guerilla tactics.
- **The PCs:** Itai arms them with weapons and biased information, and uses them to achieve its ends.

The Overlord and Its Army

- **What:** Cybernetic brain in a gigantic tank, and its enslaved army.
- **Wants:** Total conquest.
- **Where:** Ruins on north side of dead city (Area 5-1A).
- **Play Style:** Direct in all things; both recruits and enslaves foes; its army uses formations and rigid tactical discipline.

- **The PCs:** Persuades them to join, enslaves them, or kills them.

Da'brok and the Korgu

- **What:** Alien scientist and genetically engineered octopoid guardians.
- **Want:** To study war and unlock secret of Great Egg (Area 4-6B).
- **Where:** Derelict missile silo on east side of the dead city (Area 4).
- **Play Style:** Peaceful and earnest; guardians use ambush tactics and lead enemies into traps.
- **The PCs:** Aids them and helps them figure out how to use the Great Egg to heal Mezar-Kul.

Vor the Teknikat and Her Constructs

- **What:** Cybernetic creature and her constructs.
- **Want:** Immortality and a functioning city.
- **Where:** Southeastern ruins and along monorail lines.
- **Play Style:** Watchful and protective of city assets; constructs use direct and aggressive frontal assault with little concern for tactics.
- **The PCs:** Watches them and skirmishes if necessary, but confronts/attacks them only if threatened.

ADVENTURING IN THE DEAD CITY



gainst the Atomic Overlord sends the PCs into a warzone, a desperate and perilous place where they should feel out of control and anxious. Judges should press the party frequently, using a combination of ambushes, booby traps, and the like to keep the players on edge, and occasionally throw enough force at them to make retreat the only smart option. The opposition has no mercy, and failure by players to use smart tactics, including scouting, cover, and advantages from terrain features, can easily result in total party annihilation. At the same time, the party must be careful not to expend its resources before the final, decisive encounter.

Though there are many keyed encounter areas in this adventure, the dead city is too vast to elaborate in this space. Should your adventuring party go wandering, keep the following in mind: The dead city consists of two main "layers" (surface and underground) and two main regions (east and west). Treat the surface area as a hex crawl and the Undercity as a dungeon crawl.

Surface Areas and Encounters

The surface layer of the city is divided by a line of high cliffs with a river running along them on the eastern (lower) side. The western (upper) side of the city is a dangerous, mutagenic hellscape which gives rise to wild creatures to complement the dangers of the four factions. All creatures are detailed in Appendix B. Judges should include their own, if needed or desired.

The ruined surface areas have few intact buildings. The monorail stations remain the only significant structures to escape destruction. Dangerous encounters can occur on the surface, with troops of the various factions, among other hazards.

Underground Areas and Encounters

Aside from a few lone, alpha predators (like the zarn in Area 3-7), the underground consists mostly of long, empty stretches of tunnels and chambers. There certainly are a variety of weird creatures, but few of them endanger the adventurers—this world's equivalent of cockroaches. However, there are many bands of wild korgu, and it's not uncommon to find Vor's constructs underground—especially nanoplasms, the worker bees to her queenly self.

PLAYER BEGINNING



he dead city is the site of the final battle of what might be the last war. It is home to an artificial intelligence known as Itai the Oracle and its guardians, the Urah.

However the PCs might arrive, their coming is anticipated by Itai the Oracle, as the fulfillment of a bargain with a supernatural patron, Atraz A'zul. Itai has sent the Urah to escort the adventurers to its subterranean compound (Area 2). Unfortunately, the Overlord has also sent a heavy patrol into the area (1-1), disrupting this meeting.

PART 1: FULFILLMENT OF THE BARGAIN

Area 1-1 – Arrival Area: *You arrive in a wasteland. Gusty winds blow grey-white dust, forming swirling devils and billowing clouds, and making it difficult to see more than a few yards*

through the haze. For a moment, the northern horizon clears, revealing a ruined city, a few broken spires clawing at the skies above. A river runs north-south through the center of the city, bisecting it. Before you are able to see much more, a group of shadowy figures emerges from the dust. Just as you register their presence, two raise their arms and attack with bursts of eldritch power!

The PCs are attacked by a patrol of the Overlord's troops, located on the right, rear flank of a larger battle between the Overlord's forces and Itai's guardians, the Urah.

Malga (6): Init +5; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus shock); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 8 each; MV 45'; Act 1d20; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks), shock (DC 18 Fort save or stunned for 1 turn); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will immune; AL L.

Kozaks (8): Init +1; Atk saw +4 melee (1d8+4) or arc gun +5 missile (1d8+2 plus DC 13 Fort save or stunned for 1d4+1 rounds); AC 16; HD 5d10; hp 25 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks), over-seer; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will immune; AL L.





Overseers (8): Init -1; Atk control spike +2 (1d2); AC 18; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mind control (may control its host: opposed Will save to resist), cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks); SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +7; AL L.

After two rounds of combat, the party is joined in the fight by 25 Urah cavalry (charging in from the east via the river's shallow ford), who help them defeat the Overlord's troops.

Say something like the following: *A formation of humanoid creatures with weirdly-mottled, grey skins, and riding huge, fierce-looking mounts breaks like a wave upon the attacking foe, sending them tumbling. The riders slash about them with heavy glaives attached to strange missile weapons, with which they also fire bolts at the fleeing remainder of the enemy force.*

Go directly to Area 1-2.

Area 1-2 – Battle at the Edge of the Dead City: *The skirmish over, several of the creatures dismount to stab viciously at the wriggling, crab-like creatures attached to the backs of their foes' skulls.*

The winds calm, and you see that you stand on the edge of a greater struggle. To the northeast, toward the ruins, a pack of the weird, dog-like creatures harries a force of retreating infantry. To your north, you see troops in formation moving to engage

them. Their commander floats atop a horseless chariot directing the larger force. It signals commands to its troops, and they drive toward the retreating infantry. The smaller force retreats rapidly, carrying their wounded and dead with them. Your rescuers leap back onto their mounts and charge toward the force led by the charioteer, waving for you to join them.

Show the players Handout A.

The "friendly" force attacks the warlord in his floating chariot, even if the PCs do not follow. The creatures listed below are the main force surrounding the warlord. If all are slain, the rest of the army routs. If the warlord is killed, its squad must be controlled directly by the Overlord with their overseers—weird, crab-like creatures tapped into their skulls—reducing their initiative and attack rolls by 2.

Warlord: Init +4; Atk saber +7 melee (1d8+3) or plasma cannon +4 missile (2d6 plus DC 12 Ref save or 1d4 splash damage to any in 20' radius); AC 17; HD 6d12; hp 41; MV 30' afoot or 60' in chariot; Act 1d20+1d16; SP overseer; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; AL L.

Kozaks (12): Init +1; Atk saw +4 melee (1d8+4) or arc gun +5 missile (1d8+2 plus DC 13 Fort save or stunned for 1d4+1 rounds); AC 16; HD 5d10; hp 24 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks), overseer; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will immune; AL L.

Overseers (13): Init -1; Atk control spike +2 (1d2); AC 18; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mind control (may control its host: opposed Will save to resist), cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks); SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +7; AL L.

Area 1-3 – The Aftermath of Battle: *The remainder of the enemy host has broken off the attack and retreated northwest. The creatures who aided you approach as their foes fade into the haze. The leader speaks to you in an unknown language, but a tinny voice emanates from a small box strapped to its chest, and requests (in Common) that you accompany them to see Itai the Oracle, who is expecting you.*

If the players decide not to follow the Urah to see Itai, the judge should adapt the story based on these guidelines:

- It's best that the PCs follow the Urah, who lead the party to Itai the Oracle, but not strictly necessary. If they don't go willingly, the increasingly desperate Itai eventually sends the Urah to capture one or two of the PCs so that it can make its offer.
- Following the Overlord's troops leads them around the city toward Area 5-1A. The Overlord attempts to capture and dominate them with overseers.
- Entering the dead city on their own leads them into the rubble. It's a dangerous place full of fell beasts, and the locale of frequent, factional skirmishes. It also contains a functional monorail system.

PART 2: UNDER THE DEAD CITY



Judges' Note: Much of what follows assumes that the party follows the Urah willingly from the initial battle site, into Itai's lair in the Undercity. If so, the party is led straight to Area 2-11 to meet Itai the Oracle. Should the party venture into the Undercity without benefit of escort, the Urah reaction depends on the PCs' behavior. The Urah have been told not to kill them unless absolutely necessary. The Urah attempt first to parley with them, to convince them to attend the Oracle. If the PCs refuse, the Urah use knockout gas grenades (DC 20 Fort save). Urah are immune. They are bound and brought to Area 2-11. In addition to the forces listed in the area descriptions, there are 40 more Urah in Areas 2-10 and 2-11. They supply reinforcements as needed.

Area 2-1 – Underground Entrance: *A mostly-hidden tunnel enters the cliffside to your north. At first, it's little more than a crack. It widens gradually as you go deeper into the rock, the daylight behind you fading rapidly. You soon find yourselves among rooms and corridors that clearly are parts of constructed underground spaces.*

Many of the corridors and rooms in the Undercity are abandoned by the Urah, and filled with collapsed passages, vermin, and clutter. Traps are deployed in some of the spaces to take care of any larger predators that might try to take up residence. If they are not traveling with the Urah, the PCs don't know which rooms contain traps or creatures, and won't be led through the "safe" route.

Area 2-2 – Collapsed Area: *A corridor ends in a collapse of strange stone, with roughly broken rods of metal jutting out from it, like bones from flesh.*

Many areas in the ruins reveal the presence of reinforced concrete, steel beams, and other detritus of modern construction methods. In a playtest, one of the dwarven characters was told that the reinforced concrete "tastes like pure mortar, but has bones of iron." Judges are encouraged to describe such anachronisms without using modern terms for what the PCs encounter.

Area 2-3 – Trapped Torture Room: *The door opens inward into a mostly barren room. Three figures hang suspended and unmoving from manacles fixed to the south wall. They do not react as you enter. On the north side, a pile of clothing, weapons, and other oddments lie on the floor in a loose pile. A table stands against the south side of the eastern wall, and there is a door on the north side of the eastern wall.*

The room appears to be a torture chamber, as evidenced by prisoners and implements on the table. It actually is a trap set by the Urah. The "corpses" suspended from the south wall wear the clothing of the Overlord's kozak troops, but are dummies. The one nearest the western door is an improvised fire bomb, and the others are filled with bladders of flammable jelly. Any significant jarring of the "prisoners" sets off the flame trap (2d8 damage + 1d4 damage per round until fire is extinguished via DC 15 Ref save; the

character setting off the trap takes 1d8 additional damage the first round). A successful Find Traps roll (DC 15) determines the presence of the device, but not its exact function. Disarming it is difficult (DC 20), as it has a motion-activated, electronic trigger.

If the PCs set off the trap, the Urah guards in Area 2-5 come to investigate, and attempt to capture the surviving PCs. If they resist, the Urah send a runner for reinforcements.

Area 2-4 – Septic Processing: *Beyond the door is a room filled with piping of various diameters; some of the largest pipes have metal wheels extending from their joints. The floor is covered in metal grating, which rattles and echoes with a low vibration, and flickering lights can be seen to the northwest.*

The northwestern corner of this room contains the controls for the area's septic system (show players Handout E). If PCs pull any levers or turn any valves, the effects are as follows:

- Changing the "A" switch to the leftmost setting causes dangerous overpressure, and triggers a release valve. If this happens, the blast door drops from the ceiling to isolate the controls from the rising sewerage and close/lock the western door. Methane begins to fill the room. The PCs must react quickly to escape before they are overcome by the fumes (Fort save each round, DC 5 + 5 per round). Any open flame or fire-based spell ignites the methane after 2 rounds (2d6 damage per round). Opening one of the doors requires a DC 20 Pick Locks check.
- Changing any of the "B" switches to the "up" position begins one aspect of the facility's cleaning cycle. **Switch 1:** The blast door drops. **Switch 2:** The area outside is flushed with cleaning chemicals "(DC 15 Fort save or blinded until healed). **Switch 3:** Steam cycle (any PC not shielded by blast door takes 40 damage, DC 25 Fort save for half damage).
- The "C" valves control water or sewage in the Urah stronghold (Area 2-5). Turning them can shut down (clockwise) or activate (counter-clockwise) the system.

The Urah guards in Area 2-5 come to investigate the alarm, and attempt to capture any surviving PCs. The Urah send a runner for reinforcements, if attacked.

Area 2-5 – Urah Guardpost: *A steady glow of blue-white light emanates from the eastern passage of a four-way intersection. The other passages extend north and west into darkness.*

About a half mile into the Undercity, the PCs encounter a group of 6 Urah guards carrying electric lanterns. Normally, they would wait in the dark, but, on the orders of Itai, they are attempting not to surprise the PCs, and possibly cause a conflict. If the PCs are accompanied by Urah from Area 1-3, then they are waved through. If the PCs chose not to accompany the Urah initially, this group greets them and

invites them to speak with Itai the Oracle. Should the PCs attack, they respond in kind, raise an alarm for additional reinforcements (5 additional Urah arrive every round), overwhelm and subdue the PCs, and bring them to Area 2-11.

Urah (6): Init +7; Atk glaive +3 melee (1d8+3+deed die), claw +3 melee (1d4+3+deed die), or spring gun +3 missile (1d6+deed die); AC 17; HD 5d12; hp 35 each; MV 35'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP martial expertise (deed die [1d6], improved threat range [19-20]), camouflage (+5 to hide), retractable claws, auto-euthanasia; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; AL L.

Area 2-6 – Vermin Trap: *Assorted trash, bones, and other detritus litter the floor of this octagonal chamber, and a smell of decaying meat permeates the air. An arched passageway leads away to the north.*

A grid under the trash emits an electrical discharge when pressure is applied (2d8 damage, DC 20 Fort save for half). Rotting meat serves as bait for potential vermin. There is a 10-foot “safe zone” around the perimeter of the room. A trapdoor is concealed under a pile of trash and rubble on the east side of the room, beyond the grid. An open passageway leads north to a locked, steel door (DC 15 Pick Locks check to open).

Area 2-7 – Killzone: *The heavy steel door opens inward onto a stone platform. A bridge of steel grating extends north, toward a fortified area.*

Note that Areas 2-7 and 2-8 are very close together. Six Urah troopers can fire (in cover, behind sandbags) from 2-8 into 2-7, and into the corridor beyond, if the door is left open (stats listed in description for Area 2-8).

If the PCs are accompanied by other Urah, the guards in Area 2-8 hail the approaching group and wave them through. If they are not with other Urah, they challenge the PCs, and summon reinforcements. 10 additional Urah arrive within 2 rounds, and additional reinforcements (if needed) arrive at a rate of 2d3 per round. They attempt to parley with PCs to meet peacefully with Itai, but fight if attacked. Quarter is granted if the party surrenders. The Urah are behind sandbag fortifications, and ranged attacks against them are at a -2 penalty to hit.

Area 2-8 – Fortified Guard Post: *A short bridge of steel grating leads to a platform fortified with piled sandbags. 6 humanoids stand guard here. They have more of the strange lanterns. You can see cached food and water, and sheaves of bolts for their strange crossbows.*

The guard post sits atop a steel grating platform. A ladder on the northeastern edge drops 20' to the concrete floor. Steel poles support the grating where the guards are posted. The room below contains crates and barrels of supplies. A steel door in the east wall leads to Area 2-12.

Urah (6): Init +7; Atk glaive +3 melee (1d8+3+deed die), claw +3 melee (1d4+3+deed die), or spring gun +3 missile

(1d6+deed die); AC 17; HD 5d12; hp 35 each; MV 35'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP martial expertise (deed die [1d6], improved threat range [19-20]), camouflage (+5 to hide), retractable claws, auto-euthanasia; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; AL L.

Area 2-9 – Urah Common Area: *The heavy door slides noiselessly into the ceiling, opening into a large room. A dozen of the humanoids are busy at various tasks, from maintaining weapons to eating. In the northeast corner, a railing surrounds a spiral stairway leading below. To the west, an open doorway reveals another room.*

This room is filled with tables and seating. An area has been cleared for “friendly” hand-to-hand sparring. Should the PCs spend much time here, they may be challenged to a “no-claws” grappling match.

SIMPLE GRAPPLING

If one or more of the adventurers chooses to grapple with the Urah (or anyone else), handle it as follows:

Mighty Deeds of Arms may be used (e.g., pushbacks and trips and throws in DCC RPG core rules).

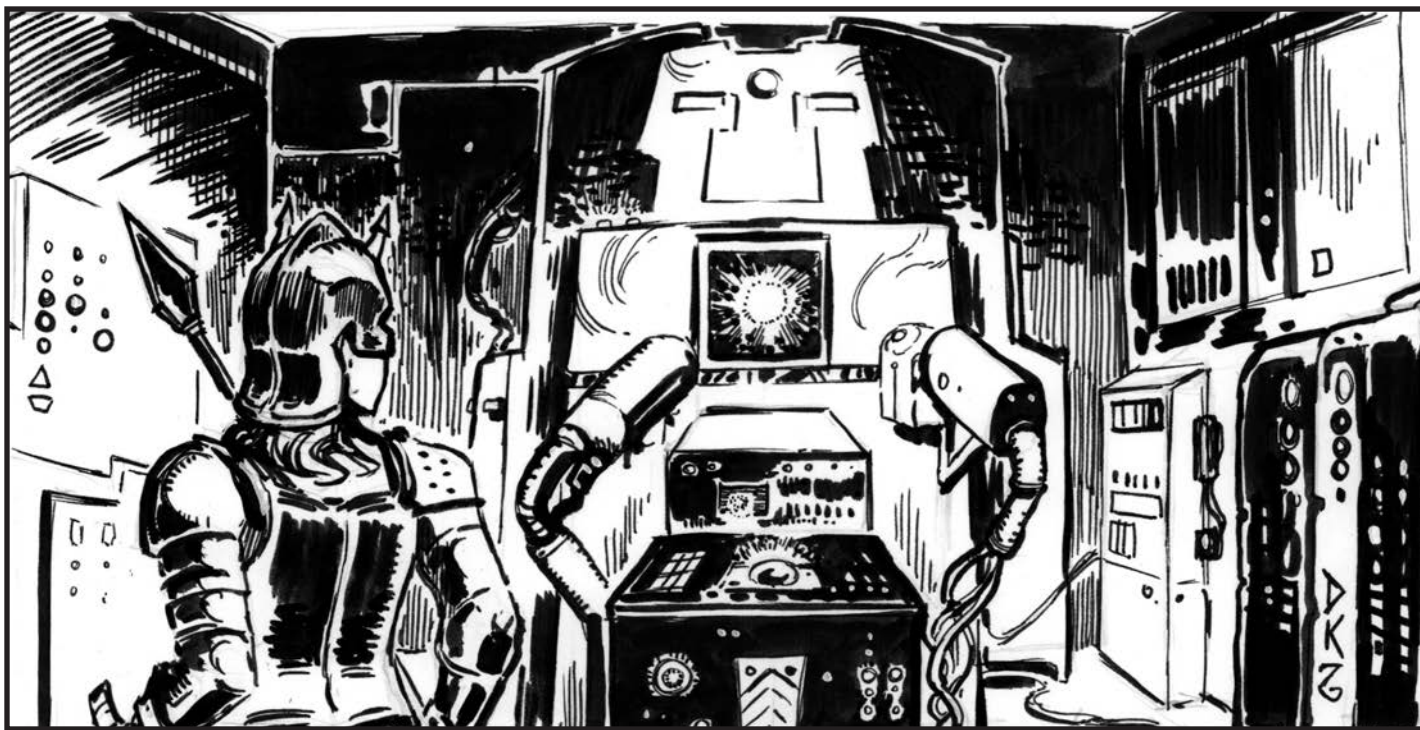
Non-martial PCs can also grapple, but don't get a deed die. Thieves and halflings, though, can use the Luck die.

Grappling is a test of Strength and Agility (Urah are at +3/+3 for each).

After an initiative roll, each grappler acts in turn. He or she may either attempt to (1) takedown, (2) escape, (3) clinch, (4) reverse, or (5) pin an opponent.

- **Takedown:** a trip or throw to put the opponent prone on the ground (Strength or Agility).
- **Escape:** an attempt to break contact (Agility only).
- **Clinch:** a hold or position that puts the opponent at a disadvantage (Strength only).
- **Reverse:** a maneuver to change which combatant controls a clinch (Agility only).
- **Pin:** pressing the opponent's back to the ground. A successful takedown and clinch must precede the attempt to pin (Strength only).

The applicable modifier (Strength or Agility) should be added to a d20 roll to determine the outcome of an attempt. The match is over once a combatant has been pinned. Judges could modify these simple rules to provide a more flamboyant “lucha libre” style, and various grapplers can have signature maneuvers resulting in the outcomes discussed above. Judges could even provide steel cages for matches, folding chairs, etc., for more “color,” if desired.



Area 2-10 – Living Quarters: *Tables, chairs, and bunk beds fill this room. An arched opening to the south leads into a bathing chamber.*

The bunks are made of welded metal pipe, painted grey. A footlocker sits at each end of the bunks.

Area 2-11 – Itai the Oracle: *After descending the spiral stair, you enter a short corridor leading east to a steel door. Beyond the door is a small, dark room with a ladder climbing 20' to a small platform and another door.*

Assuming that the PCs are here willingly, they are allowed to climb the ladder and enter the door at the top.

Hostile PCs can enter the ladder room, but both doors lock (DC 25 Pick Locks check) and the compartment floods with knockout gas (DC 25 Fort save or fall unconscious for 1d4+1 turns). If any PC saves, she remains conscious, but extremely groggy (-4 to all attacks, saves, skill checks, and spell checks). In either case, Urah storm the compartment (they are immune to poison) and bind the PCs before taking them up the ladder.

Once they are in Itai the Oracle's chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

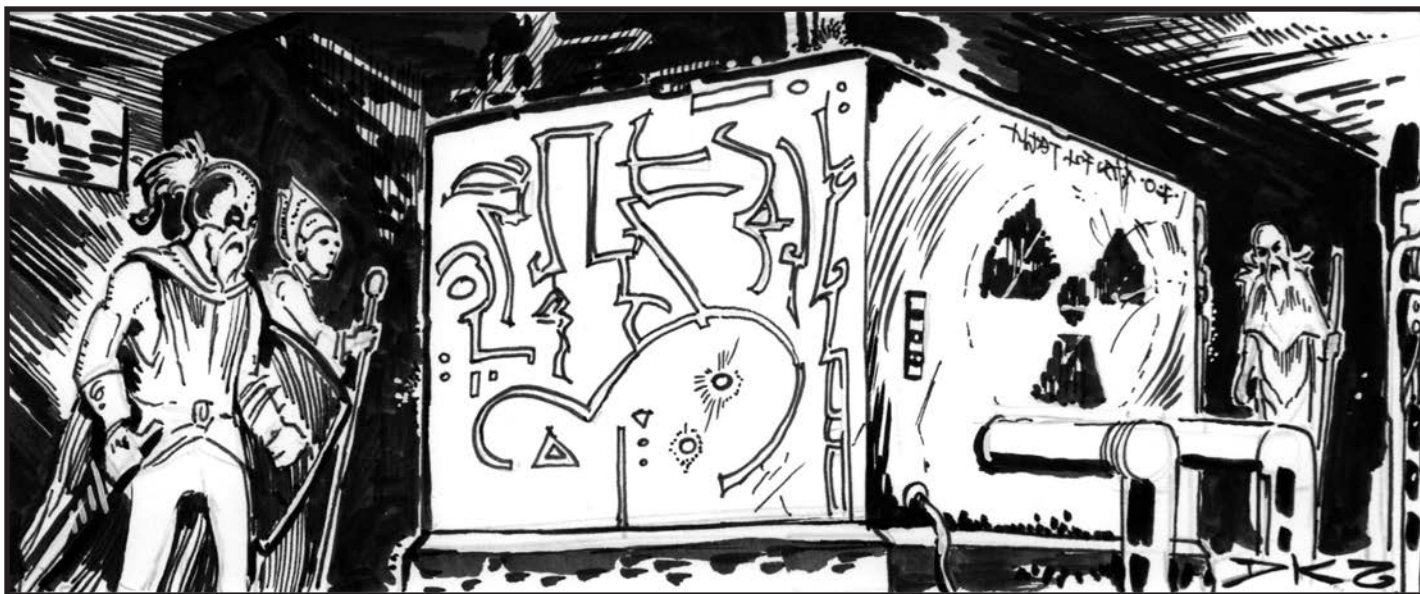
You enter a room with more guards, behind sandbag fortifications. Beyond them, a round platform rises from the center of the room, and metal boxes covered with colored, blinking lights and spinning discs stand along the walls. Before you have time to take it all in, a disembodied voice emanates from a small box on the front of the central platform. "Welcome. It is good that you are here. I have awaited your arrival."

The following framework provides a brief guide for the PCs' conversation with Itai the Oracle:

- Itai speaks in terms familiar to the PCs, with no ref-

erences to technology or other anachronistic turns of phrase. For example, Itai claims to be a spirit imprisoned in the box from which it speaks, but can project itself elsewhere, where similar artifacts reside.

- Itai wants them to quest for a device it calls the "Great Egg." It provides a device to lead them to its location: a small box with a black glass panel. A red dot on the panel represents the direction of the missile silo (Area 4). The PCs must decide how best to reach it, starting in the bottom of Area 2-8.
- Itai also provides a key card for the silo holding the Great Egg (Area 4-6) and the Gold Line of the monorail (Area 3-12), and a "magical" artifact they can use to help Itai speak to them (remote uplink module). Itai has lost control of the silo, but once the uplink is connected to the command center controls (Area 4-2), it can access the computers. Once it does so, Itai becomes aware of Da'brok and his korgu followers, and attempts to parley with Da'brok, if the PCs have not already done so.
- Itai also reveals the presence of the monorail and explains how to use the "demon carriage."
- If the PCs seem reluctant, Itai offers to provide a translator box, "magical" light sources, and arms to supplement their own: 4 spring guns and 80 bolts.
- Itai promises rich rewards from the Spider Goddess, Atraz A'zul (or another patron), who has promised a favor to anyone aiding this quest.
- Itai warns them of the presence of korgu in the Undercity, and that there are many other dangers.
- Itai shows them the symbol for mutagenic radiation (player Handout C), and explains its significance in terms they can understand: Magical corruption.



Area 2-12 – Entrance to Underground Tunnel Network: *The humanoids lead you down a ladder to a small door with a wheel in its center. One creature twists the wheel counter-clockwise and pushes open the door, revealing an unlit space beyond. It instructs you to go to the round room and then south, before following the directions from the directional device.*

A dank, concrete corridor goes east 30' and climbs a flight of stairs to a round room with two doors (east and south). The east door leads into another darkened corridor, and off the map. If necessary, judges can key a "dungeon" map using the encounter tables (Appendix C). The south door leads to a corridor that splits off the east in two places. Continuing south brings the party to the secret door to Area 2-14.

Area 2-13 A&B – Reactor Rooms: *Two large, blocky vaults made of steel and more of the strange, formed stone fill this space. Two heavy doors face each other across an interior corridor. The eastern door is marked prominently with a strange sigil.*

The "strange sigil" is the symbol for mutagenic radiation (show players Handout C). Both doors are secured with padlocked (DC 15 Pick Locks check), screw wheel handles.

Room A: *Tall columns of metal and glass arc with electricity, and bundles of cables cross the floor and walls. Shadows from the blue-white lightning dance jerkily against the walls. A large box is attached to the wall, just inside the door.*

The columns are pretty, but very dangerous for anyone who touches them (4d6 electrical damage, no save). A switch panel just inside the door (right side) can shut them down, but also shuts down power to Itai's complex. Should the PCs do this and not restore power, Itai sends Urah to fix them. If the PCs wreck the equipment, Itai can't contact them when they reach the silo complex (Area 4).

Room B: *A metal box with pipes flowing in and out of it dominates this room. A glass panel on the box's side pulses with fluctuating columns of green light, their tips occasionally flashing into amber. Another, smaller box stands just inside the door, to the north. Gridded panels of lights, some glowing and some darker, lay on its slanted surface. Two rounded glass portals cover what appear to be compass needles, which fluctuate slowly within a green arc.*

The box is an atomic reactor, and the pipes lead to the cooling system. It's functioning perfectly. Should the PCs be so bold and foolish as to manipulate its controls, or should any wizard make a casting roll, have each person doing these things make a Luck roll. If successful, nothing untoward occurs. If it's unsuccessful, have that PC roll a d7:

(1) **containment breach**—DC 25 Fort save versus death, permanently lose 1d3 Stamina per day until healed (treat as poison); (2) **vent**—a valve opens, releasing mutagenic radiation (roll 1d3 times on Table 5-1 [page 18] for effects, halve results and round up); (3-6) **low-power mode**—lighting dims; (7) **emergency shutdown**—all power to complex shuts down in one turn. Itai the Oracle enters standby mode, unavailable to the PCs.

Area 2-14 – Secret Entrance: *The corridor ends in a wall with a panel of polished metal. Small, square objects protrude at the corners of the panel.*

The wall actually is an access panel for the maintenance area beyond. The squares can be turned counter-clockwise to release the catches holding the panel in place.

Behind the metal panel is small room with a steel door on the west wall. The strange torch mounted to the wall by the door seems to have gone out, for it casts no light.

The light has been disabled by the feral korgu scouts hiding on the wall near the ceiling. They remain motionless, and trail the party cautiously as they leave this area. The korgu alert the tribe of their brethren who live in Area 3 as soon as they believe it safe to do so. (See Appendix B for more on the korgu.) The steel door is locked (DC 15 Pick Locks check), and leads into a corridor stretching west to a ladder topped by an unlocked trapdoor, which is blocked by heavy debris (DC 15 Str check to open into Area 2-6).

Korgu (4): Init +3 (75% chance to surprise if hiding); Atk claw +1 melee (1d4) or acid +4 missile (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP amphibious, boneless; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

PART 3: THE GREAT EGG HUNT



ow, the PCs must reach the silo where the Great Egg lies dormant, awaiting its destiny. If they have allied with Itai, the PCs receive a map (player Handout B), through the Undercity to the Arena mono-rail station, and onward to the silo. A keycard opens the silo complex to them, and enables passage on a hidden mono-rail line (Gold Line). It's just a matter of getting there in one piece.

If they did not ally with Itai, then their path is less certain. The Urah continue to recruit them for the Oracle's cause. The other factions still take an interest in them, for their own reasons, especially the Overlord and Da'brok.

Area 3-1 – Descent: *After about a half mile, you find yourselves in a small, round room coated with slimy green plant matter, and water drips slowly from the ceiling. A metal ladder, fixed to the ledge on which you stand, descends the western wall into darkness.*

The ladder descends 30 feet. A puddle of liquid lies at the bottom, and drains toward a round opening about 6 feet in diameter, leading to the east. The puddle conceals a nanoplasm which is gathering organic materials for Vor's use. The PCs serve this purpose just as well as the plant matter in this chamber (which is harmless algae). Beyond the round opening, a pipe slopes very slightly downward toward the east.

Nanoplasm: Init +3; Atk decompile +4 melee (1d3 per round + special); AC special; HD 5d8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to non-magical weapons, synthetic creature (immune to sleep, charm, and any effects requiring a Will save; double damage from electrical and magical attacks; half damage from heat and cold-based attacks; regenerates 1 hp per round), nanoform (see below); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will immune; AL N.

If attacked physically with a non-magical weapon, the nanoplasm "grabs" the weapon (DC 15 Str check to pull free), flows up to encase the object and anything attached to it, and decompiles its target. It can flow through, over, or under anything, deconstructing it on a molecular level, enveloping a living creature within 2 rounds and thereafter inflicting suffocation damage and infection. Suffocating creatures take 1d6 points of Stamina damage per round and die when Stamina reaches 0; lost Stamina is regained within 1 round once breathing is restored. Creatures damaged by nanoplasm must make a Fort save (DC 18) or become infected with nanites. After 1 week, the affected creature begins to crave metals; after 2 weeks the creature becomes a nanoform, a slave of Vor.

Area 3-2 – Sewer Crossing: *The drainpipe slopes gently down ahead of you, opening into a larger space. Where the pipe ends, a narrow bridge spans a gap. From below you hear water flowing rapidly.*

A concrete bridge spans a major wastewater drainage channel, and a swift flow of water moves through a grate and

toward the south. Should the PCs follow the flow of water, they would find themselves near the river and close to the entrance to Itai's stronghold. However, the water is strongly radioactive. Should a PC fall in and fail a DC 25 Fort save, roll on Table 5-1 (page 18) and halve the effect (round down).

The feral korgu hiding in this area are a bigger concern. At this point, the PCs probably are being trailed by four other feral korgu. Six others lurk under the bridge. They strike from hiding as soon as the PCs are strung out along its length. The trailing korgu strike from behind. The korgu on the bridge use it as cover, and both stab at the party with spears and attempt to grapple them and throw them into the water below. As soon as four korgu die, the rest flee. Some go down the walls of the drainage channel, toward the river, but at least two move toward their nearby lair (Area 3-4), carrying an alarm. If it is successful, the korgu begin to evacuate through the arena corridor (Area 3-5) with their young. Some stay behind to skirmish as they retreat, and lure the PCs close to the arena floor and the fearsome zarn sleeping beneath its rocky sands.

Korgu (6 to 10): Init +3 (75% chance to surprise if hiding); Atk claw +1 melee (1d4) or acid +4 missile (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP amphibious, boneless; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

Area 3-3 – Gorva Lair: *The floor of this chamber is covered with fallen stone and masonry. A wide crack in the floor emits sounds of flowing water, and a moss-like substance with slowly writhing tendrils grows along the length of the fissure, which extends up the rear wall and into the ceiling.*

If any PCs approach within 5 feet of the crack, the two gorva within select a target and cooperate to harpoon it and pull it down into the crack until it expires, keeping the body between them and the party. Once the target is dead, they creep deeper, out of sight, to wait for it to ripen and for the rest of the party to leave.

Gorva (2): Init +3; Atk harpoon +4 missile (1d4 plus poison); AC 15; HD 4d6; hp 13 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP harpoon tether (DC 20 Str check to break free), poison (DC 15 Fort save or 1d4 additional damage, plus 1d4 hp damage per round until healed); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; AL N.

Area 3-4 A&B – Feral Korgu Nest: *A high chamber opens before you, a blue-green glow limning its walls. From the ceiling, baglike pods depend like dark fruits from a vine. To the northeast, you see a partly-open door leading into a room beyond.*

This is a nest of korgu and their young (3-4A). If they have been warned by their guards, the party should arrive at an empty room. If not, 10 climb from their sleeping hammocks to the ceiling and attempt to hide in the shadows. Six move into the other room (3-4B) and bar the door from within (DC 20 Pick Lock check). The room is a nursery, and the korgu die to the last to defend their young.

Korgu (up to 16): Init +3 (75% chance to surprise if hiding); Atk claw +1 melee (1d4) or acid +4 missile (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP amphibious, boneless; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

Area 3-5 – Connecting Corridor: If korgu are retreating, read or paraphrase the following: *The creatures flee down a hallway, north-easterly. They occasionally spit acid back at you, as they move toward the door at its end.*

If korgu are not retreating, read or paraphrase this: *A long hallway stretches north-easterly to an open door at its end. From beyond you can make out dim, natural daylight.*

The corridor is painted concrete with broken light fixtures along its ceiling, without cover or other significant features.

Area 3-6 – Middle and Upper Arena Concourses: A wide, flat plaza borders a sunken area surrounded by a railing with several gaps. Across a vast open space, three tiers of seating can be seen: one of them on your level, one above, and one below, like a vast coliseum. Tables and carts and the debris of long-ago entertainments litter the environs.

The PCs enter at the middle level. Other concourses can be reached via spiral ramps in three corners of the arena. (Note: The upper concourse is similar in layout to the middle one, and can be treated as equivalent.) For each concourse, roll twice on the Undercity encounter table in Appendix C to see what objects the PCs find. Otherwise, the area has been cleared by the korgu of vermin and valuables.

Area 3-7 – Arena Grounds: Dim light suffuses a vast room. The floor is a confusion of rubble, bits and pieces of broken masonry, and fine, white sand. The natural light descends upon the central area of the chamber from a large rift in the ceiling, leaving the edges of the room in shadow. The high, keening sound of this planet's endless winds can be heard from above.

The arena is a rectangular, open area filled with sand and rubble, with a cracked dome and row upon row of empty seating filled with the bones and dust of thousands of humanoids. But the dome is not empty. Below the sands of the arena slumbers a zarn. Should the PCs tread on the sands, it awakens, and lies in wait for a few moments before erupting from below to devour them. If PCs get into a running battle with the korgu from Area 3-4, the korgu attempt to draw the party down to the floor of the arena.

Zarn: Init +5; Atk bite +7 melee (2d6+4) and 2x claw +7 melee (1d6+4); AC 18; HD 7d12; hp 40; MV 50'; Act 1d20+1d16+1d16; SP none; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; AL N.

Area 3-8 – Lower Concourse/Arena Entrance: This concourse is very similar to the one above it, but an entrance on the west side leads off into a wide, north-south avenue. To the north it dead-ends, but to the south it leads to elaborate staircases, one moving downward.

The lower concourse rings the arena like the others. Aside from whatever objects can be found here, its most remark-

able feature is the entrance to the monorail station. To reach the station, the PCs must navigate functioning escalators or descend a mundane stair, and pass through a turnstile system. Doing so alerts Vor to their presence. She dispatches several watchers (see page 24 for stats). to observe them. The watchers show up by the time the train emerges into open air, and monitor the party's movements.

THE MONORAIL

The monorail cars (4 to a train) have stainless steel exteriors and blocky shapes, with sliding doors and windows along each side and emergency doors at the ends. Leaping or falling from a moving train above ground results in a fall to the rubble below (6d6 damage); below ground, adjacent characters are crushed against stone walls (6d12 damage).

Each car contains a box with an emergency brake (a large red lever behind a sheet of tempered glass). Pulling this lever causes the train to shriek to a stop in a single round. PCs must make a DC 20 Ref save or be knocked prone, taking 1d4 falling damage.

There are 3 monorail lines:

- **Red Line:** Runs between the Arena station (Area 3-9) and the eastern hills, where it meets the Blue Line at the Central Transit Hub (Area 3-10) and then turns south.
- **Blue Line:** The northern extent of this line no longer operates, though most of the track is intact. Vor has disabled the northern leg to keep the Overlord from using it. The PCs can use the south leg to reach Eastpoint Station (Area 3-11)
- **Gold Line:** The entrance to the Gold Line is hidden below Eastpoint Station (Area 3-11) and runs to what used to be a military base on the northern side of the dead city (Area 5-1B). It served the crews manning the silo, moving personnel and cargo swiftly between them. The tracks where it runs are still in good repair, but their tunnel is blocked by heavy blast doors, and inaccessible from above ground. The Overlord believes it defunct, like the northern leg of the Blue Line.

The monorail makes additional stops between its origin and terminus. Stations are marked on the hex map, but not included as area descriptions below. To simplify matters, the architecture of each station, unless otherwise noted, is exactly the same as every other station. When entering a new station, the judge should roll to determine if an encounter occurs, and may also place useful or interesting items or artifacts inside it. The objects may be mundane to the modern world, but would be strange and wondrous to the PCs (see Appendix C).

Note: Vor is aware of the PCs' presence in any monorail station.



Area 3-9 – The Arena Monorail Station: A bank of metal boxes with waist-high gates stands at the bottom of the peculiar stair. Beyond it stands a long, narrow construct of red-accented, shining metal with banks of windows along its sides, light shining forth from them. Doors stand open between the windows.

This is the westernmost stop of the monorail's Red Line, which runs to the Central Transit Hub (Area 3-10), and on to the southern part of the ruins.

Area 3-10 – Central Transit Hub: You enter a dimly lit tunnel, its blue-white torches flashing swiftly past, and feel the demon carriage slowing. In a few moments, it comes to a full stop. To the west you spy another carriage, this one marked with blue accents.

Reference the map of a generic monorail station. The Blue and Red monorail lines meet at this underground station. To reach Eastpoint Station, the PCs must transfer to the Blue line. Should they stay on the Red Line, it continues on its way to its southern terminus, another unremarkable station; if they go to the Red Line's southern terminus, introduce Vor the Teknikat.

Area 3-11 A&B – Eastpoint Station: The demon carriage begins to slow again as you approach another of its dwellings. As you enter the low structure, it halts, and its apertures open onto a stone platform. To the east, the creature's path has ended in a blank wall. The platform is about 100' long, and beyond is a space

with doors opening to the east and west, cold daylight streaming through them.

Check for encounters, as normal. The station itself is relatively unremarkable, much like the others, except in the maintenance area (3-11A), where a secret elevator (3-11B) leads down into the hidden Gold Line station (3-12B), and the entrance (3-12A) to the missile silo (Area 4).

This also is a good place to meet Vor, if they have not done so already.

Area 3-12 A&B – Gold Line Station/Silo Entrance: The box descends into the depths and you feel your insides climb up into your throats. You slow to a stop and the doors open into a long, dimly-lit, subterranean room, with empty shelves along the left side. Beyond the shelves, two small platforms with attached handles float about a foot above the ground. To the right is a stone wall set with massive, steel doors.

This room (3-12A) leads both to the Gold Line monorail station (3-12B) and the missile silo (Area 4). The floating platforms are cargo movers. One will be needed to move the Great Egg (4-6B). In the southeast corner is the door to the silo complex. It is closed, but not locked. The heavy doors leading to the Gold Line are locked, but can be opened with Itai's keycard. A panel on the south wall, between shelves and silo door, has keycard slots to open and close both doors.

PART 4:

THE SCIENTIST AND THE SILO



In this part of the adventure, the PCs encounter Da'brok the scientist and his guards, and the resting place of the Great Egg. See Appendix A for more information about how to role-play Da'brok.

Area 4-1 – Silo Entrance: *As you approach a set of intimidating metal doors, a low rumble can be heard. The doors begin to draw apart, and a swarm of octopoid creatures crowd through the crack and onto the ceiling and walls, then merely wait and watch. You spy a humanoid figure with elaborate spiked armor. Its beady, green-glowing eyes glare at you from beneath a horned brow. "Welcome," it says. "I am Da'brok, and this is my home. What is your business here?"*

Da'brok has no hostility toward the party, and won't initiate violence. He genuinely is interested in their presence (and provenance) and questions them patiently, and at length.

Area 4-2 – Command Center: *A roughly octagonal chamber with a high dome-shaped ceiling stretches before you. At its center, a round platform rises from the floor, and around its sides are a series of shelf-like levels. Weird lanterns light the area with a*

bright, bluish-white light; some depend from the ceiling on ropes, and some seem to be embedded in the walls themselves.

Here are the controls for the silo, including all systems except the power plant. Itai's control box can be plugged into the main console. If Da'brok sees the box, he knows what it is, and asks why they have it.

Area 4-3 A&B – Decontamination Chambers: *Doors open into a square room. A small, single door with a glass window is on the wall to the left.*

These are two identical areas that allow those working with the reactor or the missile to don protective gear, and get decontaminated after exposure. Should a character be exposed to radiation, Da'brok knows the procedures to conduct decontamination. The suits in the small rooms are old and brittle, and no longer functional.

Area 4-4 – Power Plant: *The door opens into a brightly-lit room. A vast metal construct with a central spire and 4 smaller monoliths stands at in its center. Cables and pipes radiate from its base, and there is a panel of blinking lights and levers on a nearby console.*

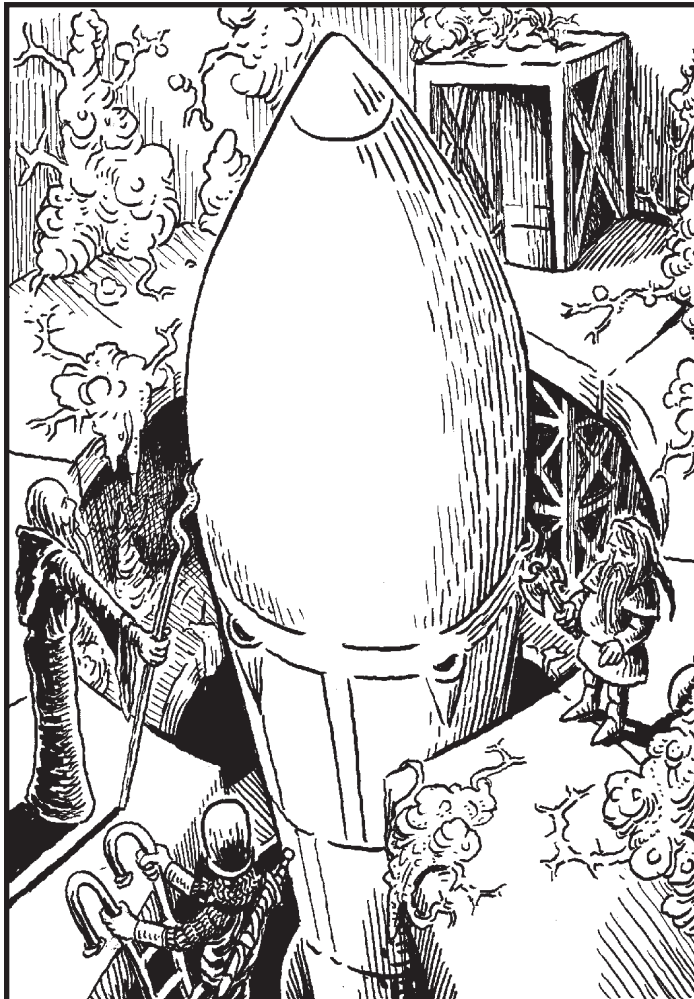
Unless the PCs have killed or driven away Da'brok and the korgu, there's no reason to enter this room. This is the silo's power plant, which still works after all these years, but only Da'brok's scientific knowledge has kept it stable. Use the table described in Area 2-13B to determine what happens if PCs alter its settings (ignore effects on Itai the Oracle).

Area 4-5 – Living Areas: *In the front part of this open area, you see crude bedding on the floor and hanging bags depending from the ceiling. Beyond are two doorways leading into connecting rooms.*

The front area is where the korgu and Da'Brok live. Beyond the doorways there are sources of potable water, and both a kitchen area (northeast) and hygienic facilities (northwest).

Area 4-6A – Blast Containment Area: This hallway was designed to provide some measure of protection during missile launch or in case of an enemy missile strike. The intervening walls are baffles designed to blunt the force of such energies. The blast doors are now open at each end. When the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Two heavy doors slide aside, revealing a long chamber punctuated with walls jutting out first from one side and then the other. The chamber opens into a darkened space beyond two gigantic doors like those you just passed through.



Area 4-6B – Silo: Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter this area:

A vast, round room stretches upward into the darkness, beyond your torchlight. The air is warm, moist, and musty, and a diffuse, blue-green light glows from one wall. A causeway of intricately forged metal lattice circles the room to the left and right, and above you can see another causeway, about 20 feet up. In front of you is a railing and beyond it an open pit. A megalithic construct rises up into the darkness above. As you gaze about, the chamber's lanterns come to life, illuminating the space. Sheets of blue-green fungus adhere to its walls, climbing out of sight above you, and some of the octopoid creatures are harvesting pieces of it into mesh bags.

The silo contains the missile with which the "Great Egg" was to be delivered. It is not functional. The Great Egg it-

self is still in place, but must be activated aboveground and controlled by magical means in order to achieve its effects (see "Triggering the Great Egg," page 17).

Four ring-shaped causeways rise to the ceiling, connected by a ladder and a cargo lift. At the top of the ladder is a hidden entrance that opens to the surface. If Da'brok is attacked, this is one means of escape, and an ideal place for the korgu to use their remarkable climbing skills to make a fighting retreat. The cargo lift is still operational, and can be used to move the warhead from the missile to the floor of the silo.

The korgu also use the silo to grow the faintly-luminescent, blue-green fungus upon which Da'brok feeds. It grows up the walls from the central pit area, from a bed of decomposing plant matter.

RUNNING THE FINAL COMBAT

The metal fortress of the Overlord is, essentially, a gigantic tank, with one main gun and an array of smaller weapons. The smaller weapons either have been destroyed or their munitions depleted. Only its siege cannon still functions. The vehicle is vast, covering a 100-yard by 200-yard rectangle, with 10 stories aboveground, and 5 more buried in the rubble around its base. Exploration of the megatank is beyond the scope of this adventure, but would be a suitable subject for a future adventure if the PCs decide to remain on the planet after the Great Egg is activated.

Preferred Scenario

- If the PCs enter Area 5 riding the Gold Line train, they have 10 rounds before entering its terminal station (Area 5-1B). There, a large force of the Overlord's troops awaits the train. Should the PCs use its emergency brake, they can stop the train in a single round, but this leaves them vulnerable to attack by screamers, siege cannon, and, eventually, the two approaching clubbers. The force at the terminal station advances if they delay too long; the warlords begin the attack with their hovering chariots.
- Ideally, the PCs either stop the train or trigger the Great Egg as they arrive at the terminal station.
- The first wave of screamers arrives 2 rounds after they emerge from the Gold Line tunnel (Area 5-1A read-aloud text).
- The spellcasters attempt to activate the Great Egg (see "Triggering the Great Egg"). If multiple casters join in, they receive a bonus. However, hostile forces may make it necessary to keep some casters in combat so the party does not get overwhelmed.
- The non-casters must protect the casters while they

attempt to trigger the Great Egg.

- The PCs should face mounting pressure as this encounter plays out, making the situation more and more frantic as they seek to trigger the device. If they delay too long, they may be overwhelmed by the Overlord's forces.

Alternate Scenarios

- If the PCs attempt to reach this area overland, detection by scouts or by the megatank's sensors is likely. Rubble has been piled around the front of the vehicle to funnel attackers into well-guarded fire-zones. Those areas not thus protected contain minefields (Luck roll to cross or exit, or take 2d8 damage). The Overlord's troops know not to walk through these. The clubbers waiting outside are at the edge of one such minefield.
- If they attempt to fly in, PCs are engaged by screamers and by warlords in their levitating chariots. Kozaks climb up the fortress and begin firing weapons a few rounds later.
- If the PCs arrive by teleportation of some sort, they are not able (for whatever reason) to penetrate the fortress itself. Instead, they arrive within 50' of it, just behind enemy lines. The troops concentrated there (malga, kozaks, and warlords) are surprised, so the PCs get a surprise attack, but they recover quickly and attack the next round, on normal initiative.
- Should the PCs somehow manage to tunnel in from below, they find the bottom of the fortress extremely well-armored, with no apparent entrances. Without an industrial plasma cutter or equivalent, they cannot penetrate it.



PART 5: A MATTER OF LIFE

Area 5-1A – When Chaos Drives: *The demon carriage opens its maw so that you may enter, and closes it again. It rapidly builds speed, racing through the pitch darkness of the tunnel. Within a few minutes, it emerges into light again, and you see in the distance the metal fortress of the Overlord, its angled superstructure rearing from a flattened base, and a variety of spars jutting out from it, some bearing great banners and others bare. An immense pipe extends horizontally from the superstructure, pointing in your direction. It rotates toward you and belches fire, and something massive howls past, above the carriage, too fast to be seen and wailing like a demented soul before exploding, with the thunder of the gods themselves, behind you. Weird, crab-like creatures with flashing, prismatic wings and riders circle the fortress, holding station high above; several of them swoop toward the fortress and then take flight again, headed straight toward you, objects clutched in their claws.*

Show the players Handout D.

The megatank is able to fire its siege cannon every five rounds. At this range, and with a moving target, it only hits on a natural 20. Even then, the strike impacts behind the train, destroying a section of track. The flying creatures, called screamers, immediately attack. (Also, see read-aloud text below, which introduces the clubbers and the terminal station guard in Area 5-1B.)

Megatank (1): Init -10; Atk siege cannon missile hits only on natural 20 (10d20); AC 30; HD n/a hp n/a; MV immobile; Act 1d20 every 5 rounds; SP immune to primitive weapons, sense movement 5,000'; SV n/a.

Screamers (4): Init +3; Atk bomb +2 missile (variable) or spit acid +4 missile (2d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 11 each; MV 20' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP overseer, armaments (two armed with fire bombs, two with overseer pods); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; AL N.

Four additional screamers attack after 3 rounds (same stats as above).

Read aloud: *Further along the tracks stands another carriage house, like those the party has already encountered. There, troops assembled in defensive positions await your arrival. Nearer the great fortress, two giant creatures painted a mottled grey bestir themselves from slumber and begin to stride heavily in your direction. Each bears a huge flail, and their baleful crimson eyes gleam from their brows.*

Clubbers (2): Init -3; Atk flail +6 melee (2d10+5); AC 20; HD 12d12; hp 70 each; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP cybernetic creature (immune to sleep, charm, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks); SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will immune; AL N.

Area 5-1B – Terminal Station Guard: The defensive force awaiting the party's arrival consists of 16 kozaks and 2 warlords. If the combat continues and the Great Egg is not detonated, refer to Appendix B for stats for these and additional waves.

THE GREAT EGG



hile the players (not the PCs) may have a pretty good idea what to expect at this point—that they will detonate a nuclear warhead—they are wrong. Instead, the device unleashes the power of Law or Chaos. The magic of the party's wizards and clerics and the science of the warhead's non-Euclidean physics combine to produce one of two effects: either a life-giving burst of anti-corruption (the Lawful effect) or a powerful mutagenic effect (the Chaos effect), either of which blankets the entire surface of Mezar-Kul, affecting anything exposed to its powers. It also emits a pulse of weird energy which reorders the physics of the world on a subatomic level, disabling electronic, cybernetic, and nanoplasmic creatures and devices indefinitely.

It's important to note that the Overlord, its overseers, and many of its troops are cybernetic, as are Vor and her creatures; so is Itai the Oracle. All are inactivated immediately by the energy pulse, whatever the device's effect. However, Itai the Oracle uploads a copy of itself into Atraz A'zul's mind prior to activation of the device.

In the aftermath, any surviving screamers flee for the megatank. The warlords are the only survivors among the Overlord's forces, their overseers now inert. Other purely organic creatures survive, either horribly changed by mutagenic radiation or made whole and sane by the "Eden effect" (see below).

TRIGGERING THE GREAT EGG



o trigger the Great Egg, one of the adventurers must press the proverbial Big Red Button, as per the ritual detailed by Itai the Oracle. This begins a countdown. If no other action is taken, then the device activates after 3 rounds, and releases a wave of corrupting energy. However, the party's spellcasters can control the device's timing and effects, "guiding" it toward more Lawful, healing effects. This requires a contest of caster(s) versus device, where they attempt to control the energies released by the Great Egg.

- The judge should start the contest with a d7 set to "4," on the table in full view of everyone. This is the count die, reflecting progress toward success or failure.
- After the device is activated, casters involved in the contest with the Great Egg should take turns rolling spell checks against the device. Each additional caster beyond the first adds 1 to these rolls. Luck and spellburn apply as normal, but only the caster currently rolling may employ them.
- The Great Egg's opposing roll is 1d30+6.
- Depending on the outcome of each roll, the counter goes "up" or "down" (up for success, and down for failure).

- If the casters lose contact with the device, for whatever reason, it automatically ticks down, 1 increment per round unattended.
- If the count reaches “7,” the Eden effect is triggered; if it reaches “1,” the Great Corruption is triggered (each described in the next two sections).

Whichever effect is triggered, it affects every creature and machine on Mezar-Kul and its moons (effect radius is 150,000 miles). Normally, it would not be so powerful, but synergy with the casters’ powers has caused a non-linear increase in its output. Only living creatures or machines are affected. Inert objects are unchanged.

THE EDEN EFFECT



f the casters succeed (counter rises to 7), they trigger an “Eden effect” and rewrite the physics of Mezar-Kul, healing the land, but also undoing the Ancients’ advanced technologies, including the Overlord and its cybernetic minions (but not the warlords), Itai’s “body” on Mezar-Kul, Vor the Teknikat and her creatures, the monorail, and any device requiring advanced energies to function. Physics simply don’t work that way anymore. There are benefits, though.

The immediate effects are rapid growth of healthy flora, and healing of the land from the corrupting effects of mutagenic radiation (and healing any mundane injuries, new or old, and any corruption and/or spellburn affecting the party). In addition, each PC gains 1d5 plus Luck modifier additional Stamina, permanently. If the new Stamina score has a positive modifier, then the PC gains a number of permanent hit points equal to that new modifier.

The various peoples of the dead city also benefit. The korgu are the most numerous of these, and become more fecund and intelligent. The Urah, too, are changed, as the blast has made them capable of procreation, where before they were sterile by design. Itai’s self-sacrifice was its final gift to them, for their millennia of loyal service, and a pristine new world awaits their progeny.

Example read-aloud text (modify as makes sense for the situation): *The world around you seems to take a deep breath, and, as if exhaling life itself, an endlessly expanding circle of wholesomeness and beauty fills the land, erupting from the very rubble of the dead city. It begins with you, like a celestial chorus raising its voice in your soul, healing and soothing your injuries, purging you of all corruption. As you look around, you see that the land itself has become a riot of color and budding life. The Overlord’s minions, too, are affected. Its monstrous machine-men stop and fall, and the unnatural creatures that control them shrivel and die; save for its warlords and the now-masterless screamers, the Overlord’s minions are no more. Their master’s iron grip upon this city has been broken. Life has come again to Mezar-Kul, but it is a life without artifice, without machines to control it; a mighty work of magic has been done today, and you are its architects. In this place, there is life and reason for hope, and maybe there will be peace.*

THE GREAT CORRUPTION



f the casters fail to trigger the beneficial effects of the device, a great tragedy befalls Mezar-Kul. Though the Overlord and much of his army still perish, along with Itai, and Vor and her constructs, the device also broadcasts a powerful wave of mutagenic radiation, corrupting even further the land and everything in it. Any purely biological creature survives, but is changed and horribly mutated.

Example read-aloud text (modify as makes sense for the situation): *You hear a rising scream like a choir of demons in the deepest pit, though there is no sound. Your bodies and minds are twisted and corrupted with the chaotic energies the Great Egg has released, reshaping each of you down to your very bones. Then, like a wave of filth spreading from where you stand, ripples of the hell-scream spread as far as the eye can see. Strange and unhealthy life bursts forth from the ruins, cloaking the dead city in a mantle of corruption. Mezar-Kul is still a grave for what came before; but now the corpse lives again, fell and horrible of aspect, like rotting flesh and the miasma of corruption. You have failed this world, and now you and every other living thing on Mezar-Kul will suffer.*

Each player should roll for his or her characters three times on Table 5-1, below.

- Top Row: Roll 1d4 and add luck modifier.
- Left Column: Roll 2d5.
- The square where these results cross should be applied to three randomly chosen attributes, excluding Luck. (1) Strength, (2) Agility, (3) Stamina, (4) Personality, (5) Intelligence. These scores become the character’s new, permanent attributes.

Table 5-1: Effects of Mutagenic Radiation

Roll 2d5	Roll 1d4 + Luck modifier			
	0 or less	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 or more
2	–5	–4	–2	–1
3	–4	–3	–1	0
4	–3	–2	–1	0
5	–2	–1	0	0
6	–2	0	0	0
7	–1	0	+1	+1
8	–1	+1	+2	+2
9	0	+1	+3	+3
10	+1	+2	+3	+4

- It is up to the player and judge to determine exactly what horrible mutation caused each result. Here are a few examples:

Strength: (1) muscles grow or atrophy; (2) bones and sinews become denser or more fragile; (3) entire body grows or shrinks in size.

Agility: (1) grows limbs of especially agile or clumsy creature; (2) muscle reflex time decreases or increases; (3) time sense expands or contracts, allowing more or less efficient reaction times.

Stamina: (1) blood changes color — its new composition enhances or weakens PC's constitution; (2) PC grows redundant internal organs or has existing organs atrophy; (3) PC's body is inhabited by a symbiote or parasite.

Personality: (1) body and personality become celestial or demonic; (2) PC becomes more or less connected to self and others; (3) anticipates interactions with creatures and other powers (better or worse).

Intelligence: (1) entire head enlarges or shrinks; (2) brain becomes neurologically denser or atrophies; (3) grows a parallel brain, making intellect more or less efficient.

- Each lawful or neutral character also should lose 2 Luck, permanently. Chaotic PCs gain 1d3 Luck.

The result of mutation may be a significant change to the character's intellect, personality, and/or physique. Characters may find that their chosen class no longer reflects their new attributes. Judges should resolve such cases as fits their campaigns.

EPILOGUE



fter the climax of the adventure, the characters have been changed, for good or for ill, and must deal with the consequences of their actions. What those consequences might entail are up to the judge to determine (e.g., favors owed to patrons, PCs targeted for vengeance, etc.). A changed Mezar-Kul may offer the party new opportunities, should they wish to pursue them, or they may simply want to get home and reap whatever reward (or retribution) they have coming to them.

GETTING HOME



Depending on the judge's choices in getting the party to Mezar-Kul and the party's actions in the time since they arrived, they can get home in a variety of ways (see "**Getting to Mezar-Kul (and Back)**," page 2). The Great Egg has altered the very fabric of existence and drawn the attention of the Powers That Be. If there is no other apparent means of return, the judge should allow them to be contacted in some fashion by a supernatural patron, and bargain for safe passage. Such aid, of course, comes with a price.

APPENDIX A: FACTIONS OF THE DEAD CITY



he dead city's main factions are Itai the Oracle (and its allies, the Urah), the Overlord and its minions, and Da'brok (and his allies, the korgu). The player characters contend with each of these factions to accomplish their objectives. A fourth faction consists of Vor the Teknikat and her constructs. Vor is more passive, and somewhat of a wildcard.

The adventure is designed with the assumption that the PCs ally with Itai the Oracle's faction, but the players and judge may decide to go a different way. The judge should play each faction according to its motivations and preferred strategy and tactics, as described below.

ITAI THE ORACLE AND THE URAH



Itai the Oracle is an artificial intelligence tasked with managing and defending the dead city. Itai is attended by the Urah, guardians set in place to maintain and protect it. The Urah are a humanoid race bred for war, but they are not the force they once were; their numbers have dwindled over the years, by accident or by incident. Though long-lived, they cannot procreate; less than a hundred of them remain.

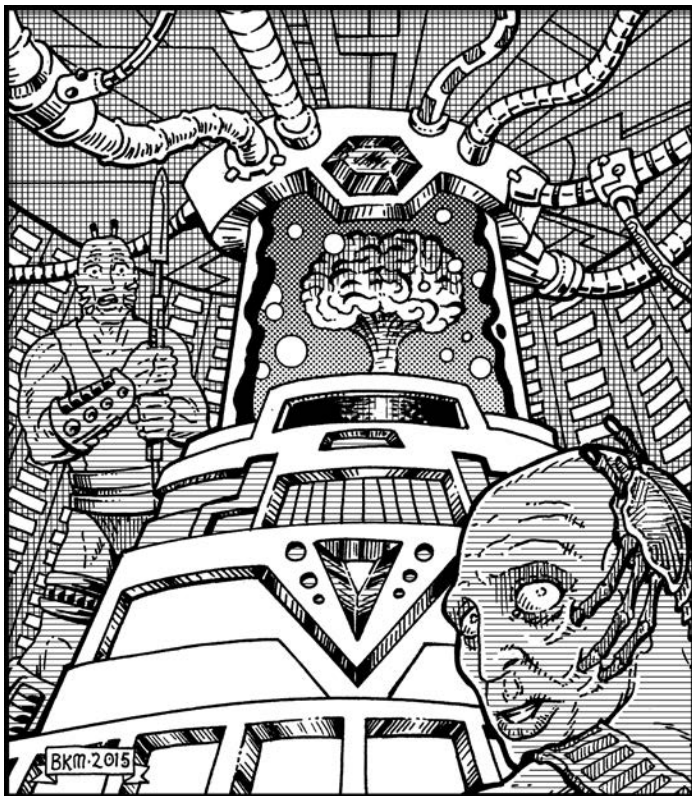
Playing Itai the Oracle

Because its interactions with Atraz A'zul have given it deep knowledge of the PCs' world, Itai portrays itself to them as a spirit trapped inside an ancient artifact. It tells them a story of an evil necromancer in a fortress of metal, the Atomic Overlord, who controls an army of living and undead creatures, and seeks to bring on an age of unending darkness. Itai tells the party that their coming was prophesied, and that they alone have the power to retrieve an ancient artifact from within a crypt beneath the dead city and destroy the Overlord, once and for all.

PC Interaction with Itai the Oracle

Itai the Oracle provides the PCs with information about the dead city, but only in the vaguest terms. The judge should make the Itai's proclamations relate to what the PCs need to know or understand to proceed, but should also remember that the Itai's knowledge sometimes is incomplete or incorrect. It has been out of contact with parts of its "domain" for a very long time.

Anything Itai says to them about the nature of the device they must seek, the conditions in the city, and so forth, is



stated in terms understandable to these characters. For example, it speaks of the monorail system as if it were a demon carriage with which it has an agreement. It describes the device they are to recover as a “Great Egg,” which they must bear to its appointed hatching place, near the Overlord’s fortress. Itai provides the party’s wizard with a description of a ritual for “hatching” the Great Egg, once in place.

Itai knows Vor the Teknikat and has an uneasy alliance with her, but knows nothing of Da’brok and the korgu, or that they have taken over the silo containing the Great Egg. Only Atraz A’zul knows Da’brok the alien scientist’s secret, and has not revealed it to Itai. She only has told Itai that she can provide it with a power capable of killing the Overlord and healing Mezar-Kul. Learn more about Da’brok in the right-hand column.

THE OVERLORD

The Overlord is a synthetic brain, encased in a crablike, armored exoskeleton, and plugged into a gargantuan megatank. It was designed to operate semi-autonomously and to pacify far-flung territories. Its commanders are long dead, but the Overlord fights on. It has cleansed most of its assigned territory of opposition, and maintained an army. Some of its minions serve willingly and are allowed autonomous command of portions of its forces; others are directly controlled by the Overlord through overseers, crablike creatures that tap into the brainstems of host bodies. No stats are included for the Overlord, as it’s incredibly unlikely the PCs will encounter it. Should they do so, it should be tough and well-armored and capable of psychic powers as well as powerful missile and melee attacks.

Playing the Overlord

The Overlord is not innovative. Its strategy is simple: Eliminate all opposition. The Overlord uses its troops aggressively, sweeping the outskirts of the dead city for enemies, and occasionally driving deeper into the city to root out pockets of resistance.

Not all on Mezar-Kul oppose the Overlord. It has recruited a variety of battle-hardened warlords. They lead its armies, granting the Overlord their creativity and ruthlessness, and their ability to command its troops more efficiently. In the absence of its warlords, the Overlord controls the troops directly, using the overseers, but much less effectively. If the PCs kill a warlord, the troops under its command reduce their initiative bonuses and attacks (–2) to reflect the Overlord’s difficulty in controlling them.

PC Interaction with the Overlord

The Overlord doesn’t really interact; it only seeks to dominate. To do so, it uses its overseers: small crablike creatures with sharp, spiny tails used to tap directly into the brainstems of victims. They communicate directly with the Overlord and provide an enhanced sensory network. Should a warrior or dwarf PC come under the control of an overseer, the Overlord recognizes the character’s martial expertise, and offers the PC a chance to become a warlord, but won’t remove the overseer under any circumstances. Any non-martial PC is controlled and made to fight in the Overlord’s army.

DA’BROK AND THE KORGU

Da’brok is an alien scientist who came to Mezar-Kul to study the war. Though a pacifist, he is guarded by intelligent octopoids, the korgu. They were reconnaissance troops, once, but now remember only that they are Children of The Bomb. Before Da’brok’s coming, these particular korgu inhabited the silo because it bears the sacred sign of their genesis (this world’s symbol for mutagenic radiation). The korgu worship the missile, secure in the knowledge that their new high priest (Da’brok) performs the rites necessary to appease it. They are fanatically loyal to Da’brok, and protect him zealously. Da’brok also has a spaceship, but it is hidden far below the waters of a lake, a few miles to the south. Being wholly organic, the ship is the only machine on Mezar-Kul capable of surviving the effects of the Great Egg, and may serve as a means to return the party to their own planet.

Playing Da’brok and the Korgu

Da’brok never leaves the silo, spending his time trying to discover a way to alter the payload of the missile it contains (the Great Egg). He has hypothesized a means to twist the device’s intended purpose to that of healing rather than corruption, but not how to produce the energies necessary to accomplish that transformation. His equations account for the necessity of a strange and wild power, but he has no knowledge of its production. The party’s spellcasters hold the knowledge Da’brok seeks. Revelation of their powers

helps him intuit the solution. Once he understands what the casters can do, he actively recruits the PCs to help him alter and trigger the Great Egg.

PC Interaction with Da'brok and the Korgu

Da'brok is a pacifist and won't engage in combat. Da'brok's korgu, though, are holy warriors in his service, and will fight if Da'brok is threatened. There also are "feral" korgu in the ruins. The PCs may encounter them on the way to the silo, building their prejudice toward the creatures.

If the PCs come within 60 feet of Da'brok, they encounter a strange effect—a feeling of deep contentment. This pacifying effect comes from a device invented by Da'brok, which allows him to avoid violence by forestalling conflict before it happens. Any creature affected (DC 30 Will save to resist) eschews violence while inside the field's radius. Those succeeding on the initial Will save must make a further DC 15 Will save for each attack initiated within the field's influence.

Da'brok recognizes that the PCs are not native to Mezar-Kul, and inquires about their origins and present mission. He is simply curious. So long as they are under the influence of his calming device, the PCs are not compelled to tell the truth, but simply feel no reason not to do so. The judge should use Da'brok's questions about the individual PCs as a means to help Da'brok learn that the party's spellcasters can harness strange energies — this is a realm of physics he has long suspected but been unable to unlock, and is key to controlling the effects of the Great Egg. Any detailed description or demonstration of magic inspires Da'brok to intuit that such powers are the "wild" energies he needs to control the Great Egg (actually a warhead with a mutagenic payload) into something far more potent — and potentially beneficent.

VOR THE TEKNIKAT AND HER CONSTRUCTS



or the Teknikat is a builder and engineer, once an adjunct of Itai—acting as its physical "hands"—now estranged by circumstances. Vor has been in the city since before the war, and seeks to repair its damage. Her efforts have preserved the monorail and the systems which maintain it, as well as some other technologies. Most of Vor's natural body has been supplanted by cybernetics. She has access to a workshop and an ancient medical suite, deep in the Undercity.

Playing Vor the Teknikat

Vor observes the PCs from afar, using her observation drones. She hates the Overlord and considers the overseer devices it uses an abomination. She is neutral toward everyone else, though her constructs have skirmished with both the Urah and the korgu, at times. However, she would oppose triggering the Great Egg to heal Mezar-Kul, as it probably would thwart her life's work, and kill her. Her greatest ambition is immortality.

PC Interactions with Vor the Teknikat

Should the PCs ally with Itai, it informs Vor the Teknikat that they serve its cause. She will leave them alone unless provoked. If they ally with, or are conscripted by, the Overlord, they are treated as enemies. If they remain neutral in the conflict, the judge should allow Vor to propose an alliance against the Overlord, whom she describes as a "slaver". Repeated destruction of her constructs by the PCs leads her to assume that they are, in fact, allied with the Overlord.

APPENDIX B: CREATURES OF MEZAR-KUL

Wild Creatures

Gorva: Init +3; Atk harpoon +4 missile (1d4 plus poison); AC 15; HD 4d6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP harpoon tether (DC 20 Str check to break free), poison (DC 15 Fort save or 1d4 additional damage, plus 1d4 hp damage per round until healed); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; AL N.

Gorva are scorpion-like ambush predators. They lie in wait for prey and strike with poisoned, harpoon-like extremities which pump more poison each round. Poison causes 1d4 hp of damage (DC 15 Fort save). Failed save also results in 1d4 necrosis damage per round until healed. Harpoon tethers have AC 15.

Peygamb: Init +5; Atk leaping attack +3 melee (2d4+4) or bite +5 melee (1d8+4); AC 16; HD 4d12; MV 25' or leap up to 50'; Act 1d20; SP impale (after successful leaping attack, target is impaled and suffers -3 AC; must make DC 15 Str check to escape, taking +1d4 damage); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5; AL N.

Well-armored, six-limbed beast resembling a gigantic, spiked mantis. Springs to impale foes on hook-like arms. To escape, victims must make a DC 15 Str check to break free, or face its fearsome bite. Escape causes 1d4 additional damage to the victim as the barbs are ripped from flesh.

Zarn: Init +5; Atk bite +7 melee (2d6+4) and 2x claw +7 melee (1d6+4); AC 18; HD 7d12; MV 50'; Act 1d20+1d16+1d16; SP none; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; AL N.

Fearsome, octopoid beast about the mass of an elephant, with an armored exoskeleton, and scissor-like claws. Always hungry and very territorial, they burrow in sand or rubble, above or below ground.

Spine Crab: Init +0; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6+4, special) or 2x tail spines missile +3 (1d8 each); AC 15; HD 14d8; MV 40'; Act special or 2d20; SP multi-headed (see below), immune to effects requiring a Will save; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will immune; AL N.



Spine crabs are gigantic 8-legged predators and move quickly along the surface rubble. When the spine crab bites, 1d4 heads shoot out from its front end. The heads have variable attack dice, starting from d24 and descending by 1 per head that emerges (first head uses d24, second uses d20, and so on).

The Urah

The Urah are hardy humanoids with hairless, elongated heads, and large black eyes. They have armored, chameleon-like, grey skin, and retractable claws. They stand a little over 5 feet tall. While they are not large, they are heavy and strong for their size, and have natural armor under camouflaged hide.

These creatures are the remnants of an elite military force, engineered to infiltrate, strike, and escape. They guard Itai the Oracle.

The Urah fight with primitive weapons, including exotic crossbows (spring guns) with attached glaives, and retractable claws. They are skilled guerilla fighters, adept at climbing and using the natural landscape. Urah generally are knowledgeable about local flora and fauna. Because of their natural coloring, and their skills in the wilderness, they receive a +5 bonus to hide. The Urah cannot be co-opted by overseers, as they auto-euthanize if captured.

Urah: Init +7; Atk glaive +3 melee (1d8+3+deed die), claw +3 melee (1d4+3+deed die), or spring gun +3 missile (1d6+deed die); AC 17; HD 5d12; MV 35'; Act 1d20+1d16;

SP martial expertise, camouflage (+5 to hide), retractable claws, auto-euthanasia; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; AL L.

Martial Expertise: Deed die d6; Crit Table/die 1d20/IV; Crit threat range 19-20.

The Overlord's Minions

Warlord: Init +4; Atk saber +7 melee (1d8+3) or plasma cannon +4 missile (2d6 plus DC 12 Ref save or 1d4 splash damage to any in 20' radius); AC 17; HD 6d12; MV 30' afoot or 60' in chariot; Act 1d20+1d16; SP overseer; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; AL L.

These are the leaders of the Overlord's forces. The Overlord has provided them with autonomy, allowing them to lead its troops more effectively and rarely using the overseers attached to their skulls. They are not cybernetic creatures like the kozaks and malga. Warlords ride hover chariots armed with plasma cannons, which can be aimed in a 270-degree arc to the front and sides. These vehicles are remotely tracked by the Overlord. Warlords also pilot screamers; as pilots, they carry only their melee weapons.

If the PCs kill a warlord, the troops under its command reduce their initiative bonuses and attacks (-2) to reflect the Overlord's difficulty in controlling them.

Malga: Init +5; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus shock); AC 14; HD 2d8; MV 45'; Act 1d20; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks), shock (DC 18 Fort save or stunned for 1 turn); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will immune; AL L.

Malga are six-legged predators, swift and dangerous, used to run down and capture recruits for the Overlord's army, but will kill just as readily. They attack with a bite that inflicts a stunning shock.

Kozak: Init +1; Atk saw +4 melee (1d8+4) or arc gun +5 missile (1d8+2 plus DC 13 Fort save or stunned for 1d4+1 rounds); AC 16; HD 5d10; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks), overseer; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will immune; AL L.

A cybernetic humanoid, armed with a plasma arc gun and a circular saw, each connected to an arm. It is controlled by an overseer.

Overseer: Init -1; Atk control spike +2 (1d2); AC 18; HD 1d4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mind control (may control its host: opposed Will save to resist), cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks); SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +7; AL L.

The overseer resembles a small horseshoe crab, often attached to the back of a host's head, tail spike tapped into the brainstem. The Overlord controls the host (though this control can be resisted via an opposed Will save), and can "see" through host's senses. If the host is killed, the overseer seeks a new host or, at the Overlord's bidding, returns to base.

Screamer: Init +3; Atk bomb +2 missile (variable) or spit acid +4 missile (2d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; MV 20 or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP overseer; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; AL N.

The screamer looks like a gigantic crab with iridescent wings like those of a dragonfly. It is controlled by an overseer, and often carries a warlord rider. These creatures perform airborne reconnaissance for the Overlord, and can drop flammable liquids, acid, and pods of additional overseers (any two payloads). The creature may spit acid once per combat, or drop a fire bomb (2d6 damage first round, 1d8 the second, 1d4 the third) and/or a pod with 8 overseers in it. The pod opens on landing and the overseers attack to control nearby living creatures without overseers.

Clubber: Init -3; Atk flail +6 melee (2d10+5); AC 20; HD 12d12; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP synthetic (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks); SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will immune; AL N.

This mechanical brute is about 20 feet tall. The munitions that once armed its main weapons are long since expended, but the clubber is still capable of using its secondary melee armament, a gargantuan flail.

Da'brok and the Korgu

Da'brok: Init +4; Atk pacifying field (special); AC 18; HD 5d4; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP pacifying field (any creature within a 60' radius failing a DC 30 Will save becomes pacifistic); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; AL N.

Da'brok is an alien scientist who came to Mezar-Kul to study the effects of the war, and how life has adapted to the ruined environment. He inhabits the silo holding the Great Egg.

Korgu: Init +3 (75% chance to surprise if hiding); Atk claw +1 melee (1d4) or acid +4 missile (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP amphibious, boneless; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

The korgu look something like a leathery-skinned octopus, adapted for land warfare. They attack with jets of acid (50' range) or with claws on their appendages. Korgu are stealthy, highly intelligent, and capable of using tools and weapons. While they are not particularly hardy, they are able to squeeze through narrow cracks for escape or attack, and often act as pack-ambush predators. Their natural camouflage blends with any background. They climb sheer surfaces using hooks on their tentacles.

Vor the Teknikat and Her Constructs

Vor's creatures are self-repairing. When damaged, they regenerate 1 hp per round. "Killed" creatures become nanoplasm and begin to harvest resources. However, nanoform creatures are vulnerable to magical attacks or electrical shocks, which do enhanced damage and render them unable to regenerate or reconstitute as nanoplasm.

Vor the Teknikat: Init +2; Atk staff +3 melee (1d4 plus



shock); AC 18; HD 5d10; MV 35'; Act 2d20; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; vulnerable to electrical attacks), distributed consciousness (in constant contact with network of constructs), shocking staff (+2d8 damage plus DC 20 Fort save or stunned 1d4 turns); SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL L.

Vor spends most of her time communing with the network of nanites that make up her creatures. She is cybernetic, still, but slowly becoming transorganic, sharing communion with her constructs. She is surprisingly well-armed and carries a staff with a strong electrical charge.

Nano-Mech: Init +0; Atk shock +4 melee or +3 missile (DC 15 Fort save or stunned for 1d4 turns); AC 16; HD 3d8; MV 20; Act 1d20; SP synthetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; double damage from electrical and magical attacks; half damage from heat and cold-based attacks; regenerates 1 hp per round), nanoform (damage causes formation of nanoplasm pools and any successful attack may infect target failing DC 18 Fort save); SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will immune; AL N.

These autonomous robotic repair modules roam the east side of the dead city, maintaining and repairing the monorail. Nano-mechs consist of large blobs of liquid, which extrude a variety of flexible "arms" for sensing, repairing, and defense. A nano-mech attacks only to defend itself. It can shed pieces of itself (nanoplasm) which act autonomously and are very dangerous.

Nanoplasm: Init +3; Atk decompile +4 melee (1d3 per round + special); AC special; HD 5d8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to non-magical weapons, synthetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; double damage from electrical and magical attacks; half damage from heat and cold-based attacks; regenerates 1 hp per round), nanoform (see below); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will immune; AL N.

These creatures are sent to roam the dead city, acquiring raw materials. They look like moving puddles of iridescent, liquid metal. They are not affected by normal weapons, but magical attacks damage them through the corrupting influence of otherworldly power. If attacked physically with a non-magical weapon, it "grabs" whatever it is hit with (DC 15 Str check to pull the object or limb free), flows up to encase the object and anything attached to it, and decompiles its target.

Nanoplasm can flow through, over, or under anything, deconstructing it on a molecular level, enveloping a living creature within 2 rounds and thereafter inflicting suffocation damage and infection. Suffocating creatures take 1d6 points of Stamina damage per round and die when Stamina

reaches 0; lost Stamina is regained after 1 round once breathing is restored. Creatures damaged by nanoplasm must make a Fort save (DC 18) or become infected with nanites. Though it takes a very long time, a nanoplasm can abduct a living being. After 1 week, the affected creature begins to feel ill and crave metals; after 2 weeks the creature becomes nanoplasm.

Protector: Init -1; Atk blade +5 melee (1d8+4) or autogun +4 missile (5d4); AC 18; HD 5d12; MV 20' or roll 35'; Act 1d20 or 2d16; SP nanoplasmic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save; regenerates 1 hp per round); SV Fort +6, Ref -1, Will immune; AL N.

A 3' diameter spherical construct which rolls when collapsed or walks when opened. It has an autogun and sensor where its head should be and bladed arms.

Watcher: Init +4; Atk n/a; AC 19; HD 1d6; MV 50'; Act n/a; SP cybernetic creature (immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and any effects requiring a Will save); SV Fort -2; Ref +6; Will immune; AL N.

A hummingbird-like construct, about the size of a human head.

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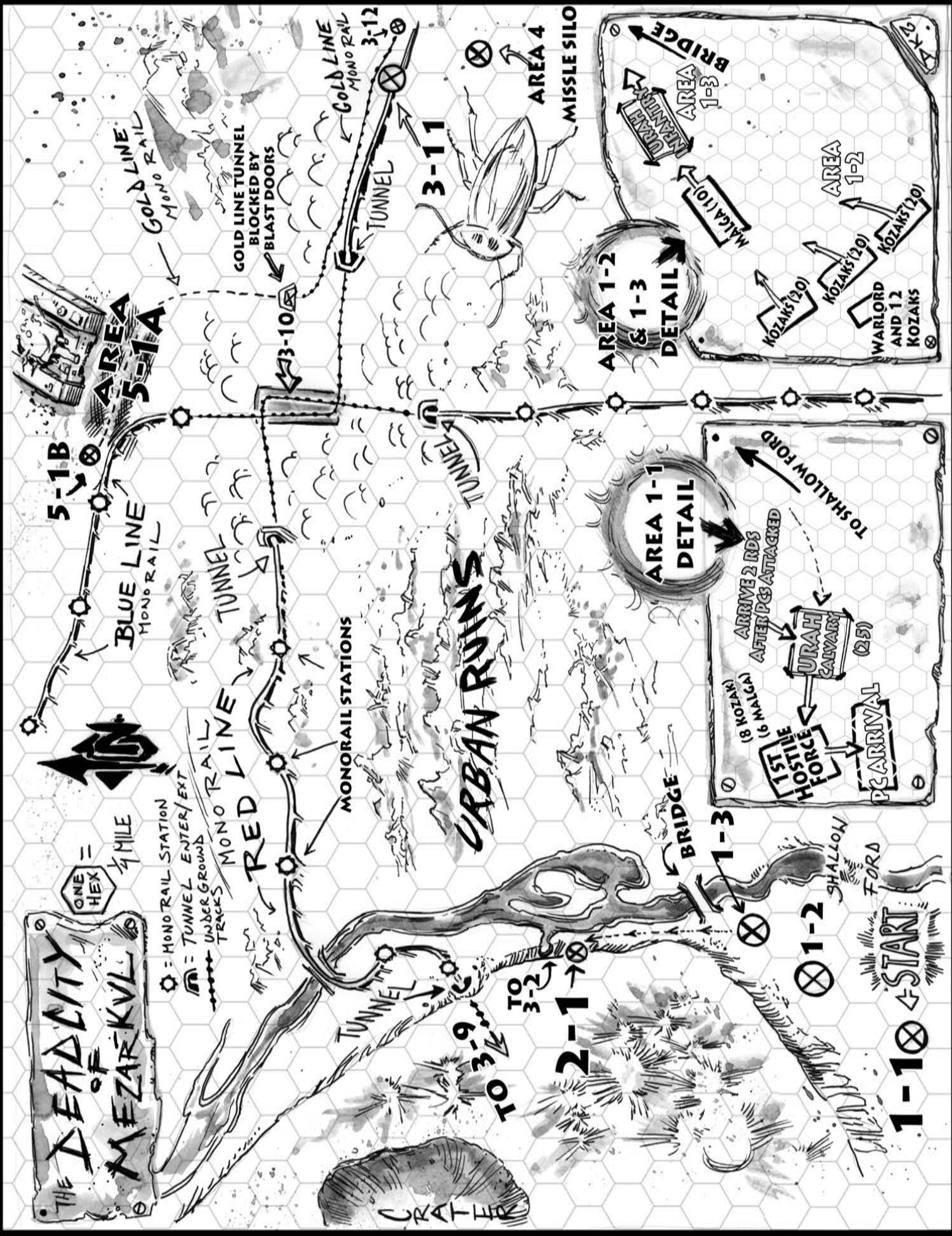
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APPENDIX C: DEAD CITY ENCOUNTERS AND ARTIFACTS

ROLL	UNDERCITY		MONORAIL		RUINS	
d14	Encounter	Artifact	Encounter	Artifact	Encounter	Artifact
1	Feral korgu scouts (1d4)	Plastic jug of grain alcohol	Watcher	Bucket of electrically-conductive industrial grease	Feral korgu hunters (1d6+2)	Undetonated artillery shell (unstable, Luck roll or 2d10 damage)
2	Feral korgu warband (2d6)	Padlocked toolbox w/handle (full of tools)	Squad of Urah (1d6+2)	5-gallon barrel of caustic liquid	Urah warband (2d6+4)	Small electromagnet with loop handle (400 lb load, 1d100 turn charge)
3	Gorva nest (1d4)	Unlocked toolbox w/handle (DC 15 explosive trap, 2d6 damage)	Squad of kozaks (1d6+2)	Plastic squirt bottle	Minefield (Luck roll to cross or exit, or 2d8 damage)	Urah spring gun w/1d3 clips of 5 bolts
4	Gorva colony (2d5)	Aluminum baseball bat (1d4+1 damage)	Watcher	Mop and bucket	Watcher	Umbrella
5	Harmless but startling vermin (small)	Two-wheeled hand truck	Battle between korgu and kozaks	Glow-in-the-dark superball (recharges in sunlight, 10' light radius for 4 hours)	Watcher	Pouch of metallic polyhedral dice
6	Harmless but startling vermin (large)	Plastic shipping container (2x2x4') w/handles	Band of feral korgu (1d8)	Telescoping 15' pole (3 sections)	Watcher	Bulletproof messenger bag & old maps
7	Nanoplasm	Radiation suit	Nano-mech	Spare battery for monorail emergency power (charged)	Protector squad (1d4+2)	Metal box w/ 1d6 stainless steel pulleys
8	Nanoplasms (1d4)	Bolt cutters	Nano-mech	Pair of rubber boots	Peygamb nest (1d6+2)	Broken down war machine
9	Unstable room/passageway (1 in 4 chance of collapse)	Box of 1,000 ball bearings	Harmless but startling vermin (small)	Maintenance kit	Malga pack (2d4+2)	Ancient bass guitar w/indestructible case
10	Unstable room/passageway (1 in 3 chance of collapse)	Collapsible ladder (15')	Harmless but startling vermin (large)	Jumpsuit	Kozak squad (1d6+2)	Box of 1d4 functional landmines
11	Weird fungus (glowing)	50' spool of 1/8-in. braided steel cable	Lone peygamb	Child's toy	Kozak warband (3d6) & warlord	Urah/kozak battle site (1d4 days old)
12	Weird fungus emitting spores (DC 15 Fort save or 2d6 poison damage)	Box w/1d5 50-yd. rolls of duct tape	Nanoplasm	Screamer cocoon	Spine Crab	Large metal arm w/attached flail
13	Mutagenic radiation (DC 20 Fort save versus greater corruption)	5-gallon can of petroleum fuel	Nanoplasms (1d4)	Flashlight (1d10 hours remaining charge)	Zarn	20' heavy steel chain w/hooks at ends
14	Trap (judge's discretion)	Web climbing harness with 1d8 carabiners attached	Vor the Teknikat and 2 protectors	Metal crate (trapped, judge's discretion)	Clubber	Large bag w/ 100-sq. ft. tent



THE DEAD CITY
OF MEZARKUL

ONE
HEX
= 1/4 MILE

○ = MONORAIL STATION
⬇ = TUNNEL ENTER/EXIT
--- = UNDERGROUND TRACKS

CITY RUINS

CRATER

BRIDGE

1-10 START

1-2

SHALLOW FORD

1-3

ARRIVE 2 RDS
AFTER PGs ATTACKED

(8 KOZAKS)

(6 MAICA)

URAH CALVARY (25)

PC ARRIVAL

TO SHALLOW FORD

AREA 1-1
DETAIL

AREA 1-2
& 1-3
DETAIL

KOZAKS (20)

KOZAKS (20)

KOZAKS (20)

WARLORD AND 12 KOZAKS

MAICA (10)

URAH (10)

BRIDGE

AREA 1-3

AREA 1-2

AREA 4
MISSILE SILO

3-11

TUNNEL

GOLD LINE MONORAIL
3-12

GOLD LINE TUNNEL
BLOCKED BY
BLAST DOORS

GOLD LINE MONORAIL

AREA 5-1A

5-1B

BLUE LINE MONORAIL

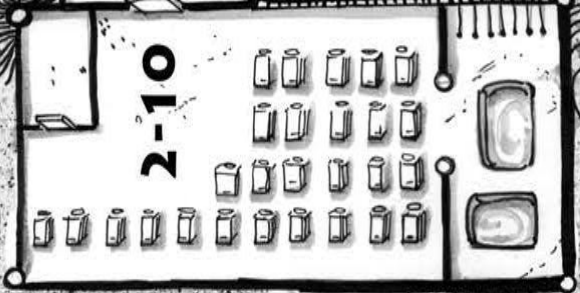
RED LINE MONORAIL

MONORAIL STATIONS

TUNNEL

AREA 2
THE STRONGHOLD
OF ITAI
AND THE
UNDER CITY

□ = 10'



2-9

DOWN TO
2-11

2-11

SANDBAGS

LADDER
2-12

2-8

2-7



2-6

BLAST
DOOR
2-4

2-3

2-2



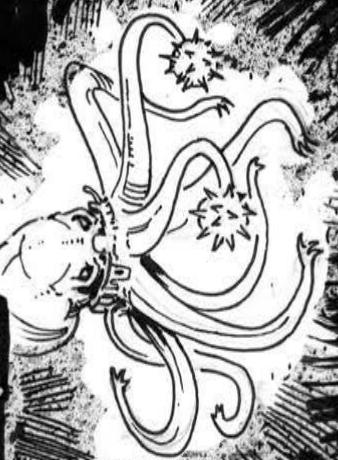
2-13B

TO COLLAPSED
AREAS,
VERMIN,
AND
RADIATION HAZARDS

1/2 MILE
TO
AREA 3-1

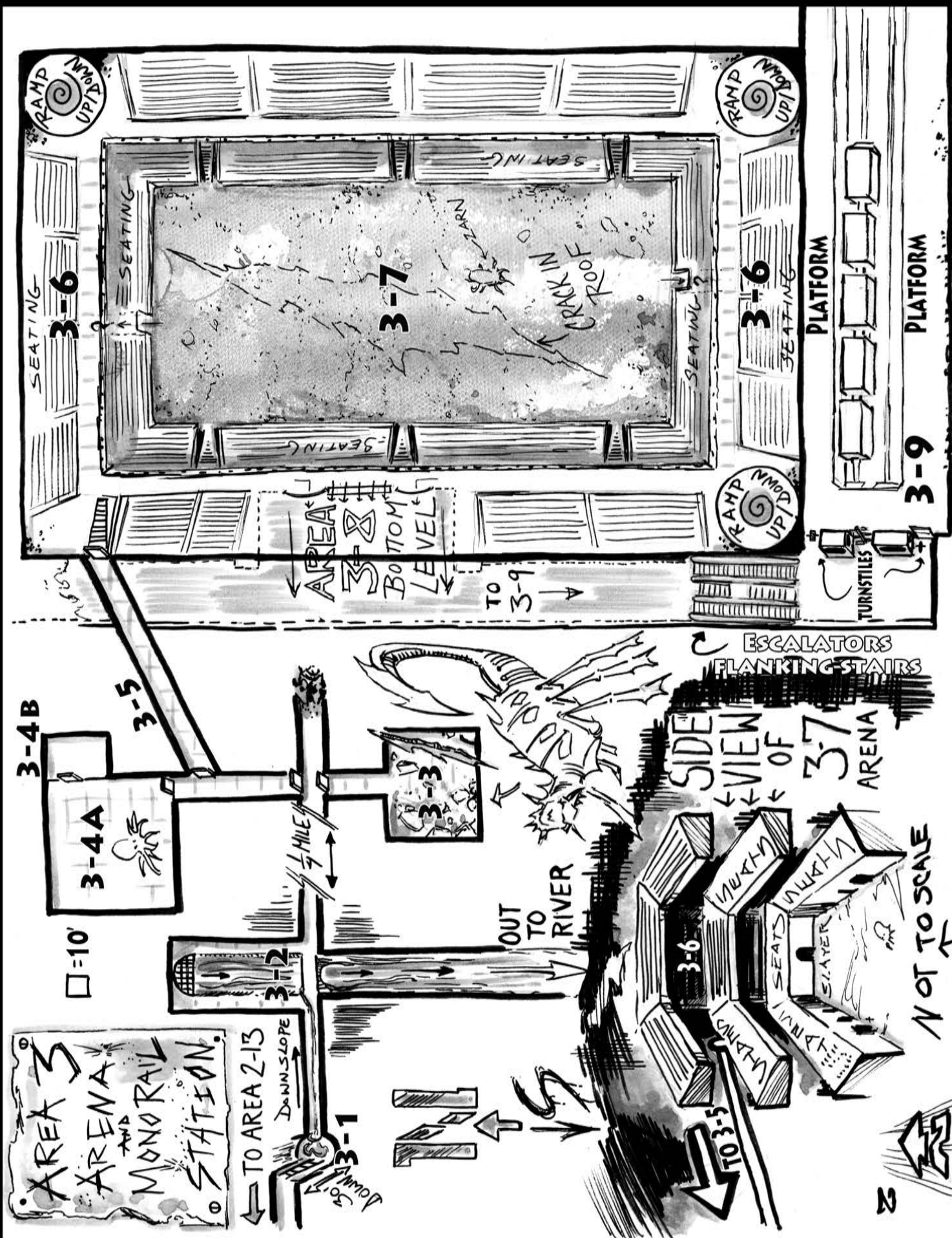
3-1

2-74



150' TO
2-1

2-1



EITHER MIRROR THIS PLATFORM FOR OPPOSITE DIRECTION
OR MAKE IT RUINED AND INACCESSIBLE

GENERIC
MONORAIL
STATION

□ = 10'



TURNSTILES

STAIRS
UP OR DOWN

TURNSTILES

STAIRS UP OR DOWN

MAINTENANCE
AREA

PLATFORM

MONORAIL TRACK

TURNSTILES

TURNSTILES

AREA 3-11
EAST POINT
STATION



□ = 10'

UPPER LEVEL

PLATFORM

BLUE LINE WEST

MONORAIL TRACK

TO 3-12

GOLD LINE OUT

MONORAIL TRACK

AREA 3-12
GOLD LINE
AND
SILO ENTRANCE



HOVER
SLEDS

SHELVES

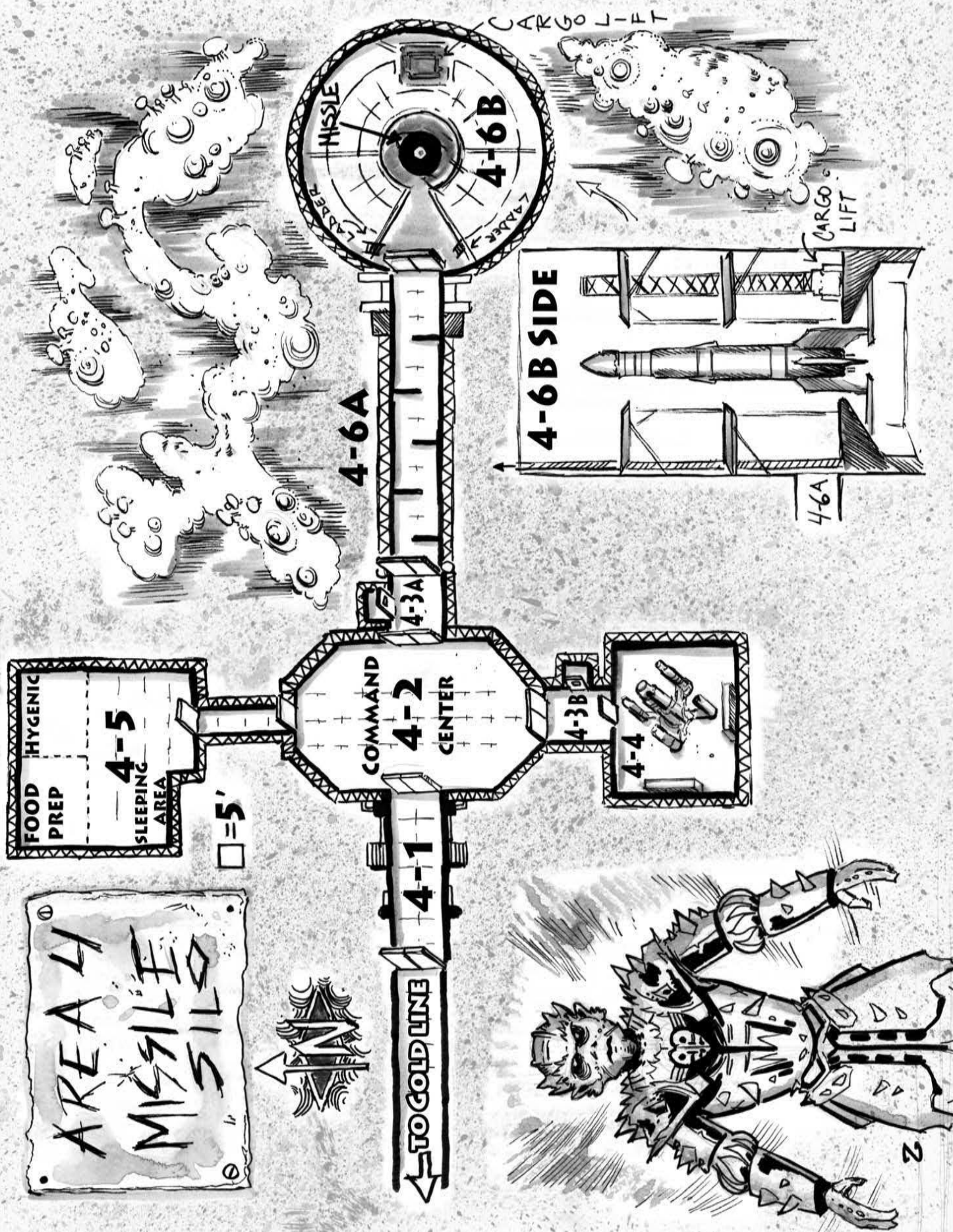
PLATFORM

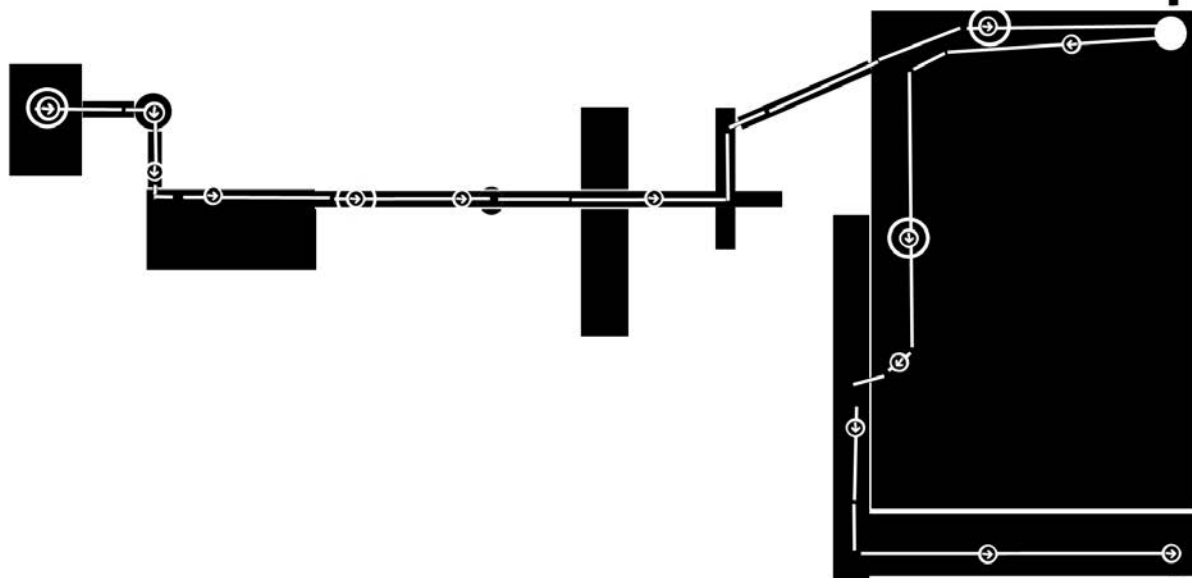
A

B

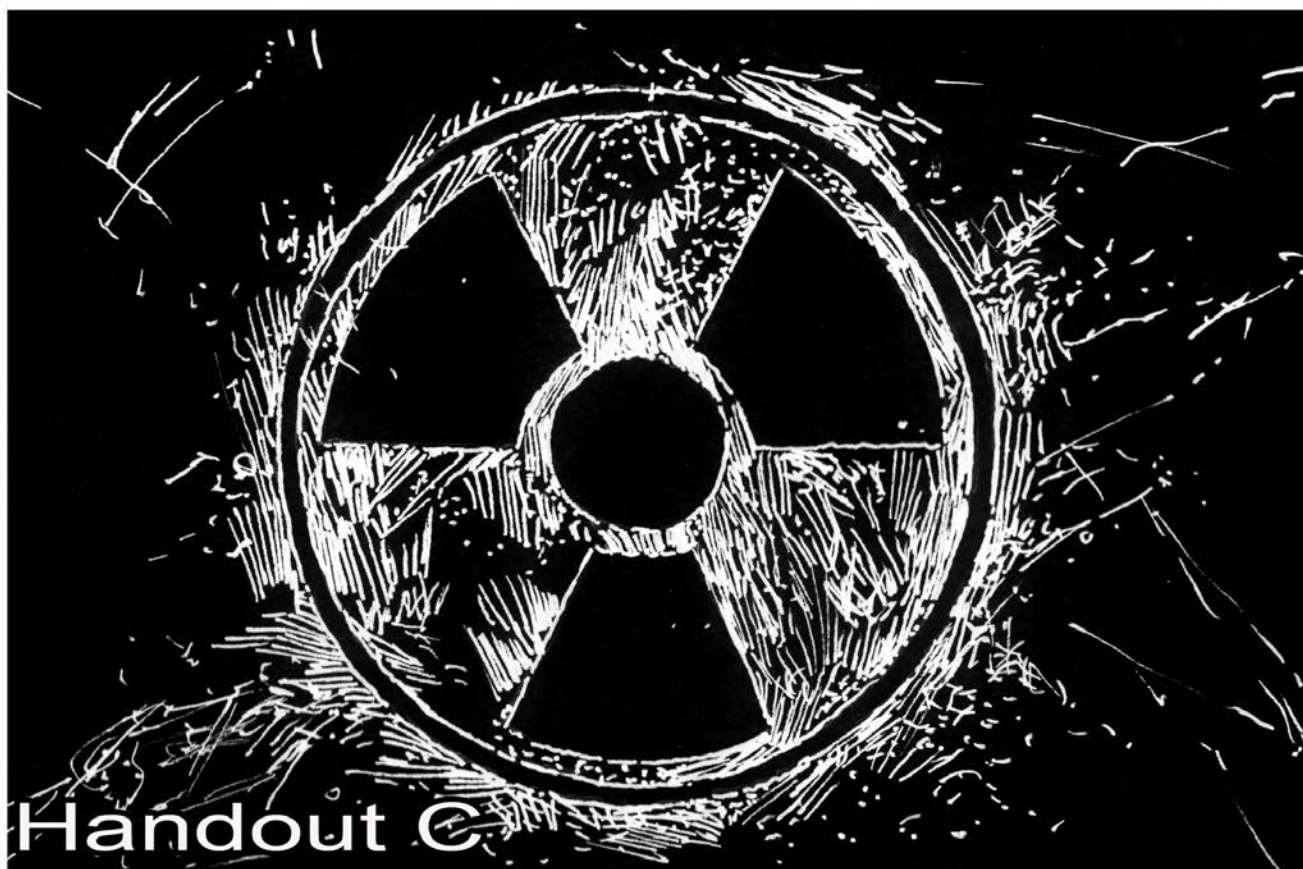
TO MISSILE
SILO
AREA 4

LOWER LEVEL

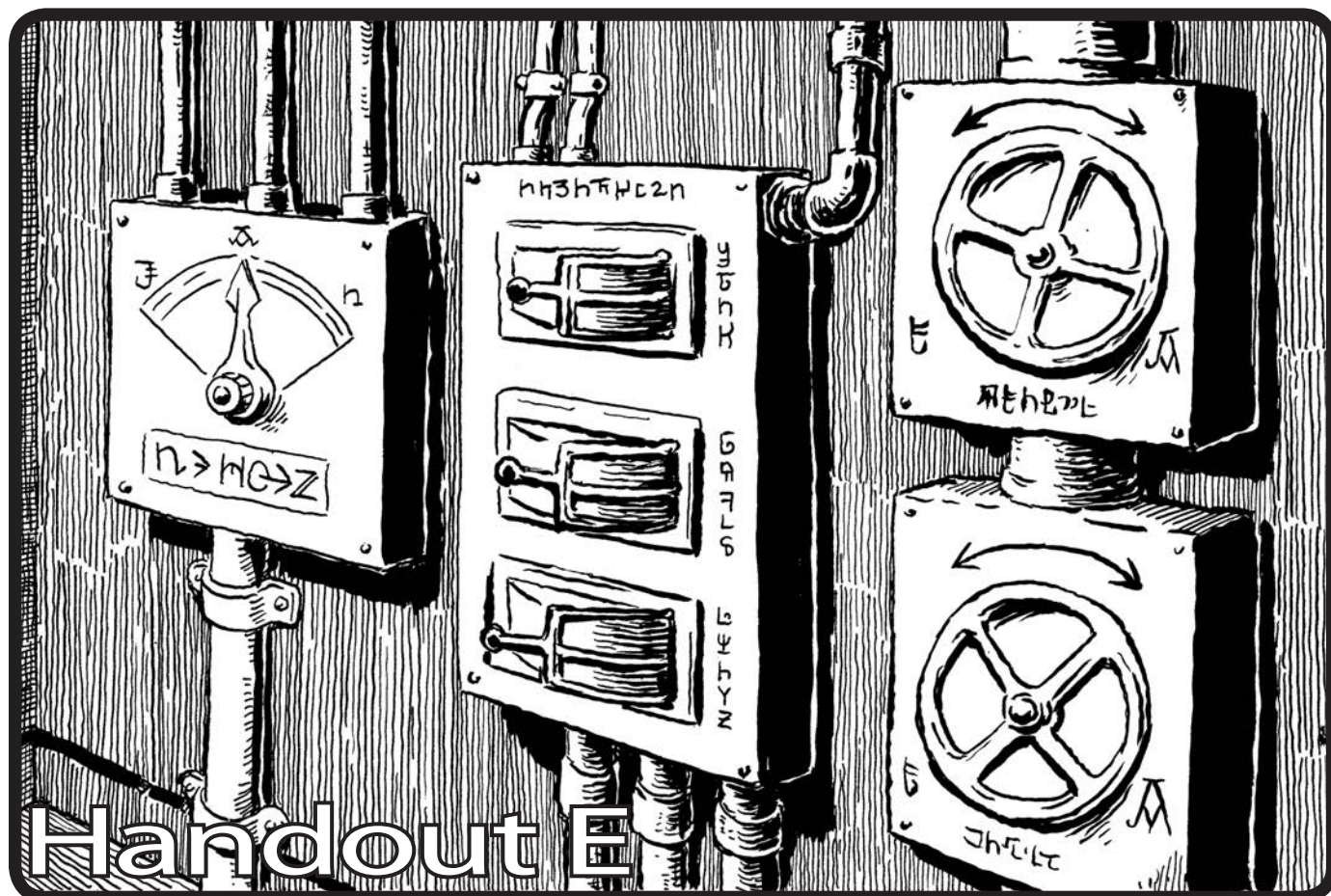
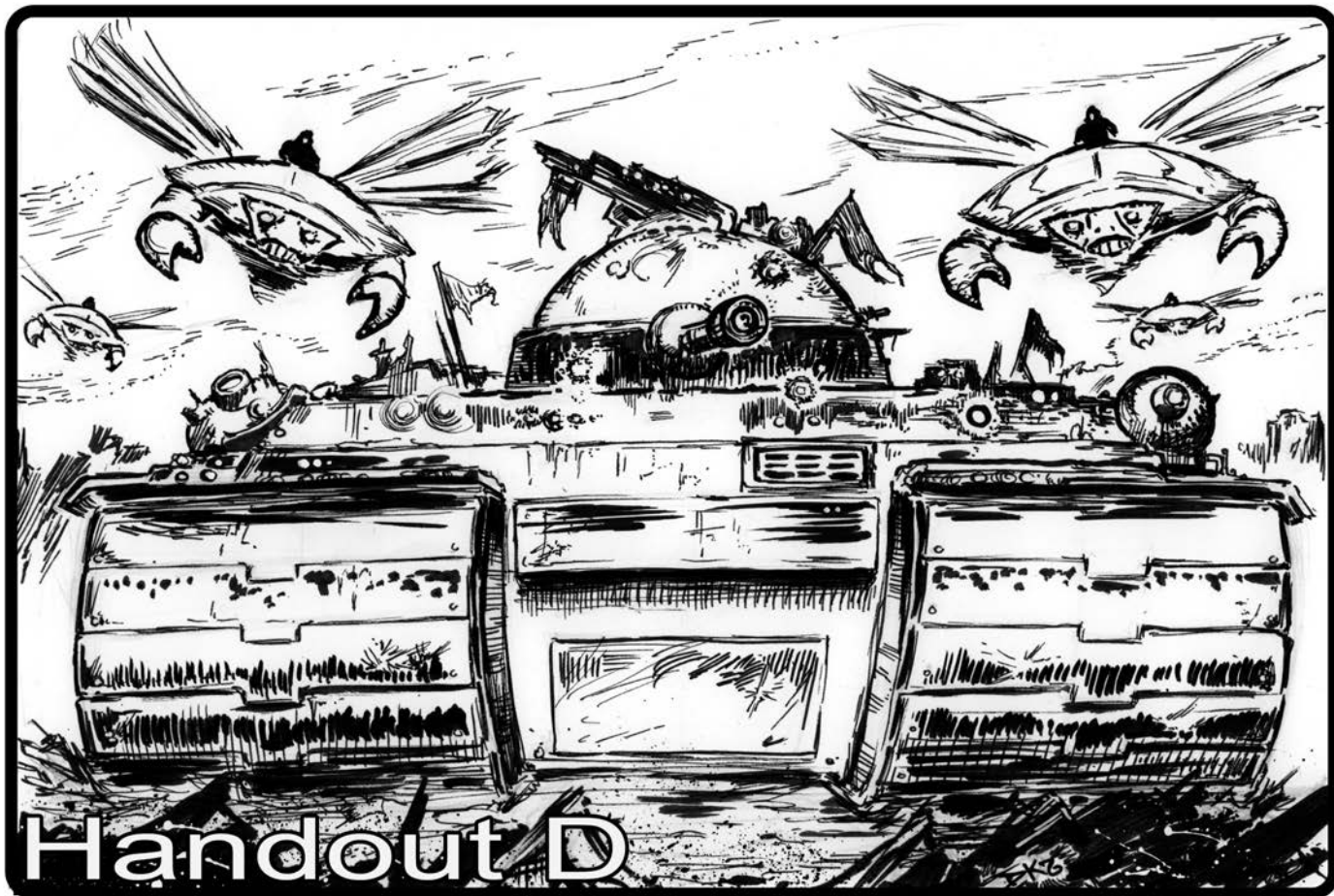




Handout B



Handout C



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