

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

## SYNTHETIC SWORDSMEN THE PURPLE PLANET



#84.2: A LEVEL 5 ADVENTURE  
ON THE PURPLE PLANET  
BY JIM WAMPLER

DK6



# SYNTHETIC SWORDSMEN ON THE PURPLE PLANET

## A LEVEL 5 ADVENTURE

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his adventure is designed for 5th level characters and assumes that the PCs have adventured on the Purple Planet extensively. Experienced characters, or appropriate pre-generated characters should be used.

## BACKGROUND



hough the weirdling sun of the Purple Planet has been a punishing influence for untold millennia, of late, conditions have worsened notably. Many of the native life forms on the surface have begun to behave sluggishly, and even the Kith who imbibe the moon-milk brewed from tiger mushrooms have begun to notice a loss in its potency and effect.

The reason is a reduction of the thin envelope of air that has until now at least partially shielded this world from the ruinous rays of the weirdling sun. Unknown to all, this is being caused by the gradual failure of the ancient Biosphere plant located at the northern pole of the planet. Since even the Ascended Masters have all but forgotten about this ancient site, it will fall to the PCs to discover its location and purpose, and perhaps through a combination of luck, grit, and persistence, solve another mystery of the Purple Planet.

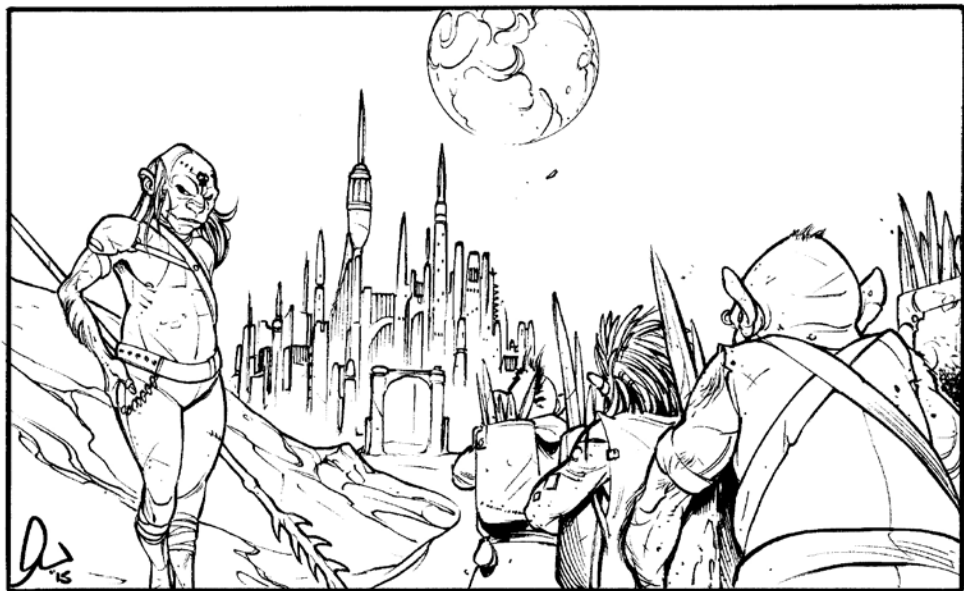
### THE LOST HISTORY OF HOUSE DRAGE



housands of years of years ago, House Drage held dominion over vast tracks of land in the northern hemisphere of the Purple Planet, including the ice fields that comprised the polar cap. Because of the northern climate, they were least and last affected by the ever-increasing radiation cast down by the weirdling sun as it entered its final phase of life. Their science and art were still in a relatively high state as the other major houses began a slow descent into barbarism and eternal warfare.

Thus, the scientist-nobles of House Drage became aware of the eventual outcome of the climate change being caused by unknown forces. Plans were quickly conceived to build a Biosphere plant at the northern pole in order to augment and replenish the planet's slowly thinning atmosphere. An accord was then struck between House Drage and the remaining semi-civilized House-nations. In exchange for House Drage ceding all of its lands south of the ice fields, the other houses pledged to forever afterwards pay an annual tribute to House Drage in the form of 100 greenstone shards. These objects were then used to power the Biosphere plant, which in turn kept the entire planet habitable.

From that ancient time to as recently as 10 generations ago, each of the major houses sent yearly tribute caravans to the northern pole. But over the passing centuries, the actual accord between the houses slowly became a legend, and then legend became myth, and eventually superstition. Eventually even the most powerful houses decayed into small pockets of barbarism, and the practice of the traditional pilgrimages and tribute stopped.



Since that time some few hundred years past, the Ascended Masters of House Drage — no longer powerful enough themselves to do otherwise — have sought to keep the Biosphere plant operational. They used their fading scientific knowledge to breed artificial warriors to venture forth and bring back as many green-stone shards as possible. They used genetics to clone themselves in order to maintain their lineage. When their own bodies began to suffer from clone degradation, they even took to having their heads surgically grafted to the synthetic bodies that they were creating. Ultimately, even that was not enough, as they began to die off. Where once the Biosphere plant required a minimum of 8 Ascended Masters in order to function fully, there is now only a single remaining ancient one left alive to see to it all — Lady Morn’na Bane — and she is dying. And when the last of the House Drage Ascended Masters passes into history, so goes the planet and all its inhabitants.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

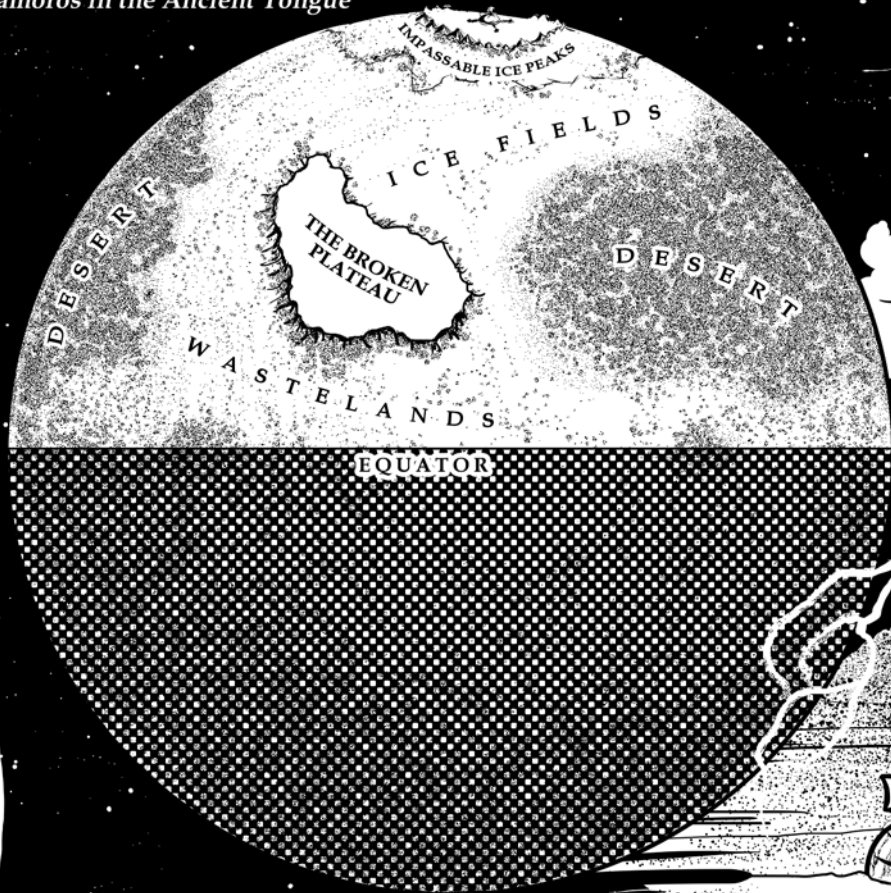


his adventure could easily take place in three acts: the search for clues to the nature of the worsening environmental conditions, travel to and exploring the Biosphere plant, and the final confrontation with it’s keeper, Lady Morn’na Bane of House Drage. For ease-of-use in a convention setting or as a one-off adventure, this version essentially hand-waves the first half of the adventure — research into causes and the hex crawl to the Biosphere plant — into a simple introduction to the adventure proper. Discerning judges who wish to expand this adventure further into a multi-session campaign arc taking place on the Purple Planet should have little difficulty doing so by adding those plot elements using DCC #84 *Peril on the Purple Planet* and associated materials as a guide.

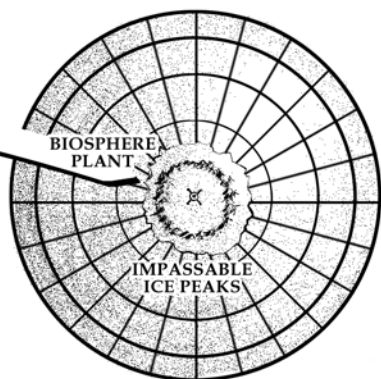
# THE PURPLE PLANET

*Pamoros in the Ancient Tongue*

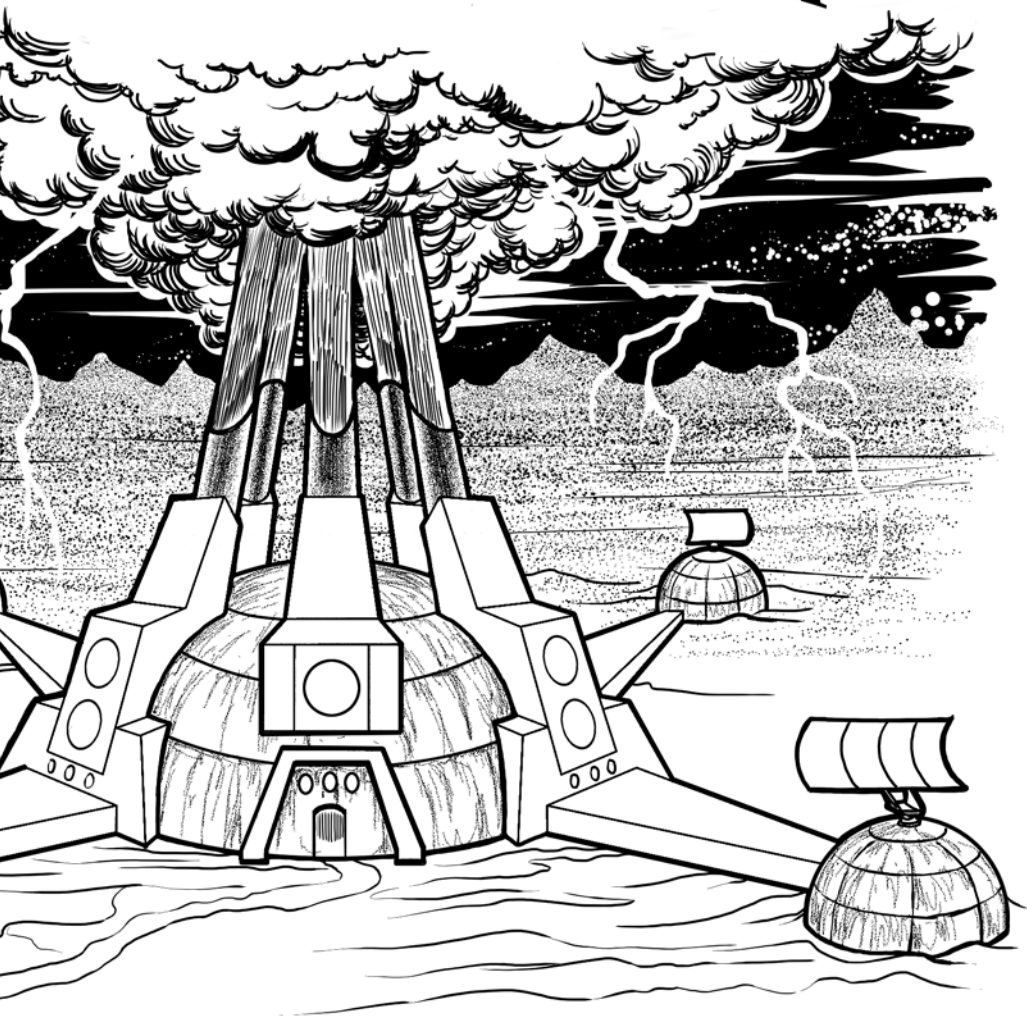
BIOSPHERE  
PLANT



Allen 2015



# THE BIOSPHERE PLANT



# STARTING THE ADVENTURE



y the time this adventure takes place, the PCs are assumed to be experienced immigrants to the Purple Planet. They should possess a working knowledge of the effects of the weirdling sun radiation, how to counter it with moon-milk, possession of a selection of native artifacts, and enough greenstone shards to power them. One of these devices should be an operational hover skiff.

## THE SKY IS STALLING

*Of late, you have noticed that the moon-milk you imbibe to deal with the baleful effects of the weirdling sun seems to be losing its potency. Then you notice that even the native lifeforms, long accustomed to the sun's punishing radiation, also seem to be behaving sluggishly, as though a gnawing lethargy gripped them all. You didn't notice it for months, but suddenly you realize that even you are constantly running out of breath after even minor exertions. After some research into the matter, the brightest among you, the wizard, suddenly announces a probable explanation — the very air you breathe seems to be thinning.*

## JOURNEY NORTHWARD

*Having possession of an ancient skiff, you and your band of interplanetary wanderers decide to scout the local area by air in order to determine how widespread the increased effects of the weirdling sun have become.*

*Around high-sun, you notice that the skiff has begun to buck slightly and to accelerate to a speed greater than you thought it capable. You have lost control of its flight. Strange ripples in the air seem to surround you, as the fragile ancient craft continues to pick up speed until you struggle for breath against the onrushing wind. Within an hour, you travel at tremendous velocity over a ridge of mile-high ice cliffs as the air chills to nearly intolerable levels. You then fly over a series of seemingly impassible ice peaks that span the horizon from east-to-west. As you approach your final destination, whatever force is controlling your craft seems to be drawing you to an ancient temple far larger in size than any you have ever witnessed. With a slight jolt, your skiff lands a short distance from it, with the craft's greenstone shard power source now fully drained.*

## THE BIOSPHERE PLANT

*Before you lies an immense temple-like structure that resembles a gigantic domed turtle shell the size of a city. Its upper section is bristling with fluted mile-tall spires that billow dank, purplish storm clouds upwards into the sky. The ever-rising cloud banks cast a penumbral shadow for miles around, before gradually dissipating on the far horizons in every direction.*

As the PCs approach the Biosphere plant, they will note that there are two very obvious entrances on the southern side (areas 1-1 and 1-2).



**Area 1-1 — Biosphere Airlock:** *The left-most entrance is 50' tall and 50' wide, with a single thin seam joining two hinge-less metal doors. A quick thump on the surface tells you that the green-flecked doors are made of a metal unknown to you and appear to be several feet thick. The hair stands up on your neck as you note that high up above the door several metal eyes on stalks seem to be regarding you with dispassionate calculation.*

The airlock scanners will pause for 3 rounds in order to allow anyone at the doors time to properly identify themselves. To the right side of the door is a rune-plate along with a small receptacle chamber. Guessing and inputting the correct rune sequence to open the door is virtually impossible, but allow the PCs a small chance. Have the player who attempts this roll d100, and if the result is 97-00, they have input the correct sequence.

The airlock doors can also be opened by placing a greenstone shard into the receptacle bay, causing the device to consume the shard. Placing anything else there will fail to activate the doors, unless an artifact containing a greenstone shard is placed within it, which also works though it consumes the entire item.

The doors are constructed from *unassailium*, a metallic 7th state of matter that greedily drinks in both kinetic and magical energies before shunting them off into a parallel universe. Thus, any physical damage done to the doors is simply absorbed, and spells directed against it fail outright. Unless the doors are properly activated within 3 rounds the four security eye-beamers above the door begin to attack the party.

Once the eye-beamers are destroyed, the airlock doors are opened from inside by the waiting party of synthi-kith guards (see area 1-3).

**Eye-Beamers (4):** Init: +6; Atk meson beamer +6 ranged (2d12); AC 18; HD 4d6; hp 14; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SV Fort+6, Ref +4, Will +10; AL N.

**Area 1-2 — Blocked Biosphere Airlock:** *The right-most entrance is likewise 50' tall and 50' wide, but has been entirely blocked a large mound of megalith ice shards. Upon closer inspection, the ice shard mound has several cave-like openings large enough for a humanoid to enter.*

The ice shard mound is home to a snow orm, the stunted but cold-adapted relative of the death orms of the wastelands. Anyone entering the mound will trigger an attack from the white wooly worm. Though smaller in size than its desert-dwelling cousins, the snow orm is still quite capable of swallowing medium size prey, which it will attempt to do by bursting up through the snow underneath its victim. If any two paddle attacks successfully hit a PC on the same round, that character is shoved into the snow orm's maw and the victim will then take 1d6 of damage per round until freed. The victim can be freed by inflicting 18 points of damage with a bladed weapon, from inside or out.

There is a 35% chance of discovering a relic in the worm's gullet. Roll 1d4: (1) field kit; (2) skullcap; (3) plasma torch; (4) raygun.

Any further exploration of the ice shard mound will reveal that the snow orm created an underground network of burrows, one of which leads up into area 1-8.





**Snow Orm:** Init -2; Atk paddles +5 melee (1d5) and maw +5 melee (1d12+5); AC 15; HD 8d12; hp 48; MV 45'; Act 5d20; SP swallow whole; SV Fort +4, Ref -3, Will +4; AL C.

**Area 1-3 — Attack of the Synthi-Kith:** *The gigantic metal doors trundle open as a gust of pure, fresh air rushes past you. Inside the immense chamber you see a mass of well-armed Kith preparing to charge at you. In the brief seconds before battle commences you catch a fleeting impression that these Kith are unlike the ones that you have encountered before. They are well-equipped with polished weapons slung on their unnaturally well-formed bodies, which are of a clean, pinkish tone, rather than the dirty amber-brown to which you are accustomed. Roll for initiative!*

The synthi-kith guards have been ordered to repel the invaders and are well-prepared to do so by the time the airlock doors open. The synthi-kith Brain Leader will expertly direct his troops to begin the battle with a volley of lightning spear fire before closing for melee in the following round.

As the melee unfolds, the PCs will quickly discover that the synthi-kith do not go down easily in combat. Because the synthi-kith are artificially grown from huge vats of Synthi-flesh, their nervous systems are equally distributed throughout their bodies — like an octopus or squid. If a synthi-kith head is chopped off, the body continues to fight (albeit blinded and at a -4 to attacks) while the head growls and spits from the ground. A synthi-kith will not stop fighting until all its limbs and head have been severed.

Unfortunately, their synthetic nature makes the synthi-kith especially vulnerable to dismemberment, as their uniformly formed bodies do not enjoy the same level of internal strength in skeleton, muscle, and joints. Thus, anyone engaging in melee with a synthi-kith enjoys an augmented critical hit range of 18-20 (Warriors and other classes that enjoy an improved critical hit range may use whichever critical hit range is superior). Employ the special synthi-kith critical hit table on page 10 to easily adjudicate critical hits against them and the resultant in-game effects.

In any event, severed synthi-kith body parts do not live on forever. Within 1d6 hours individual body parts will melt into a turgid pool of raw, lifeless Synthi-flesh. Note: In cases where a synthi-kith has lost both legs and is immobile, any other additional attack upon him is considered an automatic coup de grâs which severs the head.

**Synthi-Kith (14):** Init +2; Atk electro-spatha +2 melee (1d8+1d12+2) or lightning spear +2 ranged (3d6+2); AC 11; HD 3d12+6; hp 26; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP synthetic body does not stop fighting until all limbs are severed; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.

**Synthi-Kith Brain-Leader:** Init +2; Atk electro-spatha +2 melee (1d8+1d12+2) or lightning spear +2 ranged (3d6+2); AC 11; HD 3d12+6; hp 26; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP synthetic body does not stop fighting until all limbs are severed, Intelligence augmented by brain spider cap; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N

**Electro-Spatha:** The electro-spatha is a 4' long broad sword with an activation rune that electrifies the blade, dealing extra shock damage (1d12+2). Powered by a greenstone shard, the electro-spatha will be recovered with 1d6 charges remaining, after which its damage becomes 1d8 until it is powered again with a new shard. Charges are only expended upon successful strikes with the weapon.

**Lightning Spear:** The lightning spear is capable of casting an arc of electricity that does 3d6+2 points of damage with a range of up to 100'. When used in melee, the spear only does normal damage of 1d8. A lightning spear will be recovered with 1d5 charges remaining, a charge being used each time its powers are used. A replacement greenstone shard will re-power the weapon with 5 charges.

**Brain Spider Cap:** When placed on the head, the legs of this spider shaped device will immediately bore into the skull of the wearer, as metallic tendrils snake through the brain and set up a complex cybernetic network. While the wearer takes 1d4 damage from this process, their Intelligence is also boosted by +4 to a maximum of 18. The brain spider cap cannot subsequently be removed without causing the death of the wearer.

## Table 1-A: Synthi-Kith Critical Hits

### d6 Critical Hit and Effects

- 1 **No! That's impossible!** Your weapon expertly slashes off one of the synthi-kith's hands (50% chance it is the weapon hand). If disarmed, the synthi-kith continues to attack with the bloody stump for 1d4 melee damage.
- 2 **Right! I'll have your leg!** One of the synthi-kith's legs is sliced off, reducing his movement rate to 5'.
- 3 **It's just a flesh wound.** An arm is severed at the shoulder (50% chance it is the weapon arm). If disarmed, the synthi-kith continues to attack bare-handed with his off-arm at -2 penalty for 1d3 damage upon a successful strike.
- 4 **Come back and fight!** Both legs are chopped off in a single stroke of your weapon. The synthi-kith is immobilized with 0' movement, but will continue to strike at all enemies within melee range at a -2 penalty.
- 5 **'Tis but a scratch!** Both arms are simultaneous shorn from the synthi-kith in a double-windmill like attack of your weapon. The synthi-kith attempts to kick and taunt you (1d3 damage on a successful kick).
- 6 **You had the higher ground!** Both legs and an arm are neatly sliced off the synthi-kith in a single sweeping weapon strike. The synthi-kith drops to the ground and crawls feebly after you with its remaining arm, cursing your name.
- 7+ **Decapitation!** The synthi-kith's head pops off and rolls to the ground, continuing to growl and hiss at you. Body continues to fight at a -4 to all actions, unless otherwise dismembered.

## EXITING THE BIOSPHERE AIRLOCK

In order to progress through the secondary airlock doors, the exterior doors must first be closed and the airlock re-pressurized. This is accomplished easily enough by simply touching the pressure plate next to the interior side of the outer doors. The PCs then experience a soothing blast of sweet, heavy air as their ears pop suddenly. All Stamina-draining effects from the weirdling sun also cease inside the Biosphere.

The pressure plate next to the interior airlock doors has an indented area exactly in the shape of a synthi-kith right hand. If a living or dead synthi-kith right hand is placed there (and there should be a few of those handy), the interior airlock doors slowly grind open.

## NOTES ON THE BIOSPHERE INTERIOR

Only one small slice of the Biosphere interior is shown on the main map, which should be sufficient for this adventure. The remaining sections of the facility feature the same basic distribution of rooms, and can either be run as duplicate en-

## Table 1-B: Effects of Ingesting Synthi-Flesh Broth

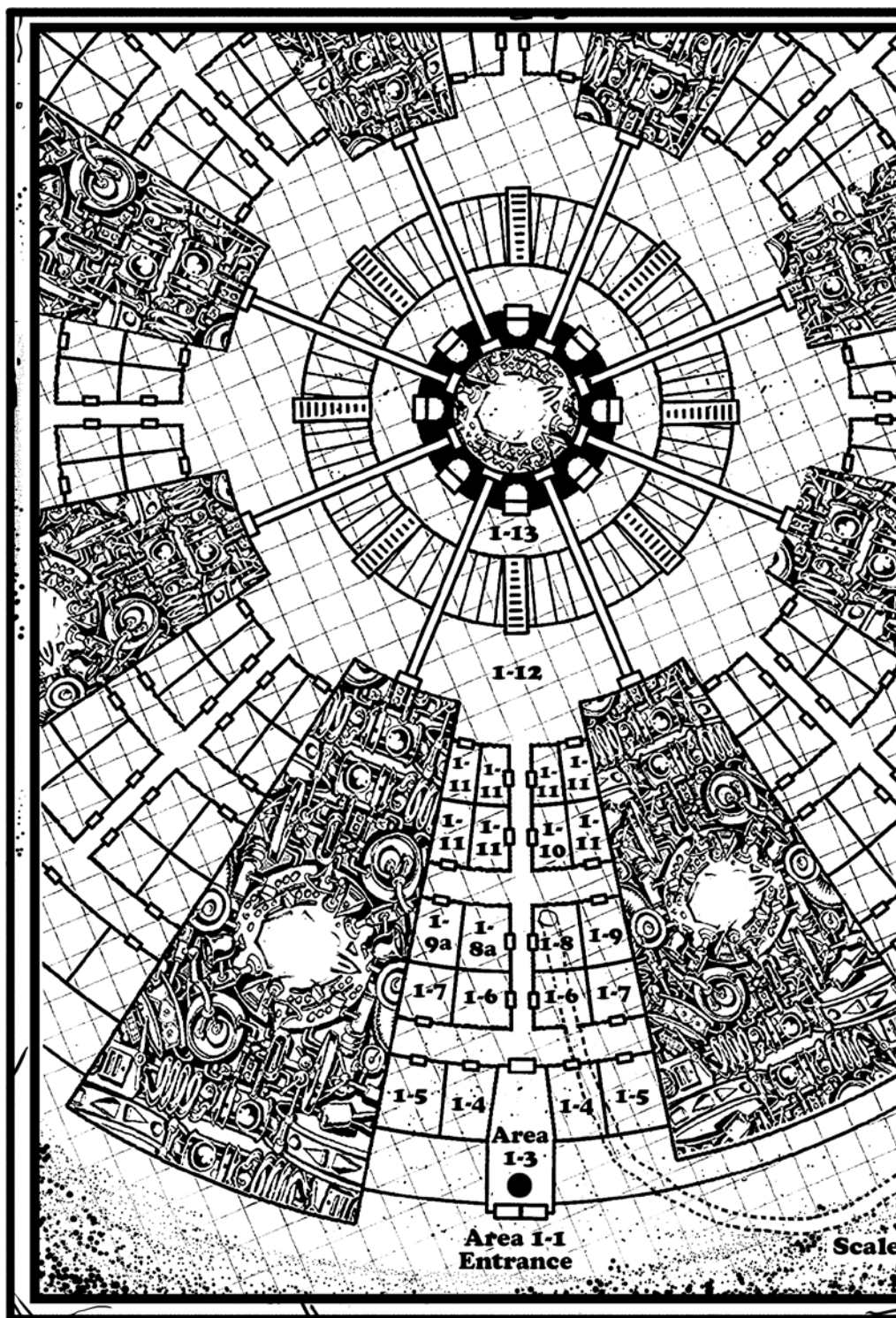
d5	Effect
1	<b>Allergic reaction:</b> The PC’s body violently rejects the Synthi-flesh cells, as the Synthi-flesh broth leaves the PCs body all at once via every possible orifice. The PC suffers 1d4 damage from induced fever and dehydration.
2	<b>Need a hand?:</b> A synthetic arm grows out of the PC’s sternum. It takes the PC 1 week to fully master the use of the third arm, which tends to flail and flop around randomly until that time. Until mastered, the arm is effectively worthless and causes a -2 to all actions unless chopped off (PC takes 1d3 damage). After the week, the PC gains an extra 1d14 action die that may be used for any action that the extra arm undertakes.
3	<b>Two heads are better than one:</b> A second synthetic head grows out of the PC’s right shoulder, imperfectly mimicking his original head. The second head is argumentative and far less intelligent (roll 2d6 for Intelligence). All of the PC’s actions are now at a -2 until such time as the extra head is cut off, which causes 1d6 damage. While the second head is present, the PC cannot be surprised.
4	<b>Genetic match:</b> The genetic materials in the Synthi-flesh cells successfully gene-splice themselves with the PC’s own genome. The PC’s body is transformed into the appearance of a synthi-kith. This change is primarily in appearance only, though the PC does gain an extra HD permanently. The PC otherwise gains none of the synthi-kith abilities and keeps his or her own stats and class abilities.
5	<b>Good for what ails yah:</b> Synthi-flesh cells flood the PC’s blood stream, healing all damage, removing any ability score loss (including Luck), and curing any spell corruption.

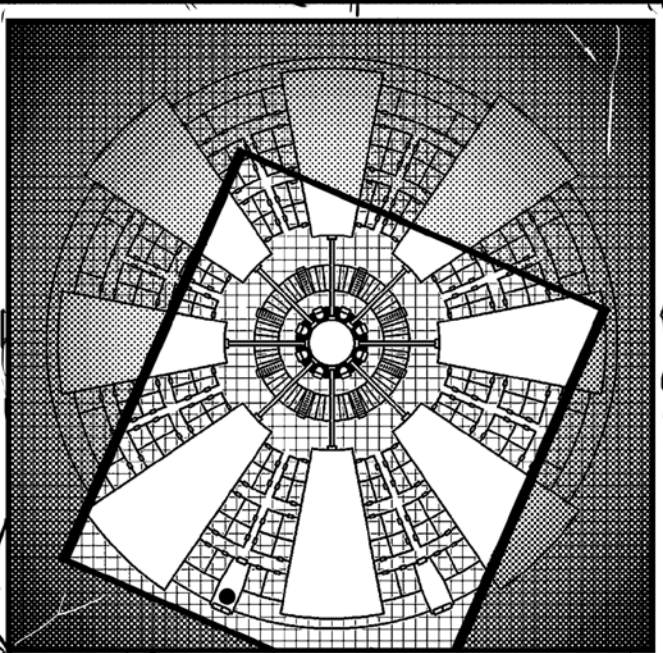
counters of those below, or completely customized into new encounters and sand-box play at the judge’s discretion.

Interior doors in areas 1-5 through 1-11 have indented scan plates similar to the interior airlock door and can only be opened with a synthi-kith hand, or by delivering 100 points of physical damage to the door in a single round, which overloads the unassailium metal’s 7th state matrix causing the door to momentarily fade away and then reappear – popping the door open. These interior doors may also be opened by a successful DC 18 pick lock check. Failed pick lock checks alert any occupants of the room to the presence of intruders.

**Area 1-4 – Synthi-Kith Mess Halls:** *As the door swishes upwards, you see a large room filled with odd one-legged tables and chairs, at which are seated several synthi-kith who appear to be drawing a bubbling violaceous fluid into their mouths via a series of transparent hoses originating from machinery built into the center of each table.*







## BIOSPHERE PLANT



These rooms are the synthi-kith refueling stations — their equivalent of a mess hall. The synthi-kith seated at the tables are ingesting a Synthi-flesh broth through the dispensers at each table. All are unarmed except for daggers.

**Synthi-Kith (6):** Init +2; Atk dagger +2 melee (1d6+2) or ranged (1d4+2); AC 11; HD 3d12+6; hp 26; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP synthetic body does not stop fighting until all limbs are severed; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.

**Synthi-Flesh Broth:** Should the PCs sample the broth freely available via the table dispensers, roll randomly on table 1-B for the variable effects.

**Area 1-5 — Synthi-Kith Barracks:** *You enter a room filled with crude cots set up on metallic ovals that levitate 1' above the floor. The room is filthy, with soiled rags and blankets everywhere, and is unoccupied except for a lone synthi-kith. This synthi-kith immediately attempts to rush towards a small metal panel on the west wall of the room.*

The single synthi-kith occupant of this room will reach the wall panel and activate an intruder alarm within 1 round unless prevented from doing so. If activated, the alarm will summon another squad of synthi-kith guards from a different section of the Biosphere who arrive within 4 rounds. The synthi-kith guards are identical in composition to those in area 1-4. The lone synthi-kith in the barracks is armed only with a dagger.

If the barracks are searched, the PCs will find as many normal daggers as they could possibly wish for, but little else of worth. One of the piles of rags is rife with sand mites. Have all the PCs with current Luck scores under 9 make a Luck check. The PC with the lowest adjusted roll becomes infested with the sand mites and all of his or her actions will be at a -2 from the itching for the rest of the adventure, or until disinfected in the sonic showers in areas 1-10 and 1-11. A clerical lay on hands spell of at least 3 HD effect will also ride the PC of the infestation.

**Area 1-6 — Synthi-Kith Armory:** *Jackpot! This room is unoccupied, but has a large floating metal counter in the center on which are spread strange and unknown tools. The shelves on the walls are overfull with electro-spathas and lightning spears, all seemingly in various stages of disassembly, maintenance, and possibly repair.*

The armory has been used by the spider brain cap augmented synthi-kith leaders to maintain and repair their weapons, with fairly dismal results. Allow any PC who wishes to attempt to assemble a working weapon to make a DC 18 Intelligence check. If the PC succeeds, there is still only a 50% chance that the weapon was assembled from fully functional parts. A malfunctioning weapon will explode when first activated, causing 4d6 damage in a 10' radius.

Note that the room contains no greenstone shards, so any assembled weapon will need to be powered by a greenstone shard supplied by one of the PCs. If the weapon explodes, obviously that particular shard is also destroyed in the process.

**Area 1-7 — Encephlo-Education Room:** *This room is divided in the middle by a wall comprised of a very hard, transparent substance 6" thick. On the north side is a raised metal pedestal with myriad dark gemstones imbedded in its upwards facing surface. On the other side is a large reclining metal chair with two oversized amber gems mounted paral-*

*lel to each other on either side of the head rest. The walls of both chambers are lined with shelves containing hundreds of metallic orbs, each about 3" in circumference.*

In the distant past this room was used to fully educate the synthi-kith warriors with all the knowledge necessary to run and maintain the Biosphere. Over the centuries, many of the data orbs have become corrupted or entirely burnt out. PCs will quickly be able to deduce that there is an orb-shaped receptacle in the back of the encephlo-education chair. Should they plug a data-orb into the chair and attempt to operate the control pedestal, the chair will activate and attempt to transmit the orb data directly into the mind of any creature sitting in the chair (use Table 1-C below).

The data-orbs are manufactured out of a metal alloy that is 95% pure gold, and dwarves will readily detect this. Thus, they are valuable (10 gp each) whether they contain valid data or not, and there are 125 orbs present on the shelves. Any attempt to pry the gemstones from either the metal chair or control pedestal will succeed on a DC 15 Strength check, netting a 100 GP gem of unknown type. Regardless of the success or failure of an attempt to remove a gem, the person attempting to do so (and anyone else in physical contact with the device at the time) will also receive a shocking 1d6 of electrical damage in a shower of sparks and small arcs of lightning. Once any gems are removed, the encephlo-education chair loses all functionality.

**Area 1-8 — Synthi-Kith Genetics Lab and Surgical Bay:** *At first glance you take this room to be a medieval torture chamber, with it's gruesome blood-splattered walls and dangerous-looking bladed machinery hanging down from the ceiling. In transparent chambers built into one of the walls you see headless synthi-kith bodies stored. In a smaller area on the opposite wall are smaller chambers containing a series of warped and malformed heads that were probably once human. On a table in the center of the room lays a headless synthi-kith body. With a start you notice that even missing its head, the body appears to be warm and breathing.*

This room is where the last Ascended Master of House Drage, Lady Morn'na Bane, has been extending her life for thousands of years. In a long game of ever-decreasing returns, Morn'na Bane has been surgically grafting her head to an endless series of synthi-kith bodies in this room. She has also been conducting failed genetics experiments trying to clone her own head, for reasons the PCs may discover later.

A PC with the proper knowledge gained from area 1-7 can also operate the robotic surgical equipment to similar effect. Grafting a PC's head onto the body on the table creates a new Ascended Master, albeit one with the mind and knowledge of the PC and the body and abilities of a robust synthi-kith. Grafting one of the malformed heads onto the synthi-kith body creates a fully insane and demented version of Morn'na Bane, who will immediately attack the party.

Anyone without the proper knowledge to activate the robotic surgical equipment takes a terrible chance if they monkey around with the controls. Have anyone trying to experiment with the controls make an Intelligence roll against the Table 1-D below, rolling anew each time an additional attempt is made.



**Table 1-C: Encephlo-Education Chair Effects**

d5	Effect	Knowledge Gained
1	<b>Major Brain Damage!</b> Major hematoma permanently lowers recipient's Intelligence by 1d6.	Complete knowledge of electro-spatha and lightning spear construction, repair, and maintenance is now yours to command. The data fed the PC is corrupted so badly that his chances of success are now actually worse than if uneducated (i.e., PC now has only a 25% chance to make a functional weapon in area 1-6).
2	<b>Cognitive Dissonance:</b> Recipient cannot deal with the magnitude of what has been learned, and disassociates with reality for 1d3 hours, during which time the PC considers all Ascended Masters to be true gods.	Synthi-kith vat operations. PC now understands how to activate the UV laser armature and spigots in area 1-9 to bring forth a fully formed synthi-kith from the Synthi-flesh vats. It takes 1 hour per vat to fully create each synthi-kith, and the creature is automatically obedient to its creator. Any such freshly created synthi-kith have only 2d6 Intelligence, are mute, and have no knowledge save that given it by the PC. There is a 25% chance per hour that the creature will randomly go insane and attack the nearest living person. This knowledge will be retained for 12 hours.
3	<b>Migraine:</b> Recipient's brain is overloaded by the new knowledge and suffers a nearly paralyzing headache as a result. All actions are at -2 for the next 1d24 hours.	Biosphere plant operations (shard collector). The PC suddenly understands how to place greenstone shards into the Biosphere collector in area 1-12 in order to power the Biosphere plant. This knowledge will be retained for 24 hours.
4	<b>Brain Boost:</b> Recipient's neural pathways are temporarily rewired, granting 1d6 of increased Intelligence (to a maximum of 18) for the next 12 hours. These Intelligence points can be used to spellburn.	Biosphere plant operations (Ascended Masters chambers). The PC now understands the necessity of a living being with an Intelligence score of 15 or higher being present in one of the Ascended Master chambers in area 1-13 in order to direct the green flow into powering the Biosphere plant. This knowledge will be retained for 48 hours.
5	<b>Cerebral Acceleration:</b> Recipient's mind actually expands to accommodate new knowledge gained. PC's Intelligence score is permanently raised by 1d3 (to a maximum of 18).	The Ascended Masters of House Drage achieved a form of immortality for themselves by growing artificial bodies and advanced surgical procedures for attaching their own heads to these mighty new forms. You now understand how to operate the equipment necessary to perform this surgery in area 1-8. This knowledge will be retained indefinitely.



**Table 1-D: Robotic Surgical Bay Artifact Check**

d20 + INT mod	Results
1	The robotic surgical bay suddenly activates and runs amuck, gaining surprise. Device will attempt to sever the heads of all present.
2-17	The robotic surgical bay suddenly activates, gaining surprise. Device will attempt to use its 4 attacks to sever two random heads and reattach them to the opposite bodies.
18-19	The robotic surgical equipment activates, and a calm, deep voice personally addresses the activating character, saying, "Shall I proceed with Ascended Master propagation experiment #4,234, Lady Bane?" If the PC responds in the affirmative, the device immediately removes one of the mutated heads from the storage unit and attaches it to the synthi-kith body on the table, creating the insane Morn'na Bane clone beast.
20+	The robotic surgical equipment activates, and a calm, deep voice personally addresses the activating character, saying, "Are you ready for your next immortality procedure, Lady Bane?" If the PC responds in the affirmative, the device immediately removes the PC's head and reattaches it to the synthi-kith body on the table.

The main portion of the robotic surgical unit is buried in the ceiling, so PCs will have to destroy the 4 individual robotic arms in order to render the machine powerless. Note: In the back of one of the large body storage units is a hole that leads to the snow worm tunnels connected to area 1-2.

**Robotic Surgical Bay Arm (4):** Init +10; Atk vibro-saw/blade/scalpel/shears +5 melee (1d20+10); AC 17; HD 4d20; hp 41 each; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP robotic arms can reach anywhere in the room, severs head on 18-20 (switches and re-attaches severed heads on following round); SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will -1; AL N.

**Insane Morn'na Bane Clone Beast:** Init +5; Atk claw +5 melee (1d8+2) or psionic blast +5 ranged (6d6+2); AC 11; HD 4d12+6; hp 32; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP synthetic body does not stop fighting until all limbs are severed, psionic blast; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +8; AL C.

**Area 1-8a — Abandoned Lab:** *This dust filled room is lined with glass cases of various sizes along the walls. Hanging from the ceiling are long mechanical arms fitted with rusty blades and other sharp and edged implements.*

This room has been long neglected. There is a 20% chance that 1d4 of the robotic arms (see area 1-8) are still functional and will attack the PCs. The arms will try to sever heads and attach them to random or non-existent bodies.

**Area 1-9 — Synthi-Kith Vats:** *This 50' long room is lined on both sides with huge, bubbling vats of a viscous pinkish material — eight in all. Though the room is currently unattended, it is clear to you that the pipes and spigots arranged above each vat are likely for the purpose of replenishing the vats. There is a gem-studded pedestal at the far end of the room. Pencil-thin beams of purple light projected by insect-like antennae on each side of the spigots are rapidly tracing an arcane pattern in the roiling surface of each vat.*

The Synthi-flesh vats in this room are currently at work creating replacement synthi-kith, having been automatically triggered by the deaths of the guards in area 1-3. For each round after the PCs open the door, approximately 1/3 of a newly formed synthi-kith will slowly arise from the vats. Left unmolested for 3 rounds, 8 brand new synthi-kith will step out of the vats. These artificial beasts are unarmed, uneducated, and confused. If approached in any way, they will begin fearfully attacking the PCs with brutish blows from their still-damp fists and claws.

**Newly Grown Synthi-Kith (8):** Init +0; Atk fist +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 11; HD 3d12+6; hp 26; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP synthetic body does not stop fighting until all limbs are severed; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will -4; AL N.

Should the PCs destroy the UV laser beam emitters (AC 12, 6 hp each, 2 per spigot) prior to the full formation of a synthi-kith, the process aborts and the partially-formed creature simply falls down into the vat and melts back into the viscous caldron of Synthi-flesh.

PCs who attempt to manipulate the control panel without knowledge gained from the encephlo-education device in area 1-7 have a very small chance of correctly operating the device. Have any uneducated PC making the attempt roll an Intelligence check. On a roll of natural 20 or a roll pushed above 20 by Luck, the PC

will be able to shut the device down until it is manually reactivated. Any number less than 20 cause the machinery to malfunction and to begin to pour a flood of Synthi-flesh into the vats.

If this happens, the Synthi-flesh will then begin to spill over the edges of the vats and pool together in the center of the room, creating a turbid, rolling mass of Synthi-life that rises up and attacks the PCs as soon as the spigots are cut off or it is damaged. This Synthi-mass creature will have 1 HD for every round that an individual spigot remains on, and 1 pseudopod attack for each HD. The spigots may be stopped-up or clamped shut by numerous feats of player ingenuity, but simple melee attacks against them are only 50% successful at stemming the flow, as the machinery is as easily broken open as dented shut (spigots are AC 12, and require a successfully delivered 12 hp of damage to be clamped shut).

**Synthi-Mass:** Init +0; Atk pseudopod +1 melee (1d6); AC 11; HD 1d12 (1 HD per round spigots are operating); hp variable; MV 30'; Act 1d20 per pseudopod; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will -4; AL C.

**Area 1-9a — Abandoned Vats:** *This trash filled room contains large vats and other fixtures, most of them cracked or completely dismantled. A pedestal sits at the far end of the room.*

This room is similar in appearance to area 1-9, except the equipment has been long abandoned and is clearly in disrepair. The console is covered in dust and is missing all major components. There is a 10% chance a Synthi-mass with 1d6 Hit Dice and the same number of pseudopods occupies this room (see area 1-9).

**Area 1-10 — Reoccupied Ascended Master Quarters:** *In stark contrast to the synthi-kith barracks, this room is a luxuriously-appointed apartment filled with rich carpets, gold and silver-filigreed furniture — including a floating chaise lounge. The room's sole occupant is an especially large-headed synthi-kith who is dressed in a jeweled harness, flowing velvet cape, and armed with a saber and dagger. On his head is a brain spider cap. Instead of drawing his weapon, he folds his massive arms across his barrel chest and regards you with a malevolent gleam in his eyes.*

Sar S'Vatha is an advanced and unusual synthi-kith of potent mental abilities. Created by Lady Morn'na Bane 200 years ago as an assistant in her efforts to rehabilitate the failing Biosphere, Sar S'Vatha rebelled and took control of the facility. He now commands all of the synthi-kith guards, and runs the Biosphere as his own private kingdom.

Sar S'Vatha is already aware of the invasion by outsiders, but did not expect them to get this far. His arrogance and belief in his own powers is such that he has now chosen to take on the PCs directly, without the aid of additional troops which he could easily summon. On Sar S'Vatha's person is a bronze medallion on a neck chain. The medallion features a blue-green gem on one side, and a rune-glyph on the other side.

A sonic shower is located in this room, and can be used to decontaminate a sand mite infestation (from area 1-5), and may have other benefits at the judge's discretion.





**Sar S'Vatha:** Init +10; Atk saber +10 melee (1d14+2) and dagger +10 melee (1d4+2) or psionic powers (see below); AC 16; HD 12d12+2; 85 hp; MV 30'; Act 4d20; SP psionic powers, synthetic body does not stop fighting until all limbs are severed, autonomous head; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +10; AL C.

If Sar S'Vatha's is decapitated, his head will grown spider legs and continue to scurry about the room attempting to use psionic attacks with his mental powers.

**Sar S'Vatha's Severed Head:** Init +10; Atk psionic powers (see below); AC 12; HD 1d12+2; hp 11; MV 10'; Act 4d20; SP psionic powers, autonomous head; SV Fort -4, Ref +2, Will +10; AL C.

#### **Sar S'Vatha's Psionic Powers:**

- **Regeneration:** Sar S'Vatha is able to psychically self-heal 3d12 damage, up to four times in one 24 hour period.
- **Domination:** With a glance, Sar S'Vatha is able to completely dominate the weak-minded. He rolls 1d20+10 on each attempt, with any roll that equals or surpasses the target's Personality score indicating that Sar S'Vatha is now able to command that being mentally. Dominated targets are allowed a DC 18 Will save on each subsequent round to break free of Sar S'Vatha's mental domination.

- **Force Field Generation:** Sar S'Vatha's mind can project a telekinetic force field capable of absorbing up to 25 points of damage before failing. He can do this 4 times per day.
- **Illusion Generation:** Sar S'Vatha is able to project realistic illusions into the minds of the unwary or unintelligent. Sar S'Vatha most often uses this power to create the illusion of masses of synthi-kith warriors in order to seed confusion in his enemies and to create opportunities of attack for himself. Targets are allowed a DC 16 Will save *only* when they announce that they believe that the illusions are unreal. Until such time as a successful save is made, the illusory creatures are capable of delivering 1d6 damage per round.

**Area 1-11 — Abandoned Quarters:** *This chamber is a dim, dirty, and long-abandoned apartment otherwise similar to the others. It has been stripped of furnishings and even the trash that remains is covered in a thick coating of dust.*

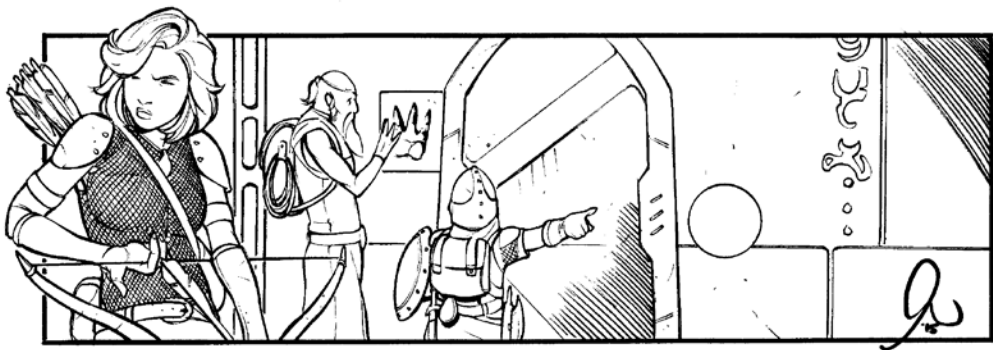
These rooms are former Ascended Master's living quarters, with almost nothing of value in them. If the room is thoroughly searched, there is a small chance (15%) of finding a lost and forgotten bronze medallion exactly like that possessed by Sar S'Vatha in area 1-10.

The sonic showers in these quarters each have a 25% chance of being functional, and may be used to decontaminate a sand mite infestation (from area 1-5) and other ailments at the judge's discretion.

**Area 1-12 — Biosphere Core:** *As you proceed, the hallway opens up into a gargantuan, cathedral-like domed space that is too large for you to take in all at once. A curved, sweeping area of metal floor extends both east and west for as far as you can see. Over 75' in front of you, a dais at least 300' wide rises several stories into the air where it forms the base of a cylindrical column of gold and silver that spans upwards to the domed ceiling hundreds of feet above you. At the base of the 80' wide column are a series of large chamber doors — at least four of them that you can see from this side. 10' wide inclined ramps lead up onto the dais, and to each door. Roughly at the midpoint of the column, it's shape is interrupted by a large transparent sphere which glows brightly with an emerald light. Gigantic flying buttresses constructed of the same substance as the exterior of the Biosphere project from the chamber's outer walls, with metal pipes over 10' in circumference connecting each buttress to the central column at a point just below the glowing chamber.*

The ancient and nearly imperishable machinery in this chamber are the slender threads by which all future life on the Purple Planet hangs. When operating as intended, the 8 Ascended Master chambers were occupied by a specially-trained Ascended Master in rotating shifts. All members of House Drage were born and raised knowing that as part of their duty to House, Family, and ultimately the entire planet, these services would be required of them.

Each science-noble sat in an encephlo-chair station in the Ascended Master chambers and used their great minds to direct and control the Biosphere core. The core, in turn, focused and directed the green flow being pumped up from subterranean depths through a gigantic greenstone held in the center of the gigantic device.



Inert gasses were then drawn into the glowing chamber, transmuted and multiplied into life-giving ones, and pumped back into the atmosphere, thickening and maintaining it. Other machinery built into the Biosphere device could also take greenstone shards and use them to continually reconstitute the gigantic greenstone which made the entire process possible.

For thousands of years this worked admirably. But over the centuries the scientist-nobles of House Drage began to lose the ability to reproduce naturally. This led to the development of the radical methods for extending their own lives. Still, magical corruption from proximity to the Green Flow began to take its toll upon them, until finally, everything depended up one last Ascended Master — Lady Morn'na Bane.

**Area 1-13 — Ascended Master Chambers:** *Arranged at perfect 45 degree increments around the great machine column you see a series of 8 large chamber doors, all constructed of the metal you now know is called unassailium. There is a metal plate next to each chamber door with two indentations — one with the familiar synthi-kith hand shape, and another that is perfectly round and about 4" in circumference.*

The Ascended Master chamber doors require both a synthi-kith hand and the bronze medallion from areas 1-10 or 1-11 to open. While the unassailium doors will soak up almost any amount of physical or magical damage without harm, it is possible to overload the metal's quantum matrix with massive amounts of damage delivered within a single round. 125 points of damage all delivered within a single round will cause these doors to shimmer as its physical form is temporarily shunted into a parallel plane of existence, popping it open when its metal matrix normalizes on the following round.

In 7 of the 8 chambers, the PCs will discover a darkened room containing a throne-like artifact device in which sits a centuries-desiccated corpse of a long-forgotten member of House Drage. Roll a d8 each time the PCs check a new chamber. On a result of 1, or after all other chambers have been checked, they will discover the chamber still occupied by Lady Morn'na Bane.

*As this chamber opens, you immediately note that it is quite different from the rest. A lime-green glow suffuses its interior, and hooked into the artifact throne by multitudinous wires and tubes is a withered but visibly alive Ascended Master. A withered crone's head sits atop a shriveled synthi-kith body that no longer quite fills its voluminous fine robes and jeweled harness. Pulses of emerald light are emanating from the tube devices affixed to her wrinkled brow, as they travel up to the ceiling and out of the chamber.*

The Lady Morn'na Bane has been held as a virtual prisoner in this room by Sar S'Vatha for nearly two centuries, while he attempted to create additional synthetic clones of her to replace the other Ascended Masters who were slowly dying off. Being in a torpor, she is no danger to the PCs, and cannot in fact be aroused. This is to the ultimate good, as killing her or removing her from the artifact throne will result in the Biosphere shutting down, and the eventual end of all life upon the Purple Planet.

Shortly after opening her chamber door, a holographic message plays.

*A transparent ghost image appears before you. It crackles and is imperfect, as bands of polychromatic distortion frequently pass through the apparition. Squinting your eyes, you suddenly realize that the lithe, richly dressed, and beautiful young woman before you is a much younger version of the withered hag wired into the chair. She speaks to you with a voice that echoes with the vastness of centuries gone by.*

*"If you are seeing me now, my children, then know that I have done all within my power to preserve our future and our way of life. But despite my most valiant efforts, I have obviously failed. In the name of all who have lived, and who may yet live, upon Pamoros, I beseech thee. Learn all that you can from our mistakes, and rectify them before it is too late. I bequeath unto you all that there is within this mighty temple, that you may accomplish this task."*

*With that, the image fades, leaving you to ponder your destiny.*

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE



After resolving the final encounter, the PCs have some interesting decisions in front of them. They can simply leave the Biosphere plant and seek further adventures on the Purple Planet — for as long as it lasts. With the Biosphere plant barely functioning, the planet's atmosphere will continue to deplete until life becomes impossible on the surface in approximately 100 years' time.

One option is for a PC to voluntarily sacrifice himself by successfully undergoing the Ascended Master surgical procedure (having his head attached to a synthi-kith body) and undergoing the encephlo-education process (to gain the necessary knowledge to run the Biosphere plant from one of the Ascended Master chambers). These acts will at least maintain or augment the reduced atmospheric conditions of the Purple Planet.

Astute and devious players may well avail themselves of a golden opportunity to both save the entire planet and set themselves up in style with a new base of operations. Possessing one of the bronze medallions, the remaining synthi-kith in the facility, hungry for guidance and purpose, will regard that PC as an Ascended Master. This potentially gives the PCs access to a large army, or at least the ready means to create one. All it will cost them is taking on the mighty burdens and awful legacy of House Drage.

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**When even the native lifeforms of the Purple Planet begin to wither and die under the weirdling sun's punishing rays, you and your party of interplanetary freebooters quickly conclude that something is going wrong with the very sky above your heads. What ancient mysteries lie in wait for you at the planet's northern pole, as you explore the timeworn and failing biosphere plant found sprawling there amongst the ice peaks? Will you save your harsh but adopted home, or hasten its eventual doom?**

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