

MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

INTO THE GLOWING DEPTHS

#13: A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE
BY MICHAEL CURTIS



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MCC RPG

INTO THE GLOWING DEPTHS

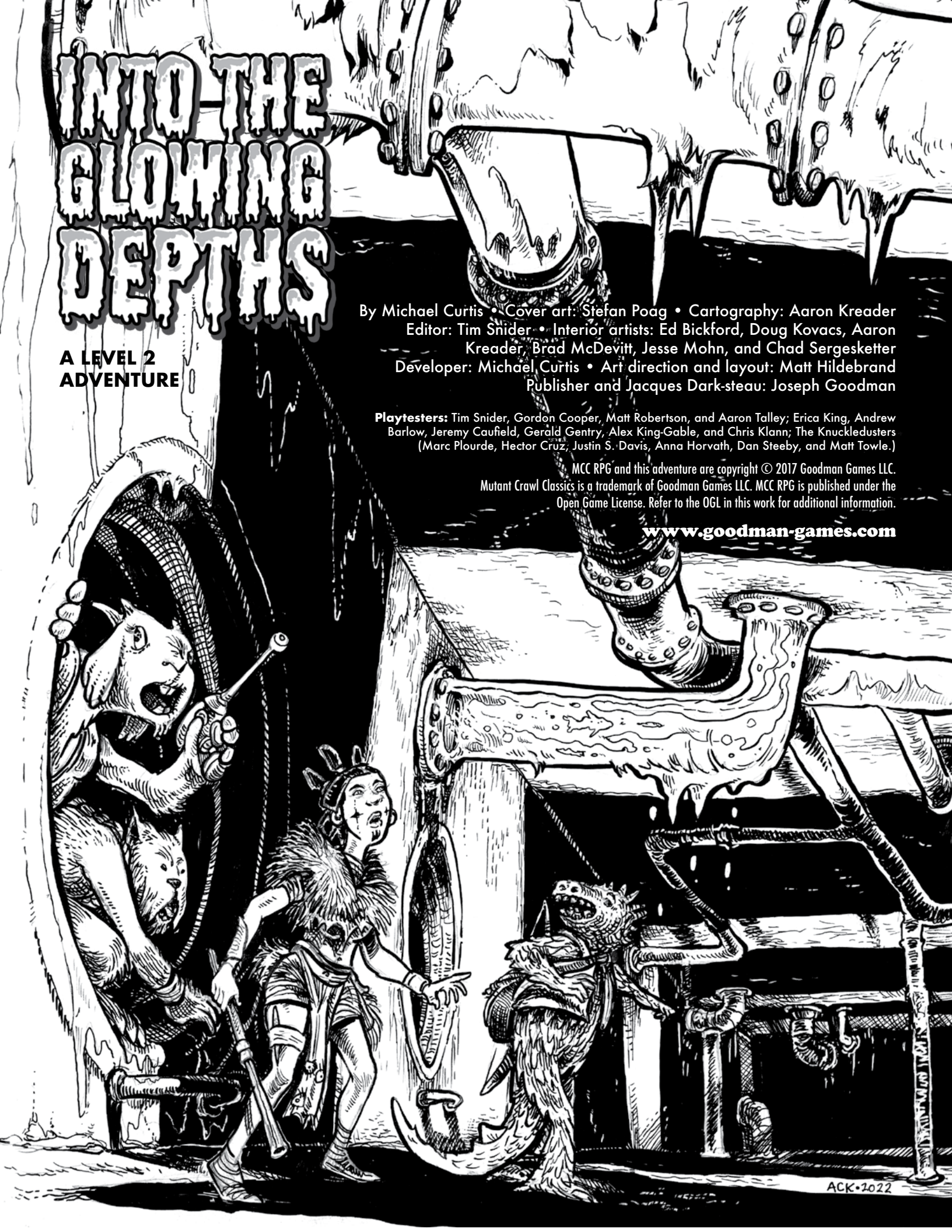
**A LEVEL 2
ADVENTURE**

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Into the *Glowing Depths* is a 2nd-level Mutant Crawl Classics adventure designed for 4 to 6 adventurers. This scenario takes them beneath the surface of Terra A.D.'s oceans to help a most unusual intelligence thwart an invasion of mutant life forms rising up from the depths. A legacy of humanity's attempt to tame the seas, these creatures have been further changed by the weird radiation and pollution beneath the waves.

BACKGROUND

Before the Great Disaster, humanity looked not only to the stars to colonize but an equally unforgiving environment even closer to home: the world's oceans. The seas held their own ample supply of resources — animal, vegetable, and mineral — and required as much ingenuity to settle as the alien planets whirling through space. Advances in technology and genetic engineering made it possible to both establish cities under the sea and alter the human form to better take advantage of this unforgiving environment.

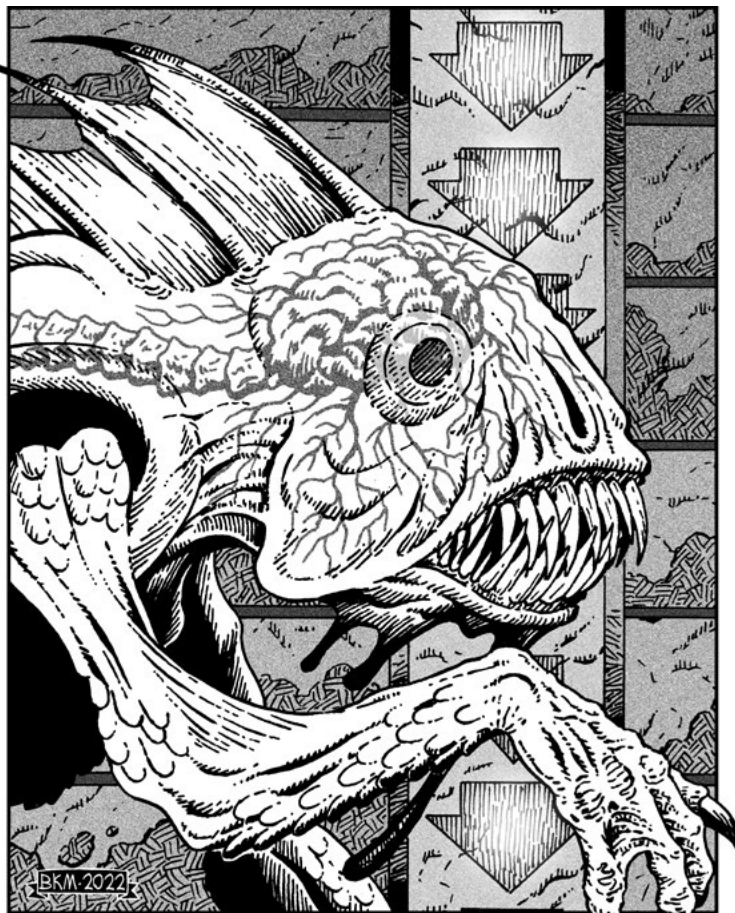
Two such established deep sea habitats were Tiamat Station and Oceanus. Tiamat Station was an underwater laboratory specializing in genetic splicing and biological alterations. It was here that some of the earliest work in altering the human form for underwater survival was performed. Oceanus was one of the first deep sea colonies, a network of linked domes erected in the lightless depths to harvest the ocean's bounty. Both Tiamat Station and Oceanus prospered in the days before the world ended, each almost reaching a state of self-sustainment away from the surface world. When the Great Disaster struck, however, they and other deep sea installations found themselves cut off from the world of air and light.

Tiamat Station and Oceanus were spared much of the destruction that ravaged the surface world, but as radiation and pollution began to seep into the waters, their predicament worsened. Strange new forms of life emerged; mutations spawned not from a laboratory but from the black depths of the deep sea trenches. Deprived of supplies from the surface, machinery began to fail. Food and fresh water were something to kill for. In time, the deep sea colonies plunged into barbarism and were forgotten by the surface world entirely.

But those beneath the ocean's surface never forgot the world above. Legends spoke of the ample resources to be found above the waves, waiting to be taken. And as the legends grew, so did the desire for those rumored treasures...

Now, the levy has broken, and something never before seen is swimming and crawling up toward the light, an army of creatures birthed from both super-science and untamed mutation. These creatures desire to first conquer Tiamat Station, then the surface world. Unbeknownst to this invading force, however, lies an unexpected intelligence.

Sheshma 1X6 is part of a living neural network of telepathically connected coral reefs spread throughout the world. The seed of this worldwide mind was spawned by the genetic tampering of Tiamat Station's scientists, a seed that sprouted when the horrific radiations of the Great Disaster



further changed it. Although part of a greater intellect, each "node" of the planetary mind has its own concerns and duties. Sheshma 1X6 considers Tiamat Station its sacrosanct home, and this home is being threatened. What it needs is someone to intervene on its behalf, both to save Tiamat Station and stop this underwater menace before it reaches the surface and spreads its brutality beyond the deeps that created it.

To this end, Sheshma 1X6 has taken a cue from the anglerfish and set out bait to attract creatures smart enough to be of use to it. Using the only still-functioning drone supply craft from the station, Sheshma 1X6 has left a trap designed to bring would-be heroes under the waves to help stem the tide of destruction rising up from the ruins of Oceanus. The adventure begins when the PCs fall into that trap.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure can begin anywhere the judge desires. It starts when the adventurers come across what seems to be a pre-disaster structure ready for the pillaging. Once they overcome some rivals also seeking the loot within, they quickly learn that their curiosity and greed has made them "volunteer" to save Tiamat Station. Although press-ganged into service, they soon learn that the rewards and opportunities for helping Sheshma 1X6 might be worth the trouble and danger.

The judge need simply place the drone supply ship along the PCs' path and wait for them to take the bait. Once they do, the PCs are swept up in events beyond their control, but in

the world of *Mutant Crawl Classics*, the players should know that tampering with the legacy of the Ancients often has undesirable consequences, and they have nobody to blame but themselves if they end up in another mess.

THE DRONE SHIP

As the party ventures across the surface of Terra A.D., they come across the drone supply ship that landed on the surface 6 hours ago. A band of tri-eyes discovered the ship first and are currently rifling through the cargo hold. Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure:

The sound of grunting and that of clattering objects on metal is heard just ahead. Cautiously, you edge closer to the noise, keeping hidden in the underbrush. Peering through fronds of a giant fern, you see a recently made clearing beyond. The plants have been flattened with great force, sap still leaking from broken stems and boughs.

In the middle of the clearing is a tapered cylinder the size of one of your village's longhouses. The cylinder is deep green in color with ancient symbols inscribed on it in flaking yellow paint. The end of the cylinder nearest you is open revealing a dark interior.

At the mouth of the entrance, you see two shaggy creatures standing 7 feet tall and bearing crude weapons of stone and wood. The creatures stand on two legs and are covered with silky blue fur. Each one has a bulbous head with pointed ears and three bloodshot eyes. Two of the eyes are set above their bulbous noses, but their third resides where a human's mouth would be. A mouth lined with sharpened teeth runs across the top of their head like a horrible, toothy wound. The creatures are rummaging through a number of boxes inside the capsule, pulling out shiny material and heavy-looking bits of metal. They appear unaware of your presence.

Tri-eyes (4): Init +1; Atk spear +2 melee (1d8) or heavy axe +2 melee (1d6+2 plus knockdown) or searing gaze +1 missile fire (1d6+1, range 30'); AC 12; HD 2d10; hp 11 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; Crit III/d6.

Tri-eyes are barbaric mutants with an intense desire for plastic (they love the tactile feel of the stuff). They wield flint spears and heavy axes in battle and can produce a short ray of infrared light that burns a single victim if struck. Tri-eyes swing their axes with great force, and anyone struck by one must succeed on a DC 10 Strength check or be knocked prone.

The mutants have discovered the drone ship and are currently searching through the contents, looking for plastic items. Two tri-eyes are deeper inside the vessel and cannot be seen from outside the ship. The tri-eyes are loathe to abandon such a potential treasure trove, but if the PCs decide to speak with them, they are willing to abandon their claim in return for plastic objects and a successful DC 13 Personality check.

If PCs decide to attack, the tri-eyes suffer a -1d penalty on any checks to notice the party or avoid being surprised. Even if they do succeed in spotting the party, they roll 1d16 for initiative unless the PCs give them time to react before entering battle. The tri-eyes are fierce but will flee if two are killed.

Area 1-1—Cargo Bay: A long, narrow space crowded with glossy red containers is located beyond the entrance. Two narrow windows line each long wall, allowing in dim sunlight. Several of the containers have been opened and are strewn about the floor along with fragments of yellow, spongy material. Odd bits of metal and small machine parts are mixed among the softer stuff. A door is set into wall opposite the entrance; a blue light blinks in the frame around it.

The cerasteel containers number more than 100 and are each about 2' square. They mostly contain replacement machine parts, screws, drill bits, synthetic grease tubes, and other items useful for the maintenance of more complex machinery. The spongy material is the foam packing material used to protect the parts during shipping.

Anyone searching the boxes, a process that takes 30 minutes, can make a Luck check, locating one of the following items on a success.

D6 Roll	Item Found
1	An enviro belt (no bubble helmet or power source attached)
2	A carbon nano-cord
3	A multitool
4	A packet of emergency rations (food and drink for a person for 3 days)
5	An ordinary utility knife (1d4 damage)
6	A canvas cap with an embroidered badge reading "Tiamat Station" sewn onto it

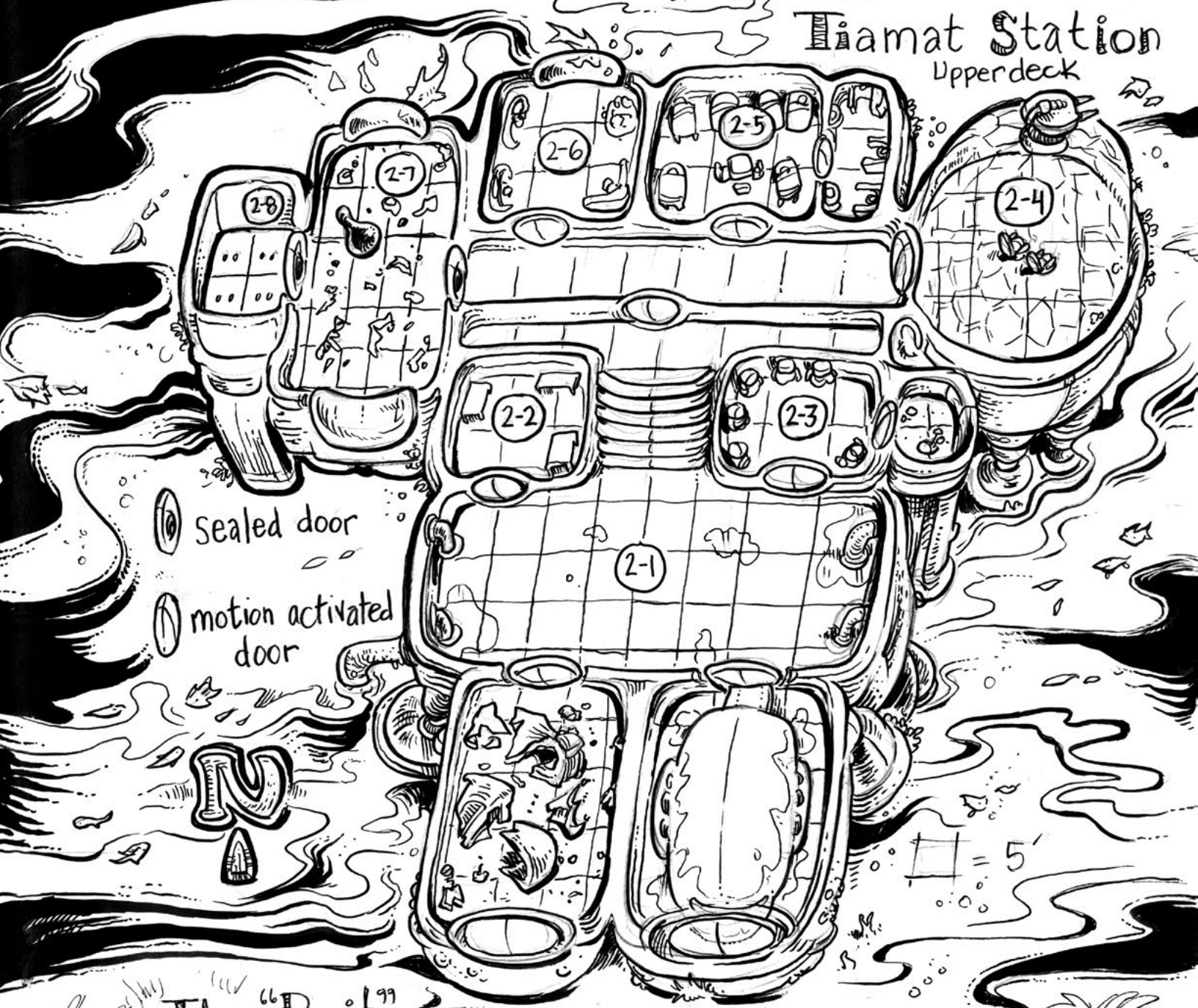
The door to area 1-2 is sealed (DC 10 open artifact doors check), but Sheshma 1X6 is watching the party through the integral monitoring system inside the drone and wants them to proceed further inside the ship so they can be snared. Even if the open artifact doors check fails, Sheshma will unlock the door, making it appear as if they PCs succeeded. The judge may wish to make the open artifact doors check secretly to preserve the illusion.

Area 1-2—Cockpit: A chair covered with soft padding and canvas straps sits in the center of this small room facing a bank of black orbs hanging on the wall before it. Knobs and protrusions are set into the arms of the chair. A small box with white and red diagonal slashes painted on its exterior is affixed to the left wall.

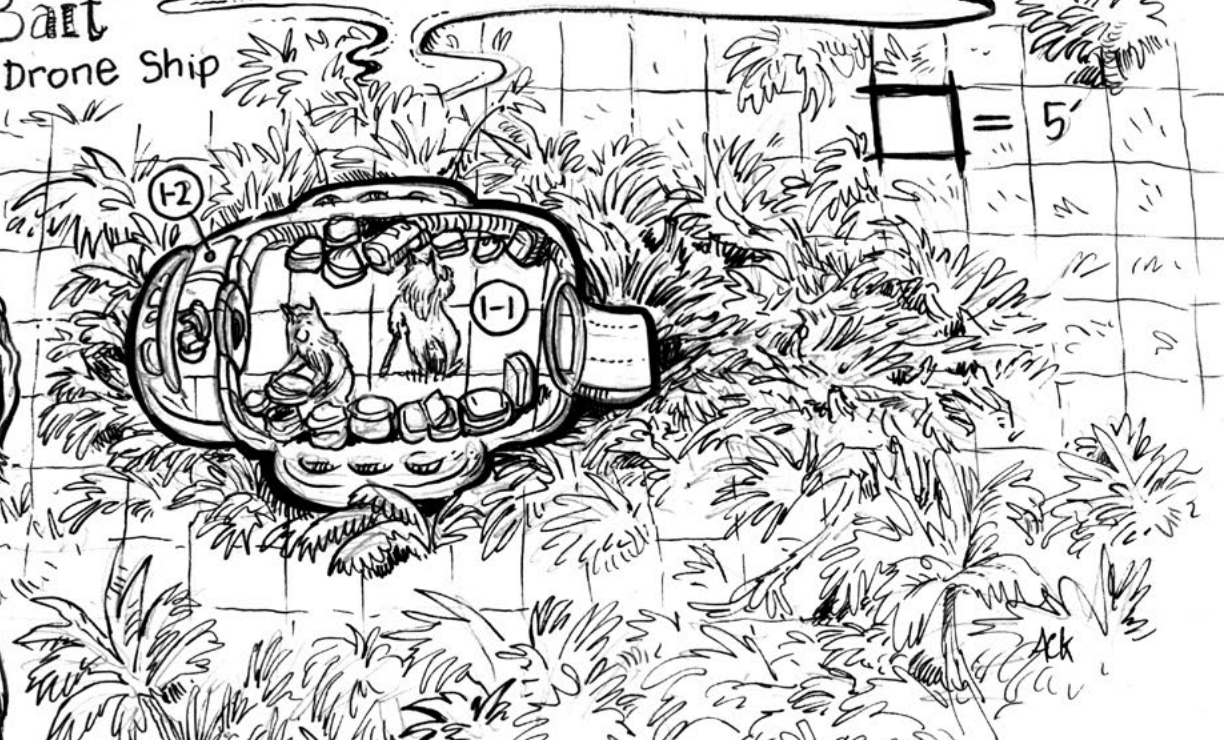
The drone ship is automated, but this small cockpit allowed for human control in the case of an emergency. Sheshma 1X6 has locked out the controls, so fiddling with the levers and dials on the chair will have no practical effect. However, the mutant intelligence will cause lights to activate and the black orbs (monitor screens displaying both an external view of the drone ship and flight information) to light up. Once the PCs are engaged in exploring this room, the entire ship reactivates and takes off (see next section).

The white and red box is an emergency storage container and holds a fire extinguisher (TL 3, CM 2; automatically extinguishes a 5' x 5' area with a green gel; four uses; Power: Self), a *medishot*, and a *medipack* (6 uses remaining)

Tiamat Station Upperdeck



The "Bait" Tiamat Drone Ship



LIFTOFF AND SPLASHDOWN!

Once the PCs are focused on exploring/plundering the drone ship, Sheshma 1X6 acts, springing the trap. Read or paraphrase the following:

The container suddenly hums to life around you, and the floor vibrates beneath your feet. Outside, you can see the crushed vegetation whirl as if caught in a windstorm. Lights flash from the chair inside the small chamber and a voice from nowhere calmly states, "Remote flight activated."

The rear door suddenly closes, sealing the PCs inside. Anyone immediately next to the door can make a DC 15 Agility check to leap either into or out of the vessel. On a failure, they suffer 1d6 damage from being partly crushed by the closing door. The judge is also free to decide whether they end up inside or outside the drone ship if the check fails so as to keep the party together and involved in the adventure.

The drone ship then lifts off, rising to 5,000 feet before streaking off at supersonic speeds. The PCs can watch their journey from either the windows or the cockpit monitors, observing the vast hothouse jungles of Terra A.D. rushing by beneath them for 30 minutes. Then, the jungles vanish and are replaced by the open ocean.

The greenery of the jungle ends suddenly as you find yourself high above the greatest expanse of water you've ever glimpsed. This massive body of water stretches to the horizon, its surface marked by specks of white that must be the froth of breaking waves of a size unimaginable. Suddenly, your stomachs lurch as your strange prison plunges down, down, down toward the water. With a splash that rumbles through the walls, the container passes beneath the surface.

Outside, you see a world of blue-green inhabited by shoals of bizarre sea creatures. Sunlight dazzles and strobes as the container continues deeper into the depths, and soon you're encased in a watery twilight. Your ears pop, and you feel your skin tingle as the air pressure around you changes. Slowly, you continue your descent under the waves, wondering if you'll ever see the light of day again.

After an indeterminable time, the gloom is pierced by red and white lights ahead of you. The container alters course and heads for them. Soon you can see some ancient structure still intact deep underwater, a house of the Ancient Ones untouched by war and disaster. A large door slowly slides open in the side of the boxy structure, emitting a pale red light. The container performs a 180-degree turn before passing through the doorway. It then suddenly stops with a loud thump. The hull vibrates and, after a moment, the container's doorway opens, revealing a lighted, air-filled space beyond.

TIAMAT STATION

Tiamat Station is a scientific laboratory located 1 mile beneath the ocean's surface. It was designed for under-sea genetic research and hybridization experimentation. For the last hundred years, it has been absolutely under the control of Sheshma 1X6. The station has suffered dam-

age and neglect but remains habitable by air-breathers...for now. Recent attacks by the mutants of Oceanus have compromised Tiamat Station, and repairs are needed before the larger problems of the imminent invasion can be dealt with.

GENERAL FEATURES

Doors: Doors are oval in shape and watertight. Most are motion-activated, but some require com-badges or the security access band from area 2-12 to open. All non-badge/band-activated doors can be closed or opened automatically by using the controls in area 2-14. A sealed door can be opened with a DC 13 open artifact doors check unless noted otherwise.

Lighting: Until the geothermal relay station is repaired, lighting inside the station is on emergency power. Red alert lights provide gloomy illumination throughout the place. Once power is restored, lights are automated, turning on when motion-activated. They can be toggled on or off using controls in area 2-14 or on a panel (TL 3, CM 1) in each room.

Flooding: The middeck and lower deck are partially flooded by 2.5' of chilly seawater due to damage, broken specimen tanks, and neglect. The water reduces the speed of non-aquatic or non-amphibious creatures by -10' and is dark and capable of concealing many threats. In theory, with a week's worth of repair work overseen by Sheshma 1X6, the leaks could be fixed and the levels drained, but that's outside of the time available to the PCs to resolve the situation at the station.

The flooded sections are home to many small, harmless sea creatures—fish, mollusks, crustaceans, sponges, plankton, etc.—that form a living, sustainable ecosphere that feeds larger, more dangerous creatures. The PCs will notice these harmless life forms as they explore, but the sea life mostly flees or hides from larger creatures.

Airlocks: There are two airlocks in Tiamat Station, found in areas 2-3 and 2-22. Aside from size, they work identically. Each has a door leading outside, which cannot be opened until the interior door is closed and sealed. Likewise, the interior door will not open unless the exterior airlock door is shut. Activating the airlock requires either telepathic instruction from Sheshma 1X6 or an artifact check (TL 4, CM 2). An airlock can be flooded or pumped dry in 1 minute.

Figuring out Artifacts: Sheshma 1X6 can instruct the PCs telepathically as to how to use the various artifacts found in Tiamat Station, implanting this knowledge directly into their brains. If the judge wishes, this means the characters can automatically use any pre-disaster device found in the station. Some judges, however, might find this goes against their preferred play style where figuring out artifacts or that the consequences of incorrectly operating them are much more entertaining. In this case, the author suggests they resolve learning how to use an artifact as if Sheshma 1X6 was teaching others (see MCC rulebook p. 167). However, this could lead to undesired consequences if the party can't deduce the correct operation of or irreparably damages the ADS units or similar important artifacts aboard the station.

UPPER DECK

Area 2-1—Docking Bay: *The humid air smells of salt and burned plastic in this high-ceilinged space. Red lights burn dimly above you. The room is largely empty with the exception of a few opened and empty boxes. A flight of metal steps leads up to an oval door set 10' up on the far wall. There are four other doors at ground level: two before you on either side of the stairs and two, including the one you just exited, in the wall behind you. There are several puddles of water on the floor, and pipes drip slowly from above.*

This chamber contains the airlocks for both personnel and vessels. Damage to the station has caused the minor leaks, but this level of the installation hasn't yet been compromised. The door leading to the leftmost southern airlock is emergency sealed and cannot be opened.

Sheshma 1X6 allows the PCs to get their bearings and briefly explore before contacting them telepathically. Read the following:

Suddenly, you feel a tickle at the back of your consciousness and a soft, calm voice whispers in your minds. "Welcome to Tiamat Station. I apologize for the heavy-handedness I employed to bring you here, but there are urgent matters that threaten many lives, and I required assistance in dealing with them. I am designated Sheshma 1X6, and I know who you all are. You must have many questions and I shall answer them, but let me explain more before you ask."

Sheshma 1X6 quickly but accurately explains the situation facing both Tiamat Station and the surface world (see Background). Given its immobility and the damaged condition of the station, Sheshma 1X6 requires the help of those able to move about to both fix the station and organize a means to defeat the deep sea invasion before it can rise up out of the depths. There are several issues, however, that must be addressed beforehand.

- The invaders from Oceanus are attempting to conquer or destroy Tiamat Station before they move on to the surface world above. They deem it a threat and have launched three attacks in the last 5 days against the station. Sheshma 1X6 has been able to fend them off using the station's defenses (area 2-4), but the most recent attack caused serious damage to its power source.
- Tiamat Station is under emergency power at the moment due to damage to the geothermal relay located outside the installation. This needs to be repaired to get all the systems working again and maintain the station's life support.
- Until the relay is restored, there's no way to recharge the power cells on the drone ship, meaning the characters are stuck on the station. Additionally, life support will fail in 6 hours, condemning all non-aquatic life aboard the station to a crushing, drowning death. Restoring power not only prevents this but will also allow Sheshma 1X6 to recharge the drone ship, a process taking 8 hours.
- The upper deck of the station is dry, but the middeck and lower deck are partially flooded. The descendants

of former laboratory specimens dwell on those decks and are dangerous to other living creatures.

- This is problematic as Sheshma 1X6 has determined that the best way to deal with the invasion would be to send a large quantity of explosives down to Oceanus and detonate them. Unfortunately, these explosives are located in a secure area on the lower deck. The explosives must be acquired and any dangerous creatures on that deck dealt with. The secure door cannot be opened remotely, and Sheshma 1X6 has no choice but to use another creature in its stead.
- The secure area the explosives are in require a special access band that can be found on the middeck in the security office. Hostile creatures and conditions might also have to be confronted to acquire it.
- Once the explosives are in hand, they must be prepared and sent down to Oceanus via the hydro-lift outside the station. The hydro-lift is likely under the control of an advance party of the Oceanus invaders.
- If the characters agree to help Sheshma 1X6 in restoring Tiamat Station to functionality and stop the deep sea invasion, they are welcome to most any artifacts they find, and the intellect will help them in the future in any way it can.

The docking bay contains nothing of interest.

Area 2-2—Repair Bay: *This small room contains several complex machines and tables. A single amber light burns above the door. A rack of small metal cages set into the left wall hold tools and a trio of yellow and black cylinders the size of a human's forearm.*

The machinery in this room are a variety of workstations for making repairs, but none currently work due to the emergency power situation. Once power is restored, they may be used to make minor repairs to artifacts and gear at the judge's discretion (TL 4, CM 3).

There are nine metal cages, most of which contain simple hand tools. There are also four multitools, a *grav clamp* (12 hours use remaining), and a *fusion torch* (8 charges remaining)), as well as a box holding six still-functioning C-Cells. The three cylinders are emergency one-use nano repairbots (see Appendix A), and at least one of these is necessary to fix the geothermal relay.

Area 2-3—Personnel Air Lock: *The walls of this room are painted sea-green, and it lacks any furniture. Instead, six large metal creatures stand motionless along the walls, three to a side. Each reminds you of a many-eyed crab humanoid covered in an articulated shell. Their eyes are like windows, and you can clearly see inside their hollow heads. A closed door stands at the far side of the room.*

This airlock contains six functioning atmospheric diving suit (ADS) units (see Appendix A). These are necessary for work in the crushing depths outside of Tiamat Station. The door at the far side of the room leads to the airlock, which opens onto an elevator platform that rises and descends 50'

LIKELY QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

The PCs may have questions for Sheshma 1X6. Here are some of the most likely ones as well as the mutant intellect's responses:

Who/what are you?

I am Sheshma 1X6. I was born in this place many centuries ago thanks to the wonders of those you call the Ancients. I am a living organism, and my being exists here on the station. In time, we will meet in person.

Who are these invaders?

The descendants of those Ancients who were adapted for a life beneath the waves. They seem to hate and yet desire the surface world. This hatred and desire has reached a peak, and they've decided to act against the sunlight lands above the waves. I have read their thoughts each time they attack, and they want nothing more than to make air-breathers suffer.

What is this place?

The founders called it Tiamat Station. They performed experiments here, creating new forms of life and altering existing ones to better endure the ocean depths.

Tell us more about Oceanus.

Oceanus was a small, enclosed community located 3 miles below the surface. It was originally occupied by workers and colonists, but that population has long since departed or perished. Now it is occupied by a majority of the invasion force. From reading the minds of the attackers, they number in the thousands, far more than I or we can confront directly, but I have another means in mind to thwart their plans. And that is where I must ask for your aid.

You said there are dangerous creatures on the decks below. What about them?

The labs on the station experimented with different forms of sea life. Some escaped long ago, and they have established an ecosystem on the lower levels, feeding on one another. I can sense the minds of many living creatures on the station. These are simple brains, only concerned only with base needs and drives. There is at least one large apex predator on each of the lower levels and possibly smaller ones as well that might pose a danger to you. Take caution as you travel through the decks.

to the seabed below. A simple lever activates the platform, requiring no artifact check to operate.

The ADS units are bulky affairs and can only enter and exit this area via the exterior airlock. They will not fit through the station's internal doorways and cannot be brought inside the station beyond this room or area 2-22.

Area 2-4—Defense Dome: *The domed ceiling of this round chamber is a honeycomb of large octagons framing transparent material. Through each of these windows you can see the dark depths outside of the station, lit dimly by a few struggling lights*

affixed to the station's exterior. Outside of and directly above the dome are a pair of snub-nosed tubes protruding from a spheroid housing. Inside the dome and under them are two chairs with levers and other protrusions set into their arms.

This is Tiamat Station's sole defense capability, a pair of gauzer guns designed to fend off submarine attacks. Until the geothermal relay is repaired (see Event 1), the weapon systems are unpowered and useless. Anyone looking outside the dome's windows can see the power pipeline running off into the darkness in the direction of a green light located a mile away from the station. From here, any PC not participating in the repair work can observe those doing so. Once power is restored, communication channels activate between this area and the ADS units as well, allowing the PCs to directly communicate with those outside the station.

If the geothermal power relay is fixed, the two chairs (the weapon stations) suddenly light up and perform a few synchronized movements as the defense systems come back online. Anyone seated at one of the stations can attempt to figure out how the weapon operates (TL 4, CM 4). Alternately, Sheshma 1X6 can telepathically instruct a character how to operate the weapons instantly, which it will do if and when the shell flayer attacks the PCs outside the station on their way back from making repairs (see Event 1).

The dome is constructed to not only resist the immense pressure of the ocean depths but direct attacks by advanced weaponry. It is nearly impossible for the PCs to damage it and—willingly or inadvertently—flood the station and cause its destruction.

Area 2-5—Crew Quarters: *The stink of mildew rushes out of this room when the door opens. Inside you can see rows of bunks lining the walls and a number of narrow doors set into the same wall as the entrance. A table and chairs along with a few less identifiable objects are placed about the open spaces of the room. A closed door stands in the right-hand wall. Patches of black mold grow everywhere, and the once sea-green walls are now discolored and gray.*

The mold here is highly dangerous. Given the mold's lack of intelligence, Sheshma 1X6 is unaware of its presence and cannot warn the PCs to avoid opening this room. Unless the room is immediately resealed, the characters are exposed to the mold spores. After a minute, anyone inside the room must make a DC 15 Fortitude save, while those outside the room must make a DC 10 Fortitude save. If the contents of the room have been disturbed in the preceding minute, this save is made with a -2 penalty.

On a failed save, the affected individual suffers a persistent wracking cough and occasionally expels a thick viscous phlegm. They slowly grow weaker, losing 1 point of Stamina every hour as the mutated mold begins to colonize their airways. A creature reduced to zero Stamina dies. So virulent is this mold that a *cureshot* or *medishot* has only a 25% chance of being effective. The medipod in area 2-19 will remove the mold and restore the victim to full health, however. Sheshma 1X6 knows of the medipod's presence and location, and will advise the PCs to seek it out if they become exposed to the spores.

The 20 narrow doors set into the wall are personal storage cubicles. Many are empty; others hold rags and worthless personal items. A 2' tall by 1' wide mirror is affixed to the inside of each cubicle door. Each is worth 10 creds in trade value, but they may prove more valuable if used in area 2-9 (Dining Hall).

The door in the right-hand wall leads to a lavatory area. This area is also mold-infested, but if the mold is cleared away, the facilities still function—albeit noisily.

Area 2-6—Secondary Operations Station: Note: This room is pitch black until the geothermal relay is repaired (see Event 1). Once repaired, the room is lit by a mixture of poorly maintained ceiling panels and a rainbow of warning lights, gauges, and readouts displayed on the flat workstation tables.

Many flat tables are positioned about the room, their surfaces black and reflective. A large oval window is set in the far wall, giving view to the undersea darkness pressing against it. A misshapen lump on the floor reveals itself to be a skeleton wrapped in ragged, mildewed clothing, a gleaming metal rod held in its bony hand.

Minor station operations were overseen in this location. After the disaster, life carried on for a while, but ultimately despair drove much of the crew to desperate measures. The skeleton is all that remains of the deck officer who took their life rather than endure the deep undersea darkness a moment longer.

The skeleton has a *com badge* that allows the bearer to open the door to area 2-7, activate the elevator in area 2-8, and open the security office in area 2-12, in addition to its other normal properties. The metal rod is a *mazer pistol* (2 shots remaining).

When the geothermal relay station is repaired and Tiamat Station has power restored, Sheshma 1X6 can use the displays and A/V transmitters in this room to communicate vocally with the party. It can call up schematics of the station's layout, providing the party with information on where things are located and where it detects mental activity. Sheshma 1X6 will appear to the party as a tri-dee hologram that looks like a mature human female dressed in strange clinical garments. Her head is bald, her skin and eyes are dark, and she displays a professional mien, occasionally broken by a wry smile. This is the image of the chief science officer who worked at Tiamat Station before the disaster, making her effectively Sheshma's "mother." The party may be in for a shock when they finally meet Sheshma in person (see area 2-18)

Area 2-7—Rogue-Bot: Note: The door to this room is sealed and the PCs must either have the com badge from area 2-6 or ask Sheshma 1X6 to unseal it before they can enter; a rover can bypass the lock with a DC 20 open artifact doors check. Sheshma 1X6 will warn them that there is a dangerous robot behind this door before they enter this room, one gone mad and imprisoned here to protect the rest of the station.

The door slides open to reveal a destroyed room. Whatever furnishings once occupied it have been smashed to flinders. A pair

of double doors are set into the far wall, a red light blinking in the panel beside them. Moving much faster than you'd expect across the floor toward you is a glittering metallic mass resembling a tear-shaped lump of protoplasm. The air vibrates with a subsonic hum as if the mass were howling in anger. Tendrils emerge from the lumpy metallic body, ending in a number of sharp-looking implements.

Rogue-Bot: Init +2; Atk improvised weapon melee +3 (1d6+1) or tentacle slam +2 melee (2d4); AC 12; HD 4d8; hp 30; MV 30', swim 30'; Act 2d20; SP immune to mind-affecting mutations, suffers half damage from non-energy attacks, ferrous weapon entrapment; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Crit M/d16.

The rogue-bot was formerly a repair unit designed for both aquatic and land use. Its body consists entirely of a magnetic slime with a custard-like consistency. It can alter its metallic-based protoplasm to create tools as necessary for its duties. Unfortunately, this particular unit has gone rogue and no longer responds to commands or recognizes PCs as anything other than something to destroy.

The rogue-bot's magnetic slime nature means it takes only half damage from attacks from non-energy sources. Additionally, anyone hitting it with a ferrous weapon must make a DC 16 Strength check to pull their weapon free. Otherwise, it is trapped in the bot's magnetized slimy body. Once reduced to zero hit points, the slime loses its magnetic properties and trapped weapons can be retrieved.

The room contains only debris pulverized by the bot in its madness.

Area 2-8—Elevator: A 10-foot square chamber is situated behind the double doors. It is empty and lit poorly by stuttering light panels in the ceiling. A black oval is set beside the doors on the right-hand side.

The elevator only functions if the geothermal relay has been fixed (see Event 1), making the lower decks inaccessible until that occurs. The lift can be activated with the com badge found in area 2-6 by pressing it against the oval and selecting the desired deck to travel to. The elevator groans ominously and moves in fits and starts but nevertheless operates. Water from the partially flooded levels (middeck and lower deck) swirls in when the elevator doors arrive on those levels, but slowly drains when the elevator doors are closed. The elevator lacks any escape hatch, an unforeseen design flaw from designers who saw their construction as error-proof.

MIDDECK LEVEL

Area 2-9—Dining Hall: The tops of tables encrusted with strange sea growths make islands in this inundated room, each rising slightly above the dark water. Two closed doors are set into the far wall of the room. Several of the mollusk-looking growths clinging to the tabletops glow and pulse with a turquoise light.

The mollusks evolved in the lightless irradiated depths of the sea and are used to dwelling in gloomy or dark conditions. Once power is restored, their formerly gloomy home becomes bathed in light when the PCs enter, and the mutant

mussels will feel threatened. They can sense movement in the water and react to potential predators with focused bioluminescent energy — effectively lasers. As simple life forms, Sheshma 1X6 cannot read the mollusks' thoughts and is unaware of their presence on the station.

Bioluminescent mussels (4 clumps): Init +0; Atk bioluminescent laser +2 missile fire (1d10; range 60'); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 0'; Act 2d20; SP reflective vulnerability, energy battery; SV Fort +2, Ref -4, Will -4; Crit M/d8.

The bioluminescent mussels pulse just before firing their energy beams, allowing quick creatures the ability to react. If a creature who either holds their initiative until the mussel fires or typically acts after the mussel has a reflective object such as a mirror from area 2-5, they can attempt a Reflex save vs. the mussel's attack roll as the DC. If they succeed on the saving throw, they can reflect the beam elsewhere, including back at the mussel. They make a new attack roll adding either their own ranged attack modifier or the mussel's, whichever is greater. Each mussel has enough power to fire 10 times before they must recharge over 1d12 hours. A slain mussel retains its power for 1d12 hours and might potentially be used as an energy source to power artifacts as if it were a C-Cell with a DC 15 Intelligence check and access to some minor tools such as those found in area 2-2.

Area 2-10—Galley: *This partially flooded room has one wall lined with complex looking devices, windowed niches, and reflective black surfaces. The left-hand wall bears an oval window looking out into the black ocean depths. A door is located in the wall opposite you.*

Meals were prepared here, but even with power restored to the station, the devices are all water-logged and inoperable without major repairs and replacement. Searching the cabinets does reveal a number of prepackaged meals that are still edible. A weeks' worth of food for six creatures can be looted.

Anyone searching the room should also make a Luck check. Whoever succeeds by the largest margin discovers a *sonic carving knife* with a drained energy cell (see Appendix A)

Area 2-11—Purple Slime: *An awful stench of rot and organic decay assails your nose as the door to this area opens. The half-flooded small area beyond contains rusted shelves encrusted with undersea plant growth. A purple, slimy substance drips from the shelves into the water, creating a floating blanket of undulating mucus atop the surface. Torn and waterlogged cartons of what might have been foodstuffs are mired in the slime.*

The purple slime is an animate, if mindless, mutant "sea snot," a marine mucilage produced by phytoplankton. Bathed in irradiated waters and feasting on the modified foodstuffs stored in the pantry, it possesses a ravenous hunger and will attempt to consume anything edible and organic it senses — including the creature unlucky enough to open the door to this former pantry.

Mutant sea snot: Init always acts last; Atk acidic pseudopod +4 melee (1d6 plus acid); AC 11; HD 5d6; hp 20; MV 5', swim 15'; Act 1d20 plus special; SP engulf (fill a 10' square

area, doing acid effect to all creatures in that area), acid (target must succeed on a DC 10 Ref save or one piece of gear is destroyed), *gene splice* (+3 to mutation check against one creature it is currently engulfing), takes half damage from slicing or piecing weapons; SV Fort +8, Ref -6, Will -6; Crit M/d8.

The mutant sea snot always attempts to engulf nearby creatures. It automatically makes a *gene splice* mutation check against one mutant it is engulfing each round. It can use stolen mutations as an action in lieu of its pseudopod attack.

The pantry's contents have been destroyed by time, the elements, and the mutant sea snot. Nothing of value or use remains.

Area 2-12—Security Office: Note: This door requires the com badge from area 2-6 to open. It is motion-activated by someone carrying that item.

Another black mirrored table with flicking glowing characters running across it occupies this room. A skeleton dressed in a blue uniform lies slumped in a curved padded chair behind the table. One of its boney hands rests atop the table, an oval spheroid trapped beneath it. A blue and red striped bracelet is wrapped around the wrist of the same hand. An impressive looking door, its face covered with strange crimson icons, is set into the left-hand wall.

The skeleton at the desk was the station's security chief who died of radiation sickness on the job. Determined to not let death prevent him from defending the station, the chief armed a quantum grenade and rested his hand on the release lever. That armed grenade remains a danger and will detonate the following round if pressure is removed from the lever. The delicate state of the skeleton means that anyone who doesn't gently handle it has a high probability of causing the grenade to explode.

If the players think to telepathically contact Sheshma 1X6 when confronted with this tableau, it identifies the spheroid as a "highly dangerous explosive device" but can provide no additional assistance in dealing with the problem.

Removing the security access bracelet from the skeletal wrist or gingerly extracting the quantum grenade with the release lever depressed requires a DC 13 Agility or security systems check. On a failure, the bones collapse and the armed grenade detonates in 6 seconds. *Telekinesis* might be used to remove the bracelet or remove the grenade, but the lack of fine control means a mutation check of 18+ must be achieved to avoid deadly consequences. Other means and mutations might also resolve the situation at the judge's discretion.

If the quantum grenade detonates, it disintegrates the hull in this room, causing instant death to anyone inside the room from crushing pressure. The station's emergency systems immediately activate a force field sealing off the room and damaged hull, preventing damage beyond area 2-12 and the complete collapse of the installation. However, the security access band is lost, and this prevents access to the explosives in area 2-21, forcing the players to improvise a solution (see area 2-20).



Area 2-13—Armory: Note: The door to this room is sealed and requires either the security access bracelet in area 2-12 or a successful DC 20 artifact doors check by a rover to bypass.

This room is empty of furniture. A row of shelves and a rack containing a handful of metallic rods are affixed to the opposite wall. Three boxes rest on the shelves, their packaging covered in bold-looking symbols and letters of the Ancients.

Tiamat Station was not a military installation but was issued small arms in the event of terrorist attack or industrial sabotage. This room contains three *dazer* pistols, a *gauzer* pistol, and a *mazer* rifle, none of which are loaded or powered. The three boxes hold 6 charged C-Cells, four full *gauzer* pistol clips, 1 *emp* grenade, and 4 *stun* grenades.

Area 2-14—Main Operations: *The water swirls as the door to this large room opens. Rising up out of the black, chilly seawater are several glossy black tabletops, each blinking with lights or displaying cryptic symbols. Wide clear viewports are set in the left-hand wall and directly opposite the entryway. The few lights outside the station do little to push back the gloom. A long alcove almost filled with tall cylinders as big around as a human extends off to the south. The water feels warmer in that direction as if the unknown devices are producing heat somehow.*

Controls for all the station's systems are found in this room, many of them just stuttering back to life as full power is restored. Figuring out how to operate the controls (TL 5, CM 4) will allow the party to seal off ordinary doors, illuminate or darken sections of the station, adjust the temperature, observe sections via holocamera, and other useful tasks. Shesh-

ma 1X6 has some idea of how to work the controls here, and help from the mutant intelligence grants the party a +5 to their artifact checks.

The cylinders in the alcove are part of the station's life support system, their heat channeled throughout the installation to keep the temperature regulated. The heat produced by the cylinders makes the alcove a desirable lair for a pacific blackdragon hydra that will swim out to attack anyone spending more than a minute or two in this area.

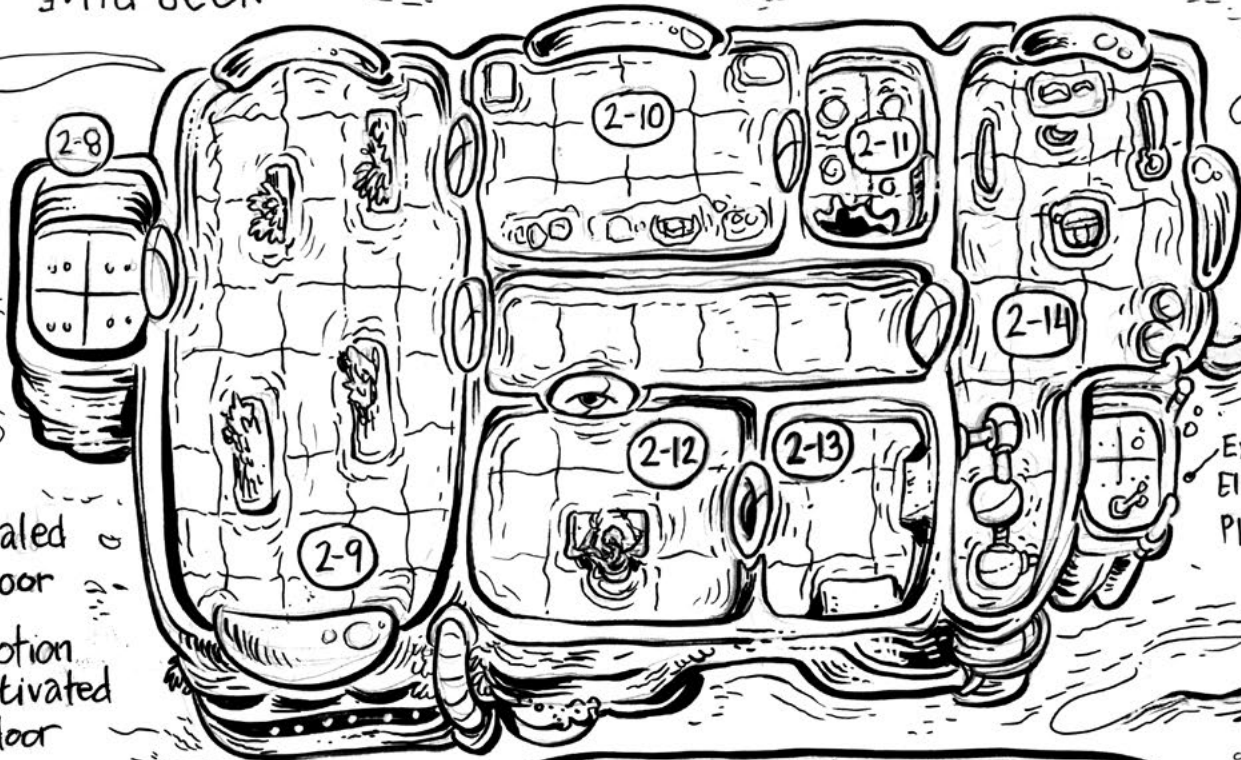
Pacific Blackdragon Hydra: Init +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d5); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 35; MV 10', swim 60'; Act 3d20; SP immune to electrical attacks, mutations (+3 mutation check bonus; *mental shield*, *electrical generation*), stealthy (+10 bonus to stealth checks); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Crit M/d10

This mutant has a 10-foot-long serpentine body. Eight feet along its length, the body splits into three individual necks, each crowned with hideous head that resembles a hybrid of snake and fish. Rows of jagged teeth line its mouths. The creature is nearly entirely black, making it almost impossible to see in lowlight conditions, rendering it a superb predator.

The pacific blackdragon hydra attacks with either three bites or makes two bites and uses one mutation each round. If it uses its *mental shield* ability reflexively, it cannot make a mutation check on the following round. The creature has three independent brains, but any effect that would incapacitate one creature or sever a single head reduces the mutant's action dice by 1. If reduced to a single head, the creature attempts to flee.

Tiamat Station

Mid deck

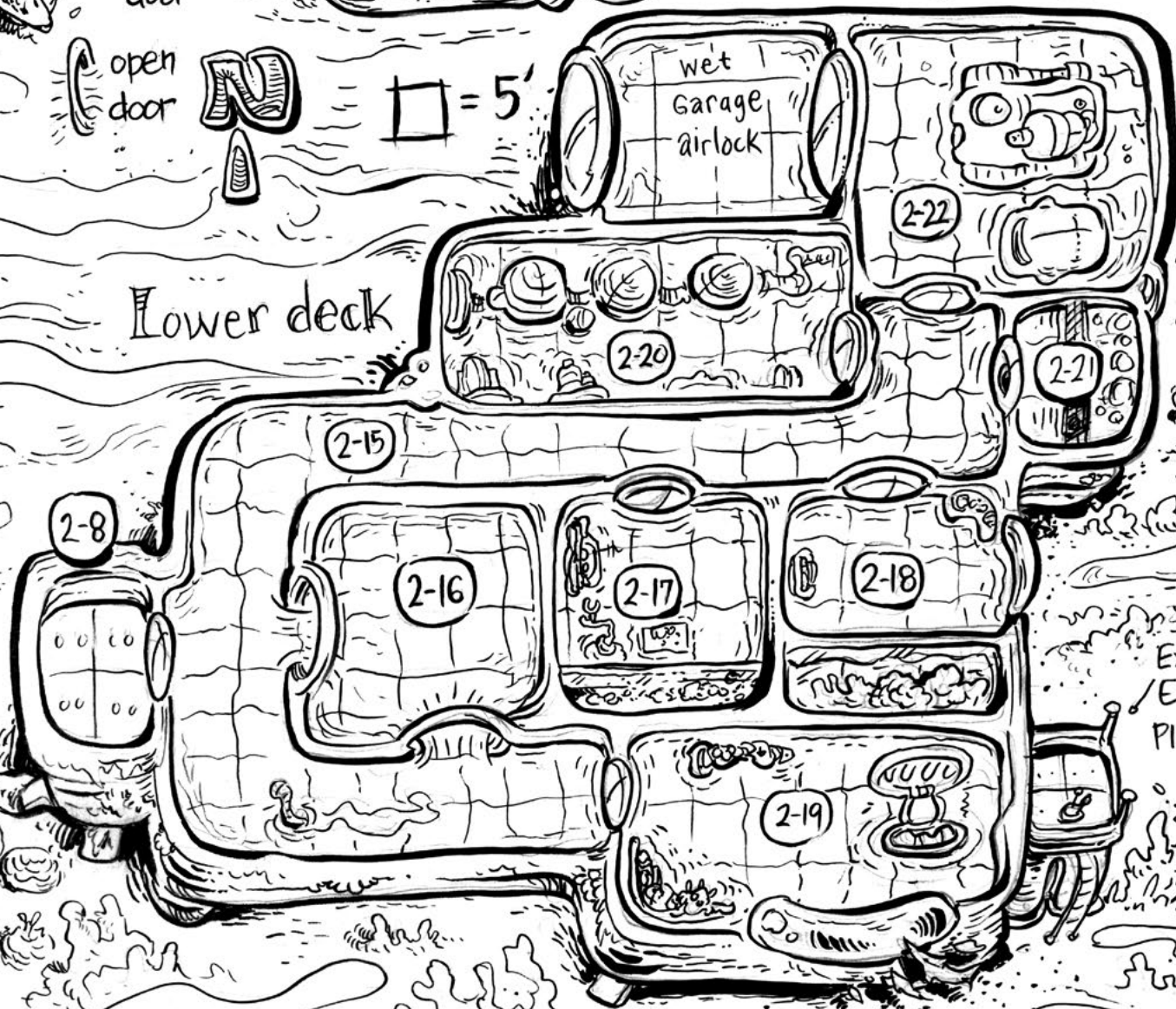


External Elevator Platform

- Sealed door
- Motion activated door
- Open door

N = 5'

Lower deck



External Elevator Platform

The pacific blackdragon hydra devoured a cybernetic implant (eye) (see MCC rulebook p. 178) during its time swimming about the level. If cut open, the still-functioning artifact will be discovered in its stomach.

LOWER DECK

This level is also partially flooded and has the same effect on movement (see General Features earlier). Additionally, the damage to the laboratory in area 2-16 caused a thick layer of sand to be spread across the floors of the central hallways. This will immediately be noticeable by anyone stepping off the elevator.

Area 2-15—Worm: *The water around you suddenly churns and froths as a tremendous segmented worm breaches the surface. Its segments are colorfully iridescent, like a living rainbow. They're almost beautiful enough to draw your attention away from the scythe-like mandibles protruding from its maw!*

This creature is a mutated *Eunice aphroditois* that makes its burrow in the floor's sandy layer in this section of corridor. It attacks anyone walking down the hallway. An ambush predator, it surprises the PCs if the party member with the worst Luck fails their Luck check.

Mutant *Eunice aphroditois*: Init +3; Atk bite +5 melee (1d10 plus grapple); AC 13; HD 6d8; hp 40; MV 0', burrow 10', swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP crit range 18-20, sever appendage; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Crit n.a.

This worm measures 15' in length and weighs 400 lbs. Its segmented body has a colorful iridescent sheen that shimmers wetly as it springs from ambush to attack its prey. A creature struck by the worm must win an opposed Strength check (+6 Strength modifier for the worm) or be grappled. If the worm achieves a crit against a target, an appendage is severed. Roll 1d5 to determine what body part is lost: (1) left leg; (2) right leg; (3) left arm; (4) right arm; (5) head (instant death). The judge may rule that a target is immune to losing a limb if they're sufficiently protected (wearing power armor, for example).

Highly territorial, the *Eunice aphroditois* fights until slain, pursuing its prey if they attempt to flee.

Area 2-16—Damaged Lab: *The door to this section is ajar, the bulkhead around it bent and warped. It is clear that the room beyond has suffered damage and fire at a point in the far past. The ceiling and part of one wall is scorched black. A large section of the room appears to have at one point held a tank or other habitat. Now only broken shards of thick transparent material hang in its frame. Trash and chemical residue float on the surface of the water, further adding to the sense of destruction and loss.*

A chemical explosion set by one of the station's despairing crew caused the destruction of this lab. Although not enough to compromise the station, it did rupture the containment tank present here, spilling genetically altered marine life and food animals into the station. This inadvertently created a biosphere that has allowed some of the creatures occupying this level to survive and endure. The destruction has rendered this room empty of anything useful or interesting.

Area 2-17—Hybridization Lab: *Hundreds of 4-inch-long glass cylinders containing various colored gels rest in a sealed compartment set into the opposite wall of this room. A large, hinged metal arm extends from the same wall, terminating in a sphere bearing a frightening number of needles, probes, and other unidentifiable instruments. Tubes appear to connect each of the cylinders to the base of the arm from within the compartment. A dirty padded tabletop rises just above the water level near the arm.*

It was here that genetic work was undertaken to sample DNA from sea life, render it into a highly protean state able to merge and change existing genetic code, and create physical alterations to life. The hundreds of glass cylinders contain genetic material kept preserved and active in nutritional gels. Each of these cylinders can be accessed by the medical arm, the genetic material drawn from its gel and injected into other living creatures to impart physical changes.

The medical arm can be properly operated if its function can be determined (TL 5, CM 5). Sheshma doesn't know how to operate this device (a result of this same experimentation, Sheshma has an unrealized mental block that prevents it from delving too far into the exact circumstances of its creation), so it will be up to the party to figure out the genetic hybridization system if they choose to meddle with it.

If the device is successfully figured out, a display screen appears with four options: 1) Acclimation, 2) Augmentation, 3) Alteration, and 4) Restore. Choosing an option causes the arm to activate, swinging into position above the padded bed. If a living creature is lying on the bed, it injects them with protean DNA drawn from one or more of the gel tubes. The effect depends on which option was chosen.

The creature on the bed must first succeed on a DC 10 Fort save. Pure strain humans make their saves with a -1d penalty. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature's body is changed as described in the following section. If the save fails, they suffer damage based on their level. Pure strain humans suffer 1d10 damage per hit die, while mutant species suffer 1d6 damage per hit die. If reduced to zero hit points, the creature's body goes into a spontaneous and messy mutational transformation, resulting in an explosion of bodily goo in a 10' radius around it. They cannot be restored to life by any means.

DNA HYBRIDIZATION OPTION EFFECTS

1) Acclimation: This effect causes the target's body to automatically adjust itself to varying undersea pressure conditions. It can range from sea level to depths of up to 3 miles below the surface without suffering the detrimental effects of pressure. It will never develop "the bends" as a result. The target gains a +4 saving throw bonus against harmful effects caused by pressure or gravity as well. This does not provide the creature with the ability to breathe water, however.

2) Augmentation: The target gains the *new body parts mutation* (gills), even if they are pure strain human. They can breathe underwater naturally, and this doesn't affect their ability to breathe air.



3) Alteration: Roll 1d4 to determine what supplemental benefit is gained: (1) *extra sense (sonar)*; (2) *new body parts (fins)*; (3) *heightened agility*; or (4) *spines*. The judge makes a mutation check with a +6 modifier to determine the extent of these changes if necessary.

4) Restore: Removes *all* mutations and defects, including those implemented by the hybridization system. Humanoids become 0-level pure strain humans, while manimals and plantients turn into their ancestral genotypes, losing all anthropomorphic qualities.

The gel tubes are behind a thick protective material. Treat this as AC 20 with 100 hit points. If broken through and the tubes removed, the hybridization system breaks down. Consuming raw protean DNA directly requires the creature to make a DC 20 Fort save, taking 3d10 damage on a success or instantly undergoing a fatal mutational transformation as previously described on a failure.

Area 2-18—Coral Research Laboratory: Watery light bathes this room in an undersea glow that ripples across the walls and floor. The room is dominated by a large tank measuring 20 feet long by 10 feet deep. It runs from floor to ceiling. Inside the tank is a small section of coral reef containing knobby growths, wavy ridges, softly swaying fronds, and other mineral deposits. One particularly large piece of the reef is spheroid in shape with numerous grooves covering its surface, making it resemble a brain. Outside of the tank are a pair of mirror-topped workstations. A human figure dressed in rags lies slumped over one of the stations, an opaque visor covering its face. The figure's body looks strangely mummified despite the moist air.

This room was dedicated to coral research, and this same research produced Sheshma 1X6. Between genetic tampering and the post-disaster radiation, a large brain coral became hyper-intelligent, giving birth to the personality that is Sheshma 1X6. It still resides in the tank in which it was born, keeping watch over Tiamat Station through a postmortem telepathic link with a crewman's body that remains connected to the installation's computer network.

Sheshma 1X6: Init +6; Atk none; AC 8 (20 if attacked from outside the tank); HD 10d6; hp 50; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP mutations (+10 to mutation checks; *empathy, domination, heightened intelligence (30), mental reflection, mental shield, mind control, regeneration, telepathy*), mind expansion (see sidebar); SV Fort +1, Ref -5, Will +15; Crit n.a.

Sheshma 1X6 is assumed to be able to telepathically communicate with any creature inside the station and up to 1 mile outside it (no mutation check necessary). It will only use its *domination* and *mind control* mutations in self-defense. Sheshma is greatly protected by the resin wall of the coral tank. Treat it as AC 20 with 100 hit points. Any attack directed through the tank wall inflicts half damage on the tank and half damage on Sheshma. Reducing the tank to 0 hit points causes it to collapse and further flood this level. Sheshma is carried along by the flood if still alive, but once it comes to rest is immobile and helpless.

Sheshma 1X6 greets the PCs upon entering, its voice much stronger in their heads now that they're in close proximity. The mutant intellect once again apologizes for the circumstances in which the Seekers were brought to the station but reassures

them that their tasks are close to completion. If they bear with it a little longer, they'll be amply rewarded and returned to the surface, if that's what they wish. The mutant coral answers any other questions the PCs might have or gives advice as necessary before urging them to complete their tasks. It's possible that Event 2 occurs at this point as well.

Should the PCs ask Sheshma 1X6 for additional rewards for saving the station or ask for more help in dealing with the invaders from the depths (and if they've been acting in good faith so far), it hesitantly suggests it might be able to theoretically enhance their mental abilities using a telepathic process it has developed; it can alter another creature's mental neurons and unlock innate potential. The process is unproven, however, and there might be risks involved. If one or more PCs agree to this process, see the sidebar for further details.

MIND EXPANSION

If the PCs agree to undergo the experimental modification of their minds offered by Sheshma 1X6, the mutant intelligence telepathically reaches out and touches their psyche. Using a type of psychic surgery over the course of a 15-minute period, Sheshma 1X6 rearranges their neurons and mental pathways, attempting to amplify the target's mind. The targeted creature must make a DC 15 Will save to benefit from this mental alteration.

Mutants, manimals, and plantients make their saving throw normally. Pure strain humans, whose genetic makeup is prone to remaining static, suffer a -1d penalty to their save. A mutant, manimal, or plantient that makes their save gains a random beneficial mental mutation. A human who succeeds gains a permanent 1d3 points of Intelligence.

On a failed save, the target suffers 1d3 points of temporary Intelligence and Personality damage. If a pure strain human rolls a natural 1 or 2 on their save, or a mutant type rolls a natural 1, they are permanently brain-damaged, rendering them into a vegetative state. Only powerful artifacts of the Ancients have any hope of restoring their minds.

Sheshma 1X6 can only make one attempt to "rewire" a target's head and will not use this ability twice on the same creature.

Sheshma 1X6 asks the party not to tamper with the corpse if they make a move to examine it, stating that the body serves as a conduit for the mutant intellect to interact with the station. If that connection is broken, it will be cut off from Tiamat Station, losing, for example, the ability to remotely pilot the drone ship and return the PCs back to the surface. Anyone performing a purely visual examination of the body and succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence check determines it looks like it's been artificially preserved. Sheshma 1X6 admits to having the body chemically mummified by the rogue-bot

before it went entirely uncontrolled so that it could keep the corpse's organic brain telepathically stimulated postmortem and operate some of the station's systems. It doesn't see anything wrong with this course of action, which might disgust more sensitive PCs and hint that Sheshma 1X6's intellect is most assuredly non-human.

If the party ignores Sheshma's request and removes the opaque visor (an AR interface device), they lock the mutant mind out of the system. Once broken, it cannot be restored. Sheshma can no longer perform any operating functions on the station. This might make leaving the station difficult (see Ending the Adventure later).

Area 2-19—Medical Bay: *The walls of this room have gone grey with age and mildew. Shelves holding rotted paper packaging and rusted metal devices are set over a sink filled with seawater. Rising up from the water that half-fills the room is an oval, glossy, blue capsule slightly larger than a man. Lights play across its glass cover, displaying information in the ancient script. A red light glows on a panel at the base of the capsule's cover.*

This is the station's medical center, designed to deal with any health emergency that might occur at great depths. Most of the medical supplies and drugs are no longer usable, having gone to rot from the moist conditions in the flooded deck. The bay's medipod, however, does function once full power has been restored to the installation.

The medipod acts as highly efficient *medipac*. Its use can be learned via telepathic instruction from Sheshma 1X6 or through normal artifact experimentation (TL 5, CM 5). The medipod restores 6d8 hit points of damage and cures poison, disease, and radiation. It neutralizes spore infestation if a target has been exposed to the mold in area 2-5. The medipod has the normal chances of affecting the mutations of a mutated creature (as described under the medipac on p. 178 of the MCC rulebook).

Due to the medipod's great age and lack of maintenance, there is a cumulative 5% chance that it fails and becomes permanently inoperative each time it is used. Once inoperative, only a skilled medical repair bot can restore it to full function. Even the emergency nano repairbots cannot fix this complicated device.

Area 2-20—Life Support and Power Distribution: *Large machines fill most of this room, rattling and wheezing as they perform their mechanized tasks. Glowing black tables, their surfaces alive with dancing lights and flickering symbols, are connected to each of the machines.*

The machinery in this area run Tiamat Station's life support systems and power distribution. Damage here would render the installations inhospitable to non-marine life. If the Oceanus scouts run into stiff resistance from the PCs when they enter the station (see Event 2), they may attempt to sabotage the equipment here then withdraw, waiting for the slow demise of the inhabitants before claiming it in the name of undersea conquest.

The equipment here is all TL 5, CM 5, and best left alone. If the PCs decide to meddle with it, Sheshma 1X6 informs



them that this place is keeping them alive and should not be disturbed. If the PCs insist on toying with machines, make normal artifact checks, but any result of 11 or less causes problems with the station's core life support and power. The judge should describe alarms going off, emergency venting, power fluctuations, etc. If three checks result in an 11 or less, a critical failure occurs, and the station become incapable of supporting life in 1d3+3 turns. Klaxons sound and Sheshma 1X6 begins mentally berating them for their stupidity. Unless one or more emergency nano repairbot cylinders remain to fix the damage, the PCs have no choice but to either take desperate measures in area 2-18 or abandon ship using the ADS units and/or the sea sled (area 2-22), hoping for the best.

Should the PCs lose the security access band from area 2-12 and fail to bypass the door to area 2-21, it is possible to cannibalize the power storage cells present in the distribution main breaker and use them as an improvised explosive device against the gathering army in Oceanus. Sheshma 1X6 offers this up as a last resort solution, since doing so will render the station uninhabitable. The PCs would only have two hours to fulfill their task before all power, even the drone ship, failed, dooming the PCs to die unless they used the hybridization lab to acclimate their bodies to a new life under the sea.

Cannibalizing the power cells takes an hour, and the PCs must succeed on both a DC 11 Agility and Intelligence check. Failing one means the station's life support becomes damaged and the installation rendered uninhabitable to surface dwellers in 1d3+1 hours. Failing both checks causes a premature explosion that also detonates the explosives in area 2-21. The station is destroyed, all life within a mile diameter around it is slain, and nothing remains to stop the undersea menace from rising up from the depths to wage war against the lands above. Better luck with the next batch of characters!

Area 2-21—Secure Storage: Note: The door to this area is sealed by a force field that can only be deactivated with the security access band from area 2-12. The force field defends the door from all physical and energy attacks, making it impossible to open without the proper key or some devious plan of the PCs.

A fence cage occupies most of this room, its interior accessible by a single locked door. Bright crimson signs displaying symbols of flames and explosions are plastered to the cage's wire fencing. Inside are a dozen stout crates made of ancient materials. They too are adorned with danger symbols.

The fence cage door is locked and requires either the security access band or a DC 15 artifact door check to bypass. The fence is high tensile metal wire and only energy weapons can cut through the steel (AC 10, 10 hp). Melee weapons (even the sonic carving knife from area 2-10) are the safest way to do so. Ranged weapons risk striking a crate inside and detonating its contents, destroying the facility. Any damage from a ranged weapon that exceeds the cage's 10 hp has a cumulative 5% per point of damage of detonating one of the crates, which sets off all of them.

The 12 crates contain foam padding and each hold 24 cylinders measuring 1.5' long and 6" in diameter. A full crate weighs 50 lbs. The cylinders are seismic and construction explosive charges. They are activated by a three-step process making them safe to handle (except when struck by energy attacks as previously noted). To arm one of the charges, a creature must either successfully determine how to activate it (TL 4, CM 4) or receive telepathic instruction from Sheshma 1X6. The timers on the explosives can be set for anywhere from 1 minute to 1 hour, but they can be set off prematurely as previously described.

A single charge causes 3d6 damage to everything in a 30' radius around it. An entire crate detonating does 50d6 damage to everything within a 200' radius. All 12 crates detonating instantly kills anything in a 1000' radius and, if detonated underwater, creates a shockwave that does 100d6 damage to everything in another 1000' radius beyond that initial area of effect. All this is more than enough to cripple the invaders in Oceanus as they prepare for their attack on the upper world.

Area 2-22—Wet Garage: *This wide, low-ceiling room contains a hulking treaded vehicle 20 feet long and 10 feet high. Entry to the vehicle is by a closed hatch at its rear. A number of crane arms and a plow blade protrude from the vehicle's hull. A second vehicle rests on skids beside the larger one. The smaller one is a flatbed transport with enclosed cab and side-mounted propellers, obviously meant to move cargo. Empty fuel cells and other trash bob on the water's surface. The left-hand wall is dominated by a pair of thick-looking doors positioned directly in front of the vehicles.*

If the party has moved directly here upon being alerted by Sheshma 1X6 that intruders are entering the station, they encounter the Oceanus scouting party investigating the room and examining the underwater engineering vehicle parked here. Two of the eelians will be watching the airlock door and the other two will be positioned to guard the door leading deeper into the station. If combat occurs, refer to Event 2 for the scouting party's stats.

The underwater engineering vehicle was used for construction work outside of the station during its heyday. Its power cells have long been drained due to a lack of maintenance. It might be possible given time and a successful artifact check (TL 4, CM 4) to get the vehicle running again, but such actions will have to wait until the invasion threat of Oceanus is dealt with.

The second vehicle is a sea sled, an underwater version of a *grav sled*. It can carry loads at a speed of 40' per round and features an airtight and pressured cab capable of holding a driver and one passenger. It has an AC of 13 and 60 hit points. Objects strapped to the flatbed have no protection against attacks, which might come into play during Event 3 (see later).

A search of the wet garage and the vehicles uncovers two fire extinguishers (see area 1-2) and a functional *medipac*.

The doors in the west wall connects to an airlock large enough to accommodate the vehicles here. Aside from its size, it operates normally as described earlier.

UNDERSEA EVENTS

There are three events that are likely to occur during the party's time exploring Tiamat Station. These events are detailed in this section. They have no set time for when they will occur. The party's actions and decisions trigger each one. These events involve repairing the geothermal relay and restoring full power to the station, repelling boarders attempting to gain control of the station, and launching a preemptive attack against the forces of Oceanus gathering in the depths below the station.

EVENT 1: RESTORING POWER

The PCs need to repair the geothermal relay station before power fails entirely, causing their deaths. They must deliver an emergency nano repairbot unit to the relay station, which involves a trek outside of Tiamat Station. Luckily, the station has several still-operational atmospheric diving suits (ADSs) in area 2-3 for the PCs to use.

Each suit can be worn by a humanoid creature no larger than 7' tall, shorter than 5' tall, or weighing more than 300 lbs. At the judge's discretion, some physical mutations such as wings or multiple limbs might also prevent a PC from wearing an ADS unit. These restrictions could keep some PCs from leaving the station to do repairs, but they can still participate at the climax of the event. In any case, the judge is encouraged to ignore these physical restrictions if they impact the fun the players might have.

Sheshma 1X6 will telepathically instruct those who volunteer to leave the station to enact the repairs on how to use the ADSs. PCs not leaving the station can watch their allies' progress via the defense dome (area 2-4). Those agreeing to enact the repairs are told the following by Sheshma 1X6:

"You must take one of the yellow and black cylinders from the repair bay out to the relay station. Go inside the building and allow me to observe the conditions within. I can then determine what steps are necessary to take. It should be a simple matter of activating the cylinder and allowing it to make repairs. Once those repairs are completed, you can return to Tiamat Station and rejoin your friends. Collect the cylinder and go through the door with the orange light blinking above it. I will provide instructions on what to do then. Anyone not going on this task can watch from an observational dome nearby. I will show you how to get there."

Sheshma 1X6 activates an orange light over the door to area 2-3 and telepathically guides the rest to area 2-4. Describe those areas as necessary once the applicable characters reach them.

OUTSIDE

PCs leaving the station receive telepathic instructions on how to enter and operate the ADSs in area 2-3 and, once encased in their armor-like shells, are told to proceed through the adjacent airlock and wait for it to cycle. The airlock floods quickly with water once they're sealed inside, and the external door then swings open.

You step cautiously outside the doorway and onto a platform set 50 feet above the sandy ocean floor. The lights from Tiamat Station illuminate the immediate area, but beyond is darkness. Fish dart just at the edge of your vision, disappearing into the gloom. There seems to be movement all around you, but your eyes never quite catch what's causing it.

Off in the distance, you see a green light. On the ground near the platform is a 3-foot-thick pipe resting 4 feet above the sea floor. The pipe itself is clean, but the struts supporting it are covered in curious shells, undulating aquatic vegetation, and patches of slime. The pipe leads off into the darkness, headed directly for the green light.

Following Sheshma 1X6's mental instructions, you activate a lever on the platform and smoothly and slowly descend to the sea floor. Stepping off the platform, it's now just a matter of following the pipe to your goal and making the repairs.

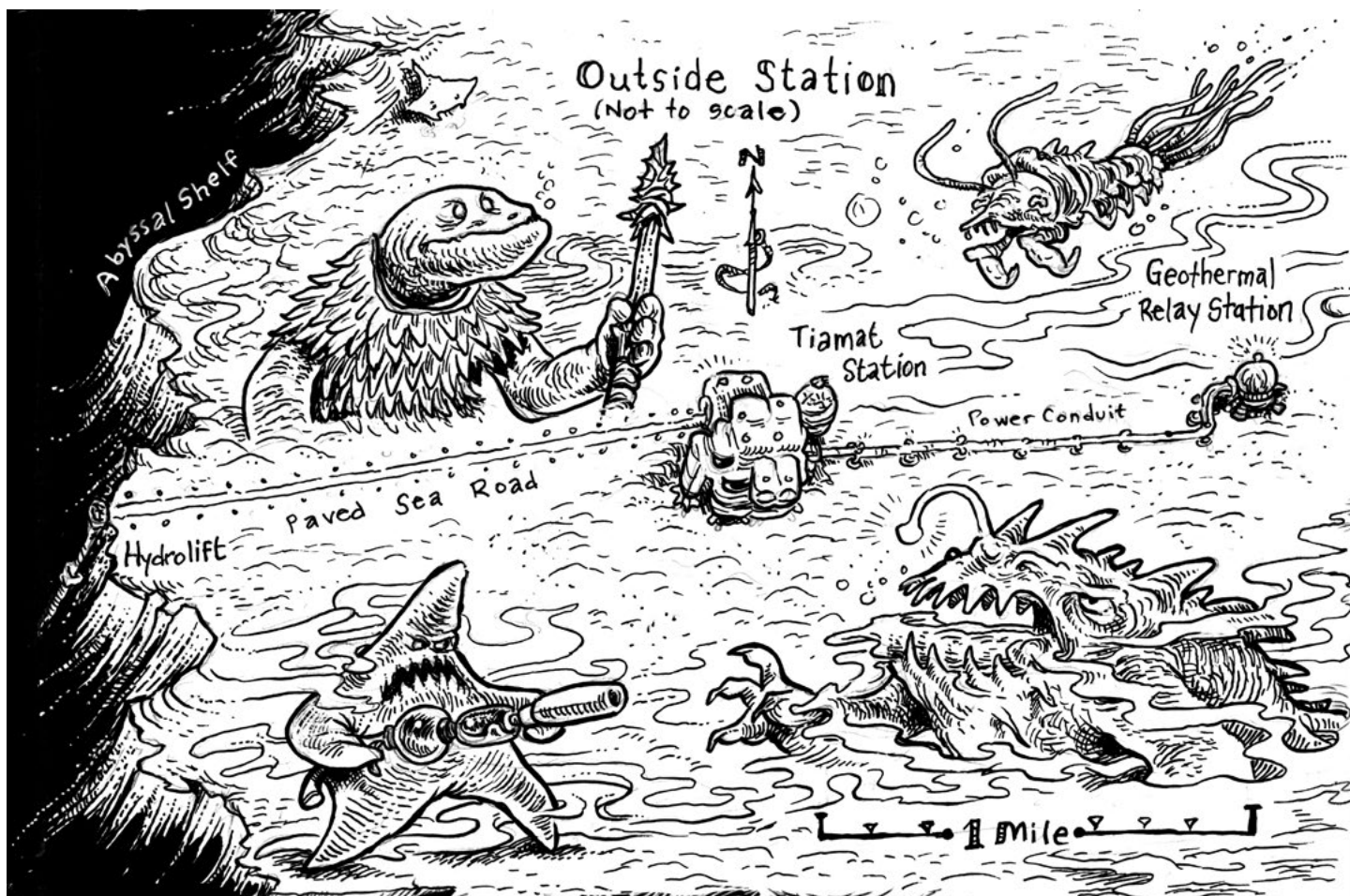
The judge should play up the tension as the PCs head out toward the light. Tell them how their breathing echoes hollowly inside the ADSs; how the water around them seems alive with shadows and motion; and drive home the fact that if anything goes wrong with their suits, they'll be killed almost instantly. Their friends watching from the dome see the lights on the suits slowly get dimmer and dimmer as they walk toward the relay station.

It takes 20 minutes to reach the relay station, but so long as the PCs follow the pipe, they have no difficulties. They discover a domed building measuring 20' tall and 40' in diameter. The dome shows signs of recent damage (cracks and radiation or laser burns on its ferrocrete surface), but it appears intact. The pipe runs into the side of the dome, and there's a hatchway set into the southern side of the structure. The door has to be opened manually, but with the augmented strength of the ADSs, that's easily done. An airlock lies inside the door, and once the exterior door is closed, the airlock pumps dry and the interior airlock door opens, leading to the central chamber of the station.

This large circular station is partially awash with dark water. Stray bits of flotsam and jetsam drift on the surface, and a slick of grease stains the water. Red lights flash on curious machines, throwing the entire room into strobing shadows. The air is hot and the metal grating under your feet occasionally shakes as if some great beast turns in its sleep.

Sheshma 1X6 telepathically observes the situation, then instructs the PCs to pull the latch on the repairbot cylinder. The cylinder cracks open when this is done and a 10' diameter cloud of shining black motes emerges, hanging in the air around the PCs briefly like a swarm of metallic gnats. Then, the cloud disappears around the room, vanishing into the machinery. After an hour, the red lights stop strobing and the water begins to drain from the chamber. The floor ceases to shake and Sheshma 1X6 informs the PCs that the repairs are completed. They can return to Tiamat Station.

Any characters who remained behind at Tiamat Station see the rooms there suddenly brighten and the lights on the various devices come alive. Also, the defense dome in area 2-4 is now fully operational...just in time.



When the PCs are almost back to the station, about 500' away, a titanic bulk swims out of the gloom, headed directly toward them. This is the shelled flayer, a giant mutant that possesses the qualities of an isopod and a squid. Read the following:

Suddenly, from out of the gloom, silhouetted against the now-bright lights of Tiamat Station, swims a horrific sight. As long as 10 humanoids, this terror looks like some bizarre mix of insect and squid. A hard carapace covers its back and rows of vestigial legs runs down its length. Sightless eyes sprout two antennae directly above them and two clawed forelegs are held praying mantis-style before it. Four long tentacles flex behind it, pushing it through the water directly toward you!

A shelled flayer is a formidable opponent, one normally beyond the ability of the PCs to deal with. Luckily, they have both the ADS units' capabilities and potentially the station's gauzer guns at their disposal.

Shelled Flayer: Init +2; Atk claws +6 (1d10) or tentacles +6 melee (1d6+2 plus grapple); AC 16; HD 10d12; hp 80; MV swim 40'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +0; Crit M/d16.

The shelled flayer always lashes with its tentacles first, using up to two each round. Once it has a target grappled in its tentacle, it uses its claw attack against that creature until the creature is slain or the grapple is broken. Any creature struck by a tentacle must make an opposed Strength check (+10 to shelled flayer's roll), becoming grappled if they fail the check. The shelled flayer gains a +1d bonus to attack rolls against a grappled opponent.

Note that for each 5 points of damage an ADS suffers, its ability to sustain the wearer is reduced, limiting the remaining breathing time provided by 4 hours. Unless repaired, the suit remains unable to sustain life beyond the reduced time period even if fully charged. The judge or player should keep track of any and all damage suffered by an ADS as it might come into play at a later time should the party need to abandon the station.

USING THE GAUZER GUNS

If the gauzer guns in area 2-4 are crewed and the operator understands how to fire them, they can take shots at the shelled flayer. Due to its great size, it's possible to make missile fire attacks against the creature if it's in melee combat with an ally without the usual chance of friendly fire. Only on a fumble is an engaged ally inadvertently shot (which occurs instead of rolling on the fumble table)

Anyone firing a gauzer gun receives a +4 bonus to their attack roll due to the integral targeting system in addition to any normal attack modifiers the operator might have. The shelled flayer is always considered at medium range, and a successful hit does 3d6 damage. The gauzer guns are assumed to have enough ammunition to fire for the duration of the battle with the shelled flayer without danger of running out.

EVENT TWO: INFILTRATION

This event occurs after the PCs have reached the lower deck. As they begin to explore, perhaps after dealing with the mutant worm in area 2-15 or after meeting with Sheshma 1X6, read or paraphrase the following:

The soft voice of Sheshma 1X6 abruptly fills your mind. "Friends, I regret to inform you that the station is being entered by sentient creatures from Oceanus. The airlock connected to the wet garage on this level has been activated and I can feel their thoughts. They are hungry and angry, and they mean to do harm. There are six creatures, and you must deal with them before they can gain a foothold here."

The com badge [or a nearby console or other computer-linked device if they PCs no longer have the come badge] suddenly glows, projecting a schematic in glowing green light. It shows your position on this level, indicated by blue dots representing your group. Another section of the level, one not far from your current location, shows six red dots moving deeper into the station. These must be the invaders. If you act fast, you can cut them off before they get much further!

The party must move quickly to repel the intruders. Assuming they act relatively swiftly (not stopping to investigate other side rooms or deal with more than the mutant worm in area 2-15), they can reach the wet garage (area 2-22) before the Oceanus scouts leave that area. The PCs might likely wish to let the scouts come to them, setting up an ambush. If the scouts aren't confronted within 15 minutes, they move deeper into the station, seeking to sabotage or capture the installation. Unlike the PCs, the scouts won't hesitate to destroy the station rather than allow it to remain an obstacle to their own plans of conquest.

The scouts consist of the following creatures:

Eelians (4): Init +3; Atk axe +3 melee (1d8+1) or harpoon +1 missile fire (1d6; range 30'); AC 14; HD 2d10; hp 12 each; MV 25', swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP bloodlust (gain +1 to all attack rolls if they've caused their opponent to bleed), amphibious, natural decompression (body naturally adjusts to the varying pressures of the ocean depths), fearless (immune to fear or morale checks); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Crit III/d8.

Resembling hulking humanoids with moray eel heads, these creatures are armed with serrated axes and harpoons, and wear a scale mail-type armor made from clamshells. They are highly resilient and used as shock troops by the Oceanus forces. Eelians are fearless and aggressive once they spill blood.

Clearbrain: Init +2; Atk by mutation; AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 20; MV 30', swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP mutations (+3 to mutation checks; *death field generation*, *mental blast*, *mental reflection*, *telepathy*), amphibious, natural decompression (body naturally adjusts to the varying pressures of the ocean depths); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; Crit III/d8.

Clearbrains resemble four-legged fish the size of large dogs. A mutant form of the barreleye fish, their heads are transparent behind their eyes, allowing a clear view of their optic



nerves and brain, thus giving them their name. Clearbrains are powerful mental mutants used to neutralize enemies. The clearbrain in the scouting party carries no equipment.

Shrimpian: Init +4; Atk spine bow +3 missile fire (1d4 plus poison; range 60') or plasma sword +1 melee (2d12); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 25; MV 30', swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP spine bow poison (DC 11 Fort save or paralysis for 1d6 turns), mutations (+3 to mutation checks; *heightened intelligence* (20), *symbiotic touch*), amphibious, natural decompression (body naturally adjusts to the varying pressures of the ocean depths), chemical sniffer (detect chemicals 100' radius); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Crit III/d10.

This shrimp-headed humanoid is the leader of the scouting party, sent to use its great intellect to devise a plan to capture or destroy the station. Its ability to sniff out chemicals allowed it to recognize the presence of explosives onboard, and the scouting team is making the capture or destruction of those its priority. Even with its plasma sword, however, they might find it difficult to access the secure storage area... unless it can use its symbiotic touch to force a creature with the access band to open the door. The shrimpian is a cunning opponent who prefers to use its spine bow to launch toxin-coated spines at foes from afar. It has 7 more strikes left on its plasma sword and will only use it as a last resort. The shrimpian wears clam shell scale mail like the eelians and has 12 toxin-coated spines in a sharkskin quiver over one shoulder. The shrimpian feels no loyalty to the troops under its command and will sacrifice or abandon them if things go poorly.

The scouts' priority is to secure or destroy the explosives. Barring that, the sabotage of the power plant and life support is their next objective. If they learn of the existence of Sheshma 1X6 (possible given the clearbrain's own telepathy), the assassination of the station's resident intelligence takes priority above all other concerns, and the troops move to take area 2-18.

EVENT THREE: ANNIHILATION

Once the scouting party has been dealt with and the PCs have retrieved the explosive charges, it is time to thwart the gathering forces down in Oceanus. To do this, the party must deliver the crates of explosives to the hydro-lift outside the station and send the deadly cargo down to the domed city below. The sea sled in the wet garage is the most likely means of doing so, but the players might come up with other options.

Sheshma 1X6 informs the party that it takes 15 minutes for the hydro-lift to descend down to Oceanus. When they deploy the explosive charges, they should set the timer on one or more of the charges for that duration before activating the lift. One charge in close proximity is sufficient to detonate the rest.

Regardless of how they decide to move the explosives out to the hydro-lift, they'll have to deal with a squad of Oceanus soldiers who have taken control of the hydro-lift to prevent exactly the sort of thing the PCs are attempting to do. These

hostile forces will have to be neutralized without the explosives being damaged in battle.

The hydro-lift is an open framework embedded in the ocean floor 2 miles down with additional supports anchored into the abyssal shelf just beyond Tiamat Station. A paved strip marked by flashing green lights runs from the top of the hydro-lift to the station's wet garage, making it easy to traverse the mile and half distance between the two locations. The distance, unfortunately, makes it impossible for Sheshma 1X6 to detect the thoughts of the occupying forces stationed at the top of the hydro-lift, and the PCs might walk into an ambush if not careful.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs head out to the hydro-lift:

A flat, straight road runs across the sea floor from the station off into the darkness. Green lights are positioned every 50' on either side of the road, clearly marking its edges. It is a simple matter to follow the road to its destination.

If the PCs do take the road, continue with the following:

After traveling for approximately 20 minutes, you see that the road ends abruptly at the edge of a cliff, a point where the sea floor drops away into indeterminable blackness beyond. Level with the top of the cliff is a large framework measuring 50' square. The framework consists of four large beams running vertically, creating an open-sided shaft plunging down into the depths. A flat platform rests at the top of the shaft, easily accessible from the top of the cliff. The paved road terminates directly in front of the platform.

If the PCs used the sea sled to take the explosives out, the Oceanus forces saw them coming down the road from far off and are currently under cover around the top of the hydro-lift. If the party moved the explosives by other means or took pains to move stealthily out to the lift, they see can make out five creatures, one quite large, standing and swimming around the top of the hydro-lift, waiting for word from the scouting party that infiltrated Tiamat Station.

Fangmouths (2): Init +1; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8) or harpoon +2 missile fire (1d6; range 30'); AC 13; HD 3d12; hp 20 each; MV 25', swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP improved critical 19-20, natural decompression (body naturally adjusts to the varying pressures of the ocean depths); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Crit M/d8.

Fangmouths are lumbering finned humanoids with massive, fang-filled mouths. Dim-witted, they're the perfect cannon-fodder troop, rushing into battle to engage forces in melee after throwing their harpoons. Their large maws allow them to critically hit foes on a natural 19 or 20.

Killer Star: Init +2; Atk gauzer rifle +3 missile fire (1d8; range 140'); AC 12; HD 3d6; hp 12; MV 20', swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP mutations (+3 to mutation check; *mental blast*, *sonic generation*), natural decompression (body naturally adjust to the varying pressures of the ocean depths), suffers double damage from slashing attacks; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Crit III/d8.

A 6'-tall mutant star fish, the killer star is armed with both a gauzer rifle and a pair of deadly mutations. It has 15 shots remaining in its rifle. Its *sonic generation* attack is particularly harmful underwater and inflicts double damage when used beneath the sea.

Melta-Manta: Init +4; Atk barbed tail +4 melee (1d6+1) or spine +6 missile fire (1d6 per target; 60' range); AC 16; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP mutations (+4 to mutation checks; *molecular disruption*, *radiation generation*, *spines*), natural decompression (body naturally adjusts to the varying pressures of the ocean depths); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Crit III/d8.

This giant manta measures 30' from nose to stinger-tipped tail and has a wingspan of 20'. Its body is covered with spines that offer protection and can be fired at targets up to 60' away. The manta can fire up to two spines each round as an action, doing 2d6 damage to one target or 1d6 to two adjacent targets. The melta-manta prefers to use its *radiation generation* and *molecular disruption* mutations at foes first before resorting to its tail and spine attacks.

Glowie Sergeant: Init +3; Atk gauzer pistol +4 missile fire (1d6; range 70'); AC 14; HD 3d10; hp 21; MV 30', swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP *force belt* (shielded against radiation, gaseous attacks, and the first 25 points of damage from physical damage), mutations (+2 to mutation check; *light generation*), natural decompression (body naturally adjusts to the varying pressures of the ocean depths); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; Crit III/d8.

This mutant lanternfish has a humanoid form and bioluminescent spots running along its fishy head and back. When it gets excited or angry, the spots glow bright blue. These also flare when it uses its *light generation* mutation. The glowie sergeant wears a *force belt* and carries 3 clips for its gauzer pistol. It also has 2 spare C-Cells in a woven kelp bag. If the sergeant is slain, each troop under its command must make a morale check or flee the battle.

The troops have orders to hold the top of the hydro-lift until the Oceanus army is ready to move in full against Tiamat Station, an order they're expecting any time. So long as the glowie sergeant remains alive, they fearlessly obey these orders unless compelled by unnatural influences (mental mutations, for example).

SHOOTING THE EXPLOSIVES

Each round during combat, there is a 2 in 6 chance one of the Oceanus soldiers decides to target the sea sled with missile fire if it's present (or other large means of transportation if the party has moved the explosives that way). There's a 60% chance they shoot at the cab and a 40% chance they fire at anyone or anything on the flatbed. Anyone piloting such a transport can choose to forgo their next action to try and make the craft more difficult to hit. The pilot makes an Agility check, and the result of that roll is used as the cab's or crate's AC for any attack directed at it that round, but only if the result is higher than its normal AC. On a roll of a natural 1, the pilot inadvertently drives the vehicle into the

line of fire, and the attacker gains a +2d bonus on their attack roll.

The cab has an AC of 13 and 60 hit points. If reduced to zero hit points, the cab depressurizes, killing anyone inside if they're not protected by an ADS or having undergone physical changes in area 2-17. The sea sled is incapacitated, and the explosives must be hauled to the hydro-lift physically, possibly while under continued attack.

Shots at the flatbed directed at passengers are resolved normally. If a shot hits a crate of explosives and penetrates it (striking an AC 14 and inflicting 5 or more damage on a single attack), there is a 25% chance the explosives detonate, resulting in instant death to every living thing in a 1000' radius. Each time a crate is struck, the chance of detonation increases 25%, so if four crates are hit and penetrated (or a single crate is penetrated four times), the explosion is certain. The judge is free to let the players know this fact or keep it to themselves based on which method will result in the most tension around the table.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the Oceanus forces at the hydro-lift are neutralized, the party can peer over the edge of the abyssal shelf and see their target 2 miles below them. Read or paraphrase the following:

Deep below, the darkness of the abyss is interrupted by a glowing radiance. Two miles down stands a domed city, one filled with spire-like towers and spherical buildings seemingly floating in the air. An eerie greenish-blue light spills from the domed metropolis, pushing back the ocean darkness with an almost fairy-like glow. Silhouetted against the glow, you can see countless minute specks of darkness: the forces of Oceanus' army gathering in a massive horde intent on destroying Tiamat Station and taking their hatred to the surface world. There isn't much time to act.

The hydro-lift is easy to operate. Three buttons move the massive cargo platform up, down, or stop it in place. Loading the explosives onto the platform takes only a few minutes if the party has dealt with the Oceanus forces present here. If they try the same while engaged in battle, assume a PC can move either one crate onto the platform each round if they have a Strength of 12 or less, or two crates per round if their Strength is 13 or better (the crates aren't extremely heavy, but they are cumbersome). The PCs must load at least 10 crates onto the hydro-lift to cause sufficient damage to Oceanus and the gathering forces. Anything less might deal the mutant undersea army a severe bloody nose but not do enough harm to fully terminate the threat it poses to the surface world. After regrouping, which might take months, their campaign of above-the-waves domination will begin again.

Once loaded, the hydro-lift can be activated and the ordinance deployed below. The hydro-lift ends in an enclosed terminal connected to the domed city, so the explosives are



guaranteed to hit their target when the hydro-lift arrives. All the PCs need to do is arm one or more of the charges for 15 minutes and hit the “Down” button. Then, if they’re smart, they’ll get away from the abyssal shelf and head back toward Tiamat Station.

Given it’s a 20-minute trip from the hydro-lift to Tiamat Station, the PCs will likely be outside and able to observe the results of their bombardment. Read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, in the distance behind you, the sea turns a brilliant crimson as the charges detonate. Moments later, you see a massive storm of bubbles and silt rise up from below the edge of the abyssal shelf. Then the shockwave hits you like a hammer to the chest, staggering you back from the force. Luckily, the cliff edge protected you from the worst of it. As you watch, you see the crimson glow fade, but the water grows murky as it does. The debris and seabed carried up by the blast begins to rain slowly down around you. Oceanus is no more.

Having destroyed Oceanus and defeated the mutant army’s threat, the party is welcomed back to Tiamat Station by Sheshma 1X6 who thanks them with great solemnity and sincerity. Their actions have not only defended it and the habitat it calls home but saved the lives of many who would have perished from Oceanus’ war of conquest. As promised, Sheshma 1X6 gladly allows the PCs to take anything of val-

ue they’ve found (assuming they don’t strip Tiamat Station to the struts and leave it a lifeless derelict!) and will happily return them to the surface via the drone supply ship, landing them anywhere they choose to go. If it hasn’t already done so, Sheshma 1X6 raises the possibility of performing mental manipulation on any who choose so as described in area 2-18, stressing the caveat that the process is not proven and might have unexpected consequences.

If Sheshma 1X6 has been slain or disconnected from the station’s computer systems, the PCs will have to figure out how to operate the drone ship themselves (TL 5, CM 8) to return to the surface. Even then, operating the ship doesn’t allow them to navigate it, and they might arrive someplace unexpected on the surface of Terra A.D., leading to new dangers and adventures.

The PCs might choose to remain in Tiamat Station and continue their exploits under the sea. Sheshma 1X6 is happy to have them as its guests. With time and effort, the party can make the station a cozy home base and launch expeditions into the ruins of Oceanus to see what might have survived the explosion. There’s an undersea world of post-apocalyptic excitement waiting for them just outside the airlock. Who knows what they might find beneath the waves in *Mutant Crawl Classics*?!

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APPENDIX A: NEW ARTIFACTS

ATMOSPHERIC DIVING SUIT (ADS)

Tech Level: 5

Complexity Modifier: 5

Protection: +6 AC

Special: Jet propulsion allows the wearer to move 40' per round underwater; provides 24 hours life support, +3 Strength bonus while worn, work lights (illuminates a 60' long, 10' wide area)

Power: F-Pack (24 hours)

This suit is made of articulated segments, much like those of a crustacean, which entirely encases the wearer's body to create a breathable environment and protection against the crushing pressure of the ocean depths. A mixture of viewports set around the helmet and a HUD inside it allow the wearer to be fully aware of their surroundings when encased in the bulky suit.

The suit recycles the wearer's exhalations, returning it as breathable air. The suit's environmental recycling systems provide life support for 24 hours, after which the power cells must be replaced. Each ADS is equipped with an internal communication link (functions as a *com-badge*), a *fusion torch*, and a *multitool*. For defense against hostile sea life, the left arm of each ADS contains a micro-torpedo launcher (2d4 damage; range 90') with a clip of 20 micro-torpedoes. A wearer who successfully figures out how to operate an ADS also understands how to use each of these features. The suit's fusion torch can be used as a weapon in dire straits, but it is not intended for such. Attack made with the torch suffer a -2d penalty to hit and inflicts 3d6 damage if used underwater or 6d6 damage if used in dry environments.

An ADS is not designed as armor but does provide incidental protection. All damage directed at the suit's wearer is divided between the suit and its operator. Once the suit suffers 30 hp of damage, it is compromised. If the wearer is underwater at this time, they either begin to drown or immediately perish from the crushing pressure of the ocean depths if submerged deep enough under the sea. For every 5 points of damage the suit takes, its life support capabilities are reduced by 4 hours until the ADS is repaired to full working order.

EMERGENCY NANO REPAIRBOT

Tech Level: 5

Complexity Modifier: 3

Effect: Automatically diagnoses and repairs damaged machinery.

Power: None (one-use item)

This black and yellow striped cylinder contains a cloud of nanite robots capable of analyzing a 50' diameter area to pinpoint what machinery and mechanisms are damaged in that area. The cloud is 10' in diameter and capable of manufacturing replacement parts from materials present in its surroundings. The time required to make repairs ranges from 10 minutes to 10 hours depending on the amount of damage and the number of mechanisms in need of fixing. Each emergency nano repairbot is a single-use item. Once activated by pulling the lever on the cylinder, the cloud is released and functions until it completes its repairs. The cloud often consumes itself in making repairs, leaving nothing but an empty cylinder behind. Despite its capabilities, some complex machines, especially medical or AI ones, are beyond this artifact's ability to repair.

SONIC CARVING KNIFE

Tech Level: 3

Complexity Modifier: 3

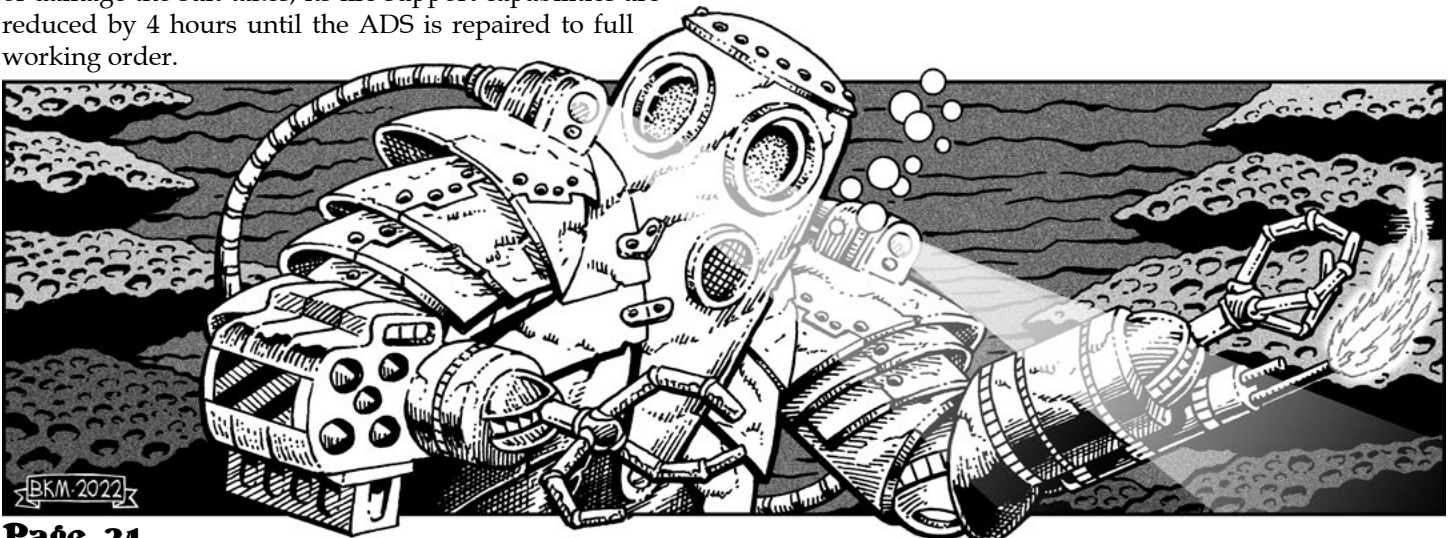
Range: Melee

Damage: 1d12

Special: Attack +1

Power: C-Cell (10), F-Cell (20), Q-Cell (Unlimited)

A kitchen utensil rather than a weapon, this sonic knife was nevertheless designed to efficiently slice through meat and gristle. Each successful strike reduces its power by 1 charge. Cutting through metal is possible but drains 2 charges with each successful strike or per round used against stationary objects such as gates, chains, or similar things. At the judge's discretion, some metals are beyond the carving knife's ability to cut.





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*Missives from the Purple Planet, Shudder Mountains, or the Center of Aereth should expect 6 to 8 weeks for reply.

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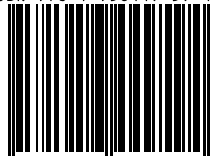
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