

HELLSGATE™

Julia
Martin



GDW



Julia Martin

DARK CONSPIRACYTM





CREDITS

Design: Julia Martin

Additional Design: Eric W. Haddock

Editing: Nick Atlas

Cover Art: Dell Harris

Interior Art: Dell Harris, Earl Geier, Ellisa Martin, Thomas Darrell Midgette, and Allen Nunis

Art Direction: Kirk Wescom

Graphic Design and Production: Steve Bryant, Amy Doubet, and LaMont Fullerton

Copyediting: Stephen Olle

Hellsgate

Copyright©1992 GDW, Inc.

All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. Made in U.S.A.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 1-55878-097-1

Dark Conspiracy™ is GDW's trademark for its game of unearthly horror in a modern world.



P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

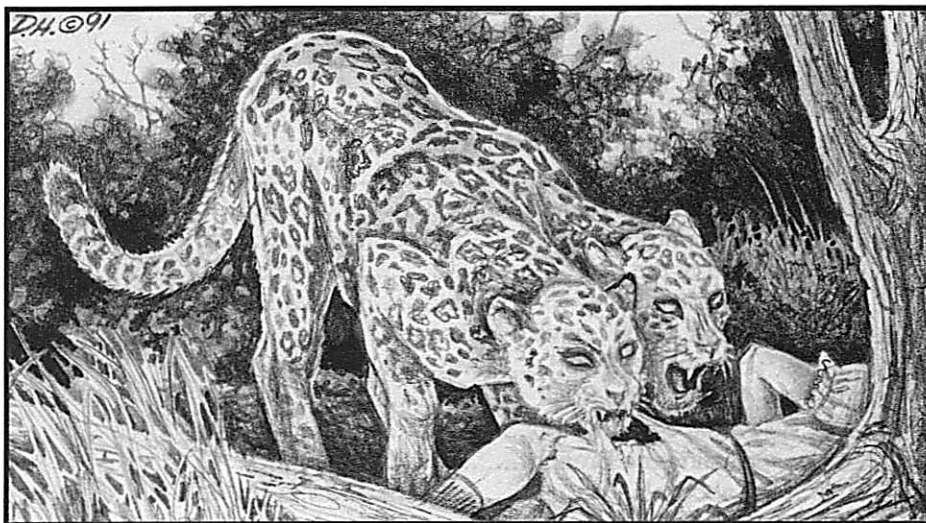
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4	An Unearthly Arboretum	37
<i>National Weekly Crier</i>	4	Spring Breeze	38
REFEREE'S INTRODUCTION	6	Lighting the Fuse	38
All Is Not As It Seems	6	A Country Lane	38
Historical Synopsis	7	End of the Line	38
Plot Synopsis	7	Paradise Valley	39
KNOCK, KNOCK	11	...But if You Leave a Message... ..	40
Setting Up Anthony	11	Howdy Neighbor!	40
Question and Answer	12	A Really Big Rock	41
And Now For Something		Unexpected Visitor	41
Completely Different	13	Sealing the Breach	41
<i>Anthony Williams</i>	13	Kaboom!	43
A Transfer of Power	16	A GRAND OPENING	44
The Goody Bag	16	The New Gate	45
WHO'S THERE?	17	Io	46
Reunion	17	The Floater Twins	47
<i>Margaret Ryan</i>	18	<i>Alien Encampment Map</i>	47
The Mission	18	On the Surface	48
Travel, Equipment & Compensation	19	THE GATE TO HELL	49
<i>Raoul Smith</i>	20	Cerberus	49
Using Raoul	20	The Alien Ruin	50
THE VILLAGE	21	Hellsgate	51
In Merida	21	SHOWDOWN	52
The Search Begins	21	The Great Dark One Notices a Problem	53
<i>Yucatan Travel Distances</i>	22	Closing Hellsgate	53
Bad Medicine at Piste	22	<i>The Margaret-Thing</i>	53
Information-Seeking in Piste	23	So Long, It's Been Good to Know Ya	54
<i>Piste Map</i>	24	Leaving Io	54
Mad Monkions	26	AFTERMATH	55
Nighttime Attack	27	The Reopening of Hellsgate	55
THE PYRAMID	28	Rewards	56
Getting to the Pyramid	28	RESEARCH RESULTS	57
<i>Tepeyet</i>	29	Chac	57
Approaching the Temple	30	Chichen Itza	57
The Temple of Kukulcan (El Castillo)	30	Kukulcan	58
The Temple Floor	31	Mayas	58
The Temple Sublevel	31	REFEREE RESOURCES	59
The Maze Floor	32	Dimensional Hunter	59
The Ground Floor	34	Jaguar-Weres (Moreau Weres)	60
The Tomb Floor	34	Monkions	61
The Gate Room	35	Scorpion Tail	61
THE LAND BEYOND	37	Quetzals	62
First Stop	37	DARKTEK	63

"All the News That's Fit to Print!"

Sept. 9, 2014

TWO-HEADED MUTANT ANIMALS KIDNAP CHILDREN AND TERRORIZE VILLAGE!



Piste, Mexico—José Rivera left his two young daughters, Maria and Hermosa, playing in his yard and went into his house to find his pipe. His search was interrupted by the terrified screams of the two girls. Grabbing his rifle, José rushed outside to aid his children, only to discover Maria nowhere in sight and Hermosa being dragged off by one leg by a four-foot-tall jaguar with two heads.

"The beast's eyes glowed an unearthly red," says Señor Rivera, "but I took a deep breath and aimed right between them at the head chewing on my daughter. I knew if I missed, I might hit Hermosa. But if I didn't shoot, she'd be its dinner."

According to José, he put his first shot right on target, and the jaguar-thing dropped his daughter. It then ran off across the neighbor's land and out of sight. Hermosa, though terrified, sustained only superficial injuries to her leg. But Mr. Rivera was unable to locate little Maria.

"One of those things must have carried her off. I didn't see any blood, but I found a couple of pieces of her dress in some nearby bushes. My poor little one!" Mr. Rivera asserted tearfully.

Within the next two days, more incidences of vicious mutant animals, many

with two heads, began to surface. Reports of two-headed ocelots, coyotes, wolves, and monkeys have been made. All of the animals seem to come out of the nearby jungle, and most have assaulted only relatively helpless children and household pets.

"I saw the eyes at first," says Señora Martinez, age 64 and an invalid. "I was sitting on my veranda, enjoying the evening air, when two pairs of glowing eyes appeared to the left. I screamed for help, and my neighbor, Pedro, heard me and came running. It was a giant lizard, with two heads. It looked like a gila monster, only bigger. It took a chunk out of the porch railing and bit off my left little toe before Pedro drove it away with his gun. It was horrifying—it smelled like it had been dead a month."

Villagers have enacted a curfew and now go out only in armed groups. The authorities have no explanation for the mutant creatures. Lt. Castillo of the Valladoid Police Department says, "Many powerful companies have established pharmaceutical and chemical research facilities here in the Yucatan to capitalize on the exotic plants in the rain forest. Who knows what sort of waste they may be leaving?"

COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUTS CAUSED BY ALIENS—ATTACK IMMINENT!

Dr. Harvey Taylor of Mount Palomar observatory refused to comment in his newsbrief today on the statement by Dr. Boris Trent earlier this week that the recent communications blackouts have been caused by extremely strong incoming signals from the direction of Jupiter, probably from an alien source. "Dr. Trent's theory that aliens are testing our global communications network in preparation for destroying it in an imminent invasion is not worth the serious comment or concern of the scientific community," commented Taylor wryly.

Inside sources at NASA have also denied an extraterrestrial encounter as the cause of the recent EVA tragedy suffered by a shuttle crew, contrary to the statement of the mission's commander, Lt. Col. Lyle Andrews, upon his return. "Lyle was in shock and didn't know what to say. Leave him alone now," pleaded fellow crewmember Major Margaret Ryan, the only other survivor of the tragedy that claimed three lives.

Taylor's statement revealed that all of the recent communications blackouts—during which television and some radio were rendered useless over large portions of North America—are connected. The blackouts have been caused by the failure of one satellite, Comsat 144, which NASA boosted into orbit three months ago.

"The eccentric method in which the satellite failed confused us at first, as it had gradually drifted out of its original stable orbit into a slightly different one. This resulted in only a very specific set of circumstances causing failure—like when the satellite was at peak or receiving and transmitting at the extremes of its operating parameters," stated Taylor in his 10-page brief.



About three months ago, NASA hefted a multi-million-dollar satellite into orbit around the Earth. This satellite was to be the final link in a network of Comsats which would blanket the Earth, making the reception and transmission of most modes of electromagnetically carried information even more thorough, timely and convenient for the conglomerate of globe-spanning corporations which financed the Comsat network. In an age where information continues to be power, they would consolidate their stranglehold on world markets. And the proles and wage slaves would continue to receive their mind-numbing doses of daytime television, docudramas, and music television to keep their minds off of their lot in life.

But something went wrong. Within a week after the satellite was positioned, clearing all of its diagnostics with flying colors, it had drifted out of position in the network. Its attitude thrusters had fired seemingly in error, and the satellite had broken with the network and defied all attempts by ground crews to bring it back in line and on-line.

At great expense, a shuttle was diverted to make hands-on repairs. In a freakish EVA accident, three crewmembers were lost. Only the commander, Lt. Col. Lyle Andrews, and the pilot of the mission,

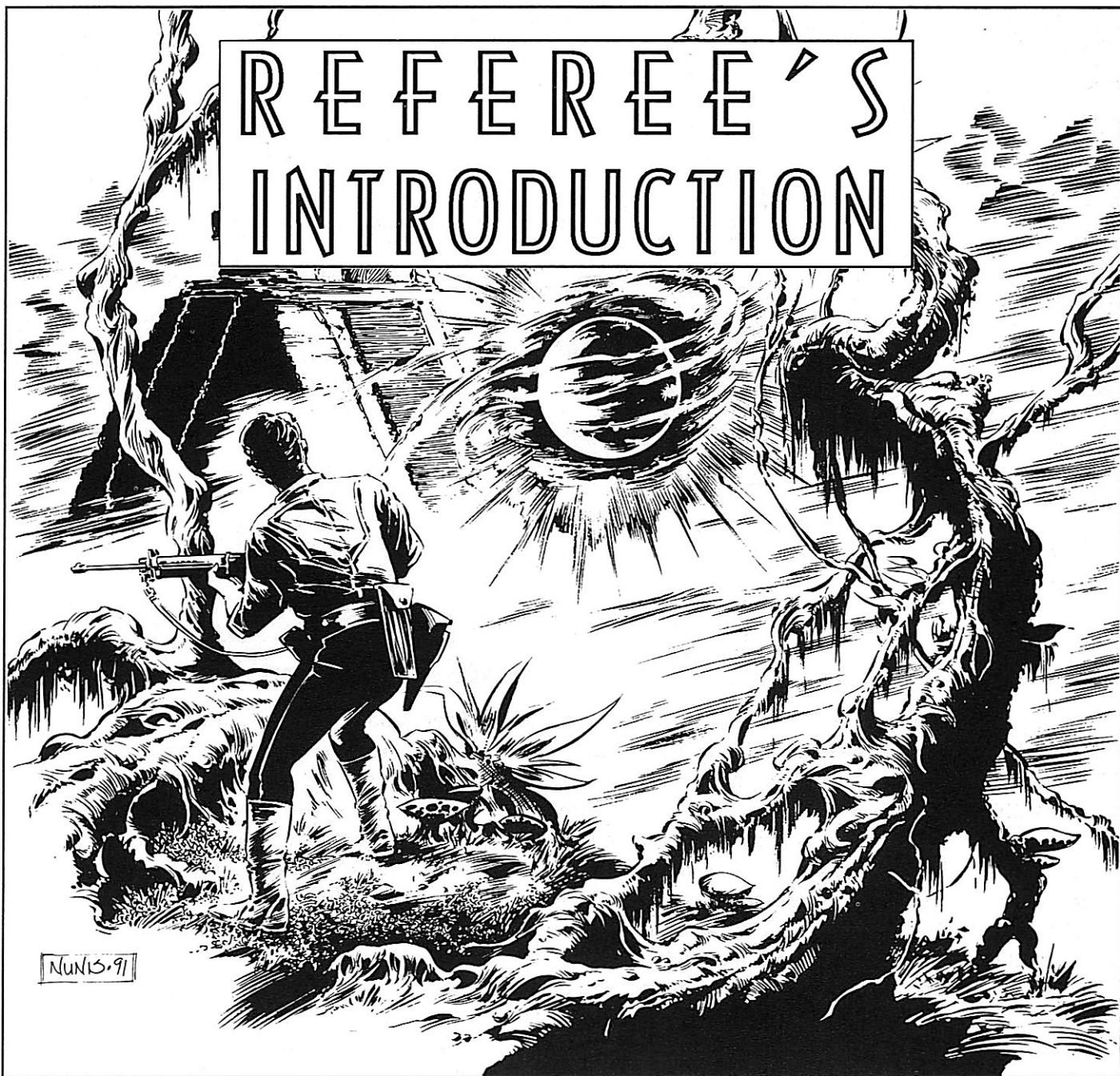
Major Margaret Ryan, who had not left the shuttle, returned to Earth after the mission was aborted.

In the meantime, the satellite began sporadic transmissions of great strength—reportedly into somewhere in Mexico. The official networks and news releases have attempted to brush everything off as the result of either human error or faulty components. But five days ago the tabloids caught hold of rumors of mutant animals stalking the Yucatan. Bizarre weather systems have also hung over that portion of Mexico for almost two months.

All of this seems to add up to more than a set of unfortunate (and costly) coincidences for NASA, according to the recent rumors within the empathic community. The prescients of the community have been having increasingly strong nightmares of a "gate" opening into what they can only describe as "otherwhere." And what lies beyond that gate is a horror so old and so powerful that when the strongest among them attempted to look upon it, he was driven into a week of catatonia. The signs and dreams are confusing, but something momentous—and evil—is afoot.

Hellsgate will take you into the depths of the jungle to combat a horror from beyond this dimension. Do you have the heart to face it?

REFEREE'S INTRODUCTION



Hellsgate is an adventure for three to five PCs. They should be veteran PCs with quite a few **Dark Conspiracy** adventures under their belts. They need some previous **Dark Conspiracy** experience because the situation in which the PCs are placed presupposes their having taken actions which have gotten them noticed by the empathic community. Also, the beasts in this adventure are formidable, and the twists of the plot will probably not be as enjoyable to a player focused purely on the "shoot 'em up" aspects of roleplaying.

Note that, throughout this module, there are devices not in the basic rules. They are drawn from the **DarkTek** supplement, and their descriptions are on pages 63-64.

ALL IS NOT AS IT SEEMS

Hellsgate builds upon the principle that "everything is not as it seems." During most of the adventure the PCs will be "aided" by Margaret Ryan, a respected astronaut. But from her first words with the PCs, Margaret is setting them up; she recently sold out to the Dark One the ETs freed on Jupiter's moon Io (see the "Historical Synopsis" on the page following). In exchange for power and immortality, she has volunteered to lead the PCs down the primrose path. She will aid them in closing the gate to one proto-dimension recently opened by ETs



under control of a different Dark One than hers. This will cause a major setback to her Dark One's rival, but most importantly, it will enable it to divert the tremendous energy release from the closing of the gate into the opening of an old gate to Io, located nearby. This gate will give it quick and easy access for its minions to the Earth. When the PCs think that they are at the moment of triumph in closing the first gate, they are merely pawns in the effort to open the second gate.

At a couple of points in Hellsgate, it is also quite possible (likely, in fact) that any PCs or NPCs who spent one or more terms as cyborg escapees will be taken over by extraterrestrials to do their bidding (until the control devices are destroyed). This is another example of turning the tables on the players. The forces at work in Hellsgate are working on plans that have taken them a great deal of time, effort, and empathic energy. They are not at all inclined to pull their punches.

HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS

In 1958, an extraterrestrial survey team discovered ruins of what appeared to be a broad-based, pyramidal structure on Io, Jupiter's first satellite. Spurred on by curiosity, the team proceeded into the ruins, using high-energy fusion disruption drills to break into sealed sections. Unfortunately, in doing so, the team eventually broke through an ancient portal—a portal to another universe.

No one in this reality will probably ever know the true name of the being released by the extraterrestrial exploratory team that day. It has been called by many names throughout time, and its evil is legendary. All of its names come to one meaning—the Great Dark One.

Released from its millennia-long captivity, this evil being began its wave of conquest with the empathic domination of all five races of ETs. The Great Dark One's influence spread like wildfire. In a single night of chaos, the entire exploratory force was subjugated to its will. The strongest

aliens resisted and were slaughtered without mercy. A few escaped to relative safety with the sheltering empathic on Earth

New gates were soon opened by the dominated ETs. Some gave access to Dark Ones with different goals than the Great Dark One. A few were able to subvert the Great Dark One's ETs to their own goals.

A group of ETs, using the Comsat to beam energy from their ship, were working for another Dark One opening a gate on a weak spot in the cosmic continuum, a spot which correlated with the old Mayan/Toltec city of Chichen Itza. This weak spot bordered an alternate reality inhabited by a Dark One known to the ancient Mayans as Kukulcan, whose influence was last felt on Earth around AD 250-900.

The apparent "malfunction" of the Comsat prompted a shuttle mission to repair the satellite. During the initial stages of EVA repairs to the satellite, a minion of the Great Dark One arrived on the scene, devoured the three astronauts currently disembarked, and sent the shuttle commander into semicatatonic shock. After docking with the shuttle, the Great Dark One established contact between itself and the pilot, Major Margaret Ryan, through the ETs. It offered her physical power, a position of leadership, and immortality. She accepted.

She was to perform one mission for it: trick a group of annoying humans into closing its rival's gate while shunting the energy to a gate which would connect Earth and Io, giving the Great Dark One almost direct access to the Earth for itself its minions.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

At this point the adventure begins for the PCs.

Knock, Knock: One of the PCs, the one with the highest empathic skills (preferably a mystic), receives a mysterious visit late one night from a man in a trenchcoat. He is a member of a secret empathic group who has come to trust this PC and his friends because of what he has

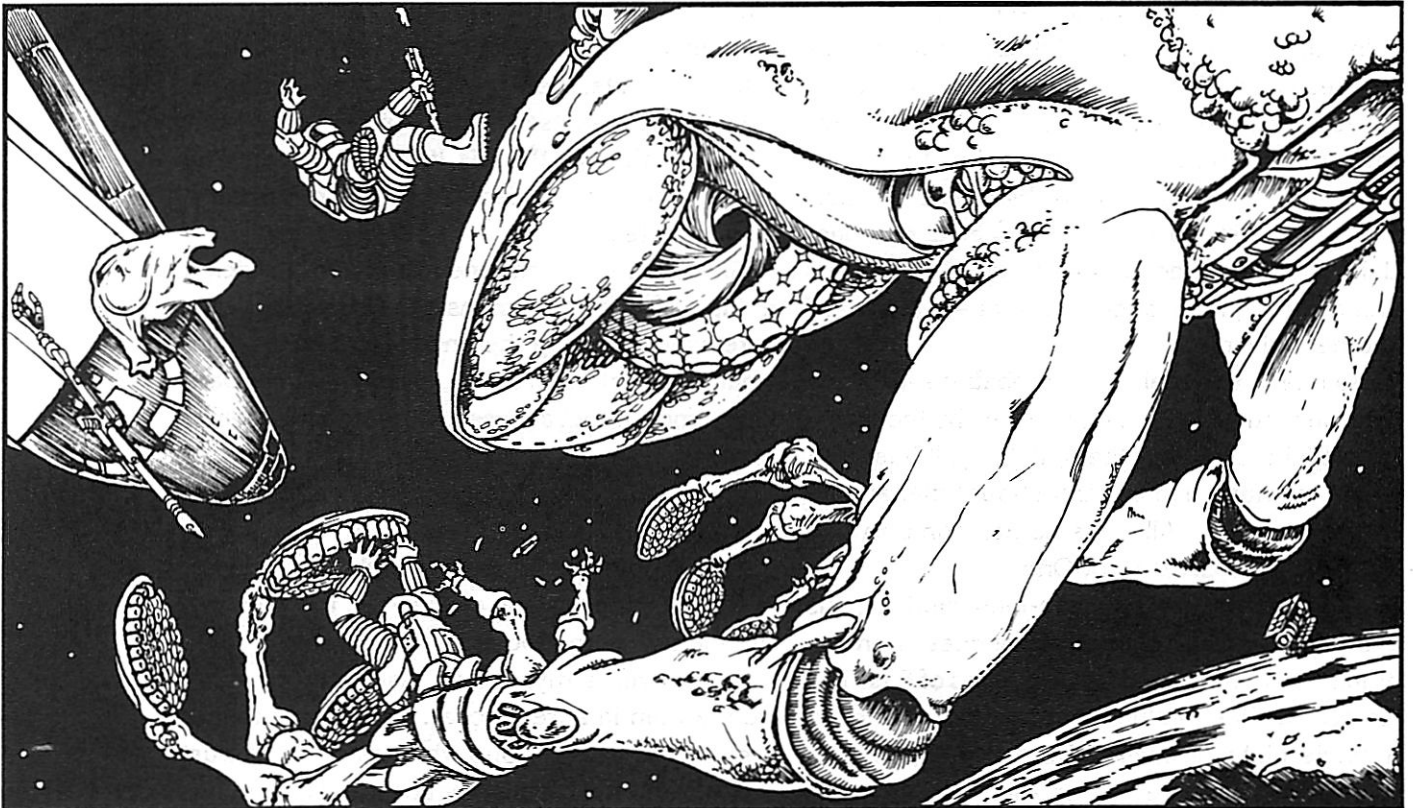


learned of their past actions. He reveals that he is a friend of a group guarding one of the last unpossessed extraterrestrials. He would not have contacted the PC, but all the signs and dreams of his precognitive friends indicate that something extremely big is going on in the Yucatan, in Mexico, and somehow a permanent dimensional gate is involved. He presents the PC with a duffel bag full of things which the ET said the empathic PC would need, and plays a holographic "tape" of the ET.

The hologram tells the story of the extraterrestrials opening the "wrong door" and explains why the ET believes that another major gate is being opened in the Yucatan. It is imperative that this gate be closed, or the power of the Dark One will be boosted to such levels that this universe may never recover. On a more personal note, the concerted efforts of all the ET's friends will no longer be able to shield him, and he and all his empathic protectors will quickly be hunted down and eliminated.

The visitor remains for a brief time to answer a few questions and explain some of the equipment. One of the devices he leaves with the PC will link the PC with the ET for a few hours—long enough to teach the PC a new empathic skill, Dimension Walk (if the PC already knows Dimension Walk, this contact improves any Dimension Walking talent he might have). After that point, the device will disable itself and become inert. He says that the PC will have struck a major blow for humanity if he is able to close this gate. He also warns the PC to tell no one about what the ET revealed except to his closest friends—trust no one easily. Then the visitor leaves, Dimension Walking out like he Dimension Walked into the PC's dwelling.

Who's There?: The very next day another PC (preferably an astronaut) is contacted by Major Margaret Ryan, an old acquaintance. Officially, she says, NASA has allowed her to recommend this PC and his or her friends for a tough job based on their past acquaintance. Unofficially, she has





heard about some of the work with strange goings on the PCs have done and wants them with her on this job. She explains about the NASA-positioned Comsat which has "malfunctioned" and is now routing odd, but very strong, transmissions into the Yucatan. She also shows the PCs the tabloid reports of mutant animals attacking villagers. She can pay the PCs \$10,000 dollars each for aiding her on her mission to discover what the satellite is doing, to discover who is controlling it, and to shut it off, if possible. A \$10,000 bonus for each surviving PC if a swift and politically non-messy resolution can be arranged. Reasonable expenses will also be covered.

The Village: NASA flies the PCs to Merida, and they proceed to search around the area to which Ryan says the satellite is transmitting, in the neighborhood of Libre Union, Yaxcaba, Piste, Chichen Itza, and Balancanchen. In Piste, the PCs encounter a terrified village. Mutant animals—strange humanoid jaguar things—are indeed a problem here, and they usually seem to attack from the direction of Chichen Itza. But what is even more terrifying is a well-guarded priest of the ancient Mayan religion who claims that the old gods are returning. He is attempting to bring back the old ways, and is carrying on blood sacrifices in Chichen Itza. As the general populace of the village is still not keen about volunteering sacrifices, he and his followers kidnap victims—often visitors, children, or the elderly—in the night and take them to Chichen Itza. He claims that the gods talk to him there and bless him with great power and gifts when he brings them sacrifices.

The Pyramid: When the PCs go to Chichen Itza, they discover an oddly transmuted Temple of Kukulcan. Rebuilt from the rubble of recent neglect, terrorism, and vandalism, extraterrestrial erectors and viners have combined with the remains of the ancient pyramid to construct a weird, semiorganic structure. Evidence of Dark Minion activity is blatant. After defeating, outwitting, or sneaking past a jaguar-thing patrol, the

PCs enter the pyramid. Working their way through several levels of a mazelike interior, the PCs finally locate the gate and the ET biomachinery evidently controlling the Comsat. Even after destroying the controlling machinery, the gate remains open. Ryan reveals that she has a device which might be able to close the gate—from the other side.

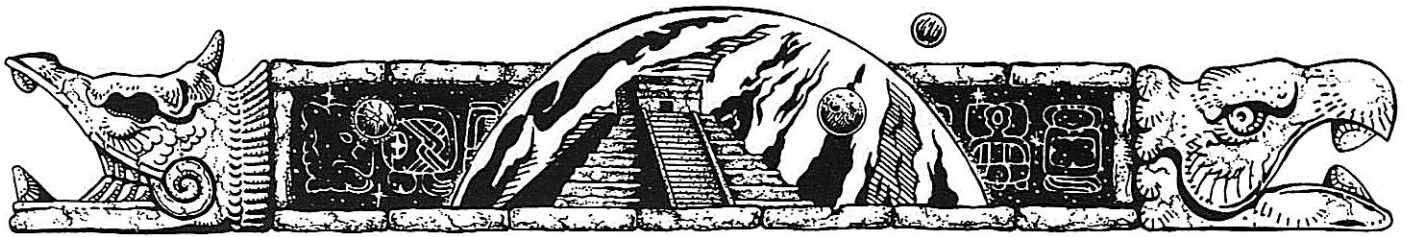
The Land Beyond: The land beyond the gate is a version of the Mayan afterlife. Apparently, hundreds of years ago, another gate connected this dimension with the Earth, and many Mayan people passed through it. This dimension has been leeched of life energy by Kukulcan who, until recently, dwelled here. The plants, people, and structures have an ethereal quality; they are greyed and almost translucent from the thinning of energy.

The land is dying everywhere except near the new gate, where color and life are evidenced. The empathic life energies of our universe are evidently being siphoned off at an increasing rate, gradually revivifying this place. A short way from the gate, in a valley, a group of energy ETs are circling a stela, above which a peculiar atmospheric disturbance is growing.

Sealing the Breach: Ryan sets up her device to go off after a brief delay. When it goes off, the device's batteries crackle and spark, but the gate does not close; there is not enough power to close the gate.

The PCs come up with a reasonable method to power the array—the energy ETs or the creature they are summoning could provide the needed power. The PCs and Ryan dive back through the gate, and it closes with a great explosion of empathic energy.

A Grand Opening: The PCs escape the now-collapsing pyramid and prepare to take a breather. About 350 meters north of the Temple of Kukulcan, a strong glow has appeared, like a powerful searchlight shining up into the sky from the ground. This is the location of the former sacred well of Chichen Itza. A few feet below its waters,



an even larger and more powerful gate has opened.

At this point, Ryan wants to lure the PCs through the new gate and have the Great Dark One's minions finish them off. While she has gained a grudging respect for their abilities, she is positive that the Great Dark One's forces will triumph easily. She will accompany the PCs if they seem intent on going through the new gate within a day. If they decide to recuperate for a long while first, she will wait until the second night and enact a fake kidnapping of herself by minions who come through the new gate.

Io: This new gate opens onto Io, in an area of rubble and boulders left heretofore unexplored by the aliens on Io. Fortunately, it is with the area of a force-bubble dome set up over the area of the ancient ruins and the gate to the Great Dark One's universe. There are not many extraterrestrials

here on Io, and those are not heavily armed. They never expected to have to defend Io, as humankind has no way to get to there, so it is possible to get to the ancient structure with some effort. If the PCs have come to Io with Ryan, she escapes as soon as it is practical, allowing herself to be cut off, and even taken prisoner if necessary (staged, of course). If the PCs are chasing her "kidnappers," they will see her taken into a partially ruined, huge, ancient structure a short distance away.

The Door to Hell: It is not too hard to figure out where they are and what is here after what the ET said on the holotape—Jupiter's a dead giveaway. After entering the ruins and proceeding through several levels of the ruins, the PCs find three shafts drilled by the extraterrestrials. Curiously, they are unguarded, although the entire area fairly oozes evil. Down one shaft, the PCs find a horizontal shaft with a fusion disrupter drill still in place and turned on. The gate it pierces has been enlarged to avoid its beam.

Showdown: At this point, the PCs find Ryan. Or rather, what remains of her finds the PCs. She charges out from the mouth of the gate to the Great Dark One's universe. She has been *changed*. She is now a huge thing, with several extra limbs, multifaceted eyes, some sort of alien weaponry, and an attitude. In the ensuing battle, the fusion drill is destroyed. At this, something within the gate begins to stir. The PCs can sense something really big has been angered and is now *noticing them*. The PCs' overall impression is that something incredibly ancient and evil is beginning to emerge. The PCs can use Dimension Walk to close this gate. As this happens, Ryan is taken back through the gate.

Wrapup: Hellsgate is closed (at least temporarily). The PCs can return home and close the gate to Io with relative ease compared to their latest effort. They will be little hindered by the remaining extraterrestrials on Io, as they are in a confused state, having temporarily lost contact with their master.



KNOCK, KNOCK



It was drizzling outside again, and hot—one of the two kinds of weather you seem to get lately. Try as you might, you couldn't fall asleep. So you stayed up late watching reruns on the television. And then even that option was stolen from you by one of the abrupt communications blackouts that the entire region has been having recently.

You thought you were in one of those peculiarly realistic dreams that one has while sitting upright halfway to falling asleep. First, a knock. Then a dot of purplish light appeared on the door, expanded slowly into a line, and widened in the silhouette of a tall man, which filled with a twirl-

ing blue glow. Suddenly, the shadow developed three dimensions and full color. Then, the man walked right through the door.

You were sure it was a dream, right until he set down his duffel bag and said, "You wouldn't happen to have any real coffee, would you?"

SETTING UP ANTHONY

Anthony Williams comes to visit one of the PCs one night out of the blue. The referee should pick the mystic of his campaign group to receive the visit from Tony. If the group has no one who is or has been a mystic, then the character with the highest Empa-



thy or the largest concentration of empathic talents would be the next most logical choice. Since the encounter with Tony is pretty much a solo one, it might be wise for a referee to play out this encounter with the PC in a one-on-one session separate from the gaming group's normal meeting, or ask the player who plays the PC to come early to the gaming session, to prevent the rest of the group from becoming bored.

Tony has chosen to contact the mystic because his friends in the empathic underground and other contacts Tony has on the street have heard good things about this PC and the people he or she associates with. If the PC has had dealings with the empathic network, Tony can provide a "reference" from someone that the PC has met and trusts. Or, if it would work in well with the campaign that the referee is running and the PC is willing, Tony could be a generic criminal or empathic contact that the PC has (after this decision is made, though, he is no longer generic, obviously).

Since Tony's appearance will startle and probably alarm the PC, the referee should try to convey Tony's good intentions (if somewhat overzealous methods) right away. Tony vocally expresses his peaceful intentions ("Hey, I'm not armed!" and "Wait, (fill in the blank—an empathic contact the PC trusts) sent me!") if the PC goes for a gun right away. Tony will not shoot at the PC, although he dives for cover if shot at. If a PC insists on continuing to fire, even after Tony's protestations, Tony surrenders to the PC. Tony will let the PC use Human Empathy on him to sense his sincerity and intentions. As Tony is a willing subject, this is Easy: Human Empathy.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Tony makes the following statement as soon as he can (after a cup of coffee, if he can get one):

Sorry about the entrance—didn't mean to send you to Mars. I guess I got a little overeager. Something very big is going down. All of my friends who can see the future have been having night-

mares lately—real screamers. They see a gate opening into...well...otherwhere. Some see the jungle, others see the stars—all of them see something horrible, old, and evil oozing out of the gate and absorbing everything in its path. Nobody's been able to see what the thing is—everyone says their dream selves are too weak to look. Friend of my teacher—name of Sterling—tried to push it. Thought he could take it. We've been feeding him oatmeal and keeping him clean for about a week.

Anyways, the stronger ones with the gift can feel something. They know that something is happening down south, down in Mexico, in the Yucatan. I don't know if you've seen the tabloids lately, with the mutant animal reports and all? (Hand the PC a photocopy of page 4. Permission to copy it for personal use is hereby given.) Well, we were starting to figure that even through the usual smoke screen these were reports of some sort of Demonground growing, maybe with this gate in its center. Then another group contacted us.

I can't tell you where they are. You see, I know you've run into a few odd creatures with your friends—zombies, vampires, maybe some even weirder stuff. Maybe even some—aliens? Maddier than hatters, using technology I can barely even imagine, sorta human-looking but with big eyes and funny-looking ears? Well, this group is protecting a humanoid ET. And this one isn't evil and he isn't nuts. But he's scared. He knows he's one of the last of his kind not possessed by some sort of evil overlord from another dimension.

Anyways, after what they told me and my friends, I got sent to find someone who could act on our suspicions. I picked you.

Tony has come with three goals in mind: inform the PC of a major disturbance in the empathic network (he has just done this), show the PC the holovideo of the alien, and transfer the equipment and knowledge entrusted to him by the ET to the PC. Tony answers all the questions he can. The only thing he will not reveal is where the ET is being hidden. The referee should improvise answers not given here from what Tony knows and



would reveal.

PC: Who are your friends?

Tony: (Name an empath the PC knows and trusts), for one. I'd rather not reveal them all. That way no one could betray all of us, ya know?

PC: You said a gate. What do you mean?

Tony: Well, if you've ever dimension walked, you've opened a minor one—like I did when I came in. They're openings into other places, maybe other universes, with different cosmic geographies and laws than ours. Sometimes a person who has a strong mental focus can draw one of the close dimensions into contact with ours and then force open a door to walk into it, or do the same from another dimension to ours. The opening into another dimension is a gate. Most are temporary, from what I know. A few people have been rumored to be able to make permanent ones, or have found permanent ones. Sometimes places that a gate goes to have occupants who don't like visitors or who see the gate as a great way to expand their turf.

PC: What do you know about what's going on in Mexico?

Tony: Not a lot. I know the ones who dream strong say that something evil is growing there.

PC: Have you met the ET?

Tony: Not face to face. I touched its mind once. It's clean, orderly, almost Zen-like in its thoughts. I couldn't understand a lot, but I know it's not evil.

PC: What did the ET have to say? (Alternatively—What's in the duffel bag?)

Tony: I'll show you.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

When the PC asks to see what is in the duffel bag or what the ET said to Tony's friends, Tony asks to unpack the bag so that he can show the PC. He requests a table and a couple of chairs. Then he unpacks a machine about 40 centimeters long by 25 centimeters wide by 20 centimeters deep, and removes its cover. It looks sort of



ANTHONY WILLIAMS

Anthony Williams is tall, black, and in his mid-thirties. Anthony, who prefers to be called Tony, grew up in a tough neighborhood of Pittshio. When he was young, he belonged to a gang, but became disillusioned with its violent life-style. Also, he was disturbed by his sensitivity to the emotional distress of the gang's victims.

Eventually, after moving to another metroplex, Tony be-

came acquainted with a group (or cell) of people in the empathic underground. Tony found the goals and ideals of this group much more suited to his conscience and nature, and has gained a great deal of status with the group over the years.

Last week the cell made contact with another cell operating in the Southwest. This group has been sheltering one of the last free humanoid ETs. Tony has never met the ET face to face, but he has "touched minds" with him through a long-distance communications link set up by the combined efforts of his cell. Tony learned enough about him during the link to determine (to his satisfaction) that the alien has good intentions and is not being duplicitous. When his group asked Tony to find some people not directly traceable to the empathic network to check out the disturbance in Central America, Tony accepted gladly.

Tony is generally cool and calm, but displays a tendency to overuse his empathic talents.

Experience: Veteran

Attributes: 6; INT 7, EMP 9

Skills: 6; Melee Combat (Armed) 7, Vehicle Use (Motorcycle) 9, Streetwise 7, Human Empathy 7, Project Emotion 4, Project Thought 5, Willpower Drain 4, Foreboding 3, Willpower 7, Dimension Walk 7.

Initiative: 4

Motivation: *Heart 7:* Tony is primarily motivated by loyalty to his cell in the empathic underground and a sense of duty to perform the tasks it sets them. He is slightly awed by the alien, but trusts him implicitly. *Club 3:* Tony is not intimidated by violence, and is not afraid to dish it out himself when necessary—he lived in a very violent environment in his youth. He just prefers not to use violence, unless it seems to be the only reasonable solution.



like an extra-bulky notebook computer or a portable videotape viewer. Next, Tony pulls what looks like a rectangular lucite block with embedded circuitry in it out of the duffel and inserts it in a slot in the machine's side. Tony then pulls out two sets of earphones and plugs them both into two jacks on another side of the machine. He puts one set on, and gestures for the PC to do the same. He then turns the machine on, and pushes a button marked, "play." Swirling static forms above the top surface of the machine, and then solidifies into a three-dimensional image.

A humanoid alien is seated in some sort of booth, and several wand-like projections can be seen slanting from ceiling to floor behind him and to his sides. (The alien is seated in a holoweb surround-booth—see page 63.) The alien's eyes are huge, but intelligent-looking. They convey great sadness, and a hint of fear. Its nose is small, two slits mainly, and its ears seem to be formed integrally with its skull ridges. It is dressed in a flight suit which says "Crusoe" over the breast pocket, but bears no insignia. It is wearing a peculiar device on its head that looks like some sort of cross between a crown and a flattened

lobster (an Esperlink—see page 63). It opens its small mouth and begins to speak in perfect English in a vibrant, baritone voice.

I am a part of a great and noble expedition, a cooperative effort between four races. We travelled to your solar system in a generation ship on a scientific mission. We were gathering information and searching for planets which could sustain life.

We arrived near Earth in time to witness the beginning of your planet's Atomic Age, and an accompanying wave of hatred and xenophobia which terrified us. Your total disregard for your planet's ecosystem also spoke to us of your immaturity. We decided it would be wise not to directly contact your world, but rather to observe it and pursue further exploration elsewhere in your solar system until such time as your species matured.

Unfortunately, in July of 1947, one of our scout saucers, sent to clandestinely survey your planet, suffered a complete and catastrophic electrical failure and crashed in the American southwestern desert. The bodies of our companions were taken by the American Air Force to one of their air bases. Although they could not determine much from what remained of our fellows, the Americans now knew of our existence, although they kept it from their civilian population.

The cautious and logical behavior of the Air Force led a small faction among us, including myself, to encourage limited contact with that organization. Finally, we contacted them and some of us made friends amongst the military and other government organizations over the years which followed. But we insisted that those we contacted continue to conceal our existence from the general public—the public was still too unstable and might mount a campaign to exterminate us out of fear and lack of experience. And while we shared some information with those we contacted, we resisted the temptation and their pleas to greatly accelerate their technical knowledge, assuring them that with greater technology



also had to come greater social development; the one could not be forced out of balance from the other without grave consequence.

While we nurtured a growing dialogue with the leaders of your world, we continued our exploration of the solar system. On Io, one of the moons orbiting the planet you call Jupiter, we discovered the partially buried remains of what had to be a structure built by a sentient hand! As this was obviously not the work of humankind—it was still contemplating the beginnings of its infant space programs—it had to have been made by another spacefaring race. We were not alone in space!

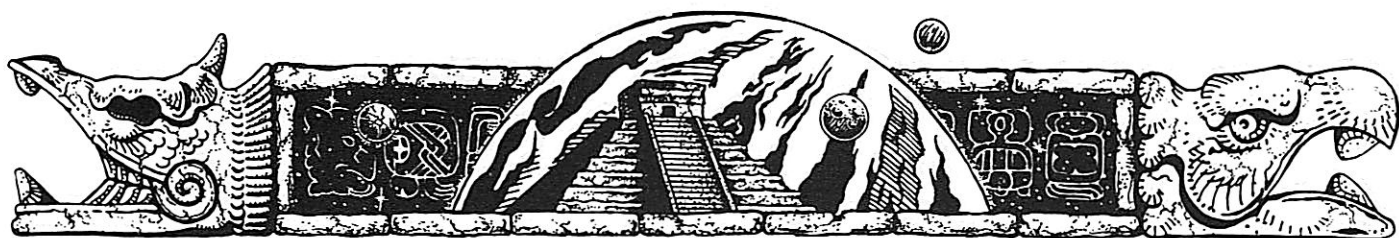
An eager exploratory team hurried to discover any clues that might remain in the ruin. Virtually empty were the three levels they were able to access above the surface. Many passages seemed blocked, some by rubble, some seemingly sealed by intention. Using high-energy drills to excavate deep below the ruin, the first shaft was sunk and

horizontal shafts begun. The third shaft opened by the drill broke open a seal on a door to another universe, and doomed my fellows by releasing an ancient evil.

An evil being of incredible age and power killed some of the teammates and seized control of the others' minds. We communicate through mental and emotional transmission—mind to mind, soul to soul—as well as by voice. This being used the ones it took over to spread its control throughout my people and the other races in our expedition like the disease you call cancer. Many killed themselves, others went insane, the possessed killed the unpossessed, and some few, like me, found refuge among those of your people with power enough to shield them.

My possessed and insane brothers and sisters have been working for this evil ever since, opening other gates and performing incomprehensible missions. I have reason to believe, from an analysis of what passes for public information ex-





change and from knowledge gained through the powers of my protectors, that a group of my fellows have opened a permanent gate of power in Mexico, in the Yucatan. If this is so, it must be closed, both for your race's survival and for mine. If this gate leads to that same evil one who wreaked havoc on my people, this new access point will provide him with incredible power and direct access to your planet. Your people will fall like mine did, and my empathic protectors will not be able to stand against such an near and overwhelming onslaught. They will fall, one by one, and then will I be captured.

Please—for my sake and yours—you must close this gate.

A TRANSFER OF POWER

Tony is moved by the alien's plea. Hopefully, the PC will be too. If the PC indicates a commitment to do as the alien asks, Tony pulls a small pile of other items out of the duffel bag and then repacks the holoprojector into it. He then explains the Esperlink. It is a modified empathic linking device, stolen from the possessed ETs but still very useful. Once attuned, it will link the PC's mind with the alien's briefly so that he can convey some very important knowledge directly to the PC. Then it will permanently deactivate itself for the safety of the ET and the PC. It must be used within two hours of when it is attuned.

Tony puts it on his head, concentrates for about two minutes, removes it, and announces the link is attuned. Tony briefly explains the rest of the items he removed from the duffel bag, and answers any further questions the player character has that he can. Tony provides a way for the PC to contact him. The referee should pick a round-about method of contact, as Tony feels that it is unsafe for the PC to contact him often, and would prefer to only be contacted when the mission is completed. After this, Tony warns the PC to be very careful with whom he shares the information with which he has been entrusted and leaves, unless he is requested to stay until after the PC

uses the Esperlink.

If the PC insists on some sort of reward for performing the mission (in addition to the supplied equipment covered below), Tony looks slightly disgusted at the PC's mercenary attitude, but tells the PC that his friends can come up with \$20,000 or some training in hard-to-learn skills for free or a reduced price.

When the PC puts the Esperlink on his head, he is briefly disoriented, then finds himself in contact with the alien. The ET's mind is orderly, but convoluted, like a marble maze. It has a harmonious basic nature, but is tinged with erratic bursts of grief, anger, and longing and a sense of immense harnessed power. The PC can sense that he is not evil with basic success at an Easy: Human Empathy test or an Average: Empathy check. Greater degrees of success are very difficult due to his high Willpower (9), but would gain the knowledge that he respects humankind, grieves for his wife and children, is angry and frustrated at his current situation, and was the conceptual equivalent of a minor officer/captain whose primary training was as a contact specialist but who was also skilled in the ET equivalent of electronic and computer engineering as a hobby.

The alien "burst" trains the player character in Dimension Walking while he is in contact. This leaves the PC exhausted. The PC gains 6 experience points to spend immediately on the Dimension Walk skill only.

THE GOODY BAG

The supplies that Tony leaves include, but are not limited to: six Virophage autoinjectors, one Doc in the Box, one ET stun gun (see pages 63-64), fully loaded, and one death ray pistol (15 shots remaining). Referees should feel free to include any other items they feel would be necessary or appropriate for Tony's empathic cell and an escaped ET to give the PC group. Conversely, any of the given items can be excluded or substituted.

WHO'S THERE?



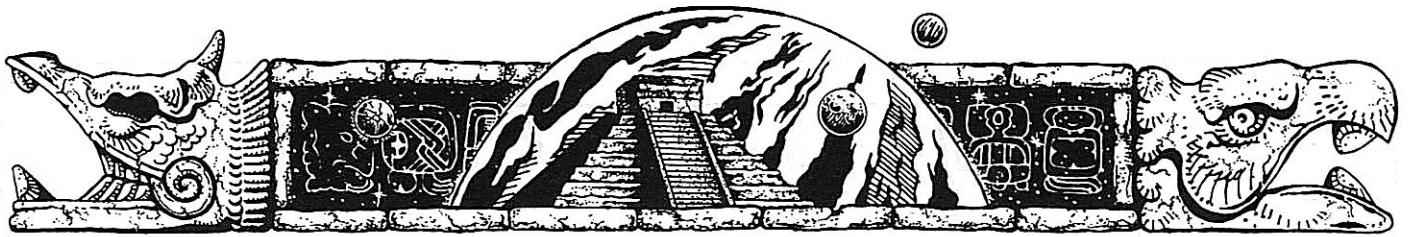
The night after Tony visits, another member of the player characters' group receives a visit.

REUNION

If there is an astronaut or former astronaut in the PC party, this character is the ideal one for Maggie to visit. If there are no astronauts, Maggie will visit someone who was in the military, a government agent or federal law enforcement officer, private detective, police officer, or mercenary, in about that order. The PC who receives the visit should be informed that Maggie is an old friend (or even an old flame) if it would work well in the campaign. At the

very least, the PC and Maggie worked together on some mission. If the PC volunteers to use up a generic contact for Maggie, the referee should give the PC one or two bonus experience points at the end of the gaming session for helping the story.

The PC does not have to be alone when Maggie visits. However, it may better serve the plot if the PC that Tony visited has not yet been allowed to tell the PC group the story of Tony's visit when Maggie shows up. On the other hand, if the PC mystic has told his or her tale, the referee may wish to allow anyone who wishes to confide in Maggie an Easy: Foreboding test to get a "funny feeling" about telling



MARGARET RYAN

Margaret "Maggie" Ryan is 5'6" and in her early thirties. She never really lacked anything while growing up, but was never given any breaks, either. She worked hard for everything she got, breaking her back for every grade, promotion, or special mission. She came to resent others around her who, on the one hand, regarded her successes as due to her pretty face or, on the other, promoted men above her because, as an attractive woman, she must not be competent.



She has concealed her festering resentment well for years, as she has learned that a bitter or cynical attitude gains her nothing. Her hidden hatred left her easy prey to the Great Dark One when it needed a pawn for its current plan to open a gate to lo.

While Maggie's high Charisma and winning smile would seem to belie any great cunning on her part, she has a cold and untouchable center, and nothing is beyond her capacity. She will lie, betray, and kill to succeed at her current mission, as all her moral inhibitions have been removed by her new master.

Maggie has a .44 magnum Desert Eagle and three eight-round clips, along with a box of ammunition to reload them, as her personal side arm. She has been given a bracelet which artificially enhances her Willpower.

Experience: Elite

Attributes: 7; INT 8, CHR 9, EMP 5

Skills: 6; Melee Combat (Unarmed) 8, Small Arms (Pistol) 8, Climbing 5, Pilot (Shuttle) 10, Act/Bluff 7, Persuasion 4, Spanish 6, Japanese 4, German 4, Gaelic 2, Willpower 2 (10)

Initiative: 5

Motivation: *Spade King:* Maggie has no problem manipulating people, lying to them for her own ends. She will tell as much of the truth as possible, only withholding whatever is necessary to show things in the light she wants them seen in. But, she is not above an outright lie when needed. *Spade 10:* Maggie is very ambitious. She sees this mission for the Great Dark One as a quick way to lock herself into a very powerful position in its organization. She has been promised immortality and control over the whole of North America, and she believes, from what she has seen, that it can be delivered to her with some ruthless effort on her part.

her anything until the group gets to know her better. Human Empathy checks made on Maggie (which will often fail) will leave the empath who attempts the check with the feeling of an oddly smooth and faintly mechanical iron will lurking behind her quick smile and winning words (this is a reflection of the device which is artificially boosting her Willpower). A basic success shows her to be happy and slightly concerned at the moment. A Stage Two success finds her thinking about the logistics of the mission at hand. A Stage Three success reaches some past memories of working with the PC she came to see. A Stage Four success finds her actively blocking thinking too hard about some event in the recent past.

THE MISSION

Maggie behaves in an extremely natural and forthright manner. She is very happy to see her old friend, and spends a little time talking about "the old days." After some chitchat, she gets visibly more serious, and relates the following:

I didn't come here just to kick around stories about the good old days. Here's the official story: About three months ago, NASA hefted a multimillion-dollar satellite into orbit for some megacorporate clients. This satellite was to link a network of Comsats and blanket the Earth, improving planetwide communications a thousandfold. But something went wrong. Less than a week after it cleared its diagnostics perfectly, the satellite drifted out of its original orbit. Apparently an attitude thruster had misfired, and ground crews could not correct the problem.

Those megacorps pack a lot of punch, and satellite ferrying is what keeps NASA in business these days, so after weighing the loss of corporate business against the cost of launching a special mission, NASA sent a shuttle up to reposition the satellite manually. I was pilot, Lt. Col. Andrews—you know, the Project Nova hero?—was the commander, and three other specialists made up the rest of the crew. I got us up there and in position, and the specialists suited up and began EVA repairs to the satellite. Then something happened—there was a bright



flash, some sort of explosion, and then screams over the radio. Then nothing.

There's a period of time I can't remember—the psych specialists think I was in shock. Mission Control says Andrews called my name and then started, well, gurgling. I think I was in another state of mind—an intense state of concentration on survival. In any case, the instrument records show that I surveyed the EVA crew, determined they were gone—disintegrated maybe—punched up calculations for evasive maneuvers and an emergency landing and executed those maneuvers. I started to “think” again about halfway back down to the surface, when I reestablished voice contact with Mission Control.

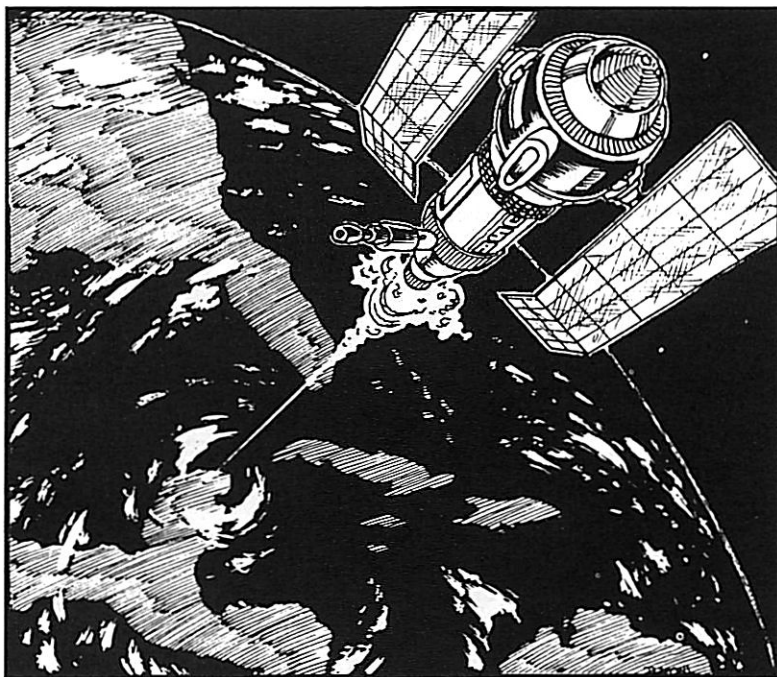
They have Andrews in a special psych unit somewhere.

While I was in recovery and debriefing, the satellite began making sporadic transmissions of great strength into the Yucatan Peninsula. Officially, these are due to human error combined with faulty components. Unofficially, there is no reason they should be happening at all. Not from that orbit or at that strength.

Bizarre weather systems have been lingering around the Yucatan for two weeks. And five days ago, reports of mutant animals and other...things...started coming out of the area. This is all very embarrassing to NASA in the eyes of the megacorps. Officially, NASA wants to know why the satellite is beaming into the Yucatan, to know who is controlling it and, if possible, to shut it down. Unofficially, they think something weird is going on. Something unearthly.

Officially, I've recommended you and your friends for the job based on our past acquaintance. Unofficially, I've heard about some of the work you've done with less-than-normal situations, and I want you working with me. What do you say?

Maggie is willing to answer any questions the PCs put to her. The referee should improvise her answers based on her NPC description and the “Referee's Introduction.” If the PCs want to know what “less than normal” situations she has heard about, the referee should pick a past adventure



that the PCs had that could be known about by her, NASA, other government agencies, etc. She will claim that she does not know what happened on the shuttle mission, and that she's undergone quite a bit of psychiatric “poking about in her head.” She will “admit” that “it upsets her to think about it” and doesn't want to discuss that any more. If a PC persists in trying to use Psychology on her to see if she is lying or to find out more about her, it is a Difficult: Psychology check. A successful result will obtain a mixed result, as if part of everything she says is true and part is a lie, and she does not seem to know which is which. Human Empathy attempt results are covered above, under Reunion.

TRAVEL, EQUIPMENT & COMPENSATION

NASA will provide international travel papers and passports if the PCs do not already have them. It will transport the PCs within three days by military cargo plane to Merida. The plane will wait there for their return for up to a month.

NASA will provide the PCs with any equipment they request, within reason. Requests for heavy weapons of the nature of mortars, rocket launchers,



RAOUL SMITH

Raoul is in his late thirties, tall, heavy-set, and almost unspeakably ugly. Raoul was born somewhere in the American Southwest. He thinks. He doesn't remember much of what happened to him between the ages of 13 and 29, and whatever did happen left him with vast holes in memories of his childhood.

The only things he does remember are that some aliens with large heads and eyes and some really *big* insects did horrible things to him. He is now very strong and very fast, but at the price of a great deal of pain. He escaped, and joined the Mexican Army, as they asked few questions. When he got out, he did some mercenary and bodyguard work.

Raoul hates insects and ETs. He has a lingering suspicion that somehow terran insects can communicate with *them*. Raoul still wants revenge. He will destroy anything of ET or Dark Minion manufacture which he believes could harm him, and will remain suspicious of the remainder.

Raoul has integral body armor (AV 1) in his head and torso. Also note that Raoul's unarmed combat damage is 14, but he is capable of "pulling" some of that so as not to kill someone he has only been asked to knock unconscious, for instance.

Raoul owns a Wildey Wolf, an AR-12 Stormcloud, and an M16A2 (and appropriate ammo for each). He carries whatever seems appropriate for the situation.

Experience: Elite

Attributes: 7; STR 12, CON 8, AGL 8, EDU 2, CHR 1, EMP 2

Skills: 3 (this reflects Raoul's years of lost experience); Melee Combat (Unarmed) 12, Willpower 3, Thrown Weapon 5, Demolitions 4, Stealth 5, Observation 6, Stalking 6, Medical 2, Spanish 10, English 8, Luck 5

Initiative: 6 (a reflection of Raoul's cybernetic enhancements)

Motivation: *Heart 6:* Raoul is very loyal to his current employer or the group he is currently involved with. He would never think of betraying anyone (consciously) *Club 10:* While he is not unintelligent or unable to talk his way out of a problem, Raoul has discovered that most people react poorly to his ugliness. Therefore, Raoul solves most problems with his fists. It's clear-cut and decisive.



and heavy machineguns will be looked upon questionably. The PCs will have to move among the civilian population and transportation of large weapons will be difficult by land, and the only transportation available in Merida is by truck, jeep, bus, foot, or donkey. With a good Bargaining skill the PCs may be able to obtain a single rare or normally unobtainable weapon like the XM22, XM26, or laser carbine, at the referee's discretion.

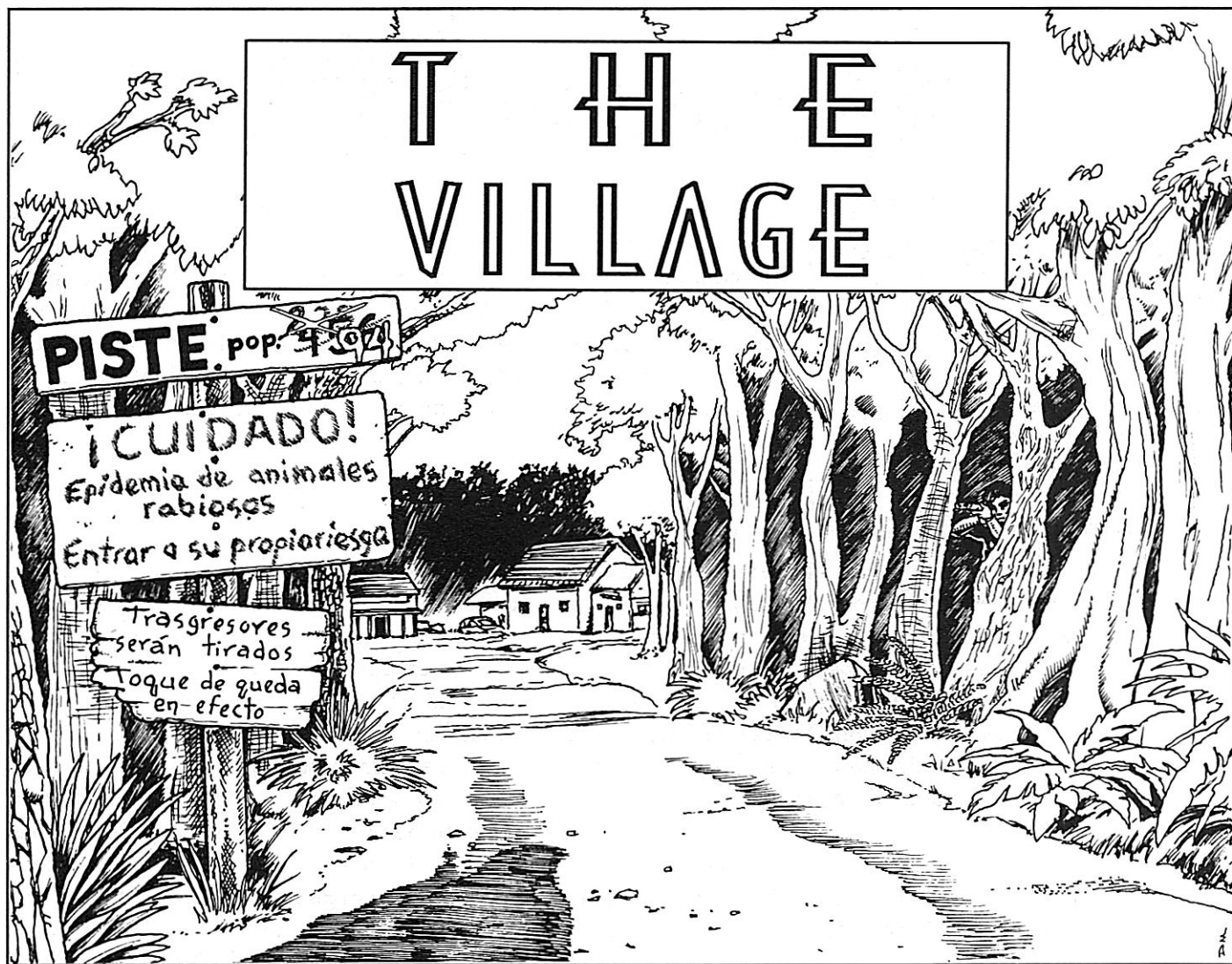
NASA is prepared to pay each of the player characters \$10,000 for their trouble in advance, with a \$10,000 (each) bonus for swift completion of their mission, as long as they do not cause trouble with the Mexican authorities.

USING RAOUL

Raoul (see sidebar at left) can be used in several ways. If the PC party is weak on muscle, Raoul can be brought in by Maggie as someone recommended "to beef up your group's physical profile." Or if the group feels it might need backup, he can be available for hire.

At two different times in *Hellsgate*, a cyborg escapee can be "taken over" again by ETs. The possibility that such things may happen lurks in the description of the cyborg escapee career. Ample opportunity is given in *Hellsgate* to make PCs come to grips with the dark price they pay for the escapee career's physical bonuses. If a PC cyborg escapee already exists in the group, Raoul is redundant, and should not be used. Rather, those events which are slated to happen to Raoul should be experienced by the PC instead.

If the campaign group has any guests who want to play *Dark Conspiracy* but who may be leaving soon, Raoul can be brought in with only a few modifications as a PC. Raoul is constructed so as to be able to logically join a group either before or after it enters Mexico. Truly devious referees may wish to encourage a very good roleplayer in the group to take on Raoul as his or her PC temporarily, secretly informing the player that Raoul has a "special" place in events to come, and providing some bonus for the player's main character in the not-too-unlikely event that Raoul is killed.



IN MERIDA

NASA flies the PCs to Merida, which is the capital of what remains of the Mexican state of Yucatan. Mexico is in a pretty wretched state economically, and this part of Mexico has gone downhill as the tourist trade, one of the region's major sources of income, has fallen off by almost 95%. Only the extremely wealthy can now afford to vacation out of their own metropolis, let alone the country, and the wealthy stay at only the choicest resorts. Consequently, most resorts and middle-class to luxury hotels closed years ago. The PCs are lodged in a small hotel catering mostly to locals forced to travel to Merida as the seat of local government for permits, to appear in court, and to sell wares (some of them contraband) at a larger market.

Referees can find information on Merida in any good travel guide to Mexico and the Yucatan. Just adjust prices upward and the overall state of affairs downward.

THE SEARCH BEGINS

Maggie informs the PCs that NASA has been able to narrow the area to which the satellite is transmitting to the neighborhood of Libre Union, Yaxcaba, Piste, Chichen Itza, and Balancanchen.

Travel: The PCs will have to buy a vehicle. Maggie can pay for this out of the expense money she has been allotted. Referees should use the *Dark Conspiracy* rulebook prices for vehicles, but all that are available are used and ill-maintained. Suitable available vehicles are the Range Rover II, the *Kartoffeln* van, the Conestoga ¾-ton pickup truck, and the Orca 2½-ton truck. While there are roads connecting the cities and towns in the Yucatan, they are by no means highways, and in many cases are only twin-wheel ruts. Travel movement between towns is at the full off-road cruise speed for vehicles.

The only other type of transport available,



Yucatan Travel Distances

Transit Points	Kilometers
Merida to Piste	119
Merida to Chichen Itza	121
Merida to Libre Union	97
Libre Union to Piste	22
Libre Union to Yaxcaba	19
Piste to Chichen Itza	3
Chichen Itza to Balancanchen	7
Balancanchen to Valladolid	33
Chichen Itza to Valladolid	40

features an average temperature in the upper 70s (Fahrenheit) November through April with light precipitation and temperatures in the middle to high 80s May through October with heavy precipitation. Lately, the weather has featured days of freakish, sudden heavy winds followed by dead calms with little or no cloud cover and high temperatures (90s), alternating with days of driving rain and thunderstorms. There have been few days of sunshine and normal precipitation for the season.

Shelter: The PCs can find small inns to stay in if they stop overnight in a town; otherwise, they will be staying in the jungle or the edges of overgrown fields or farms.

Other Towns: Towns other than Piste and Valladolid know little about what the PCs will want to know. The locals will be generally cold or hostile toward visitors, especially foreigners. Throwing money around won't help the locals' attitude much, although they'll certainly not turn it down. Some may have heard rumors that a plague of some sort is ravaging Piste. Referees can plant custom encounters relevant to their own campaigns in these towns.

Valladolid: The Valladolid Police Department was where the residents of Piste complained about the mutant animal attacks and disappearances, while they dared to. The police here are overworked and put most of the stories down to rabid animals. They supplied the locals with some

aside from donkeys, is a helicopter. Its pilot will contract for one trip to and from Valladolid for \$2000. He will not land in any other town, and will not go up if the weather is bad.

Weather: The weather in the Yucatan has been strange lately. Normal weather

rabies vaccine to take to the local doctor and told them to go out armed at night, set up a curfew, and not to bother strange animals. They still have not been able to personally investigate the complaints of Piste's residents. They assume that the problem has been resolved, as they haven't received any new complaints recently.

BAD MEDICINE AT PISTE

Piste is currently under a curfew—no one is supposed to go out at night. Visitors and people who pass through town are usually told that there is a rabies epidemic. In truth, Piste's current problems are several:

Mutant Animals: Stray microwave radiation from the extremely strong Comsat transmissions combined with escaped ET empathic viral mutators have created some truly horrendous mutations in the local flora and fauna. Mutations that, by all laws of genetics, just shouldn't be. The poor animals who are the victims of the ET virus are now just as rabid animals. These animals tend toward all sorts of behavior: attacking the weak, young and isolated in feeding frenzies, hiding under porches and whining and then savaging anyone who tries to help them, leaping from trees onto people tending gardens or hunting in the woods, etc.

Disappearances: People have been disappearing from Piste at an alarming rate. At first this was blamed on the mutant animal attacks, as evidence of animal attack was often present near the disappearance site. However, people soon were disappearing from their secured homes at night, or between one block and the next, having left their friends' sight for only a moment.

At first some of these disappearances *were* caused by mutant animals. Recently, though, people have been kidnapped for use as sacrifices by the cult growing in Piste.

The Cult of the Old Mayan Gods: The energy ETs working at Chichen Itza have needed to make



the locals more malleable and less likely to band together and present a serious threat to their work. They also needed bodies to feed the erectors and viners (see pages 63-64) used to reconstruct El Castillo, which had been allowed to crumble into ruin after the tourist trade dried up and the government could not longer protect it from scavengers. So the ETs set about convincing the locals that the old gods were returning through a particularly malleable and gullible shaman of the old Mayan religion.

This struck fear into the hearts of many. The old shaman was instructed to present sacrifices at the old Temple of Kukulcan, which was regrowing itself. This supplied a food source for the viners and erectors. He was also given the "service" of some jaguar-weres (see the "Referee Resources" chapter for statistics) as proof of the strength of the gods and as a "reward" for his service. These jaguar-weres impressed some superstitious people gathered together by the shaman in Piste at a secret meeting, and they agreed that the old gods were indeed returning. They formed a secret cult with the old shaman, Tepeyet, at their head.

Tepeyet has taken to authorizing abductions of visitors, the weak, and any easy prey to be used as sacrifices. Some of the "sacrifices" are taken while still alive by the energy ETs at Chichen Itza and injected with a viral mutator which transforms them into easily controlled jaguar-weres, who are, in turn, used as guardians by the ETs and servants by Tepeyet.


Two days ago, Tepeyet declared himself and the return of the old gods openly. The rest of the town has now either sided with him or lives in fear of him.

Information-Seeking in Piste


Piste has never been a very large town, and its main claim to fame was supplying workers to the archaeological projects which went on at Chichen Itza. It grew to a respectable size as a kind of overflow facility for tourists who either did not want to pay the high prices of the hotels at

Chichen Itza or who could not find lodging there. Piste has been in decline ever since the tourists dried up, and has suffered along as a tiny agricultural town and glorified gas stop. Recent events are probably the last nail in its coffin.

Almost all the citizens of Piste speak Maya as their native tongue and Spanish secondarily. Dr. Agua fuente, Gomez at the Hotel Pyramide Chichen, Esmerelda and Inez at the Imbert Cafe, and Hernando at the general store all speak Spanish extremely well. All the other inhabitants of Piste have Spanish 3 or 4.










Fearful Citizens: Residences marked on the map of Piste with a  are the abodes of fearful citizens who have not joined Tepeyet's cult. Their homes are marked with a lock because in all likelihood they are inside, behind a locked door, when the PCs approach their house. Fearful citizens will be hesitant to communicate with anyone and will travel in armed groups if forced to leave their homes.

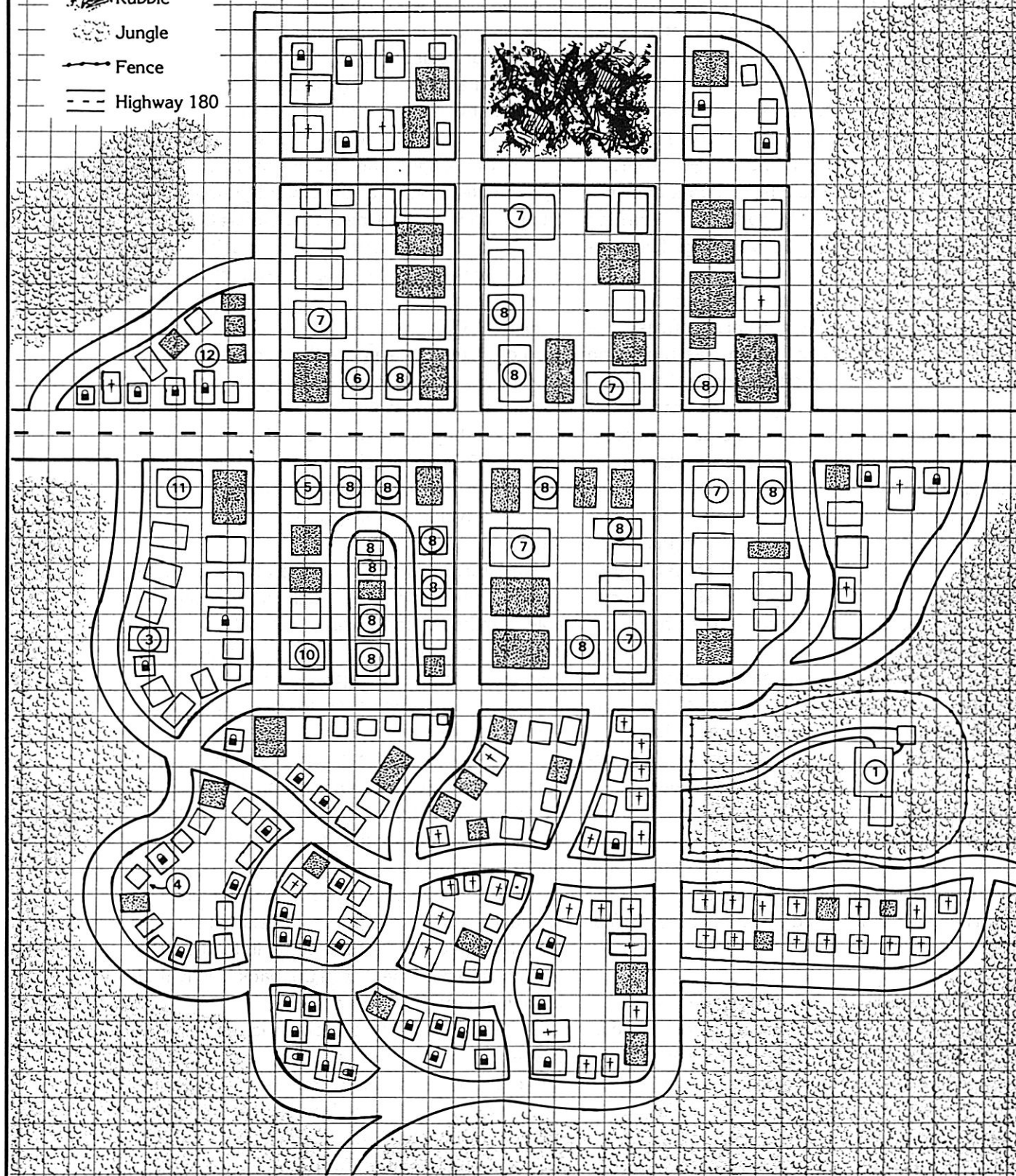
Cultists: Cultists' houses are also under lock and key, but cultists are much more approachable. If talked to for a while, they will open their doors and talk of the horrible tragedy of the rabies epidemic and the disappearances. They blame the disappearances on rabid wild animals and fearful people leaving town.

Cultists see the PCs as an easy way to gain status in the cult. They will recommend the Hotel Pyramide Chichen as the only place to stay in town, and will assure the PCs that it is one of the only remaining safe places in town. They hope that the PCs are taken prisoner to be used as sacrifices—the fact that the cultists led them to the slaughter will raise their cult status. This tendency to stab the PCs in the back is why their homes are marked with a .

1. Tepeyet's House: Tepeyet is not here, no matter when the PCs visit. This used to be the mayor's house and is surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Inside Tepeyet's house are two jaguar-weres who have been told to attack any intruders. The house is fairly well furnished for the area.

Piste

-  Buildings/houses
-  Abandoned building
-  Rubble
-  Jungle
-  Fence
-  Highway 180
-  = 5 meters
-  = Fearful citizen's house
-  = Cultist's house





2. Town Hall: This used to be a meeting place for the village. It is still well kept up, but is currently empty and locked. There is a radio capable of reaching Merida or Valladolid in one of three locked offices in this building.

3. Dr. Aguafuente's House: Dr. Manuel Aguafuente is far too scientific a man to truly believe in the return of the old gods, but he is pretending belief so the cultists will leave him alone until he can either escape with his family (wife and two children) or formulate a plan to eliminate Tepeyet while keeping his family safe. Dr. Aguafuente supports the "rabies epidemic" farce until confronted with any decent proof of it being a lie. He then assesses the PCs, and if he feels they can be trusted (or if Enrique Borges (see "Mad Monkions," next page) brings the PCs to him), he tells the truth of what he knows is going on in Piste. He backs up what Enrique may have already told the PCs and adds that the mutations are caused by some sort of unearthly virus. Manuel Aguafuente is an Experienced NPC and has a Colt M1911A1 pistol.

4. José Rivera's House: This is the home of the man mentioned in the tabloid article. He has since disappeared. Anyone in town can direct the PCs here. The Rivera home is empty, although still furnished. It looks like the inhabitants put everything in order and went to visit someone. The only sign of anything odd is a broken St. Christopher's medallion on the floor of the kitchen and a spot on the floor which smells of kerosene. There is no sign of any broken lamp, though.

5. General Store and Gas Station: The general store is being kept open by Hernando Ruíz, the owner, who is a fearful citizen. He is quite certain that the only reason the cultists haven't come for him is that they find his store, and the outside contacts for supplies that go with it, useful.

About half the time the store is open, a cultist or two will be lingering in the store, "watching" Hernando and visitors. Hernando is very close-mouthed and will not discuss anything but purchases. He does not bargain, either. Most com-



mon supplies, including common calibers of ammunition, can be found here.

6. Abandoned Gas Station: This gas station shut down quite some time ago, as the weeds growing around it and a couple of broken windows attest. If the PCs' vehicle had trouble somewhere on the road, they might find a part or two in the assortment of odds and ends in the deserted repair bay.

7. Abandoned Hotel: This hotel is quite abandoned and suffering the wear of the elements.

8. Closed Gift Shop: One of many gift shops that used to cater to the tourist trade, this shop is boarded up.

9. Imbert Cafe: The owner of the Imbert Cafe disappeared two nights ago, but it is being kept open by his wife, Esmerelda, and the cook, Inez. Both of these women are cultists, and recommend the Hotel Pyramide Chichen as a place to stay. They otherwise behave much the same as any cultist (see Cultists, above). They can direct



the PCs to any specific location in town, except Tepeyet's house, which they will refer to as the abandoned mayor's house, if asked. They will disavow Tepeyet's existence if confronted with information gained from Enrique Borges.

10. Enrique Borges' House: If the PCs approach Enrique's house before rescuing his wife (see "Mad Monkions," below), he behaves as a fearful citizen once he is awakened, but is most concerned at the absence of his wife. The PCs may, with a little persuasion, be allowed to accompany him in his search for his wife. Enrique has a shotgun which is the equivalent of a Mossberg M500. See "Mad Monkions" if the PCs have rescued Maria Borges.

11. Hotel Pyramide Chichen: This is the only remaining hotel in Piste. It used to serve tourists. It has a now weed-clogged pool, dinner is served in a common dining room/restaurant/bar, and two rooms actually still have air conditioning. All the doors have heavy deadbolt locks, and the windows are barred.

The owner of the hotel, Gomez, is a cultist. If the PCs stay the night here, he will attempt to assign them to at least two different rooms in different parts of the hotel (more if possible). This will be easy if the PCs request the air-conditioned rooms, as they are not next to each other.

If the PCs eat dinner here (served at dusk), Gomez (an Experienced NPC) will drug either their food or their drinks with a heavy-duty tranquilizer, depending on which will better disguise the taste of the drug. The cultists come during the night to collect any PCs that succumb.

Treat the drug as a poison of 0p6, which does not need to get through armor as it is ingested. It has an onset time delay of one hour. PCs get two rolls, one Average: Constitution after one round of effect and one Difficult: Constitution at a serious wound level to stop taking damage to their chest. If their wound level reaches critical, they are unconscious for five hours. If they manage to fight off the drug on the first roll, they are at -2 all attributes and all skill levels for 15 minutes, and then return to normal. If they fight

off the drug on the second roll, they suffer the effects of a serious wound for half an hour, and then they return to normal.

The cultists deliver them to rooms G9-G11 in the Temple of Kukulcan (see the next chapter). If the PCs do not eat here, Gomez and three cultists (Novice NPCs) will use his key to sneak into the most isolated PCs' room (while the PCs are asleep) and try to bushwhack the PCs and take them to the temple. Their favorite tactic involves clubbing people over the head with blackjacks, but Gomez also has a Colt M1911A1 pistol.

PCs with Foreboding should be allowed a chance to sense something wrong with this place and Gomez (the referee should assign appropriate task rolls). Of course, anyone succeeding in an Average: Human Empathy test may also sense Gomez's malign intent.

12. Mission Inn Hotel and Trailer Park: This hotel is currently abandoned, and was gutted in a fire. Some of the trailers are still habitable, though there is no running water to any of them. A pump which still works is located in the center of the park.

MAD MONKIONS

At some time when the PCs are near the general store (or whenever the referee deems it appropriate), the PCs hear an infernal din start up, a woman begin screaming, and gunshots. When they investigate, they find Maria Borges, a pretty woman who has just dropped a sack of very basic groceries, and is trying to defend herself against seven monkions (see the "Referee Resources" chapter for statistics), two of which just jumped out of a tree she walked under.

Maria is grateful for the PCs' help, if somewhat reticent at first. She allows her wounds to be tended if she was stung and then insists the PCs accompany her to her home. If she was not stung, she insists on getting home first and then allows herself to be treated.

At her home the PCs meet her husband Enrique. Maria will explain to Enrique that she left to get some food while he was asleep, exhausted from



staying up all night on guard. She thought that her handgun would keep her safe. She tells Enrique of how the PCs helped her against the monkions.

Enrique is extremely grateful for the PCs' help and insists that they eat dinner with him and stay the night in his house. When approached about what is really going on, Enrique tells what he knows, which is that mutant "things" are coming out of the jungle from the direction of Chichen Itza to prey on the village. He will also tell about Tepeyet and the cult, and confide that they are having some sort of service at the Temple of Kukulcan tomorrow night.

Enrique does not know too much about the animals, but takes the player characters to see Dr. Aguafuentes. Enrique is an Experienced NPC, and used to work on the archaeological restoration projects at Chichen Itza before the place closed down. He can be persuaded to guide the PCs there, if they convince him there is a good reason to do so.

Nighttime Attack

If the PCs do not stay at the Hotel Pyramide Chichen, or if they kill or chase off Gomez and the cultists in a kidnap attempt, they will be attacked by four jaguar-weres during their first night in Piste. The jaguar-weres will break down doors, break windows, and bend bars to get at the PCs and other inhabitants of any structure the PCs are in. The jaguar-weres are supposed to bring back alive one person in the building the PCs are in. They will try and grapple and pummel the first person they can until she or he is unconscious and then drag that person off, with two jaguar-weres carrying the person at a trot. If they succeed, they leave the person in G9 in the Temple of Kukulcan. Remember that these jaguar-weres can understand Spanish and even speak it. They can also adapt their attack slightly to take PC actions into account. (They have an Intelligence of 2—they're slow, but they remember what a gun is!)

THE PYRAMID



GETTING TO THE PYRAMID

In general, there are two ways the PCs can get to the pyramid: by going there themselves, or by waking up there after having been bushwhacked by Gomez in the hotel in Piste.

Voluntarily: The PCs finally determine that something weird is up in Chichen Itza. The residents of Piste may mention that the mutant animal attacks come from that direction, or Enrique Borges may have told the PCs that Tepeyet is holding some sort of ceremony there tomorrow night. Whatever the case, the PCs can either go through the jungle to Chichen Itza (three kilometers and less likely to

attract attention, but must be done on foot) or take the road to Chichen Itza (three kilometers, but very likely to attract the attention of anyone at Chichen Itza—and the road is not very good).

If asked, Enrique advises that the PCs go through the jungle. He volunteers to guide them. While the mutant animals are out there in the jungle, surely the cultists would have a watch out to see and hear anyone taking the road. Chichen Itza has many spots ideal for snipers, and the road could easily be booby-trapped.

If the PCs take the jungle, they have another encounter with monkions (roll randomly for the number,



or pick a number which would be an annoyance, but not seriously challenging to the group). They also have the chance to scope out Chichen Itza with binoculars or the like before moving toward the pyramid. Stealth, Stalking, and Observation rolls which are applied to checking out the inhabitants and activities at Chichen Itza are at +1 level if the PCs use the jungle approach (this ends when anyone tries to enter the pyramid or is discovered).

If the PCs take the road, they run into a camouflaged pit trap in the pothole-ridden, muddy, and overgrown road from Merida which leads to the old Tourist Center (50 meters from the old parking lot). This pit trap requires the driver of the group's vehicle to make a Difficult: Vehicle (Wheeled Vehicle) check or the vehicle goes into the pit, making a lot of noise, requiring that it be pulled or winched out, and flattening one or all of its tires. (At least one tire blows—the vehicle has one spare. Roll for the remaining tires: 1-7, fine; 8-10, flat.) If the roll is successful, the vehicle is teetering on the edge, resting on the now teeter-totter-like cover to the trap. Quick dismounts from the vehicle, and pushing or pulling on it will prevent it from falling into the pit. Have the PCs all make Average: Agility checks, but unless someone fails catastrophically, the vehicle doesn't go down.

The cultists and jaguar-weres are now aware that someone is coming. The cultists will be at +1 to their Observation skills (they're more alert). The single jaguar-were patrol is also doubled to two patrols.

Prisoners: If the PCs were caught by Gomez, they will awaken in the temple's sacrificial holding cells. They will be stripped to their underwear, and split between cells TS8, 9, and 10. Their equipment is being held in a desk and cabinet at TS7. Any equipment of peculiar manufacture (Dark Minion or ET) is being stored at G7, having been confiscated by the ETs. Referees can be somewhat lenient if this would unduly penalize a party—perhaps a guard hid something he thought was really neat in the desk for himself.

If only one PC was taken by the jaguar-weres in the night raid, he or she is being held in G9. While

TEPEYET

Tepeyet is the son of a Mayan priest, who was the son of a Mayan priest, going back for generations. While forced to work as a trapper to make money, Tepeyet still preserved the ways and rituals of his people. He was called upon once in a while at a birth dedication or wedding, as his people had not left behind all of the true rituals, and many of them wanted the blessings of any gods which might have an effect on their lives at such important times. Tepeyet has lived most of his life as a healer and herbalist, though, and rarely spoke out about religious matters.



A short time ago, he began having extremely troubling dreams about the old gods awakening from their slumber and returning to act in force upon Earth. In these dreams, warriors with the heads of jaguars spoke to him. When one of the jaguar-weres visited him, he followed it into the jungle to Chichen Itza. There the energy ETs convinced him that they were messengers of Kukulcan, who would soon return if the faithful would resume giving him sacrifices. They presented him with some jaguar-were servants which they keyed to his control, and he in turn showed the jaguar-weres to some who he had told of his dreams. The cult in Pisté is the direct upshot of this.

Level: Experienced

Attributes: 5; INT 7, EMP 8

Skills: 4; Melee Combat (Armed) 6, Thrown Weapon 5, Observation 7, Stealth 5, Stalking 7, Tracking 5, Psychology 5, Willpower 5, Act/Bluff 5, Foreboding 4, Project Thought 5, Willpower Drain 7, Human Empathy 6, Animal Empathy 3, Empathic Healing 8

Initiative: 3

Motivation: Spade Ace: Tepeyet is very charismatic. As a healer and preserver of the old ways, he was always respected. Now that many of the things he foresaw have come true, many of the people of Pisté believe he is a true Mayan priest. His eyes are very intense and his voice is commanding. **Heart 8:** The Mayan people are very important to Tepeyet. Tepeyet believes that he is doing what is right for the Mayan people. While the gods slept, his people drifted from the true ways. Now that the gods are awake again and returning, he will be the one to lead the people back to the true ways so they can prosper again.



permitted to retain his or her clothing, the rest of the PC's equipment is now in G7.

If Raoul was taken prisoner by either method described earlier, he is not being held captive. Rather, he has been reclaimed as an ET servant. One of the medusa guards of the pyramid is equipped with a transmitter which allows it to control Raoul. Raoul has been "reprogrammed" to protect the energy ETs, the medusa holding the transmitter, Tepeyet, and the gate, in that order. Any other specific orders must be given to him via the transmitter the medusa has. If the transmitter is destroyed, the empathic "carrier wave" it was transmitting ceases, and Raoul returns to normal. A successful Difficult: Human Empathy task followed by a Stage Four or above success at an Average: Project Thought task check will allow an empathic character to "block" the "carrier wave" for as many rounds as he continues to roll under his Empathy score. If the blocking stops, Raoul reverts to ET control unless the transmitter has been broken.

APPROACHING THE TEMPLE

At Chichen Itza, Novice cultist guards are posted



at the Platform of the Eagles, the Tomb of Chac-Mool, the Tomb of the Great Priest and the Caracol Observatory. These guards all have knives and Browning HP-35s, except the guard at the Caracol Observatory, who has a Marlin .30-06 bolt-action rifle.

At any given time five jaguar-weres, led by a medusa, are patrolling Chichen Itza. They circle from El Castillo around behind the Platform of the Eagles and the Tomb of Chac-Mool, then to the Temple of the Warriors, back to El Castillo, over to the ball court near the market, to the market, to the Xtoloc Cenote, behind the Temple of the Wall Panels and Caracol Observatory, to the Temple of the Deer, House of the Grinding Stones, and Tomb of the Great Priest and back to El Castillo. This route takes them half an hour to 45 minutes or longer if the medusa sees something suspicious. If the energy ETs are alerted, an extra patrol of the same type will follow this route around Chichen Itza, effectively halving the time between patrols. If the ETs are really tense (someone has been killed on the grounds), a third patrol will be added. Medusas on patrol are armed with Colt Kraits.

For a detailed description of Chichen Itza, it is recommended that the referee consult a good travel guide to the Yucatan or reference work on the Mayan culture.

THE TEMPLE OF KUKULCAN (EL CASTILLO)

The Temple of Kukulcan is 24 meters tall. Its four sides feature 91 steps each, with the platform on top equalling a 365th step, betraying the astronomical guidelines of the temple. The temple was ruined due to neglect, age, and terrorist actions until the ETs rebuilt it using viners and erectors. The area in the vicinity of the temple out for about 10 meters is a gruesome sight, as all the "sacrificed" bodies from Tepeyet's services have been deposited here as food for the viners and erectors. Their almost-digested remains smell horrific and are woven through with the fibrous feeding tendrils of the biomechanisms.



Seated in the roof of the temple on top of the pyramid is a lens-like bioorganism which glows with a dull, reddish hue. This biolens is used by the energy ETs to focus the satellite transmissions down to the biomachinery on the maze floor, open, and then stabilize the gate to the Land Beyond.

A sniper is stationed on the top ledge of the temple. He is Experienced, but has a Small Arms (Rifle) skill of 6. He is armed with an M21 equipped with a telescopic starlight scope. The temple also has a jaguar-were and a medusa stationed at the bottom of the stairs on each of the four sides of El Castillo. The medusas look as human as possible, to avoid scaring the cultists too much (standard statistics from pages 223-224 of *Dark Conspiracy*). They have let their hair grow very long, and may be mistaken for cultists by anyone not viewing them up close. These medusas all have Colt Kraits.

The defense force of the temple is composed of cultists, medusas, jaguar-weres, and energy ETs. The energy ETs are in charge and will send other creatures to the front first. There are a total of five energy ETs, six medusas, 24 jaguar-weres, and 35 cultists at Chichen Itza, not including Tepeyet.

The Temple Floor

The Outside Ledge: This ledge is where the sniper, mentioned above, is stationed. During ceremonies, two acolytes (Experienced NPCs, armed with obsidian knives) in Mayan costume flank the temple entrance.

T1: This area of the temple is where worshipers gather to watch the ceremonies Tepeyet conducts. It features large columns which seem to have twisted, grouped human bodies as the root of their construction material.

T2: This raised dais is where Tepeyet conducts ceremonies and sacrifices to Kukulcan and the old Mayan gods. The altar is a crouching jaguar, studded with jade as its spots. It is painted red, and the red is suspiciously darker along its back and in runnels reaching the floor. Two statues, one of Kukulcan, and one of Chac, the Mayan rain god, flank the altar. While neither of these statues ani-

mates, they appear menacing, and have polished cat's-eye eyes which appear to follow people around the room. Tepeyet will be found here expounding to the faithful and the room will be filled with cultists if the PCs enter on the night indicated by Enrique. Otherwise, the temple is empty except, perhaps, for one or two praying cultists, if the referee desires.

The Gate Shaft: The gate shaft starts at the temple sublevel and runs to the maze level. Its walls are fairly rough, being woven of stone and fibrous viner and erector growth. A determined person who was not being shot at could climb down to the sublevel with several successful Average: Climbing tests. Stressful situations would make this Difficult. Similar procedures would allow one to work down to the maze level.

The Temple Sublevel

TS1: This alcove leading to the temple is guarded by a trusted Experienced cultist armed with a Browning HP-35. He investigates any disturbances upstairs, while his buddy at TS2 covers both TS1 and TS3.

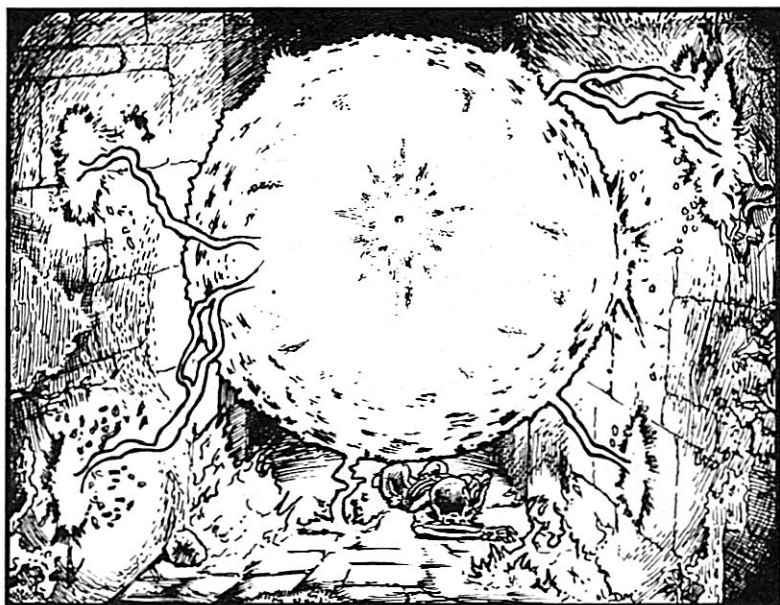
TS2: This alcove is guarded by a Veteran cultist. He also has a Browning HP-35.

TS3: This area features a mosaic on the floor of Chac, the rain god, in living plant matter with his mouth open as if to swallow the universe. The gate shaft (see "The Temple Floor," above) is his mouth.

TS4: This is an area shared by four acolytes of the cult. Half of them are Novices and half are Experienced. They are asleep here, unless a ceremony is in progress. Normal camp-style bedding, personal effects, etc., can be found here.

TS5: This area serves as a common sleeping area for off-duty cultists. Bedrolls and some odds and ends of personal effects (combs, ammo, clothes) can be found here.

TS6: This is Tepeyet's chamber. The room is not as large as Tepeyet would like, but he needs to be close to the other cultists at this stage to keep them on track and guide them in their progress personally. His quarters have a lock (a "door" of pseudo-organic vegetation has grown around an old-style



key lock) (Easy: Lockpick). He keeps some herbs, some odd-shaped crystals and figurines, a full set of Mayan regalia, and a diary containing his rambling and confused dreams, revelations, and experiences while talking with the gods. There is also assorted personal jewelry taken from sacrificial victims (lockets, medallions, rings). The room has a bookshelf, cot with sheets, chair and table. All except the chair have "grown" from the floors and walls.

TS7: This guard room is where the guards for the prisoners and future sacrificial victims in cells TS8-TS11 lounge when they are not checking the cell. One gets up to check the cells about every 15-20 minutes if there are not any unusual disturbances. The guards are Experienced cultists and both have Browning HP-35s; one also has a large knife. They have been forbidden to use any of the PCs' equipment, if the PCs are in any of the cells, as it has yet to be officially inspected and redistributed. Any PC equipment is locked in the cabinet and desk, except as noted under "Getting to the Pyramid," above.

TS8-TS11: These cells are guarded in shifts by two guards who usually play cards at the table in TS7. If the PCs are not in the cells, they are filled with terrified villagers who have been kidnapped from Piste. Cell TS11 holds José Rivera and his daughter, Hermosa (whether the other cells hold PCs or not).

They are both scared almost witless. PCs who rescue them should be rewarded in the final experience-point distribution for the adventure.

Cell TS8 has a loose floor flagstone which could be used as a weapon. Under it, a previous prisoner has hidden a makeshift knife. Cell TS10 has a loose bar which could be broken free with a Difficult: Strength check and a Strength of at least 7 (two PCs can apply their Strengths). Cell TS9 is inhabited by three rats, in addition to any PCs. One of the guards is deathly afraid of rats, and will mention his aversion to the other guard in Mayan. PCs who understand may be able to take advantage of this, if they are being held as prisoners.

The Maze Floor

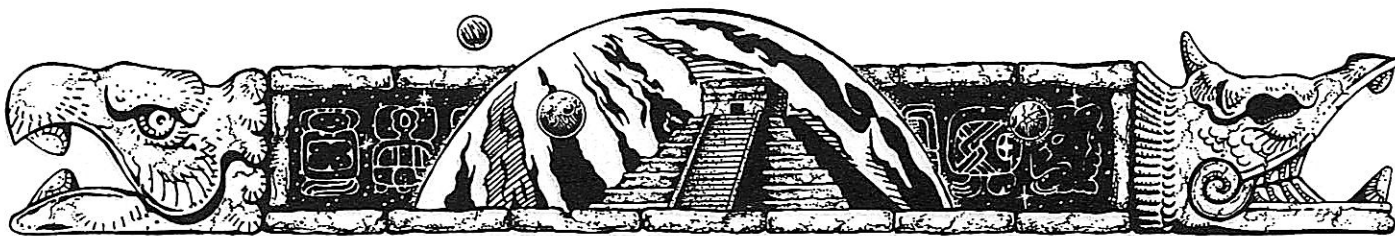
M1: The top of this stairwell is warmer than the bottom. A ground fog clings to the floor and reaches to about the knees of the average human on this level. The level smells earthy, and slightly of something charred.

M2: This long hallway begins the maze level. Those in the know (Tepeyet, medusas, energy ETs) take the shortcut to the gate chamber at M14 by going from here to M6, taking a left there and entering through the hidden door at M16. Everyone else takes the long way, in the few instances where others have been allowed to see the "door to the gods' home." A low moaning can occasionally be heard here.

M3 and M5: A jaguar-were has been stationed in this niche and ordered to attack anyone who does not recite the password (a Mayan rhyme about Kukulcan, know by Tepeyet, all the medusas, and some acolytes). They will try to wait until the PCs are mostly between the two one-way doors and then spring out, hoping to block both advance and retreat.

M4: This niche also contains a jaguar-were ordered to attack those who do not recite the password. He can aid his fellows in attacking PCs in M2 or attack the PCs when they turn the corner to the other side of his niche.

M6: The fog has risen to mid-chest here. The lead



PC kicks something on the floor. If it is picked up, it can be seen to be a human skull, barren of any flesh. It seems to be charred. The moaning has become quite loud here, and seems to come from straight ahead.

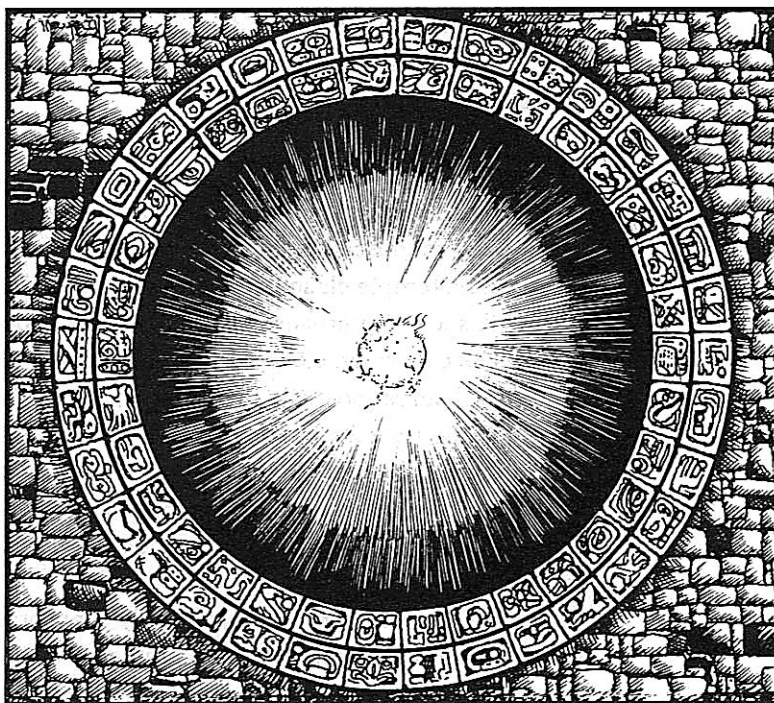
M7: A banshee has been persuaded to lurk here. She begins keening loudly when a PC opens the door. She appears to be a Mayan woman, dressed in old Mayan clothes, who is holding her still-beating heart. She uses Willpower Drain, Human Empathy, and Project Emotion to project despair and hopelessness at a target of opportunity. When anyone approaches her or attacks, she looks up, smiles maliciously, and is sucked backward into a black hole in midair (Dimension Walk).

M8: An energy ET is floating in midair when the PCs turn the corner. It summons the jaguar-were at M9 through the one-way door, and uses Willpower Drain on two victims, if possible, then projects terror (Project Emotion) into one, and the thought, "I must flee to survive," into the other (Project Thought). It then attacks one or two PCs with its energy attack and flees to warn its fellows in the gate room. The first successful attack on it causes it to cease and flee immediately.

M9: The jaguar-were here attacks any PCs approaching from the direction of M10 who do not recite the password. It aids the energy ET at M8 when summoned, if it is still alive. If it begins combat on its side of the wall, the energy ET will use one action to break down the one-way door and emerge from its niche to aid it (see M8 for its attack sequence).

M10: A full human skeleton lies frozen with one hand over its face as if to ward off a blow against the end of this alcove. It is charred into its current position.

M11: Both of these alcoves feature a shallow pit-type trap in their last two meters which breaks when anyone over 90 kilos steps on it. If the stepping PC fails an Average: Agility or Easy: Acrobatics task, he or she takes 1D6 to each leg from the 10-centimeter long, thorn-like spikes two-thirds of a meter below the trap top. The PCs' movement is reduced to half



from the pain (the referee should judge the effectiveness of bandages and healing attempts on this).

M12: This passageway is rough and bubbly, and oozes a noxious fluid, like an unearthly blister which has popped. One of the energy ETs discharged here yesterday, and the walls are still "healing."

M13: This is the main entrance to the gate room. A medusa stands guard outside it, armed with a Colt Krait.

M14: The gate room is described more fully in "The Gate Room," page 35.

M15: The gate is described more fully below.

M16: This short hall/antechamber leads to the door that the energy ETs and most of the important corporeal Dark Minions in the pyramid use to the gate room.

M17: This room is filled with translucent people in ancient Mayan dress who constantly walk back and forth, wringing their hands. They are a manifestation of the traumatic psychic memories of all of those who have lost their lives in this pyramid. They cannot be harmed and cannot harm anyone, except if an empath tries to use Human Empathy on them (an Average task). The anguish that the figures



project is so strong, if contacted, it stuns the empath for a minute, during which he or she can only lean against a wall and cry.

The Ground Floor

G1: This secret, concealed door is not secret at all to the ETs, medusas, and jaguar-weres. If a PC observes the temple closely for at least an hour, he or she will see a jaguar-were open this door and go in, then close it. When closed, it takes a successful Difficult: Observation task to detect it, if one is looking in the right area. Torches light the ground floor everywhere except in G2. These torches look like normal torches, but give off no heat and extinguish themselves if removed from their brackets. They reignite if reinserted.

G2: This narrow stone tunnel will only allow one person to pass at a time. It is the remains of an ancient secret entrance to the lower pyramid and its tomb levels, constructed by the original Mayan builders.

G3: This door marks the other end of tunnel G2. It is obvious from the G2 side and concealed (Difficult: Observation) from the G4 side.

G4: This open area serves as a sort of lounge for the medusas. It has some couch-like furniture, a few chairs, and a couple of tables. Two medusas and one jaguar-were are normally here at any given time. The medusas have no weapons, but will attempt to get their Colt Kraits from their quarters in G10-G11 if given reason and opportunity. They will always send the jaguar-were to delay an attacker.

G5: This room is mostly decimated by the collapse of the floor. The remains of some Mayan carvings can be found near the stairs.

G6: This area has collapsed down into the floor below. A rope could be secured on this level and a person lowered to the bottom level if the rope were long enough.

G7: This room is used for storage and as an armory. It has a number of ET devices and weapons (referees should pick from *DarkTek* and/or *Dark Conspiracy*, but most of the devices here are keyed to a specific individual, and will self-destruct if handled by anyone

else). The referee should use discretion as to what may or may not be useful to the PCs. If the PCs were taken prisoner and had ET or Dark Minion devices with them, they will be found here in a chest or on one of the shelves which line this room.

G8: This hallway provides access to any prisoners in G9, the interrogation center, and to the living quarters of the medusas.

G9: This room contains a cot, but is otherwise empty unless a PC is here. If a single PC is taken prisoner by the jaguar-weres and left here, an energy ET, accompanied by a jaguar-were and a medusa guard, spends an hour interrogating the PC about what he or she is doing in Piste and near Chichen Itza, his or her employer, mission, friends, etc., and then leaves the PC to wait alone in the dark. The ET will not return, but may use any information it learns to set up defenses in preparation for the rest of the PCs coming. One of the rock flagstones in the cell is loose enough to pull up with some effort, and could be used as a weapon. After the interrogation session, the cell is guarded by a Novice human cultist who walks up and down G8 with a Browning HP-35.

G10-G12: The living quarters of the medusas have some basic furnishings and at least one unidentifiable biomechanism in each. These biomechanisms are the size of a toaster, have lumps on them that glow in different colors and degrees of heat which change from time to time. Anyone using Computer Empathy on them will determine that they are some sort of communication devices. The medusas bunk two to a room, and store their personal Colt Kraits here.

The Tomb Floor

T1: This floor has the lingering smell of old attics and musty museums full of stuffed creatures, along with a wet odor of mildew that can first be noticed when the PCs reach this spot. This floor is constructed of stone.

T2: All of these spots are niches from the original tomb level of El Castillo. Each of them features a crumbling statue of one of the Mayan deities. Kukulcan and Chac flank the stairway. Many of



them feature semiprecious gemstones as eyes, which create a weird reflection effect.

T3: This niche has a jaguar-were standing in it. It attacks if the password is not recited by anyone passing it. Its eyes can be seen reflecting green from the niche, but are different from the statues', as its eyes blink.

T4: This last niche before the collapse at T5 has no statue in it or sign that there ever was a statue in it.

T5 and T7: This area of the ceiling (T7) has collapsed due to water seepage and age. Light from the floor above can be seen coming down through the hole. Footing is treacherous here, and PCs must move equivalent to a walk, no matter what, or risk a twisted ankle. The remains of the original room (T5) can just be made out in some places.

T6: This room has a small jade figurine of Kukulcan half-buried in muck in the far corner. It is otherwise empty.

T8: This chamber has friezes and bas-reliefs on all its walls and ceiling. They depict many happy Mayan people being led by priests through a large archway to a jungle-filled place. A feathered serpent forms the archway with its body. The long processions end at the door to T9. This is a depiction of the Mayans who went to the Land Beyond to serve Kukulcan there.

T9: This room has a great deal of rubbish on the floor. Broken boxes, bones, clothes, blankets, etc., seem tossed in here randomly. The referee may allow the PCs to find something common and functional that they need or desire in this room.

T10: This room is also decorated with friezes and bas-reliefs which depict a long funeral procession, filled with many mourners carrying a bier on which rests a priest in full regalia. The procession ends at the door to T11.

T11: This hallway provides the living quarters of the jaguar-weres who are not on duty. They rest on the slabs indicated. Currently there are four jaguar-weres here on the slabs. They do not rise unless someone attacks them or tries to enter the tomb chambers the slabs partially block.

T12: These tomb chambers used to contain the bodies of old Mayan priests. The remains have long since been removed, and only stone sarcophagi remain.

T13: These two tomb chambers have not yet been completely denuded. Two skeletons wearing the remains of Mayan garb and adorned with a few small scraps of jade (a lot of jade appears to have been pried out of fittings, etc.) lie in state in their sarcophagi. The lids of the sarcophagi have been removed and propped against the far ends of the tombs. They bear carved likenesses of the tombs' inhabitants while alive, complete with bone and obsidian eyes that glint in the light.

T14: Two more jaguar-weres lie resting on the floor here. They will not rise or attack unless attacked. This room also houses some "grown" furniture, which is stacked in a corner—three chairs, one table, and two cabinets.

THE GATE ROOM

This chamber is circular, and packed around its circumference with 18-20 ET biomechanisms which throb, pulse, and glow with witchfires. From each of the mechanisms a bundle of cords unites into a cable, which in turn runs across the floor and up into the gate in midair. The vine/cable seems to pulse in sync with the faint pulsations of the gate. One of the biomechanisms seems to have the majority of a satellite uplink grafted into it.

The gate itself hovers about a meter above the floor of the room. It is a glowing, fiery presence which hypnotically sucks the eye into itself. It shifts through random colors up and down the spectrum, sometimes showing colors that *shouldn't* be there. Below it on the floor is a circle inscribed in small, glittering chips of a metallic substance which have been formed into a mosaic resembling a continuous integrated computer circuit. Portions of the mosaic glimmer every so often in red, blue, and green. Both the gate and the room are lit in the sultry red of the massive lens housed on the temple roof, meters above.

Three energy ETs are hovering in this room, two near the gate and one near a mechanism. If the ET



in the hall made it in to warn its fellows, two of them will hover above a doorway and simultaneously lash out with their energy attacks at the first person to enter the doorway. The other two will attack the second person, if they can get a line of sight (if, say one person moves in and to the right or left). A single jaguar-were in the room will also attack as soon as a target presents itself. If Raoul has been taken over, and the referee has not had the PCs encounter him yet, he enter the room two rounds after the battle commences in the company of his controlling medusa.

All of the Dark Minions fight to the death. When they are dead, if the PCs do not demolish at least the satellite uplink-ish mechanism, the most likely candidate for what is controlling the Comsat, Margaret will suggest they do so or do it herself if the PCs are indecisive.

The most obvious method to close the gate is to destroy the biomechanisms apparently in sync with it, and/or the circuitry pattern on the floor. The PCs

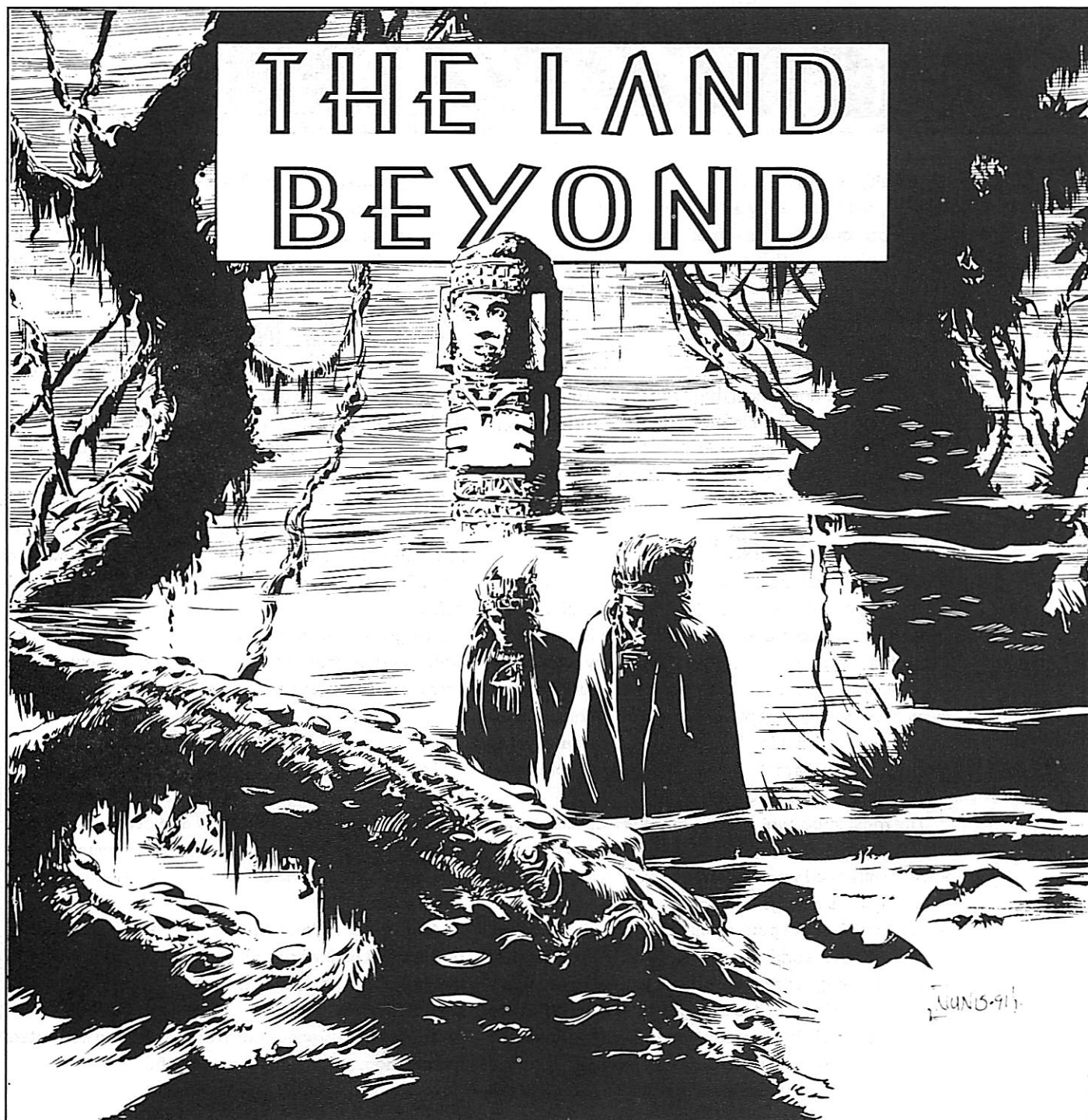
may attempt this in any way they wish, and Margaret, if consulted, will feel sure that this will succeed. Let the player characters shoot, grenade, blow up and cut the biomechanisms. When the damage seems terminal, the gate will dim slightly, flicker once or twice, and then regain its former appearance. The vine/cables will fall out, apparently cleanly severed.

At this point, the PCs may try what they like to close the gate. Before a PC tries using Dimension Walk to do it, though, Margaret speaks up:

"NASA gave me an experimental device before I left. It creates distortions in the time-space continuum. They hoped it might give us an edge against the creatures they feared might be running this show. I'm willing to try it. I can set it to delay activate. The only problem is that it will only work to close this gate from the other side."

If the PCs are reluctant to enter the gate, Margaret will persuade them by any method necessary, up to and including a dramatic leap through the portal.



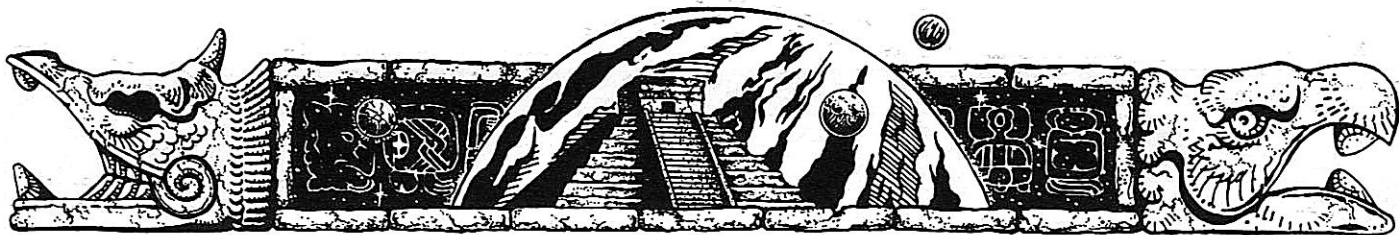


FIRST STOP

Going through a dimensional gateway can be quite an ordeal. The one that leads to the Land Beyond is no exception. The gateway projects (from the PCs' point of view) a vibrant field of cascading light around the PCs as they travel. It's as if a glowing curtain comes down around them and fences them in. When the PCs finally arrive in the proto-dimension, the curtain fades slowly, and the PCs are left aching as if they had run for several kilometers.

AN UNEARTHLY ARBORETUM

While still within the arch of the gate (which from this side looks like a huge "henge" from Stonehenge), the PCs can see the shockingly mutated growth all around them. The plants range in height from under a centimeter to four meters tall. Strangely, they are all bent toward the gate and shaking, as if a high wind were buffeting them. It is completely still and quiet within the gate, however. The plants completely surround the gate, and there's no visible clue as to which direction the PCs should go.



The sky is a grey-blue. As they look, the PCs can probably tell that the sky is "normally" as clear a blue as it used to be on Earth, but something is tainting it, leaving a sickly grey haze. There is no visible sun, yet there are multiple shadows on the ground, and some plants seem to be reflecting Earth-like sunlight.

The ground outside of the gate resembles a terran jungle floor. Every few minutes, one of the PCs sees something "moving" under the ground, as if a giant worm was crawling just a centimeter below the surface. Digging does not reveal any clues.

Stepping out of the gate, though, yields a different experience.

SPRING BREEZE

A wave of pressure sweeps over the PCs as they step out of the gate. Although there's no wind, the effect is the same on their faces and hair. Something is rushing at them and toward the gate. The farther they walk away from the gate, the shorter the plants are. About 10 meters away from the gate, the plants form a unified height of 10 centimeters. Everything "blows" toward the gate, yet at no time will the PCs really feel the wind, only the pressure. The only sound is the rustling of the plants.

The most important effect is how the PCs feel as they walk away from the gate. As soon as they step out, they are instantly filled with anxiety. Everyone with an Empathy rating feels a surge of empathic force, personified in a sudden rush of evil pouring into the gate. They also see a vision of the world around them as a giant pool of empathic energy. The gate is a drain, and the dimension's energy is pouring into it, swirling around it until the gate sucks it "down," like a greedy throat. Everyone near the gate has an urgent need to get away from it, and those with Empathy find themselves running to get out of the flow of energy, lest they be somehow swept up in it.

The rush of empathic energy also interferes with the empathic abilities of the PCs. The PCs will find their empathic talents focused on the gateway to such a degree that focusing on anything else is one level more difficult than normal. In addition, all stages of success are reduced by one. For example, an Easy task becomes an Average task, and a Stage Two success is reduced to Stage One. This rule is only in effect while the characters are outside the gate and more than 50 meters away from the stela (described later).

The positive effect of this is no PCs with an Empathy rating can ever become lost, as they have a flawless, compass-like heading pointing to the dimensional gateway. They can also judge distance to the gateway to within five meters.

LIGHTING THE FUSE

When the PCs set up and trigger the distortion device Maggie brought, it activates properly, but immediately begins to emit a fizzling sound. As the PCs watch, an animated stream of energy will come from the device and arc quickly around the gate and into it. The gate remains unchanged.

It's obvious from looking at it that the device doesn't have enough power to close the gate. The swirling empathic flow around the gate is too strong for it to defeat.

Maggie will point out that the PCs will have to find additional power to boost the device or somehow stop the flow around the gateway.

A COUNTRY LANE

The farther away the PCs proceed from the gate, the more tolerable the flow of empathy and feelings of anxiety. As the PCs look around and get their bearings, they notice a trail worn into the mutated vegetation. The trail looks very old, and the floor of the trail has been worn down to rock.

As they look down the trail, the PCs notice a faint pulsing light on the horizon. The flashes of light reflect off the grey haze in the sky, promoting the effect of a lightning storm at night.

The PCs can proceed down the trail for two kilometers before encountering anything eventful.

END OF THE LINE

The trail ends at a steep hillside that leads down to a large valley. At the end of the trail is a four-meter-high cylindrical obelisk with Mayan carvings on it. Although the carvings themselves aren't decipherable, the important thing about it is that the side of the obelisk facing the gate appears not to be totally solid.

The carvings are of humans dressed in various Mayan costumes performing some sort of dance. As the PCs look over the obelisk, they notice that it is somehow being "stretched" toward the gate. The stone matter is being taken particle by particle into the gate. Those standing



between the obelisk and the gateway feel like they are in a sandstorm. Although the feeling is quite intense, whatever process is at work has no visible real-time evidence. The part of the obelisk facing away from the gate appears to be totally normal and virtually new.

It's at this point that the PCs first see the huge stela and the source of the pulsing light.

PARADISE VALLEY

The stela looks huge. Although it's certainly more than two kilometers away, a fair estimate is that it's half a kilometer tall. The PCs can also see that the pulsing light is in fact caused by several arcs of light striking the stela from a half-dozen glowing balls of energy that are



bobbing and circling the stela. The energy ETs strike the stela in unison, creating one bright flash. There is a unified strike every 10 seconds.

The barren valley floor extends for five kilometers from the stela, and the valley walls are about half a kilometer tall. The top of the stela is flush with the ground the trail is on. Covering the ceiling of the valley is a thin grey haze that is flowing in rivulets toward the gateway. This haze is also about even with the ground the trail is on.

The trail ends at the top of the hill. The hill is at a steep angle, but is not too difficult to descend. As soon as the PCs start down and get under the haze, they feel the absence of the rushing pressure against their faces, but the empathic effects remain. It also becomes dramatically darker. The haze looks thicker from underneath, and the surroundings are dusk-like.

Sounds also fill the stale air. A curious chanting is heard down the hill and farther ahead, and the PCs, following the sound, can see almost a dozen small stone structures about a kilometer away. They cannot see any people or activity, though.

...BUT IF YOU LEAVE A MESSAGE...

The village is roughly in between the characters and the stela. It will only cost a few minutes for them to detour to the village.

The structures themselves appear to be simple living quarters for large families. Although they are covered with various Mesoamerican-style carvings, there is nothing architecturally significant about them. The insides of the houses are completely furnished and look as if the inhabitants just stepped out.

The chanting that attracted the PCs grows louder the closer they approach. When they finally arrive at the village, the chanting reverberates off the walls. As much as they look around, they cannot see the source of the chanting.

Despite the forceful empathic pull toward the gate, those with Empathy will still feel something coming from one of the structures.

HOWDY NEIGHBOR!

The structure the PCs are attracted to is a small, one-story house that has more carvings on its walls than any other building in the village. As the PCs approach it, they can tell the chanting is indeed coming from this building.

There is no door, only a square archway. Inside, the

PCs can see a human, apparently of Mayan descent, sitting cross-legged in a circle of intricate cracks in the floor. Some kind of energy is flowing out of the cracks and is creating an eerie, purplish glow throughout the one-room house.

If the PCs enter, they find the chanting extremely loud, and they also begin to see shadowy figures walking around the circle of cracks. The circling ghostly images are of Mayans in various costumes, and it seems they are the ones who are chanting.

The figure in the center is a live Mayan. He came to the Land Beyond many centuries ago, and has been keeping himself alive with empathic energy "donated" from the spirits of those around him. His fellow villagers have been leeches of most of their life energy, but have somehow managed to contain what's left of themselves in the circle on the floor. The last remaining Mayan is himself close to death. At no time will the Mayan make any movement at all. If the PCs couldn't see him breathing, they would mistake him for being dead.

If an empath tries to establish an empathic link with the Mayan (Easy: Human Empathy), it will be automatically successful, but difficult to maintain. As soon as the link is made, the Mayan will communicate to whoever established the contact. The Mayan's many centuries of constant empathic flow have enabled him to use empathic energy to communicate with a kind of telepathy which overcomes language barriers (Project Thought 9). In addition to explaining his current situation, he will have the following to say:

You have to leave here as soon as you can. Some evil leeches all life from here and there's no way for you to avoid it. I don't know where this evil is, nor how to fight it, but the energy creatures seem to know. Since they've come, the leeching has slowed. If, perhaps, you were to help them, you could save this realm from disappearing completely, and make it safe for other Mayans to join me here.

This was once a beautiful place. You can make it so again, but only if you hurry. I have this vision of this whole dimension being sucked into an endless vortex of evil thought and energy. Whatever evil has caused this has an endless supply of empathic energy. I've felt it; it's incredible. It has more than an entire Mayan city.

I don't know how the energy beings have challenged such a great power, but you've got to help them somehow.

The Mayan will go on to answer any questions the PCs



might have, but the only thing he knows about the stela is that it's grown bigger as the evil in this dimension has grown. The stela started as a pebble.

As a side effect from this contact, for a brief period of time the empath will be able to read Mayan carvings, reliefs, and whatever hieroglyphics the character sees.

A REALLY BIG ROCK

The stela looms ever larger the closer the PCs get to it. As soon as they get within 50 meters of it, an incredible calm descends. The empathic current (described under "Spring Breeze," above) ceases, and the air becomes completely still.

The sky changes to an absolute black, and the PCs are hard pressed to see unless they have flashlights or lanterns with them. They do, however, have light from the energy ETs to see by.

There are six energy ETs hard at work energizing the stela. With each bolt of energy that strikes the stela, a particular relief carving on it glows brighter with energy. The relief can be read by the empath who talked to the Mayan in the village. The carving is one that represents the summoning of a hugely powerful entity. It's not correct to call the entity a god, but that's the stature of the creature the energy ETs are trying to summon.

One look at the relief, though, and the empath is firmly convinced that whatever the creature is, it's pure evil.

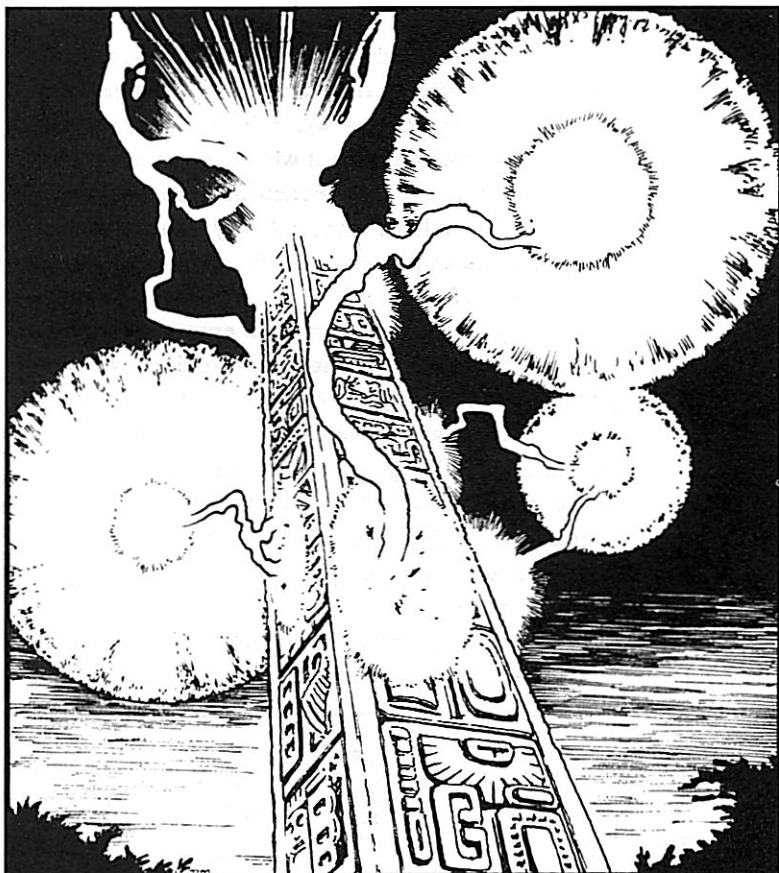
If the PCs attack the energy ETs (they'll have to attack with ranged weapons, as the ETs are about 400 meters in the sky) half of them will attack the PCs and attempt to kill them.

By the time the PCs arrive, the relief is basically as energized as it can be. The ETs keep striking it to maintain its energy level. Shortly after the PCs arrive, regardless of what they do, a new dimensional gateway will open in the side of the stela.

UNEXPECTED VISITOR

A quetzal (see "Referee Resources" for statistics) flies from the gateway and into the Land Beyond. The empath who communicated with the Mayan will instantly know that this is not what the relief is intended to summon, but something much less powerful.

The quetzal flies into the air and surveys the situation. As soon as it sees six juicy glowing balls of energy right near it, it attacks them, trying to absorb them. It's not necessary to go through the mechanics of combat, since



these results are really not important.

The quetzal absorbs the ET closest to it by opening its mouth wide and literally sucking the ET into it. Once that is done, it spreads its wings and directs a massive bolt of energy (a "breath" weapon of sorts) that catches two of the ETs in its path, destroying them instantly in a deafening screech.

After it uses its big weapon, the quetzal is visibly weaker. It drops in altitude a couple hundred meters as it recuperates. The remaining three energy ETs rush out of the valley and toward the gateway the PCs have just come through.

SEALING THE BREACH

If it doesn't occur to the PCs, Maggie will point out that the constant energy field surrounding the ETs is surely enough to boost the distortion device. If the PCs left the device on, they are in serious trouble. The ETs move at least 10 meters faster than the PCs can run, and the ETs are highly motivated to make good time to the gateway.

If the device wasn't left on, then the PCs have to



somehow make sure that they turn the device on when there's an ET in the vicinity. If one of the PCs suggests that it might be possible to trick the quetzal into "breathing" onto the device, Maggie will point out that once the device has enough power, it will work just as she programmed it (either for instant activation or a delay), and that if they are all inside the gateway when the quetzal breathes, they will be okay, as the gate will close, and they'll be safe from the blast.

The PCs have a few avenues of approach to take in getting either the ETs or the quetzal to the device. The group's empath or mystic can attempt to trick the ETs or form a temporary alliance of two opponents against a greater evil (the quetzal), using his Project Thought skill or his basic Empathy attribute to try and establish contact. The PCs could also ask for mercy from the quetzal or even try to convince the Mayan to leave his home and use the life energy of his companions to prevent evil from spreading from this dimension.

If the PCs get into a discussion with the ETs and ask

them what they were trying to do, they will only respond that they were trying to summon Kukulcan, a great former ally of their master, and that he sent one of his minions instead. The ETs will not stop rushing toward the gate unless the PCs think of something to say that would make them hesitate. What would probably be most effective is if the PCs say they just ran from another quetzal that is guarding the gateway, or something similar.

If the PCs talk to the quetzal, they will find it extremely difficult to maintain its attention. If the quetzal was able to eat a total of four ETs, it's sated enough not to eat the PCs. It will quickly become obvious to the PCs that the quetzal is not a bastion of higher reasoning. It can be very easy to trick the quetzal into breathing onto the device. The PCs can make up any even marginally plausible reason for the quetzal to do it, as long as it promises some energy to the quetzal.

If the PCs are not able to talk to either the quetzal or the ETs, and if the quetzal attacks the PCs for whatever





reason, they can attack the quetzal. If it sustains 20 points of damage, its flying rate will drop to 25 meters. The PCs could then outrun it, make it to the gate and huddle, baiting it to breathe not at them, but on the device.

KABOOM!

When the PCs return through the gate after getting the distorter to activate, they once again experience the peculiar effect of being surrounded by a curtain of light. Then they find themselves on the floor of the gate room in the pyramid. The gate pulsates wildly, flaring outward a couple of times, and suddenly sucks *into* itself. It reduces to a pinpoint of light, then winks out.

When the gate winks out, the floor begins to spark and crackle where the mosaic/circuitry pattern is. Like a sparkler lighting or a fuse burning out, the sparks spit around the pattern faster and faster and then erupt in a small pyrotechnic explosion.

After this point, the PCs witness a progressive decay of the pyramid's stability, with the walls coming

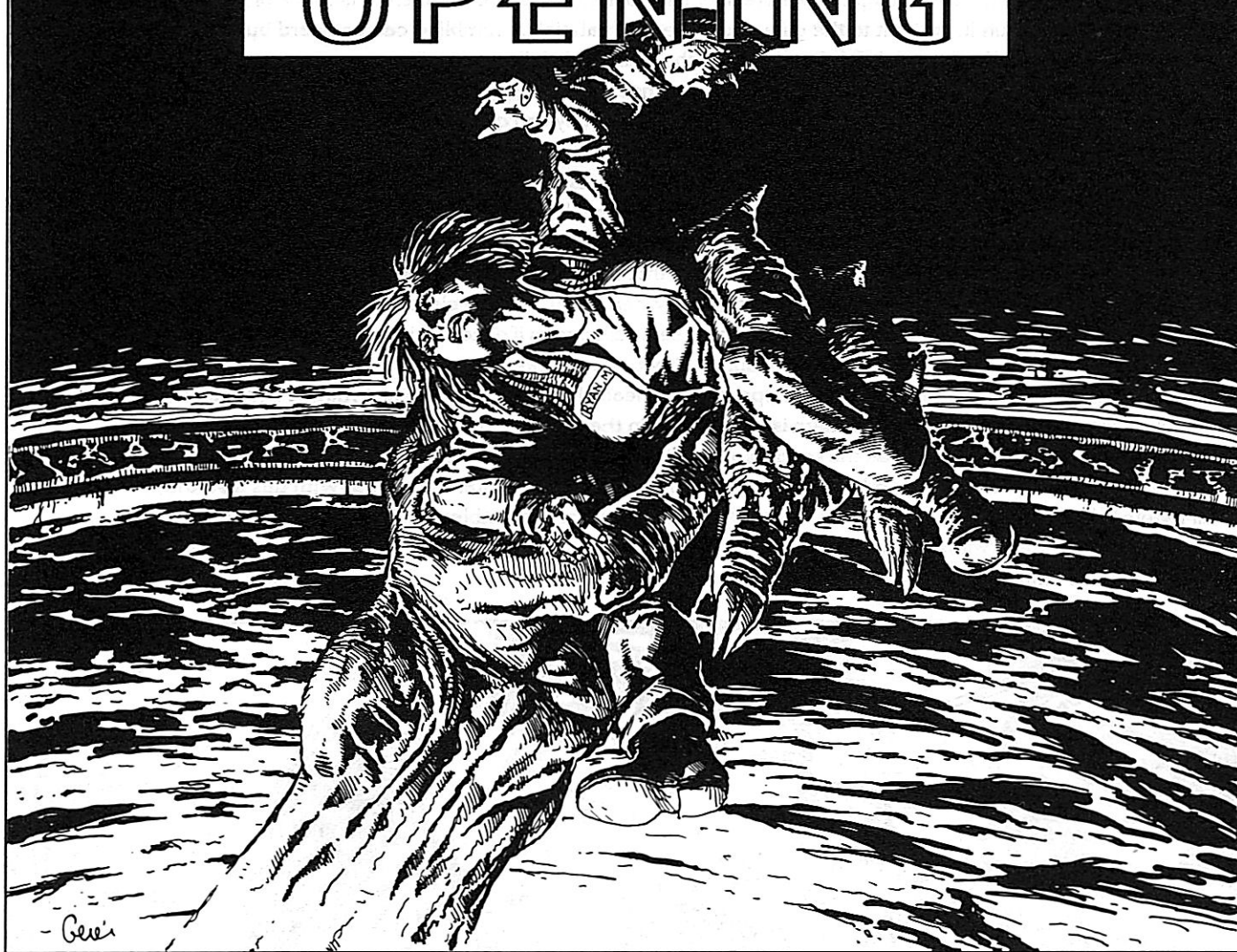
"unwoven" in places and vines thrashing about wildly. The floor starts to buckle where it is made of peculiar erector material. A rumbling can be heard building in the walls and ceiling.

The PCs probably get the idea that they should exit the pyramid. They can grab one or two things lying about if the referee is so inclined, and if they have agreed to come back and rescue anyone, they should be allowed to do so—preferably with a great many heroics, Agility rolls just made, Strength checks to hold back collapsing walls so that the weakened captives can escape, etc.

When the PCs finally clear the pyramid, they get to see it collapse as if distorted in seven or eight different directions—sucked in, pulled, exploded—twisted in an unearthly manner. At the last minute the reddish lens in the temple's roof transforms into a ruddy eye with a slitted pupil which begins to glow. Then the lens/eye distorts too far and—pop! With this last, the entire pyramid crumbles to the ground in a pile of rubble and bubbling, dissolving viner/erector ooze of the foulest sort.



A GRAND OPENING



The PCs make their way out of the pyramid, and some of them may be hurt. Everyone feels a sense of relief and, perhaps, triumph at the pyramid's collapse. The cultists who survived the collapse vacate the area of Chichen Itza, confused and afraid now that their leadership is gone. If the PCs killed Tepeyet in the pyramid, he is quite dead. If they never confronted him, the referee can decide whether he is dead from the collapse of tons of rubble onto him, or has survived to lead a few cultists away and form the nucleus of a new cult, which may soon dog the footsteps of the PCs in some adventure to come of the referee's own construct.

As soon as the last of the pyramid stops crumbling, anyone making an Easy: Observation task roll notices that, about 350 meters north of what was the Temple of Kukulcan, a strong, bluish-white glow has appeared, like a powerful searchlight shining up into the sky from the ground. Even PCs who are exhausted can feel an energy in the air as the light grows stronger, and characters with an Empathy of 2 or better should be given a chance to make an Easy: Foreboding task roll (or Average: Empathy, if they have no Foreboding). Success indicates that, while this phenomenon is not itself evil, it has a great evil connected with it.



This is the location of the former sacred well or *cenote* (say-NO-tay) of Chichen Itza. (Enrique can tell the PCs this if he is still with them.) The PCs may decide to go and check out this new phenomenon right away or spend some time recuperating and perhaps having Dr. Aguafuente tend to their wounds. At this point, Ryan wants to lure the PCs through the new gate and have the Great Dark One's minions finish them off. Maggie Ryan encourages the PCs to check out this new wrinkle as soon as possible. "Maybe what we just dealt with was only the tip of the iceberg," she comments. "I'm sure NASA wants this matter to be taken care of *thoroughly*."

Maggie accompanies the PCs if they seem intent on going through the new gate within a day. If they decide to recuperate for a while first, she will wait until the second night after the temple falls and enact a fake kidnapping of herself by minions who come through the new gate. Specifically, she waits until after dark on the second night. When she is alone, she breaks the bracelet the Great Dark One gave her to enhance her Willpower. This serves as a signal to the being which the Great Dark One left in charge of "watching over" her empathically, a dimensional hunter (see "Referee Resources" for statistics). It walks through the dimensions and retrieves Maggie, bringing her to meet the Great Dark One face to face so that she can be given her reward. Maggie has never seen a dimensional hunter, so her screams of terror will sound quite genuine.

While the dimensional hunter Dimension Walks to a location near where the PCs are staying, it carries Maggie into the new gate, across Io and into the gate below the ruins (to leave traces for the PCs to follow, so that it can have them ambushed and eliminated on Io). If spotted by the PCs, the hunter accelerates to a dead run, which it maintains until it gets to the well. If the PCs start shooting at the dimensional hunter, Maggie screams louder—she is afraid they'll hit her rather than it.

THE NEW GATE

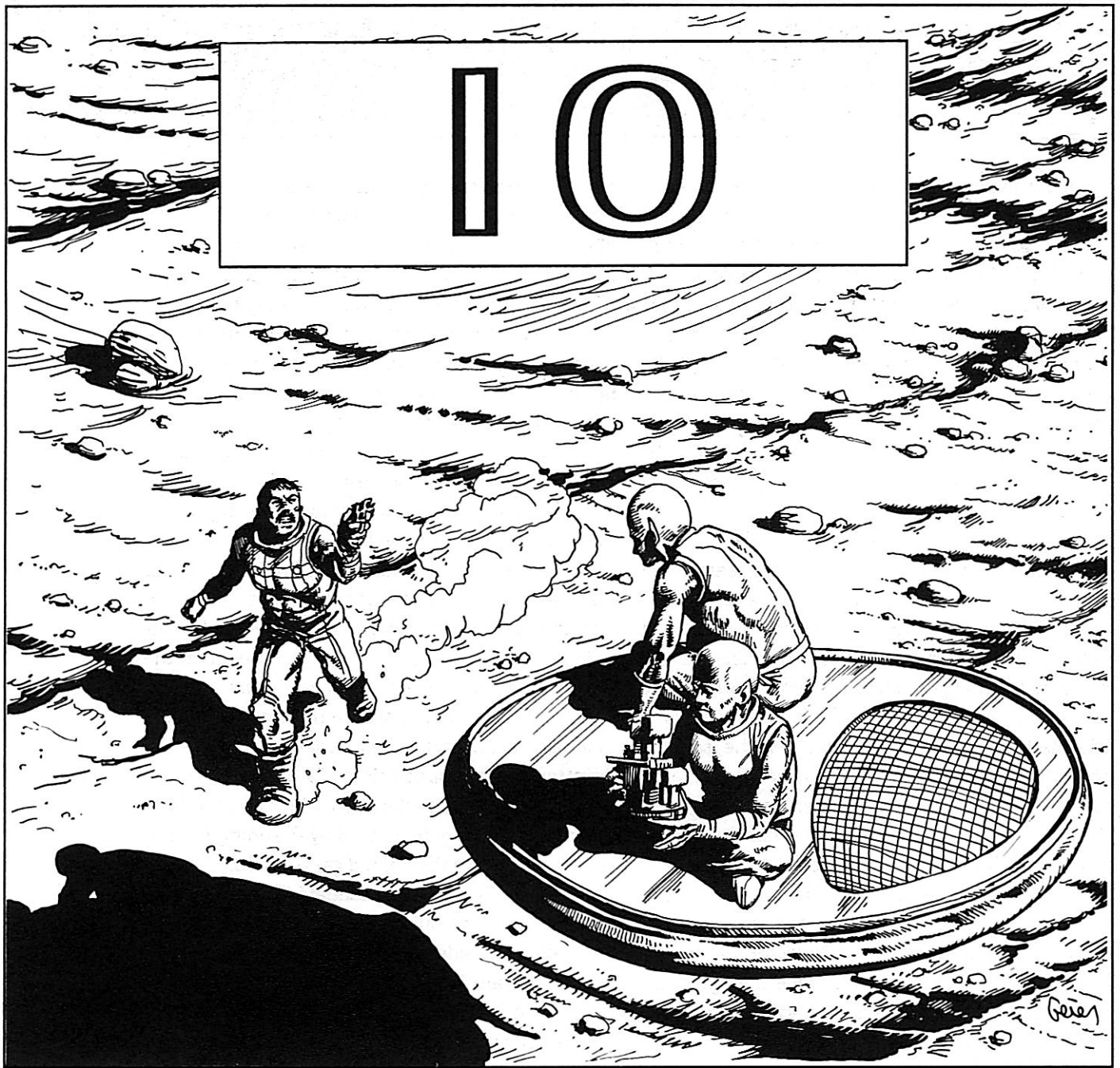
A half-meter below the former sacred *cenote* of Chichen Itza's waters has opened an even larger

and more powerful gate than the one the PCs just closed. The *cenote* is a large well, about 20 meters in diameter, with walls 20 meters above the surface of the water (which is about 34 meters deep). It was where the ancient Mayans made sacrifices to the rain god, Chac, who supposedly lived in it. He accepted sacrifices of amulets, figurines, jewelry, fine pottery, children, and young adults. The humans were thrown, still living, into the well and left overnight. If they were still alive in the morning, they were hauled from the well and asked to recount the words of the spirits and gods who lived in the well.

The few sacrifices who survived did indeed hear voices—strange voices speaking sometimes in Mayan and sometimes in languages alien and frightening. This *cenote* borders on a thin space in the walls between universes, and thoughts and sounds from other dimensions sometimes leaked through in times past. Because the *cenote* was so close to a point tangential in space-time to a location on Io, the Great Dark One used the energy he siphoned from the closure of the gate opened by the energy ETs to open a gate from the sacred *cenote* to Io.

When the PCs go to investigate the *cenote*, they find that a slowly swirling blue spot has formed in the water near one side of the well. It is about six meters in diameter, and located about a half-meter from the southernmost side of the well. It seems to be about a half-meter underwater, and its peculiar glow swirls clockwise. If the PCs observe the gate for an extended period, they determine that it seems to be expanding by two or three centimeters a day. The spot is projecting light upward from itself which can be seen from far away.

If Maggie has allowed herself to be kidnapped through the *cenote*, large, alien footprints lead right up to the well, circle it once and then disappear. Hunks of the limestone surface of the well have been torn out of the well's interior wall on the side closest to the gate, as if to form hand- and footrests for something inhumanly tall. A patch of Maggie's clothing can be found trampled into the mud in one of the footprints.



When the PCs go through this new gate, they experience something different from their travel through the temple gate, but just as unsettling. They seem to become balls of energy, sparkling in different colors. They are hurtling at incredible speeds toward—something. Pieces of themselves burn up and trail behind them like a comet's tail. Just when it seems that they are going to be worn away to nothing, they stop. They have just arrived somewhere dark.

The other end of the *cenote* gate is on Io, one of the four Galilean moons of Jupiter. Normally, if the PCs were experiencing actual Iotian atmosphere,

gravity, and pressure, they would be quite dead in less than 30 seconds. Fortunately, the gate that has just opened emerges within the bubble-dome force field the ETs set up when they came to explore Io. Specifically, the PCs come out a couple of meters below the surface of Io, in some rubble, boulders, and hardened magma, in an area the ETs have been using as a trash heap.

After the PCs' eyes adjust for a few seconds, they can see a faint illumination coming from their left. It turns out that this is a tunnel of sorts (built by the same beings who originally came to Io long ago), which has mainly collapsed, but can be wormed



through. It can also be widened and made smoother if the PCs want to take some time to clear away stone and rubble. If the PCs are following after Maggie has been kidnapped, the dimensional hunter has already cleared a comfortable tunnel to the surface.

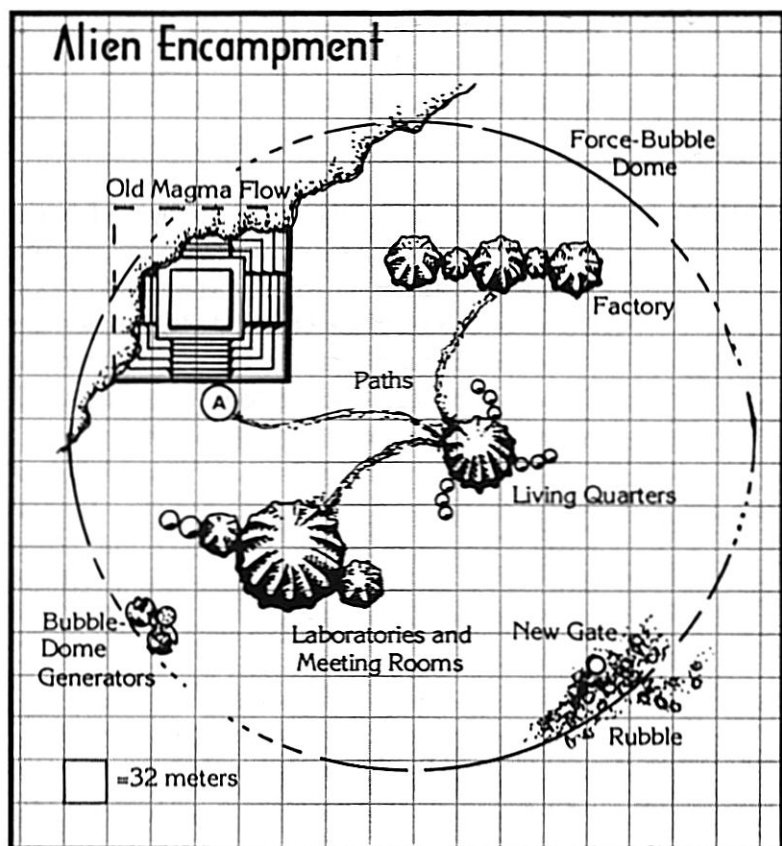
The gate appears much the same from this side as on Earth, except that it is oriented vertically, rather than horizontally. Also, the swirling light moves counterclockwise here. Anything thrown back into the gate disappears (and ends up at the bottom of the cenote on Earth, unless it can swim or float).

THE FLOATER TWINS

Two humanoid ETs have been given the front-line duty of terminating the PCs. If Maggie is with the PCs, they are to "capture" her and take her to the ruins of the alien pyramid, and then return to kill the PCs. If Maggie has been taken by the dimensional hunter, they are simply to kill the PCs.

While the PCs are working their way out of the gate, they hear thumping and rattling from up ahead, as if someone were moving rocks and stones to get to them. If they wait, they witness rocks and boulders being lifted away from their location as if by magic, and tossed to the side. When a PC dares a peek, he or she sees two humanoid aliens in a floater (see page 63)—one of them is apparently concentrating very hard, and the other is also concentrating, but appears to be holding and manipulating a device with a stubby, antenna-like piece sticking out of it. The one without anything in his hands actually has a death ray pistol (page 243 of *Dark Conspiracy*) sitting next to him in the floater. It has a damage rating of 8, and 30 rounds remaining. The other alien is holding a cyborg-control device keyed to—you guessed it—Raoul.

If Maggie is with the PCs, she "sprints" up the tunnel when the group sees the ETs, yelling that she'll distract them. She takes a couple of shots at the ETs (missing), and the floater swoops down at her. One of the ETs looks at her, and she slumps to the ground (she's faking it; the ET just used Thought Projection to tell her to). The floater then swoops



down and picks her up with two robot-like claws which unfold from its bottom surface. (The referee should engineer events so that Maggie gets taken.) It flies away toward the ruins of the alien pyramid (see the map above), and then returns in a couple of minutes, after apparently landing there. When the ETs return, the one with the control device activates it, and Raoul turns into a raving maniac intent on killing all the PCs. (If Raoul has already been taken over at the pyramid and lived through it, give the ET with the device an ET stun gun instead, and have it concentrate on putting Raoul out of action for the combat.)

If Maggie is not with the PCs, the two ETs simply turn on the cyborg-control device and start plugging away with the death ray pistol if Raoul looks like he's having a hard time. The ET with the cyborg-control device must hold it in his hand all the time (this completes its organic circuit and prevents unauthorized use). Therefore, it is possible for a PC to make a called shot to destroy it. Any shot which does at



least 2 points of damage will do so. If the device is destroyed, Raoul returns to normal after a 1D6 phase period of confusion. If the device is destroyed, the ET who was holding it will begin using Pyrokinesis on the person who destroyed the device.

A successful Difficult: Human Empathy task followed by a Stage Four or better success at an Average: Project Thought task will allow an empathic character to "block" the transmissions of the control device for as many rounds as he or she continues to roll under his or her Empathy score. If the blocking stops, Raoul reverts to ET control unless the transmitter has been broken.

Firing at the two ETs falls under "Firing at Riders" covered on page 88 of *Dark Conspiracy*. The ETs cease attacking when they are killed or their floater is destroyed (in which case they are too injured from the fall to press the attack).

ON THE SURFACE

The surface of Io underneath the humanoid ET bubble dome has an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere with certain trace gasses which give the air what might be described as an exotic or spicy scent. The sky is almost completely taken up by a view of Jupiter. The PCs find that they feel slightly lighter than usual (the gravity is slightly less here than on Earth, but not enough to be reflected in any combat or movement effects). The atmosphere, gravity, and protection from the normal weather and tectonic instability of Io are provided by the extraterrestrial bubble-dome generators. The dome created by the generator goes up almost a kilometer at its peak.

The Alien Encampment: The ET encampment is composed of four structures: the bubble-dome generators, the laboratories and meeting rooms, the living quarters, and the factory. The bubble-dome generator cannot be entered, and consists of biomechanisms, including organic computer electronics, formed into two minaret-like structures about a half-kilometer tall with a small dome interconnecting them. The dome appears to contain floating incandescent balls about the size of a human fist. They cluster near anyone touching the translucent dome enclosing them, and after some

time such a person begins to feel cold.

The factory, living quarters, labs, and meeting rooms are all constructed of fibrous, translucent domes. They have a framework of "ribs" of a tough, but flexible, material like cartilage, which also forms archways and doorways. Connecting the ribs (thicker nearer the ribs and thinnest at points farthest from any of them) is a translucent whitish material like plastic, but which appears to grow out from the ribs. The overall effect is of a giant, dome-shaped lampshade made of skin and internally braced by long fingers of bone.

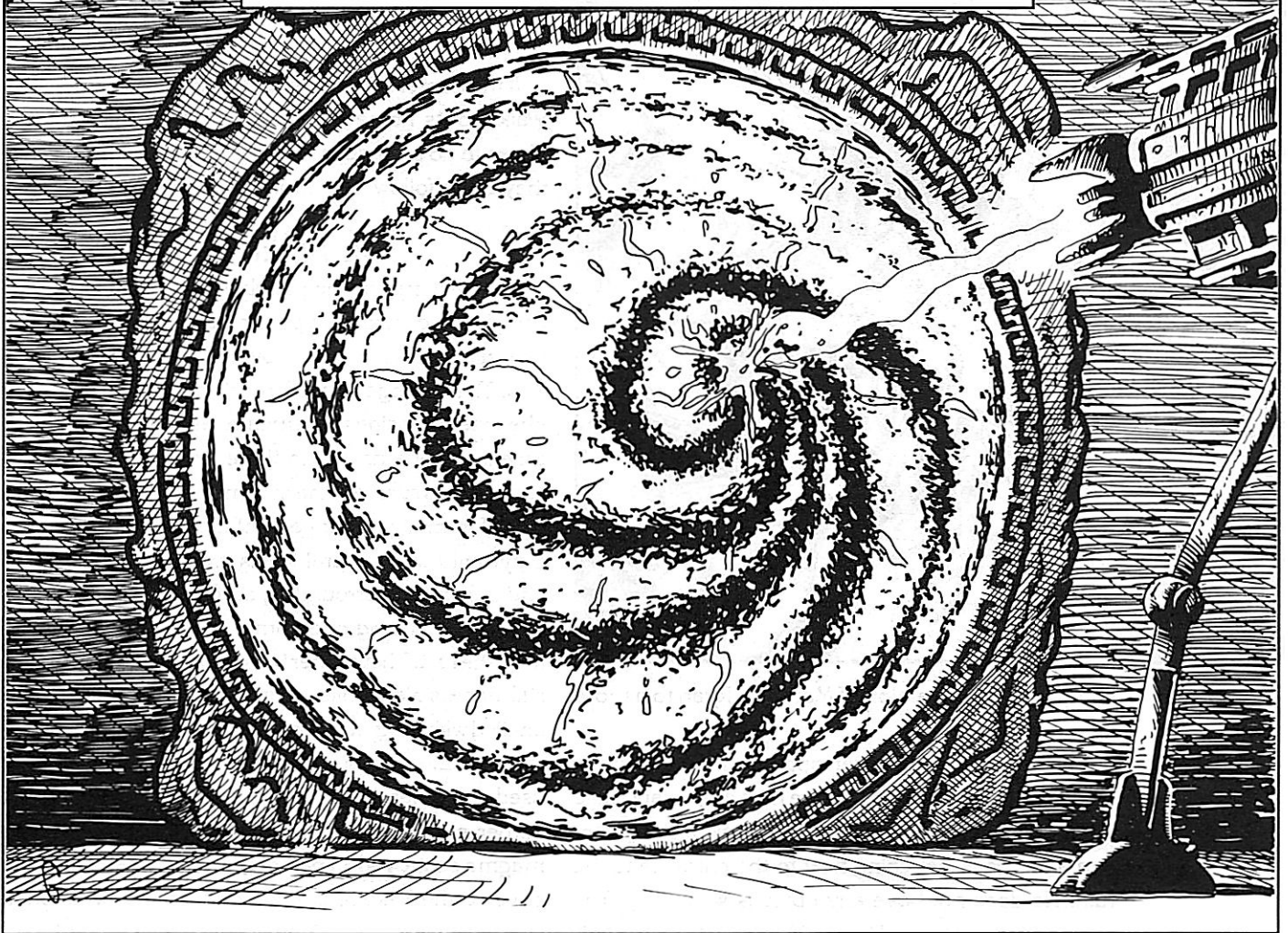
The laboratories and living quarters contain furniture of a parallel nature similar to structures on Earth. One room in the living quarters contains a rejuvenator (see page 63). The factory is busily making bioorganic components for an unknown product.

The domes are impervious to fire, and have an armor value of 6.

The Extraterrestrials: Not many extraterrestrials are currently present on Io. All of the ETs on Io right now are humanoid, and the referee should use the statistics for humanoid ETs found in the *Dark Conspiracy* rulebook. Aside from the two ETs in the floater, there are two in the factory, four in the laboratories, and six in the living quarters. One of the ETs at each location is armed with a resonator, for defense of the beings in the building he or she is in. None of the ETs come out of the areas where they can be found, even if their compatriots are killed by the PCs. They are aware of their fellows' deaths, but the Great Dark One has deemed that no other humanoid ETs will try and divert the PCs; instead, the dimensional hunter will destroy the PCs if they make it past the ET guards.

If the PCs close hellsgate, these remaining humanoid ETs are confused and rendered unconscious by the mental shock. If a PC enters one of the extraterrestrial buildings on the way back to the new gate, they find the appropriate number of ETs in the building collapsed on the floor and apparently dead of shock. If the PCs don't damage the bodies or destroy the bubble-dome generators, these ETs will recover in about a week and send a signal for help.

GATE TO HELL



If the PC who was contacted by Tony at the beginning of Hellsgate has not told his or her compatriots the story of the hidden ET, it would be best if they are told before they enter the ruins. Jupiter in the sky, the alien encampment, and the ruined pyramid should set off all sorts of alarm bells in the mystic PC's mind relating back to the story the renegade alien told. (If Maggie was told about him after the group left for Mexico, she has not been able to communicate the information to the Great Dark One until she was kidnapped by either the dimensional hunter or the two ETs on the floater, so the escaped alien is safe for the very near future.)

CERBERUS

When the PCs finally get within sight of the entrance to the alien ruin, located at "A" on the Alien Encampment Map on page 47, they meet the watchdog of the ruin, a dimensional hunter (the same one that kidnapped Maggie, if that's the option used to let her escape). This hunter has been sent on an unusual mission: to delay the PCs and kill them if possible. This is unusual because dimensional hunters are usually used as "retrievers," not "pit bulls." But since this hunter was close by, the Great Dark One diverted it to this duty, as it needs some time to



complete its conversion of Margaret Ryan to a more advanced state.

The dimensional hunter appears from nowhere. One minute nothing is there, the next a tall, dark male human wearing black pants, a black turtleneck sweater and a fedora is slouching next to the entrance to the ruin. He does not have any obvious weaponry. The hunter attempts to use Human Empathy to communicate that he is a fighter on the PCs' side, and that they should follow him, because he knows the way in. The referee should not forget the peculiarities of the hunter's shadow. If the PCs follow it into the ruin, the dimensional hunter leads them around in circles in the ruin until they become suspicious.

Whenever the PCs attack, the hunter transforms to its true appearance and attacks in return. It attacks using its claw and bite routine; if a PC is inflicting telling damage, it will attempt to seize him or her, and forgoing its bite, it will fling the PC into the walls of the ruin or to the ground. This causes the same damage as if the PC fell four meters, automatically suffering the effects of knockdown (page

103 of *Dark Conspiracy*), and requiring the PC to make an Average: Agility check and an Average: Constitution check. If flung PCs fail the Agility check, they drop whatever is in their hands; if they fail their Constitution check, they are stunned (roll 1D6+2 for number of turns unconscious).

If the hunter takes over half of its hits, it Dimension Walks to its home dimension. It takes the hunter a phase to do so. It does not take anyone with it, even if they try to follow it through its personal gate.

THE ALIEN RUIN

The alien ruin is uncountable eons old. It looks like it might have once been pyramidal in shape, but about two-thirds of it has been covered by a large magma flow. The damage caused by this geological catastrophe extends inside the structure as well as outside. In essence, portions of the three levels closest to the surface of Io survived the magma flow, but were totally cut off from any other parts of the structure. Imagine a pyramid with several levels extending both above and below the surrounding surface. Now imagine a giant knife cutting one corner of the structure apart from the rest. That corner is the portion of the structure still accessible. While other levels may still remain unfilled with magma or uncanceled, the accessways—ramps, stairs, elevators, whatever this ancient species used—to other levels were cut off from the unburied corner, and so it remains isolated. In the time since the magma destroyed its part of the ruins, weathering has covered the base of the pyramid, so that what once was level with Io's surface is now below ground.

The halls of the ruins extend in many directions, but most are ended abruptly by a collapse, or magma, or seem to just stop, as if the builders had not finished. The halls are broad—about two to two and a half meters wide—and three or four meters tall, depending on the area. While there are many halls in the pyramid, there are only three rooms, plus the shafts cut by the ETs. Absolutely nothing of any significance remains in the halls, as it was taken by the original owners, destroyed, or removed by the ETs years ago. Therefore, no map is provided of the ruins. Referees are free to make their own, or can simply describe the halls as so many right and left turns, or differing types of



intersections. Room 1 is located on Level 1. Rooms 2 and 3 are located on Level 2.

Entrance to Level 1 is through a metal doorway which has a force field bridging it. The force field does not keep out anyone who tries to enter, but was evidently intended as some sort of weather seal. Pressing against it is like pushing against plastic wrap, until it suddenly "gives," brushing over the person pushing it like a hundred little fingertips and then reestablishing itself behind him or her. Levels 1 (the current surface level) and 2 are connected by a huge spiraling ramp. Levels 2 and 3 are connected by a broad double staircase. Level 3 has the shaft cut into it by the ETs.

Room 1: This chamber is dominated by a huge, dead black crystalline form. It is a double cube—that is, it is two interlocked cubes rotated at 45° to each other. The cube cannot be made to do anything, and cannot be damaged. It is far too heavy to move, and it makes anyone who touches it nervous to try to pick it up. It feels slick to the touch, yet people who make themselves touch it for very long begin to develop an irrational fear that their flesh will stick to it and not come off. The cube makes anyone who stays in the same room with it for more than an hour very nervous, and gives anyone who sleeps in the room with it nightmares, the subject of which they can never remember. The cube was left by the builders of this structure. The ETs don't know what its purpose is, either.

Room 2: In this room are 12 cold sleep cylinders of the type that the ETs travelled in while in their exploration ship. Most of them seem empty. Their clear faceplates show internal monitoring equipment, some straps, and some cushions. Two of the cylinders have shrivelled up humanoid ETs in them. The cylinders will not open, but the lights on the outside of the cylinders are constantly changing. One bar of lights gently undulates up and down, and another six blink steadily, but unrhythmically. The cylinders can be destroyed with explosives, in which case their inhabitants will die. The two ETs inside have suffered a psychically induced trauma which cannot be treated by a rejuvenator. They have been left alone to let their own psyches

deal with the problem, either allowing them to recover or die.

Room 3: The furnishing of this chamber can just be made out through the reddish tones of the force field closing it off. Inside the room, stalagmites and stalactites of varicolored frozen crystals are draped from the ceiling and grow up from the floor, covering what look like chairs and large worktables on which were placed vials, tubing, and instruments as if for a vast alchemical experiment. In the center of the room, the floor has blown upward into the room and a frozen pool of a yellowish substance fills the hole and runs onto the room's floor. A yellowish plume is frozen in midair in the midst of the pool, as if an eruption had been halted instantaneously. The force field prevents entrance into this room.

HELLSGATE

The shaft the ETs drilled is obviously not native to the pyramid, and is given away by its absolute vertical construction and lack of integration into its surroundings. A smooth, grey, metal staircase has been stapled to the interior of the shaft by some sort of rods inserted into the shaft walls, and winds its way hastily downward. Three horizontal shafts open off of the vertical shaft. The first two are featureless. The third ends in the hellsgate.

The fusion disruptor drill which first breached the energy seal on the gate is still in position on its tripod and still turned on. Its bright beam is contained by a self-projected force field of some sort, so that it looks like its beam is surrounded by a corona of light. The beam strikes toward the right edge of the gate, which is a round gateway about three and a half meters in diameter located a half meter above the level of the shaft's floor. Writing in a script of glyphs which seems composed of microcircuitry encircles the gate. The fusion disruptor beam interacts with the pale, whitish-green surface of the gate in a fitful swirling, and an occasional fizzling noise can be heard as an energy discharge backs up the beam toward the drill, which hums briefly and then quiets.

Needless to say, the empathic vibrations here are very bad. PCs with any Empathy feels like electricity is crawling over their skin, or hundreds of roaches are crawling on their body. Shortly after the PCs get a chance for a cursory look at the gate, something comes through it.

SHOWDOWN



Maggie Ryan, or what is left of her, comes through the gate shortly after the PCs find it. The Margaret-thing steps out first with one inhuman leg, a silhouette of her form appears briefly in the gate, and then the rest of her body emerges. She is carrying a fully loaded bolter in one of her human arms. She moves like one of those animated models used in monster movies like *Clash of the Titans* and *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad*—a little too jerky in some movements and a little too smooth in others to seem right. She brings with her a faintly chemical odor, and a great blast of heat. She has obviously been remade, but in whose or what's image, a right-minded person would try not to think about.

The first thing she does is laugh, a loud, sinister,

slightly ragged laugh. Then she bellows, in tones which belie the confidence of her words:

"Idiots! Fools! It was so easy to fool you, to lead you on. So trusting! 'Help me fix the satellite,' and 'Help me close the gate; it's your duty.' And in the process, you helped me open the most direct gate for the Enlightened One to mount an invasion of Earth. Without your recent insistence on staying alive, the Enlightened One would not have been forced to remake me in a warrior mold. But now I will lead the invasion from the front, rather than the headquarters. And you will die, for my master has decreed it."

At which point the Margaret-thing commences its attack. It will fire the bolter, then close to melee range in the third turn of combat, if the PCs have



not closed with it. (It only gets multiple attacks, one fire combat and one melee, if it is in range to make the melee attack.) The shaft is 30 meters long, round, but with a flattened floor, and five meters tall at its highest point.

While it is closing, if the PCs have not shot or knocked over the fusion disrupter drill, the Margaret-thing fires the bolter which misses the PC it was aimed at and hits the drill. With a massive screech of feedback, and the smell of burning insulation, the drill cuts out and falls over.

THE GREAT DARK ONE NOTICES A PROBLEM

When the disruptor drill stops working, hellsgate gradually changes from whitish-green to a dark violet. An indistinct form can be seen in it getting larger and larger. The chemical smell that accompanied the appearance of the Margaret-thing returns and begins to get stronger, smelling somewhat like formaldehyde. The shaft begins to grow hotter.

A shape which could be eyes can be seen glowing through the gate. There are six globular shapes, grouped in two groups of three and ranging from about a meter to half a meter across, which begin to glow a fluorescent greenish-yellow and become more intense as the combat with the Margaret-thing continues.

CLOSING HELLSGATE

The PCs may wait to try sealing hellsgate until after the Margaret-thing is downed, or they may try while she is still up. Attempts to use Dimension Walk to seal the gate are not successful until the disrupter drill is disabled, as it is serving the Great Dark One as an energy anchor to this dimension. Once it is disabled, a Stage Six Dimension Walk success is required to seal hellsgate. If this result seems too easy for the PCs to achieve, a referee could increase the requirement to two Stage Six successes, or two Stage Six successes on consecutive phases. On the other hand, if a Stage Six success is impossible for the PCs to achieve, the referee has two options:



THE MARGARET-THING

Margaret Ryan was promised power, immortality, and a position where she would be in charge of the whole of North America. Of course, she didn't realize that the Great Dark One intended to remake her physically in a manner more suited to its purposes. Maggie Ryan hardly remains in the creature that the Great Dark One has made. Her sight has been "improved" with faceted eyes. She now has multiple limbs, the better to keep a hand on things, and a running box (see page 64) to speed her reflexes on her command, and her legs have been replaced with sturdier models.

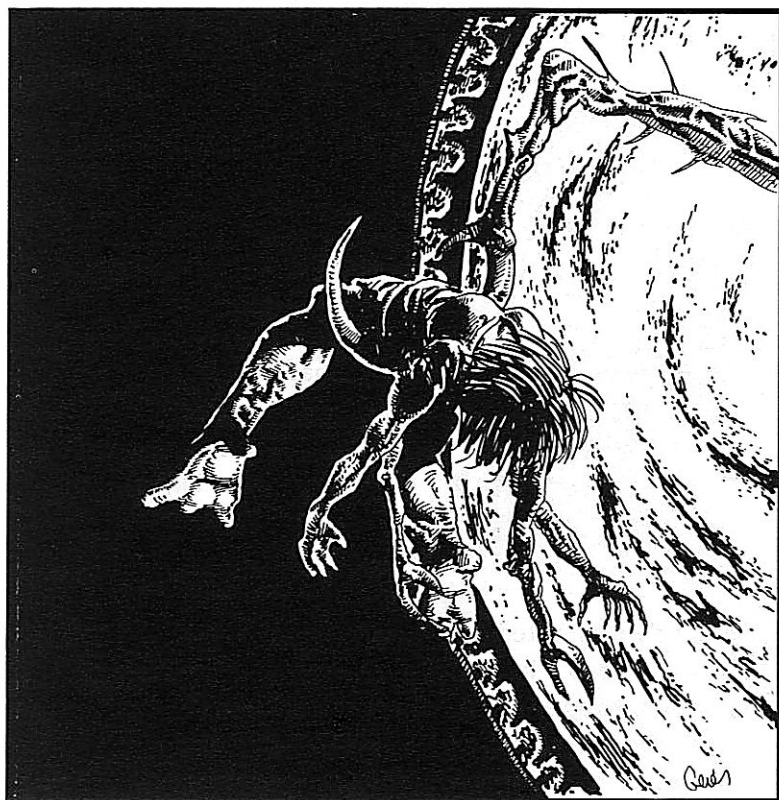
This form is certainly more powerful, and Maggie has been granted unlimited access to the rejuvenator in the ET encampment on Io, so she now has virtual immortality. But this was not quite the deal that Maggie bargained for. She has, to put it mildly, become unhinged.

She is now out to kill the people she feels are the cause of her current condition—the PCs. And she wants them to suffer a lot as they die.

Strength: 12	Education: 7	Move: 3/9/16/32
Constitution: 14	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: 8/2D10
Agility: 8	Empathy: 3	Hits: 30/60
Intelligence: 8	Initiative: 6	# Appear: Unique

Special: Margaret now has four arms along with the normal collection of legs, torso, abdomen, etc. Margaret is treated as having a body armor value of 1 everywhere but on her two human arms and her head, and does not suffer double damage from head hits.

She receives multiple attacks, one with a weapon and one with one of her claws or pincers, each phase. The weapon does normal damage for its type. Margaret's running box increases her damage by 2 for every point of STR she boosts, or her hit points by 5 for every point of CON she boosts. It otherwise follows the description on page 64.



make success slightly easier, or have the PCs fail to close the gate and have to run for it, closing the new Earth-Io gate behind them. The object is to make this success seem very hard-won, so PCs with already-high skills in Dimension Walk should have the requirements boosted.

When the conditions are met to close hellsgate, it begins to shrink and pulse, emitting a very high whistling tone which undulates up above the normal human auditory range and back down again. The purplish gate and the images of the glowing eye-things just "behind" it are broken up and whirled about, and seething tendrils of a smoke-like substance erupt into the shaft and are then suddenly dragged back into hellsgate.

SO LONG, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YA

If the PCs manage to close the gate before the Margaret-thing dies, she is sucked into the gate as it closes, screaming madly and trying to remain in

this dimension by any means. Her nails screech and draw sparks, leaving gouges in the stone around the gate as she is pulled slowly back into the Great Dark One's home dimension. She howls:

"This isn't the end between me and you. I'll come back to get you, even from hell itself. Nobody gets in my way. Nobody! You'll pay for this!"

If the player characters have killed the Margaret-thing, her body continues to twitch and ooze a mixture of fluids until the gate is closing. Then, as the gate shrinks, a long, crystalline limb, like that of a cosmic glass spider, reaches out and lifts her body almost tenderly with a sickle-like "finger," pulling it through the closing hellsgate.

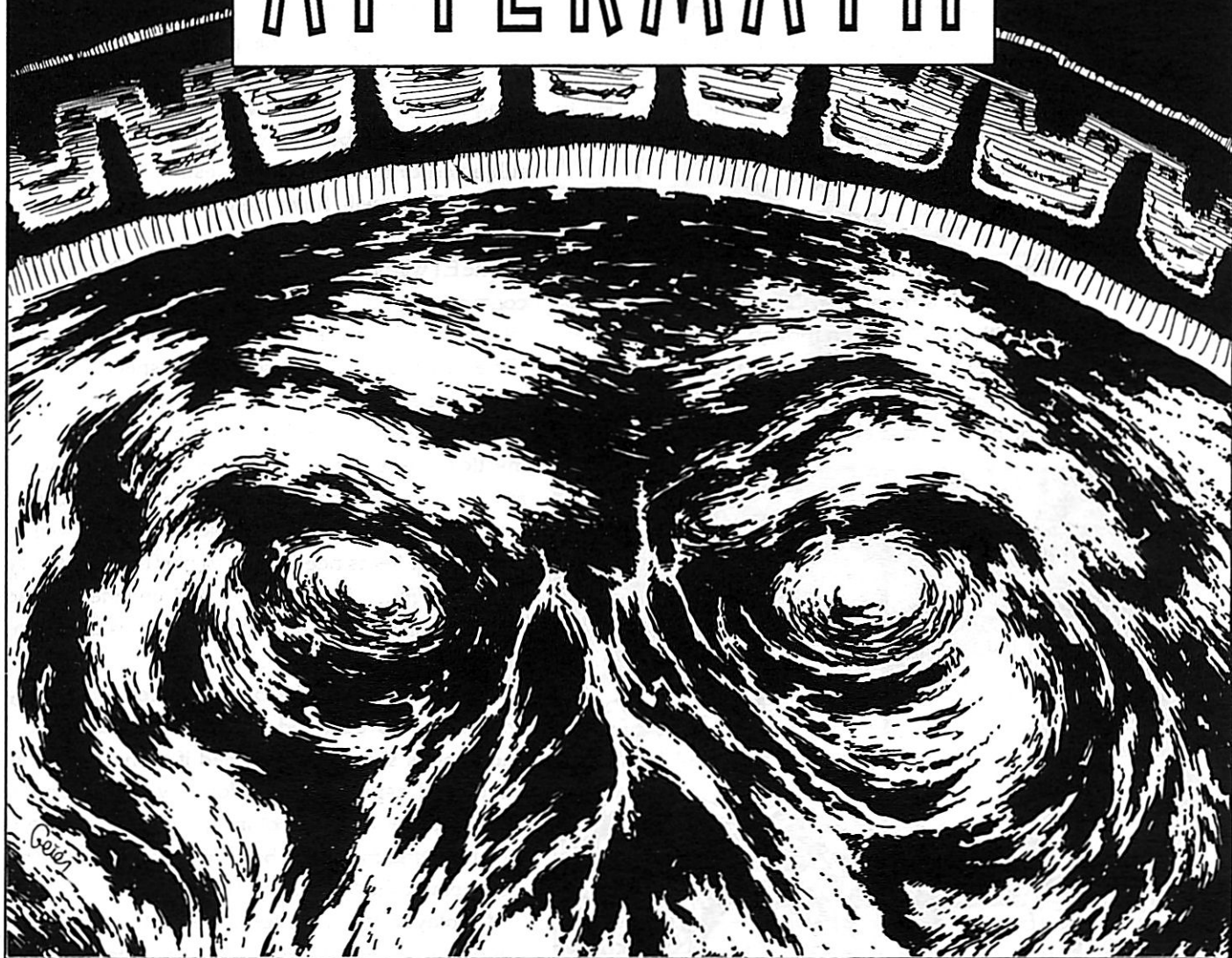
LEAVING IO

Leaving the ruin is as simple as retracing the party's steps. If the group has been led on a merry chase by the dimensional hunter, it may have to stumble about a bit, but it eventually finds its way out. As mentioned in the "Io" chapter, the humanoid ETs in the buildings beneath the bubble dome are unconscious and in shock; in fact, they are in a state very close to suspended animation. A person with Medical 6 or better who takes at least a half hour and succeeds at a Difficult: Medical task is able to tell that a given alien is not dead. If the PCs collect souvenirs from the ET buildings, the referee will have to improvise, but should avoid giving the PCs much DarkTek (and quite possibly none).

While destroying the bubble dome generator might seem an easy way to destroy the ETs, there is no way for the PCs to get to the open gate to Earth after they set off explosives unless they set the explosive on a timed fuse or detonator. Particularly conscientious PCs might point out that the ETs could have returned to normal now (if the PCs have determined the ETs are still alive), and might no longer be under the evil influence of the Great Dark One.

If the ETs are left alive, they send for help when they revive. Hellsgate is reopened in six months (or a time determined by the referee as best for his or her campaign).

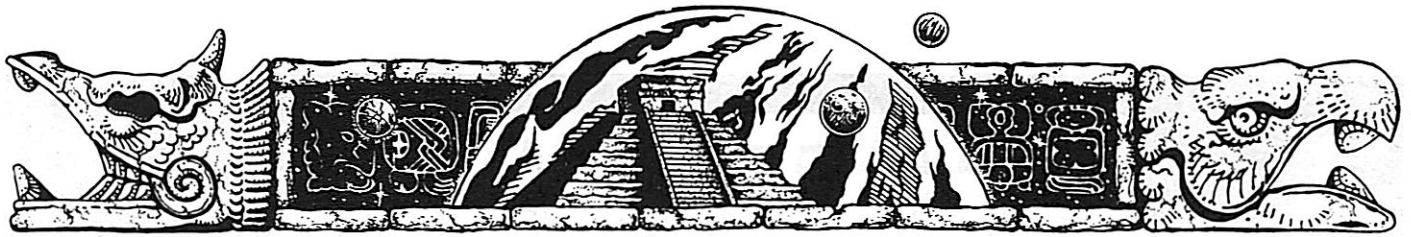
AFTERMATH



Closing the gate from the *cenote* to *Io* can be accomplished in much the same way as the closing of hellsgate. It is not so taxing an event, however, as it does not take place under the duress of battle or the imminent invasion of a Dark One. It is an Average task, rather than a Difficult one, and the referee should allow as many retries as necessary (perhaps on different days, though, to simulate the effort involved). The gate can be closed from either side, so the PCs could return to Earth and begin recuperating from any wounds taken recently under the care of Dr. Aguafuente while returning once a day or so to the gate to try and close it.

THE REOPENING OF HELLSGATE

Hellsgate itself is not likely to stay closed, as the Great Dark One has created other pathways to this universe since this first gate was opened, and it has a great many minions who still feel its influence and can be directed toward its reopening. However, the closure of hellsgate has thrown many of its schemes into disarray and ruined quite a few. It has also freed a few more ETs (guilt-ridden from memories of their past actions) from his control. A few will reach the sanctuary of the empathic underground and be able to pass on valuable information about the capabili-



ties, troops, and tactics of the enemy, so that the fight to free Earth's dimension from the influence of the Dark Ones can continue at a renewed pace.

The gate from the *cenote* to *Io* will not be reopened, as the coincidences of energy needed to force it open cannot be reassembled any time in the next few hundred years.

REWARDS

The NASA plane is still waiting for the PCs if they return within a month. NASA will honor its agreement with the PCs, even though Margaret does not return with them. If the PCs tell the truth, their story will be viewed skeptically, but will not be dismissed out of hand. After about two weeks of tests and

questioning, the PCs will be released due to the influence of the Air Force. (When the hidden ET heard what happened, he put on some pressure through old friends of his in the Air Force.) If the PCs bring back an ET, NASA will believe them without too much hassle, but they will still be questioned and subjected to quarantine and testing for about two weeks. They will have deluxe accommodations during that time, though.

The ET will be extremely grateful to the PCs, and will contact the group's mystic through Tony. He will offer information that the PCs need or will find very useful. (Referees should supply something specific to their own campaigns). He can also supply information on how to recharge the ET stun gun he supplied to the mystic at the beginning adventure, and his analyses of any items the PCs brought back with them from *Io* or the pyramid. His analyses will take at least two weeks' time, as the items need to get to him through a very circuitous route (yes, he has just changed hiding places again, to avoid any hunters that this adventure might have set on his tail).

Referees should award 3 experience points to any character who survived *Hellsgate*. Bonus experience points should be awarded if a character was roleplayed especially well, for clever solutions to problems, for moments of insight into the developing story, and for heroic behavior, such as rescuing prisoners at the Temple of Kukulcan.

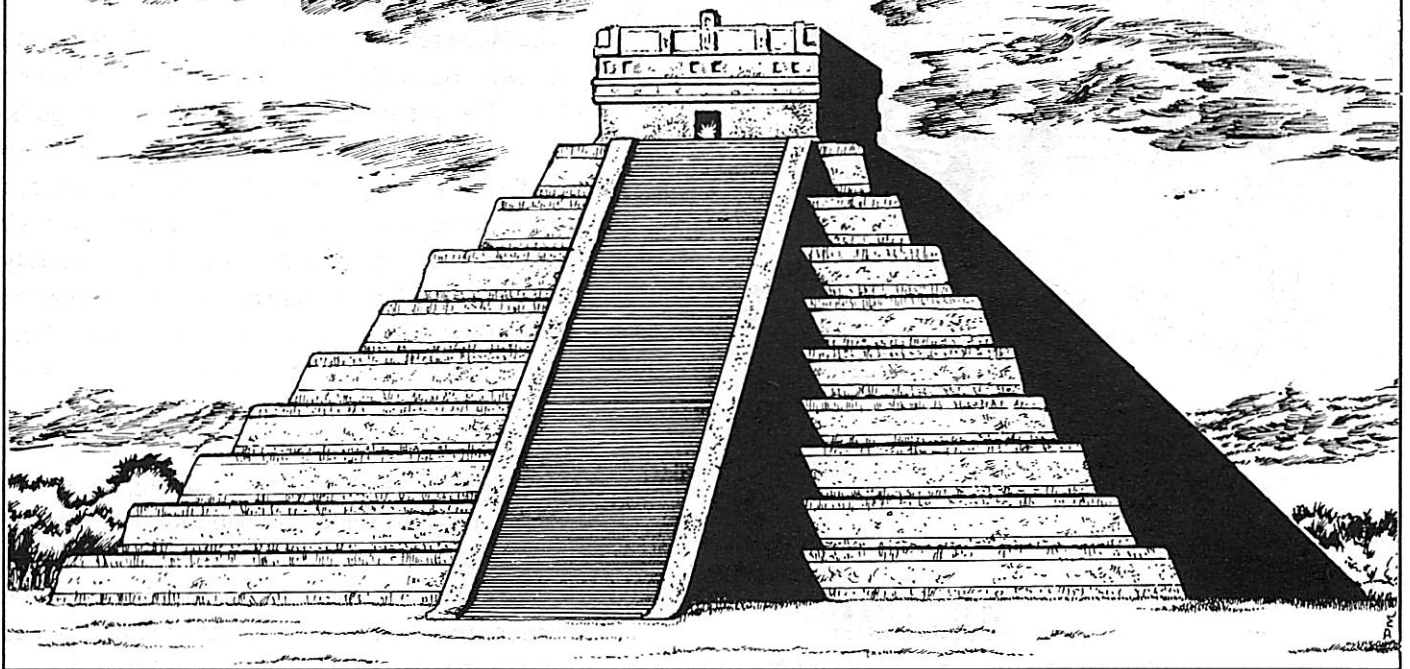
If a player character took the parts assigned to Raoul and performed his or her "repossession" well, the player should be awarded 2 bonus experience points. If the character died while the player was playing his or her own PC, the referee should provide a generous bonus to the player in creating a new character.

If the PCs were cautious about revealing the information about the gate and the hidden ET to Margaret, or never revealed it, they should all receive one bonus experience point.

If the PC who Margaret contacted at the start of the adventure was an old flame, roleplaying the remains of the romance (tastefully) should earn a bonus experience point.



RESEARCH RESULTS



CHAC

Chac was the Mayan name for the rain god. He had to be appeased, for without the rain, the corn would not grow, and without the corn all the people would die. Chac was often worshiped in sacred wells, or *cenotes*, where he was reputed to dwell. He accepted sacrifices thrown into the wells, including jade figurines, jewelry, and human sacrifices (of both sexes, but usually children or young adults).

CHICHEN ITZA

Chichen Itza was a large Toltec-Mayan civic and ceremonial center. It rose to its height in the 11th and 12th centuries when a man named Kukulcan, named after the deity revered by the Toltecs and the Mayas, took over the city. He focused his rule around the Castillo, a new temple/pyramid to Kukulcan. Chichen Itza featured the largest Mesoamerican ball court, among other archaeological structures of note,

such as the Temple of the Warriors, the Temple of the Bearded Man with its unique acoustics, and the observatory, which is shaped like a great snail. Every spring and fall equinox the shadows falling on the north stairs of the Temple of Kukulcan would precisely portray the illusion that a great serpent was slithering up or down them, an effect which was only rediscovered in the 1970s.

Chichen Itza was a state treasure of Mexico, an archaeological preservation and a tourist attraction in the Yucatan. Since the collapse of the global economy and its devastation of the tourist industry, and with the many problems which Mexico has faced as a nation, Chichen Itza has been closed to the public. The Temple of Kukulcan was the object of a terrorist bombing in 2003, and was almost totally destroyed. Other structures at Chichen Itza have presumably been allowed to weather and are gradually being reclaimed by the jungle from which they were rescued not long ago.



KUKULCAN

Kukulcan is the Mayan name for the Mesoamerican god known also as Quetzalcoatl, or the feathered serpent god. Quetzalcoatl is one of the oldest Mesoamerican gods, and was worshiped as early as AD 300. He was worshipped all over Maya and Aztec territory during the 16th century, when the Spaniards conquered much of Mexico and Central and South America. Kukulcan had many faces. As the creator god, he was responsible for the creation of humankind, and was the god of self-sacrifice, wisdom, and science. He was also the god of the wind in another aspect, and of the planet Venus, both as morning and evening star. When he was the morning star, he was represented by the feathered serpent; when the evening star, by the dog-headed monster, Xolotl.

MAYAS

The ancient Mayas lived in southern Mexico and Central America, and their descendents, the modern Mayas, currently live in the same regions. The Mayas were the first New World people to keep historical records, and they developed several inter-

locking calendar systems, including one more accurate in reflecting the length of the year than the Gregorian or Julian calendar. The Long Count of the Maya, equivalent in principle to the year AD 1 in the modern calendar, is generally agreed by scholars to be either August 10, 3113 or 3114 B.C.

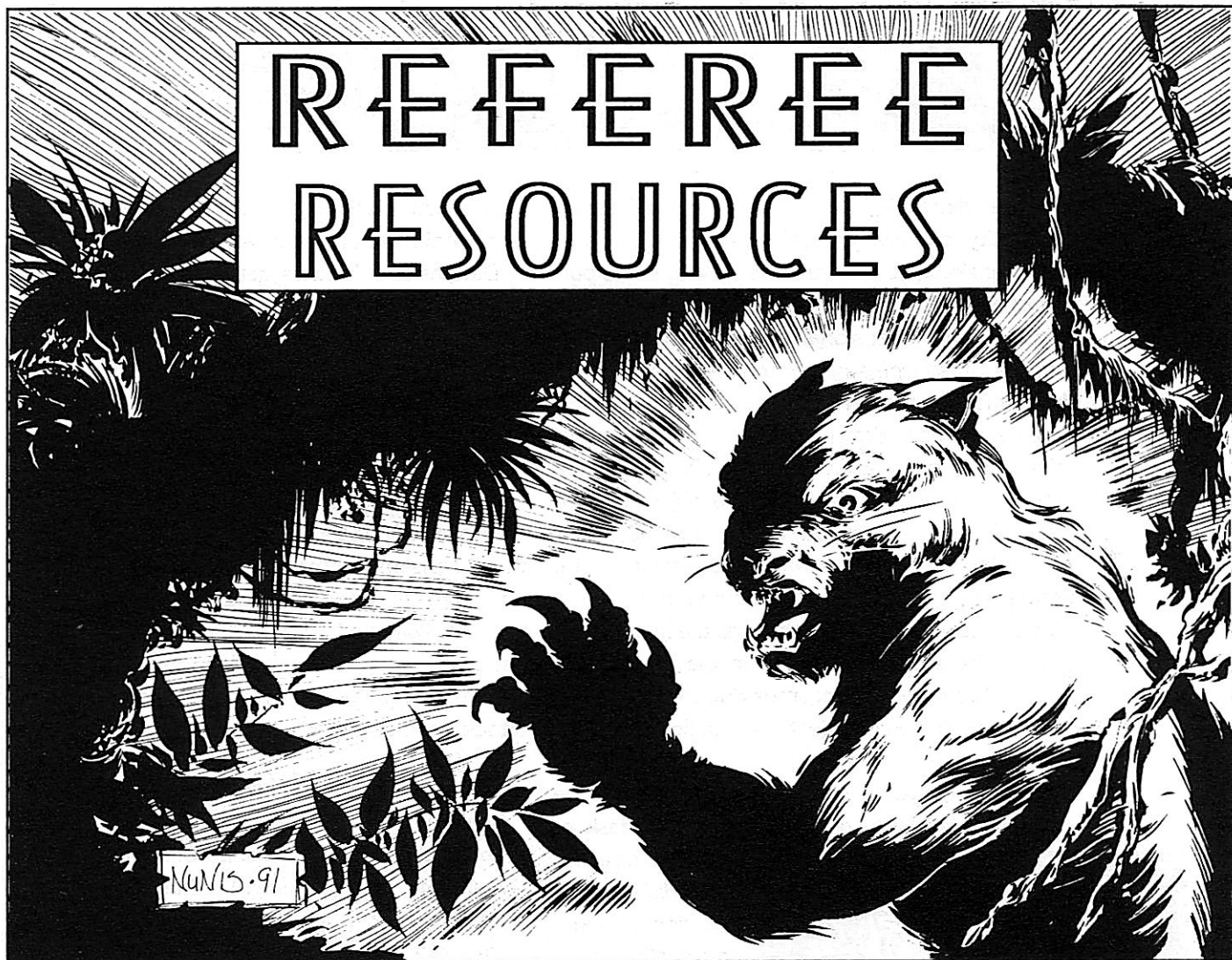
The Maya religion revolved around placating the gods, who could only be communicated with through priests. Many sacrifices were given to the gods, including human sacrifices, to persuade them to favor the Maya people, remember to send rain, ask them to keep away disease, and to bring to their worshipers victory in battle. The Mayan nobility partook in what it perceived as a ritual cycle during its lives. Birth, heir designation, accession, warfare, ballgame, and death was the usual cycle expressed in their art and architecture.

During the Classic Mayan period, much religious ritual focussed on ancestors, and during this period the Mayan rulers ruled as divine kings. After AD 900, the Mayan civilization suffered a rapid decline, the cause of which scholars are still in disagreement. Some say that the agricultural system was stretched too far by the priestly bureaucracy and other classes who consumed but did not add to the agricultural base. Others say that the far-reaching empire fell to disease, invasion, and internecine warfare between the nobles of rival houses. Whatever the cause or combination of factors, not one Classic Mayan lowland city-state domain survived into the 10th century.

Modern Mayas, over 4 million of them, speak one of over 30 Maya dialects and often dress in traditional Maya costume. The modern Mayans have retained many of the old traditions, in some cases blending them with new Catholic rituals. Mayan rituals for naming children, marriage, sickness, death, fortune-telling, and rainmaking have been retained over the centuries.

The ancient Mayans favored a conical head shape, with a prominent nose as beautiful, and bound the heads of infants with boards to produce it. This tradition is evident in the art of the ancient Mayas, but has not been retained by the modern Mayas.

REFEREE RESOURCES



This resource section provides the referee with statistical information on new beasts and Dark Races used in Hellsgate.

DIMENSIONAL HUNTER

Strength: 25 Education: 3 Move: 4/8/30/50
 Constitution: 20 Charisma: 7 Skill/Dam.: 8†/*
 Agility: 9 Empathy: 15 Hits: 37/75
 Intelligence: 9 Initiative: 6 # Appear: 1

†Possesses the following special skills: Darkling Empathy 10, Human Empathy 9, Dimension Walk 10, Dissolution 9. *See text.

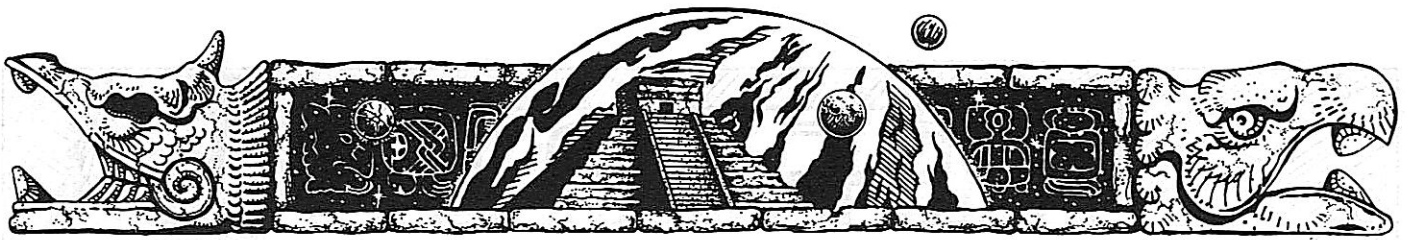
Special: Armor value 1. Automatic human image projection. Any successful attack disrupts this. Empathic "lock-on" to seen or touched target object.

Dimensional hunters are *EVIL*. The Great Dark One considers them to be vital weapons in his arsenal. They are always sent on specific missions, usually to find a specific person or thing and return with it to a certain person or place (often to the Great

Dark One in his home proto-dimension).

Dimensional hunters never speak, but communicate with other Dark Minions through Darkling Empathy. They communicate with humans using Human Empathy. The nature of their empathic communication and automatic image projection abilities work to befuddle the minds of humans they communicate with, such that they usually do not notice that the "tall, dark stranger" never spoke when he asked questions. A peculiarity of the human image projection ability of the dimensional hunter leaves the creature with no shadow, or its own shadow, a flaw which the few humans who have ever escaped one took advantage of.

In their natural form, dimensional hunters often exceed four meters in height. Their projected human images are always large, but never attract undue attention. Dimensional hunters are able to fit into spaces which such a large form would seem to prohibit—perhaps by standing halfway in a self-



projected dimensional gate, or using their Dissolution ability to partially dissolve their form.

Dimensional hunters are unswerving in the pursuit of their targets, and will continue across both physical and dimensional space. While they can begin a pursuit of a person or thing based on a description or projected or recorded image of it (even a memory drawn from someone or something), they become truly unshakable once they actually lay eyes on or touch the object of their quest. This is not a learned skill for them, but rather something that seems to be innate in their nature. Perhaps they divine the empathic vibrations of a target once they see or touch it and are then able to discern the subtle differences in the flow of life-energy throughout the cosmos due to the interaction of that person or object with the flow. One can only speculate.

Such an empathic lock-on can be broken by the death of the hunter, its reassignment to a new task, or

certain specific methods (empathic masking of some sort, or other methods specific to a certain hunter—therefore may specify his own).

Dimensional hunters only attack in self-defense, when they feel their disguise has been penetrated, or when someone is directly interfering with their acquisition of a target (physically in the way, shooting at them, whatever). They are never sent on simple as-

sassination missions; those are reserved for other, less specialized and less valuable Dark Races.

Dimensional hunters get two simultaneous attacks in each of their attack phases, each at skill level 8: one armed melee attack (claws) for 2D10 damage and a one armed melee attack (bite) for 2D10 damage. These must both be taken on the same target. Alternatively, they can grapple an opponent with one hand (1D6 grappling damage) or both (2D6 grappling damage). A completely controlled opponent can be automatically bitten, or the dimensional hunter may Dimension Walk to its goal with the opponent, if this opponent was its target. If a dimensional hunter is grappling with one hand, it may not bite until complete control is obtained over the grappled opponent, but it may attack another target with its free hand for 1D10.

JAGUAR-WERES (MOREAU WERES)

Strength: 9 Education: 3 Move: 2/8/14*
 Constitution: 9 Charisma: 2 Skill/Dam.: 7/**
 Agility: 4 Empathy: 1 Hits: 15/30
 Intelligence: 2 Initiative: 2 # Appear: 1D6+2

Special: *While jaguar-weres can never run (movement is for crawl/walk/trot), they can maintain a trot almost indefinitely when so directed.
 **See text.

Jaguar-weres used to be normal Mexicans until they were captured by the ETs inhabiting El Castillo in Chichen Itza. The ETs exposed their captives to an empathic viral mutator and an empathic viral subjugator (see page 63). The viral mutator was developed to transform its victims into beings with the characteristics of jaguar-men. It was the intention of the ETs that these jaguar-weres be used to further cow the local population, as legends remained among the local people that the old Mayan gods used jaguars to enact their justice and demonstrate their displeasure upon lapsed believers.

The viral mutator did not leave its victims with much of their intellectual capacity or sanity, and the viral subjugator erased whatever free will remained in the jaguar-weres. An unfortunate side effect of this was that the jaguar-weres do not retain much





spirit, and need constant direction as to what actions to take. In effect, they are jaguar-were zombies.

Although they are not truly walking dead people, they are slow, single-minded, and slavishly devoted to their ET Dark Minion masters. They can be told by a Dark Minion to obey a human, but they are extremely literal-minded, and so must be dealt with precisely. Learning to control them takes some instruction. Jaguar-weres told to obey one human cannot be told by that human to obey yet another human. A Dark Minion with Darkling Empathy must do the "reassignment." Jaguar-weres under the control of a human respond to verbal instructions in any language they used to know as a human being. Dark Minions may control jaguar-weres with Darkling Empathy or verbally.

Jaguar-weres often perplex opponents who think of them as the walking dead. They do still need to eat (and will do so ravenously, preferably on meat), and even to sleep for short periods. They can still talk (when they wish to, or rather, when it occurs to them to), and they still understand any spoken language they understood before their transformation. Some jaguar-weres can remember bits and pieces of information from before their transformation, but most who persist in remember-

ing succeed in getting themselves killed to escape their miserable existence.

Jaguar-weres get two simultaneous attacks in each of their attack phases, each at skill level 7: one armed melee attack (claws) for 2D6 damage and one-armed melee attack (bite) for 1D10 damage. These must both be taken on the same target.

MONKIONS

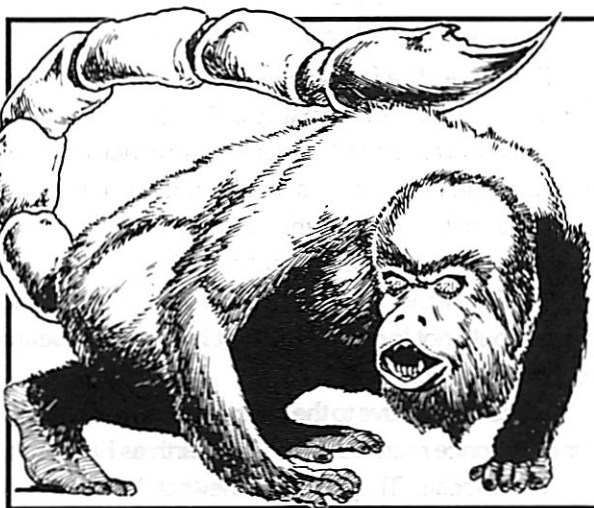
Appear: 2D6 Initiative: 4 Agility: 7
Attack: 60% Strength: 3 Skill/Dam.: 6/1D3
Move: 10/20/25 Constitution: 3 Hits: 5/10

Scorpion Tail

Appear: — Initiative: — Agility: —
Attack: — Strength: — Skill/Dam.: 4/2p1
Move: — Constitution: — Hits: —

A monkion is a mutated howler monkey which looks like it was crossed with a scorpion. Monkions are probably the result of an escaped empathic viral mutator which has been even further twisted by concentrated exposure to microwave radiation. Monkions have the body and head of howler monkeys, but the tail of a scorpion. Their eyes are faceted, like an insect's.

Monkions walk (10; bipedal or quadrupedal) or trot (20; quadrupedal) or propel themselves by swinging from branch to branch by their arms (25). Their tails help somewhat in this form of movement, but are not completely prehensile, being scorpion-





like now; a monkion cannot hang from a branch by its tail, but can use its tail for balance and to prop itself against a tree trunk, etc.

Monkions are social creatures in that they like to remain in groups. They are very territorial, but also roam about in search of food. They are omnivorous, and not at all above ganging up on creatures larger than themselves.

When attacking, monkions let forth an unbearable howling which unnerves their opponents and acts upon both their opponent's psyches and balance centers (especially the middle ear). The result of this unceasing din is that their opponents must make an Average: Constitution test or suffer a -1 to all combat skills while the monkions are screeching. Opponents that are deaf or employing hearing protection are not affected.

In combat, monkions may grab and bite at skill level 5 for 1D6+2 or attack with their tails at skill level 4 doing poison damage rated at 2p1; they may not make both attacks simultaneously. Their tails have an effective armor value of 1. In any given group of monkions, about half will make each kind of attack per phase that they can attack.

Monkions use the *Bipedal* column of the Hit Location Chart, except that a 7 hits their tail.

QUETZALS

Strength: 15 Education: 1 Move: 36
 Constitution: 15 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 6†/4D6*
 Agility: 8 Empathy: 12 Hits: 20/40
 Intelligence: 4 Initiative: 4 # Appear: 1

†Possesses the following special skills: Darkling Empathy 7, Human Empathy 6, Dimension Walk 6.

*This is an energy attack issued from their mouths with a range of 16 meters. It may only be used one out of every two phases the creature attacks. (That is, it requires a phase to "recharge.")

Special: Armor value 1 on head. Always flies, but wings could not logically support its mass. Appears to swim through the air.

Quetzals are native to the proto-dimension of a Dark One who once manifested itself on Earth as Kukulcan, or Quetzalcoatl. They look somewhat like the god

Kukulcan was supposed to appear—as a feathered serpent. They are a servant race to Kukulcan.

Quetzals are often used as messengers, guardians, and scouts by Kukulcan. While Kukulcan has moved his base of operations from his home proto-dimension, he sends quetzals back to it when any disturbance takes place there. Also, if any being tries to summon him back to his home dimension (or to any proto-dimension), he sends a quetzal first to see who is doing the summoning and what they want.

Quetzals perform their assigned duties with mixed efficiency. They are rather flighty, easily distracted, and not terribly bright. They are easily distracted by sources of what they see as food—life-energy. The hungrier they are (or the more temptingly large a source of food is), the more likely they are to pursue it. They are empathic energy vacuums—they absorb the ambient universal life-energies and store them, like batteries. They most easily absorb the life-energy given off by a dying creature. When need be, they can project these energies as heat and light in a ranged attack similar to a lightning bolt. Some quetzals' attacks more closely resemble a laser beam in nature than a lightning bolt.

Quetzals may also bite as an armed melee attack at skill level 6 for 2D10. They cannot bite and use their energy attack simultaneously.



DARKTEK

The following descriptions are not intended as full explanations of the given technology. Rather, this section is intended to provide enough information to play the adventure without the **DarkTek** supplement. For in-depth explanations of these and numerous other such items, **DarkTek** is highly recommended.

Bolter: This techno-organic weapon utilizes two creatures whose secretions combine to produce a large burst of flame.

Bolter Statistics

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoll—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Bolter	SA	6	2-Nil	3	5	1	—	8

Doc in the Box: An advanced medical kit containing a diagnostic computer, blood sampler/analyzer, oxygen mask, IV kit with fluids (including blood plasma), cardiac shock pads, portable X-ray unit, autosuturer, EKG (heart monitor), EEG (brainwave monitor), simple surgical tools, and basic drugs (including local anesthetics and antibiotics). The Doc in the Box is an excellent tool for first aid or general illness treatment, but use requires a medical skill of 1+. The kit as a whole grants the user a +3 bonus to effective medical skill.

Empathic Viruses: These are custom-designed viruses that are activated by an empathic command from their creator (through Darkling Empathy). The viruses have an empathic link to a specific Dark One or Dark Minion, and only that particular being can trigger the virus to take effect. The only way to become infected is to be injected with a large quantity of the virus. Once infected, there are only two cures. The most common is a complete blood transfusion. This transfusion must take place before the virus has taken root in the host's system. The only other cure is Virophage (see below). A single dose will immediately cure any empathic virus. The two types used in this adventure are detailed below. These are by no means the only types available.

Mutator: This highly specialized virus is impressed with a genetic pattern. Once activated in the host's body, this virus can cause the entire body to restructure itself into a gestalt of the two genetic patterns (the original and the virus' impressed pattern). The change takes a full 48 hours, after which the virus dies. The change is extremely painful and often leads to insanity for the recipient. This virus is responsible for many of the moreau weres in existence. Once the virus is has run its course, there is no cure.

Subjugator: When this virus is activated, it effects the will of the host, making him or her more susceptible to Darkling control. The virus lowers effective Willpower by 4. Once this virus has activated, it stays in the host's system unless he or she is cured. The only cure, once activated, is a dose of Virophage.

Erector: This creature is used by Dark Minions to raise structures. When fed fresh meat, this creature will follow empathic guidance in constructing new buildings or reconstructing old ones. It creates a framework lattice to the empathic specifications given it, while the viner (see below) fills in the spaces.

Esperlink: The Esperlink is a small biomechanical machine that links the wearer to another wearer of a similar device. It effectively allows the user to practice Thought Projection at a skill level of 20, but only to connect with the other Esperlink user. This Thought Projection cannot be used to command or implant commands; this is a communication device only. Not only are the users' thoughts shared, but also physical sensations. These sensations cannot effect the reciever in any way. Therefore, if one user was being tortured, the other user would know how much pain the first user was in, but would not be debilitated by it.

Under no circumstances can false data be transmitted via Esperlink.

The Esperlink must be worn on or near (within 10 centimeters) the brain to function. If placed farther away, the device can extend a tendril to the brain area that is up to 12 centimeters long.

The device looks like a large combination of an insect and a tentacled sea creature.

Wt: 0.05

Cost: \$450,000 (—/R)

Floater, Large Modular: A dish-shaped, open craft used for transportation by the humanoid ETs, the performance of this craft drops by 10 percent for every 60 kilograms over its normal 600-kilogram capacity. The entire vehicle is a rounded platform to sit on.

Price: N/A (—/—)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: Unknown



Load: 600 kg (-10% speed for additional 60 kg)

Wt: 250 kg

Crew: 2+7

Night Vision: None

Min Runway, Takeoff: 0 m

Min Runway, Land: 0 m

Damage Record: Pilot ☐ Copilot ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

Engine: ☐

Cruise Speed: 75

Com Move: 10

Fuel Cap: N/A

Fuel Cons: N/A

Holoweb: A product of joint human and renegade ET technologies, this is a device to produce, transmit, and record three-dimensional images. This device is rarely available to the public, and when it is, the cost is enormous.

Rejuvenator: This biomechanism is designed to regenerate injuries. With this coffin-like machine lost limbs may be regrown, injuries may be healed at increased rates, critical wounds can be automatically stabilized, the normal healing time for any wound can be halved (under medical care), and it can even extend the natural lifespan. There are two drawbacks: First, the machine must be fed 800 calories per hour of operation. If food is not available, then the patient may be placed into stasis for up to one week. If fed 2400 calories per day, this stasis can be maintained indefinitely. The other drawback is that for every 12 hours of treatment, the patient's effective Willpower versus Darkling control is reduced by 1.

Stun Gun, ET: This stun gun fires a bolt of electricity along a stream of laser-plasmatized air. If a target is struck by such a

effect with a radius of 10 meters.

Viner: This plant-like creature is the natural complement to the erector. While the erector creates a lattice, the viner can create solid surfaces to fit on the erector's framework. It must be fed similarly to the erector.

Virophage: Virophage is the newest in bioengineered superdrugs. Once injected, this organic medication cures any viral infection (including empathic viruses). Not actually a drug, Virophage is a beneficial symbiote that supercharges the immune system and releases counteragents to viruses, germs, etc. These symbiotes are so powerful that they can even help in the event of radiation poisoning. There is a near 100 percent survival rate in injected patients exposed to up to 250 rem of radiation.

Price: \$50,000 per vial

Wt: 20-cc vial

Running Box: This device is actually a symbiotic organism that can boost the user's physical capabilities upon command. This is accomplished by injecting chemicals into the user's body that will speed him or her up. This injection is done on command, thus the user can summon up a huge surge of adrenaline and other chemicals (some of which are mental-affective neurohumors.)

Each time the user decides to use a "surge," he must first state how many "points" and what type of boost he wants to draw, up to a maximum of 5. The selected physical attribute is raised for by the selected amount for one minute (two full combat turns). If the selected attribute is nonphysical, it is only raised by one half the selected number of points (rounding fractions down). Only one boost may be in effect at any one time. Another cannot be taken until the active one wears off.

The method of attachment is extremely unpleasant. When placed next to bare flesh, the running box extrudes a score of grappling pincers and (none too gently)

pushes invasive filaments and tubules into the host's body.

The biggest trouble with the running box as a viable tool is its side effect. For every point of boost used, the host must feed on one kilogram of fresh, raw meat. Fresh means dead less than one hour. This compulsion is very strong, and a Dark Minion will usually use the first living creature available. Up to one kilogram per combat turn can be devoured.

This device is not advised for PC use.

Wt: 0.375 kg

Price: \$950,000 (—/R)

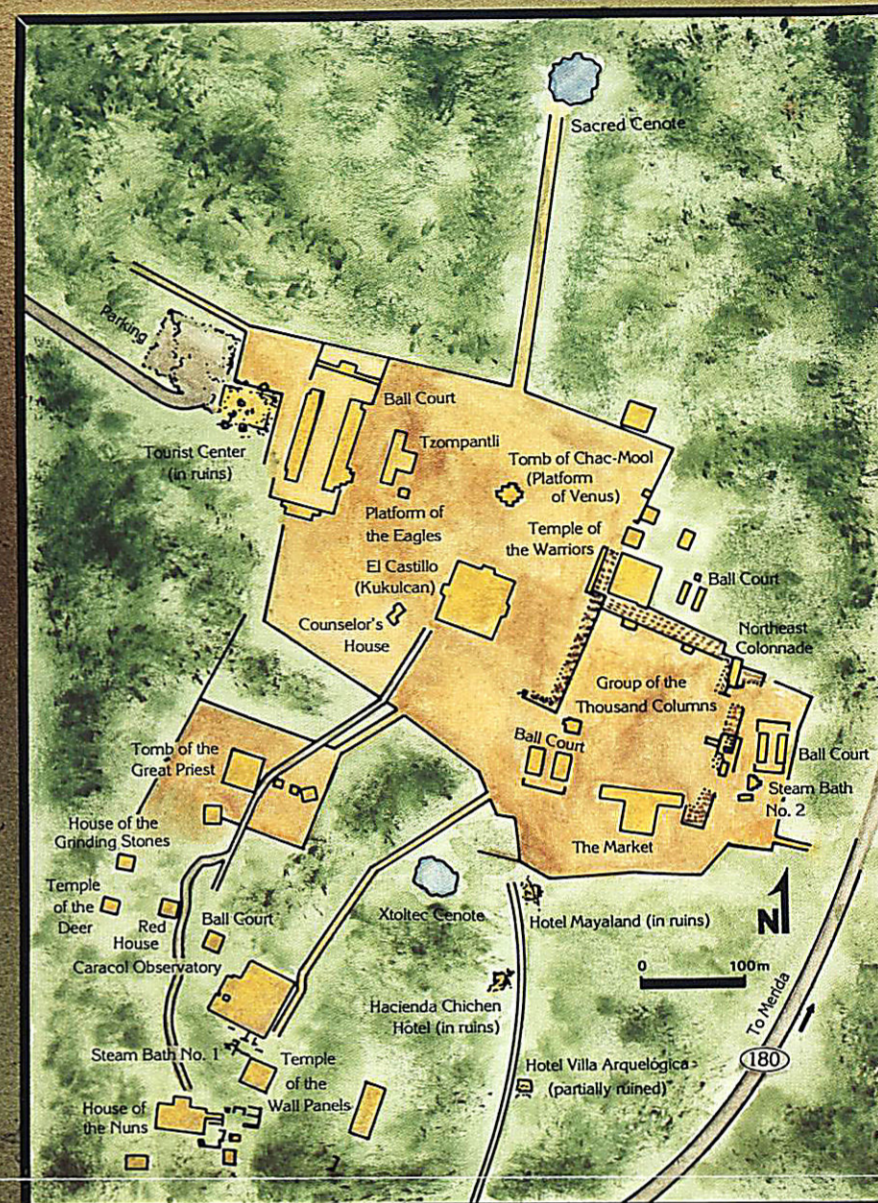
ET Stun Gun Statistics

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		Rng
						SS	Brst	
ET Stun Gun	SA	See text	Nil	2	40i	—	—	35

bolt, he or she must make a Difficult: CON test to remain conscious. If this test is not successful, the target is rendered unconscious for five minutes. If the test is successful, the target remains conscious but suffers a penalty of -2 to Initiative and Agility for six phases. In the case of an outstanding success, the penalty is reduced to -1. If a target still suffering from the effects of one stun is struck again, a catastrophic failure indicates that the individual has gone into cardiac arrest.

In a vacuum, the range of this weapon is reduced to 10 percent of normal. In water, the weapon has a globe

CHICHEN ITZA



STATE OF YUCATAN



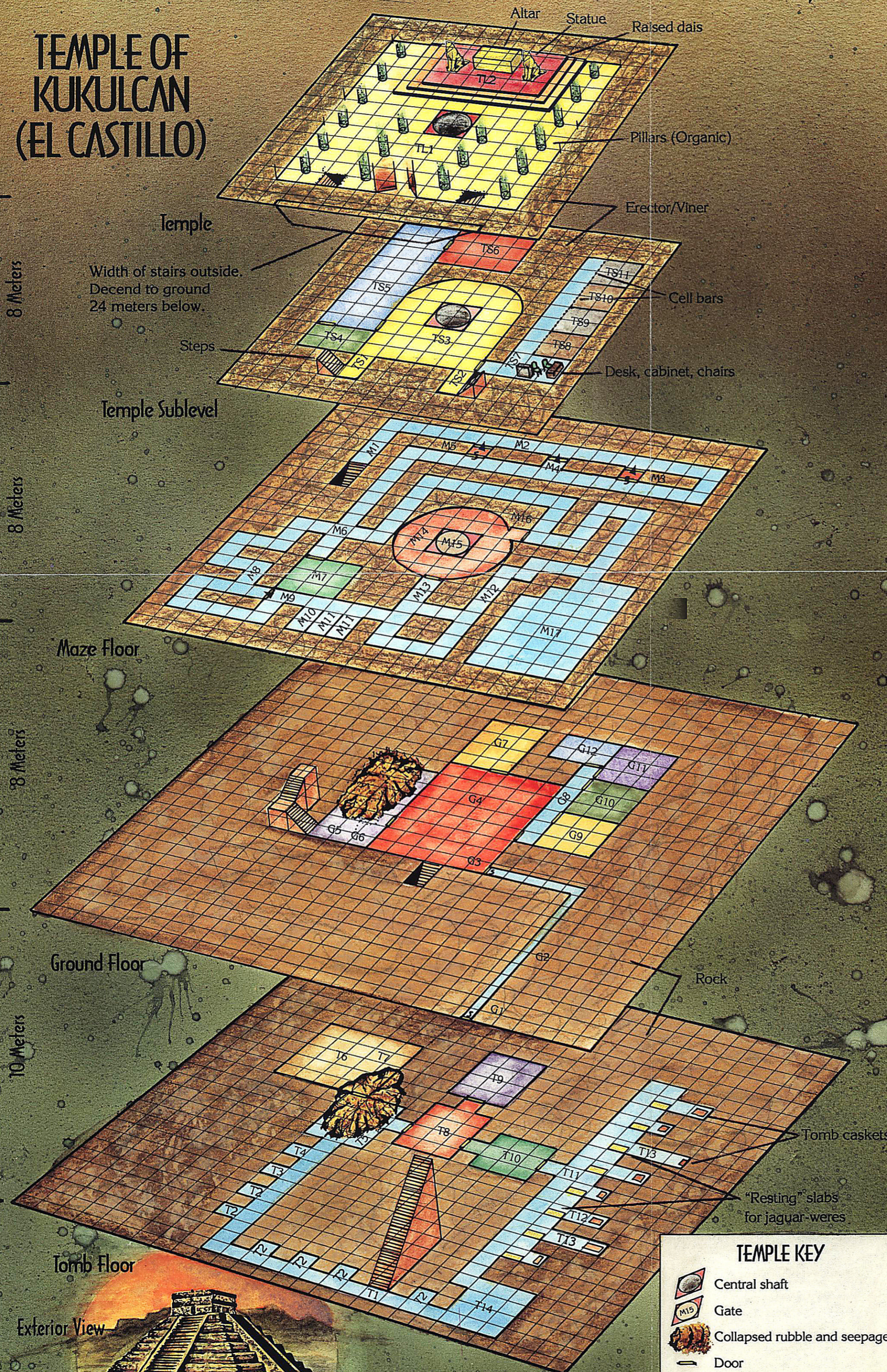
DRIVING DISTANCES (IN KILOMETERS)



THE YUCATAN PENINSULA









P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646



1 Square = 2 Meters

TEMPLE KEY

-  Central shaft
-  Gate
-  Collapsed rubble and seepage
-  Door
-  1-way door (secret)
-  Secret door

HELLSGATE™

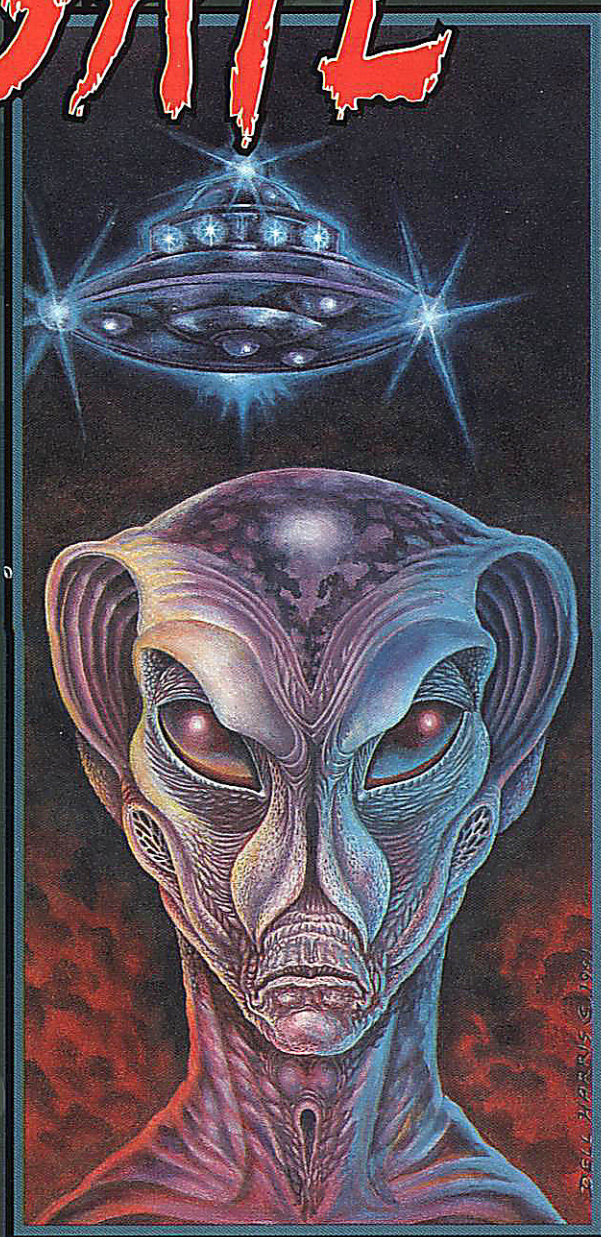
Through the millenia, it has known many names: Set, Surtur, Hel, Kutulu, Tiamat. The legends of this being stretch back beyond the memory of humankind. It is the Great Dark One. The source of misery, the bringer of despair, and the wellspring of human suffering.

Imprisoned in ages past, it has bided its time. When humans crawled from the evolutionary muck, it waited. As the first civilizations arose, it waited. When humanity first reached out for the skies, it waited. It waited for a time when it could be free to rule and torture.

That time has come. NASA's newest Comsat is beaming a strange and unknown signal to Mexico. The gods of the ancient Mayans are rising anew. Strange and horrible creatures stalk the night. These disparate threads hold the secret of the Dark One's return. The way is open for the coming of the Great Dark One.

Hidden away in this tangled skein of threads lies the terrible secret that can breach the walls of reality and herald the arrival of the greatest evil ever known.

The secret of **HELLSGATE**.



2104 10.00



ISBN 1-55878-097-1

Made in U.S.A.
Printed in U.S.A.
All rights reserved.
Copyright©1992 GDW, Inc.
Dark Conspiracy™ is a
trademark of GDW, Inc.

DARK™
CONSPIRACY



P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646