

DOCTOR WHO

ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE BBC



CAT'S EYE

 CREDITS

WRITING

Nick Huggins

LINE DEVELOPER

Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan

EDITING

Andrew Kenrick and Matthew Pook

COVER

Paul Bourne

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT

Paul Bourne

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Dominic McDowall

ART DIRECTOR

Jon Hodgson

 CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

3

THE MAJESTIC HOTEL

4

Reception

4

The Courtyard

5

The Restaurant

5

The Leisure Centre

5

THE FERAL CAT COLONY

6

THE SQUATTERS

6

THE POC UNITY

7

ARRIVAL

7

Kate Petersen

9

MEET THE SQUATTERS

9

Talking with the Squatters

10

The Afflicted

10

Water vs. The Poc Unity

11

Max Eddings

11

Peter Hutchins

11

"Chad"

12

EXPLORING THE HOTEL

12

Eddings

13

The Courtyard

14

A Sleeping Squatter

14

A Confusing Room

14

The Swimming pool

15

A Sudden Deluge

16

THE VILLAIN REVEALED

16

HERDING CATS

18

MAJESTIC HOTEL MAP

20

Published by Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd (UK reg. no. 6036414).
Find out more about us and our games at www.cubicle7.co.uk

© Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd. 2013

BBC, DOCTOR WHO (word marks, logos and devices), TARDIS, DALEKS, CYBERMAN and K-9 (word marks and devices) are trade marks of the British Broadcasting Corporation and are used under licence.

BBC logo © BBC 1996. Doctor Who logo © BBC 2012. Dalek image © BBC/Terry Nation 1963. Cyberman image © BBC/Kit Pedler/Gerry Davis 1966. K-9 image © BBC/Bob Baker/Dave Martin 1977.



INTRODUCTION

Earth. The present day.

With an eerie sigh, the TARDIS (or the time-travel capsule of your choice) materialises in the reception area of a deserted and boarded-up hotel. It's dusk, and what views there are of the outside world reveal a dilapidated industrial estate, full of concrete and drab buildings under a grey sky. It's just started to rain, and this quickly develops into a vertical downpour that would soak anyone venturing outside to the skin. Even the rain is uninteresting – no wind to blow it into squalls, no thunder and lightning to turn it into an interesting storm.

This place is the Majestic hotel – a testament to 1980s decor and 1980s business practices. It went out of business not long after the turn of the millennium and has remained deserted ever since. In the middle of an industrial district, itself run-down and well past its prime, boarding the hotel up well to prevent unwanted guests seemed like a good idea. But that was years ago, and now the place is home to a colony of feral cats, and a small (but growing) quantity of squatters who have moved in within the last year.

There's one other inhabitant of the Majestic hotel: a telepathic intelligence has a foothold within the hotel's small population. This intelligence is growing slowly in power, and if left unchecked it will use the hotel as a base to spread its influence out into the wider world.

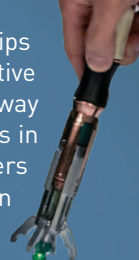
DIFFERENT CHARACTER TYPES

While this adventure is intended for a group of time (and space!) travellers, your player characters may not fit this bill.

If your player characters are a group of Torchwood operatives, you could have them tracking the meteorite that the Poc Unity intelligence arrived on, several weeks ago – perhaps there was a remnant of some alien single-celled organism found on a small chunk of rock that fragmented from the asteroid as it fell, the remainder of the meteorite fell in the hotel (see *"A Confusing Room"* page 14.) Alternatively, the group could have detected the formation of a telepathic matrix at the Majestic hotel using advanced technology.

If your player characters are from UNIT, it's wise to have them as a small investigative team rather than an entire battalion of troops and scientific advisors. They could also be on the hunt for the meteorite, or aware of the out-of-the-ordinary telepathic signature of the Majestic hotel.

If your campaign is the sort to involve personal relationships you might arrange a troubled background for a young relative of one of your player characters. The relative has run away from home and is rumoured to be living with the squatters in the Majestic. If this background is used, the player characters may be going in "cold" and not expecting any kind of alien involvement!





THE MAJESTIC HOTEL

A short exploration should turn up that this place is the Majestic hotel – arriving inside the hotel, it's hard to tell exactly how big the place is, but the decor seems low-quality enough that the place can't be very upmarket. If the player characters are coming from a different era than the present it might be hard to tell what era they're in just by looking at the hotel – it's trapped in the 1980s. Good ways of putting this across to your players might be clothes or magazines strewn around staff areas (in the UK "Smash Hits" was a popular music magazine, "Computer & Video Games" and "Zzap!" dealt with video gaming while "More!" and "Vogue" were aimed at housewives and fashionistas.) As a more obvious approach there may be a guest sign-in book at the reception desk.

Wherever the player characters go within the hotel they should never be far away from a cat. There is a significant colony of feral cats living in the Majestic and their scent should be constantly apparent. It's to be expected that the player characters will encounter cats on their explorations within the hotel – a shadow darting around a corner, or the yowl of fighting toms coming from elsewhere in the building.

The hotel comprises two storeys – a ground floor and a first floor. It is shaped as a square with what was originally a garden courtyard in

the middle. At the front of the hotel is a reception area, and there is a large building at the rear containing a restaurant area as well as a leisure centre with a pool. The area between the reception and the leisure centre/restaurant area on either side is a "wing" with one wing significantly more dilapidated than the other. It's also the case that the lower storey of the hotel is in better condition than the upper. Closer to the roof there are more leaks and areas open to the elements with commensurate mould, fungus and structural damage.

RECEPTION

Reception is the first area the player characters encounter. If they have arrived by TARDIS then they materialise in reception. If they are coming in from the outside and have broken down the boards that cover all the external windows and doors they will come through the front door.

The reception area has a high ceiling covering both storeys and a staircase on either side of the main entrance area leads up to the first floor guest rooms. A side door beneath the stairs on either side leads to the ground floor rooms. There would once have been furniture here, but that has been long removed, and so the area is large, dark and echoing, as the fake marble flooring here makes every footstep sound like thunder.





THE COURTYARD

The courtyard is now overgrown and treacherous, and most of the windows that face into it are green with algae and neglect.

Originally the courtyard was a square area roughly sixty feet on a side. Trees were planted at random in a grassy area surrounding a small rockery and seating area in the middle of the courtyard. Now, with neglect the grass has grown knee-height or higher and weedy. The trees are overgrown and beginning to spread wide, throwing darkness over the surrounding area. The central area is also gone to seed, but most of the grass and weeds there have been pressed down with the weight and movement of the feral cat colony as this open area is where the cats can be found most often, basking in the available sunlight during the day. The combined scent from a number of cats in the area lends an additional wildness to the courtyard!

THE RESTAURANT

The restaurant consists of a large open hall where originally there would have been tables and chairs for the hotel's residents to sit and eat. Adjoining this is a kitchen area – big enough to have a dozen

chefs working comfortably in it. The roof has failed in the large restaurant hall area and there is a good twenty feet square hole above which is open to the elements. The squatters living in the hotel use this area whenever they need to light a fire for whatever reason, and what was originally a wooden floor is now crunchy underfoot, ringed with areas of charcoal and ash. A couple of metal drums have been rolled into this area in an attempt to contain some of the fires, but it would appear that the squatters light up wherever they like.

Though the kitchen might be considered to be a good place to “tool up” in the event of the player group feeling insecure and needing some kind of weapon, it's not. Whatever sharp implements were there have long since been scavenged away by the squatters (spending a Story Point can turn up a rusty knife or a really big spoon that the squatters missed).

The restaurant area is also a good place to get out into the outside world, should the players want to. Double doors here once led out onto a patio/beer-garden area. The doors are boarded over, but have been modified by the squatters so that they can be opened and closed as normal. The squatters go out of their way to keep these closed and keep the secret of their lair within the hotel, but it's a good way of getting out.

THE LEISURE CENTRE

At the back of the Majestic is the leisure centre. It consists of a large room where exercise machines originally stood, a set of changing rooms for both men and women, and a swimming pool. Oddly, the pool is filled with water (albeit cold and a dubious muddy brown colour). The exercise room – the largest comfortable living area in the hotel – has been commandeered by Peter Hutchins and his friend and bodyguard Chad – see page 9.

SO WHY NOT JUST LEAVE?

With an alien intelligence threatening to take over this small, uncared-for group of people and the cats that live here... it would be easy to just walk away. The rain outside is keeping the mentally enslaved cats and humans in the Majestic, but certainly not the player characters.

But there's a reason that the player group is here. If they're UNIT or Torchwood there's a mission to be carried out, and a duty to be adhered to. If the group are just casual time travellers then they've been asked for help by the squatters (in the guise of Kate and Hutchins). If the Doctor were asked for help against an alien threat by a group of defenceless people it's highly unlikely that he'd just walk away!

THE FERAL CAT COLONY

Feral cats have two distinct origins – either as a domesticated cat that has escaped into the wild, or as a cat that was born in the wild, away from the calming influence of humanity. The lack of domestication is important – feral cats will, when confronted by a human, run. If cornered, a feral cat will spit and growl and hiss, hunching itself into a ball, all teeth and raised hackles. If touched, the cat will claw and bite.

The colony (or “clowder”, to be both technically correct and to confuse your players with the suggestion of soup) of feral cats at the Majestic is around twenty cats strong. The colony primarily inhabits the courtyard in the centre of the hotel where it is overgrown and unkempt, and both mice and birds are plentiful. The cats are social, often rubbing up against each other to transfer scents. Kittens from different litters romp and play together. When seen alone, cats are usually hunting.

When encountered in the Majestic the cats seem a little more solitary. They will stare for as long as they are able, only running when they are threatened or disturbed. The player group may find itself in the unnerving situation of being stared at by several cats simultaneously from different directions.

THE SQUATTERS

In recent times (the last year or so) a number of squatters have taken up residence in the Majestic's deserted corridors and rooms. These are homeless people who have been informed of the existence of a free place to live, albeit a damp and smelly one, by word of mouth. After all, sleeping on a mattress on the floor in a room with a closed door is a lot better than sleeping on the streets, and the fact that there are a number of other indigents in the vicinity only makes it more attractive. Over time a small community has built up in the hotel, until there are roughly twenty people creating their own little co-operative commune.

What may be surprising is the lack of drugs among the current residents of the Majestic. This is largely because of the stabilising influence of the group. While there are occasionally individuals within the group that are have some sort of antisocial disorder, the

community as a whole has gone out of its way to push out any unstable influence from drug culture – the moment the police have a reason to take an interest in the Majestic because of the drugs culture there, the more likely it is that the whole community will be shut down. The fact that the community has been in existence for approximately a year speaks testament to the wisdom of this policy.



Currently, the community is “led” by **Peter Hutchins**. Hutchins is less of a leader and more of an older man who many of the current residents of the hotel like and trust. These followers appreciate Hutchins' advice and defer to his opinions.

Hutchins is frequently accompanied by his best friend – simply known as **Chad**. Chad is a hulking man, either mute or voluntarily silent, who all of the other squatters have a healthy respect for.

The player group are also going to meet **Max Eddings**, the proverbial “squeaky wheel” of the community, and **Kate Petersen**, who they should come to consider as a friend. There are two catatonic squatters by the names of **Mister Stavros**, and **Ginny** who the player characters will come across – feel free to add in more squatters depending on the size of your party and whether or not you think they'll be useful.

The squatters don't spend all their time in the hotel. Rather, most have “day jobs” of one sort or another, some as panhandlers, some are involved in petty theft. The less socially capable are often involved in “collecting” – mostly for their own ends, but sometimes an item may be brought back that will be useful to the group. There is no electricity supply in the hotel, but the rain supplies a usable supply of



water, there is plenty of space, and there is a lot of debris that can easily be used as firewood. Mostly the squatters use the restaurant area for lighting fires, but the occasional burned circle on the ground can still be found.

THE POC UNITY

The Poc Unity is more of a telepathic matrix than an actual physical creature. It can hold its own memories and personality together in the smallest of minds and reproduces this way – seeding its own consciousness into microbes on asteroids.

Such an asteroid fell to Earth recently, carrying a tiny number of single-celled organisms. This was enough for the Poc Unity, and it has been slowly building strength, inhabiting more Earth organisms, and more complex ones. It's important to note that there is no "central" creature here, no controlling entity or glowing master brain. The Unity carries itself entirely inside the minds of its slaves (unlike, say, the Nestene Consciousness). It's a collective.



The intelligence can inhabit more than one creature at the same time, raising itself an army of slaves. It can only do by increments, inhabiting a creature with a tiny brain, then something slightly bigger, and slightly more complex. At the time that this adventure begins it inhabits a number of cats and is looking to step its game up to include humans as well. It has latched on to a plentiful supply of human brains with flaws – the squatters in the Majestic hotel, some of whom are fully in control of their mental faculties, but others of which have minds that are disused or addled from the long periods of isolation and lack

of social niceties that go hand-in-hand with living rough. It cannot right now inhabit a complex and high-functioning mind (like that of an adventurer).

In order to subvert the will of something new the Poc Unity needs to maintain eye contact for a full five minutes or so between the prospective convert and an already controlled organism. This sets up the psychic link.

The creature's weakness is undoubtedly its inability to maintain control through a body of water. A being of advanced intellect and experience of the scientific study of telepathy (such as someone who has the Time Traveller, Alien, Time Agent or Time Lord trait, or who has Telepathy, or a suitable Area of Expertise in Science) will realise that this is likely due to the differing speeds of thought in a liquid medium versus air, though this realisation is not important to defeating or warding off the intelligence.

A creature enslaved by the Poc Unity will stay still and stare off into space, blinking very occasionally. It will not move or struggle if picked up or manhandled – its cognitive functions are being used by the intelligence. The intelligence may move its slaves, but can only stay focused on a small number at a time. As it enslaves more minds the number it can "puppet" in this fashion also increases. This also means that someone who has been enslaved by the Unity is easily shaken to their senses in the early stages. As the Unity takes a greater hold it becomes harder to take a convert back.

ARRIVAL

Depending on how the characters arrive at the Majestic they may arrive in any area of the hotel. For the sake of argument, it's going to be assumed that they arrive in the reception area – either because they got in through the "front door" (having prised open the wood boarded across the doors) or because whatever conveyance they're using (TARDIS, time ring etc) materialises them in the reception area.

Have the players spend quite some time working out where they are and what's around them – atmosphere is important here, and you should be emphasising that the hotel is dark inside. If you have any control over the timing of the arrival, the player group should have arrived after dark. If this option isn't available to you, then play up the fact



that with all the windows boarded up and electricity not available, there is a constant state of gloom in the Majestic. The player characters will need some kind of light source, be that a candle, a torch, or the light from a sonic screwdriver, especially when they choose to leave the reception area and travel through to other areas within the hotel.

The next important thing to note is the rain – there is an unseasonal downpour going on outside at the moment, a heavy and constant deluge that shows no signs of relenting for the time being. This is another thing you can use in order to heighten atmosphere with the players – the Majestic has a number of leaks, from the tiny to the large hole in the roof of the restaurant area. You can use these for sound effects – the slow drip-drip-dripping of a tiny crack in the roof, or for visual effects – wet footprints (feline or human) leading away from a puddle and stopping at a door.

The rain is also keeping the Poc Unity in the hotel this evening. If any of its slaves go out in the deluge they are likely to get soaked through and the intelligence will lose control of them.

Once the player group has figured out where they are and what's around them, they should encounter Kate. She is one of the squatters, and has been attracted by the sounds of the party talking and walking around generally exploring. She's more curious and social than some of the other squatters, and she's also the closest to the player characters. Kate will lurk around watching the group for a little while before introducing herself (anyone managing an Awareness + Ingenuity roll with a difficulty of 12 will be able to spot the girl before she shows herself).

Kate will spend some time working out in the conversation whether or not the player group is trustworthy or not. Though she is naturally suspicious, she also wants to see the best in people. Once she has gained enough trust in the group, or alternatively if she has been frightened enough by a show of force or threats she will discuss the existence of the rest of the squatters.

She will also reveal that there are a number of the squatters who have fallen ill and nobody knows what to do with them – the game is afoot!



KATE PETERSEN

AWARENESS	3	PRESENCE	2
COORDINATION	3	RESOLVE	2
INGENUITY	4	STRENGTH	2

SKILLS

Fighting 3, Convince 4, Survival (streets) 5, Subterfuge (hide) 4

TRAITS

Attractive: Kate is "cute".

TECH LEVEL: 4 **STORY POINTS: 8**

Kate is a runaway. She's 19 years old, though she may look a little older than that due to her rough life on the streets. She's far from unattractive, but she's more "cute" than classically beautiful. Her hair is blonde, cut loosely (probably by herself) into a shaggy page boy cut and she wears clothes designed to keep herself warm, including a hoodie and workman's vest, then faded jeans and battered and worn workman's boots that look maybe a size too large for her. She sports a number of piercings in her ears, nose and lower lip and has a soft cockney accent.

Kate is pleasant to talk to. Curiosity is her main driving quality. She will want to know everything about the player characters, their arrival and intent. This is both because she's interested, but she will also want to report all of this information to Hutchins and Chad - knowing things about the Majestic that nobody else knows is worth something in the little co-operative society of the squatters. Though curious, Kate is quite quiet. She has a tendency to fade into the background when she's not being concentrated on - probably a good skill for an urchin.

Though Kate is a runaway she has become used to her life on the streets and is very comfortable with her life in the Majestic. During the daytime she frequently acts as a scavenger for the group, panhandling for money (easier for her with her attractiveness than for some of the others) and buying consumables like milk or lighters. She has become the unofficial "little sister" of the community.

 MEET THE SQUATTERS

Kate will lead the player characters through the hotel to get to the leisure centre. This is likely the first time that the players will have seen the hotel, so make this a tour of sights and sounds and smells for them, possibly with Kate acting as tour guide. It would be useful for the players to see (if not necessarily investigate) the restaurant and the central courtyard on the way to the rear of the hotel.

This is also the first time that the player group should see a cat. Try and work in two encounters with cats on the way back toward the leisure centre. One encounter should be a quick one - torch beams in the darkness catch the reflecting glint of a cat's eyes and the cat is revealed a second later, staring at the party. Kate shoos the creature away before anything else can occur, and this may prompt a discussion about the feral cat colony. Kate loves cats, but these ones "aren't the purring and petting kind, oh no." The second cat encounter should ideally be discovering a cat staring - from somewhere on high down at the party - ideally by one of the characters alone. The cat then walks away into the darkness, tail held high.

Eventually, Kate leads the party to the leisure centre, and into the exercise hall, now the domain of Peter Hutchins and his friend Chad. If it feels like the group is being taken to a throne room in order to meet the ruler of the Majestic, you're probably doing it right. A handful of squatters occupy this the area at any one time; men and women in heavy and bundled clothes, some of them carrying plastic bags, all of them dirty and unkempt. This should be an uneasy situation for the player characters as they are outnumbered, and the squatters might be dangerous. The squatters are not entirely clean and don't smell entirely pleasant. There's a wild look in the eyes of many of them. If any player characters are likely to be prejudiced or judgemental, play that up. How would, say, an upper-class Victorian companion think of the lowest of the low?

The room is partway a meeting room of sorts, with a number of scavenged chairs and stools in a loose sort of a circle in the middle. There is a curtained area off to the left and the right, supported by string tied across the length of the room. The light is better in here due to a number of skylights that let moonlight or sodium light from streetlamps in (natural light if it's the day time). Water drip

from these skylights. A number of candles stand strategically placed around the perimeter of the area in a rough circle.

Hutchins is around 60, bearded and with long straggly grey hair. However, his eyes shine with intelligence in a face made leathery by exposure to the sun. Like Kate, he is suspicious of the newcomers, but he's also concerned for whom he considers to be "his" people, and he'll listen to reason easily enough.



TALKING WITH THE SQUATTERS

Starting a fight in this area isn't recommended. The squatters side with Hutchins, and while he entreats everyone to calm down his people will try and defend him – notably Chad, who should act as a kind of a deterrent for violence all by himself. On the other hand, if the player group are the martial sort they can get the same amount of information and co-operation from the squatters – they will find Hutchins disappointed that the group feels it needs to use force to get what it wants. The group will also encounter more general resistance from the squatters in future, especially Chad, whose silent burning gaze can be felt from across the room.

The character of Max Eddings should be used in order to play devil's advocate with the player group. Eddings is confused and negative and unafraid of letting his unconstructive opinions show. Where Hutchins is more likely to trust the characters, Eddings doesn't, and will suggest that the group represent the authorities come to evict everyone, or that they are looking to take the Majestic

for themselves, or that they are the cause of the problem. Eddings' arguments don't always make sense – he might try all three of the arguments above, switching between them from time to time. When you feel like he has made his point enough, he grumpily heads off back to his room in the hotel (see page 13.) The party may follow, or may choose to talk more with Hutchins.

THE AFFLICTED

If Hutchins is convinced by the player group's intentions, or he feels like the squatters have something to gain from these newcomers then he draws aside one of the curtains: behind it are two makeshift cots made of blankets where two squatters are lying, eyes open, staring at the ceiling! There's a small table lying between the two cots, and on this are a jug of water, some over-the-counter painkillers and what looks like a bowl of soup.

The two squatters (a man and a woman) are catatonic, and it's clearly not natural. An Awareness + Medicine roll at difficulty 12 will indicate that while the essential reactions of the squatters are normal (they respond to stimuli like a nerve-jerk test, pupil dilation and so on) they are unresponsive to virtually anything else like loud noises, being poked or prodded, pain etc.

The only thing they may be responsive to is having cold water splashed into their faces (see *Water vs. The Poc Unity*, opposite) Hutchins will explain that these squatters were found in this condition roughly 24 hours ago now, and he is worried for their safety considering that they are neither eating nor drinking. The other squatters have been attempting to force-feed them with soup.

At this point, the ball is very much in the player characters' court. There are a number of possible directions of investigation within the Majestic – possibly the group will think that Eddings is responsible. Possibly they will want to explore more; possibly they will want to conduct some more medical tests on the squatters who are currently catatonic. This narrative will follow the course of investigating the hotel further and will suggest various optional scenes that the Gamemaster may or may not use, including a confrontation with Eddings.



WATER VS. THE POC UNITY

As noted above (on page 7), immersion in water disconnects a victim from the Unity's control. In order to fully disconnect someone, they need to be fully immersed in water (completely soaked in rainwater will do). However, a short splash of enough water

will bring an enslaved victim around, making them blink and cough and get a panicked look as if they weren't sure of exactly how they got to be here. Opportunities to discover the weakness of the Unity will be highlighted in following scenes so that it's easier to allow the players to notice what's going on.

MAX EDDINGS

AWARENESS	3	PRESENCE	2
COORDINATION	2	RESOLVE	2
INGENUITY	3	STRENGTH	1

SKILLS

Fighting 1, Survival (streets) 4, Subterfuge (hide) 4, Medicine 2

TRAITS

Selfish: Eddings thinks of nobody other than himself. He is conniving and suspicious by nature.

Argumentative: Eddings likes nothing better than to argue and nitpick others.

TECH LEVEL: 4 **STORY POINTS: 8**

Max Eddings suffers from some unknown psychological complaint that makes him angry and confused a lot of the time. Misanthropic and hurting inside, he takes out his confusion on those around him, constantly looking for fault and argument in everyone he comes into contact with. Unfortunately he can't back any of his unpleasant nature up, and if things begin to get violent, Max will be the first one to turn tail and run. He is new to the Majestic, only having been around for a couple of weeks.

For all his bluster, Eddings is a follower. He doesn't trust Hutchins' ease with other people and the family spirit that has built up around him. In point of fact, Eddings would likely be a lot happier as a willing convert to the Unity – with his suspicion taken away from him he could relax and let someone else do the driving; precisely what Hutchins would never do.

PETER HUTCHINS

AWARENESS	4	PRESENCE	4
COORDINATION	3	RESOLVE	3
INGENUITY	4	STRENGTH	1

SKILLS

Fighting 3, Convince 5, Survival (streets) 4

TRAITS

Friends: Hutchins has the majority of the squatters of the Majestic on his side. While not all of them would fight for him, some would.

TECH LEVEL: 4 **STORY POINTS: 6**

Peter Hutchins is something of an enigma – why he is homeless is a mystery considering the remarkable gift he has where people are concerned. People are drawn to Hutchins and he takes care of them, using a natural gift for organisation and management. He is warm and friendly, easy to smile and quick to thank someone for their help. Hutchins is a hard man to dislike, and if he is threatened he has a number of friends who will take care of him, including the formidable Chad.

Hutchins can be considered to be the "leader" of the squatters, though he considers himself more as a father or uncle to those around him rather than a leader who holds sway by force or coercion. He may even refer to his people as his family. He definitely considers Chad close enough to be a brother.

"CHAD"

AWARENESS	3	PRESENCE	1
COORDINATION	5	RESOLVE	3
INGENUITY	3	STRENGTH	6

SKILLS

Fighting 4 (Unarmed Combat 6),
Survival (streets) 3, Subterfuge (hide) 4

TRAITS

Brave: Chad would think little of jumping into a fight to save a friend of his. His best friend is Hutchins, but he would likely try and fight on the side of any of the squatters.

Friends: Chad has won the respect of many of the squatters.

Tough: Chad's a big guy, and his bulk reduces any damage he takes by 2.

TECH LEVEL: 4 **STORY POINTS:** 5

Chad is a large and mysterious man, 6'3" tall and with great shoulders that are only emphasised by the greatcoat he generally wears.

He is always silent; if he speaks it is only to Peter Hutchins, and only when they are alone. He follows Hutchins like the man is a great leader, or perhaps a lover. His intense gaze follows anyone who is interacting with Hutchins and he will leap to Hutchins' defence if someone were to act threateningly. Chad has one other close friend – a ginger kitten. "Hamish" (as the kitten has been named by the rest of the squatters and Chad hasn't objected) can generally be found in a pocket of the big man's greatcoat. It is not, nor has it ever been, a part of the feral cat colony, but it is infected by the Poc Unity nonetheless, and has designs on Chad, as the party will eventually discover.

The party should become aware of Hamish at some point, both to humanise Chad, and then to ideally cause them to worry when they realise that the cats in the Majestic are far from benign.

EXPLORING THE HOTEL

The player group are on their own now – unless they feel like they'd like to take a squatter with them (Kate will happily accompany the player characters). Depending on the relationship between the characters and Kate she may want to tag along anyway.

Travelling through the lower storey of the Majestic should be relatively easy – it's frequently used by the squatters after all. The upper storey, as previously mentioned, is less easy to get around, and the characters may need to climb over debris or duck under partially collapsed ceilings in order to get from place to place. How much of this occurs and how much of an issue it is to the group is up to you. You may also throw cat encounters in whenever you like – cats jumping out and then running away, cats staring at spots on the wall unblinkingly, cats partially hidden under debris staring at the player characters...

The following scenes are available "a la carte" – play as many or as few as you'd like and as you feel fit the flow of the story for your player group:





EDDINGS

This scene may take place either immediately at the end of “Meet the Squatters” if the player group decide to confront and question Eddings, or when Eddings’ territory is encountered during a proper exploration of the hotel. If the former is the case then skip the scene lead-in.

The first thing that’s likely to be discovered when arriving in the small section of corridor and the single room that Eddings calls “his territory” are the trip-lines. There are two of these at opposite ends of Eddings’ little section of corridor, both of which are attached to a small pile of empty cans. Tripping over the wire will cause the cans to fall down, clattering and making noise and Eddings will charge out into the corridor, wild-eyed, wielding what looks like a nasty kitchen knife. On seeing the player group he will likely stop attacking. After saying something lame like “I thought you were another of those damned cats” he will launch into a tirade about trespassing and how the player group doesn’t appreciate privacy.

Here’s a list of questions and answers that might come up in conversation with the player characters:

Q: “What do you know about the catatonic squatters?”

A: “You think I know something about that? C’mon – I’m a newcomer here. I don’t hardly know any of

them – why would I do anything to hurt any of them? You arrived at about the same time as people started keeling over, though – what do YOU know about any of it, eh?”

Q: “Why are you living here?”

A: “Just because someone’s slipped through the cracks in society doesn’t mean that he’s a bad person, you know! So I don’t shower a lot and I live in an abandoned hotel. Does that mean I’m a bad person? You people... judging and hating all the time...”

Q: “Can you tell us anything about the squatters who we saw unconscious in the leisure centre?”

A: “They’re like the rest of us – quiet. We go about our business. One of them was called Mister Stavros. The other one was Ginny. They were good people.”

Searching Eddings’ room will show up a fairly complete collection of a local newspaper for the last three years – some of them being used as bedding, and some of them stuck to the walls of the room with sellotape. The clippings all relate to fires in one place or another. This information is a red herring, but highly paranoid player groups may suspect that there’s something odd about Eddings because he’s not immediately friendly.

THE COURTYARD

The players investigate the courtyard. The physical look and feel of the courtyard has been discussed in detail elsewhere above (see “*The Majestic Hotel*”, page 5) What does need describing is the behaviour of the cats in the courtyard.

First of all – it’s raining hard. The rain is pattering off of the leaves in the trees and falling in sudden short bursts of droplets. The ground is slick and muddy underfoot. There are maybe ten cats, all sitting in locations where they’re out of the rain – under trees, under a window ledge, under the benches in the centre of the courtyard. These cats are completely motionless and staring hard into the rain.

The cats here are under the control of the Poc Unity, and are currently as still as statues, carrying the intelligence while their brothers and sisters hunt human prey inside the hotel. This is a very good opportunity to have the intelligence’s weakness discovered – cats taken out of their hidey-holes and exposed to the rain will blink and begin to stir in the arms of whoever took them out there. When they’re wet through (soaked in water) they will shake themselves off, struggle and jump to the ground, bolting for cover and disappearing into the hotel if at all possible.



A SLEEPING SQUATTER

The player characters are investigating a room in the Majestic when they discover a squatter lying on a mattress on the floor. He is staring into the eyes of a cat that is sitting on his chest. The cat is staring back at the man, virtually motionless on his chest.

The cat in question here is being controlled by the Poc Unity and is in the process of taking over the squatter. One of several things could happen:

- The player group leave the man and the cat alone. After five minutes or so the cat will drop off of the man’s chest to the floor and walk away slowly. The man will not recover, and will become like the catatonic squatters in the leisure centre.
- The player group disrupt the process. In this case the cat will yowl and scratch and attack whoever’s trying to remove it from the man’s chest. The man will recover, and will be friendly enough to describe the experience for the group (see below). He will eventually want to return to the leisure centre and Hutchins.
- Someone at some point may try to stare into the cat’s eyes. If this happens, the player holding the cat will begin to feel something squirming in his mind – a slow, insidious oily presence. If the player decides to keep staring into the eyes of the cat the feeling will increase and increase and there will be the brief flash of lucidity, like waking up from a vivid dream, where the player sees a gestalt of intelligence – many minds linked as one, and a puppet master controlling everything.

A CONFUSING ROOM

Most of the squatters that live in the Majestic are “damaged” in some way or another, and this room belongs to one of them who is too far gone to comfortably live around other people. The room should be at the end of a corridor or on the upper storey – anywhere where there will be some isolation. The occupant isn’t home right now, but the room has a variety of slogans written on the walls of the room: “They are coming”, “The Earth will be taken in fire and flame and only the dark shall remain”, “The burning is in the mind but shows in the eyes.”



There is a lot of paraphernalia in this room as well – tattered and worn books, collected by the poor soul that lives here, all with occult or UFO significance. The candles that adorn the room have been lit in the same places so that they stand in piles of melted and re-solidified wax, giving the room a gothic look and feel. Lastly, but not least there is a roll of tinfoil on the pile of blankets and soft clothes that serves as a nest or bed of sorts – the tinfoil has carefully been moulded into something that looks like a skull cap.

One item of interest is a small lump of rock that's kept in a biscuit tin, which is hidden under the bed (an Awareness + Ingenuity roll with a difficulty of 12 will allow a character to spot the concealment, or you could allow anyone who specifically declares that they are looking under the bed to find it). The rock is the meteorite that the Poc Unity arrived on – it looks like a fused lump of glassy rock with a purple stain on one side of it. Someone with knowledge of alien worlds and technologies, or someone who succeeds in an Ingenuity + Science roll with a difficulty of 18 will be able to recognise the stain as the remains of a cushioning gel, able to shield a biological life-form from the rigours of space, and re-entry. Whatever the gel held is gone, but it must have been tiny – the

gel is only enough to hold some bacteria or perhaps a colony of cells; all the Poc Unity needed in order to travel.

With the exception of the meteorite, everything here is a red herring. While the unfortunate squatter who lives here may be on to something it's not related to this adventure. On the other hand you may want to let your player group believe that it does, and even that the tinfoil hat does something (it offers no protection against the Poc Unity whatsoever).

THE SWIMMING POOL

It's quite likely that, if the group are trying to exit the leisure centre and go around the hotel in the direction they didn't arrive from that their first port of call will be in the pool area. This area is always likely to be deserted and full of shadows – the Poc Unity doesn't want to be in this general area – it knows what its own weakness is. While the squatters use this area as a water supply from time to time they don't frequent the area, and definitely not during a storm. The skylights here are badly corroded and let a constant stream of water down into the murky water of the pool.

TIME LORDS, TELEPATHY & CATS

Time Lords, much like Humans, are capable of loving cats and also hating them. The Doctor, through his various incarnations has generally been favourable to cats, but this doesn't necessarily mean that all Time Lords are the same. Some Time Lords can use telepathy to talk to cats, but cats are a strange bunch – sometimes they want to listen, sometimes not. Sometimes they'll listen, but not necessarily talk back. And it's definitely true that a cat in the middle of hunting definitely doesn't want to be disturbed...

So it is with the feral cats that live in the Majestic. While some might be feeling chatty to a Time Lord who can converse with them, or even some other character that has the Telepathy Special Trait, some won't. If the cat that a player character is trying to hold a conversation with is under the control of the Poc Unity and isn't responding, that shouldn't really be considered to be out of the ordinary. If a conversation is held with a cat they aren't up to a very detailed conversation. At absolute best the cat is likely to comment that it wishes that the colony didn't have to share space with a load of even smellier than usual humans – internal colony business is just that.

If there's someone in your player group with the Telepathy Special Trait, they might be able to feel the growth of the Poc Unity telepathic matrix in the Majestic like the slow growth and uncoiling of a giant worm...



The pool is about half-full, and that's quite a lot of water, really. Like most swimming pools it has a shallow end and a deep end, although that might not be obvious to someone looking at the water level.

There are a number of objects around the pool that an enterprising adventurer could use to combat the Poc Unity if required; buckets and small jars used by the squatters to carry water could be used by the party for the same purpose and used to splash/immerse the intelligence's victims. There are some storage boxes, and a winch as well – used to operate the swimming pool a bit like a well in hot weather.

A SUDDEN DELUGE

The player characters are walking through an area of the Majestic (the upper storey works well for this) when they begin to hear creaking and groaning noises. Above them in the downpour there is an enormous flood building up on a damaged section of roof, which chooses this exact moment to give way and let all of that water through into the hotel, sluicing through anything (and anyone!) that's beneath.

To avoid the sudden flood, players must roll Awareness + Coordination against a difficulty of 13. Anyone with the Quick Reflexes Trait may add 2 to their roll. Anyone who is unlucky enough to have the Slow Reflexes Trait will have to subtract 2 from theirs. Failing the roll may have dire consequences as the character is swept off of their feet and tumbles along the corridor gasping and trying to hold their breath for a few seconds – a Failure will cause 2 damage, a Bad result will cause 3 damage, and a Disastrous result will cause 5 damage. The flood doesn't last long enough for anyone to drown.

This would be an excellent moment for the player group to have a flash of inspiration when it comes to the source of the possession... a catatonic cat or human may be awoken briefly by the deluge.



THE VILLAIN REVEALED

This scene takes place back in the leisure centre headquarters of Peter Hutchins. By this time another squatter has been taken ill and is lying on blankets next to the other two. Hutchins himself is by now extremely worried and is pacing back and forth, muttering to himself. For his part, Chad occasionally tries to comfort Hutchins with a wordless meaty

hand on his shoulder, or a sympathetic glance from across the room – it's clear the big man is worried about his friend as well.

If the characters want to speak to Hutchins he'll explain that he's seriously considering leaving the Majestic and that if there's a disease that's spreading among the squatters that he owes it to them to move them on from here – they always knew that the hotel wouldn't be a permanent home.

If she is present, Kate will balk at this news and protest that this isn't something to do with normal sicknesses – this is something outside of everyone's normal experiences. She will look to the player characters for some kind of support in this, and this would be a good time to try and persuade the squatters to leave, if the group is leaning toward that mode of thinking.

However, it can't happen just yet. As the discussion is carrying on, or immediately after Kate's impassioned plea if the players aren't interested in talking, three cats walk stiffly into the room, in an arrow formation – one in front and the other two behind. They walk over to the three still and staring squatters and sit down. The middle squatter sits up and begins to speak, with the other two squatters talking along while still lying still with their eyes open:

"THIS PLACE NOW BELONGS TO THE POC UNITY. OUR MANY BODIES DWELL HERE, SO WE DWELL HERE. IF YOU STAY, YOU TOO WILL BELONG TO US AND NEVER BE ALONE – WE WILL HUNT HERE AND WE WILL TAKE WHAT WE NEED TO BOLSTER OUR NUMBERS. WHILE ONE OF US HARBORS THE UNITY, WE WILL SURVIVE. WHILE ONE OF US CARRIES THE SEED IN THEIR MIND WE WILL CONTINUE."

This is a blatant attention-grabbing distraction technique by the Poc Unity. While the three bodies are talking, the cats are staring at the squatters in the room (leaving the player group for the time being – remember, the intelligence isn't quite up to taking a fully active mind right now). It will reject both Kate and Hutchins as being too active for it, and instead focus on Chad, through his pet kitten Hamish. If nobody's watching Chad he will be enslaved by the Unity there and then, as will any other squatters in the leisure centre at the time.



Eddings is a wild card in this scene. The Unity is appealing to him – he would rather allow someone else to do his thinking for him and be free of doubt and suspicion. He might pick up a cat and stare right into its eyes, becoming a slave almost immediately given that his mind is not fighting the process. Alternatively, Eddings can smuggle a cat into his room later in the scenario and try to bond with the Unity.

Concluding that the humans here are too mentally active to be enslaved to its will at this stage, the Poc Unity will direct its minions to attack. Use the stats given for Chad, and those given for Hutchins and the three other squatters.

It is possible that the party want to try reasoning with the Poc Unity. Having made its attempt at distracting everyone, the Unity will be a little surprised to hear someone trying to make conversation, expecting either obedience or combat. If the group mention any group of galactic significance (use your imagination here, but groups such as the Shadow Proclamation, the Daleks, the Sontarans or the Rutans will definitely work) the intelligence will listen, and rather than setting its slaves on the group will suggest that they should leave, and that the Majestic is now to be

considered its base of operations on Earth. “Leave. Now” type arguments are unlikely to succeed against the Unity – it really doesn’t have anywhere else to go.



HIGHLY ARMED?

What if the characters in your group are UNIT soldiers, or are Torchwood operatives? Any combat in this story will probably be solved quickly and efficiently by a bullet. If your party are well-armed, it is suggested that you arm the squatters as well – with knives at the very least. There may even be a gun somewhere in the hotel, but given that there’s a stated lack of drug crime among the squatters of the Majestic they’re not going to have much in the way of firepower.

If you’re really concerned that your group has too much firepower to count the squatters (and by extension the squatters controlled by the Poc Unity) as a credible threat, then you have two options.:

Firstly, increase the number of the enslaved squatters – ten controlled people is a greater threat than three.

Secondly, increase the number of attacks by cats. Your sidearm is of little use if the attacker is currently hissing, screeching and attached to your friend’s face with sharp claws!

Thirdly, point out to the players that these people are victims, not villains. They’re basically shooting unarmed hostages. Anyone with a Code of Conduct has strong second thoughts about opening fire.





This is another place where someone can make the discovery that water disrupts the Unity's control over its servants. If your group resist making the connection, a possible solution to the problem might be to have Hutchins attempt to "snap Chad out of it" by throwing the jug of water that's kept beside the stricken squatters over him. This distracts him and jars the Unity's control over him – throwing him out into the rain or into the nearby swimming pool will finish the job.

Obviously a goal here would be not to harm the squatters too badly – Hutchins will be devastated and horrified by the group's actions should they kill anyone. If they kill Chad he will be inconsolable.

HERDING CATS

Hopefully, by the time you get here, your players should be armed with the knowledge that there's something loose in the hotel that can take control of both squatters and the feral cats that live there, and that water shakes its psychic control loose. If they've been listening they also know that if one of the Unity's slaves survives – if one of them remains under its control – the whole intelligence survives to try and take over the whole world another day.

The squatters who have been recently enslaved by the Unity don't need to be completely immersed in order to shake them free – a quick splash of water to the face, or being pushed out in the rain for a few minutes will do the trick.

There's really two good ways of getting this resolved: the first obvious one is to get the cats trapped out in the rain. The second is to get them into the pool. This means that everyone is wet at the same time – if all the cats are dunked while the squatters are getting dried off the intelligence could try and "jump" from the cats to a single squatter, or vice versa.

Either way, the chief issue is going to be how to get everyone wet. The squatters, for the most part will be spooked after the attack from their mind-controlled brothers and sisters. After the previous scene they will be happy to do pretty much whatever the party would like them to do. If that includes getting dunked or even standing in cold water for a period of time then well and good, but they're not going to want to do it for long. Gamesmasters for groups that like to talk could use this as a showcase for their groups' persuasive abilities.

It's going to be a pretty tough sell for the feral cats, on the other hand. Not only are they mostly controlled by the Poc Unity, but those that aren't won't really



be very positive about the idea of being rounded up and thrown out into the rain – or worse still into the swimming pool full of mucky water.

The final scene of this adventure should blow the lid on the suspense and the mystery from earlier, becoming almost zany as the player group struggle to hunt down the cats and get them all wet at the same time. “Safe” characters include all of the player characters, Kate and Hutchins, all of whom have active and undamaged brains. On the other hand, all of the other squatters are fair game – if they’re left to go round up cats in one wing of the Majestic then it’s possible that one or more of them will end up enslaved by the Unity, and the whole task will have to be begun again. Some sort of system is called for – blocking off corridors once they’re declared clear, for example, or herding everyone together into one room (ideally the swimming pool. (This is a great opportunity for Eddings to ruin the characters’ plans by rescuing a cat for himself and becoming host to the Unity.) Perhaps some of the equipment lying around the swimming pool area could be used to cage the cats temporarily. Relevant skill rolls should be used here for things like diving across a corridor to catch a cat, or trying to hold a box lid closed over a squirming, wriggling mass of furry bodies.

The Poc Unity is not the sort of enemy that goes down with a complicated death monologue. Rather, as brain capacity is removed further and further from the pool of available processors it grows ever less intelligent and operates more and more on instinct alone. Where it’s easy to get the squatters wet, it should be increasingly difficult to hunt down the cats, and by the time the last cat has been found (which in itself should be a difficult task) it will claw, kick, scream, yowl and generally do anything within its power to escape. Nobody should finish this story without scratches and the need for a tetanus shot in the near future!

If you want a monologue to close off the adventure, Eddings is a good place to find it. For a few scant minutes he was free from his own demons, entirely dominated and told what to do by an external force. Remembering his problems and unable to trust the people who are offering him a family he’ll likely leave, hurt and more alone than ever. He won’t accept any help offered to him unless forced, and he may well try and make himself feel better by asking the squatters and the characters if they wouldn’t feel a little happier, knowing that they

could trust the Unity entirely and it would never lie to them or cheat them, as opposed to the squatters, or each other.

Optionally, Eddings could end up as the last host for the Unity, giving the gestalt a voice to plead with, a hostage to bargain with, or maybe a vessel to be exiled in.

And what happens to the Poc Unity? It’s possible that, with the last of the cats thoroughly drenched, it has been purged from everyone in the Majestic hotel. On the other hand, it’s not beyond the bounds of possibility that, at the last minute, it managed to enslave a rodent, or a small bird in the courtyard. Maybe it will be back to menace our heroes at some time in the future...

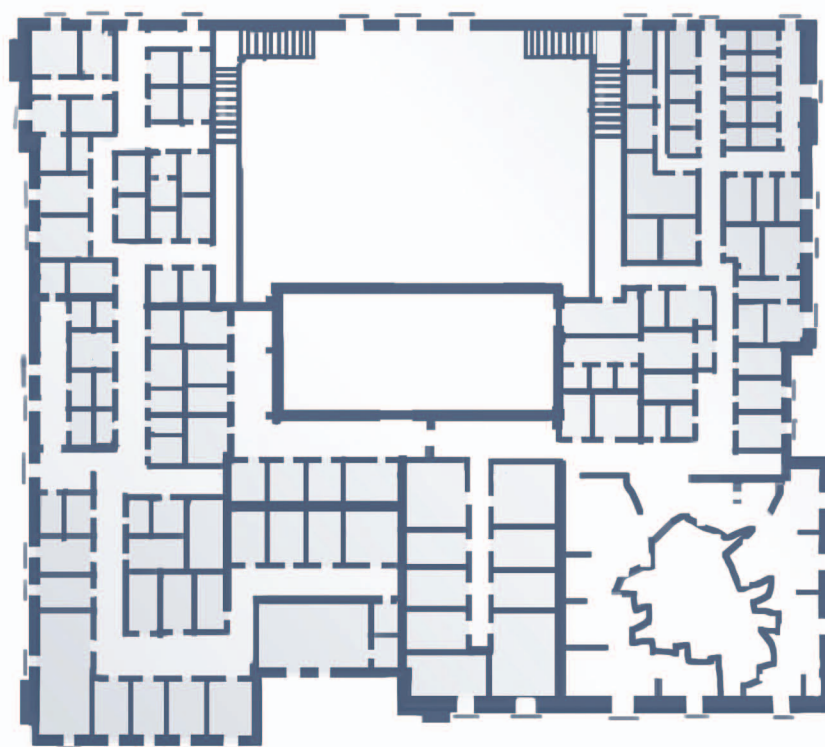




The Majestic Hotel

- 1: Reception
- 2: The Courtyard
- 3: The Restaurant
- 4: The Kitchen
- 5: The Pool Area
- 6: The Exercise Room

Ground Floor



First Floor

