

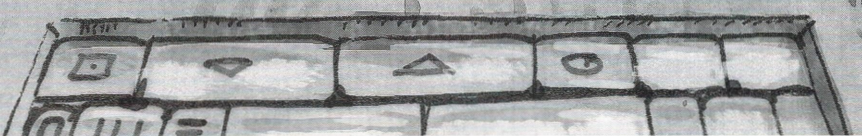
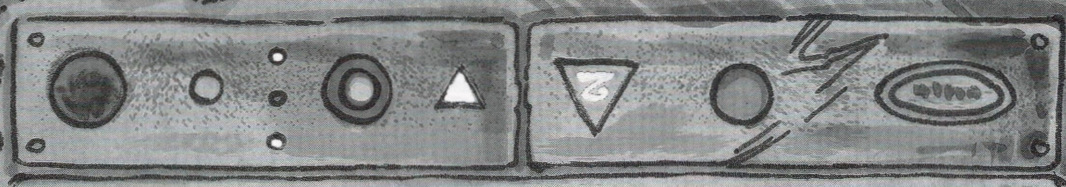
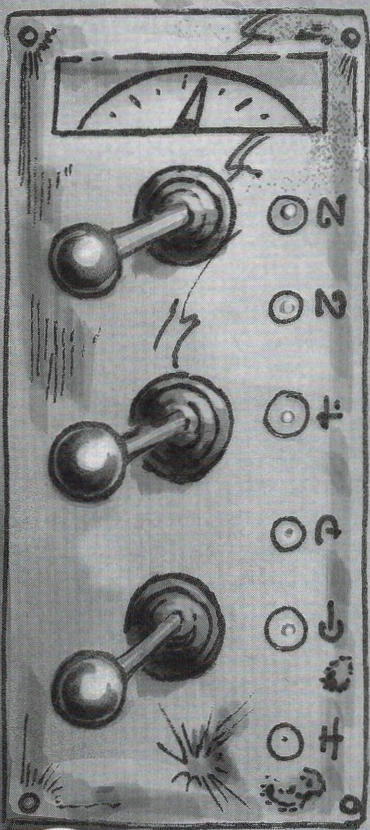
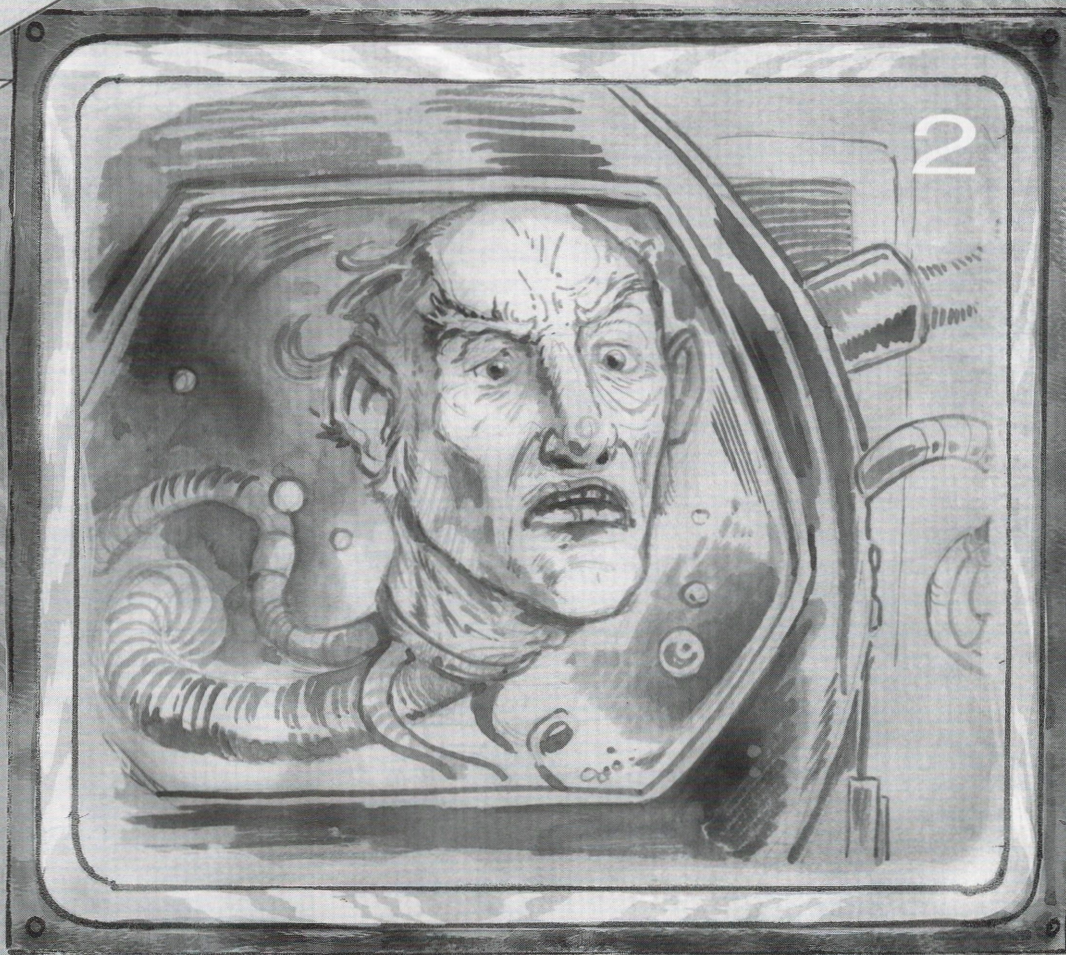
DEATH ZIGGURAT IN ZERO-G

An Adventure
By Jobe Bittman

ALPHA

METAMORPHOSIS

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METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA

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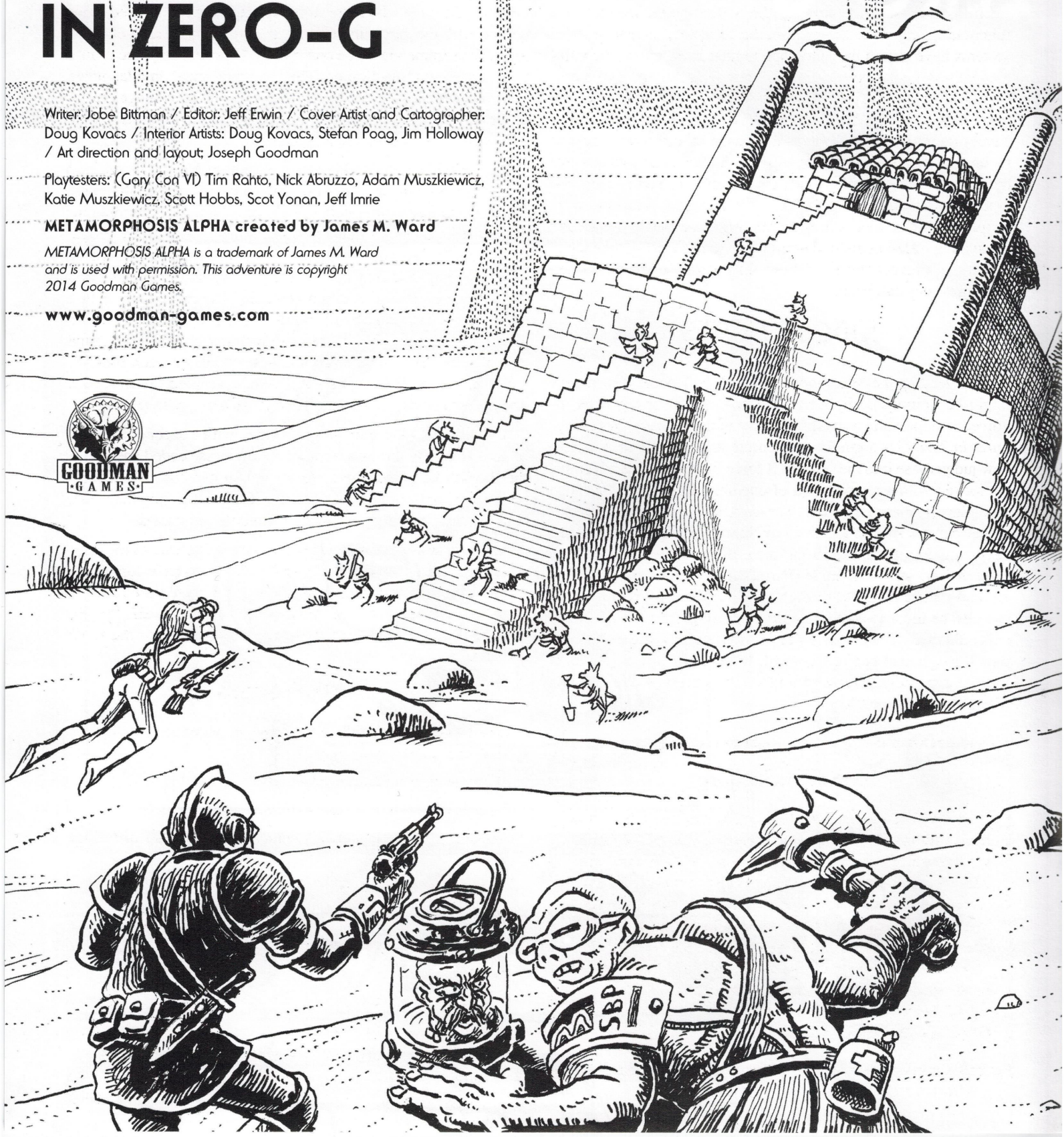
Writer: Jobe Bittman / Editor: Jeff Erwin / Cover Artist and Cartographer:
Doug Kovacs / Interior Artists: Doug Kovacs, Stefan Poag, Jim Holloway
/ Art direction and layout: Joseph Goodman

Playtesters: (Gary Con VI) Tim Rahto, Nick Abruzzo, Adam Muszkiewicz,
Katie Muszkiewicz, Scott Hobbs, Scot Yonan, Jeff Imrie

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Death Ziggurat in *Zero G* is an introductory module intended for 6-8 new adventurers. Everything you need to launch a successful *Metamorphosis Alpha* campaign is contained within these pages: a starting town, warring tribal factions, a large overland area to explore, and a deadly adventure location – all set against the backdrop of a soul-crushing desert wasteland.

BACKGROUND

Life is a ceaseless beating in the Silver Waste. Due to malfunctioning sensors in this region, the automated climate control systems have seared the landscape to dust in an effort to control a nonexistent polar vortex. Extreme temperatures and hyper-erosion have ground the once-proud buildings and luxurious gardens into fine sand the shade of gunmetal. A constantly shifting sea of silvery dunes stretches for tens of miles in all directions churned by endless sandstorms. Small tribes of humans and mutants eke out a subsistence level of existence thanks to semi-functional replicators that churn out trickles of edible goo. Tribal warriors supplement their food stores by hunting giant beetle larvae and excavating little-understood items of ancient magic, but the harsh conditions prevent travel of more than a mile from the eroded structures they call home.

JUDGE'S NOTES

After reading the *Metamorphosis Alpha* rulebook, new judges might be intimidated by learning a new ruleset or the work involved in populating a starship the size of the Warden. *Death Ziggurat in Zero-G* is a sandbox adventure location intended to help new judges ease into the setting. A force field keeps the adventurers locked within a small area of one ship deck while the judge (and players) master the rules. The suggested arc of the adventure is that players start in the town of Super Shop Mart (Part One), adventure into the surrounding area, discover the disembodied head of Professor Cardunkle (Part Two), travel through the desert, and infiltrate the Death Ziggurat (Part Three). The adventure can also be incorporated into a running campaign. The adventurers could discover an opening in the mysterious mirrored barrier, pass through, and become trapped. In this case, use Super Shop Mart as a friendly outpost while the adventurers puzzle out how to escape the Silver Waste.

NEW COLOR BAND

Death Ziggurat in Zero-G contains the first new color band authorized to be added to *Metamorphosis Alpha* since the release of the first edition in 1976. During early production of this adventure, Jim Ward commented, "Why not create a completely new color band? Let's call it the gold band. History dictates that two gold bands were created: one for the ship's architect, and one for the primary ship programmer. During the building of the ship, these master bands were needed to be in contact with all of the ship's A.I.s." More information about the new color band can be found in at the end of this adventure.

BROKEN UPLINKS

Throughout the adventure, computer uplinks can be used to interface with the ship's mainframe. All instructions are delivered to the mainframe via voice commands. Unfortunately, the uplink vocoders are malfunctioning. They can only speak in a language non-native to the players. Commands spoken in any language are processed as normal, but all of the uplink's voice prompts will be delivered in the non-native language.

The uplink's vocoder language is chosen by the judge, and should be spoken in monotone. Multilingual judges obviously will have an easier time with this exercise, but don't become intimidated if you aren't fluent in a second language. Many people study another language in high school or college. Your memory of verb conjugation may have slipped away, but if you still retain some of the vocabulary and pronunciation you can speak a pidgin version of the language by stringing together real words, phonetic gibberish, and screeches of static. Remember you are playing the part of a broken computer uplink. The uplink's speech routines could be on the fritz or its data banks corrupted. Your speech doesn't necessarily have to make sense to a native speaker.

If you do not have enough proficiency with a second language to fake your way through, another idea is to use coded speech. In the English language, there are several simple coded languages that many children learn in the playground such as "pig latin" and "gibberish." Other languages have similar word games.

Access is granted or denied based on the color band of the character speaking to the uplink. Describe the character's color band blinking or vibrating when commands are accepted or denied to drive home the connection. With proper access levels, the climate controls can be adjusted and the Great Mirror to the south disabled.

UPLINK PHRASES

Translations for several computer uplink voice prompts and responses are listed below:

Establishing main frame uplink...

French: Connection à l'unité centrale en cours...

Spanish: Establecimiento de enlace ascendente de ordenador central...

What is your instruction?

French: En attente d'instructions.

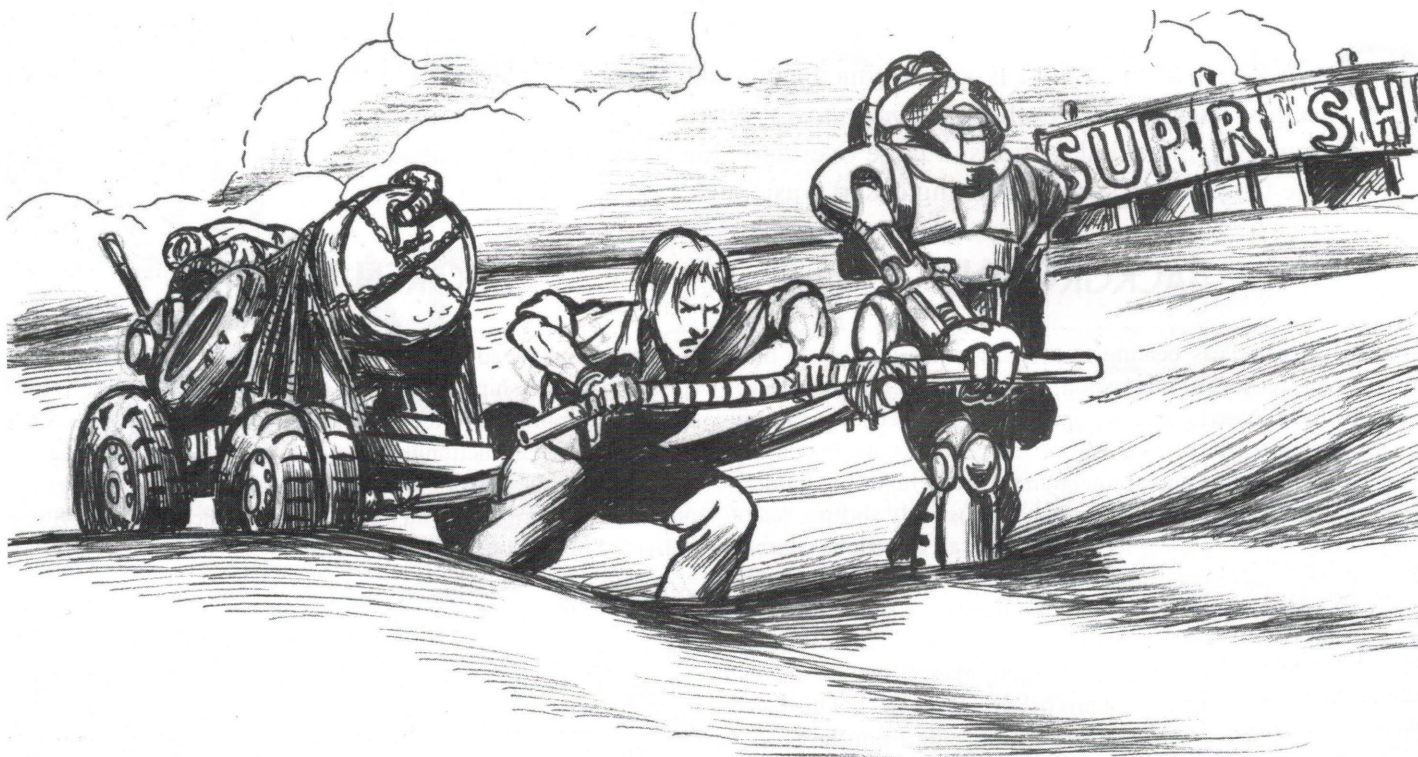
Spanish: ¿Cuál es su instrucción?

Access granted.

French: Accès autorisé.

Spanish: Acceso concedido.

Access denied. Insufficient privilege.



French: Accès refusé. Autorisations insuffisantes.

Spanish: Acceso negado. Privilegio insuficiente.

Accessing tape spool #451, file #7...

French: Lecture de la bobine numéro 451, fichier numéro 7.

Spanish: Acceso a carrete de cinta #451, archivo #7...

Climate anomaly in sectors: B-7, B-9, C-7, C-8, C-9, D-6, D-7, D-8, D-9, D-10.

French: Anomalie climatique trouvée dans les secteurs: B-7, B-9, C-7, C-8, C-9, D-6, D-7, D-8, D-9, D-10.

Spanish: Anomalía climático en sectores: B-7, B-9, C-7, C-8, C-9, D-6, D-7, D-8, D-9, D-10.

Isolation barrier engaged and functional.

French: Barrière d'isolation fonctionnelle et en marche.

Spanish: Barrera de aislamiento enganchada y funcional.

Temperature sensor reading 12 degrees celsius.

French: Le capteur climatique indique douze degrés celsius.

Spanish: Sensor de temperatura marcando 12 grados centígrados.

Disengaging climate routine #27 B.

French: Déclanchement de la routine climatique numéro 27 B.

Spanish: Desenganchando rutina de clima #27 B.

Isolation barrier disabled.

French: Barrière d'isolation désactivée.

Spanish: Barrera de aislamiento incapacitado.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The characters start in the town of Super Shop Mart as members of a tribe of survivalists who have banded together for mutual protection in the desert wasteland. A giant force field called "The Great Mirror" has sealed off this portion of the ship for hundreds of years. To remain in Super Shop Mart, the adventurers are expected to earn their keep. The tribe expects them to make daily sorties into the surrounding area to hunt for meat and scavenge technological items. Humans will start with heavy skin armor and one weapon that causes 1d8 damage or less. All characters receive a 1 gallon water container.

Once the players are comfortable with the rules and have obtained some better equipment, introduce them to Professor Car-dunkle (see "Part Two" section).

PART ONE: SUPER SHOP MART

At the southwestern corner of the Silver Waste, the adventurers' camp is located in a fortuitous position. A nomadic tribe of giants roam to the north, and waddle-necked mutants hold a fortified bunker to the northwest creating a buffer against the desert's most dangerous mutations. The town's moniker, "Super Shop Mart," is emblazoned in giant red letters on a signpost that dances with light in a repeating pattern sixty feet in the air. The red glow from the sign can be seen from over a mile away even in the heaviest sandstorms—a fact that has saved the life of a tribe member more than once. The town's population is its primary advantage over other tribes. There are over 70 inhabitants (75% mutants, 25% humans).

AREA 1-1 – BILLBOARD: A giant lighted sign stands atop a forty-foot tall metal pole, doubling as a landmark and guard post. The armored guard station atop the sign is only accessible via a retractable chain ladder. A lookout with infrared goggles maintains constant surveillance over the north and west. Pots and pans

hanging from the top are shaken to signal approaching danger. A zip line runs from the top of the sign to the northeast corner of the main building.

AREA 1-2 – ENTRANCE: The main entryway once boasted great glass panes that let in natural sunlight and magic doors that opened on their own accord when approached. Plywood boards now fill the empty window frames. Salvaged metal plates are riveted to the outside to provide a patchwork of armor. Sharpened metal spikes and barbed wire adorn a door on wheels that is rolled in and out of place by a team of two guards. Evenly spaced vertical slits in the door allow defenders to fire guns and arrows outside. An assortment of shovels, spears, pitchforks, and other tools are arranged in neat rows nearby.

AREA 1-3 – DELI: The word “deli” is written in block letters high on the wall. The original meaning of the word has been lost; tribe members use it as a verb meaning to eat. The deli is separated from the main area by a counter and long glass case. The case still retains some magic of the ancient’s technology: a dim light illuminates the contents, and the inside remains cooler than the outside. An open doorway leads to a back room cluttered with strange, non-functioning equipment. A broken replicator (dubbed “The Drip”) dribbles protein-rich green slurry into an industrial sink. An ingenious, multi-stage process produces potable drinking water and protein bars using metal screens, cheesecloth, and decanters. Hunting in the surrounding desert augments the food supply. Metal racks in the backroom are used to dry strips of beetle larvae and other meats into jerky. Perishables are preserved in the glass deli case.

AREA 1-4 – COMMON AREA: The majority of the floor space is open warehouse. The ceiling caved in many years ago, but has since been patched with triangular sheets of duralloy, loading pallets, and plastic sheeting to keep the elements at bay. A steel girder positioned near the center bears the load of the sagging repairs. Clusters of tables, chairs, and mismatched furniture fill the open floor space.

AREA 1-5 – LIVING QUARTERS: Clotheslines are strung along the outer walls and draped with sheets to create private areas mostly used for bedrooms. Behind the sheets, eight-foot high metal shelves further divide the space into smaller rooms. Ratty mattresses and milk cartons stuffed with meager possessions line each room. Several babies are sound asleep in cribs made of shopping carts.

AREA 1-6 – THE VAULT: The tribe refers to this area as “The Vault,” but it is little more than a broken walk-in freezer with a rusty padlock securing the door. A guard is always stationed outside. Ancient magical items recovered from the desert are stored here for safekeeping. Among the arcana are parts from various service robots (two of which contain functional hydrogen energy cells), an aqualung, a laser torch, a portable hand dart charger (without darts), a laser pistol, a laser rifle, one random technological treasure, and two random mutated substances (see MA p. 21 for random items). The armaments normally remain locked in the freezer only to be removed when the complex is under attack.

AREA 1-7 – LOADING DOCK: A twenty-foot-tall, reinforced metal door blocks access to the rear entrance of Super Shop Mart. The heavy door slides on rails, and is usually barred from the inside. Outside, a five-foot high platform flanked by tall concrete walls

form a long hallway making this an easily defensible position. At least two tribe members guard this point of entry at all times.

AREA 1-8 – LOOKOUT POST: A metal pole with handholds rises fifty feet above the cracked asphalt south of Super Shop Mart. A white reflective covering and a seat have been lashed to the top. A lookout is usually posted here with infrared goggles. A zip line stretches back the southwest corner of the main building.

MISSIONS

Each tribe member is required to contribute to the group’s general welfare. Half of all scavenged supplies must be donated to the shared pool. The remainder can be kept or traded to other tribe members. Everyone receives a daily ration of water (half gallon), a protein square, and hunted meat jerky. Anfrony – a human with grey eyes who everyone calls *The Mayor* – is the oldest of the group at thirty-one years old. Anfrony settles disputes, manages resources, and coordinates hunting parties. On a given day, Anfrony might send the adventurers to hunt for food, scavenge for technological items, scout an area, or search for missing hunters. Injured hunters are allowed to heal for a reasonable amount of time. During downtime, Anfrony expects able-bodied hunters to take guard duty, discover uses of newly discovered technological items, and defend the compound.

Table 1-1: Super Shop Mart Missions

D10	Mission
1	The tribe needs more (Roll d8: 1 – oil filters; 2 – duralloy sheets; 3 – technological items; 4 – medical hand analyzers; 5 – robot parts; 6 – hydrogen energy cells; 7 – infrared goggles; 8 – water containers).
2	Last night, lookouts spotted creatures to the (Roll d5: 1 – south; 2 – southwest; 3 – west; 4 – northwest; 5 – north.) Kill or drive them off.
3	A scouting group saw something large uncovered by the shifting sand south of a random tribe’s camp. Go investigate.
4	Travel 2 miles to the (Roll d5: 1 – south; 2 – southwest; 3 – west; 4 – northwest; 5 – north.), and camp for the night. Report back any new changes in the landscape.
5	Attempt to trade protein bars and an item from the vault for hydrogen energy cells with a random tribe. Make a morale check
6	Add to the water stores. Pull the “water wagon”—a four-wheeled cart holding a 50 gallon drum barrel and hand pump—through the desert until a water source is located. There is a 2 in 6 chance per day of being attacked by a rival tribe on the return trip. See Table 1-2, #4 and #13 for stats.
8	Raid a random tribe. Using either an assault or stealth, infiltrate the enemy, steal supplies, and leave Super Shop Mart’s calling card, the initials SSM in spray paint.
9	We need more tech! Search the desert until a new technological item is found.
10	Escort a turkeyoid prisoner to Me Depo and exchange for Super Shop Mart hostage or a technological item.

WHERE IS #7?

Astute readers may notice that “Table 1-1: Super Shop Mart Missions” is missing a number 7 entry. This is not a typo. Whether the result of poor editing or mad genius, contemporary gaming products were rife with missing entries when Metamorphosis Alpha was released. You need look no further than item 35 on the Mutated Substances table (MA, pg 21). Running games in this era would by necessity include a house rule for dealing with these types of omissions. Will you reroll on the table, count the roll as a non-encounter, use an adjacent entry, or make something up off the top of your head? It’s up to you.

DESERT TRAVEL

To say the environment is harsh in the Silver Waste is an understatement. The malfunctioning climate controls keep the temperature boiling during the day and below freezing at night. An endless windstorm churns a barrage of sand and metal filings that can strip exposed flesh to the bone in hours. Imagine the worst snowstorm in Antarctica recast as a Saharan hellscape.

The hurricane force winds slack to a squall for a short time at dusk. Visibility is generally 1 hex in all directions. Each day roll a d8 to determine how many hexes can be travelled before the deadly weather resumes. After all movement is spent, additional hexes of movement cause a cumulative d6 of damage until the characters reach shelter (e.g. moving to a second hex causes 2d6 damage).

Water is vital to any desert trip. Each character must drink 1 gallon of water per day or suffer a cumulative d6 of damage per day.

DESERT ENCOUNTERS

The daily lull in the weather can prove equally deadly as the great sandstorms. All the desert’s denizens emerge to feed at the same time. For every hex traveled, roll a d6; a random encounter triggers on a 6. Meat from slain creatures can be traded in town. There is a small chance creatures may have technological items in their stomachs.

Table 1-2: Desert Encounter Table

d20	Encounter
1	Deranged android: DEX 14; AC 3; HD 6; hp 23; YPM 12; #ATK 1; laser rifle (WC 6; DMG 5d6/10d6/15d6); Mutations none; SP none; RR 8, MR 10, CON 16, STR 12. <i>Android is falling apart, attacks on sight, and wears a random color band.</i>
2	Giant beetles (1d3): DEX 6; AC 3; HD 6; hp 18; YPM 5; #ATK 1; pincer (WC 3; DMG 1d6/1d6/1d8); Mutations: mental paralysis, absorption (radiation), diminished senses (hearing); SP burrowing; RR 8, MR 17, CON 11, STR 6. <i>Twelve-foot tall beetles with black carapaces. Shell can be used as temporary shelter. Larvae are a delicacy.</i>

- 3 **Technology:** Discover a random technological item (MA pg. 21).
- 4 **Amazons:** A big group of 1d3 giant amazons and 1d10 humanoid #5 slaves (see “Area C” for stats). Killed amazons are subtracted from the forces in Area C. They carry 1d4 technological treasures (MA pg. 21).
- 5 **Sand Sharks (2d4):** DEX 9; AC 5; HD 7; hp 20; YPM 18; #ATK 1; bite (WC 3; DMG 1d12/1d12/1d12+2); Mutations: heightened smell, gills (sand), sonic abilities; SP swim in sand; RR 9, MR 14, CON 12, STR 14. *Fins pop out of sand and circle PCs. Stomach contains 1 random technological item (MA pg. 21).*
- 6 **Uplink:** Semi-functional computer uplink. See “Broken Uplinks” section.
- 7 **Scorpion:** DEX 14; AC 5; HD 12; hp 51; YPM 10; #ATK 2; bite (WC 3; DMG 1d8/1d8/1d8) or sting (WC 3; DMG 1d12/1d12/1d12 plus poison strength 3d6); Mutations: telekinesis, magnetic control, heightened taste, complete mental block (plant); SP none; RR 15, MR 13, CON 10, STR 10. *Solitary hunter with a lion’s head, scorpion tail, and armored plates.*
- 8 **Gator Vines (1d6):** DEX 13; AC 5; HD 3; hp 11; YPM 4; #ATK 1; strangle (WC 1; DMG 1d8/1d8/1d8) or throwing thorns (WC 1; DMG 1d6/1d4/1d6 plus poison strength 10); Mutations: manipulation vines, reflection power ; SP none; RR 14, MR 11, CON 13, STR 16. *Vines drag characters under the sand.*
- 9 **Slaves:** 1d6 true human escapees from Bedland (Area C).
- 10 **Desert cacti (1d6):** PCs can recover 1 gallon of water from each cactus, but 50% chance of toxicity (Poison strength: 1d4+6).
- 11 **Security robots (1d8):** DEX 13; AC 3; HD 3; hp 9 each; YPM 8; #ATK 1; punch (WC 1; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4) or gas ejector (WC 5; tranquilizes for 3d6 hours); Mutations none; SP none; RR 10, MR 16, CON 11, STR 14. *Nearby security robots can be directed with a blue band.*
- 12 **Relpmaw (1d3):** DEX 8; AC 5; HD 7; hp 25; YPM 5; #ATK 2; fangs (WC 3; DMG 1d6/1d6/1d6 plus poison strength 12); Mutations: heightened precision, illusion generation, chameleon powers; SP none. ; RR 15, MR 7, CON 11, STR 7 *A trickster annelidoid that blends into the sand.*
- 13 **Turkeyoids (1d6):** Ranging turkeyoids (see “Area B” for stats). Killed turkeyoids are subtracted from the forces in Area B.
- 14 **Containers:** Roll a d4: 1 – Jerry can filled with water (5 gal); 2 – Empty canteen; 3 – 1d6 water bottles (1/2 gal each); 4 – Sealed barrel with water inside (1d8 gal).
- 15 **Cybernetic cougaroids (2):** Identical stats to cougaroids (MA pg 17), but special cybernetic implants allow them to withstand harshest desert conditions.
- 16 **Stone storm:** Savage winds rain pebbles then stones. PCs have one melee round to take cover or take 2d6 damage.

- 17 **Safehouse:** A small building that can be used as shelter. 10% chance of being buried beneath a sand dune for every 6 hours spent inside.
- 18 **Shocker beasts (1d4):** Use stats for shocker beasts (MA pg. 17).
- 19 **Vegetation:** The party finds an area filled with (Roll d6: 1 – seed sprouts; 2 – thorn shrubs; 3 – bladed grass; 4 – acacia sapling; 5 – palm bush; 6 – purple oleander). Plant growth indicates water underground. PCs can dig to refill water containers.
- 20 **Invisible attackers (1d6):** Identical stats to wolfooid (MA pg. 17) except SP: invisible. The attackers show up as humanoid voids in the swirling dust.

SILVER WASTE

The entries below pertain to the overland map of the Silver Waste. Vessel Positioning System (VPS) coordinates are listed for the areas of main interest. Characters may obtain a VPS unit in “Part Two” of the adventure. The VPS guides on the overland map can be used determine a character’s current coordinates.

THE GREAT MIRROR – A force field stretches from the foundation to the highest point of the deck. The barrier reflects like a mirror on both sides. All attempts to penetrate the barrier have failed on both sides.

AREA R#: Areas on the map marked with the letter ‘R’ denote radiation contamination. The number after the ‘R’ indicates radiation intensity level. Upon entering a contaminated hex, all characters take damage as indicated on the “Radiation Intensity Level” table (MA pg. 10). Each additional minute of game time exposure causes all creatures in the area to take damage at a cumulative -1 penalty to their radiation resistance level. Radiation is undetectable by most creature’s senses. It does not glow or emit an odor. Without a Geiger counter, the only indication that characters are being exposed to radiation is the pain taken from burning damage.

AREA A – SUPER SHOP MART (VPS 12:6.61:44.39): This fortified building can serve as a base of operations for adventures in the region. The adventurers can rest here, barter for food, water and other supplies, or gather information about the surrounding areas. See the “Part One” section for more details.

AREA B – ME DEPO (VPS 12:-0.59:44.61): *The austere landscape is broken by a box-like concrete bunker in a nest of barricades and barbed wired. A splintered sign bolted to the roof reads “Me Depo” in bright orange letters.*

Due to the high background radiation levels, the humanoids of this tribe share a distinct appearance: glassy, bulging eyes and a large veiny, waddle of flesh hanging beneath the neck. The strange appearance is due to mutated thyroid glands that trap and neutralize radiation in the body granting complete immunity to radiation. Other tribes derisively refer to them as the “turkeymen.”

Their numbers are smaller than other tribal camps in the region, but they compensate with sheer ferocity. The tribe’s warriors have access to better weapons and armor due to their impressive stockpile of Old World technology. The tribe is insular and infrequently raids other camps. Outsiders approaching within



one hex of Me Depo are greeted by a single warning shot from a laser rifle. When targets are within range, all subsequent shots are aimed to kill.

Raiding Me Depo is a dangerous proposition. Snipers are posted on the roof at all times. A ground force of half the available warriors will rush any visible attackers while the remainder of the tribe protects the entrances to their stronghold (two front and one rear). Among treasures of Me Depo, there are 2d4 random technological treasures (see MA p. 21). Me Depo’s chieftan, Jive, can sometimes be merciful. Surrendering enemies are divested of all technological items, bound, and released back into the desert.

Turkeyoid snipers (3): DEX 10; AC 6; HD 6; hp 17; YPM 7, #ATK 1; laser rifle (WC 6; DMG 5d6/10d6/15d6); Mutations: electrical generation, heightened smell; SP immune to radiation; RR 15, MR 11, CON 15, STR 12.

Turkeyoid (30): DEX 6; AC 5; HD 6; hp 23; YPM 7, #ATK 1; sword (WC 3; DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8); Mutations: electrical generation, heightened smell; SP immune to radiation; RR 15, MR 12, CON 6, STR 14.

AREA C – BEDLAND (VPS 12:4.02:48.11): *A pitted brass rail sculpture spins atop a crooked sign reading “Bedland.” Nearby, the raging wind whistles through a circle of towering tents thrumming with the crisp snap of flapping canvas. A lanky, giant woman in a loose-fitting cotton robe and headscarf cracks a bullwhip over a chained herd of scraggly humanoids half her size.*

Bedland is the primary camp of the “Ama Zoes,” a tribe of mutated hermaphroditic amazons of gigantic proportion. The giants have long bodies ranging from fifteen to twenty feet in height. Most wear a headscarf that conceals their faces except for the two pairs of wide-set, almond-shaped eyes. Inbreeding has vastly increased the Ama Zoes’ size, but physical exertion quickly saps their strength. The sole exception is their robust leader Ursula who is accompanied at all times by three bearoid protectors wearing spiked leather chest harnesses.



The amazons are harsh mistresses. They enslave all humanoids they defeat and force them into hard labor. The giants refuse to arm their slaves, but have no qualms sending them into battle.

A raid against Bedland might be feasible if the adventurers attacked at night. The large tents can easily be entered from the outside, and the giants are heavy sleepers. The chieftain dabbles in botany and has an impressive collection of specimens (1d6 mutated substances, MA pg. 21) locked in a wooden chest in her tent.

Giant amazons (15): DEX 8; AC 7; HD 10; hp 33; YPM 13, #ATK 1; whip (WC 2; DMG 2d6/2d4/2d6) or longbow (WC 1; DMG 1d8+2/1d8+2/1d12+2); Mutations: telekinesis, levitation, mental paralysis, poor respiration, poor dual brain; SP no poison resistance; RR 13, MR 9, CON 12, STR 16.

Chieftain Ursula: DEX 8; AC 7; HD 11; hp 46; YPM 13, #ATK 1; battleaxe (WC 3; DMG 2d8/2d8/2d10) or longbow (WC 1; DMG 1d8+2/1d8+2/1d12+2); Mutations: shapechange (animal), levitation, death field generation, mental defenselessness; SP none; RR 13, MR 16, CON 16, STR 18.

Bearoid (3): DEX 8; AC 5; HD 9; hp 31; YPM 7, #ATK 1; club (WC 2; DMG 1d8+2/1d8/1d12) or bow (WC 1; DMG 1d6/1d6/1d6); Mutations: teleportation, precognition, telepathy, mental control, near-sighted; SP no resistance to gas or paralysis; RR 7, MR 13, CON 9, STR 13.

Humanoid #5 (30): DEX 6; AC 7; HD 9; hp 30; YPM 9; #ATK 1; fists (WC 1; DMG 1/1/1); Mutations: reflection power (1/day); SP none; RR 9, MR 15, CON 10, STR 12.

AREA D – DRY LAKEBED: *You come upon a massive depression in the earth with a gentle slope. The ground is covered in a thin layer of cracked clay. The depression stretches as far as you can see to your left and right.*

The dry lakebed and the dry riverbed leading away have reserves of water locked beneath them. If a character digs for at least 10 minutes, describe the earth as feeling somewhat moist. It takes about 4 hours to dig a hole deep enough to collect drinkable water, then 4 hours to collect a gallon of water. For every 4 hours spent at the task, there is a 1 in 6 chance of a random encounter. The raging desert sand buries the well after 24 hours.

AREA E – SKYSCRAPER (VPS 12:-4.73:47.22): *A vast stretch of desert before you is pierced by metallic silver quills*

as if a gargantuan spiny beast lies coiled beneath sand. At the center of the forest of spikes, a leaning black monolith thrusts into the sky. Darkened windows punctuate the entire length of the hundreds-of-meters-long structure. On a spire at the very zenith, a single red light blinks at a constant interval.

The “silver quills” in this area are the last remnants of building framing in what was once a bustling city. A solitary skyscraper has managed to endure extreme weather here due to the duotonium veneer the idiosyncratic architect insisted on installing. Many creatures lurk within the forest of decimated buildings. There is a 3 in 6 chance of a random encounter occurring while travelling through this hex.

Populating the skyscraper is left to the judge. The skyscraper has 55 floors of mutated horrors. The power is shut down, but can be restored via the master console on the top floor. A fully functional computer uplink is located on the 55th floor. At the judge’s discretion, the *gold band* located in Area 2-10 can be moved to this floor. The contents of the tower can be generated on the fly by using the “Distribution of Monsters & Treasure” table (MA pg. 20) and the city column of the encounter table (MA pg. 22).

AREA F – ZIGGURAT COORDINATES (VPS 12:-3.64:50.84): This hex contains nothing more than an empty stretch of sand. If the PCs reach this area with the disembodied head of Professor Cardunkle (see “Part Two”), read the following text:

“We made it. We’re finally here,” the professor shouts as you trudge up another powdery dune. The wind momentarily subsides as you reach the crest, revealing a valley of empty sand. The professor cries, “No. No. No. This isn’t right. This is the place. It’s supposed to be right here.”

Professor Cardunkle’s Vessel Positioning System coordinates indicate the exact location of Cryostasis Facility B before the disaster. However, the extreme weather and shifting sands have conspired in the intervening years to move the building nearly a mile to the west.

Cardunkle is adamant that the building could not have been destroyed; cryostasis structures are built to withstand the incredible force of a crash landing. He also doesn’t believe the building could have been buried beneath the sand. The facility is tall

enough to rest directly on the subdeck plating and still be visible above ground if the foundation somehow broke free of its shock mount. Characters instinctively know the desert squalls blow from east to west two-thirds of the year.

Give the players adequate time to formulate their own theory of what could have happened to the building. As judge, your task is to encourage players to continue searching for the cryostasis facility without giving them all the answers. If the players are stumped or become frustrated, the answer to their conundrum can be delivered *deus ex machina* by Professor Candunkle with a suggestion that the building could have drifted west.

AREA G – ZIGGURAT (VPS 12:-5.00,50.38): *You spot a shadowy structure a half mile away.*

Cryostasis Facility B has come to rest in this area. Depending on weather conditions, the adventurers should be able to see the ziggurat from 1 hex away. Perhaps sensing the building's original purpose, diminutive dog-faced mutants with insect limbs have taken residence and transformed the building into a burial chamber. Proceed to the Death Ziggurat section.

PART TWO: PROFESSOR CARDUNKLE

Professor Cardunkle is a 74-year-old xenobioliteracy instructor cryogenically frozen in Cryostasis Facility A before the disaster that befell the ship. The sands of time have buried the facility, but the adventurers should chance upon it during one their forays into the desert. Some ideas for introducing the facility include at the end of a giant beetle tunnel, falling through a sinkhole, or being dragged as food by monsters using it as a lair. There is no map because there is only one accessible room. The rest of the facility has collapsed or flooded with sand. Cardunkle's head is frozen within a cryohub unit, a device used to extract and repair bodies stored in a cryogenic storage matrix. When the characters enter, read the following text:

An eight-foot-tall metal triangle on the wall slides away with a hiss. In a room packed with drawers, control panels, and levers, you see a boulder-sized contraption lined with glowing blue bulbs and a central glass pane. Clear plastic pipes branch from the ceiling and connect to the left side of the strange machine. Another tube exits on the other side connected to a clear tube with a door and a stainless steel chair inside.

Cardunkle's frozen head is visible through the cryohub's window. The neck is capped by a metal plate flashing with tiny lights. Fiddling with the machine defrosts and restores the head. A speaker on the cryohub unit projects Cardunkle's voice. He's cantankerous and a bit senile, but crafty. Cardunkle will ask many questions: *Where am I? What year is it? Who are you? Where is the medical crew?*

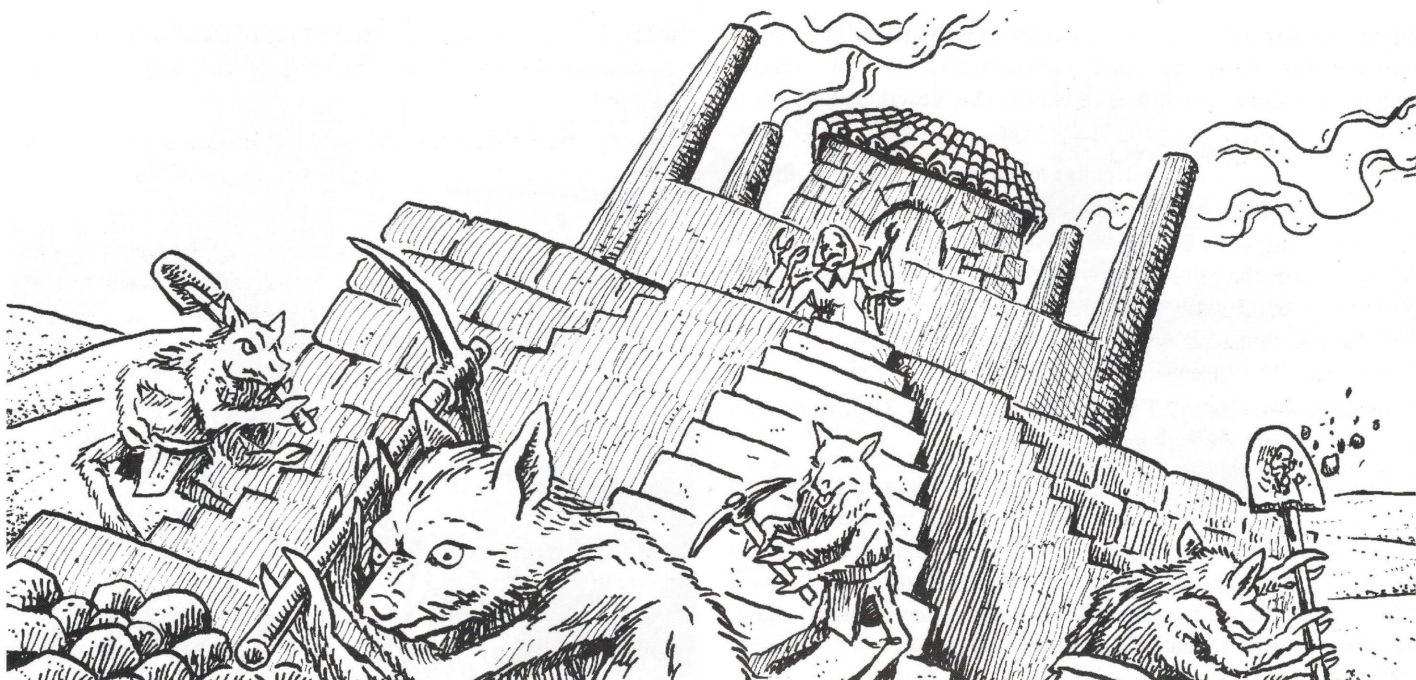
Seeing as there are no medical technicians, the professor asks the adventurers to help restore his body. Following his instructions, a series of unusable corpses are sucked through the vacuum pipes and plunked into the cryohub chair. Cardunkle finally asks if a party member would be willing to let him attach to their body. The process is relatively painless. Several tubes snake into the host's flesh while needles inject painkillers. The tubes anchor the head and tie into the host's circulatory system. Any warm-blooded creature larger than a Labrador retriever is sufficient to



keep Cardunkle's head alive. Attaching the head to another body doesn't allow it to be controlled; it only allows the head to be safely transported away from the cryohub.

Cardunkle's head has 12 hit points and shares all defenses of the host body. Cardunkle only takes damage when directly targeted and hit by an attack. If Cardunkle's bearer is slain, he must be re-attached to another body within a few hours. Emergency connectors in the head's neck cap sink into the new host. The head unit also contains retractable muscle-wire legs, but Cardunkle only activates them if he is abandoned or out of sight of the primitives.

Once the head is attached, Cardunkle asks his bearer to go through card catalog drawers on the wall that contain information about stored bodies and hold them up to his face to read. Cardunkle's body has been moved to Cryostasis Facility B. The facility is only a few miles away. Cardunkle demands to be taken there straight away (which seems reasonable as he thinks it's a twenty minute monorail ride away). Once the professor is made aware of the desert, he implores the party to bring him to the other facility. Cardunkle persuades reluctant characters with tales of the great magic items located there. He also instructs his bearer to open a drawer containing a Vessel Positioning System (VPS) unit. This device can be worn on the wrist and displays 4 numbers that in-



dicating the deck number plus X and Y coordinates in kilometers relative to a point at the center of the ship.

Cardunkle spent years researching theoretical alien biology and psychology. Inwardly, he is distrustful of the party. When answering questions about the ship, he is intentionally vague. If an adventurer asks a question about how to operate a technological device, he makes a mental calculation about how much damage could be done with the device. His code of ethics prevents him from giving laser pistols to primitive beings. He will lie about what a device does or give bad instructions on activating it then say it's broken.

PART THREE: DEATH ZIGGURAT

For hundreds of years, Cryostasis Facility B slowly sank as it drifted westward. When it came to rest against the Warden's hull, only the top few floors were visible above the sand. The insectocanids, a race of small insect-dog hybrids, took shelter next to the hulking structure. Over the course of decades, the insectocanids have transformed the upper portion into a temple and burial chamber for revered dead. Quarried sandstone was mortared to the outside of the building to create three stairways, then an additional two platform tiers were constructed on the roof. The first tier is still clearly recognizable as Old World architecture. The topmost floor of the building is numbered 40. Floors 39 through 27 were destroyed in a generator explosion triggered by a flux inversion event. Floor 26 remains intact, but all the lower floors are either destroyed or filled with sand. Gravity generators are inoperative below the 39th floor.

JUDGE NOTES

As written, this adventure assumes the adventurers have arrived at the Death Ziggurat accompanied by the disembodied head of Professor Cardunkle. Otherwise, adjustments must be made to the final encounter. If the party discovers the ziggurat on their own, replace the Professor Cardunkle character with an original crewmember who has awoken from cryosleep. If Profes-

sor Cardunkle was lost, abandoned, or seemingly killed, invent a contrivance for the disembodied head to have arrived before the adventurers: insectocanids collected the head and revere it as a god; the head was rescued by a roving medical robot; or the head unit had an unrevealed levitation mode. The professor's motivation becomes simple revenge.

Also note, the adventure has a different approach in regard to the areas above ground, specifically areas 2-1 through 2-5. Most of the information and stat blocks for running encounters are contained in the "Breaching the Ziggurat" section. Read and understand it before starting the adventure. The keyed locations have further descriptions intended to supplement the information in the "Breaching the Ziggurat" section.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION AT THE ZIGGURAT

The weather takes a sudden turn for the worse. The perpetual blasting of sand increases in intensity until it reaches a painful, stinging crescendo. The wind howls in your ears until they feel fit to burst, then as abruptly as it appeared the wind dies like a final violent note fading in an empty room. The veil over the horizon melts away to reveal a stepped structure of gleaming metal and sandstone blocks shimmering in the distance. Three long stairways converge at the front allowing access to the first tier of the building thirty feet above the ground. Several large white letters affixed to the eastern face spell out C-R-Y-O. Small black dots amass around shiny points of light in the building's shadow and fan out over the entire landscape.

The ziggurat is populated by insectocanids—shaggy, dog-faced creatures with four pincer-tipped arms that walk upright on back-turned insectoid legs and stand around three feet tall. Their culture is both primitive and brutally hierarchical. Most wear simple yellow loincloths marking them as members of the labor caste. These workers sleep in tents built in the shade of the ziggurat, and toil all their waking hours repairing and expanding the ziggurat as directed by their priests. The members of the priest caste are small in number and wear embroidered azure robes. The priests wear bronze masks in the likeness of the cryogenically stored gi-

ant gods entombed in the cryostasis facility. While small in size, these creatures move over sand at incredible speed. Their powerful legs also allow them to make ten-foot high bounding leaps.

BREACHING THE ZIGGURAT

There are myriad ways to access the ziggurat. The easiest method is entreating with the insectocanids. True humans who peacefully approach the ziggurat will be taken to the priests. Without the aid of mental mutations (such as telepathy) communicating with the insectocanids will require pantomime and a great deal of patience. The insectocanid language is comprised of clicks and chirps that register above the frequency of normal human hearing. The priests will assume the adventurers are giant gods returned to reclaim the ziggurat. A great feast of nectar and flatbread will be served, and then the adventurers will be conveyed to the ziggurat's entrance with great ceremony (Area 2-4). The priests will also offer 1d3 insectocanid workers as followers; roll 3d6+2 on the loyalty table for each follower (MA pg. 23).

A direct assault on the ziggurat is a risky proposition, but the insectocanids are skittish by nature. Make 10 group morale checks (1 for each 30 insectocanid workers) at a cumulative -1 penalty for each true human player character. Roll 2d6: (2-5) group flees a safe distance into desert to watch; (6-8) group retreats up stairs to defend ziggurat; (9-12) group rushes the invaders. Once the adventurers defeat the first onslaught of attackers, the workers defending the ziggurat make another round of group morale checks; failure (2-5) means the group falls to their knees and kowtows to the returned gods. The priests are resolute, thus they never need to make morale checks.

Sneaking into the ziggurat is another possibility. Guards are stationed on the stairs at all hours. Climbing up the northern face of the ziggurat under cover of darkness is the safest way to gain stealthy access. The entrance to the cryostasis facility (Area 2-4) is left unguarded; it is strictly forbidden for insectocanids to enter except members of the priesthood. Adventurers who stake out the ziggurat will notice that huge plumes of sand are purged by the ventilation system (Area 2-5) several times per day—another potential point of entry. If the characters emerge from the ziggurat without being spotted entering, the insectocanids will react to them as awakened gods.

Insectocanid workers (300): DEX 5; AC 7; HD 2; hp 3; YPM 15, #ATK 1; knife (WC 3; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4) or sling (WC 1; DMG 1d6/1d4+1/1d6); Mutations: multi-armed (-2 to hit), speed increase (2/day), fur change (laser-proof); SP none; RR 12, MR 5, CON 14, STR 7.

Insectocanid priests (3): DEX 6; AC 8; HD 3; hp 6; YPM 15, #ATK 1; mace (WC 3; DMG 1d8/1d6/1d8) or sling (WC 1; DMG 1d6/1d4+1/1d6); Mutations: see below; SP none; RR 8, MR 17, CON 11, STR 6.

- **Laughing mask (1):** Mutations: Light generation, complete mental block (robots), telekinetic arm, force field generation.
- **Angry mask (1):** Mutations: Heightened smell, heightened dexterity (AC 1), heightened strength (+3d6 dmg), poison claws (poison strength 5), shapechange (insect), wings, death field generation.
- **Crying mask (1):** Mutations: Mental control.

AREA 2-1 – STAIRS: *Three sets of stairs constructed from cyclopean sandstone blocks lead to the elevated platform base of the ziggurat.*

Under normal circumstances, two workers are stationed at the bottom of each of the stairs and ten workers guard the upper platform.

AREA 2-2 – VILLAGE: *A large area next to the ziggurat is littered with hundreds of low-slung lean-tos covered by white sheets and reflective metal foil. Furry insect-like creatures scuttle under and out of the lean-tos into small tunnels in the ground.*

The insectocanids dig small burrows and keep the heat out with tented sheets. The burrows are small, but it's possible for the average humanoid to crawl inside. Each contains a single room den roughly 2 meters tall and 3 meters in diameter. Some insectocanids bury treasure in their homes; searching grants a 5% chance of finding a random mutated substance, or 1% chance of a random technological item (MA pg. 21). Depending on the time of day, anywhere from 50-250 workers will be in the village.

AREA 2-3 – FIRST TIER: *Sandstone blocks tile the expansive platform. Striped canvas cabanas are situated along the west, south, and east faces. Hairy insectoid creatures wearing robes of lapis lazuli and brass face masks recline on pillowed couches within. Throngs of attendants gently fan the richly garbed creatures.*

Large carved idols stand on pedestals at each corner of the platform. The idols resemble an insect with a hammer and chisel. At the center of the structure, another platform towers twenty feet above. You can barely see the blue-tiled roof of another building on the next higher platform.

The insectocanid priests live on the first tier. They direct construction operations by placing different idols onto the pedestal. The current idol tells the workers to shape sandstone into blocks. A single set of stairs leads up to the second tier on the southern side. If the player characters reach this area undetected, they could surprise the priests with an ambush attack. Each of the 3 priests has 5 attendants, and an additional retinue of 10 worker guards is stationed on the landing atop the stairs. Do not forget the priest with the angry brass mask has the *heightened smell* mutation. Unless the characters approach while the priests slumber, they will be detected if they come within 200 feet of the west-facing cabana.

AREA 2-4 – SECOND TIER: *The entire platform is constructed from sandstone blocks that give it an archaic look. A five-meter-high column stands at each corner. A building with a blue tiled roof is covered in bas-relief at the center of this tier. A heavy stone door is set in the southern façade. You have a commanding view of the area from the altitude.*

This entire tier consists of new insectocanid construction. The bas-relief carved walls depict giant humans giving gifts to small insectoids. The centrally located building is empty and the stone door opens easily.

When the adventurers open the door, read the following text:

The stink of incense and mortification burst forth as you pull open the stone doors. As your eyes adjust to the light, you see a bloodstained sandstone bier. The walls are crammed with shelves of decorated clay jars from floor to ceiling.



The priests prepare the corpses of the past priests and notable insectocanids for the afterlife in this chamber. A collection of metal tools used in the ritual lie on a table next to the bier. A cursory search of the room reveals the unlocked trapdoor. Descending the metal ladder leads to the burial chamber below.

The clay jars on the walls contain preserved organs. There is a 5% chance that an opened jar contains a mutated gland. If ingested, roll a d10 to determine effects: (1) modifies radiation resistance by 1d12-6; (2) increases hit dice by 2; (3) poison with strength of 3d6; (4) adds 5% bonus to all attempts to gain followers; (5) gain levitation; (6) modifies mental resistance by 1d12-6; (7) radiation with intensity of 2d6+6; (8) suffer mental defenselessness; (9) heals 2d6 hit points; (10) Mental Strength increases by 1 (permanent). The gland's effects last 24 hours.

AREA 2-5 – VENTS: If an adventurer climbs a column to inspect it, read the following:

You peer over the top of the column and see the column conceals an open metal pipe. There is ample room to climb inside. The bottom of the pipe is shrouded in darkness.

Adventurers can enter the ventilation system here to gain access to the cryofacility. Sliding down into the pipe leads to the air conditioning plant (area 2-6).

AREA 2-6 – AIR CONDITIONER: *The walls of this room are covered in riveted metal sheets encrusted with black mold. Gigantic fan blades lie still beneath a large metal grate. Musty air gently blows up from beneath the grate. Metal rungs are welded into the wall below the fan.*

Cracks in the complex's outer walls allow desert sand to seep into ventilation shafts. At random intervals, the air conditioners kick in to evacuate the system. The heavy grate on the floor can be readily pried open at the edges. Characters may attempt to disable the fan at the control panel (Item Complexity 5) that is located beneath a sliding panel on the fan mount. The fan can also be disabled by either destroying it (stat block below) or wedging something in the blades.

Once the players have completed their preparations, roll a d4 to determine the number of characters that pass through the fan blades before the system turns on. The referee will need to make a judgment call whether items wedged in the fan are strong enough to hold.

The fan remains activated for 1d6+3 melee turns. Determine initiative. All characters will be sucked up toward the ventilation pipes in the ceiling. Characters below the fan will take damage as they pass through the fan (see "blades" attack below), and characters above the fan will be ejected through the ceiling and take an additional 2d6 falling damage when they land. On each character's turn, allow them a chance to hold onto a rung or the metal grate if either are within reach; a character can halt their ascent by rolling a d20 under his or her Strength score. Characters can also use powers or make attacks on their turn. Allowing weapons or other items to be sucked through the fan causes automatic damage. Weapons cause damage equivalent to their weapon class (e.g. a longsword causes 3 hit points of damage). The judge determines damage output of other items.

Giant fan: DEX 1; AC 2; HD 4; hp 15; YPM 0, #ATK 3; blades (WC 3; DMG 1d6/1d6/1d6); Mutations: none; SP makes 3 attacks on every creature that passes through; RR 11, MR 18, CON 18, STR 17.

AREA 2-7 – SECURITY GATE: *As you descend the metal ladder, you see stone sarcophagi covered in strange symbols stacked against every wall. On the east wall, a triangular metal doorway blinks with tiny lights in sharp contrast to the primitive stone tiles that adorn the rest of the chamber. A distinct hum can be heard coming from behind the door.*

There are dozens of sarcophagi hold the mummified remains of insectocanids. One of the mummies wears a white color band beneath its wrappings. Each time the characters unravel a mummy, there is a 1 in 6 chance it will be discovered. A ventilation grate that can be used to access the air conditioning (area 2-6) is concealed behind a stack of sarcophagi.

The security gate can be opened with a red/blue, red, or white color band, or by using the left-side control panel (Item Complexity 4). The control panel has been pried apart and wires are exposed. After the first failed Item Complexity check, two Peacemaker gun mounts descend from the ceiling and a soothing voice warns intruders to vacate the premise. After the second failed check, the guns open fire.

Behind the door, two large generators topped by pulsing glass pyramids produce a loud humming noise. A stairway leads down.

Peacemakers (2): DEX 4; AC 4; HD 5; hp 23; YPM 0; #ATK 1; paralysis ray (WC 4; DMG 1d8/1d8/1d8 plus unconscious 1d6 hours); Mutations: none; SP none; RR 11, MR 18, CON 6, STR 11.

AREA 2-8 – BLASTED FLOORS: *You see a strange sight in the next room. Chunks of concrete, broken chairs, computer readouts, and other trash hang in midair. The floor has crumbled away leaving only the stairwell in the southeast corner intact. Light fixtures strobe randomly in the cavernous expanse below revealing at least ten floors of floating debris and exposed ventilation ducts.*

A massive explosion ripped through the cryostasis facility as it was dragged through the Silver Wastes, decimating a large portion of the building and cryopods. The gravity generator's poles inverted, creating a zone of weightlessness on all floors below this point. However, the lower level cryostatic matrices containing Professor Cardunkle's body are still operational.

Moving through this area is tricky. Characters must push off stationary objects to propel forward. Some mutations such as levitation and telekinesis may help. Keeping the characters together may prove difficult unless they anchor to each other with rope or lengths of salvaged network cable. Shooting a weapon or using a projectile type mutation will cause an unanchored character to propel in the opposite direction. Of course, this could also be used as a means of propulsion.

Four mutant spiders have evolved to the zero gravity environment. They feed off the cryopods that are sometimes ejected though broken vacuum tubes when the automated systems try to move pods between cryomatrices. The spiders have a large central body mass covered in black hair and twenty double-jointed legs that radiate in all directions. The spiders lost their natural ability to produce silk, but they have adapted by collecting spool of magnetic tape to create webs and catch prey. The creatures attach metal shards to the tape and hurl them like harpoons to snare enemies up to 15 meters away. On the next turn, they reel in the target. After the target succumbs to the spider toxin, the corpse is wrapped in a cocoon of magnetic tape and tied to a wall for later consumption.

The first spider will attack alone while the other spiders hide and observe. Characters that blindly try to drop down the open void will become ensnared in a web of tape. Trapped characters will be unable to move until they roll a d20 under their Strength or Dexterity ability scores.

The safest way through this area is either through the ventilation ducts or the stairwell. Characters that shimmy through the ducts should be able to reach the lower levels without a fight. Traveling via the stairwell protects the party from long-range at-

tacks forcing the spiders to approach near melee range to attack. The railings also provide ready handholds.

When the first spider attacks, read:

A broken light fixture suddenly flashes, illuminating a three-yard-wide hairy black mound with ten glittering eyes and slaver-ing fangs zooming right at you. Its flailing segmented legs radiate in all directions.

Zero Gravity Spiders (4): DEX 5; AC 7; HD 3; hp 13; YPM 6; #ATK 1; fangs (WC 3; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4 plus poison intensity level 10) or snare (WC 2; DMG 1d6/1d4/1d6 plus target snared); Mutations: none; SP reel (a snared target within 15m dragged adjacent); RR 14, MR 11, CON 17, STR 12.

AREA 2-9 – HALLWAY: *Double doors from the stairwell open to a floor that has remained structurally sound. A long hall with several doors heads east 30 meters then makes a right turn. The stairs leading down are filled with sand.*

The three doors in the south hallway are locked. Two of the rooms are used for patient examination and contain mostly use-less medical tools. However, there is a medical hand analyzer in the western most room. The room closest to the stairwell contains the gravity controls and can only be opened with a grey or gold color band. The professor claims the gold color band is held in that room, but in truth there is only a broken uplink and an operations manual. The manual can be used to reduce an Item Complexity check by 1 given the user is literate and has ten minutes of uninterrupted time to consult the manual before making the check.

AREA 2-10 – CRYO HUB: *A grimy triangular door hisses open to reveal a pristine, white room with whirring tape reels, pulsing buttons, and ghostly squares of light floating in air. "We're finally here," the professor says and nods his head to the opposite wall. Another door stands open next to a large observation window. Through the window, you see a glowing contraption that looks similar to the cryohub where you found the professor.*

Professor Cardunkle claims he can open the locked rooms in the hallway and retrieve the gold color band once he is reunited with his body. Cardunkle invents reasons for each character to man consoles and levers in the cryohub room, but this is just a ruse to lure as many as possible into his trap. Cardunkle insists the characters hold up their end of his bargain and reattach his head. He must have full use of his body to perform the operations required to unlock the promised cache of technological items. Talking someone through the procedure would take too long.

Once the characters are at their stations, the professor instructs the character carrying him to sit in the chair. The open tube lowers over his head and sucks the head off the character's shoulders into the cryohub machine. A moment later the head shoots up into the ceiling. Then, read the following text:

You hear a whoosh as the door suddenly slams behind you. In the observation window, you see Professor Cardunkle has been bodily restored. A gold band gleams on one wrist, a white band on the other. His voice crackles over the intercom as he waves a shiny purple rifle. "I'm so sorry. You seem like lovely people, but I realized during our trip that you cannot be allowed to reintegrate with the ship. You are much too dangerous. Obviously, the crew placed this area under containment to protect the ship." You hear

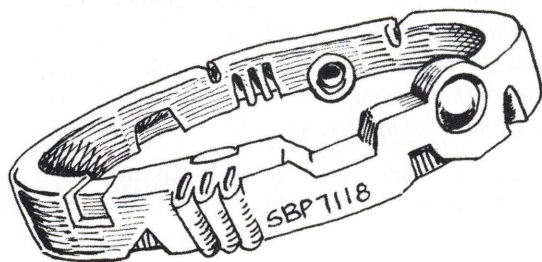
a hissing sound as Cardunkle depresses a bright red plunger button. "The only responsible course of action is to purge the disease in this area. Regrettably, I must start with you. I truly am sorry."

The judge will have to adjust the read-aloud if some characters refused to enter the cryohub room. The professor can seal off the cryohub and release the gas, then make his monologue while fighting characters in the same room. The professor has already engaged the optional shield attachment of his protein disruptor rifle.

The gas flooding into the cryohub room is highly poisonous. In the first round, the gas starts with poison strength 7, and increases by one in each subsequent round. Fortunately, the observation window was not built to withstand weapon fire and mutant powers. It has an AC of 2, and is shattered after 30 points of damage. In the second round, a peacemaker gun mount drops from the ceiling above Cardunkle and targets any mutated creature.

Professor Cardunkle: DEX 7; AC 3; HD 4; hp 19; YPM 6; #ATK 1; protein disruptor rifle (WC 8; DMG 5d6/10d6/15d6); Mutations: none; SP shield attachment (impervious to all physical attacks except heat and radiation); RR 7, MR 15, CON 9, STR 9.

Peacemaker: DEX 4; AC 4; HD 5; hp 23; YPM 0; #ATK 1; paralysis ray (WC 4; DMG 1d8/1d8/1d8 plus unconscious 1d6 hours); Mutations: none; SP none; RR 11, MR 18, CON 6, STR 11.



THE GOLD BAND

The gold band is the rarest of all color bands. In fact, only two were ever produced and held by the ship's architect and primary programmer. The color band is quite an oddity. A single gold band has no function on its own. It must be used in conjunction with another color band. The gold band enables a special debugging mode in the other band for 10 minutes. This mode allows the wearer to reboot systems, query parameters, and even change program instructions when used at a computer uplink or other interface. Access is limited to the functional area of the color band. For example, a character wearing a green horticultural band and a gold band together could query temperature readings and adjust the climate patterns, but would not be able to open a door tuned to red security bands.

One gold band is located at the bottom of the destroyed cryofacility in this adventure. The other is lost somewhere aboard the ship. Wearing both gold color bands unlocks a superuser access mode. In superuser mode, the wearer has access to all areas, functions, and debugging modes of all other color bands at the same time. In addition, the wearer can summon and interrogate any of the ship's artificial intelligences including the elusive primary AI, Artemis.

The gold band is an exceedingly powerful item. The judge should carefully consider the implications of actions the characters perform with the item lest the item becomes the solution to every problem. There are many inherent dangers in overusing the gold color band. The characters have a primitive conception of technology. Messing with program registers could have unintended consequences such as turning off lights, gravity, or oxygen systems with no clear indication how to fix them. Many circuit boards on the ship were damaged in the disaster and there is the possibility that activating the gold band could cause arcs of electricity to electrocute nearby creatures. In short, using the gold band has inherent risks that counterbalance its power. If a character was sucked out an airlock the last time the gold band was activated, the party will think carefully before using it again.

CONCLUSION

Acquiring the gold band is the first step in escaping the Silver Waste. Using the gold band, the characters can enable debug mode on other color bands and use them at an uplink to change language settings, fix the climate malfunction, or drop the isolation barrier. What does the world look like beyond the Silver Waste? How will the other inhabitants of the ship react to the sudden disappearance of the Great Mirror? Where will the adventurers go next? All these questions and more will be answered as your campaign unfolds in the world of *Metamorphosis Alpha*.

THE SILVER WASTE
->N
 = .33 miles

