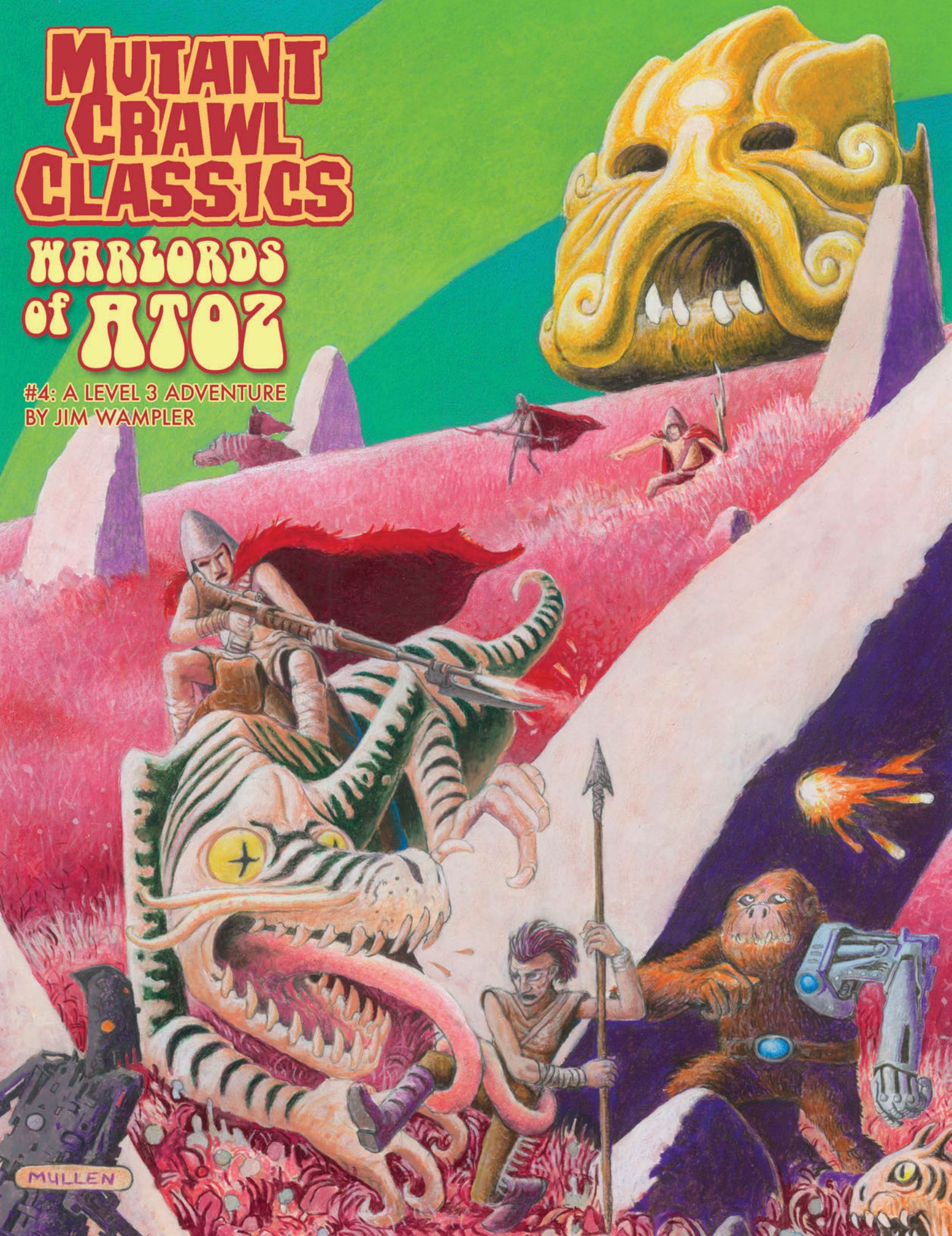


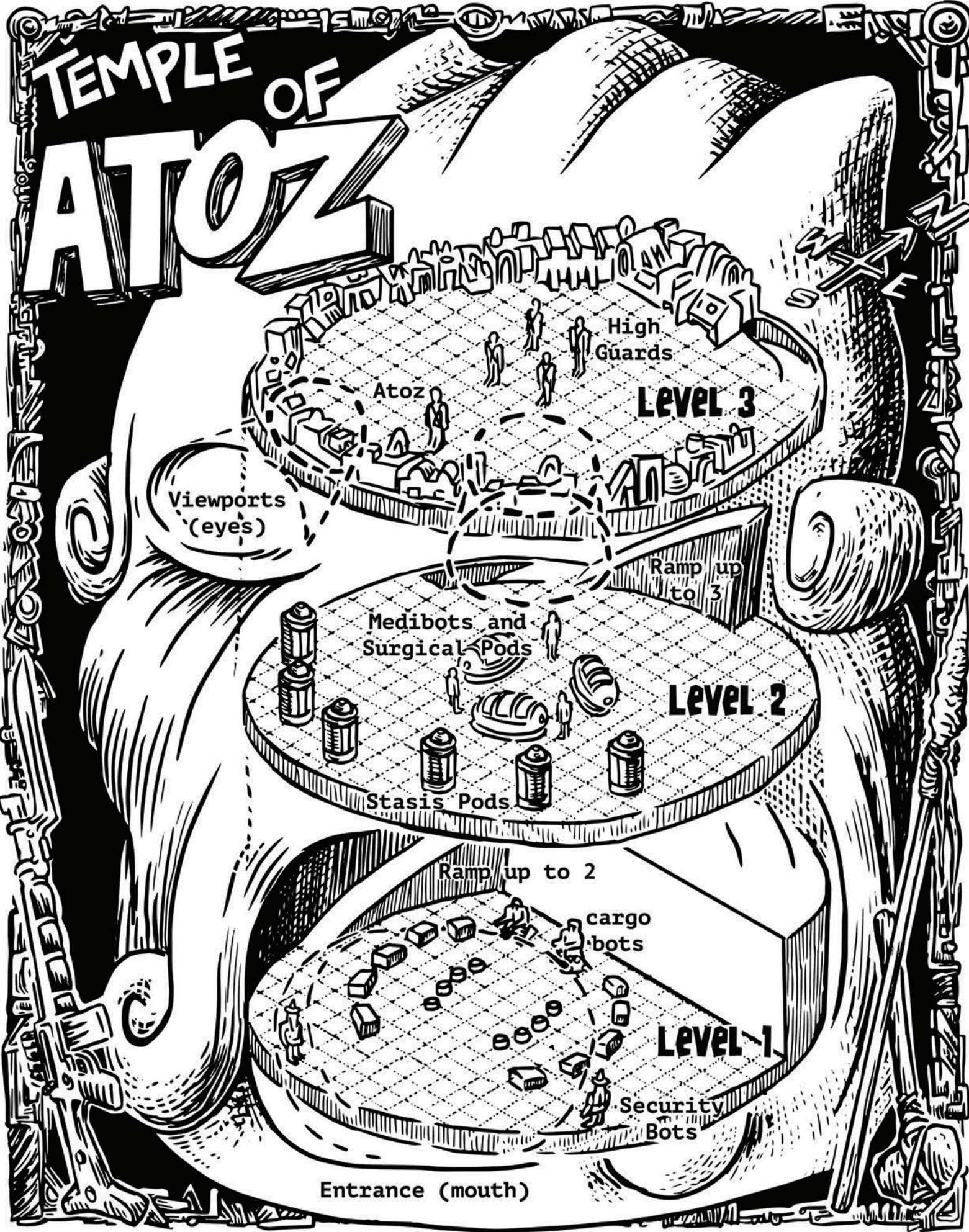
MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

WARLORDS of ATOZ

#4: A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE
BY JIM WAMPLER



MULLEN



TEMPLE OF ATOZ

Viewports
(eyes)

High
Guards

Atoz

LEVEL 3

Ramp up
to 3

Medibots and
Surgical Pods

LEVEL 2

Stasis Pods

Ramp up to 2

cargo
bots

LEVEL 1

Security
Bots

Entrance (mouth)

WARLORDS OF ATOZ

A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

By Jim Wampler

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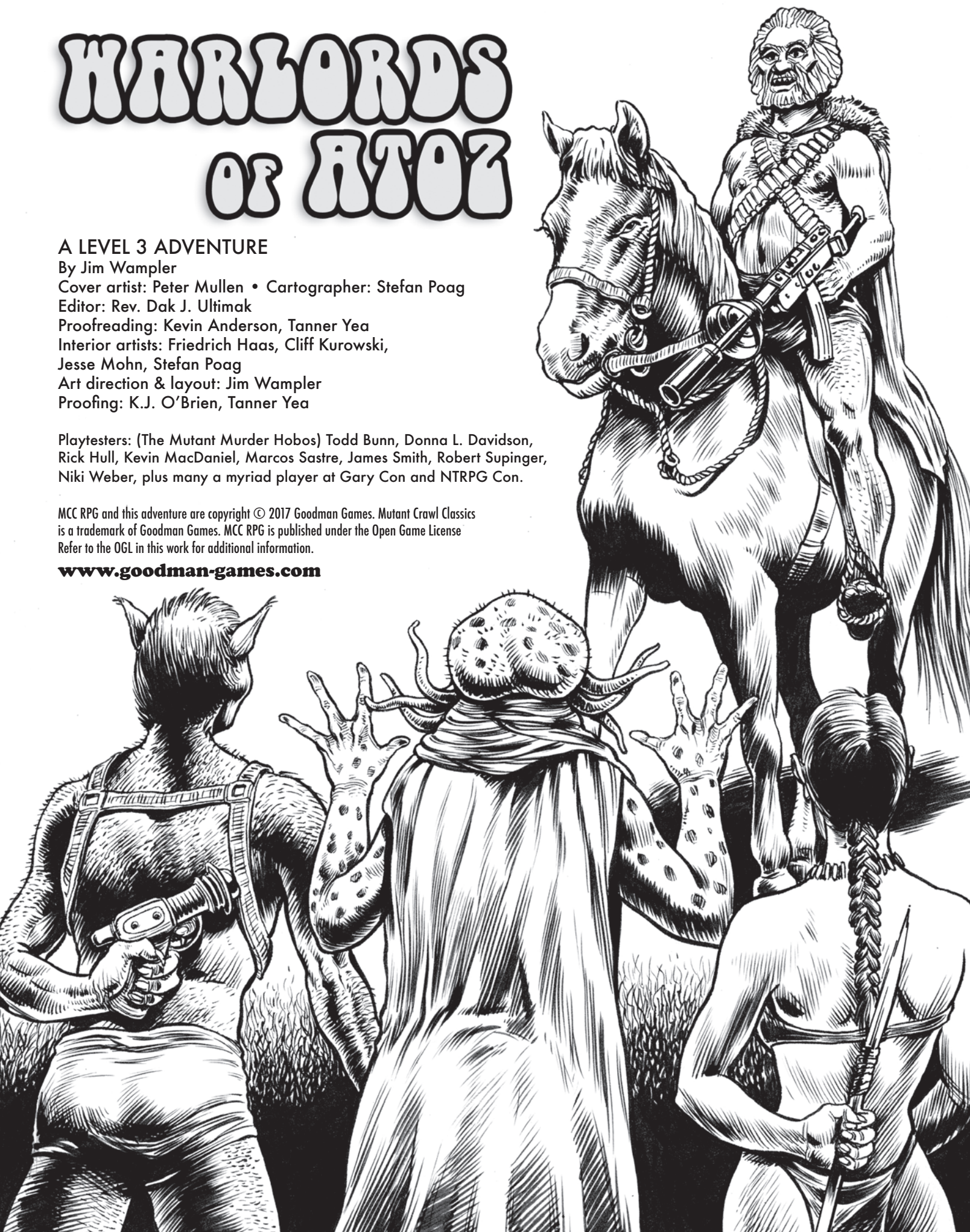
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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when post-apocalyptic adventures were full of super-science, robots that were there to be mastered, and the finale of every underground adventure was setting the fusion power plant to overload? Those days are back. Mutant Crawl Classics adventures take place in an ambiguous time period after a great disaster has ravaged the world, and it's up to your neolithic mutant tribesmen to go out into the hot house jungles and radioactive deserts of Terra A.D. (After Disaster) and collect the artifacts of the Ancient Ones in order to attain great personal power and savage glory.

This Mutant Crawl Classics RPG adventure is for 6-8 3rd-level PCs. This adventure can be run for lower or higher level parties by scaling the number of adversaries down or up in encounters. Unwary players should be cautioned that parts of this adventure absolutely require strategic thinking, or a TPK is all but assured in several places.

In *The Warlords of ATOZ*, the player characters' tribal villages have begun to be overrun by refugees from a war of aggression taking place some distance from their territories. The tribal elders will assign one of their best seeker teams to go investigate and assess the situation, bring back valuable intel, and to hamper the oncoming horde if possible and prudent.



BACKGROUND

There have been rumors passed along by drum-beat communications of a major tribal war brewing in the northern lands for some time. Solid evidence for this is beginning to appear right on the tribe's bamboo doorsteps. Displaced and homeless refugees from many days north of their villages have begun to appear, seeking succor and solace. The refugees include mutants and manimals — but few pure strain humans — all telling the same tale of woe-filled warfare. Where they once lived for generations in peaceful trade and coexistence, a new tribe of fierce warriors have been conquering their lands and enslaving their kinsmen.

These new conquerors call themselves the Warlords of ATOZ. They claim divine guidance from the Great God ATOZ, said to be not only a god but also the last of the Ancient Ones to still walk the world. Adding credence to their claims is their description of the Warlords: that they wear red fur cloaks and helmets fashioned in the likeness of the face of their god, that they are huge striped lizard-mutants, and that all are armed with a terrible artifact called a boom stick. They have only to point a boom stick in your direction and your body explodes in a shower of shredded flesh.

The Warlords of ATOZ are said to be uniformly comprised of pure strain humans, and that they capture and enslave other pure strain humans, preferring to kill all mutants, and burn down any sentient plants.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

You have been gathered by the tribal elders of the Clan of Cog and briefed on the strange circumstances causing the recent influx of tribal refugees. After conferring with his mutant, manimal, and plantient sub-chiefs, the current chieftain Mangarr the Mighty points his feathered stone axe in your group's direction and says, "With the Alpha and Beta seeker teams already out on missions, clearly your Gamma Team must investigate these tales and assess the threat the Warlords of ATOZ pose to our tribe. You must travel northward, investigate, and if possible, impede the progress of these aggressive warlords."

NORTHWARD THROUGH THE HOTHOUSE JUNGLES

You begin your trek northward, padding silently on leather-bound feet through the dense mile-high trees and worn mossy rocks of your homelands. The normal babble of feathered lizard-birds and frog-monkeys seems subdued, as though the millennial wood trees with trunks larger than your own bamboo huts knew more than they were willing to say. Even the typically plentiful banana slugs seem to have vanished into hiding. You have passed the blackened remains of several burnt-out villages — empty of all possessions and life. After two day's walk, the muted forest cadence gives way to the sounds of many footfalls up ahead on the muddy game trail.

Refugees – A ragged group of over 20 beaten and bloodied refugees appear on the trail, heading southward. They

SURVIVORS' TRAMATIC TALES

d8 Result

- 1 "I am the Great God ATOZ, and if you do not believe me I place a curse upon you!"
(The harmless tribesman spits at PC, then collapses into a manic frenzy.)
- 2 "The Great God ATOZ appeared to us as a striding giant being of pure light who crushed our huts under heel with but a step."
- 3 "The Warlords called down a storm of meteors that wiped us out by the dozens."
- 4 "A group of my kinsmen surrendered to the Warlords, but the mutants and manimals were killed by boom sticks and the plantients burned alive like fire wood. Only the pure strain humans were taken captive. I think that ATOZ eats them."
- 5 "The Warlords were all many-legged mutants about 12' tall with two heads. Their legs were striped."
- 6 "I heard that my kinsmen were being taken to do a strange thing. Instead of gathering tangfruit in the forest as we do, they were to uproot and move the whole plants to bare earth and put them into rows as some kind of sacrifice to ATOZ."
- 7 "The Warlords of ATOZ all wore their own god's face and looked the same — metal-headed and terrible."
- 8 "The Warlords of ATOZ had boom sticks. When they pointed a boom stick at you there were two booms. The stick made a boom and then there was a bigger boom when the creature it was aimed at blew up."



are weaponless except for improvised walking sticks, and appear to be a mixed group of shell-shocked mutants and manimals. They cower at first in fear, then seemed relieved when they recognize the PCs as a seeker team from the Clan of Cog, the Archaic Alignment to which their tribes also belong.

If treated well, the war-torn survivors will tell tall tales of their downfall and dispossession. Some of which will even be fairly accurate and true.

THE BLOOD GRASS SAVANNAS

After three days of forced march, you are finally reaching the edge of your jungle domain and all that you have ever known. The tops of the gigantic bluewoods and mile-high jungle canopy have grown lower and lower until the jungle's edge finally breaks into endlessly rolling hills of blood-red grass about 8 hands high. Despite the chest-high cover of the savanna before you, you still feel exposed as you gaze upwards to the unbroken view of the cloudless turquoise sky and the magnificent east-west curve of the banded Sky Arc above you. A winding path of flattened blood grass heading out northward suggests that a large group of creatures passed this way recently.

As the PCs follow the bent-grass trail, they will discover that it breaks apart and branches off in places, though always heading generally north. While trekking northward, the PCs will encounter the following creatures and sentients.

SAVANNA ENCOUNTER ONE

Devils (Hoppers): A huge herd of hoppers (gigantic grasshoppers over 15' long) are encountered. The hoppers will, in general, avoid any PCs and move away at great speed. If the PCs appear aggressive or threatening, several bull hoppers will wheel around and attack the intruders with head butt and kick attacks.

Just ahead you notice that the flattened grass trail becomes much wider, and you begin to hear devil noises from over the next rise. Devils are quite rare in your jungle home, and the only one you are familiar with are the great red-furred woolers that hunt game like gigantic lone moths from high up in the sky. The sound you begin hearing does not sound exactly like woolers, and definitely does not come from a single creature. You just hear a growing chorus of klick-klack sounds along with a tumult of munching noises.

It is possible to subdue a bull hopper, but the intention to inflict subdual damage must be announced in advance. If a bull hopper is reduced to zero hit points with subdual damage, it will become submissive to the attacking creature and can be used by that sentient as a mount provided that some means of improvised reins and bridle are constructed and employed. Subdual damage heals instantly once combat has ended.

(Devil) Bull Hopper (3): Init +2; Atk bite +0 melee (1d6), kick +2 melee (1d10), head butt +2 melee (1d8); AC 14; HD 2d10; hp 8, 12, 14; MV 100'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -1.

WARLORDS OF ATOZ ALERTNESS CHECK

d20 Result

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | A Warlord's mount steps in a burrow hole and is spooked. It rears up, throws one of the Warlords out of his saddle, and runs off northward. Everyone's undivided attention is focused on the lost mount and the bucked Warlord is prone. PCs may seek cover or engage in combat and gain a surprise round of actions if they wish. |
| 2-14 | An impatient Warlord in the back of their party goads the captives forward with a shout and a cruel shove with a stone cudgel. No one appears to notice the PCs' presence. |
| 15-17 | A young adolescent prisoner spots the PCs and begins gesturing wildly and screaming for help. A Warlord strikes the child in the temple with the butt of his boom stick and knocks her out cold. As the group circles back on itself in the commotion, the Warlords notice the PCs standing in the tall grass. Roll for initiative, but the PCs all get +2 to their rolls. |
| 18-19 | A flying insect bites one of the Warlords and he slaps it away. As he does so, his head turns and he sees the PCs and shouts to his comrades. Combat initiative is rolled, but only the single alerted Warlord and the PCs may act on the first round of combat. |
| 20 | A PC steps on a dried twig and it snaps loudly. The Warlords all whirl around and combat initiative is rolled. |

SAVANNA ENCOUNTER TWO

Warlord Slaver Crew: A party of 10 mounted Warlords of ATOZ are driving 25 pure strain human slaves northward through the grasslands. As the PCs sight the group, they are about 60' behind them, and unless some untoward noise or commotion has been caused by the PCs, the Warlords have not yet seen the party tracking them.

You have come up behind a much larger party of travelers. You see a large group of over 20 pure strain human tribes-people, beaten and bowed, tied together at the wrists by hemp ropes as they are marched forward by large ungainly mutant beasts. The beasts appear to be lizard-like, with six legs, two arms, and two heads. The legs, large, fanged forward head, and body are covered in scales that alternate in dark and light jagged stripes. A smaller head and set of arms grow out of the creature's spine. The arms and head look somewhat human, though they are covered in bright red furs. Each second head is made up of an identical metallic and scowling face. The faces of these second heads all look like little gods to you, and it suddenly occurs to you that each of these faces must be the face of the Great God ATOZ. In their arms, the beast creatures cradle powerful and deadly-looking Artifacts of the Ancients.

They have not yet taken notice of you as they are focused on herding the prisoners ever-forward towards their unknown sinister goal.

The Warlords outnumber and likely out-gun the PCs if confronted head on, so it is up to the players to decide upon a strategic approach. Backing away, remaining relatively silent, and crouching in the tall grass for cover are all wise moves, and will keep the party from being noticed. For each subsequent round that the PCs do not back away or take cover, make an alertness check for the Warlords.

From cover, the PCs can plan a best approach should they decide to tackle the Warlords and free the captives — like trying to circle around and ambush them from their flank. Since the Warlords (and the PCs) are now less than a day's march from the borders of Warlord-controlled land and the Temple of ATOZ, merely tracking them for the rest of the day will result in increasing chances of being detected. For each hour that the party tracks the Warlords without engaging them, make another alertness check.

Warlords of ATOZ (9): Init +2; Atk cadmium rifle +2 missile fire (1d8+[see below]) or obsidian dagger +2 (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 100' (mounted), 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1.

Warlord Leader: Init +4; Atk cadmium rifle +2 missile fire (1d8+[see below]) or cybernetic arm punch +4 (1d6+6); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 11; MV 100' (mounted), 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2.

The Warlords of ATOZ are the pure strain human worshippers and warriors of the Great God ATOZ. They are typically garbed in twin red leather bandoliers, red-furred cloaks, and metal helmets fashioned in the image of the face of their god. Savage and chaotic, their sole goal is to subjugate wild pure strain humans as an enslaved work force for the malignant needs of their patron deity. They kill all other mutant sentients as a matter of course. Their main source of strength comes from the primitive artifact weapons provided to them by ATOZ in exchange for their unfettered loyalty.

The Warlord leader possesses a cybernetic arm that grants him a 22 Strength in that arm. Instead of firing, he will charge his enemies while mounted and attempt to strike them a 1d6+6 blow.

Zeesex (10): Init +1; Atk bite +0 melee (1d6) or horns +0 melee (1d8); AC 12; HD 2d10; hp 11 each; MV 45'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1.

Zeesex are large and sinewy six-legged reptiles that prowl the blood-grass savannas in search of prey. Their scales and hide are striped in contrasting light and dark scales to confuse their quarry. If subdued and then broken, these creatures can be used as mounts by humanoid-sized beings, though they require a steady diet of fresh meat in order to remain tamed. The zeesex used by the Warlords as mounts have already been broken, and a single successful melee blow will cause one to accept any sentient as its new master.

The Warlords each possess the following equipment:

Mask of ATOZ: TL 1; CM 0; +1 AC

These iron helmets are shaped in the semblance of a scowling inhuman face with a fanged mouth and curling, tentacle-like beard.

Wooler Cloak: TL 1; CM 0; +1 AC, +6 Fort saves vs. radiation
These red fur cloaks have been made from the pelts harvested from a Devil (Wooler) and grant the wearer added protection from the effects of radiation.

Bandolier (2 each): TL 1; CM 0

Each red leather bandolier contains 2 clips of 10 cadmium rifle shells.

Cadmium Rifle: TL 3; CM 3; 1d8 explosive damage + DC 12 Fort save or an additional 1d6 radiation damage, fixed bayonet (1d4); range 100'.

These wooden and metal rifles fire metal-jacketed cadmium pellets that explode upon contact. Each rifle has a cartridge that holds 10 rounds. A fixed bayonet on the end of the rifle can be used as a melee weapon in close-quarters combat.

If any Warlords are taken alive and questioned, they will spit at the PCs and claim that the Great God ATOZ is physically present just north of their location, and that he will reach out and crush them for their blasphemy at any moment. If asked to describe ATOZ, the captives will only repeat the claim that ATOZ is a surviving Ancient One, and that he is all-powerful. After a few brief questions, any still-living Warlords will appear to bit down hard on something and quickly die from a poison tooth implant.

Cybernetic Implant (arm): TL 4; CM 4; +6 Strength

The Warlord leader has a cybernetic implant in place of his right arm. Once he is dead, the cybernetic implant AI will actively seek out a new host. If any injured sentient mutant (except for plantients) approaches within 20' of the implant, it will detached itself from the Warlord leader's corpse and attempt to attach itself to the living-but-injured sentient. Using a combination of nano-wires and micro-lasers, the implant will sever the sentient's original right arm and graft itself on in its place. The new host will take 1d3 in damage and must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to remain conscious during this process.

Afterwards, the new host will find that he now has an artificial arm that boost his natural Strength by +6. The cybernetic



arm has tactile feedback responses, and an on-board AI that will insistently counsel the host to make attacks via melee punches rather than any other weaponry or mutation.

THE WARLORD ENCAMPMENT

As dusk approaches, you climb to the top of a rise over the grassy plains and behold a sight that sends rad-chills down your spine. The land before you has been transformed. The Warlords have cut a wide circular swath out of the blood-grass savanna much larger than your home villages. Patrols of mounted Warlords move in lazy, loped circles around the entire area. The outer area seems to be mostly bare earth as hundreds of human slaves are tending to rows of tangfruit bushes, all arranged in some maddening, regular order. Inside that ring of activity, which is winding down for the day, you see dozens of roxen hide tents with at least 100 Warlords bivouacked among them. And at the center of the encampment, you see it – taller than your tallest huts – the gleaming golden Temple of ATOZ.

The temple is formed into the shape of a giant head several stories tall, and its shape exactly mimics the Warlords' helmets except in size and scale, with its open, gaping mouth forming an opening and entrance to the temple. Slaves seem to be walking in and out of the entrance while under guard, carrying in woven baskets of tangfruit and bringing back out large wooden chests.

Obviously this is not a situation where the PCs can go charging in and expect to find anything other than an inglorious and speedy death. Strategy, caution, and thought-



ful tactics will be required. Assuming that PCs pull back a bit and wait for dark, they should have plenty of time to concoct a viable plan. So long as they stay hunched in the cover of the tall grasses and do not create any loud noises or bright lights, the chances of them being discovered are practically nil.

If the PCs do become brash and create a noticeable clamor (judge's discretion), the Warlords will send out a patrol of 9 mounted warriors to defeat and capture them. Use the stats for the slaver crew (minus the leader) for these patrols. If a patrol goes out and does not come back within an hour, another patrol will be sent out to find out what happened to the first patrol.

SNEAKING INTO THE TEMPLE

While defeating the entirety of the assembled Warlord army is obviously impossible, sneaking into the Temple of ATOZ is certainly possible with enough cunning and some luck. Observant PCs will note that as the evening wears on, the activities of the Warlords begin to wind down. The slaves are slopped and then tied to improvised stakes in the ground. The Warlords themselves enjoy a fireside meal and then retire to their tents. Several mounted patrols continue to ride a circuit around the perimeter, but their comings and goings can be timed with some extended observation. Two Warlords maintain a guard post at the entrance to the temple, but the encampment otherwise becomes quiet and tranquil as the evening wears on.

To successfully sneak past the outer patrols and sleeping Warlords, it will take considerable stealth, guile, and wit. While the totality of possible player-concocted plans to achieve this goal is beyond the scope of even the best-written prepared adventure, the following will aid the judge in adjudicating the players' plans. It is important that the judge emphasizes the untenable nature of any frontal assault.

The basic chances of the party managing to sneak undetected past the outer patrols, through the Warlord encampment at night, and past the temple guards will require three separate Agility-based stealth checks.

Party Stealth Attempts

Past the outer patrols	DC 14
Past the sleeping encampment tents	DC 12
Past the temple guards	DC 20

For each stealth check, the players may select the PC with the highest Agility score (likely a rover) as this stealth attempt leader, and that individual will make each roll on behalf of the entire party. Naturally, both the attempt leader and the party's lucky plantient may burn and add Luck points to these rolls.

The entire party may of course take any precautions they deem necessary to enhance their chances. Use the following as a general guide to calculating stealth bonuses (and minuses) to the stealth check attempt:

Method	Stealth check modifier
Make efforts to travel quietly	+4
Wait until camp is asleep	+4
Actively time and avoid patrols	+2
Create a huge distraction elsewhere	+10
Disguised as Warlords with prisoners	+5
Claim to be on a special mission for ATOZ	+4
Send a scout ahead	+5
Walk mounts (if any)	+2
Talk loudly or make loud noise	-5
The sounds of any combat	-10

Benevolent judges will want to emphasize to the players the high stakes involved in this stealth attempt. Should the PCs be discovered, the rest of the camp becomes alerted and within 5 turns the PCs will be facing 100 armed Warlords, resulting in an assured TPK. No one ever said that 3rd level adventures were easy.

THE TEMPLE OF ATOZ

LEVEL ONE

Area A-1 — Entrance: *As you approach the Warlord's holy of holies, the Temple of ATOZ seems to glare back down at you through its angry eyes, while it simultaneously and silently screams at you through its brightly lit entrance-mouth. Two Warlord guards maintain a disciplined and alert posture at the entrance.*

Ingress via the mouth-entrance can be accomplished by either killing or distracting the guards. While normal conversation, relatively quiet attacks via certain mutations, or sudden strikes will not raise the camp alarm, any loud noises or gunfire will cause the encampment to begin to come to alert status.

Temple Guards of ATOZ (2): Init +2; Atk cadmium rifle +2 missile fire (1d8+see SP) or obsidian dagger +2 (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP cadmium rifle (1d8+ DC 12 Fort save or 1d6 radiation damage); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1.

Area A-2 — Cargo Bay: *After your eyes adjust to the bright lights inside this chamber, you observe a cavernous, high-ceilinged room with vaulted metal walls. The center of the room contains a mound of baskets containing freshly-picked tangfruit. Along the east and west walls are stacks of four wooden crates each. There is a tiered ramp on the east wall that curves upwards into the ceiling. Behind the baskets stands a stationary metal object over 10' tall, and poised on either side of the entrance you just came in are two floating chunks of live metal. They move towards you.*

The two security-bots by the entrance will attempt to wait until all of the characters are in the cargo bay to attack from the shadows. If the party is purposely split between the outside and inside of the temple entrance, the bots will wait for one round and then attack any intruders. On the second

round of combat, the entire temple will shake needing all PCs to make a DC 8 Agility check to remain standing or be knocked prone.

The entire temple shakes as though a terrible earthquake has struck, and you struggle to remain standing. There is a sudden throng of loud shouts of alarm being raised among the many Warlords outside the temple.

Unknown to the PCs, the Temple of ATOZ is flight-capable and has been programmed to lift off and return home if any system security breaches are detected. Anyone inside or outside of the temple has exactly one combat round to enter or exit the temple before it is already hundreds of feet up in the air. Once in steady flight, the only sensation will be that of a very slight rocking movement.

Should the PCs be completely defeated or killed, they will awaken (or reanimate as the case may be) in area B-1, as the medi-bot is placing them into empty stasis pods after being healed. If the security-bots are defeated, the PCs will be able to examine the cargo bay contents.

Temple Security-Bots (2): Init +4; Atk stun ray +4 missile fire (DC 14 Fort save or stunned for 1d6 rounds), lazer +4 missile fire (3d6 heat damage), or sleep grenades +4 missile fire (DC 18 Fort save or sleep for 1d12 rounds, range 30'); AC 18 ; HD 10d6; hp 35 each; MV 50' flying; Act 2d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; AI recog 18.

A cursory sweep of the cargo bay reveals the following items in plain sight:

Baskets (12): Each basket contains approximately 125 freshly-picked tangfruit, all quite edible and at the peak of flavor.

Crates (4): Each wooden crate is easily pried open with nearly any lever-like tool and a DC 9 Strength check. Laying

SURGICAL POD CYBERNETIC IMPLANTS

d20	Cybernetic Implant	Benefits
1	Head	Small sensor relay pod with autonomous drone CPU; Intelligence score reduced to 2d6, Personality score reduced to 1d6, and any mutations with manifestations centered on the head are lost, along with all past memories.
2-5	Eye	Cybernetic eye grants infrared and UV vision along with telescopic and microscopic vision (+6 to perception checks).
6-10	Arm	Cybernetic arm grants +6 Strength (per arm, up to a maximum of 24 Strength).
11-15	Leg	Cybernetic leg grants +20' movement, ability to make 15' vertical jumps (per leg).
16-17	Heart	Cybernetic heart grants permanent +15 hit points.
18-19	Lungs	Cybernetic lungs grant the ability to filter out all poisons and to extract oxygen from low atmospheric pressures and under water. This implant kills plantients.
20	Brain	Cybernetic brain implant chip grants +6 Intelligence score (up to a maximum of 24) and eidetic memory.

in a bed of straw, each crate contains a boom stick (cadmium rifle) and three clips of 10 rounds each. A high-enough artifact check will reveal that all of these rifles are non-operational by virtue of missing firing pins. Otherwise, the PCs will simply discover that they do not fire even when properly loaded.

Box of Firing Pins (hidden): A box of 10 firing pins for the cadmium rifles is hidden in a secret panel in the east wall. To find these, a PC must announce that they are searching the room and succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence check. A sufficient artifact check will allow a PC to install the firing pins and render the weapons usable.

Cargo-Bot: The stationary metal object is in fact a deactivated cargo-bot used for loading and unloading in the cargo bay. It will remain deactivated unless disturbed. If it is poked or prodded by the PCs, the cargo-bot will immediately activate and request security clearance from the nearest sentient, causing an AI recognition roll (per the rules in MCC RPG, Chapter 6: Artificial Intelligences). Be sure and award the appropriate modifiers should a pure strain human PC dressed as a Warlord make the AI recognition attempt.

In the case of a failed AI recognition attempt, the cargo-bot will demand that all intruders leave the cargo bay immediately, and begin to use its load lifter arms to grapple and throw the intruders out the front entrance.

Cargo-Bot: Init +2; Atk load lifter arms +7 melee (1d12+6); AC 16; HD 8d6; hp 28; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AI recog 15.

The curved ramp on the east wall leads to the second level of the temple.

LEVEL TWO

Area B-1 — Bio Lab: *At the top of the curved ramp, you come to the second level of the temple. The vaulted metal room glows in a warm phosphorescent blue light. In it, you see three large artifacts the size of a roxen, and an attendant chunk of live metal with a strange holy symbol of the Ancient Ones on its chest. Lining the south and west walls are oblong pod-like hemispheres that are the source of the too-blue light. The transparent pods are filled with a thick azure liquid that bubbles gently, and each contains the body of a mutilated pure strain human missing a random arm, leg, or chest cavity. A curved ramp on the north wall leads upward out of the room.*

The bio lab contains three surgical pods and a deactivated medi-bot. The walls are lined with stasis pods containing ATOZ's past experiments with augmenting pure strain humans with cybernetic implants. Most of the 8 humans in the pods are maimed and dead, but at the judge's discretion one or more pods may contain a replacement character should the party or a player require one.

The medi-bot will remain deactivated unless poked, prodded, or spoken to directly. If the medi-bot is disturbed, it will activate and require an immediate AI recognition check.

Since it is programmed to only respond to ATOZ, this AI check is quite high, but there is still the possibility that a PC will roll a critical success or decide to burn a large amount of Luck to achieve mastery over this ultra-valuable robot.

A failed AI recognition check will result in the medi-bot assuming that the individual is a captured tribesman, and it will get a surprise attack and attempt to grapple that person and shove her into a surgical pod for "the procedure." If a successful grapple attack is made by the medi-bot, the victim will be instantly placed inside the surgical pod and the lid will snap shut trapping the PC. The imprisoned PC will remain inside the surgical pod until a successful artifact check is made on that pod or its programmed procedure reaches completion.

After 1 round in the pod, the subject will be tranquilized and have a random limb or organ replaced with a matching cybernetic implant.

Temple Medi-Bot (1): Init +6; Atk laser scalpel +4 melee (1d8), tractor beam grapple +4 melee (placed in pod); AC 17; HD 9d6; hp 32; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; AI recog 20.

Surgical Pods (3): TL 5; CM 10

These surgical pods have been programmed to remove limbs and organs in humans and to replace those parts with cybernetic implants. Because the procedure is experimental, the subject placed inside will need to make a DC 10 Fortitude save or die from the operation. The entire process takes 1 turn before completion, and any interruption to the procedure results in the subject being maimed or killed (depending upon the cybernetic implant randomly rolled). To determine which cybernetic implant is grafted to a subject, use the Surgical Pod Cybernetic Implants Table.

If this artifact is fully mastered, it can be set to restore anyone inserted into the pod to full hit points, cure any damage or poison, even resurrecting the recently dead. The pods are not mobile, and cannot be removed from the bio lab.

Stasis Pods: These oblong hemispheres are comprised of transparent aluminum and require either an artifact check of 10+ or inflicting 25 points of damage to open. If forced open, the blue stasis fluid spills out onto the deck along with a dead and mutilated occupant. If a replacement character is desired, an undamaged pure strain human from the Tribe of Cog comes out and may be rolled up for play. Any freed new characters gained in this way must make a "Recovering the body" roll to survive being in the stasis pod and are naked and unequipped.

If the room is thoroughly searched, a DC 12 search check will find one of the following items in medical storage units hidden within the walls:

Multitool: TL 5; CM 5; Power self

The multitool device is a compact handheld tool combining AI-driven diagnostic software with gravitational tractor field projectors, making it highly useful for working on and repairing the technology of the Ancient Ones.

Triage Pac: TL 4; CM 3; Power self; Range touch
A leatherette case containing one of each of the following pneumatic shot delivery medicines (one dose each): medishot, neuroshot, radshot, and stimshot.

Medipac: TL 5; CM 6; Power C-Cell
(10 charges); Range touch; Heals 3d8 damage per use.
This most prized of ancient artifacts is a small, handheld medical transmat device with an onboard medical diagnostic AI and database. To use the medipac, one need merely hold it against an injured living creature and activate it. This miraculous device instantly takes biomedical sensor readings and activates a specialized matter replicator to restore injured or diseased tissues to their original healthy state. NOTE: Because the medical database is programmed only for humans or other pre-disaster living creatures, there is a chance (5% for each hit point healed above the creature's maximum) that the medipac will "cure" (i.e. remove) one random mutation or defect when used on a mutant, animal, or plantient. Note that when used by a healer, the healing ability is augmented upwards on the dice chain congruent with healer class level.

Small Box: This small box contains 5 fully-charged C-cells.

LEVEL THREE

Area C-1 — Flight Deck: *As you top the final ramp to the uppermost level of the temple, the Great God ATOZ is there awaiting you with a look of serene calm, his thick forearms folded as he regards you with an amused look usually reserved for talented pets performing tricks. ATOZ's bronze and muscular body is naked except for a gold-encrusted girded loincloth and a gold-and-black striped silk headdress that drapes over his neck and shoulders. He is accompanied by four equally burly human guards wearing girded loincloths and high, pointed metal helmets. Each of the high guards of ATOZ tracks your movements with a deadly-looking artifact cradled in one hand.*

The walls of the room are aglow with myriad artifact controls and banks, with the most complex ones featured on the southern wall behind ATOZ. That wall also features two gigantic eye-shaped windows filled with some kind of transparent hard-air barrier. You see dark black clouds rolling by outside.

ATOZ addresses you directly, and says, "I can see that for local animals, you have done quite well. Very resourceful. If you surrender peaceably now, I will see that you are well-treated as favored pets in my Warlord army – well, the humans among you anyway. The rest will have to be put down or burned for firewood. So commands your new patron god ATOZ!"

The flight deck contains the temple flight controls, computer systems, and two plasteel viewing portals that correspond to the temple's eyes as seen from the outside. A main viewscreen in the forward control panel depicts sweeping camera views from the prior two decks.

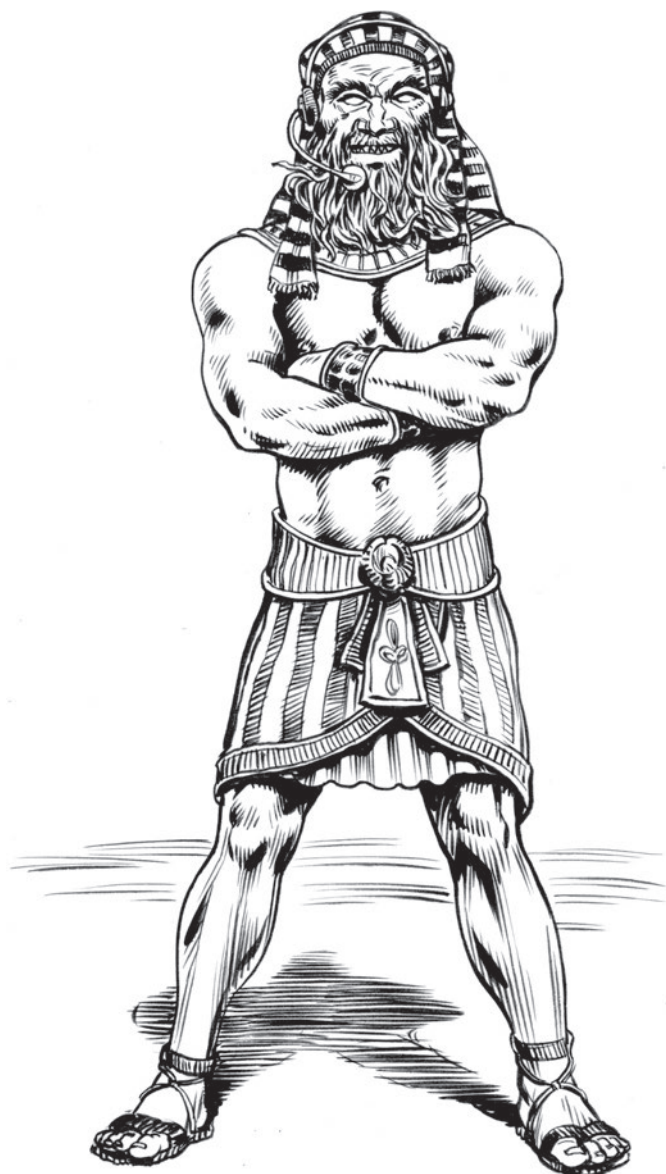
ATOZ himself is an advanced AI who has patterned his appearance upon his ancient and deceased programmer-creator, and has chosen to manifest himself as a soft-light hologram of that same Ancient One. As a soft-light hologram, ATOZ's body is comprised of immaterial photons, and all attacks pass harmlessly through him (hence his high AC). Exceedingly lucky attacks have a small chance of striking the tiny light-bug holographic projection unit that buzzes around inside his light shell.

The first battle in the cargo bay has activated the temple's security protocols, sending the temple into escape flight mode. Damage already inflicted on the temple by the PCs' actions have damaged the guidance system and the temple is currently on a random trajectory. After taunting the players with his godhood and ordering them to return to the cargo bay, ATOZ will spend the rest of any combat at the controls attempting to regain mastery of his ship while his guards battle the players.

TEMPLE OF ATOZ FLIGHT CONTROLS ARTIFACT CHECK

d20 + artifact bonus Result

1	Engine Shut Down: The anti-grav engines are shut down and the temple plunges into free fall, pining all PCs to the ceiling; catastrophic crash in 3 rounds for 3d12 damage.
2-8	Panel Explodes: Another flight control panel explodes, causing 1d6 damage in a 10' radius.
9-11	Attitude Control Failure: A misadjusted attitude control cause the temple to spin; all PCs knocked prone for 1d3 damage to all occupants.
12-13	Flight Levels: The temple's flight path momentarily levels off. On a second result, a last second leveling occurs and results in a belly-landing crash for 1d10 damage to all occupants.
14-16	Goes into a Climb: The temple goes into a momentary climb. On a second result, the temple's nose comes up into a climb just prior to crashing for 1d6 damage to all occupants.
17-19	Makes a Banked Turn: The temple banks and then levels out. On a second result, the temple clips a mountain and crashes, sliding down the mountainside for 1d4 damage to all occupants.
20+	Critical Success: Minor flight control gained. Temple breaks cloud cover and belly lands in a field of cratered volcanic rock, with all occupants taking only 1 hp of damage.



The four high guards of ATOZ are hard-light holograms armed with mazer pistols, and the PCs are in for a tough battle. The light-bug projection units of the hard-light holograms project quantum-phased photons, making their light shells effectively impervious to physical harm. The storage drives of their advanced quantum light projection units are prone to overheating however, and successful heat-based attacks will cause damage to the guards' hard-light hologram light-bugs.

Should the players manage to defeat the guards, or ATOZ believes that the battle has gone against him, he will abandon the temple and simply beam his AI back to its remote mountain-top installation.

Even winning the battle will leave the PCs in charge of a runaway flying temple, and chances are, a flying temple that has sustained some serious damage to the control instruments on the flight deck (see Ending the Adventure).

Should the players be defeated, they will regain semi-consciousness as they are being placed into individual stasis chambers in the bio lab (see Ending the Adventure).

ATOZ (Soft-Light Hologram): Init +4; Atk holo-flail +4 melee (DC 16 Fort save or stunned for 1d6 rounds); AC 18; HD 1d6; hp 6; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP immaterial, immune to mental powers; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8.

High Guards of ATOZ (Hard-Light Holograms): Init +4; Atk slam +4 melee (1d8), mazer pistols +4 missile fire (heat damage 1d6/2d6/3d6); AC 18 HD 4d6; hp 14 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mental powers, invulnerable except to heat-based attacks; SV Fort +4, Reflex +4, Will +4.

Mazer Pistol (4): TL 5; CM 5; 1d6/2d6/3d6 heat damage; range 70'; Power C-cell (10 charges); SP disregards armor and force fields.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Whether the players are victorious or completely defeated, there is one unalterable fact: they are in an out-of-control flying temple shaped in the image of a god's head, and it's going to crash somewhere eventually. Use the following scenarios as a guide with which to conclude the adventure.

Scenario 1 - The players were defeated by ATOZ's

High Guard: If the players are defeated, regardless of whether they died or are captured, they will all experience a brief, groggy episode of semi-consciousness during which they will have the impression of floating suspended in a blue liquid while having a warped view of the outside room tilting to-and-fro. After a few moments they will see a wall panel explode and hear the muffled blast, as their stasis bubbles are shattered and they spill out onto the floor naked, but with all damage they had sustained fully healed. The room periodically tilts at a precipitous angle (once every third round), requiring a DC 10 Agility check to remain standing. If a search is performed, all of their equipment is stored in crates in the bio lab. If the PCs go back up to the flight deck, they will discover that due to control damage already caused, ATOZ and his guards have abandoned the temple and it is now flying through sulfurous, dark clouds at a pell-mell pace. They cannot see the ground nor determine their altitude due to the near-opaque cloud cover. After 10 rounds of post-freedom action, or if they visit the flight deck, go to Scenario 2.

Scenario 2 - The players were victorious over

ATOZ's High Guard: The flight deck begins to list in opposing directions every third round (see above) and the PCs feel as though there is a slight pressure towards the back wall. This is caused by the temple's anti-grav engines accelerating. Wise players will begin attempting to master the damaged flight controls immediately in order to regain control of the temple's random flight. While the flight controls are too damaged for a full recovery to be possible, there is enough time for each PC to make at least one control attempt via an artifact check.

Because of the inordinate complexity of the flight controls, and their highly-damaged state, use the Temple of ATOZ Flight Controls Artifact Check Table to determine the outcome, noting that all effects are sequential, not cumulative.



The Long Fall of Tri-Eye-Pod

POST CRASH RECOVERY

The PCs will ultimately find themselves in the crashed ruins of the Temple of ATOZ, with all temple power systems down and the temple permanently crippled and unable to fly again. Any remaining artifacts inside the temple that were not in the personal possession of the PCs have a 50% of being damaged by the crash and inoperable. The PCs are also certain to be injured in the crash, perhaps some of them even seemingly killed.

On the other hand, the party should have access to at least half of the artifacts contained within the temple, including some medical supplies and possibly a medi-bot if it has not been destroyed. So long as there are a few lucky survivors, the party should be well-positioned to recover fallen members, roll bodies, and heal the party.

The players have unknowingly flown a great distance to the southeast, and are now in the fabled Crater Country (recognizable to any PCs who have ventured here before). If there are no PCs who have been in Crater Country before, a PC must make a DC 15 Intelligence check to remember vague directions from the Clan of Cog shaman's hut showing Crater Country to be a taboo land generally north-west to the jungles containing their villages.

Alternatively, the judge can have the temple crash anywhere that is convenient to the next planned adventure. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain. The PCs have now earned the wrath of a powerful Patron AI and his followers, and that is sure to cause them many complications in subsequent adventures.

CAMPAIGN CONTINUATIONS

The mystery remains as to why a god-like AI would bother with subjugating a whole land and enslaving tribespeople to perform basic agriculture. Why does an all-powerful god need food grown? Where is his home base located? Will the remaining Warlords reorganize and attack again? Could an unsavory PC perhaps even adopt ATOZ as a Patron AI? Answering these and other questions can become fodder for an on-going MCC RPG campaign, and the answers will surely be intriguing.

And regardless of the level of player interest, one thing is certain. Through their actions, the PCs have earned the enmity of a powerful Patron AI — one whose path they are sure to cross again at the least convenient moment.

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