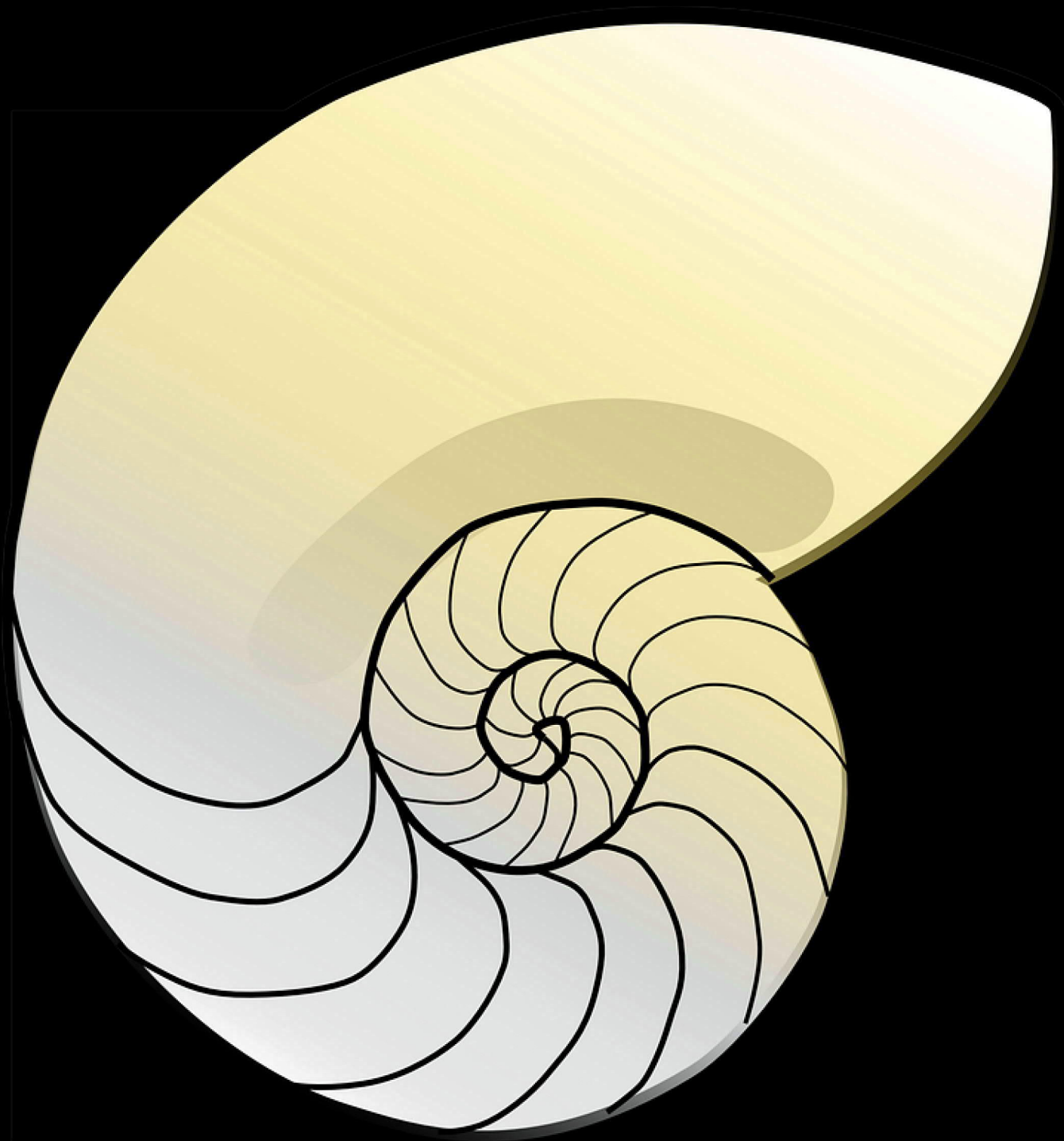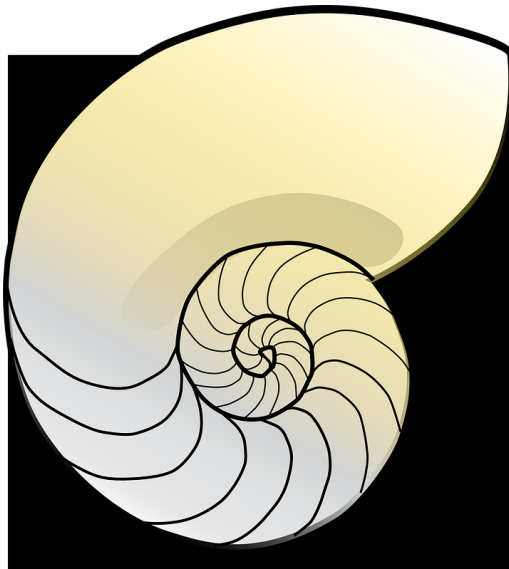# The Living Building

By Derek Holland & the Skirmisher Game Development Group

The Living Building

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The LIVING BUILDING

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J ust after dawn, a village scout dashed from the forest carrying a wondrous, and perhaps even terrifying, story of a huge, circular shell with a door, a massive coiled building that sprang up during the night. And it is still growing…

Whether from forgetfulness, mental blockage, or intrusions of the dread "real life," every Mutant Lord has probably experienced that sinking, not-so-prepared feeling before a game. This article provides a remedy, an adventure location that is both a little pre-gen and a little homemade, is immediately expandable and adaptable, and can be replayed without seeming like a re-run, because the building changes even as the characters explore it.

DESIGNING HISTORY

Ancient engineers developed the Living Building(™) series to supply inexpensive, rapidly-built structures, providing affordable housing or longterm disaster shelters. They were also very portable, with start-up kits consisting of a single, five-foot-diameter pod weighing about 750 pounds. The package could be handled by most payload robots; put into family- or personal-sized cargo vehicles; multi-packed into larger containers for rail or ship transport; or air-dropped, all with minimal preparation.

Once on-site, the Living Building kits required little supervision beyond placement and initial programming, and needed almost no assembly crew, because each pod was, in reality. a seed. The series name was not a sales gimmick or a slogan — the buildings really *were* alive.

To parrot a phrase, the Living Buildings truly were marvels of engineering. The structures combined cells, biological systems, and adaptive strategies from both plant and animal origins to create buildings that grew and maintained themselves. Like plants, the buildings put down roots; drew energy from the earth, sun, and atmosphere; and had vessels to pipe fluids throughout their structures. Like animals, the buildings had organ-like mechanical systems; skin-like, self-repairing structural membranes; and could, after a fashion, even move.

THE GROWTH

Living Building kits were designed so that Ancient architects could control their growth and amenities using a biological computers contained within the seeds. By pre-selecting the rooms' types, dimensions, and placements, a near-limitless assortment of houses, workplaces, or recreation facilities of varying sizes and floor plans


could be created from the same initial packages.

This complex process begins by placing the pod in an appropriate location, instructing the computer, and then stepping back. After a moment, the seed casing splits open with a sound like ripping canvas and a silvery tap root drives into the ground. The pod casing falls away, allowing an inner membrane to thicken and expand into what becomes the first room, the central control nexus surrounding the biological computer.

Every four hours a new room is created, swelling like a bud from a certain point on the core. When the new compartment gets large enough, the final wall seals off from the control nexus, which immediately begins producing another chamber. This continues until the requisite number of rooms have been created, upon which the computer stops production. When all the rooms reach their correct dimensions, the computer halts their growth as well, releasing a flood of catalyzing agents throughout the structure to set its final configuration.
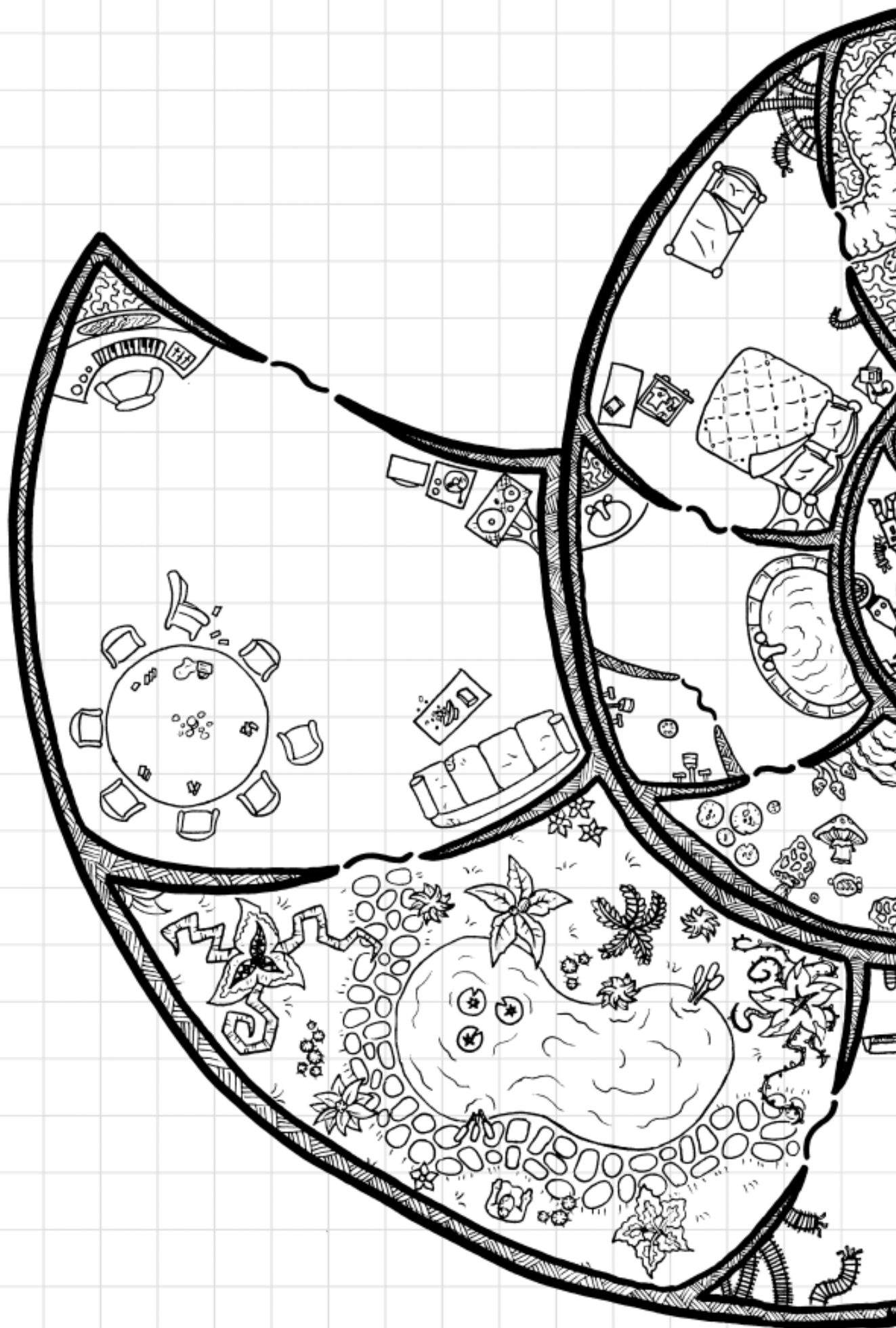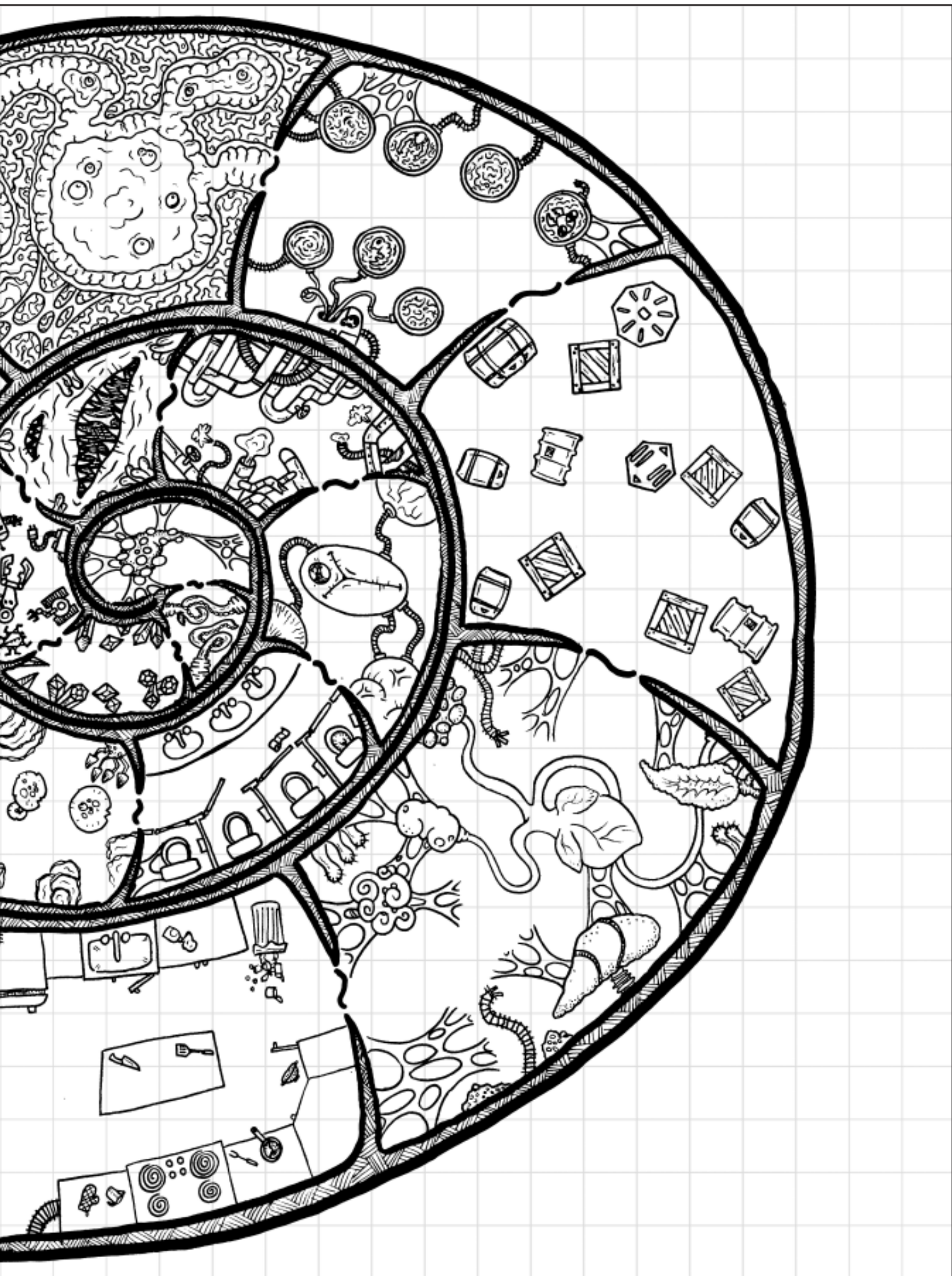
The Living Building

In shape and structure, a growing building resembles a nautilus shell, with a series of rooms gradually increasing in size toward the end of the spiral. Ancient builders departed from traditional right-angle construction and took a lesson from nature, realizing the shape would resolve several engineering challenges involving energy and weight.

The elegant solution begins in each building's core, with the control nexus rotating slowly about its axis as it generates new rooms. The motion creates the Living Buildings' signature coil and is intended to help and protect the tap root, a vital central structure that is simultaneously anchor and lifeline. It reaches deep into the earth, supplying the control nexus with minerals and geothermal energy, its initial power source. The core's rotary action works much like a mechanical well driller, helping the tap root penetrate difficult strata.

Unfortunately, the growing building's increasing size and weight could put an incredible lateral stress on the tap root and sever it. For every additional 10 rooms grown beyond the inital number, there is a 1% non cumulative chance that the root will be severed and, if this happens, the building dies in 3d4 hours. Rooms are created in a column — much like cars in a train — and continue to grow despite separating from the control nexus. Rather than having to push a straight line of rooms in one direction, the rotation coils the building and allows it to expand like a tightly-wound poster releasing to fill a mailing tube. The column grows longer with an increasing number of rooms, but the pressure of inner ring rooms expanding exerts a radial force on the outer rings, pushing them away from the core and not over-stressing the tap root.

To make the building's growth movement easier, the Ancients designed the membrane under each room to work like a snail's foot, allowing a room to move or slide over the ground. When the building reaches its intended size, the catalyzing agents solidify this organ, which becomes a waterproof foundation.

There are pre-war stories passed down of engineers trying to improve upon segments of the building process. Some are comical, such as trying to speed up the rooms' movement rate and having races, with teams sitting atop single rooms, as if riding cows, buses, or snails. Others were more practical, such as using a seed to create a series of individual outbuildings, as one can cut a room free from the growing column — at least until the room starves to death. Smaller, portable control computers were developed so these individual rooms could be controlled and directed, and a pod could then spit out a line of similar, discrete rooms. This process, for example, could create a series of individual labs, separated to minimize damage in the event of an explosion or biological contagion. Or, it could create a line of port-a-potties for an outdoor event or military encampment.

Making individual chambers like this requires the portable computers to instruct the rooms, but feeding them by hand is difficult at best.

WITHIN THE WALLS

Another miracle of design are the buildings' structural panels, which make the whole concept possible. A combination of plant and animal cells, the living walls, floors, and ceilings make every room a unique organism within the larger whole (much like a Portuguese man-o-war jellyfish). The walls expand throughout the growing process, only becoming rigid during the catalyzing stage. This tends to give a variety of room sizes, even among those of the same type, although most are between 5' and 15' tall.

Rooms are each almost completely self-contained and self-sustaining — though coordinated by the central computer. When a room reaches its assigned place, the computer instructs it to put down its own smaller roots to draw up minerals and start generating its own energy. This is primarily via photosynthesis, conducted within the engineered plant cells in the structural panels, but geothermal energy, heat exchange, lightning, and geomagnetic methods are also used. Power storage works like the *energy-retaining cell structure* mutation, although on a much larger scale and with a much more refined release mechanism. This allows appliances and electronic devices to run without the threat of power surges, meltdowns, explosions, and all the other things that make homeowners jumpy. The walls also contain plumbing modeled after vascular tissue. Each room where this is required, such as bathrooms and kitchens, individually produces its own water and handles waste, so the pipes do not travel between rooms once the building is finished.

Doors

Each room has a door at either end, leading to the rooms created immediately before and after it. Unlike the wall panels, the doors are like snail shells, dead material that is unable to heal when damaged. As the designs come from more peaceful times before the cataclysm, most of the buildings do not have locking doors. But, if the ML desires, doors could have keyed locks or other security measures, like ID card readers or scanners for retinas, fingerprints, or other biological markers.

After passing though a few rooms, characters might notice that no doors lead across the spirals and the only exterior door is in the very first room. There are several ways a Mutant Lord might justify this. The simplest explanation is this design was intentional: doors are supposed to be created during the growing period, but — because they could be placed anywhere along the two side walls, or left out entirely — they must be programmed to appear.

Slightly more complex answers, which also involve toys, have archways designated during programming (so utilities would be routed around the openings), but cut out after the buildings finished growing. Perhaps it was simply easier this way, or it was a necessary work-around due to tetchy programming on early projects: because the doorways between rings would never line up just right, the doors never worked properly. Whatever the reason, it proved more efficient and appealing to owners than trying to grow doorways in the expanding building. This method has a set of specialized cutting tools provided/grown in the first chamber, a situation possibly entertaining from the perspectives of both MLs and players. Laser torches, gamma blades, super-heated monofilament, or point-focus bio-acid sprayers were used to slice through wall membranes and "cauterize" the openings, preventing the building's self-healing/repair capacity from resealing them.

This physical act of "construction" seemed to give many clients a visceral sense of emotional fulfillment and control, seeing "work" done and having a more direct say in their building's design/aesthetic. So, the default growth pattern became two doors per room. This is unfortunate for dwellers in the *Mutant Future* world, but they are welcome to hack through walls, as with any other ruin — only the hole will eventually heal closed behind them. And they might get electrocuted (see "Death, Destruction, and Dining" for details).

Windows

Perceptive observers will also notice that Living Buildings lack windows. Because these are normally only on the outside of a building and there were no specifically designated "outside" rooms, windows were a feature chosen and placed by builders or owners during programming. Consequently, the default setting does not include them. Some rooms have openable skylights integral to their design, and these are mentioned in the room descriptions.

If a Mutant Lord wishes, there could be a more concrete rationale for the missing windows, namely that the necessary raw materials were rare and had to be placed near a seed pod before activation so that they could be drawn up through the tap root. There could be windows along the building's outer edge but, as with the interior door installation, this could be difficult because of the building's self-healing properties. There might also be one-way windows, letting inhabitants look out but preventing others from looking in, and depending on the control settings these could also provide light or shade.

Interiors/Contents

The designers not only planned for basic protection and shelter, they took care to address the inhabitants' psy-chological and emotional needs. Walls could be programmed for a full spectrum of visual stimuli: to display artwork, be painted with any color or fractal pattern design, have full-wall vid screens (possibly displaying pictures or giant photos of grandma and the cousins), or left bare.

In addition to growing rooms, the buildings made furniture, appliances, toys, and other necassary artifacts. The ML is encouraged to let her imagination run rampant coming up with stuff and things to fill rooms. If you have been waiting for a chance to break out "Uncle Jub's Universal Junk Generator" (created during your days as a code dancer) and the 25 pages of random tables collected from across the post-apocalyptic gaming genre, this is it. Go nuts.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Unfortunately, during the apocalypse the seeds were mutated and the marvelous homes transformed into houses of horror.

The tap roots become massive, rapidly drawing material directly into the central room; in areas with hard rock this causes tremors, perhaps even earthquakes, as the brittle strata shatter, while areas sitting on softer stone and earth suffer sinkholes as water and dirt are removed, creating voids.

The very air around a building is charged, smelling of ozone and drawing in or creating thunderstorms. Mechanically, this works as the *control weather* mutation on a more powerful scale.

Because seeds activated now do not have completion instructions programmed, rooms continue to grow and expand throughout the building's lifespan. As the expiration date nears, chambers at the large end of the spiral could be the size of a small house. If a building were somehow allowed to grow for its entire natural lifespan, those rooms would expand to the size of aircraft hangars.

And the buildings' sudden appearance and seemingly pristine condition exert a strong draw for ruin raiders, those looking for pillage and the power given by the Ancients' artifacts and knowledge.

Organ Rooms

Due to the seeds' exposure during the final wars, some rooms become badly corrupted and truly unpleasant for most people. Often, the organ-like mechanical systems normally within the walls have become monstrous, erupting from the panels. Many of these rooms resemble animal innards, humid chambers lined with muscle tissue; red, yellow, and purplish growths pulsing on walls, ceilings, and floors; huge, exposed vessels full of fluid; and a smell like cauterized blood and bowel. Other rooms appear based on epidermal layers, with all surfaces completely covered by growing hair or fur, and the air thick

The Living Building

with the dank odor of unwashed animal.

In those areas where plant genetic material bled over from a growth chamber, the combination of plant and animal tissue creates jungle-like rooms, redolent with the smells of fecund vegetation, rot, and sweat. Any plant the ML wants can be found in here, though all will have the *animal limbs or organs* mutation (or even multiple versions of it).

Because organ rooms are mutations, killing them does not adversely affect the overall building.

Death, Destruction, and Dining

Contamination from the post-apocalyptic world even changed the building's death. Before being mutated, each structure was designed to last five years and then reduce itself to compost. Now, the ramped-up metabolism reduces the lifespan to roughly 70 days — unless the building is somehow killed first.

Like any living creature, the building ages and its death throes are due to a build up of natural toxins (known to humans as growing older). When the building dies, the toxins take everything in the building with it, as the structure dissolves in on itself. Creatures the building birthed, all artifacts, all appliances, anything else unfortunate enough to be in a very wrong place at this very wrong time — all are destroyed. The death is a terrifyingly brief affair, lasting mere minutes, so any PCs had better exit, posthaste, when it begins.

Building-born creatures and artifacts are not necessarily doomed when the structure dies, as neither have an umbilical dependency on the building to exist and it is only the toxins that kill or destroy the building's contents. Should creatures escape, they continue to live; should artifacts be removed from the building, they continue to function perfectly, though perhaps without power.

As living things, the buildings can also be "killed" and the manner of their death determines the aftereffects. Cutting the tap root or utilities before a building is fully mature causes a partial meltdown and stops its growth. Random rooms remain whole, with their interiors more or less intact, but many others look like exploded tumors, melting and oozing like lumps of fleshy ice cream on hot pavement. If energy weapons or explosives are used on the control nexus, however, the growth pattern goes wild and the building expands in fits until all of its rooms are slain; the earthquakes become more frequent, the storms more powerful, the destruction more widespread.

Characters can also demolish individual rooms. A dead room decays as usual, dissolving anything inside — so, again, characters should depart with alacrity. But the dismantling process is also hazardous to character health. Electrocution is the most immediate concern for those hacking at structural panels. Breaking the energy

storage cells or relays could inflict between 1d4 and 5d12 points of damage, depending on the room: organ rooms cause lesser damage, communications and appliance-heavy rooms more. If the ML is feeling playful (i.e., malicious), this damage could very well start a fire. Some rooms might also pose disease threats, which would most likely manifest if characters started bursting vessels in organ rooms, and sewage will be a problem for those burrowing up into a building or climbing into a room through a sinkhole. (Mutant Lords can find several new diseases and information on creating their own in *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #8: Diseases & Medical Options*).

Given the nature of the buildings, it is a near certainty someone will want to try hacking off a wall steak and tossing it on the barby. Although the buildings do contain a mix of animal and vegetable genetic materials, and are, by many definitions, alive, they were nonetheless designed to be inedible. Beyond the aforementioned electrical danger, and their self-healing/repair capabilities, the panels are infused with a variety of pest-resisting elements. These range from anti-microbial elements that prevent mildew and mold infestations to unpalatable materials that keep normal animals, both herbivores and carnivores, from going Hansel and Gretel on the walls.

Some of the interior objects and materials could indeed be eaten, however, and a mutant termite, cow, or other creature with an especially powerful digestive tract might be able to eat the panels after any stored power was discharged. Also, once a building is destroyed and melts away, the area becomes very fertile, enriched with a wealth of minerals and decaying organic material. Plants able to survive in the sinkholes could do very well.

A building destroyed but not subjected to the toxic

dissolution is still a threat. It will decay more slowly, the smell drawing hordes of scavenging monsters, even if they might not be able to actually eat the rotting material. Their disappointment — and hunger — would be vented on convenient nearby targets. This keeps locals from imitating medieval peasants, carting off and reusing the structural panels like they were dismantling the abandoned neighborhood castle and turning the pieces into goat pens.

As a final note, if the Mutant Lord wants the building may simply grow to a certain size and then stop without dying. Its body can then be looted without fear of loss. The structure could become a location the player characters revisit multiple times, with potentially different inhabitants — both intruders and those grown from the building.

GAME MECHANICS

Unlike most commercially-designed locations, which have a set number of rooms and their contents, Living Buildings are randomly generated with die rolls and tables. This makes every structure unique and the material can be reused and replayed several times, each time possibly very different from the last. Some MLs might roll all the possible rooms before a game session starts, while others may prefer to use the charts during play. The latter option allows a ML to have the same sense of discovery as his players, although this technique requires quick wits and good improvisational skills.

The generation tables can also help design other structures grown or built by the Ancients. Their flexibility allows a ML to use them for many different situations, from whipping up a simple exploration to creating the death trap where a bandit lord hides his stolen loot. Each time the charts are used, an entirely new building can be created with but a few minutes of work.

Physical Characteristics

Each Living Building starts with 20 +2d4 chambers and grows until there are 400 +5d12 rooms. A day after this, the structure will die and decay as described previously. Every time the PCs reenter the building there is a 10% chance a room they previously entered has mutated and, if so, re-roll its contents. Rooms are lit 25% of the time.

Characters will find that appliances work 50% of the time and detonate 20% of the time, doing between 1d2 and 4d10 points of damage; an exploding toaster will be on the low side of pain, a washer in the middle, and a water heater on the high end.

Unless a room description specifies otherwise, doors have an AC of 7 and 25 hit points, while structural panels are AC 4 and 80 points of damage will knock a human-sized hole in one. In 90% of rooms, such an attack causes a reaction (see "Attacks" on page 58 for suggestions). Panels heal 10 points of damage per round.

Given a building's accelerated growth rate, it is possible — though unlikely or as a result of really bad luck — that a character might get stuck within a healing wall. He will take 1d4 points of crushing damage per turn for the first hour, 1d4 damage per round for the second hour, and 1d8 damage per round for the third hour. Should a limb be caught, it will be amputated when the damage done is one-quarter of the character's hit point total (and hopefully the party will have already located a Healing Room by the time this happens).

Determining Room Contents

To find out what kind of room is behind door number one, roll 1d20 twice. The first die gives the room type.

FREQUENCY CHART

Roll	Room Type
1-15	Common
16-19	Uncommon
20	Rare

The second roll is for a row on the appropriate "Chamber Contents Chart," which describes the room's appearance, function, and appointments. The ML can also select which room comes next to prevent repeats as well as provide artifacts or clues the characters might find useful later in the campaign.

As a general guide, **Common** rooms are those typical in either residential or commercial buildings (e.g., living, working, and entertainment spaces). **Uncommon** rooms are either more specialized rooms or Common rooms severely corrupted by the *Mutant Future* world. **Rare** rooms are intentionally scarce, as few people would want to grow them or have them in their buildings; for the most part, these are very technical, extremely mutated, or appeal only to very select owners.

COMMON CHAMBER CONTENTS

Roll   Result

1   Empty. There is nothing at all in this room.

2   Junk room. This room is filled mostly with broken objects, although two hours of search will reveal the presence of 1d4 minor artifacts.

3   Sealed. This room is an empty, vacuum-filled error, a misgrowth. Entering is difficult: the walls are AC -6; it takes 250 points of damage to make a human-sized hole; and, they heal 10 points of damage per round. A better target, the doors are AC -4, have 75 hit points, and do not heal. If the walls are breached or the doors opened, the vacuum ends. This creates a breeze that batters but does not harm the PCs, who lose their actions for one round, no save.

4   Living Room. This room is appointed with 1d4 comfortable chairs and a couch. A one-hour search will reveal the presence of 1d4 minor artifacts.

The Living Building

5   Kitchen. This area is fully-equipped with implements of culinary destruction, small countertop appliances, a stove, and a refrigerator. One day's worth of food for 2d4 people is stored throughout (30% will be poisoned, maximum class of 13), and 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with a one-hour search.

6   Bedroom. This room contains 1d4 adult-sized beds, each with a side table and lamp; in addition, 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with a one-hour search. Half of such rooms instead have child-sized furniture and toys, as well as the minor artifacts.

7   Growth Chamber. This food production room holds a dozen-or-so human-sized tubes filled with growing plant material (the weirder, the better). Much is edible or mildly toxic (class 1 or 2 poison), but 1d4 tubes hold monstrous plants. If touched, a tube bursts and the monster attacks. Some are much larger than the room, but shrunk using the *density alteration (self)* mutation. The ML should select from any plant monsters she wishes (including those that appear in this article).

8   Workshop. This area contains workbenches with various tools. Roll 1d10 to determine the type of shop: 1) woodworking; 2) crafts/woolens; 3) metal; 4) electrical/robotic; 5) automotive; 6) chemical research; 7) biological research; 8) botanical/gardening; 9) paint shop or hobbies; 10) ML's choice/addition. Plus, 4d4 minor artifacts can be found with three hours of searching.

9   Office. Holds a desk with chair, computer, and communication node — a device that allows visual, auditory, and possibly empathic or telepathic communication. 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with an hour's search.

10   Master Bedroom. There is one large bed with two bedside tables/shelves, each with a lamp; 2d4 minor artifacts can be found with two hours of searching.

11   Bathroom. Equipped with a large bathtub, sink, and toilet. Include a bidet if you are feeling sophisticated. Plus, 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with an hour of searching. Depending on the local custom, or if the ML is feeling evil, this room could also hold a variety of medicines or poisons (e.g., imbibing toothpaste, shaving cream, fungal ointment); other buildings might have these items in the **Healing Room** or **Kitchen**.

12   Fungus-Filled Room. As the result of an infection, the panels in this room are covered with fungi. Some are edible, some poisonous (maximum, class 13), and several monstrous, including 1d4+1 fungus creatures. The ML is encouraged to use whatever fungus monsters he wishes (including those that appear here).

13   Entertainment Systems. The wall displays in this room produce a blinding amount of light (-4 to attacks). PCs entering and leaving immediately can save versus stun to avoid the effect. Otherwise, they are blinded while in the room and for 1d4 rounds after. Some 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with a one-hour search.

14   Healing Room. A massive organic "bed" is the only thing in this chamber. This machine "swallows" a patient, scans her, and deals with any issue found, restoring 2d8 hit points per minute. Those healed for more than their hit point total suffer a random physical drawback for 1d4 days (see the *Mutant Future* drawback list). Although it is an organic machine, cutting open the bed (e.g., while looking for artifacts or useful organs) destroys it and yields nothing but goop.

15   Music Room. This room is empty but filled with sound. Anyone who enters must save versus stun or be compelled to listen, overwhelmed by the beautiful music and unable to leave so long as it plays (see **Attacks** and its entry on **Music** for details).

16   Luring Room. This is usually the antechamber to an **Absorption Chamber** (q.v.) and there is a 90% chance of one being next door. Mutated musk glands in the walls exude an odor (similar to *prey scent*) that attracts random creatures, which are then moved into the absorption chamber. The room's open sunroof provides a (weather-dependent) 5-10 mile dispersal radius, but it also lets PCs enter or exit the building once they save versus poison. Closing the doors contains the scent.

17   Growth Chamber. The organic growth tubes here were meant to heal pets or grow new ones (created animals have a set lifespan, like androids). Now they hold 1d6+1 mutant animals suspended in the fluid. The tubes break if touched and the monsters attack. Careful PCs could use unoccupied tubes to heal mutant animal characters small enough to fit, if the ML feels it is appropriate.

18   Storage Room. This area contains 5d6 minor and 1d4 major artifacts.

19   Partially-Grown Common Chamber. Re-roll on this chart for another result and describe the room as looking melted or partially-grown. There is a 1% chance of a minor working artifact. Although it looks like a work in progress, the room is dead. From the outside this is more obvious, because the room is smaller than those still alive, and stays this size while the rest of the building continues to grow.

20   Mutant Lord's Inspiration. There could many

other rooms a ML might envision and design (e.g., additional rooms that appear because of soil contamination, radiation, or a nanite infection). Use this space for those.

UNCOMMON CHAMBER CONTENTS

Roll   Result

1   Crystal Room. This area is partially filled with crystal formations growing from the six structural panels and covering the furniture. Some 90% of the crystals are quartz, while 10% are valuable or useful gemstones.

2   Magnet Room. One of the panels in this room pulls with a Strength of 10+2d4. Roll 1d6 to determine which surface is magnetized: 1) ceiling; 2-5) a wall; 6) floor.

3   Sea Room. Originally a place to relax, this saltwater pool has some ledges along the walls and possibly 1d2 islands comfortably large enough for one person to stay dry. Now there is also a 35% chance that 1d4 sea monsters live here. Water depth depends on the chamber size and is half to three-quarters of the room's height. Both doors to the room are usually high above ground level, to stay at least a foot above the water's surface.

4   Lake Room. Designed as a place to relax, this fresh water pool has some ledges along the walls and possibly 1d2 islands comfortably large enough for one person to stay dry. There is also a 35% chance 1d6 lake monsters live here. Water depth depends on the chamber size and is half to three-quarters the room's height. Both doors to the room are usually high above ground level, to stay at least a foot above the water's surface.

5   Organ Chamber. The room is partially filled with piles of muscle tissue and folds of skin. Touching any of it may result in a **Tentacle** attack (see **Attacks** for details).

6   Organ Chamber. Bursting through the structural panels in this areas are oversized vessels pulsing with blood and sap. The liquids stay contained unless the vessels are ruptured, in which case they will discharge a high-pressure spray that is **Mutagenic** 25% of the time and **Poisonous** 50% of the time (see **Attacks** for details).

7   Organ Chamber. Eyes, ears, antennae, taste buds, nostrils, and very fine hairs cover the panels and erupt from the floor of this room. No matter what artifact or mutation they use to hide, invaders will be detected and have **Gas** used against them (see **Attacks** for details).

8   Organ Chamber. Structural panels are wildly uneven and broken by jagged bone protrusions here. A Dexterity check must be made each round and those who fail take 1d4 damage from falling into the sharp points.

9   Organ Chamber. Masses of hair fill this room, slowing movement to 5' per round for those who have cutting implements and try to wade through it. Burning the hair produces a noxious **Gas** (see **Attacks** for details).

10   Organ Chamber. Flowers and seeds partially fill this room. They are not plant parts, but rather mixtures of plant and animal tissue. There is a 25% chance 1d4 plant seedling monsters live here. These can be any kind the ML wants, although all have the *animal limbs or organs* mutation (or even multiple versions of it).

11   Organ Chamber. Leaves and stems partially fill the room. They are not plant parts, but rather mixtures of plant and animal tissue. There is a 50% chance the room can use 1d4 combat plant mutations against invaders.

12   Organ Chamber. The structural panels in this room are covered with bark and motile roots. They are not plant parts, but rather mixtures of plant and animal tissue, allowing the room 1d6 **Tentacle** attacks (see **Attacks** for details).

13   Glass Room. This room has clear walls and ceiling and was designed as a greenhouse or solarium. There is a 95% chance 1d4 plant monsters of any kind the ML wants live here and 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with an hour of searching. The ceiling panel has a skylight, which characters can use both to enter and exit.

14   Oven Room. Intended as a kitchen, half of this room has mutated into a huge oven with faulty temperature controls; the non-mutated half of the area looks like a normal kitchen. Those entering the room suffer 1d4 points of heat damage per round. A one-hour search will reveal the presence of 1d4 minor artifacts.

15   Freezer Room. Designed as a kitchen, half of this room has mutated into a huge freezer with faulty temperature controls and those entering suffer 1d4 points of cold damage per round. The non-mutated half of the room looks like a normal kitchen. Some 1d4 minor artifacts can be found with an hour of searching.

16   Stomach Chamber. This organ room is lined with muscle tissue, floored with pools of acid, and smells intensely of bile. Breathing the fumes causes 1d4 points of acid damage per round and falling into a pool inflicts 4d4 damage.

17   Compression Chamber. As a result of mutated seed pods, this chamber shrinks visitors by 5d10%. See the *density alteration (others)* mutation for details. The change lasts for 1d4 days.

The Living Building

18 **Expansion Chamber**. Resulting from mutated seed pods, this chamber enlarges visitors by 2d10%. See the *density alteration (others)* mutation for details. The change lasts for 1d4 days.

19 **Growth Chamber**. Medical advances let patients grow organs at home, and alter their bodies as needed. Now this organ room holds 3d4 parasite mutations in organic tubes that do not attack if freed. See *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #12: Parasite Mutations/Transformations* for details.

20 **Mutant Lord's Inspiration.** There could many other rooms a ML might envision and design (e.g., additional rooms that appear because of soil contamination, radiation, or a nanite infection). Use this space for those.

RARE CHAMBER CONTENTS

Roll   Result

1 **Hacker Room**. Using a very localized broadcast signal, the room tries to take over computers within it and users must actively try to prevent reprogramming (see **Hacking** in the **Attacks** section for details).

2 **Knowledge Room**. The walls of this chamber are covered with text providing accurate information about the pre-apocalypse period. The display is supposed to scroll, but locked up before the characters enter the room. Half the writing could be useful, while the other half might be fiction, "adult" material, recipes for sweet and sour penguin, or inanely gossipy email.

3 **Pipes Room**. A constant bone-shattering shriek pierces this room, coming from either massive mutated musical instruments or damaged steam conduits. The noise causes 2d4 points of tissue damage per round, but saving versus stun reduces this to half. Some 1d4 major artifacts can be found with an hour of searching.

4 **Weird Room**. Filled with impossible shapes and mind-bending images, this room may cause **Insanity** in visitors who fail to save versus stun (see **Attacks** for details). Some 1d4 major artifacts can be found with an hour of searching.

5 **Tar Room**. This chamber is an aberration, consuming carbon from the rest of the building and turning it into very hot tar. The organic goo fills this room to half its height, so those moving through it may sink and suffocate (see **Attacks** for details). The tar is flammable but the walls are protected from heat, so a fire would simply incinerate or suffocate those in the room. Unlike the water-filled areas, there are no ledges or islands here.

6 **Reverse Gravity Room**. Roll again for Room Frequency and Chamber Contents and then add a reversed gravity field to the results. Other than falling up from the entry door and having to climb down to the exit, there are no new ill effects for those who enter here. Dancing on the ceiling while singing is not mandatory.

7 **Vacuum Room**. Roll again for Room Frequency and Chamber Contents and add a complete vacuum to that room. A mutation of either the pneumatic shower or the building's central cleaning unit has created a selective force field here that allows large objects to pass but not air molecules and anyone who stays here will suffocate if they do not have air tanks. When the PCs enter and leave, all grime is cleaned from their skin (unless it is thick mud).

8 **Robot Room**. This room hold 1d2 robots or 1d8 androids. Their programming is buggy and their alignment is Chaotic. MLs might consult the four *Wisdom from the Wastelands* issues on robots and the *Mutant Future* core rulebook for machine life possibilites.

9 **Matter Warping Room**. The abnormal furniture in this room results from a field that permanently changes the state of non-living matter (i.e., objects). See the *alter physical state* mutation below for details. Use the owner's save versus death to avoid changes, or see *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #1: Artifacts, Manuals, and Toolkits* for details on object saving throws.

10 **Duplicator Room**. Vats and pods line the walls of this room. As the characters enter it, they trigger a replication process and get scanned by the chamber's sensors and, over the following 1d4 days, it grows 1d8 duplicates of each of them. The process was meant to clone pets and allow each to be customized if desired.

11 **Power Room**. Flowing through the piping and stored in large cylinders, highly volatile chemicals fill this room and any fire or explosion **Detonates** them. See **Attacks** for details.

12 **Organ Chamber**. Pulsating fleshy masses of glan-

dular tissue, immersed in lymph and wrapped in a translucent membrane, partially fill this room. There is a 75% chance that the chamber can use 1d4 combat physical mutations against invaders, and it automatically attacks unless the ML deems otherwise.

13   Organ Chamber. Connected masses of gray brain tissue, encased in a translucent membrane, are piled against the walls and on the floor of this area. There is a 75% chance that the room can use 1d4 combat mental mutations against invaders, and it will automatically attack unless the ML deems otherwise. Some 10% of the time the brains have personalities and can communicate; otherwise, they are non-sapient and effectively insane because of their irregular formation.

14   Power Room. This space is filled with electrical junctions. Energy arcs between exposed wires, sparking brilliantly and causing 3d4 points of damage per round.

15   Armory. During the cataclysm, some owners wanted armories for protection. The Ancients' government was terrified by the prospect, declaring it illegal and labeling those citizens "terrorists." This chamber resulted from such a "terrorist infection" and holds 1d4 suits of any model powered armor, 2d4 minor weapons, 2d4 cases of ammo, and 1d4 major weapons.

16   Communication Node. This room-sized version allows visual, auditory, and possibly even empathic or telepathic communication. Much like a ham radio unit, the node has simple controls, giving a +65% bonus to any technology roll (success does not guarantee anyone will answer, only that the gear is being used properly). Unlike a normal, smaller node, this one has a range of the solar system. There is a 10% chance of making contact with someone or something every hour it is used.

17   Dream Chamber. Anyone entering this area must save versus poison or fall asleep for 1d4 days. Originally a therapeutic or recreational area, the chamber empathically induces dreams. With the damage to the building, there is now a 40% chance of triggering **Nightmares** instead (see **Attacks** for details).

18   Absorption Chamber. Often paired with a **Luring Room**, this area turns invaders into weapons for the building's use. After the chamber incapacitates (or kills) visitors with **Gas**, it **Absorbs** them (see **Attacks** for details). The ML can decide what recycling method works best. Triple-strength walls (240 hp) and doors (75 hp) help restrain guests.

19   Growth Chamber. Within this room are 1d6 tubes containing synthetic or replicant androids. They can control the building if they gain access to the core, but until then they are treated as invaders.

20   Growth Chamber. A gamma wyrm rests here on its loot, like a dragon of myth. It will be the only survivor of the building's death, ripping its way out, freed to terrorize the local area. It is small enough to fit in the room, but grows if allowed to escape. The worm's treasure hoard is also provided by the building.

And then, behind the last door, at the center of the spiral, is the **Core Room**. This is too small for human-sized characters to enter, but contains the biological computer that drives the building's growth and monitors the structure when finished. The machine and the inside of the central control nexus are made of brain and gland tissue protected by a liquid-filled, translucent membrane. One part, the human interface panel, has glowing controls labelled with mysterious symbols.

The AI itself is singleminded, concerned only with growing a building based on commands it thinks it receives. Unfortunately, those commands are caused or altered by the background radiation found throughout the wastes, and the people and creatures damaging the existing rooms. If hacked, the computer can dictate which kinds of rooms are grown and stop the building's rapid death. The structure will still have a lifespan of only five years, but that is much better than ~450 hours.

Artifacts

Most room descriptions include a number of artifacts, things more useful to adventurers than the furniture and random gewgaws that can be found in them. Although the ML has final say over what is in either category, as a suggestion, **Minor artifacts** might include non-powered items such as simple weapons, tools, containers, and small electronic devices; the gizmos, food, and drugs charts in the *Mutant Future* rulebook provide a good starting point. **Major artifacts** include powered and ranged weapons, armor, and powered artifacts that require a power pack or better (see the MF core rules).

ATTACKS

Whether from damaging a room or poorly treating some form of building-born inhabitant, there is a very good chance PCs in the Living Building will be treated as invaders and attacked in kind. Below are several ideas for aggressive responses, but the ML is also welcome to create her own forms of creative/evil reinforcement to stop ill-mannered panel-bashers.

Absorption: In one of the more horrific attacks, the building "recycles" invaders, turning them to its own use. Three versions are presented here, but the ML is encouraged to use his imagination for other methods players might "enjoy." In the first, incapacitated victims sink into the panels, digested at 4d6 points of damage per turn; their mutations later appear in rooms still developing (e.g., in the creatures, appliances, or even the walls and doors). The ML might decide dissolving PCs is bad form and may instead cocoon them in mucous, drawing on their mutations but keeping them unconscious and alive. Last, dead invaders could be brought back 1d6 hours later as zombie-slaves controlled by the building, which is always a crowd pleaser.

Alter Physical State: This response is similar to the mutation of the same name and allows the building to

The Living Building

alter the physical state of matter without altering its temperature (e.g., convert wood into a liquid form). It may not turn a solid into a gas or a gas into a solid with a single use of this mutation. This capability can be used three times per day and affects 50 pounds per use. Some Mutant Lords may want to limit this to one substance and in this case use the charts for *catalytic reaction* (q.v.) or *light to mass* (q.v.). Otherwise, substances affected by a particular room are determined by rolling on the following table:

Roll	Substance
1	Iron or Steel
2	Other Metal
3	Plastic
4	Water
5	Leather and Other Dead Organic Matter
6	ML's Pick (including other materials)

Detonation: Appliances or other machinery within a Living Building can be very touchy — and explode. This attack fills the room with energy and shrapnel, doing 1d4 10-sided dice of damage. A save versus energy attacks reduces the damage by half. If the attack is violent enough, it may very well kill the room.

Gas: See **Poison** for damage suggestions. Some 10% of these attacks are opaque, which reduces visibility to 1d6 feet; anything or anyone beyond that is completely concealed. The agent persists until both doors are opened, then all three adjoining rooms air out in 1d4 hours.

Hacking: The building's broadcast signal has become locally corrupted and virulent. Robots and basic androids must save versus stun with a +6 bonus or become slaves to the building until its death. Computerized items must either make their own save (see *WftW Issue #1* for details) or use their owner's save versus stun to avoid being taken over. Hacked items' reactions depend on their programming, and some may violently rebel against the owner (e.g., powered armor going out of control, a laser rifle shooting allies). Other times, the corruption could be subtle, first causing annoying glitches and then, eventually, a crash and the artifact completely stopping working.

Insanity: This attack may cause *confusion* (75%) or the *phobia* drawback (25%). See the *Mutant Future* core rulebook for more details on these conditions. Insanity lasts for 1d6 hours after the PC has left the room.

Music: There is a 90% chance these melodies will compel visitors to stay and listen. Saving versus stun allows a character to willingly leave the room. Otherwise, he will have to be knocked out and dragged away or risk starvation.

Mutagen: Some substance here causes random mutations in those who fail to save versus death. This can happen only once per day, no matter how many times a character visits or how long he stays. The mutations induced can be of any type appropriate for the mutant

(i.e., plant mutations for plants, etc.). Pure humans are not effected: they only get a little itchy.

Nightmare: This attack stops victims from sleeping for 1d4+1 nights. Each lost night causes cumulative -2 to hit and 1-point AC penalties, plus any others the ML deems fit.

Poison: Of these toxic attacks, 70% are class 1d3+8, 25% are class 1d12, and the remaining 5% are compounds not found in the *Mutant Future* core rulebook: those causing pain, paralysis, sleep, or skin irritations. The ML is encouraged to be "creative."

Spore: There are two types of spores: 90% are **Poison** and 10% are **Infestation**. Poisons are detailed above, while Infestations act like random diseases. Because the *Mutant Future* core rulebook has so few diseases, MLs are encouraged to consult *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #8: Diseases & Medical Options*. All spore attacks are opaque, reducing vision to 1d4 feet. The attack fills an entire room but stays contained unless the doors are destroyed; if the spores leak into another room their effect or duration is halved.

Tar: This causes 1d6 damage per round for slight contact (e.g., a hand or foot). Anyone engulfed by the hot goo takes 3d6 damage per round and will drown in half the normal time. For those trying to extricate themselves from its grip, tar has a Strength of 1d6+5.

Tentacle: Treat these attacks as 10 hit die monsters with 45 hit points and an AC of 6. There are 1d8 tentacles, each of which can reach anywhere in the room to make a slam attack. Tentacles do not constrict, unless the ML wishes or has them manifest as deformed android arms and legs. They inflict damage based on their size; roll 1d6 for each to determine this:

Roll	Damage
1-3	1d6
4	1d8
5	1d10
6	3d4

MONSTERS

Monsters from *Creatures of the Wastelands* commonly found in a Living Building include the black snowflake, blazemoth, bloater crab, body parts, ceiling walker, grey tide dinosaur, giant firebrat, floater, ghost bat, viper hound, demonic garden, mirid, nylon moth, ok'se, giant phorid fly, chewer rat, twilight rat, wasp rat, reincarnation slime, sand rat, sewer swarm, silver sheet, skeletal tar, spark slug, hippy spider, splat, vine spinner, and zombie fly.

Monsters from the *Mutant Future* core rulebook commonly found in the building include the ant horror, hideous boar, brain plant, burn leech, burrow tuber, carcass scavenger, giant centipede, chitterling, electrophant (with *density alteration (self)*), feeder, giant fish, fungal grove, gamma wyrm, glue flower, hemofowl, humanoid (synthetic) mass, jellyfish plant, kelper, kernel plant, giant leech, mummy vine, night globe, giant killer puffball, quill cat, giant rhagodessa, rot dog, rot grub, giant spider (all), spidergoat, stalker plant, vampire star, xenocattle, and zap vines.

A number of new creatures might also be found there.

Glass Snail

No. Enc.:	1d6 (0)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	30' (10')
Armor Class:	Special
Hit Dice:	2
Attacks:	1 (touch)
Damage:	Special
Save:	L1
Morale:	10
Hoard Class:	Special

Similar to garden slugs, the glass snail is dull yellow, with transparent slime and four antennae. Unlike its normal cousins, this 20-pound creature is 3' long and creates a "shell" not from calcium in its diet, but by transforming iron into a strange, transparent liquid telekinetically held around its body. A typical shell contains 2d4 pounds of the ferrous liquid, with each pound providing an additional point of armor class, starting at AC 8 (e.g., 5 pounds of liquid provides an AC of 3). Energy weapons vaporize one pound of the liquid for every 10 points of damage the shell negates, with a corresponding AC loss.

To increase its protection, the glass snail must touch a source of iron with its foot and spend 10 minutes per pound of metal to convert it. This must be a significant object (i.e., the snail cannot ooze onto a body and transform the iron content in blood). For a more active defense, a snail can hit an attacker and convert flesh into liquid. Those struck must save versus poison or take 2d4 points of damage; those who save are unharmed.

The special hoard class represents possible qualities of the iron liquid, which could be useful for repairing androids or other advanced tech. Although originally ferrous, the new liquid cannot be collected with a magnet.

Mutations: *alter atomic composition, alter physical state, gigantism, special.*

Sour Spider

No. Enc.:	1 (1d4)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	90' (30')
	Web crawling 150' (50')
Armor Class:	5
Hit Dice:	4
Attacks:	1 (bite)
Damage:	1d4
Save:	L2
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	VII

Named for the sour milk odor their silk produces, this 4'-diameter, black-and-red arachnid stands about 2' tall. It can deliver class 3 venom with its bite, but catches prey mostly with an unusual web. Instead of being sticky, the silk reacts with flesh to produce a 10' diameter cloud of paralytic gas, and anyone in the cloud who fails to save versus poison is paralyzed for 4d4 turns. The silk does not burn well, so the easiest way to destroy a web is with flesh: each touch converts a 10' diameter circle of silk and consumes a small amount of skin. Because this also inflicts 1d4 points of damage, no save, it is a good idea to throw dead flesh or meat at it instead of touching it with one's own hand. For reasons that are unclear, the spider can move much faster on its webbing than on other surfaces and builds lines of silk to capitalize on this. Within the rooms where sour spiders are found, the walls and ceiling are usually criss-crossed with silk, giving the creatures many escape routes.

Mutations: *catalytic reaction, gigantism, toxic weapon, special.*

Plant Monsters
Iti Vine

No. Enc.:	0 (1d8)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	0'
Armor Class:	7
Hit Dice:	6
Attacks:	1 (slam)
Damage:	2d4+12
Save:	L3
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	VII

These dark green, ropey vines emerge from wall niches in growth chambers and greenhouse rooms of Living Buildings. At 20-25' long, they can threaten an entire

The Living Building

room with their 4"-long, steel-hard, flesh-ripping thorns. Instead of reacting to motion or light, the plants sense and strike mutants with offensive mental mutations (i.e., those using the Mental Attack Table in the *Mutant Future* rulebook). If attacked with a mental mutation, the vine absorbs this energy and turns it into heat, inflicting an additional 1d8 points of damage with its next attack.

Mutations: *light to mass (new, variant), natural vegetal weapon, unique sense.*

Dark Jelly

No. Enc.: 1d20 (1d20)
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 90' (30')
Armor Class: 8
Hit Dice: 4
Attacks: 1 (grasp)
Damage: 1d8
Save: L2
Morale: 12
Hoard Class: None

The predecessor of this 50-pound degenerate mass of plant tissue was created in a lab before the cataclysm. Some of its spores were absorbed by the Living Building's mutated seed pod and this carnivorous, semi-solid, brown blob emerged with the growing structure. It does not resemble a plant, having no obvious leaves or branches, only random openings in the ooze where it releases its spores. Unlike other plant life, dark jelly cannot photosynthesize and, in fact, reacts very poorly to light. Between total darkness and the light of one candle the plant can move, but not attack; up to full sunlight, dark jelly is stunned and immobile; and any brighter light kills the plant and turns it to stone. To protect themselves, a jelly uses its *control light waves* mutation to create a 5'-diameter sphere of darkness. This is a weak mutation, however, which fails if exposed to illumination brighter than sunlight.

Within the building, swarms of dark jelly haunt unlit rooms, eating furniture and other creatures. If one hits with an 18+, the jelly grabs and engulfs a victim, crushing it and automatically inflicting 1d8 points of damage. Human-sized creatures are too large to be completely swallowed, and only their legs and lower torso are enveloped. Once its prey dies, the plant extrudes a root and begins to feed. If the root is damaged (AC 4, 1 hit point), the jelly starves to death.

Mutations: *bizarre appearance, control light waves, free movement, toxic weapon, special.*

NEW MUTATIONS
Alter Atomic Composition
The mutant can change one material to another, both randomly selected at the time of character creation. Only 1d4xWIL pounds can be affected per day. If the result is

undesirable, then this mutation is considered a drawback. Roll 1d10 twice on the table below to determine what material can be changed, and what it turns into:

Roll d10 for Random Materials

1 Soft Metal	6 Wood
2 Hard Metal	7 Ceramic (including glass)
3 Rubber	8 Flesh (mindless)
4 Plastic	9 ML's Pick
5 Stone	10 Player's Pick

Catalytic Reaction
The mutant produces an enzyme that can turn one ounce of a certain material into a cloud of poisonous gas. The cloud is 30' in diameter, takes 1 round to form, and lasts for 10 rounds. The poison class is determined randomly and the mutant is immune to its own poison. Roll 1d10 on the table below to determine what material is converted:

Roll d10 for Material

1 Wood	6 Stone
2 Bone	7 Plastic
3 Flesh	8 Ceramic
4 Fruit	9 ML's Pick
5 Metal	10 Player's Pick

Light to Mass
The mutant can convert light energy into matter of some sort. For every 16 hours of bright light, the mutant can create one pound of material. The light can be less intense (e.g., fluorescent lights, campfire), but it takes longer to make the resulting substance. A candle or starlight would increase the time needed to a week. Roll 1d8 on the table below to determine which material results.

Roll 1d8 for Material

1	Wood
2	Bone or Dead Flesh
3	Metal (75% Soft/25% Hard)
4	Stone
5	Plastic
6	Ceramic
7	ML's Pick
8	Player's Pick
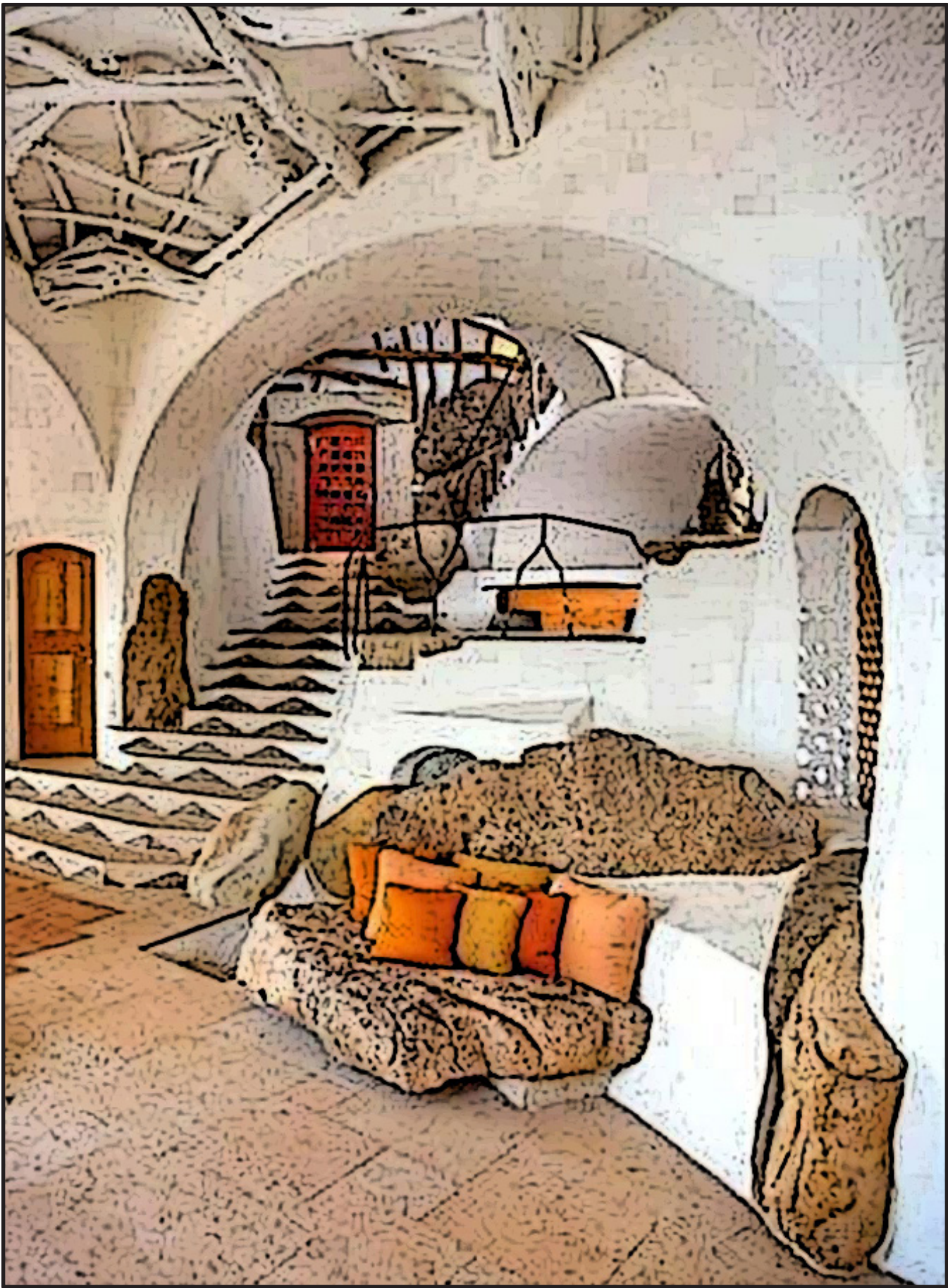
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