

# DOWN THE TUBES

## A ONE SHEET ADVENTURE FOR *HEROES OF TERRA*

By JEREMY PUCKETT

### BACKGROUND

In ancient times, the lost civilization known as the Forebears created many wonders, some of which survive to the modern day. Among the most common are the Warp Tunnels, jade and steel tubes that act as instantaneous transport across vast distances. The old Forebear empire was linked by such devices, but the magic that supported them began to fail within generations of the Forebears' disappearance.

A Warp Tunnel has been discovered, barely functional. Such tunnels often lead into danger—but they have also been known to lead to incredible treasures!

### SUMMARY

The heroes discover a functioning Warp Tunnel and use it to explore the wonders and dangers lie on the other side. This can be used as a follow-up to "The Plumber's Dilemma"; if so, forego the suggested arcane skill roll from that adventure and simply allow the Warp Tunnel to open at regular intervals.

If the GM prefers, the opening of the Warp Tunnel can be used as a plot device. For example, the characters could use it to escape from the kappa soldiers in "The Plumber's Dilemma," or from reinforcements who come to see what happened to their fellows. Once on the other side, they can either seal the Tunnel or destroy it to avoid being followed, but leaving them stranded. Should they take this option, see *Aftermath* for more details.

### SCENE 1: THE WARP OPENS

The heroes have arrived at the entrance to the Warp Tunnel, and have either managed to open it through skill checks or be present when it opens naturally. The Tunnel remains open long enough for all of the group to pass through if they're quick about it—so be sure to emphasize that they need to hurry!

Passing through a Warp Tunnel is an unnerving experience. It feels rather like being turned into taffy, then stretched infinitely thin before snapping back into reality at the other end. The Warp is a place of swirling colors, flashing starmotes, and psychedelic visions. Characters need to make a Spirit roll at -2 or be Shaken on arrival.

### SCENE 2: CARNIVOROUS PLANT!

The Warp Tunnel opens up underground, though the heroes may not realize that at first. The area is lit with a pervasive glow, like the sun through clouds, and they are surrounded by greenery. In fact, they have arrived in what was essentially an ancient subway terminal, a place where dozens of Warp Tunnels opened to allow the Forebears to quickly transit between distant locations. It was lit by magical lights that have slowly failed over the years, but plenty of plants still survive in the subterranean environment thanks to dripping water and imitation sunlight. The whole area is choked with creeping vines, colorful flowers, and overhanging pipes.

Unfortunately, the leaking magic of the failing lights and malfunctioning Warp Tunnels have made one of those plants extremely dangerous to the few creatures that come stumbling through the Tunnels these days. Immediately upon arriving, deal out initiative cards—the heroes are under attack by a carnivorous plant!

The initial battle range puts everyone within reach of the plant's fireballs, but out of reach of its bite. Given that some of them may be Shaken upon arrival, this could be a tough fight for them. If they're having trouble, put a *red mandrake* among the flowers growing here.

#### Pyrrhic Plant

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 0; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (11 vs. fire)

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6, AP 1.
- **Fire Resistant:** A pyrrhic plant has +4 Armor against fire attacks.
- **Plant:** Called shots do no extra damage. Not subject to Tests of Will.
- **Pyrokinesis:** The plant's exposure to magic allows it to spit fireballs at distant foes. These fireballs inflict 2d6 damage with a range of 12/24/48. Any creature that suffers damage from a fireball risks catching fire.
- **Roots:** A carnivorous plant has a basic Pace of 0, but it can take an action to "run," giving it a d6 bonus to Pace for the round.
- **Size +1:** This plant is a good eight feet tall and has a maw as wide across as a person's body.

### SCENE 3: EXPLORATION

Assuming the heroes survive their encounter with the ferocious flora, they can begin exploring the terminus. While there are several dozen Warp Tunnels in this area, this adventure assumes they are all nonfunctional. If you want to introduce new areas or other regions through this adventure, you can instead have one or more of the other Warp Tunnels working, if only erratically.

There are two main areas for exploration open to heroes: a long underground tunnel with a pair of odd metal tracks running down its middle and a large hallway that leads deeper into the terminus complex. (Heroes from Earth will easily recognize the metal tracks as those for a train, but native Terran heroes will need to make a Smarts roll at -4 or an Artifice roll at -2 to have ever seen such things before.)

If they take the tunnel, go to *Scene 4: The Underground*, while the hallway leads to *Scene 6: Terminal Depth*.

### SCENE 4: THE UNDERGROUND

The tunnel and its metal tracks lead away from the terminus. After a time, the lights become fewer and further between, leaving the area in Dim lighting. In the distance, the heroes can see a circle of light—the surface! After only a few minutes' walk from the terminus, they find that the ground falls away suddenly, leaving a chasm spanned by the twisted metal rails of the ancient train system.

Because of the metal ties between the tracks, crossing the chasm on the tracks would be like crossing a wide bridge with no handrails—not too hard at all. Unfortunately, the inhabitants of the caves might have other ideas.

Unless the heroes were particularly stealthy in their approach, they are noticed by the watchers for the myconites who live on the other side of the chasm. Deposited here by a Warp Tunnel that failed long ago, they fled from the Station Master and were lucky enough to find water on the far side of the chasm. They couldn't destroy the metal



rails with their primitive weapons, so they keep constant watch just in case the Master's spawn try to sneak up on them.

When the heroes get about halfway across the chasm, the single myconite lying in wait breaks cover, throws a spear, and screams for help. If the heroes see him before he attacks and can pick him off before he calls for help, they might be able to catch the rest of the tribe off-guard. Otherwise, they have to deal with the other myconites showing up at the beginning of the next round to join the battle. If the heroes fall back, the myconites will pursue them to the terminus but not into it. They fear the Station Master too much to risk it.

#### **Myconite Tribal (10 total)**

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1); **Charisma:** -2

**Gear:** Crude axe (Str+d6), crude leather armor (+1 Armor), throwing spear (Str+d6, 5/10/15)

#### **Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Brave:** +4 to resist Fear and Intimidation.
- **Low Light Vision:** These myconites are adapted to the underground and ignore penalties for the local Dim lighting.
- **Size -1:** Myconites stand around four feet tall.

#### **Hazard: Battle on the Bridge**

The bridge has a length of 20". The myconite scout throws his spear when the heroes are halfway across, putting him at range 10" (-2 to hit); if he successfully stayed hidden, he probably has the Drop on them (+4 to hit and damage).

Crossing the bridge slowly and carefully is easy—but crossing it when under attack is hard. If a character is hit with an attack, even if he Soaks the damage successfully, he makes an Agility roll to avoid falling. A character can choose to move half his Pace or less without an check; moving at his full Pace requires an Agility roll to avoid falling, while running requires an Agility roll at -2!

A character that falls can try to catch himself with a Climbing roll at -2. While dangling from the bridge, a character is effectively helpless but has Cover from ranged attacks. Getting back onto the bridge requires an action and a Climbing roll. Anyone who actually falls suffers 5d6+5 damage from the 50-foot fall.

### **SCENE 5: OTHER WORLDS THAN THESE**

If the heroes can get past the angry myconites, they find themselves in a shallow cave with a trickling pool of fresh water from an underground spring. Beyond the cave's mouth is a vast sandy desert; the train tracks end in a twisted ruin only fifty feet from the cave's mouth, with part of an ancient, wrecked machine sticking up from the desert sands.

An artificer could easily salvage the destroyed train for parts. With time and effort, he could even rebuild the engine on a smaller scale, possibly as the framework for a *racing cart*! Their prize is somewhere in the middle of the Sunscorch Desert, however, and carting it back through the terminus to the Warp Tunnel could be quite an undertaking...

### **SCENE 6: TERMINAL DEPTH**

Should the heroes choose to explore the terminus hallway, they find themselves in a series of hallways and rooms that have long since fallen into ruin. A character knowledgeable in the lore of the Forebears could recognize the area as shops, offices, and temporary

housing for travelers. The lights here are in poor condition, making the area have Dim lighting.

Allow the characters a Scavenging roll if they wish. Applying the modifiers for a "mostly intact small town" and "unlikely to have been picked over," looting the whole of the terminus is a Notice roll with no modifiers, taking 3d6 hours. If using the Adventure Deck, this would be an appropriate place to use a Relic card or something similar.

### **SCENE 7: THE STATION MASTER**

At some point during looting, the heroes will come to the attention of the remaining inhabitants of the terminus: the Station Master and his boomers.

The Station Master was once a Forebear administrator who watched over the Warp Tunnel station and its functions. During the Collapse, he was trapped in his office and slowly starved to death, becoming a horrific ghûl. He soon hunted down the few other survivors and devoured their life force, turning them into his zombie slaves. He has been stirred to wakefulness by the heroes' arrival, and now he hopes to have his first real meal in years!

#### **The Station Master (Wild Card)**

The Station Master is a true horror. Roughly human-shaped, his arms are too long, his mouth too wide, and his teeth too sharp. His flesh is withered and leathery, while his empty eye sockets glow with baleful green light. What hair he still has is matted and brittle. He wears the remains of a train station master's uniform and occasionally growls to himself in the Forebear tongue.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

#### **Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Tough hide and Forebear uniform.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the Station Master must make a Fear check.
- **Fearless:** The Station Master is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from called shots.

#### **Boomers (aka "dry bones in fancy uniforms")**

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

#### **Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +1:** Forebear uniform.
- **Bony Claws:** Str.
- **Fearless:** Dry bones are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from called shots.

### **AFTERMATH**

The Station Master's office still contains his badge of office, which could be useful in other Forebear ruins, as well as his last month's pay (20 gold coins) and four bottles of *mandrake juice*. The Master's uniform was once far fancier and could be repaired to +3 Armor by a dedicated artificer; the boomer uniforms crumble if anyone else tries them on, though.

If the heroes closed the Warp Tunnel behind them while coming into the ruins, they can still escape to the surface through the caverns, which puts them in the Sunscorch Desert. Should you feel generous, let them activate one of the other Warp Tunnels instead, which puts them out Gaia knows where!



## MAGIC OF THE TERMINUS

### A SUPPLEMENT FOR THE “DOWN THE TUBES” ONE-SHEET

“Down the Tubes” references several magic items unique to the *Heroes of Terra* setting. For Game Masters and players who can’t wait for *Heroes of Terra: The Mushroom War* to be released, here’s a quick rundown of those items and their use!

#### Forebear Uniform

The Forebears had a secret method of enchanting cloth and leather to become almost as hard as steel. Such clothing looks normal (if fancy) but provides an Armor bonus of +1 to +3, depending on the level of enchantment. They also repair small holes and tears every morning at sunrise, as well as keeping themselves clean, fresh, and cool in all but the worst environments.

Most such uniforms were mystically locked to their owner and crumble to ashes if worn by anyone else. A few are ceremonial, passed from one person to the next in an office, and can be realigned to a new wearer with a Spirit roll at –2; failure causes the uniform to disintegrate as normal.

#### Mandrake Juice

While kappa sorcerers cannot use mandrakes and lotuses directly, their savage alchemy has given them insight into a method of distillation that allows the plants to become useful with some treatment.

Made from crushed and distilled mandrakes, *mandrake juice* is a bitter concoction that imbues the drinker with some of the sorcerous power of the mystic blooms from which it was brewed. The sorcerer that drinks a bottle of *mandrake juice* immediately gains 5 Power Points, even if that takes him above his maximum. The extra Power Points fade after an hour.

If a character tries to drink more than one bottle of *mandrake juice* in an hour, every bottle past the first requires a Vigor roll, with a cumulative –1 penalty. A failure inflicts a level of Fatigue. Anyone who becomes Incapacitated through drinking too much *mandrake juice* falls into a coma for 2d10 hours, plagued by bad dreams, and has his Power Point total reduced to 0. The character cannot regain Power Points until he recovers from all of his Fatigue, which is removed at one level for every day the character goes without drinking *mandrake juice*.

#### Racing Cart

These ancient vehicles have often been found in the ruins of great arenas. This and their relative commonality—over a dozen have been found in the last three centuries—have lead some scholars to conclude that they were originally meant for some sort of racing sport rather than transportation.

A *racing cart* can hold two human-sized passengers and has simple enough controls that anyone with the Vehicles skill can use them normally. The *racing cart* has an Acceleration of 15 with a Top Speed of 30, Toughness 8 (2), and functions normally off-road on all but the worst terrain. The vehicle has 20 Power Points and uses 1 Power Point per 10 miles traveled.

#### Red Mandrake

Highly prized by warriors, red mandrakes instill furious strength and great size. Consuming a mandrake takes an action. The user increases his Size by +2, which increases his Toughness by +2 and increases his Strength die by one die type. This effect lasts for 5 rounds.