

MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

BLESSINGS OF THE VIQE BROTHERHOOD

#5: A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE
BY HARLEY STROH





NORTH
6 MILES

PILGRIMS WAY

TIER START

THE LOST MONASTERY

Map
Player's

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BLESSINGS OF THE VINE BROTHERHOOD

A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

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MOHN
AFTER DAT

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.

When the tribe's prize possession – a functioning medibot – finally breaks down, the PCs are tasked with a holy quest: deliver the dead bot to the monks of The Holy Medicinal Order in hopes that their shamans can repair it. But the monks are not as the legends portray, and there is definitely something dark and dangerous going on in the holy monastery.

Blessings of the Vile Brotherhood takes the PCs into the foreboding mountains that ring the hothouse jungles of the post apocalypse. The PCs' quest leads them along the Pilgrim's Way, an ancient sacred path, in search of the Holy Medicinal Brotherhood. There, amidst the high peaks shrouded in gray rad snow, dread 'bots fighting a long forgotten war and the perverted beasts that have sought shelter in the wilderness, the PCs discover the truth of the holy order and its bloody fate.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the savagery of the rad-glow future, devotees of the Holy Medicinal Order are revered above all others. Peaceful, wandering healers, the monks and nuns of the order offer a vision of a world that needn't be defended by a flint-tipped spear or maser rifle. The order ministers to all comers, regardless of the seeker's affiliations or past. Within the embrace of the order, the homeless are sheltered, the hungry are fed, and the wounded are healed.

While most of the order are holy vagabonds and wanderers, all have a retreat to call their home. The retreats are scattered throughout the wilderness, often seemingly at random, but a certain few serve a secret purpose: Concealing weapons of the ancient ones in the hopes that they can never again be turned against sentient beings.

So it was with the monastery. The monks and nuns of the order built their mountain fastness atop an ancient silo housing a war-bot, determined to hide its location from any that might try to awaken the slumbering AI.

Their dreams of peace were not to be.

THE VILE BROTHERHOOD

Mere weeks before the start of the adventure a hyper-violent sect of the Vile Brotherhood overran the sacred monastery, slaughtering the peaceful monks and nuns. The

bloating bodies still hang from the high cliff walls, picked apart by vultures and clouds of black crows. Worse, the Brotherhood succeeded in awakening the Mongrel – a massive war-bot – that had lay dormant beneath the monastery since before the apocalypse. However, Morgander and her would-be captains utterly failed to override its command protocols. The buzzing war-bot flew off to do battle in a war that ended eons ago.

The attack on the holy order and the release of the Mongrel runs counter to every taboo and more of the post-apocalypse, a fact not lost on lesser members of the sect. The sect has splintered between two factions: the first, led by the darkly alluring Morgander, abbess of the Vile Brotherhood; and Brother Lecho, a portly, small-faced deceiver.

The abbess still hopes to rein in the war-bot, or failing that, return it to slumber. Brother Lecho for his part simply desires to end his exile, cut down Morgander and take command of the mutant reavers.

Judge's note: Brother Lecho and his exiles regularly break camp to avoid Morgander's agents. The camp can only be found through random encounters with Lecho or his scouts. In practice, this means that the PCs may never encounter the exiles. However, if fate favors the PCs (or if they wander the wilderness long enough) they can earn valuable allies in their bid against Morgander and her mutants.

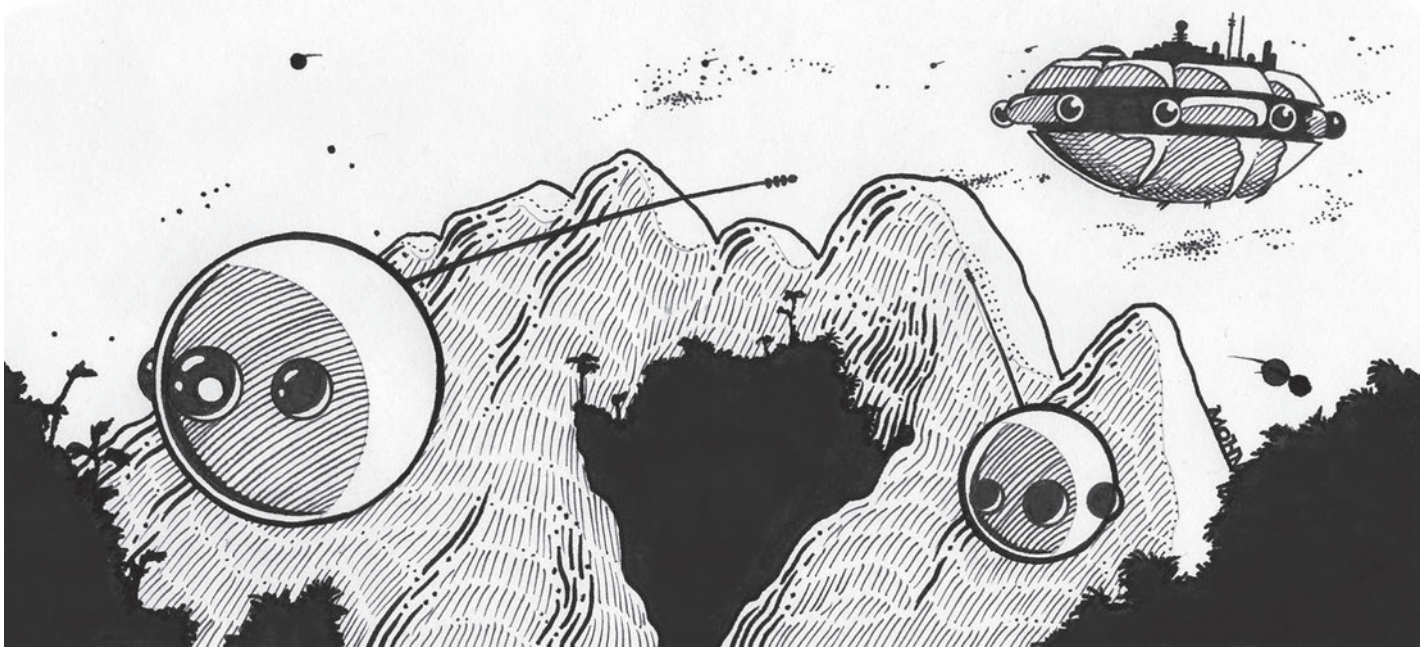
THE MONGREL

The rad-saturated mountains are host to any number of threats, from the reavers of the Vile Brotherhood to the mutant beasts, but one danger eclipses all others: The Mongrel, a massive, hovering war-bot, and its buzzing clouds of scout drones. Awakened from dormancy by the Vile Brotherhood, the massive walker now stalks the foothills and mountains, attempting to fight a war that ended eons ago – and mistaking the PCs as the forward scouts of an opposing army.

But not all is lost. Years of dormancy have weakened the Mongrel; with sensor arrays dimming and logic circuits failing, the Mongrel is entirely dependent on its swarm of slave drones to interpret the world. So while exceedingly deadly (and remorseless, ceaseless and dogged), the war-bot is nearly blind to the world. Daring and cunning PCs might not "just" use this weakness to simply defeat the Mongrel, but turn the ancient weapon against the Brotherhood.

The PCs first encounter the Mongrel in the Player Start. Presuming PCs survive the initial encounter, the war-bot deploys its slave drone swarm to home in on the characters' location. Its ability to find the PCs is largely a matter of luck and it is easy for the war-bot to incorrectly predict the PCs' location. Characters can improve their odds by traveling further distances and moving erratically between terrains.

The chances of the Mongrel locating the PCs are resolved as follows: Each day after the first encounter, the Mongrel rolls a search die (initially a 1d30) in an effort to predict the PCs' location. On a 1, the Mongrel discovers the PCs. The



die can never be larger than a d30, nor smaller than a d3. Factor in the party's best Luck modifier as a bonus / penalty to the roll. However, a natural 1 is always treated as the Mongrel discovering the PCs, regardless of Luck bonuses.

The search die is modified as follows:

- 1d for each day that passes, as the war-bot is able to hone its predictive code.
- 1d any time the drones encounter the PCs and are able to radio back their location (see below).
- 1d each time the PCs end the day having traveled 5 miles or less.
- +1d each day the PCs end their travels having moved from one path to another. (For instance, leaving the Pilgrim's Way for a game trail, or leaving a game path to begin bushwhacking.)
- +3d any time the PCs travel by means other than overland travel (e.g. psychic teleportation, tunneling through the mountains, flight, or other unconventional methods).

The flying Mongrel covers an enormous amount of ground each day; it's not important to track the war-bots' specific movement, so much as where it ends its movement (always expecting to discover opposing forces).

Use the Mongrel search template on the Judge's map to determine where the war-bot ends up on the overland hex map in relation to the PCs. The PCs are always at the center of the template, in hex 1. The Mongrel ends its movement in a numbered hex that corresponds with the search roll.

For instance, on a roll of 8 the Mongrel ends its move in corresponding hex 8. On a roll of 2, it ends its move in hex 2, adjacent to the PCs.

In general, higher rolls are further away from the PCs,

though even near misses can produce deadly results.

When the Mongrel ends its move in the template's gray zone, the PCs are beset by 1d3 scout drones. The PCs have a 1d6+3 rounds to destroy or disable the drones before they radio back the location to the Mongrel (reducing the next day's search die by -1d as above).

If the towering war-bot ends its move in the PCs' hex, it has located the PCs and attacks with furious, earth-scorching wrath.

The search die is rolled once per day. Roll 1d8 on the following table to determine when the move is applied.

Example: The Mongrel is on its fourth day of tracking a band of mutant PCs - reducing the search die from d30 to d16. The judge rolls a 3 on the search, and an 8 for the time of day: In the dark hours before dawn the PCs are spotted by 3 scout drones! One of the drones radios back the PCs' location before it is destroyed, reducing the search die to a d14.

The following day (-1d for the passage of time; the search die is now a d12) the judge rolls a 1 - the war-bot will locate the party! The judge then rolls a 6 for time of day - evening.

MONGREL SEARCH TIME	
d8	Time of Day
1	Dawn
2	Morning
3	Noon
4	Afternoon
5	Dusk
6	Evening
7	Midnight
8	Predawn

As the PCs settle down around their small campfire amid the cold peaks, the Mongrel and its swarm of drones attack!

The Mongrel is a massive war-bot, hovering nearly 50' in the air and proceeded by the thunderous whirl of earth-shaking rotors. Stained and soiled from the passage of untold eons, the war-machine depends entirely on a swarm-cloud of 20 slave drones as its eyes and ears. An implacable foe, the Mongrel pursues the PCs day and night.

Each slave drone is a hovering metallic ball covered in sensors and eyes, with a single long, whip-like antenna. The drones have limited combat ability, but are still able to attack with concentrated plasma beams (formerly used in welding repairs).

The drones are the Mongrel's greatest liability - if all of the drones are disabled or destroyed, the Mongrel is rendered blind and attacks at random. Call for a DC 10 Luck check every round a PC remains within the Mongrel's range; on a failed check, the PC is targeted by an attack at -4 to hit. After 10 rounds of overheating, the Mongrel self-destructs, inflicting 1d30 damage to all PCs within 100 ft' (DC 10 Reflex save for half).

The war-machine operates in two distinct modes - in combat the flyer slows to a crawl (20' per round) as it struggles to respond to real-time situational data. While hunting/tracking, the war-bot deploys the majority of the drones, and switches to predictive logic - moving much more quickly but with a great deal less accuracy.

In practice this means that if the PCs are able to escape out of sight of all the Mongrel's drones, the war-bot is forced to revert to search rolls in its attempts to locate the PCs.

Finally, the Mongrel and its drones are entirely unable to distinguish between PCs and other characters (including agents of the Vile Brotherhood). If the PCs are ever located by the war-bot while in the company of other NPCs, distribute the attacks randomly amongst the possible targets.

Mongrel, Mk 1 War-Bot: Init -5; Atk fazer rifle +0 missile fire (heat 5d6 and DC 15 Fort or stunned), maser rifle +0 missile fire (heat 1d6, 2d6 or 3d6, disregards armor and force fields), quantum grenades +0 missile fire (2d6 to all within 10' radius, DC 10 Ref save or disintegrate); AC 15; HD 40d6; hp 81; MV 120'; Act 4d16; SP force screen (-1d to all physical damage), immune to mind control; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +8; AI recog 20 (Military).

Scout Drones (20): Init +3; Atk plasma torch +3 melee (1d10); AC 14; HD 6d6; hp 25; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AI recog 12.

OVERLAND TRAVEL

Explorers have their choice of routes to the monastery: walking the established Pilgrim's Way; following any of the game trails over the high mountain passes; or forge their own path through the snow-locked wilderness. Each presents its own unique challenges, and none is free of risk.

OPPOSED LUCK CHECKS

At key points during the adventure the party will be asked to make Opposed Luck checks against a variety of foes. In each instance, take the sum of the PCs' Luck modifiers and add the total to a d20 roll. Make a straight d20 roll for the foe. The side with the highest roll wins the check. In each instance, the text describes the results if the PCs win or lose the opposed check.

For instance, PCs with Luck modifiers of +3, -1, 0, 0 and +1, would add a total of +3 to their d20 roll. If the PCs' Luck modifiers were -2, -1 and +1, to total modifier would be -1.

The Pilgrim's Way: A well-established path, roughly one handcart in width, rising into the mountains. Embankments are stabilized with stone walls, and the path is marked by cairns and way stations. The path is watched over by agents of the Vile Brotherhood; parties taking the Way will be hard pressed to evade detection. Parties average 2 hexes (16 miles) a day along the muddy, rutted paths into the mountains.

Game Trails: Narrow, single-track trails wend their way through the mountains, alongside streams and through the high fens. Travel is slow, but parties are less likely to encounter agents of the Vile Brotherhood. However, the wild paths are used extensively by mutated beasts and semi-plantients. Travelers average 1 hex (8 miles) a day.

The Wilds: Characters forging their own trails make the slowest progress of all, but traveling through the wilds allows them to avoid the watchful eyes of the Brotherhood. Averaging a mere 1/2 hex (4 miles), the PC are forced to contend with the dangerous mutated animals and plantients that call the wilderness their home.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll 2d5 once per day for random encounters and events. Results for encounters are listed alphabetically, following the encounter tables. Roll 1d8 on the Random Encounters table to determine when the encounter or event takes place.

Avalanche: Dense, wet snow falls for several hours, creating hazardous conditions. If PCs take the barest precautions (actively avoiding snow-laden slopes, camping amidst pine copses, testing the snowpack) they witness a terrible slide break free of the slope, swallowing a band of reavers. Otherwise, the PCs are caught up in a slide. PCs must make an immediate DC 20 Reflex save to escape. Those that fail are swept down the slope, suffering 2d6 damage per round, for 1d5+1 rounds. Each round a character can attempt to escape the slide with a DC 10 Fortitude save.

Brother Lecho's Scouts: The PCs spy a band of Brother Lecho's scouts, some 1d5 miles distant. While agents of the Vile Brotherhood, the scouts attempt to make contact with

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLES

d8 Time of Day

1	Dawn
2	Morning
3	Noon
4	Afternoon
5	Dusk
6	Evening
7	Midnight
8	Predawn

2d5 Encounter on Pilgrim's Way

2	Rad Storm
3	Refugees
4	Lost robot
5	Morgander's Reavers
6	No encounter
7	Morgander's Reavers
8	Brother Lecho's Scouts
9	Catamount
10	Fallout Lightning

2d5 Encounter on the Gme Trails

2	Rad Storm
3	Skinwalker
4	Morgander's Reavers (distant)
5	Wilder hunting party
6	No encounter
7	Longstrider
8	Catamount
9	Brother Lecho's Scouts
10	Fallout Lightning

2d5 Encounter in the Wilds

2	Avalanche
3	Rad Storm
4	Skinwalker
5-7	No encounter
8	Longstrider
9	Catamount
10	Brother Lecho's encampment

the PCs, warning them of Morgander's forces. The scouts offer the PCs a brace of 3 stun grenade as a sign of their goodwill, and ask the PCs to meet with their master, giving rough directions to Lecho's encampment (see next entry).

If this encounter is rolled a second time, Brother Lecho has succeeded in finding the PCs himself and beseeches their aid. See below for stats on the mad monk and his disciples.

BROTHER LECHO'S PERSONALITIES

d5 Personality

1	Arrogant: Mocks and taunts the PCs, pointing out every weakness.
2	Pitiable: Beggars the PCs for their aid, debasing himself and appealing to the PCs' egos.
3	Dry: Utterly literal and direct, tolerating no side talk or distractions.
4	Melancholic: Moody, pessimistic and sensitive.
5	Sanguine: Delighting in tricks, jokes, puns and distractions.

Scouts (1d5+3): Init +1; Atk blow +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +2.

Brother Lecho's Encampment: The exiled Mad Monk moves his camp regularly to elude Morgander and her reavers. If the PCs happen upon the camp in the wilds, call for an Opposed Luck check (see sidebar); if the PCs win, they spy signs of the camp before being spotted. If Brother Lecho wins, the camp's sentries spot the PCs and march out to confront the party.

Brother Lecho is loathe to throw his forces away in a meaningless battle with the PCs, preferring to save their strength for the coming battle with Morgander. Once establishing that the PCs are not agents of Morgander, Lecho welcomes them into his reavers' humble camp, offering them a seat beside his campfire.

Brother Lecho is round-bellied and barrel-chested, with dark, beady eyes reminiscent of a rat. His chest is covered with faces – desperate and wild-eyed, but with tightly pursed lips. Each of the faces has its own personality, and exerts itself on the monk, giving Lecho his moniker. On any given round roll 1d5 to determine which of the personalities the PCs encounter. (Note that Lecho's goals remain the same, regardless of the dominant personality.)

Brother Lecho, the Mad Monk: Init +2; Atk staff +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 11; HD 5d6; hp 27; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mutation (check +5, light generation); SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5.

Mutant Reavers (15): Init +1; Atk club +2 melee (1d5+2) or throwing stone +0 missile fire (1d3+2); AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 15 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0.

Mutant Scouts (10): Init +1; Atk blow +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +2.

Catamount: An enormous, mutated mountain lion, 6' high at the shoulder and 14' long, with a single great maw in the place of its neck and head, surrounded by a dozen blazing eyes. The lion-thing lurks in trees and atop boulders, attacking with complete surprise on a 1 on a 1d3. If unable to



surprise the PCs, the lion stalks the party, attacking them at dusk or dawn. The catamount hunts the PCs for food, concentrating all its attacks on the smallest member of the party. Once its prey is dead, the catamount withdraws, hauling off the slain character to be devoured in solitude.

Catamount (1): Init +5; Atk crushing hug +3 melee (1d12) or bite +1 melee (1d16+4); AC 15; HD 8d6; hp 30; MV 45'; Act 1d20; SP surprise; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will -2.

Fallout Lightning: A distant eruption (or detonation) hurls massive clouds of earth, rock and ash into the stratosphere. The resulting storm washes over the mountains, with a cacophony of thunder and lightning.

Characters that are unable to find shelter are targeted by the lightning strikes. Each hour the storm is overhead, each PC must make a DC 10 Luck check. On a failed check, the PC (and any nearby – even those that didn't fail the check) is struck by lightning for 4d6 damage.

In addition, the strikes render any superscience weapons and artifacts "dead" for 1d10 hours. It takes the storm 1d4+1 hours to pass over the PCs' location.

Longstrider: A species of enormous, mutant elk, the longstriders travel in herds of 1d100+10. The primary prey of the catamounts, the longstriders possess a startling intelligence and are happy to share what they know with PCs that are able to speak their animal tongue. In the rarest of circumstances, the longstriders will permit PCs to ride them for a short period of time, covering 16 miles an hour for up to 8 hours.

If the PCs are unable to communicate with the animals, the 'striders work to avoid them, attacking only if cornered.

Longstrider (1d100+10): Init +2; Atk antlers +5 melee (1d10+3) or kick +0 melee (1d12+5); AC 12; HD 10d6; hp 45 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2.

Lost robot: The PCs happen upon a companion-bot, wandering the wilderness. The bot's master died years ago and now the bot is seeking a new companion to fulfill its programming. The robot dedicates itself to the first human it recognizes, and lives out the remainder of its days serving that PC (to the best of its inability). If this encounter is rolled a second time, treat as No Encounter.

Companion-Bot (1): Init +0; Atk none; AC 14; HD 7d6; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AI recog 12.

Morgander's Reavers (close or distant): The PCs spy a band of Morgander's reavers. If the "close" result is rolled, call for Opposed Luck check between the PCs and the reavers; the winner spots the other party first, at a distance of 1d3x100 yards, and can choose to engage or avoid the other.

If the "distant" result is rolled, each party sights the other. The reavers attempt to close with the PCs, but desist if the PCs manage to elude them for two days.

Mutant Reaver (1d12+6): Init +1; Atk club +1 melee (1d4) or +0 shortbow missile fire (1d6); AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1.

Rad Storm: Dark storm clouds drop 1d3 feet of ash-gray snow, obscuring all trails and paths. For the next 1d5 days, travel speeds are reduced by 1/2 as the PCs fight their way through deadly drifts that glow softly in the night.

Traveling through the snow carries the danger of radiation damage. Characters traveling for those first 1d5 days must make DC 10 Fortitude saves or suffer 1d12 damage per day. Per the MCC RPG rules, mutants failing the check with natural 1 immediately lose one random mutation or defect. If a mutated character makes the required saving throw by rolling a natural 20, then that mutant character gains one new random mutation or defect.

Refugees: The PCs sight a band of refugees, either monk and nuns escaping the slaughter of the monastery, or pilgrims fleeing an ambush. Wounded and freezing, without gear, provisions or protection, the band mistakes the PCs for agents of the Brotherhood. If the PCs can prove otherwise, the refugees relate their story.

If PCs have been slain earlier in the adventure, the judge can introduce new, leveled PCs here. Otherwise, the refugees present a difficult choice for characters: Without the PCs help, the refugees are nearly assured of swift death in the desolate, snow-locked mountains.

Refugee band (1d16+3): Init -1; Atk club -1 melee (1d3); AC 8; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will -2.

Skinwalker: The PCs encounter a skinwalker in the form of a large-bellied monk with sallow flesh. The monk refuses to speak, indicating that he has sworn a vow of silence, but would like to join the party. If pressed, he gestures that he too, is on a pilgrimage to the sacred monastery. Similarly, the false monk avoids combat, having sworn a vow of peace. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The skinwalker is simply wearing the body of a slain monk; the body continues to bloat and deteriorate over the course of 1d4 days, until the walker-mutant is forced to find another corpse to occupy. Any of the PCs would make an excellent choice.

Pressed into combat, the skinwalker reveals its true nature, extending 3' long razor-bones from each arm. The walker attacks with preternatural speed, slicing and cutting foes with both blades at once, while the corpse of the monk deteriorates into gory bits of flesh and fat with each blow – revealing the skeletal, bone-thin mutant lurking below.

Facing overwhelming odds, the skinwalker flees into the wilderness, and begins to stalk the PCs, waiting for them to produce the corpses it so desperately needs.

Skinwalker (1): Init +2; Atk razor arm +3 melee (1d8+3) or by form; AC 14; HD 8d6; hp 35; MV 35'; Act 2d24; SP inhabit corpse; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0.

Wilder hunting party: The PCs come across a band of wilders – large, neanderthal-like, mutants. Standing 7' high at the shoulder, the massive man-things are on the hunt. Their tribe is desperate, having been driven into the mountains by the marauding Mongrel, and the wilders see the PCs as a welcome source of food.

Call for a Opposed Luck check between the PCs and the wilders. The winner spots the other party first, at a distance of 1d3x25 yards. If the wilders win, they succeed in ambushing the PCs. If they PCs win, they can elect to withdraw, but the wilders give chase.

The wilders are armed with crude, massive clubs and throwing stones. The wilders withdraw if a third of their number are slain, or if they succeed in bringing down two or more PCs, withdrawing with their slain prey.

Wilder hunting party (1d7+3): Init +2; Atk great club +5 melee (1d8+6) or throwing stone +3 missile fire (1d5+6); AC 16; HD 4d8+4; hp 20; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1.

PRELUDE

Prior to the start of the adventure, the PCs are beset by a series of foul dreams – the psychic effluvium of Brother Lecho. The PCs' dreams are haunted by visions of war, privation and pestilence. The closer the PCs draw to the Pilgrims Way, the stronger and more vivid the dreams become. While narrating the party's travels, call for a Will-power save from the PC with the lowest Personality score.

The judge is encouraged to print or photocopy the dream ahead of time and hand it to the player as the result is rolled, rather than reading the dreams aloud. This allows for misinformation and confusion on the part of the PCs as they attempt to interpret their own dire portents. For more information on Brother Lecho and his relationship with the Vile Brotherhood, see page 2.



NIGHT TERRORS

Will Save Night Terror

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-10 | The character dreams of portly monk, lost in meditation. As the PCs watch, the monk begins to rise into the air, vibrating with power. The monk is struck from behind, and swords erupt from his belly, tearing aside his robes to reveal screaming faces embedded in the monk's corpulent belly. |
| 11-15 | The character dreams of a portly monk, leading a band of exiles across a snowy, mountain range, far from any trail or road. The monk beckons for the PCs to follow, then leads his congregation towards a distant mountain pass. Moments later, a band of mutant reavers appear over the ridge, giving chase. |
| 16+ | The PC witness the execution of a portly monk by a woman dressed in all black. The head rolls to the foot of the PC and looks up, eyes wide in terror. The PC has succeeded in establishing a psychic connection with the Mad Monk and may ask five questions of the Mad Monk, which Brother Lecho must answer to the best of his ability. |

PLAYER START

Whether the PCs trek overland to the Pilgrim's Way, or travel by one of the sub-shuttles that dot the wilderness of post apocalypse, their adventure begins on a cold, misty morning, at the foot of snow-capped mountains. Read or paraphrase the following:

A cold mist hangs over the dim land. Slick clay sucks at your moccasins and sandals, spattering your calves with icy mud. The pre-dawn sky is overcast and gray, threatening more rain and the violent storms that have dogged your travels.

Your companions give a shout. They have spotted a massive cairn of stones. Strings of wet flags flap softly in the cold breeze and a vulture sits atop the high mound, watching you with its dead, black eyes. This ominous place is your goal: the Pilgrim's Way.

AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 - The Shrine of Seekers: *A cairn of stacked stones emerges from the icy morning mists, rising some 30' in height. Flags and totems are draped from the top of shrine, running out to gray poles that mark the entrance to a stairway descending into the earth.*

For as long as the tribe's historians have been retelling the legends of the Medicinal Order, seekers have been adding stones to the cairn-shrine. Each stone is roughly the size of a fist, and carved or scratched with the sign or mark of the seeker. Characters are right to presume that they should add to the mound but this is by no means required.

(The judge is encouraged to provide his players with stones and chalk, allowing players to make their PC's sign on a stone. The same signs can be used later in the campaign for war banners, ritual brands and the like.)

There is nothing magical about the act of contributing seeker-stones to the mound. However, belief is a powerful tool. After all players have declared their PCs' intentions, call for Willpower saves from each PC that contributed a stone. Reference the saving throw on the following table, awarding bonus Luck points as determined. The bonus are awarded just once, and the results cannot be repeated (i.e., players who see the Luck gain of their peers' PCs can certainly add seeker-stones to the mound, but they don't receive any bonuses. Faith rewards the bold.)

A single scout-drone patrols the mists, hovering 15' above the ground. The drone appears 1d8 rounds after the PCs

approach. Upon sighting the party, a bright red optical laser begins to scan the PCs - visibly illuminating each of the PCs from head to toe. Once the scan is complete, the drone extends an antenna and begins to radio data back to the Mongrel, waking it from sleep-mode.

The PCs have only a short time to destroy the flying drone; in 1d6+3 rounds the Mongrel flies into the area - presaged by a great whining of ancient metal and whirling rotors. If the drone is still active, the Mongrel attacks (likely destroying the party). If the drone has been rendered inactive and the PCs have discovered a hiding place, the Mongrel roars past and begins its hunt for the PCs (as outlined above).

A small underground bunker is located just south of the stone mound - a former way station for pilgrims trekking to the monastery. The bunker is marked by several of the prayer flags strung from the top of the mound. The bunker is sealed with heavy metal doors. The doors are stuck shut, but easily pried open in 1d5 rounds, or torn open in a single action with a DC 13 Strength check.

Inside PCs discover several simple cots, warm bedding, several weeks worth of hardtack, and a cistern holding dozens of gallons of rainwater. A trail of blood leads down the steps to a dried pool in the center of the floor.

A close inspection of the chamber reveals a bloody handprint on the west wall. Just beneath the handprint is a concealed access port that opens into a crawl-space running roughly north. The trail of blood resumes here, smeared along the floor and wall of the crawlspace.

If the Mongrel's drones spot the PCs entering the bunker, the Mongrel fires its weapons through the ceiling. The first 1d3 rounds fissures appear in the ceiling; sand and silt sifts down from above.

The following round the ceiling begins to crater: massive chunks of ferroconcrete drop, crushing unlucky souls and filling the air with blinding clouds of dust. Anyone still in the bunker must make a DC 10 Luck check or be struck by falling debris for 1d12 damage.

On the final round, the ceiling collapses, crushing anything and anyone remaining inside the bunker beneath several tons of rubble and earth. Characters that survive by fleeing further into the complex cannot return this way, and are faced with a desperate challenge: Finding their way back to the surface world.

Area 1-1a - Hidden Pit: *The floor here has been weakened from the passage of time and seeping groundwater. Cautious PCs will hear the sound of dripping water, and note that the walls and floor are wet, but that the water doesn't pool on the floor - seeping instead through cracks along the base of the wall and floor. Those taking the time to tap on the floor discover that it sounds hollow.*

The floor gives way beneath 100 lbs or more, opening a gaping pit the width of the corridor and 15' long. Characters in the first rank must make DC 15 Reflex saves or pitch

CAIRN STONE BELIEFS

Will Save	Luck Bonus
1-12	—
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3
19+	+4

down to the slick black rocks 20' below (suffering 2d6 damage). Those in the second rank must make DC 10 Reflex saves to avoid the pit.

Area 1-1b – Collapse: *The ceiling has collapsed here, dropping fractured panels, earth and debris down to the floor, and filling the passageway. Water drips from above, pooling upon the floor.*

Much of the complex has collapsed, resulting in several dead ends. In most cases the rubble entirely blocks the passage, but in rare instances the resulting sinkhole has opened a route to the surface. On encountering a collapse, roll 1d5; on 1, PCs notice a hint of fresh air, and (in total darkness) the faintest indications of sunlight. In all other instances, there is no escape through the rubble.

Climbing to the surface is fraught with danger. The broken panels, protruding metal beams, boulders and earth are saturated with water and prone to collapse. A character climbing up through the rubble must make a DC 10 Luck check. On a failed check, the rubble collapses, dropping the PC back to the base of the passage and burying the unfortunate soul (and anyone else at the base of the sinkhole) in 3' of rubble, sodden earth and concrete panels (suffering 3d6 damage, DC 10 Fort save to avoid).

The collapse of the rubble creates a slope that provides an easy escape for surviving PCs.

Area 1-1c – The Fallen: *The small, low chamber opens into a spartan vault occupied by a large, simple throne. Above the throne, is an enormous helm, suspended from the ceiling by scores of cables and polished metal arms.*

A body lies on the floor in a pool of blood.

The body once belonged to a monk of the Medicinal Brotherhood, that fled the attacks by the Vile Brotherhood. It is his blood trailing back to area 1-1. The corpse, in its simple, homespun robes, bears terrible wounds from the Mongrel.

The helm is one of the ancient control modules for the Mongrel (Tech Level 5; Complexity Modifier 10). Sitting on the "throne" causes the helm to come to life, emitting dozens

of scintillating emerald rays. A character donning the helm sees the world through the dizzying, simultaneous perspective of all the Mongrel's scout drones.

On a successful artifact check, the PC is able to control the Mongrel for 1d5 rounds; at the end of the period, the PC must make a second artifact check. On a failed roll, the Mongrel determines that it has been commandeered by enemy hackers and forcibly ejects the PC's personality – the resulting psychic expulsion inflicts 1d24 points of Intelligence damage on the PC (DC 15 Willpower save to avoid). A character reduced to 2 or less Intelligence is comatose. This Intelligence damage is temporary, and is healed naturally at the rate of 1 point per day.

The helm dims and ceases to function outside of the chamber. However with another successful artifact check it can be powered by C-Cells (2 uses), F-Cells (4 uses), or a Q-Cell (Unlimited).

Area 1-1d – Pneumatic Tube Shaft: *The passage ends before a pair of large square panels. A narrow gap between the panels reveals a mound of bones, bits of hair, and dried skin.*

The panels (long defunct sensor doors) are readily pulled aside, opening the way to a 16' by 16' shaft running 60' to the surface. The base of the shaft is filled 4' high with bones and desiccated corpses – the former prey of the enormous mutated spider lurking in the shaft above.

The spider is flattened against the walls and ceiling, making it nearly invisible from the base of the shaft, although PCs approaching within 15' will surely note the black, eight-legged gel-fiend adhered to the top of the shaft. The spider can extrude up to 4 tendrils, attacking with each once per round (see below), and attacks any PCs that spend more than three rounds at the base of the shaft. (For instance, those taking the time to search the corpses.)

Any character struck by the tendrils is hauled up to the top of the shaft at the rate of 20' per round and takes 1d4 hp acid damage. A PC can be cut free by dealing 5 or more hp to a tendril, but damage dealt to the tendrils has no effect on the spider.

PNEUMATIC TUBE SEARCH

d20	Search Result
+Luck mod	
1-10	Crumbling bones and desiccated flesh.
11-13	23' of hemp rope
14	Large metal-laced femur (treat as club, 1d8 damage)
15	Thick hide (can be used as armor; +1 AC)
16	Stone-tipped spear (1d6 damage)
17	Leather baldric fitted with 3 flint daggers (1d4 damage)
18	Bow and rotting quiver with 1d6+3 stone-tipped arrows. Bowstring snaps on an attack roll of 1-5.
19	Dead household robot; can be looted for two C-cells in its possession.
20+	Dazer Pistol: TL ; CM 4; Stun DC 14/16/20 (using 1/2/3 charges) for 1d6 rounds; C-cell (5 charges).



The spider flees out to the surface if its body (excluding all tendrils) is dealt 20 or more hp of damage, then it lurks just outside the shaft, dropping atop the very first character to emerge.

Climbing the shaft is not difficult, given the number of rusty rods, cables and wires that hang down from above. Any character succeeding on a DC 10 Agility check is able to ascend the shaft at a rate of 10' per round.

If the characters take the time to search the base of the shaft, call for a Luck check for each searcher. Each character may roll once. Apply the results to the table above, and remember that each result can only be found once.

Gelatinous Spider (1): Init +3; Atk maw +3 melee (2d12), tendril +0 missile fire (1d4); AC 8; HD 8d8; hp 32; MV 15'; Act 1d24; SP sticky tendrils; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +5.

The spider's tendrils are both sticky and highly acidic. Any character struck by a tendril is stuck and drawn to the spider, all the while taking 1d4 hp acid damage. A PC can be cut free by dealing 5 or more hp to a tendril, but damage dealt to the tendrils has no effect on the spider.

A character drawn into the spider's embrace is attacked by its central maw, and completely engulfed on a successful attack, thereafter suffering 2d12 damage per round. An engulfed PC can only be freed by slaying the spider.

Area 2-1 – Vale of the Three Supplicants: *The worn mountain path rises over a ridge and descends into a shallow vale. In the center of the vale is a pool containing a shimmering, silver liquid that glints and sparkles in the light. Opposite the pool, at the end of the vale, is a cave maw, framed by three massive stone blocks.*

The valley is home to the Station of Equanimity – the Holy Order's belief that all beings deserve their generosity, and that no injured creature shall be turned away from their door.

The pool is 10' across and ringed by a low stone wall. The liquid resembles quicksilver; in actuality the water is saturated with nanites. Any wound submerged within the pool is instantly healed. This effect can be repeated without end; so long as there is water in the pool, PCs (and NPCs!) can take advantage of its miraculous healing powers. Water removed from the pool retains its potency for 1d3 hours.

A simple wooden pedestal stands before the pool. Atop the pedestal is a heavy stone bowl, stained black.

Station of Equanimity: Pilgrims hoping to beseech the Holy Medicinal Order were expected to demonstrate their worthiness. As their companions were healed in the shallow pool, disciples were given a bowl of the silvery water and sent to the cave at the end of the valley. There, confronted by three supplicants, the seeker had to choose the proper one to bless with the holy waters. In keeping with the Order's beliefs, the correct choice is to heal all three.

The Grotto: The natural cave opening is framed by three massive, cut-stone blocks. Each of the blocks is inscribed with the sigil of the Holy Order. The air carries a hint of moisture, and the walls are cool to the touch. A series of shallow steps descend into a simple circular cave.

As the PCs' eyes adjust, the explorer is able to see three stone pedestals, set before three rough murals depicting a bloodied warrior, a wounded winged-lion and a dying nun. Atop each pedestal is wooden bowl; each is stained and scaled with dried nanites.

The murals come alive at the approach of a PC. First the dull paints brighten and then flare, and then the paintings step free of the wall. Each is a hard-light hologram, nigh invulnerable to nearly any physical attack. In each instance, if the PC withdraws, the hologram fades back into the mural, but if a character attacks, the hologram responds in kind.

Warrior: A beaten, wounded pure strain human. Leaning on his spear, the warrior pleads with the PC to save his life. If denied, the warrior stumbles towards the PCs with his spear raised.

Winged-Lion: The menacing beast advances on the PCs, limping from a mortal wound on its belly. If denied healing, the lion gives defiant roar then crouches, as if to pounce.

Dying Nun: The heavily bandaged sister bleeds from a dozen different wounds. She staggers towards the PCs, eyes wide with panic.

For all their posturing, the holograms cannot attack unless first assaulted by the PCs. Furthermore, the moment the characters withdraw, the holograms will likewise vanish back into the wall.

If the PCs pick a single hologram to heal, the other two vanish, and the PC receives the following bonuses – depending on the hard-light hologram chosen:

Warrior healed: PC gains +1 Strength

Winged-Lion healed: PC gains +1 Stamina

Dying Monk: PCs gains +1 Personality

Each of these boons can only be gained once, and only by the first PC to fill the hard-light's bowl. However, a brave character pouring the nanites into each of the bowls receives all the bonuses, as well as +1 to Luck. These bonuses can only be gained by the first PC brave enough to face the challenge.

For their different appearances, the three holograms all share nearly identical stats:

Hard-Light Hologram: Init +4; Atk sonic spanner +4 melee (1d8+2); AC 20; HD 4d6; hp 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP effectively invulnerable except for heat-based attacks or critical hits; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AI recog 5.

Area 2-2 – The Giant: *The mountain path narrows here, pinched between a rock wall and a sheer cliff. A mound of stacked stones narrows the path to the span of a few mere hands width*

across, and one misstep would send the unlucky soul pitching hundreds of feet to his doom!

The mound of stones is clearly made by defenders, making a dangerous passage even more deadly.

A towering, 13'-tall two-headed mutant and his band of 12 mutant reavers make their camp behind the mound, where the path widens. The reavers watch the pinch at all times of the day and night, and without extraordinary precautions it is impossible to avoid their notice. As the PCs come within 60' of the mound the giant emerges behind the mound of stone, calling out a challenge to the PCs while half the camp scrambles up the hidden ledge to area 2-2a and prepares to ambush the PCs from above.

The giant hopes to stall the party long enough for his reavers to reach the ledge above. He speaks in clipped, guttural sentences, but this is only a ruse – the giant has an intellect to match his size, and long ago recognized that foes mistook his size and twin heads for idiocy. Few have lived to make the mistake twice.

It takes the giant's allies 5 minutes to reach the ledge and prepare their assault. Track this in real time as the players devise their responses. The giant leads them on with a string of ever more asinine questions, delighting in testing just how stupid the PCs think he is.

Cunning PCs (and their suspicious players) may rightly suspect a ploy. Any PC specifically looking for an ambush above notes the ledge, and realizes the potential danger. Otherwise, sharp-eyed and -eared manimals and others with similarly acute mutations are granted a single DC 15 Luck check to notice movement – hushed whispers, and pebbles and sand tumbling down the cliff face. If the characters retreat out of sight and then attempt to scale the cliffs to the ledge, see area 2-2a below.

Once his reavers give the signal, the giant's demeanor transforms, and the previously fumbling, foolish lout becomes an articulate, perceptive and cruel foe. He gives the PCs just once chance to surrender (never revealing his allies above). If the PCs refuse, the giant gives a shout and battle is joined.

The giant and his reavers enjoy +4 to their AC from behind the mound of stones. Each round the giant hurls an enormous flint-tipped javelin, while up to three of his reavers fire their stone-tipped arrows. If charged, the giant trades his javelins for a mighty iron-bound staff, doing his best to prevent the PCs from passing the mound of stones. Characters struck by the staff for more than 8 points of damage must make immediate DC 10 Fortitude saves or be knocked from the path, falling to their doom.

Though deadly, the giant is largely a distraction. The real danger lurks on the ledge above, where the 6 remaining reavers prepare to unleash an avalanche on the PCs below:

Round 1: Rocks and sand slip above as mutants muscle logs and boulders to the lip of the ledge. PCs caught in the heat of combat must succeed on DC 15 Luck checks to note the warnings of death from above.





Round 2: The first boulders tumble down the cliff face. Characters within the strike zone must make DC 10 Reflex saves or be struck by the falling rocks for 1d14 damage. Those taking more than 5 points of damage must make immediate DC 10 Fortitude saves or be cast to their doom.

Round 3: The reavers pitch tree trunks down over the ledge. Characters within the strike zone must make DC 15 Reflex saves or be struck for 1d20 damage; any PC hit by the falling trees must make an immediate DC 15 Fortitude save or be knocked from the path.

Round 4+: The 6 reavers fire a hail of arrows down the cliff face, and continue firing until they have exhausted their quivers. (See area 2-2a.)

Note that, prior to round 4, the reavers atop the ledge are entirely out of sight and protected by the sheer cliff face. Apart from area effects that can overlap the ledge, the mutants are largely immune to attacks. Parties hoping to take the battle to the ambushers are forced to ascend the cliff to area 2-2a through the hail of missiles.

If the giant or any of the reavers are captured, they eagerly trade their knowledge of the sect for their freedom. The traitorous mutants can accurately report the sect's numbers, the identity of their master, and their location.

Finally, if PCs have been lost or slain, the judge is encouraged to make any of the mutant reavers available as replacement PCs. The giant is too powerful (and strong willed) to make an appropriate PC in all but the most exceptional cases, but can accompany the party as an NPC.

The Giant: Init +1; Atk staff +4 melee (2d6+3) or javelin +2 melee (2d4+3); AC 12; HD 8d6; hp 40; MV 35'; Act 2d16; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +2.

Mutant Reaver (6): Init +1; Atk club +1 melee (1d4) or +0 shortbow ranged (1d6); AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1.

Area 2-2a – The Ledge: A platform, some 4 paces deep, is cut into the side of the mountain. Large rocks and tree trunks rest atop sledges, and several long wooden poles rest against the sledges.

A simple overhang has been cut into the back wall to create a shallow cave.

If the alarm has been raised in area 2-2, there are 6 mutant reavers here, preparing to rain boulders and tree trunks down on to any unfortunate souls below. The poles are used as levers to inch the sledges forward to the edge, but can also serve as staves in combat. Once, after three rounds, the reavers have exhausted their rocks and tree trunks, the reavers lean out over the edge and fire their shortbows at surviving PCs on the path below.

The ledge is accessed from area 2-2b by a stone staircase, cut into a fissure in the rock wall. It can also be reached by PCs ascending from the path in area 2-2 by climbing 60' up the face of the cliff wall – a daring task requiring three DC 15 Agility checks.

A search of the overhang reveals three white plastel buckets. Two contain rainwater, and the third holds 32 stone-tipped arrows. Buried in the sand at the base of the overhang is a C-Cell wrapped in bubble wrap.

Prior to the arrival of the reavers, this ledge was used for contemplating the mysteries of the Holy Medicinal Order. Pilgrims were granted the opportunity to meditate in silence, contemplating the Principle of the Abberate.

The walls of the overhang are still decorated with simple scenes depicting monks of the Holy Order wandering alone through the wilderness, healing mutants, pure strain humans and animals alike. The first PC to sit within the overhang and study the murals is granted a deep sense of peace; when roused from his contemplative state, the PCs has regained all lost hit points, and increased his or her maximum hp by +1d7. This bonus can only be gained a single time, and attempts to recreate the transcendental state inevitably fail.

Mutant Reavers (6): Init +1; Atk club +1 melee (1d4) or +0 shortbow missile fire (1d6); AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1.

Area 2-2b – Reaver Encampment / Station of the Abberate: *The path opens to a large cleft in the rock face. Several crude huts are set around the circumference of the cleft. In the center of the huts is a stone statue depicting a monk in worn robes, a single arm outstretched.*

The giant and his band of reavers make their home here, sheltering in the clefts of the ravine. The simple huts are constructed of stripped branches, evergreen boughs and yellow and black plasteel panels. Each hut contains two fur bedrolls, a simple wood-fired cook stove, and a rack of drying meat. In addition, each hut contains one of the following:

REAVER HUT CONTENTS

d7	Hut Content Found
1	A pair of flint daggers.
2	A heavy fur cloak (+2 AC).
3	1d3 purple pills stamped with a black skull (if ingested treat as d16 Life Force Drain, per the mutation)
4	Leather shield (+1 AC).
5	Spiked Club (1d7 damage).
6	Glowing green vial (if ingested or applied externally, treat as d24 Amplimorph, per the mutation).
7	EMP Grenade: TL 4; CM 6; Range 50' radius; Stun AIs (DC 20 Fortitude save to resist) and shuts down all technological devices for 1d10 rounds.

The statue depicts the Station of the Abberate – the Holy Order’s principle of wandering the wilderness alone in search of those who need healing. The outstretched arm points towards a hidden cleft in the rock wall. The cleft opens to a stone staircase rising to area 2-2a.

Area 2-3 – Station of Peace: *The valley floor opens into a maze of deep trenches ringed by sheer cliff walls. At the center of the maze is a rust-covered, rotting pyramid of clubs, flint-tipped spears and arrows, crude swords hammered from twisted metal, and weird unknowable weapons. The pyramid rises some 20' from the valley floor and pulses with violet light in time to a low, droning buzz.*

The trenches pulse and with electric blue light in time to the pyramid, so that the very air is laced with the taste of burnt metal and molten plastic.

This Station on the Pilgrim’s Way is dedicated to the Principle of Peace – that no member of the Holy Medicinal Order shall be ever permitted to attack another creature of the post-apocalypse.

Once, pilgrims were expected to progress down the trenches and offer up their weapons to the pyramid for sacrifice. With the slaughter of the Holy Medicinal Order the station has been perverted from its original purpose and transformed into a killing field.

Brother Xoster, two contingents of archers and a band of reavers, lie in wait behind the ridges on either side of the valley. Once the PCs have moved onto the barren valley, Xoster sounds his warhorn. The reavers close in behind the PCs, blocking any hope of retreat. At the same time, the archers scramble to the tops of the ridges, readying their bows.

The PCs have but a single round to act; at the end of the second round, Xoster sounds his horn a second time, and the archers rain arrows down on the party. The archers continue to attack until the PCs have all surrendered or are all slain. Fearing friendly fire, the club-wielding reavers hang back, engaging with the PCs if they try to flee the south side of the valley.

Barring exceptional mutations or powers, the PCs’ sole hope of evading the clouds of arrows is to flee into the trenches. Seeing his plans thwarted, Xoster sounds his horn a third time, commanding the reavers to follow the party into the trenches. Howling with fury and fear, the reavers give chase.

Meanwhile, Brother Xoster and his archers withdraw to the north side of the valley, hoping to get ahead of the PCs. In the advent that all the trench-fighting reavers are slain, Xoster and his mutants retreat to area 3-1 to make a final stand against the PCs.

The Trenches: The trenches are 12’ deep and a scant 4’ in wide, offering shelter from the archers. The walls of the trenches are hung with exposed cables, glowing metal panels and weird antennae that arc blue and violet. All are charged with deadly energy. Leaping over the trenches is a trivial act, a threat that only results in a fall if the PC rolls a 1 on an Agility check. However, as long as the PCs remain on the surface, they are targeted by both bands of archers.

Cautious PCs can easily thread their way through the trenches. Characters fleeing for their lives or engaged in wild combat face a different challenge. Any round a PC moves at more than half-speed or is caught in melee combat, the character must succeed on a DC 10 Luck check or accidentally brush against the walls. Electricity arcs in the narrow confines, incinerating hair, and tearing gaping wounds in the flesh, for 1d12+3 damage.

The pursuing reavers are not immune to these deadly effects. Judges should describe the dramatic deaths of 1d3-1 pursuers each round, and assume that any reaver that reaches the PCs has been reduced to a mere 6 hp.

The flight through the trenches produces a peculiar side effect: Any power cell passing along a trench is completely recharged. This effect can only be reproduced three times before the cell overheats and explodes.



The Pyramid: Characters reaching the pyramid find it is made of thousands of discarded weapons. Characters are free to loot the pile, and can easily find any number of clubs, spears, staves, and crude swords, but all of the weapons are rotting, rusting and ruined, dealing -1d damage compared to functioning counterparts and breaking on roll of 1-5. Any superscience weapons are ruined and useful only as clubs.

Any energy weapon used within 25' of the pyramid is energized, adding +1d to its effects and not expending using any of its charges. However each use of an energy weapon within this zone carries a grave risk: on an attack roll of 1-5 the weapon detonates in the hands of wielder for 1d16+4 dmg (DC 15 Ref save for half).

Brother Xoster: Init +1; Atk staff +1 melee (1d5); AC 12; HD 4d6; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4.

Mutant Archers (24): Init +1; Atk shortbow +2 missile fire (1d6); AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0.

Mutant Brutes (12): Init +1; Atk club +2 melee (1d5+2); AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 15 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0.

LEVEL 3: THE LOST MONASTERY

General features: The monastery is carved from the stones of the cliff, to create series of simple caves set into the face of the mountain. The walls and ceilings have all been plastered and whitewashed, while the sandy floors are covered in dyed rugs woven in elaborate patterns. The ceilings are stained with the soot of torches and cooking fires, and the smell of wood smoke is thick throughout the complex.

Nothing has been done to conceal or remove the signs of the slaughter. Pools of dried blood stain the rugs, and spatters of gore abound.

All the unkeyed cells have been upturned and looted, leaving little of worth to the PCs. (Though desperate and cunning PCs are sure to find use for many of the items.) In the event the PCs pause to explore some of the smaller cells and sub-chambers, roll on the Looted Cell Contents table for what can still be discovered.

Morgander and her Reavers: The mistress of the violent sect desperately needs intelligent, willful minds for her efforts to master the Mongrel. Her war-dogs have orders to capture the PCs, but she is also willing to enter into a fragile truce if it means the PCs will "lend her their brains." By force or ruse, her end goal is to seat five PCs in the thrones in area 3-2 and engage the helms.

If it becomes clear that the tables have turned and that her reavers cannot carry the day, Morgander summons her champions and retreats from the battlefield to begin plotting her revenge.

LOOTED CELL CONTENTS

d16 Hut Content Found

1-3	1d5 overturned sleeping mats, stained with blood.
4	Mound of severed heads, left to dry.
5	Overtured statue, shattered.
6-7	Scores of large, broken candles.
8-10	Dozens of meditation mats, torn open.
11-12	Reaver bedroll; buckskin sack containing dried meat, a wine skin, 1d5 flint arrowheads and a hide scraper; warm fire pit roasting bits of man-flesh.
13	Overtured table; 1d10 wooden spoons, bowls and stools; 1d7 large sacks of rotting food.
14	Several stacks of firewood, now scattered.
15	A monk's body, pinned to wall by spears and used for target practice.
16	The bodies of 1d5 monks, slain during the act of meditation.

Area 3-1 – The Price of Peace: A woven suspension bridge crosses a terrifying span some three hundred feet in length. Thousands of feet below, in the shadowed recesses of the gorge, you can spy the foaming white caps of a frothing river.

On the far side of the misty span is your goal: the fabled monastery of the Holy Medicinal Order.

Yet something is horribly wrong: At your approach, a mass of crows and vultures takes to the air, revealing bodies hanging from every wall and window.

The bridge is the final ascent to the fabled monastery. While PCs are right to suspect a trap.

Once the PCs reach the far side of the bridge, Morgander and her surviving reavers emerge from the ruins. Morgander calls for their surrender, threatening (falsely) to cut the bridge if the PCs attempt retreat. The party can stall by pretending to parley, but if they resist she gives the order to attack.

Morgander has 20 Brotherhood reavers, armed with short bows, weighted nets and spiked clubs, and three Dogs – massive mutants sworn to defend their mistress at all costs. Additionally, her forces are bolstered by any mutants that survived encounter 2-3.

The mutants lead off by hurling their nets: a PC hit by an attack must make a Reflex save against the attack roll or be caught in the nets. Those caught are treated as prone, are reduced to half movement, and suffer -1d to all actions. A character can break free of a net with a DC 20 Strength check or by inflicting 10 damage on the sinewy weave.

However, characters can be targeted by multiple nets, with cumulative effects. The reavers carry a total of 10 of the large, weighted nets.

The second round of combat, the reavers charge down the sides of the monastery, to club the PCs into submission. Morgander hangs back, directing combat from afar, ensuring that none of the PCs are permitted to flee. The trio of Dogs never leaves her side, forcibly hurling themselves into the line of fire if their mistress is attacked. If pressed in combat, she uses her mental blast and mind control mutations to ward off the PCs.

If the PCs are captured or plead for peace, Morgander calls off her reavers. Cautious in victory, Morgander and her troops march the PCs into the command hall (area 3-3).

Morgander: Init +0; Atk rod +2 melee (1d4+2); AC 13; HD 4d6; hp 17; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mutations (check +5: mental blast and mind control); SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +4.

Dogs (3): Init +3; Atk spiked club +4 melee (1d7+4); AC 13; HD 5d6; hp 20 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mutation (check +2: regeneration); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2.

Mutant Reavers (12): Init +1; Atk club +2 melee (1d5+2) or net +0 ranged; AC 11; HD 3d6; hp 15 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0.

Area 3-2 – Treasures of the Brotherhood: *The dark chamber is cluttered with bundles of furs, sacks, wooden crates and strange cubes.*

The chamber serves as an ad hoc treasure vault for Morgander and her reavers. Characters searching the chamber discover the following:

1d20+5 deer, elk and bear skins

1d50 weeks of hard tack

1d5+3 wineskins

15+1d10 spears

1d6 wooden shields

1d5 C-cells

1d3 F-cells

1d4 EMP grenades

1d3 stun grenades

1d2 dormant medibots

1 gauzer pistol with 5 full clips

Area 3-3 – Sky Vault: Ornate wooden doors open into a vast open-air courtyard. The floor has been upheaved by a mighty force, casting aside massive flagstones to reveal a pair of enormous grey-metal portals.

At the far side of the hall are six thrones. Above each throne is a large, glowing helm, suspended by dozens of cables.

The hall is home to both the Mongrel hangar and the control modules necessary to direct the war-bot. The Holy Medicinal Brotherhood built over the hangar bay doors, in the hopes that the war machine would never be released. However, they failed to destroy the control thrones.

Morgander released the Mongrel, mistakenly believing that she could master the ancient war-machine. With the arrival of the PCs, she hopes to recapture the war-bot and bend it to her will. To do this she needs captains to man the helms.

If Morgander succeeds in capturing the PCs, she marches the PCs into the courtyard and forces them to don the helms. Morgander commands the PCs to bring the war machine back to base and return it to its hanger, never considering that this also gives PCs the opportunity to turn the Mongrel against her own forces (or herself!).

The Helms: As in area 1-1c, each of the helms is one of the ancient control modules for the Mongrel (Tech Level 5; Complexity Modifier 10). Sitting on any of the “thrones” causes the helms to come to life, and characters donning the helm sees the world through the dizzying, simultaneous perspective of all the surviving scout drones.

On a successful artifact check, a PC is able to control the Mongrel for 1d5 rounds. At the end of the period, another PC seated in a throne may attempt to exert control over the war-bot. In this way, up to five PCs can chain their efforts, bringing the Mongrel to heel. Using the helms the PCs can cause the Mongrel to return back to base in 1d20+15 rounds, and another 1d5+5 rounds to pilot it into the hangar and power the war-machine down. If the PCs maintain control of the Mongrel during the entire period without a single failed artifact check, they successfully eliminate a deadly threat from the world. (At least until Morgander tries to awaken the war-bot once more.) See The Endless War, below.

However, on a single failed artifact check, the war-bot Mongrel determines that it has been commandeered by enemy hackers and forcibly ejects the PC's personality – the resulting psychic expulsion inflicts 1d24 points of Intelligence damage on the PC (DC 15 Willpower save to avoid). A character reduced to 2 or less Intelligence is comatose. Intelligence damage is temporary, and healed naturally at the rate of 1 point per day.

Another character can attempt to assert control the following round, but until reestablished, the Mongrel is free to act. Unable to discern between the PCs and the Vile Brotherhood, the Mongrel attacks targets at random.

THE WAR'S END

The adventure can have any number of conclusions depending on the PCs' actions, but a handful of the more likely possibilities are detailed below to aid the judge's imagination.

The PCs bring the Mongrel Home: If Morgander's plans are a success, the PCs pilot the Mongrel back to the monastery, into the hangar and power the war machine down.

Morgander rewards the PCs by ordering them slain – an easy task if the PCs are trapped prone and blind in the control thrones.

The PCs fail the Artifact checks and are unable to reassert control: If at any time during the flight, the PCs fail an artifact check, and then are unable to reclaim control of the Mongrel in the subsequent rounds, the war machine turns itself on its former masters. Unable to discern the PCs from the Vile Brotherhood, the Mongrel attacks every living creature in the complex with the same wild abandon. This could lead to the PCs fighting alongside the Vile Brotherhood, or the PCs fleeing as Morgander desperately tries to regain control of the war machine.

The PCs turn the Mongrel Against Morgander: Possibly the most fitting ending is the PCs using their control of the Mongrel against Morgander and her mutants. It requires split-second timing from the PCs – as soon as Morgander realizes the party’s plan, she and her mutants attack the PCs.

For the plot to work, the PCs need to be deadly and swift. If they can kill Morgander in the surprise round, her mutants flee. However if Morgander lives long enough to mount an offensive, the attacks could possibly result in the release of the Mongrel, creating a three-way battle as Morgander tries to slay the PCs, while the freed Mongrel attacks both sides indiscriminately.

The Return of Brother Lecho: If the PCs succeed in forging an alliance with Lecho and his exiles, the mad monk is as good as his word. He charges his mutants into battle while



Morgander is distracted by the PCs. In the mass combat that follows, the PCs can slip free of the monastery or join Lecho and his reavers. If Lecho and the PCs carry the day, the mad monk forms an uncomfortable truce with the PCs. The Vile Brotherhood is no less wicked for the characters’ influence, but Lecho honors his alliance with the PCs – a relationship that is sure to complicate the PCs’ lives in the future.

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MCC RPG



GAME TRAIL
PILGRIMS WAY

NORTH
6 MILES

BASE DIE SEARCH

DAY DIE

1	d30
2	d24
3	d20
4	d16
5	d14
6	d12
7	d10
8	d8
9	d7
10	d6
11	d4
12	d3

PLAYER START

Area 1-1

Area 2-1

MONGREL SEARCH TEMPLATE



Area 2-2

Area 2-3

THE LOST MONASTERY

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