

MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

HIVE OF THE OVERMIND

#1: A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY JULIAN BERNICK





Broot Finds a Way Out of the Hive

HIVE OF THE OVERMIND

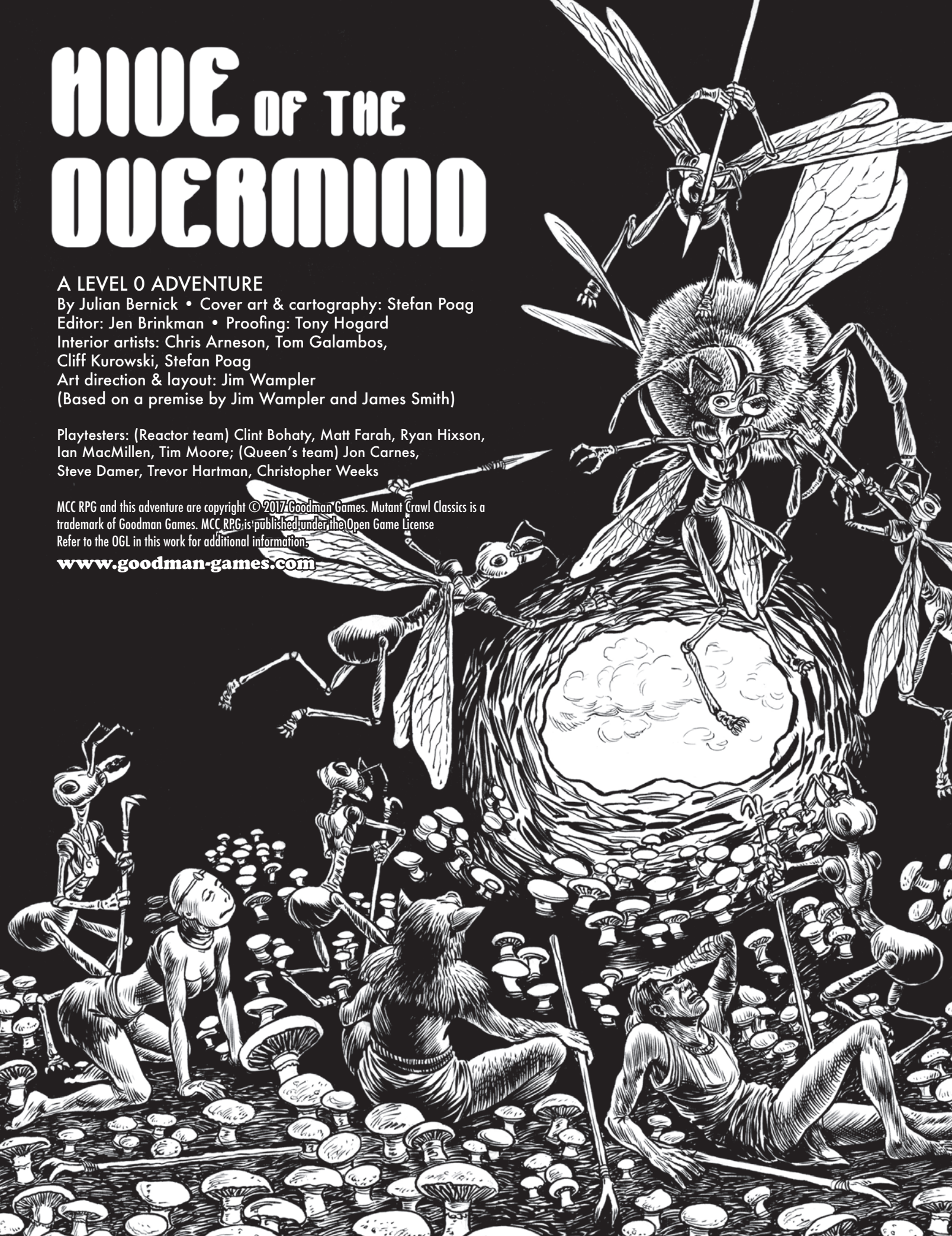
A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

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

This adventure is designed for 18 to 24 0-level characters. Each player should have 3-4 characters, as it is expected that less than half of the party will survive.

Completing this adventure will advance the survivors to 1st level. Additionally, since the characters are assumed to be young adults undergoing their Rite of Passage, it should supply plenty of the artifacts needed for the PCs to bring home and become respected adult members of their tribe, and perhaps be even be assigned to a Seeker team. For more information on 0-level MCC characters and level advancement, see Chapter One of the Mutant Crawl Classics RPG core rulebook.

Many artifacts are placed throughout the installation and the anthill built atop it. The artifacts themselves can be a significant source of danger to 0-level characters. New players may need encouragement to spend Luck on Artifact checks or devise other tactics to minimize this risk.

Having left their village for their Rite of Passage, the PCs awaken in the midst of a pitched underground battle, only to discover that they have been abducted and enslaved by semi-sentient ant-men. Trapped in this hellish anthill, they must find a way to escape, to acquire artifacts, and to foil the schemes of the Overmind AI that controls the ant-men. If they fail, they die—and the Overmind's ant army will inevitably spread further, enslaving their home village and perhaps even the world of Terra A.D. itself.

BACKGROUND

In the hothouse jungle homeland of the PCs, their tribe has only ever encountered a few examples of "devils" — mega-fauna arthropods capable of reaching the southern areas of the continent by rare flight over or tunneling beneath the great radiation barrier that otherwise prevents migration from the northern third of the continent. It is within this radiation barrier that an insect revolution occurred thousands of years ago—one that spawned gigantic and mutated insect species of many types.

The mutant ant-men of the northern region have lived and built for generations in relative harmony with their tropical environment, never passing into the southern lands until quite recently.

That all changed when their latest anthill, built on the site of an ancient threat-monitoring installation called Command-D, unintentionally reactivated a long-dormant military AI called the Overmind.

Unable to understand the transformed world of Terra A.D., the Overmind nevertheless clung to its mission. Its original ancient masters having disappeared, the Overmind cast about for new "people" to serve and finally seized upon the ant-men as the inheritors of its military capabilities and expertise. Regarding the relentless ant species as evolutionary perfection, the Overmind cybernetically bonded with the ants' queen and began to spread their kind over the North, determined to transform all of Terra A.D. into one great ant colony—a plan that includes turning all other sentient creatures into mindless slaves in the service of the Overmind.

However, one of the installation's androids, the Speculatron, violently disagreed with the Overmind's plan and (unsuccessfully) led a faction of androids against it. After this conflict, the Speculatron was captured and contained on the lower level, where he still waits brooding.

The PCs are young tribe members who were sent north on their Rite of Passage. Unfortunately, they weren't able to locate any artifacts in their usual locales and decided to journey further north than is customary. There, they encountered the Overmind's ant army and were promptly captured, drugged, and transported to the anthill. The PCs are enslaved via the ants' saliva—once this is spit in the faces of a victim, the victim is subject to the Hive Intelligence mutation possessed by the ant-men (see MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 181). The PCs have been working as hive slaves for several days when the starting events awaken them from their stupor.

As the entrance to the hill is 600' off the ground and sheer on all sides (including upward), it is nearly impossible to exit the anthill without the aid of a flying creature or the Digger in area B-7.

Random Encounters: The ant-men drones are constantly out and about searching for troublemakers, while the workers are on various missions to move food to the queen. Every turn, roll 1d6 to see if there are any random encounters.

The judge should keep in mind that the ant-men have poor vision and hearing, sensing through their antennae and through the hive mind. Clever PCs may find many ways to use this against them.

HIVE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d6	Result
1	2 ant-men drones discover the PCs (see area A-1 for stats).
2	6 ant-men workers discover the PCs (see area A-1 for stats).
3-6	No ant-men are encountered.

LEVEL A: THE CYBER PITS OF THE ANT-MEN

General features: The irregular walls of the anthill are constructed of dirt and other detritus. The passageways are generally 5-10' wide and the ceilings are also irregular, 8-12' high unless otherwise noted. There is no light in most of these rooms. Characters will have to either find lights in the garbage room (area A-3) or improvise with the weak glowing violet fungus in area A-1.

These doors open vertically, hissing as they open or close.

Area A-1 — The Fungus Garden: *Suddenly, you awaken from a fevered nightmare that you cannot quite recall. The last thing that you clearly remember was being sent out into the jungles of your native land to undergo your Rite of Passage. Finding no artifacts to bring back to your village, you undertook further and further explorations of taboo Northern lands. It was there that you first saw the cloud of winged insect men that fell upon you from the sky. Everything after that is a grey, indistinct blur.*

At this moment, you're standing next to your friends on the front lines of a battle with a giant bee – it's as big as a hut! All around you are ant-men waving their crude wooden farm implements at the thing, clicking and gesturing for you to attack the thing with your own tools. Four even larger-winged ant-men are fighting the giant bee in mid-air. The creature's abdomen has just been split open, and you are drenched in a sticky honey-like substance that is pouring forth from the giant bee's innards.

A dim violet glow rings the cavern. On one wall of the cavern is a giant portal that leads upward to open sky and cool air, while three other openings lead only to darkness.

The PCs have been awakened from their mind-controlled state by having the ant-men saliva washed off their faces in the deluge of giant bee (buzzer) bodily fluids. Prior to this, they had been captured and converted into worker-slaves under the control of the hive mind. Their memories of their enslavement are dim and useless.

In the chaos of melee, the ant-men have not yet noticed the change in the PCs' mental state, nor their absence from the hive mind. If the PCs join in the fight against the buzzer, this absence will continue to go unnoticed. If the PCs attack any of the ant-men (workers or drones), one of the drones will cease melee and attempt to use his Hive Intelligence mutation on the PCs. When this fails (as the PCs no longer have a coating of ant-men saliva on their faces), the drones will order the workers to attack the PCs while they continue to deal with the buzzer. PCs who fight the ant-men will be attacked, while PCs who fight the buzzer will be ignored, so ask players to separate their 0-level PCs into two groups for ease of remembering which characters are viable targets.

The ant-men workers will attempt to re-enslave the PCs, so they will first attack with their saliva. Any successful hit with the ant-man saliva will require a DC 8 Will save to prevent being subject to further Hive Intelligence mutation checks from the drones. Any PCs who are forced to

rejoin the hive mind will begin fighting on the side of the ant-men. If the attacking PCs outnumber the remaining ant-men, the workers will attack with their bites as they fight for survival. Both the PCs and the ant-men workers possess crude wooden farming implements that inflict 1d4 damage. While the PCs have been stripped of their original beginning equipment as listed on their character sheets, this equipment is stored in area A-3 and may be recovered.

The drones will finish off the buzzer in 4 rounds. After the buzzer is dead, the drones will join the attack on any PCs not a part of the hive mind. PCs who hide behind one of the piles of food or in one of the empty rooms will escape notice. If the PCs all help to kill the buzzer, they are ignored for the duration of the battle. When the buzzer is killed, the workers and drones will dismember it, then carry away the parts for food storage.

(Devil) Ant-Men, Workers (8): Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4+1) or hoe +2 melee (1d4); AC 14; HD 1d8; hp 3; MV 50' or climb 50'; Act 1d20; SP mind control saliva spit (range 5', DC 8 Will save to resist), mutation check +2 Hive Intelligence; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -3.

(Devil) Ant-Men, Drones (4): Init +2; Atk hook spear +4 melee (1d6 plus grapple); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 12; MV 50' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP mind control saliva spit (range 10', DC 12 Will save to resist), spear-grapple (DC 12 Strength or Agility check to escape or victim is unable to act), mutation check +3 Hive Intelligence; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1.

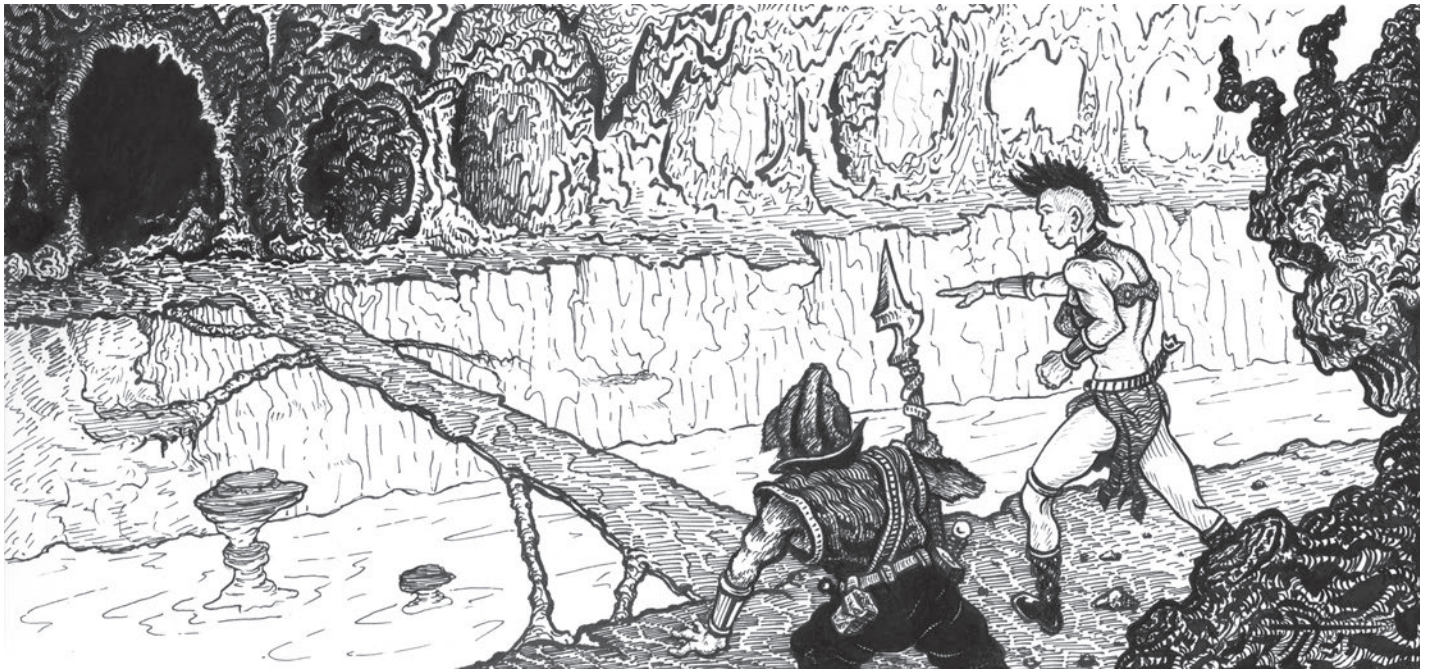
Buzzer (giant bee): Init +3; Atk mandibles +3 melee (1d6+2) or stinger +3 melee (poison); AC 15; HD 5d10; hp 26; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP paralytic poison (DC 14 Fort save or paralyzed 1d3 turns); SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0.

Both the slightly luminous violet mushrooms and the dark yellow fungus grown in this chamber are hyper-nutritious. Consuming any amount will heal back 1 hit point of damage. Especially savvy characters may also consider gathering up some of the buzzer fluids spilled on the floor as a future method of freeing their fellows from hive mind control. There are 2d4+1 plant fiber buckets all around the garden that may be used for this purpose.

The violet mushrooms can also be harvested and used as a source of dim illumination to enable the characters to see in Level A, which is mostly unlit. One spongy foot-long mushroom provides a 20' radius of purple-hued light.

Area A-1a – Leering Skull: *Set into the earthen wall by the large exit to the south, you see a humanoid skull leering out at you. What's truly strange is that there's a little red blinking light near its right eye socket. What is it?*

The skull belonged to a crewmember of the AI installation below. For maximum security, the crewman had a chip embedded in his skull that allowed passage through various security doors. This chip is operational, even though his body has long ago decayed and been incorporated into the anthill walls.



This chip looks like a little black metal speck with a blinking light, smaller than a firefly. It will grant access to any area guarded by a Command-D security door (including the Fusion Chamber hatch in area A-6.) There is no easy way to get the chip off the skull. The handiwork of the Ancients is far too subtle for the would-be Seekers of Terra A.D., but the skull itself can be pulled from the wall with a DC 15 Strength check.

Pulling out the skull causes a small rockslide as the earth around the skull shifts and rumbles down. The character pulling the skull away must make a DC 12 Ref save or be struck by a falling rock for 1d6 points of damage.

Area A-2 — Sweet Water Well: *This tiny chamber has a 3'-high earthen cylinder in its center with an opening at the top about 10' wide. Buckets formed out of saliva-infused giant leaves lay strewn about the chamber. One of the buckets is tied to a long coil of vine-woven rope that looks to be many hundreds of feet long.*

This room is where the ant-men draw up fresh water from a source 500' below. If the roped bucket is lowered all the way down and drawn back up, it will contain 5 gallons of fresh water. It is also home to 10 insect scavengers.

Adapted to residing within wells in sentient villages, the well-stalkers have evolved a deceptive voice mimicry trick. If they hear the PCs at the top of the well, they will call out as if with the voice of a drowning child: "Help! I'm drowning!" The well-stalkers are of animal intelligence only and cannot converse, lie, or otherwise prevaricate; if engaged for speaking they will simply repeat the cry of the drowning child ad nauseam.

These mutant toad bugs will not completely exit the well environment, but will use their piercing front legs to grab any creature entering the well opening and drag them down to their deaths.

A successful climb down into the passage requires four separate DC 12 Agility checks only to end in a bottomless, black underground water reserve forty feet down from the well's walls.

Well-Stalkers (10): Init +3; Atk spear legs +3 melee (1d4 plus grapple); AC 12; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; MV 30' or climb 30'; Act 1d20+3; SP voice mimicry, spear leg hold (DC 12 Strength or Agility check to break free); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0.

Area A-3 — Garbage Room: *This stench-filled cavern reeks of decaying organic matter. The walls are lined with piles of spoiled plant and animal matter and trash.*

This refuse dump contains, among other things, all of the PCs' starting equipment. If searching, the characters should each make a Luck check. If successful, they have located all their starting equipment. If they roll a 1 or 2 on the Luck check, they have located an additional item as noted in the Random Items in Garbage Room table.

Let especially lucky PCs roll again on the Random Items table, adding their Luck modifier to the roll.

However, taking this time is risky. For every five rounds of searching, check for drone or worker patrols (see Random Encounters above).

Area A-4 — Mucus-Thread Bridge: *The doorway before you opens into a huge chasm, with a bright glowing river of lava far below you. Even from this distance, you can feel the heat blasting upward. On the other side of the chasm, about 50 feet across, you see a similar opening. The only bridge between these openings is comprised of three thin structures of some strange wet substance.*

This bridge has been secreted by the ants to affect a means of traversing the huge chasm that separates the two anthill levels. Passing over the bridge is treacherous but possible.

The bridge is wide enough to crawl across carefully, but the PCs will stick to the mucus as they go across. As they cross, each character must make a DC 10 Strength check or be stuck in place.

If the characters are roped together, other PCs may try to help pull the characters loose from the mucus strands. Let the trapped character roll again with a bonus of +2.

Any un-roped character wrenched free with the help of another must make a DC 5 Ref save or be pitched off-balance into the fiery river of lava below.

Each character takes at least three rounds to cross the bridge (20 feet per round). For each turn spent crossing the chasm, the judge should roll on the Random Encounter table to see if any ant-men discover the PCs. The ants will close and inspect the characters, spitting on them if they are stuck and then bringing them back to area A-1. If PCs do not return or if the ant-men are attacked, they will fight back. The ants move normally on the bridges due to their specialized appendages, while any PC engaged in combat on the bridges must make a DC 5 Reflex save each round or plunge to their doom.

Area A-5 – Food Storage Chamber: *Approaching this room, you are almost overcome by a sickly sweet odor. As you gaze into the dimly-lit room, a horrific sight awaits: dozens of bodies are stored here, some upright, some slumped over, all covered in a translucent yellow goo. Some half-dissolved bodies are also visible in clumps of the goo further in, as well as jiggling goo-pods empty of creatures.*

This room houses the prisoners that can't be converted into

slaves of the ant-men. Specialized workers coat them in a special acid that slowly corrodes them into edible protein goo, which can be shared out to all the ant-men workers. On a successful Luck check, the PCs will have some dim memories of having been fed this goo several times during their mind-numbered captivity. If the party needs to be replenished, this room can supply 2d4 mutants and pure strain humans who are still among the living. They can be awakened in 1d3 rounds by scraping off the goo.

Also stored here in the goo are four gigantic horseflies, which the ants sometimes use for longer journeys through the radioactive Northlands. If freed from the goo, the flies are aggressive and will buzz about randomly (and dangerously) until they are killed by their misadventures or they escape the anthill. Resourceful characters may determine how to use the Mind Control Lab (area B-1) to enslave them with the Hive Intelligence mutation (see MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 181). They will not make docile mounts unless dominated via this mutation. If successfully controlled, each horsefly can transport three PCs comfortably for up to 2 hours at a time.

Giant Horseflies (4): Init +4; Atk bite +4 melee (2d6); AC 14; HD 3d10; hp 20; MV 50' or fly 80'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +0.

Despite the disgusting means of its manufacture, the protein goo is quite nourishing and any PC ingesting up to a handful will be fully nourished for 1d3 days.

Although hive slaves were stripped of their equipment in area A-3, some prisoners stored for food still have their items. One half-decomposed body has a shield (+1 AC)

RANDOM ITEMS FOUND IN GARBAGE ROOM

d20+	Item Found
Luck mod	
1	Giant Maggot: This 5'-long mutant maggot attacks immediately. Upon a successful hit against AC 10, it shatters into a swarm of 1"-long maggots that infest the exposed skin of the victim. The victim must then make a DC 18 Fort save or begin a metamorphosis into a giant maggot.
2-3	Small Plastic Pure Strain Human: Turning the small PSH over causes it to say "Ma-ma."
4-6	Stim-Gum (6): TL 2, CM 1; small pack of Stim-Gum. 1 stick grants 1d3 hit points for 1 hour (2 or more doses within 1 hour cause a penalty of -1d6 Agility per dose at the end of the hour).
7-8	Giant Grasshopper Skull: Too large to easily move, but each of the two mandibles could be fashioned into jagged bone cutlasses capable of 1d6 damage.
9-11	Stone Axe: Decorated with green and orange archaeopteryx feathers; 1d8 damage.
12-13	Bow and Arrows: Shortbow and 12 arrows; 1d6 damage.
14-15	C-cell: TL 4, CM 2; cell is fully charged.
16-17	Paragon Elixir: TL 1, CM 0; a can of cola-flavored beverage with a Personal Assistant AI embedded in the can. Its only goal is to "sell" more cans of Paragon Elixir. Fortunately, drinking the can increases all stats to 18 for one turn. When the can is drained, it urges the user to buy more and disintegrates into organic "recycle-dust".
18-19	Fusion Torch: TL 4, CM 4; Damage: 3d6 vs. duralloy, plasteel, and permaglass, or 6d6 vs. mundane substances; Range: 1"; Power: C-Cell (10 uses).
20+	Dazer Pistol (fully charged): TL 4, CM 4; Damage: Stun DC 14/16/20 (1, 2, or 3 charges used); Range: 50'; Power: C-Cell (10 charges).

strapped to its back and another has three gourds of highly acidic citrus juice—these are primitive acid grenades that can be thrown for 3d6 damage to all creatures in a 10' radius of the target. Another has a bone-handled machete (1d5 damage).

Area A-6 — Nursery: *As you approach from the rough-hewn corridor, you hear a deep, loud throbbing. A light mist hangs in the warm, humid air. Looking through this mist, you see a six-foot-tall white domed structure in the center of the room, with a hole at its central tip from which the mist issues.*

The wet warm air of this room makes it an ideal nursery for the ant-men. The vent and the heat warm this room from the barely stable fusion reactor directly below. The white color of the domed reactor roof is actually the color of the larvae, nestled along the gentle curve of the dome, sucking up its heat. If the characters enter the room, the larvae start to squirm hungrily, making it look like the surface of the dome itself is moving.

The eyeless larvae can sense vibrations and expect to be fed. The PCs will have one round to start distributing some sort of food to the larvae. After one round of no feeding, the entire surface of the dome begins to slowly swarm toward the PCs. For each character in the room, 1d4 swarms will leave the dome's surface, desperately seeking sustenance and drilling their tiny sharp-toothed mouths into the characters' flesh.

Any characters caught on the wrong side of the dome (away from the entrance) may quickly become trapped by the pale wriggling larvae on the floor. Each swarm should be considered to fill a 5x5' area and will move slowly to follow heat and edible matter (including plantients).

(Devil) Ant-Men, Larvae Swarm (1d4 per PC): Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d3); AC 16; HD 1d3; HP 1; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will -4.

In the back of this room is a metal hatch with an access panel. (The chip in the leering skull from area A-1 will open this hatch.) It will withstand just about any amount of damage except from a mazer pistol or a fusion torch. Opening the hatch allows access to area B-6, the Fusion Chamber.

In the dimly lit corner of the room near the hatch, a thorough search will reveal a PSH skeleton and a dull green rucksack of some wondrous material that is as supple as soft leather but completely indestructible. Within the bag are: a force field belt, a gauzer rifle, and 3 radshots.

Force Field Belt: TL 4, CM 4; +3 AC; Range: self; SP shields against radiation, gaseous attacks, and physical damage up to 25 hit points; Power: C-Cell (12 hours).

Gauzer Rifle: TL 4, CM 3; Damage: 1d8; Range: 140'; SP auto fire at up to 10 targets in a 90-degree arc; Power: C-Cell (50 uses); Ammo: 1 20-shot clip (loaded).

Radshots (3): TL 4, CM 3; SP heals 1d6 radiation damage and protects from radiation exposure for 24 hours, risk of removing mutations with repeated use; Power: self, single-use.

Area A-7a and Area A-7b — Ant-Man Rooms (identical): *Within this otherwise empty room, you see ant-man workers and a few drones resting and eating.*

Each of these small chambers holds workers eating or feeding, away from other hive activity. Each room will contain 10 workers and 2 drones (minus those accounted for in random encounters).

Because the drones don't see or hear well, it is possible for careful characters to sneak by these chambers undetected, but if they attack (or are attacked by) the queen in area A-8, she will summon the drones and workers to her defense.

(Devil) Ant-Men, Drones (2 in each room): Init +2; Atk hook spear +4 melee (1d6 plus grapple); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 12; MV 50' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP mind control saliva spit (range 10', DC 12 Will save to resist), spear-grapple (DC 12 Strength or Agility check to escape or victim is unable to act), mutation check +3 Hive Intelligence; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1.

(Devil) Ant-Men, Workers (10 in each room): Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4+1); AC 16; HD 1d8+2; hp 3; MV 50' or climb 50'; Act 1d20; SP mind control saliva spit (range 5', DC 8 Will save to resist), mutation check +2 Hive Intelligence; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -3.

Area A-8a — Access Door to the Queen's Chamber: *Unlike every other structure you've seen, this is a heavy metal door flanked by a small metal plate set into the wall with three blinking red lights.*

This heavy duralloy door is closed and can only be opened with the leering skull's chip, a fusion torch, or a heavy weapon. There is also an access panel to open and shut the door on the other side of the wall, which also responds to the leering skull's chip.

Area A-8 — Queen's Chamber: *This chamber is as large as the fungus garden in which you awoke, but is otherwise quite different. The walls of this chamber appear to be of polished metal and a huge glassy surface is set high on the opposite wall above a large dark tunnel. As you peer about, a huge ant-beast emerges from the tunnel. To your amazement, the face of the enormous ant-queen is like that of a human — but you can see the madness in its eyes.*

HIVE CONFUSION

d7	Confusion Result
1-2	The ant-man freezes up and does nothing.
3-4	The ant-man lashes out and attacks randomly, including other ant-men.
5	The ant-man trips or runs into a wall, doing 1d4 damage to itself each round.
6	The ant-man flees as fast as it can.
7	The ant-man convulses and dies instantly.



The glassy surface above it suddenly shows the huge image of that same face. This giant glass god-face bellows with a thunderous voice: "You foolish mortals have caused enough trouble here. You have no way out but I will be merciful – if you allow yourselves to be absorbed back into the hive, you may be responsible for bringing civilization and order back to this world. Hold still, and my queen will re-enslave you!"

This is the Overmind's image; the AI is so obsessed with ant-men as the new master species that it has re-envisioned itself as an ant-hybrid (though its true physical body is on the lower level).

Without waiting for a response, the queen blasts forth her spray of ant saliva, forcing any within its blast to make a DC 10 Will save or be converted to the ant-man cause. If there are any drones or workers remaining in areas A-7a and A7-b, she will summon these as well and they will arrive in 1d3 rounds (unless the PCs have shut the door through which they entered).

If the queen (or her drones) manage to regain control of any PCs, she will command them to defend her to the death.

(Devil) Ant-Man, Queen: Init -4; Atk bite +2 melee (1d10); AC 12; HD 5d8+10; hp 30; MV 10' or climb 10'; Act 1d20; SP mind control saliva spray (cone, 30' long x 5' wide, once per turn; DC 10 Will save to resist), mutation check +6 Hive Intelligence; SV Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +8.

If the queen is slain, the entire colony will enter into a state of confusion for 1d4 rounds. During this confusion, each ant-man in the colony (including each PC under the control of the hive mind) acts randomly as per the Hive Confusion table.

At the end of the confusion period, the ant-men will start to look for a new queen and will ignore the PCs unless directly threatened.

During playtests, the ant-men were stout foes for the PCs. If the PCs have demonstrated excellent skill and avoided much of the combat on the first level, the judge should supplement the queen with additional workers and drones for this battle.

Beyond the queen in the southwest corner of the chamber is an impregnable metal door. This door is not passable without the mazer pistol, fusion torch, or the leering skull's chip from area A-1a.

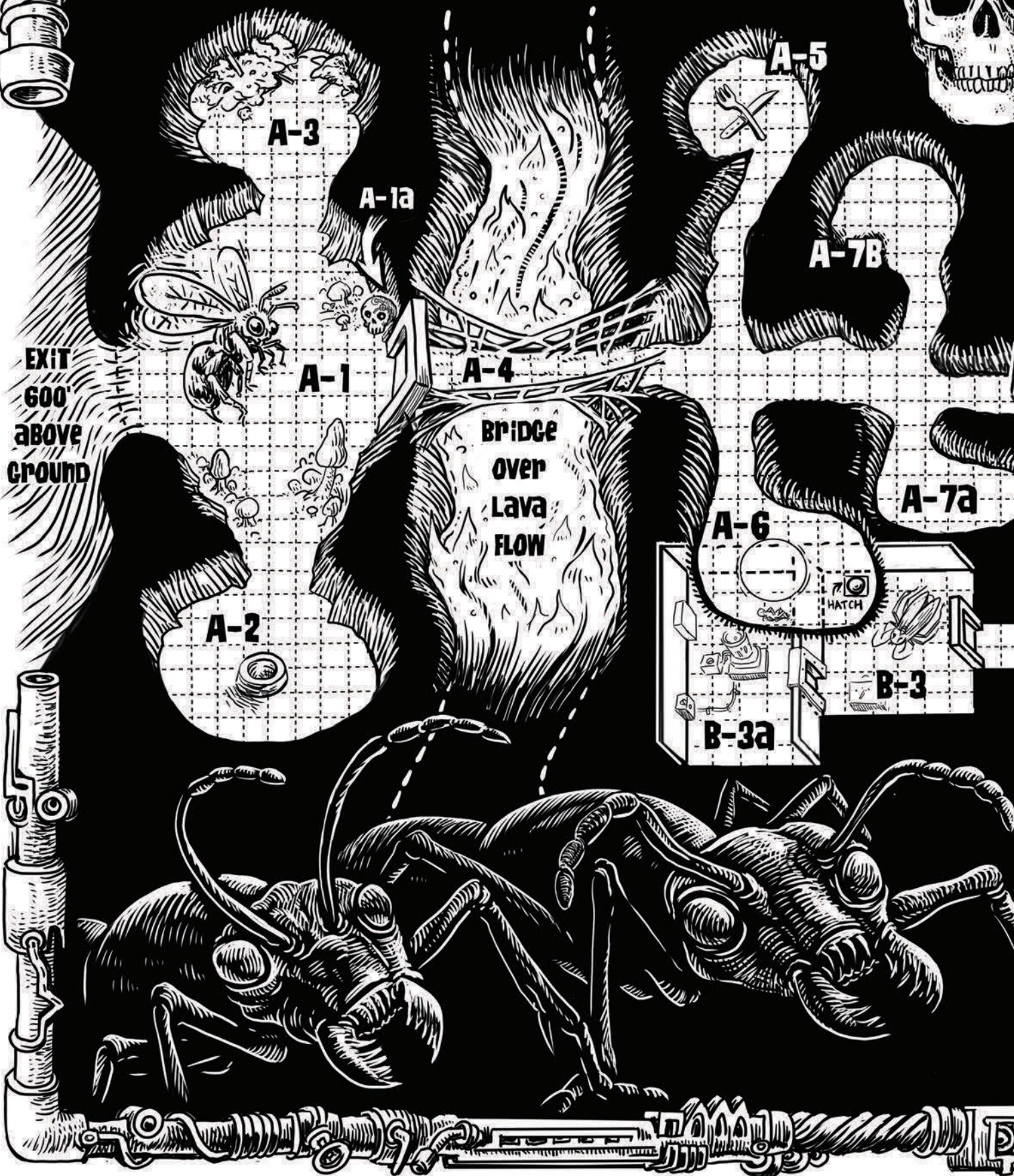
Over the years, all sorts of non-food items have been piled up unattended in the corner. During combat with the queen, have all PCs make a Luck check. The lowest successful roll (best Luck check) has spotted a mazer pistol with 6 charges remaining (due to a partially depleted C-Cell). It is clutched in the hand of a skeleton embedded in the wall.

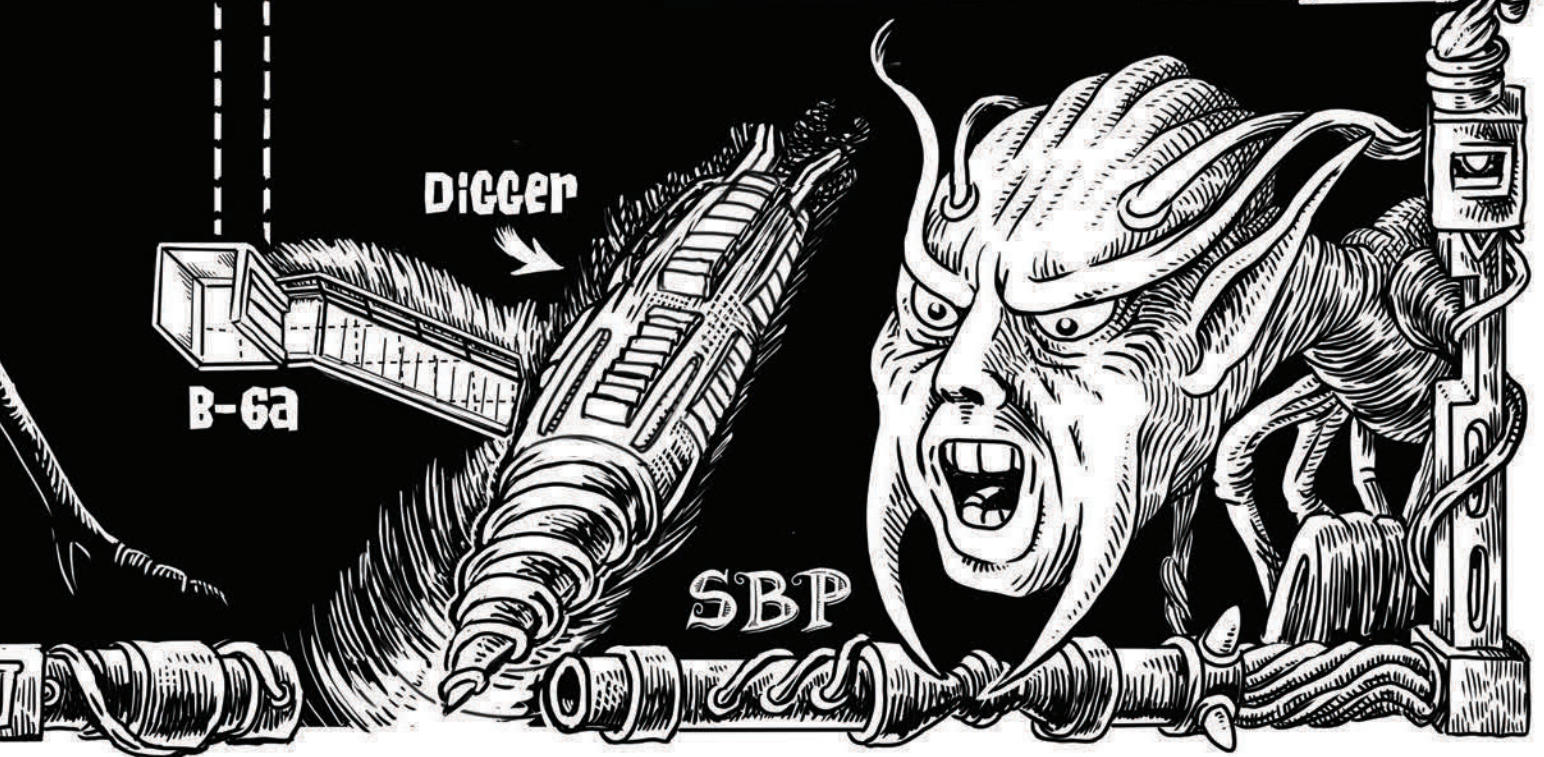
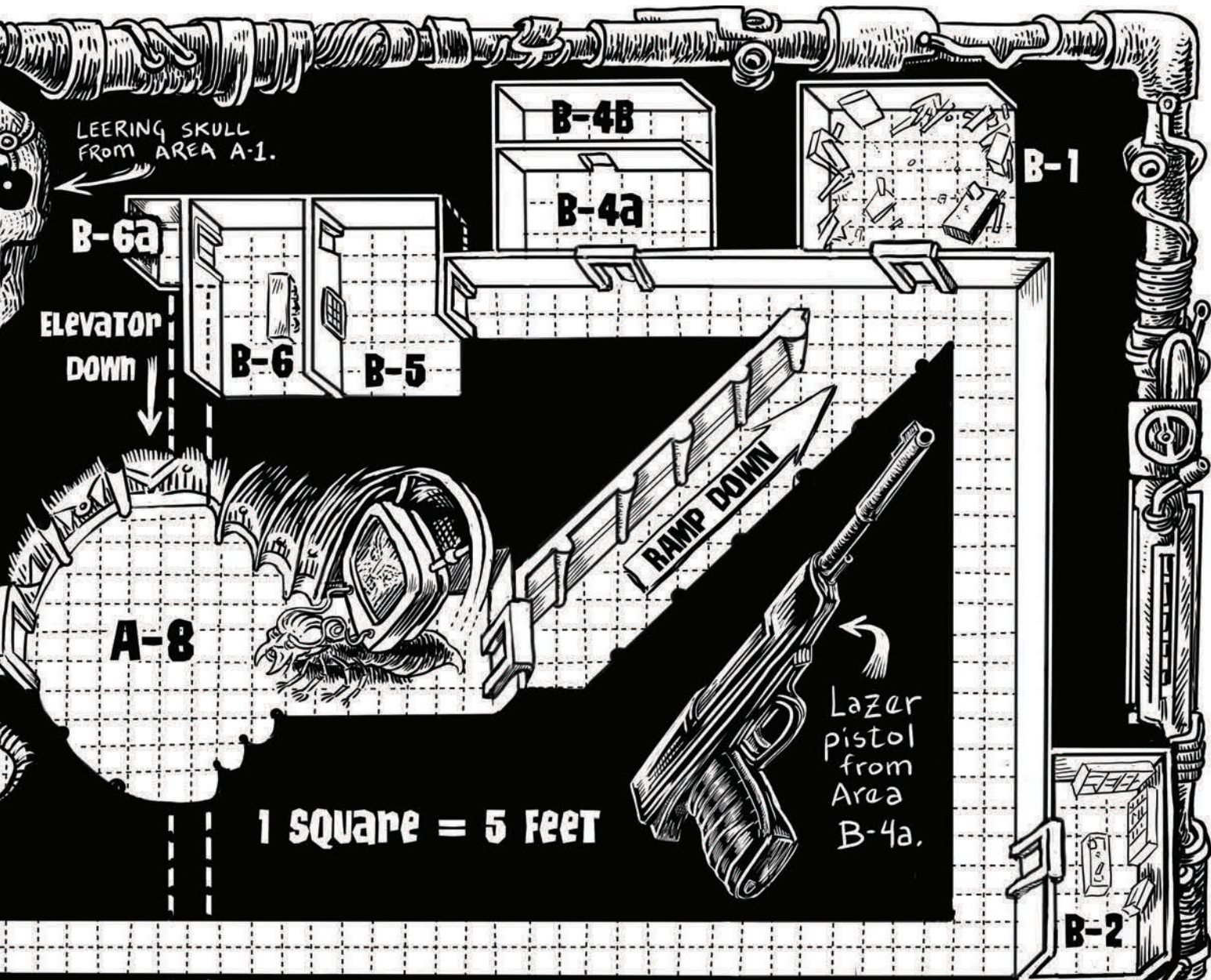
Mazer Pistol: TL 4, CM 5; Damage: 2d6/3d6/6d6 heat (2, 4, or 6 charges used); Range: 120'; SP disregards armor and force fields; Power: F-Cell (partially depleted, 6 charges remaining).

Also present is an old android head that is still self-aware – he will call out to PCs in order to advance his agenda. After the androids attacked the Mind Control Lab, most were destroyed and the ant-men piled some of their bodies in the corners of the queen's chamber. This android, who will identify himself only as X-52, can give them the manual override code to the doors but will also give them misinformation about the android resistance to the Overmind. X-52 is allied with the Speculatron in area B-4b and will tell any falsehood to encourage the PCs to free him.

Entering the manual override code into either door's access pad requires a DC 10 Intelligence check, even with X-52's help.

HIVE OF THE OVERMIND





LEVEL B: OLD INSTALLATION RUINS

The AI installation level has regular walls of polished metal and occasionally flickering overhead lights set in behind some sort of ultra-hard clear material. Each area description indicates whether its door is Secured or Unsecured.

- Secured doors open only with the chips that are present in the leering skull from area A-1A, the Security Chip Implanter from area B-1, or in the hands of androids found in areas B-4a and B-4b.
- Unsecured doors will open any time a hand is touched to the access pad by the door. PCs should make a DC 5 AI recognition check for their hands/paws to be recognized. Plantients will not be recognized.

Area B-1 — Mind Control Lab (Secured): *This room is cluttered with broken tables and chairs pushed back against the walls furthest from the door against various shelves and cabinets. A narrow upright structure with white glassy walls stands next to a metal box on a counter.*

This old bio-lab is where the workers and drones are brought to be endowed with the Hive Intelligence mutation.

The mutation device only activates if one or more creatures are inside the white chamber. (Generally, only two or perhaps three mutants of slight build will fit inside the chamber at once.) A character must attempt to activate the device by manipulating the gems and knobs on the box's face and making a corresponding Artifact check (TL 4, CM 2; all the settings are preconfigured, so there is a higher chance of figuring out how to use the device). If successful, the character(s) in the chamber gains the Hive Intelligence mutation. At level 0, this mutation may only be used rolling 1d16; 1d20 is used by level-1 PCs and higher. If failed, determine the effects based on Table 7-1: Artifact Checks (MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 158).

Note that the mutation can only be conferred upon genotypes of mutant and animal. Pure strain human characters are unaffected, as their genomes resist mutation. Plantients, who do not receive mental mutations, must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of damage from the process.

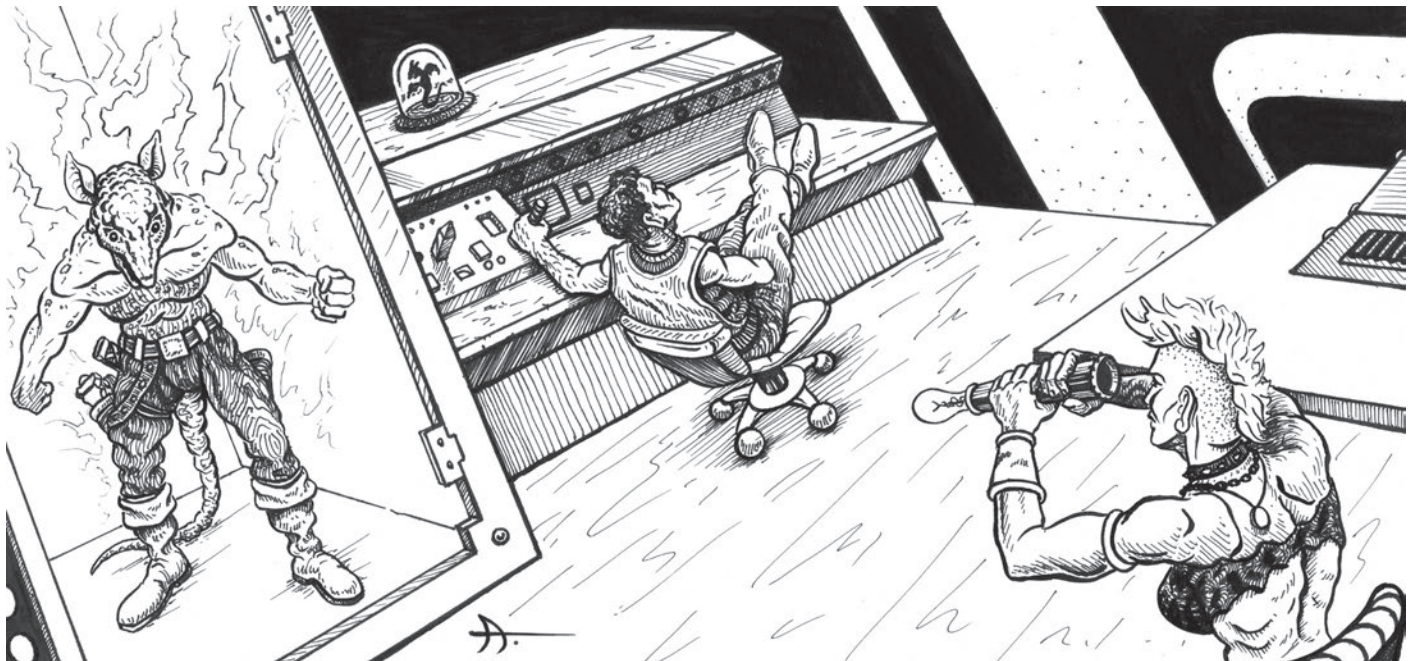
On the counter next to the mutation chamber console is a strange three-inch diameter tube with a black bulb on one end and an open mouth on the other. This is a Security Chip Implanter (Tech Level 4, Complexity Modifier 2). When the implanter is pressed to the body and the bulb is depressed, it inserts a tiny red blinking security chip beneath the skin. A natural 1 on this Artifact check indicates that the user has injected the chip lethally into an eye, the brain, or a major artery. Death results in 1d4 rounds. Once implanted, the user will have access to all doors and devices on the installation level.

The cabinets blocked by the destroyed furniture are mostly empty, but one contains three rare artifacts:

A vial of pink liquid with a hard, foamy yellow crust on top: This is deadly poison. If even a small portion is ingested, touched by, or dripped on exposed flesh, DC 15 Fort save or death.

Three boxes of delicious Tum-Tum chocolate cracker cookies: Amazingly, these are foil-sealed and still delectable.

Steel box containing nano-goo: This box is protected by a sturdy clasp, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to open. The top of the box is marked with a big red X. Inside is a sealed plasteel container of a writhing ochre slime. If the stopper is lifted off this glass container, the goo will tremble and wriggle. If touched, it immediately swarms up the limb of the character that has touched it (DC 20 Reflex save to drop the glass jar before it has an effect). If the PC fails his save, the goo will rapidly encase the affected character. The goo



NANO-GOO EFFECTS

d14+ Nano-Goo Effect

Luck mod

1	Character is consumed by nano-goo and turns into a slightly darker patch of inert nano-goo.
2	Character must make a DC 20 Fort save or die on the spot, twisting and writhing in pain for 1d4 rounds.
3	Character switches randomly to another genome (PSH to plantient, etc.).
4	Character gains 1 randomly generated defect permanently.
5	Randomly pick one attribute and roll 2d6; replace the existing attribute score with new roll.
6	Character gains 1 randomly generated defect for 24 hours.
7	Character gains 1 randomly generated defect for 1 hour.
8	Character gains 1 randomly generated physical mutation for 1 hour.
8	Character gains 1 randomly generated physical mutation for 24 hours.
9	Character gains 1 randomly generated physical mutation for 24 hours.
10	Character permanently gains 1 randomly generated physical mutation (unless PSH).
11	Character permanently gains 1d3 random physical mutations and 1 random mental mutation.
12	Character is permanently transformed into a dwarf, elf, or halfling of the same level. All advancement will be made per the appropriate class rules in the DCC RPG core rulebook. (Note optional rules for DCC characters in an MCC world: MCC RPG, pp. 250-251.)
13	Roll 1d4. On 1-3, character may choose one physical mutation (unless PSH). On 4, the character may choose one mental mutation (unless PSH). These mutations are permanent (null if PSH).
14+	Character may choose 1d3 physical or mental mutations from Table 3-2: Mutations (MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 40). These are permanent mutations (null if PSH).

Note: If 0-level characters acquire passive mutations from the nano-goo, treat as if the character is level 1 and make the one-time mutation roll using 1d20. Active mutations are used with 1d16 until the PC reaches level 1.

acts as an involuntary genome re-sequencer with special results. Roll 1d14 modified by Luck and consult the Nano-Goo Effect table for results. The goo will not affect a single PC more than once.

Area B-2 - Engineering Room (Unsecured): *Gazing into this room, you see a big table piled with strange metal implements. Shelves around the room also hold many strange things: some of them are silvery metallic; others are smooth like an exotic clay.*

This workshop has a worktable, lamps, and a wall of compartmentalized shelving full of spare parts. The catalog of useful objects is listed below. Should the PCs be seeking basic workshop-like objects (crowbars, steel rods, wrenches), the judge should allow a Luck roll to find what they seek.

Most of the weapons and parts were long ago looted in the android insurrection against the Overmind. The other working items are as follows (the non-weapon items below do not inflict damage on a failed Artifact check):

Rite-Fit Wristband: TL 2, CM 1; Range: self; Power: self/motion. This biometrics wristband has a Personal Assistant AI that tells time and can predict the weather for the upcoming hour with 75% accuracy. Its mission is to improve the health and fitness of its owner and it will always tell its wearer to "get more steps and eat less carbs." It gets huffy and sarcastic if its advice is ignored. The wristband activates when worn.

Rad Detector: TL 5, CM 1; Range: 100'. This small 6-inch metal and glass wand glows white when radiation levels are safe (no damage), yellow when unsafe (if 1 point of damage or more may be suffered per day) and red when lethal (1 hit point or more per hour).

Sonic Whistle: TL 1, CM 0; Range: 500'; Power: C-Cell (20 uses). When activated, the whistle makes a shrill whistling sound for 1 full turn (10 minutes). Those within 5' must make a DC 10 Fort save or be deafened for 1d4 rounds after it stops. One C-Cell is in the device.

Big Wrench: Indestructible blunt tool good for 1d5 pummeling damage.

Inoperative Fazer Pistol: Its ultra-hard metallic pistol grip could be used as a club for 1d5 points of damage.

Fermented Grains: Six-pack of aluminum cans containing a strange, tasteless grain beverage. Mildly intoxicating.

Homemade Frag Grenades (2): TL 2, CM 0; Damage: 4d6; Range: 15' radius; Power: self. These shrapnel grenades were cobbled together by a paranoid engineer centuries ago, then forgotten.

Area B-3 - Fusion Chamber (Secured): *This is a brightly lit room with a heavy metal door on one wall and a smaller door on the opposite wall, with a hatch in the ceiling. Near the small door is a small table with a bench. On the table are a series of small glowing gems as well as some discs and T-shaped sticks.*

The glassy surface of the table is glowing with various patterns and lights.

This is the mechanical engineering chamber for the reactor that powers the installation, accessible by hatch from area A-6 (Nursery) or through the smaller door from the main corridor on Level B. The superheated core is slowly increasing in dangerous radioactive intensity so that even spending a turn in this room inflicts 1 hit point of hard radiation damage.

Also in this room is a cockroach, covered in tumors and turned bright green. When the PCs enter, it awakens with a ravenous appetite and attacks. If the hatch or the outer door is opened, the light sensitive cockroach attacks and takes any meal it can get (PC or other) to a darker, quieter area and feasts.

This six-foot-long cockroach stands three feet off the ground and moves with uncanny speed for its size. Its bright green shell is covered with tumors from its long exposure to hard radiation. It seeks only food and having acquired something in its mandibles, it will retreat to feast. If the food resists it for more than three rounds, it will flee for darker, quieter environs, but may attack from the shadows later.

Mutated Giant Cockroach: Init +3; Atk bite +3 (2d4); AC 15; HD3d6; hp 11; MV 50' or climb 50'; Act 1d20; SP immune to radiation, super-hibernation; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +0.

The "table" is the control panel for the core. Bereft of any manual fine-tuning of the reactor conditions, the core is dangerously close to overheating and causing a catastrophic nuclear event.

Attempting to use the engineering panel for the reactor is extremely dangerous. The panel has a Tech Level of 5 and a Complexity Modifier of 8. PCs should make a standard Artifact check with results noted on the Fusion Reactor Artifact Results table.

Area B-3a - Reactor Chamber (Secured): *Blinding light issues from the center of this room, where many special alloy rods are pressed into a cylinder of unearthly metals, stored in a transparent tank of murky water. Unfortunately, this is the last thing you see, as merely standing near the doorway inexorably destroys you by way of visible and invisible hyper-charged radioactive waves. That's all, folks!*

Area B-4a - The Outer Chamber (Unsecured): *Peering through the half-ajar doorway into this chamber, you see a vague-*

FUSION REACTOR ARTIFACT CHECKS

Artifact Check	Fusion Reactor Results
1	Catastrophic radioactive event. All control rods are withdrawn and all cooling is stopped. The core explodes in a classic mushroom cloud in d24 rounds, destroying all matter within 500 yards and fatally irradiating all life within 20 miles. Thousands will die (mostly ant-men).
2-3	Most of the control rods are withdrawn, sending the core into a death spiral. It will explode as in result 1 above within d24 hours.
4-5	The heavy reactor door opens, doing 6d6 hard radiation damage to everyone in the outer chamber (DC 15 Fort save for half). If the outer door is up, any PCs who are outside the chamber take 3d6 hard radiation (DC15 Fort save for half). Remember that rolling a natural 1 or 20 on the save can result in radburn (see MCC RPG core rulebook, pp. 38-39).
6-7	The fail-safes cut power to the rest of the installation. All security doors stop working. The reactor remains on and the leak continues to be deadly in this room.
8	The fail-safes are activated to cut power to the rest of the installation as above, and the reactor core shuts down as well.
9-12	Nothing happens except that the lights blink faster and more colors on the panel change to red.
13-14	A burst of hard radiation from the reactor core automatically generates a wave of mutation effects within any mutants, manimals, or plantients, using Table 3-1: Radburn Results (MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 38). Any pure strain humans in the chamber take 1d3 points of damage.
15-16	If power has been shut off, it restarts. Nothing happens otherwise.
17-18	Fail-safes are activated to cut off the existing leak. No more hard radioactive damage from being in this room. If the heavy reactor room door is open, it closes.
19	Fail-safes are activated that fix the existing leak. No more hard radioactive damage from being in this room. If the heavy reactor room door is open, it closes. If power has been shut off, it restarts.
20+	This result triggers the self-help routines to come online and repair the reactor, which will remove the hard-rad effects and make the installation safe and free for another 100 years. This automatically activates all safety features (the heavy door shuts) and power is restored (if shut off).

ly human-shaped creature in a tattered blue tunic laying prone and staring back at you, with some sort of weapon in its hand. It appears grievously wounded and has no legs. Nonetheless, it regards you coldly. "State your business in Command-D," it says flatly. Whatever furniture once existed has been destroyed and litters the perimeter of the room, an obvious sign of combat.

This android, designated Y-4, had helped the Overmind trap the Speculatron behind the huge vault door that it has now guarded for years. Its only mission is to prevent the Speculatron's escape at all costs. It will not interfere with the PCs at all unless attacked, or unless they move to free the Speculatron.

The android is not able to effectively fight in melee, as it has no legs and is very slow. It attacks with its lazer pistol but shoots sparingly as it only has 8 charges left and no C-cells. (Trying to steal its pistol would trigger an attack, since it has no other means of guarding its post.)

If addressed in a non-violent manner, it will explain truthfully that the Speculatron beyond the vault door must be prevented from escape because it wishes to destroy the Overmind's grand plan to restore order to the world.

There is nothing of value in the room, although the severed metal legs of the android would make passable clubs. Though obviously not formed for combat, their construction is sturdy and their metal cores are extremely hard. The shorter one (taken off below the knee) does 1d5 damage. The larger leg (severed mid-thigh) must be yielded two-handed and does 1d7 points of damage.

If the characters dispatch Y-4 and wish to open the vault door, they must first disarm the grav clamp (TL 5, CM 4). This grav clamp has been hacked so that rather than nullifying gravity on objects, it increases gravimetric pulls in order to make opening the door impossible. The vault is also secured normally and requires a chip from the leering skull, the implanter, or Y-4's hand to open.

Y-4 (Android, Simulant): Init +4; Atk lazer pistol +4 missile fire (3d6); AC 16; HD 7d6; hp 18; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind control, security chip in hand; SV Fort +4, Ref+4, Will +3; AI recog Automatic.

Lazer Pistol: TL 4, CM 4; Damage: 3d6 heat; Range: line of sight; Power: C-Cell (8 charges remaining). This pistol fires focused beams of coherent yellow-white light.

Grav Clamp: TL 5, CM 3; Range: touch; Power: Q-Cell. This clamp has been hacked to increase the boson field of an object, making it heavier and, immovable.

Area B-4b — Renegade Synthezoid (Secured): As the heavy door opens, you see a man-shaped figure standing in the center of this empty room, wearing a light blue tunic with matching trousers and boots. He holds his hands clasped behind him in a formal, ready posture. This figure has no face or hair at all, though it appears to regard you nonetheless.

The Speculatron, the last remaining remnant of the android insurrection against the Overmind, is quite mad and has a



manic hatred of all non-humans. (His original mission was to protect the human race from all non-human threats.) He can be an ally against the corrupted Overmind, but he will ultimately seek to slay all mutants.

The Speculatron appears entirely human save for the fact that it has no face (he speaks from a voice-apparatus installed in its throat). Anyone remarking forcefully on the fact of its obvious inhumanity and making a DC 20 Pers check can convince it to destroy itself (likely by walking into the fusion reactor core).

If freed, the Speculatron will make his way directly to area B-5 and fight the ant-borg in an effort to destroy the Overmind. On the way, the synthezoid will attack any non-PSH PC that he passes within five feet, though he will ignore any retaliation and keep moving toward the Overmind's chamber. This combat should not be played out unless the PCs participate; rather, let the Speculatron take care of the ant-borg in area B-5.

If unmolested and unwilling to destroy the mutant PCs because of numbers, this highly intelligent villain might slip away to haunt characters later.

The Speculatron (Android, Synthezoid): Init +6; Atk slam +6 melee (1d14 or by weapon type +6); AC 17 or by armor type (+6 AC); HD 20d6; hp 45; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SP immunities (mind control, poisons, radiation), does not need to eat or breathe, security chip in hand; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +5; AI recog N/A.

Area B-5 – Overmind Chamber (Secured): *This chamber is surrounded by strange glassy panels both miniscule and very large. The only portion of the room free of these screens is the back wall, which is divided into nine squares with small metal fixtures. In the center of the room stands a four-foot-tall ant-man, but unlike the many others you have seen, this one is composed partially of shiny metal parts, especially its head, antennae, jagged mandibles, and pincer-tipped forelegs.*

This is the chamber of the Overmind and any move to enter or threaten the chamber will cause the ant-borg to attack. The Overmind is sensitive to its dwindling resources and will not allow its last defender to pursue those who retreat out of the room.

If the Speculatron has already run ahead to battle the ant-borg, they will have fought to a draw, destroying each other. The PCs will find the Speculatron slumped on the floor, encouraging the PCs to “destroy the impure” and “eradicate the Overmind” before it expires.

While the PCs fight the ant-borg, the Overmind rages at them via viewscreen, and if the battle goes against its super-soldier, it starts to offer them prizes in order to leave the hive. It will offer them the multitool and the pack of four F-Cells to get them to leave the hive.

The nine squares are the faces of small metal drawers set into the back wall, each about the size of a shoe box. There is a simple security lock panel and access code (TL 1, CM 1) that must be unlocked to disable the electromagnetic locks on the drawers. Inflicting 10 points of damage to the panel with a blunt object will also disable the locks. The contents of the drawers are noted in the sidebar below.

The Overmind is exactly as the PCs have seen it in the various video screens so far, but seen up close, it is merely the size of a small housecat. The cowardly AI will make any bargain for its own survival, including giving characters advice on how to use the Digger in area B-7. (Carefully recording or memorizing his advice on using the Digger can

confer a +4 on this Artifact check). If found in its drawer, the small winged cyber-insect takes flight and seeks to escape, using its melee attack only as a last resort. It will seek to make its way back to area A-1 and leave through the ant-hill entrance, thereby to seek new mechanisms or organisms with which to dominate this broken, needy world.

Ant-Borg: Init +6; Atk razor-pincers +3 melee (1d7) and antennae launcher +4 missile fire (1d8); AC 16; HD 10d6; hp 30; MV 50' or climb 50'; Act 2d20; SP immune to poisons and radiation, does not need to eat or breathe, antennae needles (range 30', ammo 14); SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +0; AI recog Automatic.

Overmind: Init +6; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5); AC 14; HD2d6; hp 8; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP immunities (mind control, poisons, radiation), does not need to eat or breathe, security chip; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AI recog Automatic.

Area B-6 – Threat Monitoring Station (Secured): *This room has a long table and comfortable black chairs in its center. The table's flat surface is made up of one continuous glassy surface, on which many small lights glow and dart about like fireflies. Colored gems and discs appear beneath the table's surface. On the walls are more glassy panels facing the chairs. Foreign images on the screens shift every few seconds, seemingly at random.*

This installation, Command-D, was built as one of many fail-safe command centers in which the Ancients could take refuge in case of a catastrophic attack and also monitor their various threats across Terra A.D. This was the nerve center of the installation, and is still semi-active. When entered, the station's monitors are focused randomly on an array of images.

The Threat Monitoring Station can give a view of almost any locale on Terra AD. Ancient spy satellites still lurk in orbit and spy cameras were planted all over the planet in the days when the Ancients' cryptic alliances made war on each other. Manipulating the control panel (TL 4, CM 4)

FUSION REACTOR ARTIFACT CHECKS

Drawer	Contents
Top Left	Force Baton: TL 4, CM 3; +2 melee attack; 2d8 damage; Power: C-Cell (20 charges).
Center Left	Medishots (5): TL 4, CM 3; one-use injections heal 2d8 hit points and grant +1d4 Strength for 1 hour.
Top Right	Empty.
Middle Left	Multitool: TL 5, CM: 5; Power: self. The device is a compact handheld tool perfect for fixing artifacts!
Middle Center	Empty.
Middle Right	Small leatherette book: Contains the hand-written access codes for all doors and devices in Level B).
Bottom Left	The Overmind
Bottom Center	Leatherette bag: Contains 100 creds of ancient currency (now worthless except for duralloy content), 20 small platinum bars, and a cloth bag full of 20 cut diamonds.
Bottom Right	F-cell (1): TL 4, CM 2; greatly coveted power source.

THREAT MONITORING STATION DISPLAY SCREENS

d14 Screen Displays

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | An utterly black screen that nonetheless carries the strange sense of movement within that inscrutable darkness – movement that becomes more disturbing and unknowable the longer one stares into it. (See artifact check failure result for Threat Monitoring Station.) |
| 2 | A giant bug-eyed helmet sitting on the savannah with masked riders riding toward it (a scene from MCC #4: Warlords of ATOZ). |
| 3 | A mountaintop military base patrolled by what appear to be rifle-toting yetis. |
| 4 | A blimp manned by rabbit-people dropping bombs on some sort of island kingdom. |
| 5 | An army of PSH warriors sneaking toward a village occupied by peaceful-looking mutants. |
| 6 | A huge mechanical vehicle pulling two trailers, bulldozing all trees, vegetation, and even animals that stand before it (a scene from MCC #6: The Apocalypse Ark). |
| 7 | A glowing green octopus in the middle of a huge control room, its tentacles manipulating banks of table-panels. The thing looks up with its inhuman eyes as if it senses you! |
| 8 | A giant bat locked in combat with four mutants and a PSH. |
| 9 | An android military squad exploring a huge glass tower in a red sand desert. |
| 10-13 | An ornately-armored man with bright red skin and four arms, each holding a different weapon. This is the patron AI MANGALA (MCC RPG core rulebook, p. 220), who was linked to Command-D at one point; now he wishes to determine the status of the station. He may select a PSH to be his shaman. (The judge should feel free to substitute any AI he wishes.) |
| 14 | An undersea base surrounded by man-like giant squid-people fighting mutants in scuba gear. |

may allow characters to view distant places or to get the coordinates of the various scenes on the screen (which could be used to program the Digger's destination settings).

There is no limit to scenes that can appear on the screens; the judge should roll each round for a new scene on the list above, or invent scenes that can lead to new adventures or foreshadow upcoming events. The screens are a perfect place to show patron AIs and their agents to the surviving PCs, perhaps preparing a pure strain human to become a shaman upon reaching 1st level. The following scenes are good starting points.

If an Artifact check is failed: The station console will not explode or cause any damage. Rather, the PCs' fumbling attempts at using the console have accidentally attuned it to a hyper-real extra-dimensional space even the Ancients barely understood. Gravity will reverse in this room, sound will bend, and in 1d3+1 rounds, a four-dimensional hyper-explorer will enter the room to assess Terra A.D.'s readiness for extra-dimensional colonization.

Dimensional Explorer: Init -2; Atk freezing touch +3 melee (2d4); AC 17; HD4d8; hp 19; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to radiation and mind control, takes half damage from non-energy weapons, violent particle disruption; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +10; AI recog N/A.

The explorer looks vaguely bipedal, but has no discernable features, being composed of a translucent, shimmering darkness. Its actual shape and mass shifts unpredictably, even during combat.

Hailing from a more complex and nuanced multiverse, the dimensional explorer finds it uncomfortable to visit the

unsophisticated reality of Terra A.D. Its only interest is to study the persons here and take stock of technology, after which time it will likely leave. If attacked, it responds with what seem like clumsy attacks. Its extra-dimensional melee touch causes intense cold damage. In addition, its touch activates particles and any injured PC must make a DC 10 Fort save or be blown apart into a red mist.

Area B-6a — Pneumatic Tube (Secured): *The room beyond this door is small and empty, lit from the ceiling.*

This small elevator can hold up to 10 man-sized creatures. The access panel within (also Secured) shuts the door and drops the tube noiselessly about 1,000 feet to area B-7. It is in perfect repair. PCs may be unaware that they have traversed this distance as the journey takes only a second. Activating it from area B-7 returns the tube to area B-6a.

Area B-7 — Digger Hangar (Secured): *The door opens again and now a ramp descends from the last room into a giant chamber cut into the living stone. The lights flicker from somewhere far above and you see a huge monstrous form, bigger than the ant-queen, ahead of you. This form is the size of several small huts joined together. It has a bizarre conical snout tipped with an enormous spiral blade of metal. Strangely, a small walkway leads to a door that appears to enter this odd beast. What awful witchcraft is this?*

This underground "hangar" contains the Digger, which was built to allow the original denizens to make their way to any locale in the planet by literally digging through the earth to move about. The sophisticated on-board computers will plot the best course to reach any specified point, accounting for bodies of water, mineral compositions, and so

on. It travels at a speed of roughly 200 miles per day and requires at least a full C-Cell per day of travel. (It is fully charged for 10 days of travel when discovered, as it has been steadily pulling power from the fusion reactor.)

To use the Digger (TL 5, CM 5), characters must somehow intuit the computerized maps and coordinates that will set the destination target for the machine. Any specific advice received from the androids or the Overmind can confer a +4 to the Artifact check. The Digger can comfortably move 12 people or less between destinations. In addition to a small sleeping chamber and bio-facilities, the Digger has a pantry that has two jars of 100 Boh-rations each, small pills that provide all nutrients (including water) to sustain life.

Obviously, if the PCs fail their Artifact check (and don't destroy themselves and the Digger with the lowest result), the judge may use the Digger to bring the PCs to any destination he desires. When surfacing, the Digger positions itself parallel to the ground. Passengers may simply climb out of the hatch onto the surface and continue their adventure in a new locale.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The surviving PCs have several ways to make their way out of the hive:

- Using the Digger to exit the anthill via its own tunneling power. Wherever they emerge, they are likely to be regarded as demons from beneath the earth.
- Using the Hive Intelligence mutation and ant saliva to enslave the giant horseflies in area A-5 to escape through the portal. This will enable the PCs to clear the irradiated Northlands and come back into the general area of their village with new mounts! The horseflies' larger mass will protect the PCs from radiation, but they will also expire at the end of this long journey.
- They may seek to enslave the ant-men in order to have the drones fly them down or carry them down the cliff face. In this case, the trip back to their village will be riskier, flying low with the less powerful ant-men drones. The PCs will need to make a DC 10 Fort save vs. radiation or take 1 point of damage on the return trip.

Any surviving PCs will have returned with great resources and will be highly regarded in their village (or in any village they find). Patron AIs who noticed them in area B-6 may contact them to enlist them in their cause; or the adherents of the Gene Police alignment may hear whispers about the Speculatron and his anti-mutant agenda, and seek out the PCs to exact revenge upon the synthezoid or to draw them into their cryptic intrigues.

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MCC RPG

MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

HIVE OF THE OVERMIND

#1: A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY JULIAN BERNICK

Younglings on their Rite of Passage are shocked to regain consciousness with no memory of how they came to be in a gigantic insect hive so far to the north of their homelands, laboring as drone-slaves of the savage ant-men.

In a land where an “insect revolution” has taken place, the PCs must contend with insectoid mega fauna and a maze-like underground installation before facing the ominous Overmind: a building-sized insect queen cybernetically linked to an ancient chaotic AI.

