

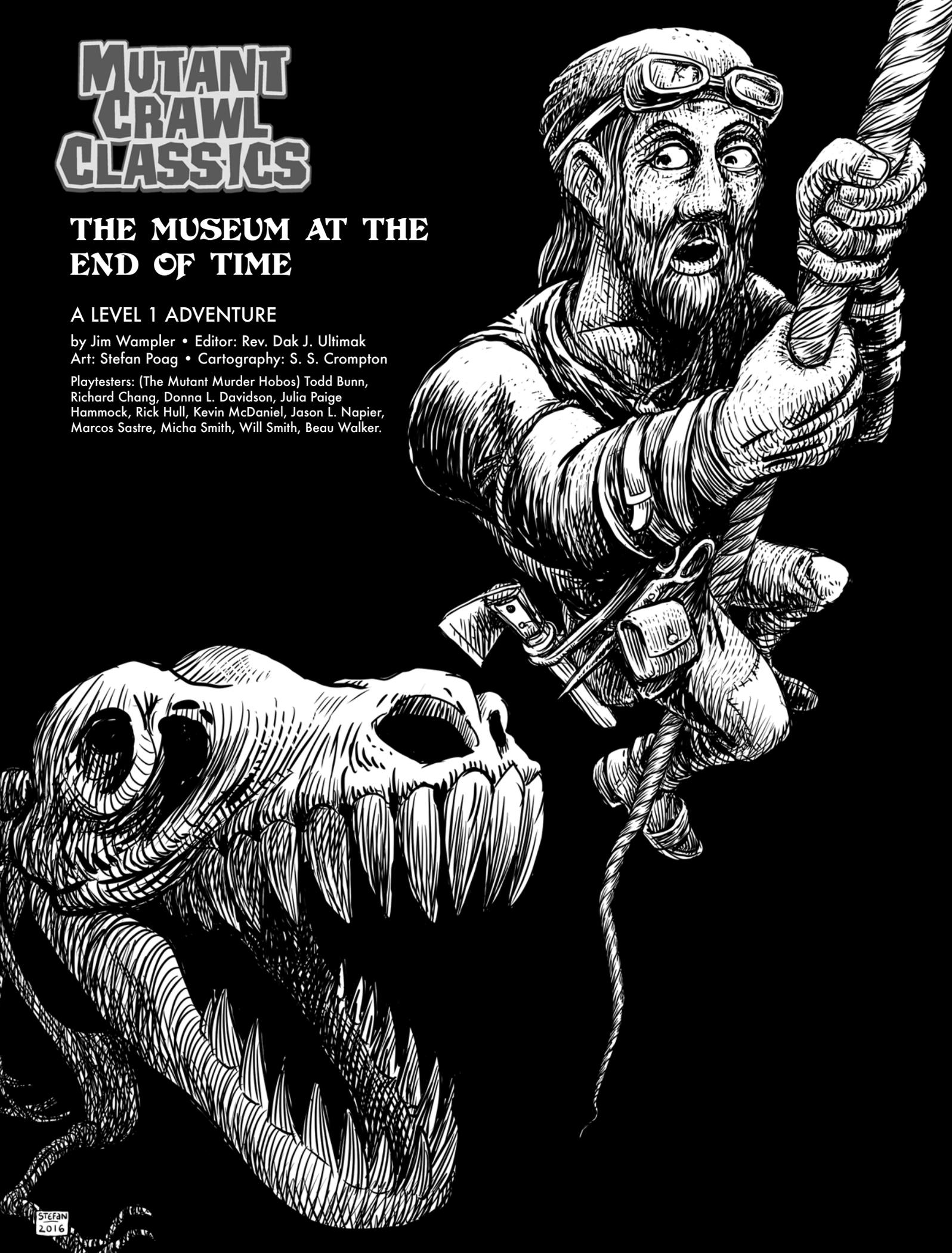
MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

THE MUSEUM AT THE END OF TIME

A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE

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Remember the good old days, when post-apocalyptic adventures were full of super-science, murderous 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 you and your mutant tribesmen to go out into the hothouse jungles and radioactive deserts of Terra A.D. and collect the artifacts of the Ancient Ones in order to attain great power and savage glory.

This adventure is a Mutant Crawl Classics RPG character funnel designed for 15-20 level-0 characters, with each player having 2-4 characters each. These numbers can be adjusted for larger or smaller groups, but remember to allow each player a minimum of 2 level-0 characters. This adventure can also easily be run as a character funnel for the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG.

BACKGROUND



With each new generation of younglings, the Tribe of Cog tests their youths' fitness to serve their neolithic society as adults by sending them out on The Rite of Passage. The purpose of the Rite is two-fold. First and foremost, the younglings are tasked with going out into the untamed wilderness, surviving on their own for over one week, and with bringing back to the tribe one functioning artifact of the ancients per participant. Secondly, it is to be hoped that the stresses of the Rite will trigger the "Metagenesis." For mutants, manimals, and plantients, the Metagenesis is the sudden full-flowering of their mutated genetic code and its attendant mutations.

The Rite of Passage is a generational custom, and the PCs' future position and rank within their society is largely determined by the quality of artifacts brought back to the tribe. While there is no shame in returning with a "working" ancient beverage container or a simple, stout length of duralloy, those doing so tend to end up being assigned the mundane adult tasks of simple hunting or gathering for the tribe. Conversely, those bringing back especially useful items — say a working dazer pistol — may find themselves quickly promoted to the ranks of a Seeker team. Seeker teams are those who's job it is to explore the wilderness in hopes of discovering even more ancient artifacts in the ruins and taboo lands of Terra A.D.

INTRODUCTION

With an unsettling combination of eager anticipation and uneasy courage, you and the friends of your youth face the portentous prospect of setting out upon your Rite of Passage. Your parents and extended families embrace you for what may be the last time. You pat your slung leather pouch full of jerked roxen meat and your overfull waterskin, making sure it's all there, as you cradle the flint dagger carried in a thigh-bound sheath.

Your youthful exuberance and untested sense of immortality would greatly distress your families if they knew of your cunning plan. You and your friends have decided to gamble everything on the chance to become full-fledged Seekers for the tribe. There will be no wandering around in the hothouse jungles of Terra A.D. only to return with a few dusty but ultimately useless trinkets for you. The ambitions of you and your childhood friends is greater than that. You have decided to chance the taboo lands. You have decided to trek out into the forbidden Glow Desert, the better to find and return with a potent and mighty device of the Ancient Ones, as legend says your ancestors once did.

An uneventful three-day journey to the northwest by foot brings you to the edge of your tribe's territory and to the edge of the mile-high trees of the jungle itself. Before you lies several yards of gradually dying brush, beyond which stretches an endless waste of blue-white sand dunes against a cloudless turquoise firmament. Your only navigation marker going forward will be the ever-present "Sky Arc," the banded and gently-curved celestial beltway that stretches from east to west in both day and nighttime skies.

THE GLOW DESERT



The Glow Desert is a radioactive wasteland of endless blue-white sand dunes punctuated by occasional stretches of wind-blown blast-glass. After a half-day's travel on foot, the desert is also interrupted by jagged and slanted buttes of mantle rock, as though subterranean spikes of mottled marble were thrust upwards by a tremendous ancient force. The jagged spikes of rock are 10' - 30' high and have been weathered by the frequent dust storms. These angled buttes are located a mile or two apart on average — just close enough to each other that from any one butte, at least 2-3 more can be seen on the far horizon.

The Glow - PCs spending more than a couple of hours in the Glow Desert will notice that their skin tingles and that they feel mildly nauseous. After nightfall, they will even notice that the desert sand is slightly phosphorescent, and that the nighttime sky fades to an eerie blue glow at the horizon. For each 24 hours spent in the radioactive desert, each PC must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1 hp of radiation damage. This may kill level-0 characters with only 1 hp, but assuming that the PCs choose to rest for at least 8 hours each day (and thereby heal 1 hp), this effect largely balances out.

GLOW DESERT ENCOUNTERS

It is a 2-day trek across the Glow Desert before the PCs will discover the museum. The dilemma faced by the PCs is that the Glow Desert is a dangerous place both at night and during the day, with the only relatively safe haven being the infrequent rock outcroppings that dot the desert.

During the PCs' two-day journey, they should encounter the following creatures at least once. The additional Glow Desert encounters may be used at the judge's discretion, though it is assumed the Glow Storm will occur early morning before they discover the Museum.



DAYTIME GLOW DESERT ENCOUNTER

Silane Serpent – A monstrous roving silane serpent begins to stalk the party. Initially, the PCs begin to hear a low, musical sound like glass tubes being vibrated. Alert PCs (DC 15 Intelligence check) may notice ripples in the surface of the sand nearby that run counter to the wind direction, as the large creature circles its intended prey. The silane serpent is attracted to vibrations, so if the PCs cease all movement and make no sounds louder than a whisper, the creature will merely circle the party for an hour or so and eventually lose interest.

Any other movement or sound will precipitate an attack within 1d3 rounds. Because the creature feeds on minerals instead of carbon-based organic matter, it will target anyone carrying metals on their person, and failing that, stone implements. When this happens, the PCs witness an awe-inspiring sight.

An enormous serpentine creature comprised entirely of faceted, translucent crystals bursts up through the sand and attempts to swallow your childhood friend whole. Its head is featureless except for a crested spiked carapace and a giant maw lined with glistening glass teeth. It greedily gulps your companion down as you see the flayed body slowly passing down into its gullet through its semi-opaque form. The creature immediately turns and attacks the next nearest of you.

Any attack by the silane serpent that exceeds the target's hit point total indicates that the prey has been swallowed whole. The silane serpent's crystalline armor is extraordinarily tough, except against any attacks involving moisture, as its silicon-based biology breaks down rapidly in the presence of water.

Non-suicidal PCs will flee to the nearest rock outcropping. The silane serpent will randomly pick off 1d3 of the PCs before the safety of a rock outcropping is obtained. Climbing to the top of a rock outcropping provides shelter from the serpent, but the creature will continue to circle and wait until sunset, at which point it will return to its underground lair.

Silane Serpent: Init +5; Atk bite +5 melee (5d6); AC 18; HD 10d6; hp 35; MV 40' burrowing; Act 1d20; SP swallow victims whole, takes 1d12 damage per pint of water splashed on it; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -4.

NIGHTTIME GLOW DESERT ENCOUNTER

Screamers – A roving band of screamers – glowing desiccated corpses animated by a semi-intelligent fungi possessing a primitive hive consciousness – find and attack the party at night. The party cannot be surprised by these creatures, as the screamers are both brightly lit and vocal. The fungi animation process causes a constant air flow through the empty chests of the screamers and back out their withered vocal chords, creating an unnerving and near-constant keening. Anyone killed by a screamer will arise the following evening as a newly-born screamer. Judges should also note that any surviving PCs who combat the screamers are then 50% likely to track traces of the screamer fungi into area A-1 of the museum, thereby possibly animating the two fossilized skeletons or any other available corpses into new screamers.

Screamers (6): Init -4; Atk claw strike +3 melee (1d4, plus DC 12 Fort save or take 1d3 radiation burn damage); AC 9; HD 1d6; hp 4 ea; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP undead, radiation burn; SV Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +2.

Any skin contact with a screamer (alive or dead) causes a 1d3 radiation burn. Weapons used against a screamer likewise glow a bright blue on the surfaces that came into contact with the creature, and will cause the same 1d3 radiation damage as additional weapon damage until cleaned. If handled carefully and sheathed in any non-porous material, a glow-enhanced weapon could be effectively employed by a PC.

ADDITIONAL GLOW DESERT ENCOUNTERS

Blast Glass – The PCs discover a 20' x 30' sheet of fractured blue-green blast glass exposed in the desert sands. The blast glass is mildly radioactive and anyone stepping onto or handling the blast glass in such a way that causes skin-to-surface contact must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or take 1d3 damage from radiation burns. The blast glass is cracked and fractured, so that industrious and cautious PCs could attempt to wrap a length of leather around a likely shard and create a "blast glass dagger" that would inflict 1d4 damage +1d3 radiation burns (DC 10 Fortitude save versus radiation damage).

Glow Storm – The PCs witness a glow storm of terrible ferocity. Writhing snakes of polychromatic light and hundreds of shooting stars blanket the sky, while 50-75 mph winds whip clouds of the white-blue sand into their eyes. Visibility is reduced to 30' for 4-6 hours until sunrise.



THE MUSEUM AT THE END OF TIME

As you set out on the morning after the glow storm, you immediately spot something new to your eyes in the trackless wastes. On the far horizon, you see a new kind of rock outcropping – straight and shining with a reflective green light.

The recent glow storm has exposed the upper spire of a green porcelain structure, a long buried and well preserved museum of the Ancient Ones. The museum is a short 1-2 mile trek from the PCs' location.

As you near the green rock, its strangeness to your eyes only increases. It stands about 15' tall, and seems to be of an odd, too-smooth shape – like a gigantic roxen horn that was impossibly straightened out so that it did not curl. Its surface is a crazy-quilt of shiny green sections in which you can see yourselves, as though you were staring down into a perfectly calm pond of emerald water. One of the oddly shaped sections of green hard-water near the ground is missing, allowing white-blue sand to

spill inwards over its bottom lip. As you peer into the opening, only a great darkness greets your sun-struck eyes.

The missing section of perma-glass has already been removed by a party of beast things that found and entered the museum earlier in the morning (see area A-2 for their current location). The desert winds have removed any tracks or sign of their passing.

This new entrance into the museum leads directly to a 50' drop to the floor below. Incautious PCs who brazenly announce that they go directly inside immediately fall to their deaths below. More cautious players looking inside will see utter darkness (the perma-glass is polarized and does not admit light inside) except for a 10' patch of the floor below that is lit by the shaft of sunlight coming in through the hole in the upper spire.

LEVEL ONE

Area A-1 — Atrium of the Ancients: The room below the spire is the main atrium of the ancient museum. Assuming that the PCs use enough hemp rope, perhaps 75' or more, they can easily anchor the rope by encircling the spire and then begin their descent. As the walls of the atrium fan outwards from the spire, there is no purchase offered for the climb down. While shimmying down the rope, only dark, shadowy shapes can be dimly made out in the pitch-black darkness.

As you expertly shimmy down the hemp rope the first 20', you are surprised to see a reptilian head the size of a small hut, with teeth like flint daggers and dark black eyes nearly the size of your head, hovering in the darkness right next to you.

Allow the PC only a few seconds to quickly react, then adjudicate the results as appropriate. The fossilized T-Rex skeleton does not pose any immediate threat to the PCs. The use of torches or other improvised light sources, will of course reveal its true nature.

In any event, should a living PC manage to make contact with the atrium floor below, the room's interior lighting will automatically activate, brightly illuminating the space for all to see.

The entire room is suddenly lit by a strange all-white light, as a banded section of its curved walls glow brightly like a noon-day sun. The large semi-circular chamber is over 75' wide and its floor, walls, and ceiling are made up of a smooth, pearlescent substance like the interior of clam shells. The space is dominated by two large skeletons of mutations that you are unfamiliar with – one a 40' tall bipedal reptile, and the other a 30' long lizard-fish creature with a long, pointed nose and massive fins. Above the lighted band about 15' up the curving walls are depictions of the Ancient Ones performing incomprehensible feats of magic and industry. Unknowable holy symbols of the ancients cover nearly every other available surface of the too-smooth walls. Everything in the room is covered in a thick layer of dust.

There are several doors that lead out of the atrium, though the primitive PCs will not immediately recognize them as such. Each set of doors is a barely-noticeable rectangular seam in the plasteel walls. Any PC alert enough to ask if the dust on the floor has been disturbed prior to their entrance will note that mixed in with the party's own footprints seem to be tracks that resemble elongated primate feet, along with tiny rodent tracks.

While the many doors in this room (and throughout the museum) require a com-badge to open correctly, it is possible for the PCs to force a door to slide open with a combined Strength check of 30. Doors opened in this fashion will always shut again unless the door is spiked open by jamming a fairly sturdy pointed object in the door tracks – say a flint dagger or fossilized T-Rex tooth.

Alert PCs will also note that the T-rex and Ichthyosaurus skeletons are not comprised of bone but of stone. Their various teeth and rib bones could be fashioned into 1d4 stone daggers and 1d8 stone clubs.

If opened, the southern double-door opens into a collapsed section of the museum, and a wall of sand will immediately spill into the room. Note that if the vibratorium machine in area B-2 is deactivated for any reason, silane serpents may enter the museum through this breach from the outside desert sands.

If the room is thoroughly searched, a skeletonized corpse of an ancient security guard will be discovered in the easternmost corner of the room hidden behind a small podium. Two artifacts can be recovered from the body. In order for the PCs to understand and use these artifacts, use the artifact rules in Appendix A of this adventure.

Com-Badge (blue/security): TL 4; CM 3; Special: Audio and holographic communication (100 mile range), security clearance identification (varies by type and former owner); AI recog: +4.

A com-badge is a small metallic disk that automatically adheres to any surface on which it is placed. While its primary function is as an audio-holo communication device, each com-badge is programmed to identify its user for purposes of security access and clearance, as well as AI recognition.

Dazer Pistol: TL 4; CM 4; Power: C-Cell (10 charges); Range: 50'; Damage: Stun DC 14/16/20 for 2d6 rounds (1/2/3 charges). Dazer pistols fire thin pink beams of compact electro-magnetic energy that stun the neural systems of living beings as well as the CPUs of robots, androids, or AIs. The dazer pistol has three settings which consume increasing amounts of power; light: 1 unit of power, medium: 2 units of power, and heavy: 3 units of power.

LEAVING THE ATRIUM AND RETURNING

After the PCs exit the museum atrium for the first time and return, a soft-light hologram of the museum curator materializes in the atrium, accompanied by 4 floating security bots.

A bald-pated human in sparkling, flowing robes appears in front of you with four floating chunks of smart metal hovering at his side. He speaks to you in your language, but many of his words are unknown to you. In a seemingly friendly tone, he says "I regret to inform you that the Museum is currently closed due to technical difficulties beyond our control. While it is most gratifying that your enthusiasm for science and history extends to visiting the museum after closing hours, we must now ask you to leave. Should your enthusiasm continue unabated, I would like to assure you that the four security-bots are merely provided as a courtesy escort to ensure your brisk departure."

Having run continuously several thousand years over his designed runtime, the Curator hologram is quite insane, and is prepared to use his holo-flail to further encourage the intruders to leave, all while politely explaining museum attendance policies and apologizing for any inconvenience. The Curator is a soft-light hologram and offensive attacks made against him normally pass harmlessly through his body. Attack rolls that overcome his relatively high armor class are considered to have struck the tiny light-bug projection unit that hovers around inside his quantum light shell. His holo-flail weapon stuns potential victims via emitted EM radiation.

The security-bots will likewise attempt to stun the intruders and to take any stunned PCs back outside through the hole in the museum roof spire. Each security-bot can carry up to two humanoid-sized bodies at a time.

AI Recognition Attempts

If a PC has discovered and activated one of the security com-badges in the museum, there is a chance that this PC can attempt an AI recognition roll and perhaps master one of the security-bots (the hologram is a fully sentient AI and cannot be mastered in this way). Since an inexperienced tribesman will not initially know to try this, a benevolent judge might provide subtle hints, such as a slight hesita-

tion exhibited by any security-bot attacking the com-badge owner as it visibly scans the com-badge. See AI recognition rules in Appendix B of this adventure for the methods of conducting an AI recognition attempt.

Curator Hologram - Soft Light: Init +2; Atk holo-flail +0 melee (DC 16 Fort save or stunned 1d6 rounds); AC 18; HD 1d6; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immaterial; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4.

Museum Security-Bots (4): Init +1; Atk stun ray +1 missile fire (DC 14 Fort save or stunned 1d6 rounds); AC 15; HD 2d6; hp 10 ea; MV 40' flying; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -4; AI recog 18 (Security).

Area A-2 — Holographic History Gallery: *The door opens into a curved hallway which features 6 large 10'-wide open doorways. Beyond each doorway only complete darkness can be seen. As you enter the hallway you hear the odd squeak of a small rodent that sounds like it came from one of the southern doorways.*

This gallery contains an array of darkened doorways, three on the curved northern wall, and three more on the curved southern wall. If any of these doorways are approached, the darkness beyond vanishes and a blurred kaleidoscope of colors and shapes appears beyond. The view is hazy until a character steps through a doorway. Upon entering, a PC must immediately make a DC 10 Willpower save. Failing this save means the PC cannot comprehend what they are seeing and runs back out through the exit in mortal terror. Once fully activated by someone stepping inside, each doorway appears to resolve into a portal to another place and time.

Each of these rooms is a small holographic suite presenting different historical periods for the education and entertainment of ancient patrons. The holographic inhabitants and objects in each room are immaterial and cannot be touched or interacted with, but anyone venturing inside further than 10' takes a chance on becoming lost inside the artificial reality and unable to find their way back out. For each 10' distance traveled inside after the first, the PCs must succeed at a DC 10+1 per 10' traveled Intelligence check to remain oriented and aware of where the gallery exit is located.

This has already happened to a party of beast things that have become lost in Gallery D. The various holographic gallery presentations include:

Gallery A - The Dawn of Man: Primitive man-apes struggle for survival on a barren, grassy savannah. One man-ape throws a large bone up into the air in celebration of a recent kill.

Gallery B - Lost Lemuria: An advanced civilization of mutants scatter and flee as a tidal wave swamps their futuristic city.

Gallery C - Ancient Pyramid Builders: A Bronze Age culture is shown driving thousands of slaves in the construction a gigantic stone pyramid.

Gallery D - The Eternal Ones: A group of highly advanced pure strain humans in flowing robes are shown meditating, making art, levitating objects, and flying around a columned temple upon a cloudy mountain enclave. A group of beast things have become lost in this holosuite, and will be encountered as soon as a PC enters the room.

Gallery E - Medieval Period: Thousands of humans and mutants (elves, dwarves, etc.) are shown fighting a great battle in metal armor.

Gallery F - Age of Wonders: The world of the Ancient Ones is depicted at its height. Pure strain humans, some with cybernetic enhancements, are shown leading semi-intelligent animals around on leashes in a vast technological cityscape.

Beast Things: An expedition of beast things entered the museum just prior to the PCs, and became lost in the holographic simulation in Gallery D. The beast thing champion is using one of his telepathic rats to try and find the exit (which is the sound the PCs heard upon entering). The telepathic rats are otherwise harmless and will scatter if freed.

The beast things appear as blue-skinned semi-devolved humans, with shocks of snow-white body hair. The beast thing champion has a wicker cage strapped to his back which contains several small rodents, and is also carrying a working security com-badge already looted from within the museum.

If the beast things are not encountered in area A-2, they will eventually find their way out of the hologram suite and surprise the PCs from behind (by scouting ahead with the telepathic rats) further inside the museum.

Beast Things (7): Init +1; Atk spear +0 melee (1d6) or poison darts +1 missile fire (DC 13 Fort save or paralysis for 10 rounds); AC 12; HD 1d10; hp 6 ea; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1.

Beast Thing Champion: Init +1; Atk axe +2 melee (1d8) or poison darts +1 missile fire (DC 13 Fort save or paralysis for 10 rounds) +1; AC 12; HD 1d10+2; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP telepathic command of rats; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1.

Area-A3 – Little Gift Shop of Horrors: *The walls of this room are dusty and lined with rows of small brightly-furred creatures with over-large eyes. On a smooth metal rock on the back wall rests an artifact of the ancients exactly like the device you discovered in the atrium on the skeleton corpse.*

This small room contains shelves overfull with dusty and useless baubles and stuffed animal toys. Sitting on the counter is what appears to be a dazer pistol. The dazer pistol and three of the stuffed dolls are all in fact changelings, which will sit and wait for the most opportune time to attack. Although the changelings are capable of imitating the appearance of any object or person touched (up to one cubic foot in volume), when frightened or attacking they most commonly assume the appearance of a small, spiky hairball that is virtually all mouth and teeth. Changelings are semi-sentient (3 Intelligence), and if more than two of them are killed, the other two will attempt to assume non-threatening shapes in order to pass unnoticed by the PCs.



Changelings (4): Init +3; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6, sever appendage on crit); AC 12; HD 1d4; hp 2 ea; MV 10'-50'; Act 1d20; SP Mutation: *Metamorph*; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1.

Area A-4 – Zero-G Experience: *You enter a room with two metal benches in the center and four translucent cabinets on both the north and south walls. As you stare into the frosted surface of a single cabinet, it appears to contain the shadowy shape of a belt and a strange helmet. Another door at the far end of the room beckons.*

The Zero-G Experience is two rooms – a prep room and the experience room itself. The prep room contains lockers with 8 sets of bubble helmets and enviro-belts total. While the cabinet doors slide open at a touch, Artifact checks will of course be required to correctly understand and use the objects within. Note that if a PC successfully activates an enviro-belt without wearing an activated bubble helm, that PC will pass out from oxygen deprivation in the same number of rounds as the PC has Stamina points.

Bubble Helmet: TL 4; CM 4 - This is a transparent, open faced round helmet, which even in a deactivated state is AC +1. Upon successful activation, the helmet will completely enclose the head of the wearer and seal itself off at the wearer's neck. When activated, the bubble helmet supplies the wearer with a 24-hour supply of oxygen (note that this will do a plantier PC no good whatsoever).

Enviro-Belt: TL 4; CM 3 - This is an automatically self-sizing belt with a small set of controls. Upon successful activation, the wearer is surrounded by a dim amber nimbus and is effectively sealed off from the ambient environment. This air-tight environmental shield is impervious to physical objects and most forms of electromagnetic radiation. It will absorb 15 points of damage before shutting down, and will require 1 hour to recharge.

When the PCs open the next door in area A-4, they see the following:

A smooth metal precipice extends out into the middle of a spherical room 50' wide. The precipice ends in a 10' wide platform on which rests a raised, gem-encrusted metal column.

The control panel for the Zero-G Experience is a CM 4 device. Upon successful activation, the door to the room will seal shut and all the air will be sucked out of the room while an anti-gravity field is established. Holo-projectors in the walls recreate the exact view one would have while in low planetary orbit. The extended metal walkway and control pedestal appear to be projecting from the side of an orbital facility of the ancients.

Suddenly you are spinning and floating as you struggle for breath and find none. As you attempt to orient yourself, you see that you have been somehow transported so high in the star-filled nighttime sky that the distant ground beneath you looks like a curved blue and white ball. You notice that instead of the ever-present sky-arc, you see a big white and grey ball among the stars, which seems to have the face of an ancient one, staring down at you.

PCs equipped with both bubble helmets and enviro-belts that they can activate will have little trouble in this room. Others will begin to suffocate and/or begin to die from decompression as their blood slowly begins to boil. In 3 rounds any PC not fully protected will pass into unconsciousness, and after 6 rounds they will die.

The PC at the controls will be able to maintain a grip on them and attempt to shut down the device by making a DC 5 Agility check. Any other PC in the zero-g environment may make an attempt to “swim” through the micro-gravity only by burning 1 or more points of Luck and making a DC 18 Agility check.

Assuming that the Zero-G Experience program is successfully shut down, air is immediately pumped back into the room and gravity slowly restored so that all occupants slowly sink to the floor otherwise unharmed.

Area A-5 — Security Ops: Inside this room is the desiccated corpse of a former guard, who has the following on his body:

Com-Badge (blue/security): TL 4; CM 3; Special: Audio and holographic communication (100 mile range), security clearance identification (varies by type and former owner), AI recog: +4.

Force Baton: TL 4; CM 3; Power: C-Cell (10 charges); Range: melee; Damage: 2d8; Special: Atk +2 – When activated, this small pommel-sized device emits a 3’ long cylinder of blue light. This blue light is a kinetic plasma field that delivers extra blunt force damage when striking an object or person. 1 charge is consumed with each successful strike.

Area A-6 — Genetics Research Lab: *As the door opens, you are surprised to see another party of looters staring back at you from the darkened room interior.*

Room A, Viewing Gallery – This curved gallery room’s north wall is comprised of transparent perma-glass, and normally allows for easy viewing of the genetics lab beyond. Until a PC steps into the room and activates the automatic lighting, the PCs will only see their reflections in the glassy surface. Any attacks made against the perma-glass will be fruitless, as it is damage resistant to anything short

of particle beam weapons. Once the lighting is activated the PCs can see what lies beyond.

Through the “hard air” surface in front of you, you see a wonderland of ancient artifacts and devices of all sizes and shapes, any one of which would surely bring you great status when returned intact to your tribe. On the western wall of the curved room interior you see a door that is mirrored by another door on your side of the hard air.

Room B, Ante-Chamber Room – The antechamber between the two rooms is filled with translucent cabinets identical to the ones in area A-4, except that these contain 4 sterile clean-room suits. These pearly-white suits are only wearable by pure strain humans or mutants with no major body-altering mutations. The head-to-toe outfits confer no AC bonus, but do come equipped with a 4-hour oxygen supply and will absorb up 10 points of damage before becoming shredded and useless.

Room C, The Genetics Research Lab – *The treasure trove of ancient artifacts before you seem to be scattered haphazardly, with some turned over, as if the Ancient Ones left this room in a great hurry. Many of the artifacts have clearly been ruined by the passage of time and the accumulation of an odd green crystalline mold. Among the intact items are an array of opaque boxes stored on the northern wall. The surface of the boxes appears to be a swirling miasma of milky-white and silky-blue clouds. An upright table of intact artifacts lie next to the southern hard air wall. At the far end of the curved room you see a large and spectacular artifact that resembles an up-turned three-legged spider, with a flat circular central area raised slightly above floor level, and a gem-studded metal post attached to the side facing you.*

The boxes stored on shelves are stasis cubes, most of which are activated but empty. Two contain living specimens of experimental animals that have been kept in a state of suspended animation for over 10,000 years. There are 10 stasis boxes in all. If a PC successfully opens a stasis cube, have the player roll 1d10. On a result of 9 or 10, the cube contains one of the two living specimens.

Puppy X-107: This small canid puppy is semi-sentient (3 Intelligence), and has had its genome adjusted in order to give it the *Teleportation* mutation. If frightened, the puppy will randomly teleport up to 60’ without error (if the teleportation destination is a solid object, the puppy will “bounce” another random 10’ until it can materialize safely). The puppy imprints on whoever frees it from the stasis box and regards that person as its mother.

Puppy X-107: Init +0; Atk bite +0 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 3; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP mutation (*Teleport*, 60’); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1.

Rabbit X-241: This white-furred lupine (a species that does not exist in Terra A.D.) is semi-sentient (3 Intelligence) and has had its genetic code altered in such a way as to grant it the *Empathy* mutation. The rabbit will attempt to bond with whichever PC seems the biggest and the strongest for protection. The target PC must make an opposed Willpower save versus a 1d20 Empathy mutation check or feel an

overwhelming emotional urge to protect and care for the rabbit.

Rabbit X-241: Init -0; Atk bite +0 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 3; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP mutation (*Empathy*); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3.

The assortment of intact artifacts on the lab table are obviously ripe for PC plunder and assorted artifact checks. The judge should hand out these artifacts randomly, resisting all attempts by players to actively meta-game by asking questions about size and shape. To the eyes of the primitive PCs, any and all ancient artifacts look equally foreign and strange.

Cortexin Cylinders (4): TL 4; CM 3; Power: Self - These small cylinders function as gas grenades, enveloping a 20' diameter area when successfully activated. Any non-sentient creature or plant affected will become fully sentient in 1d3 turns (roll 3d6 for INT), while sentient creatures are unaffected.

Multitool: TL 5; CL 5; Power: Self; Special: +5 to Artifact checks, bypass security locks on a DC 12 Intelligence check - The multitool device is a compact handheld tool combining AI-driven diagnostic software with gravitational tractor field projectors, making it highly useful for working on and repairing the technology of the Ancient Ones. The device emits a characteristic high-pitched whine when activated.

C-Cells (5) - A small locked plasteel chest containing 5 C-cells.

Medipac: TL 5; CM 6; Power: C-cell (10 charges) - This most prized of ancient artifacts is a small, handheld medical transmat device with an on-board medical diagnostic AI and database. To use the medipac, one need merely hold it against an injured living creature and activate it. This miraculous device instantly takes biomedical sensor readings and activates a specialized matter replicator to restore injured or diseased tissues to their original healthy state. NOTE: Because the medical database is programed only for humans or other pre-disaster living creatures, there is a chance (5% for each hit point healed above the creature's maximum) that the medipac will "cure" (i.e., remove) one random mutation or defect when used on a mutant, manimal, or plantient.

The large artifact at the far end of the lab is a gene resequencer. The device is comprised of a set of controls on a pedestal attached to a circular dais with three inwardly curving metal arms. While it was once used to make careful modifications to the genetic structure of test animals, the millennia have not been kind to it and it is now wholly unreliable, and any attempts to use it will have wildly unpredictable results. Note that regardless of the results of any genetic modifications performed on a living creature, that creature will also be restored to full health by the device.

As the tech level and complexity of the gene resequencer place it far beyond the limits of understanding for the tribal PCs, use the special artifact table below for this device. The controlling PC applies any natural Intelligence modifiers to the roll (and may burn Luck, of course), but critical failure

and successes (natural rolls of 1 and 20 respectively) may not be altered in this way.

Gene Resequencer: TL 6; CM 10; Power: Self.

Artifact Roll	Result
1 or less	Critical Failure: The device explodes inflicting 2d6 damage to all within a 10' radius. One random surviving character is now a non-sentient gecko.
2-3	Character is genetically regressed to a pool of primordial soup.
4-5	Character is genetically regressed to a primitive chordata, which must be placed in water in 1d3 rounds or die of asphyxiation.
6-7	Character is genetically modified into an archaeopteryx.
8-9	Character is genetically modified into a chicken that smells of curry.
10-11	Character is genetically regressed to a prior evolutionary stage (man-ape, semi-sentient genotype).
12-13	Character is genetically transformed into a different genotype; PSH to mutant, mutant to manimal, manimal to plantient, and so on.
14-15	Character is genetically modified to gain one additional physical mutation (if PSH, character becomes mutant).
16-17	Character is genetically modified to lose one additional physical mutation (if this reduces a mutant to zero mutations, then character becomes PSH).
18	Character is genetically modified to gain one additional mental mutation (if PSH, character becomes mutant).
19	Character is genetically modified to gain 1d6 additional appendages, including at least one prehensile tail and/or a pair of wings.
20+	Character is genetically modified to his or her original form and genotype.

Area A-7 – Turbo-Lift: TL 4, CM 3. This small 10' x 10' chamber grants access between levels.

Upon activation of the turbo lift, an ultraviolet decontamination ray will harmlessly scan everything within the turbo lift before ascending or descending. Any failed Artifact check will result in an alarm sounding and the summoning of a soft-light hologram and two security bots (see area A-1 for stats). A fumble on the Artifact check will drop the turbo lift one floor to the bottom of the shaft inflicting 1d4 in damage to all within.

LEVEL TWO

Area B-1 — Turbo-lift: (Same as area A-7)

Area B-2 — Vibratorium: *The vast circular chamber contains a working artifact of the ancients the size of a large boulder. The device is active and complex in a way that hurts your eyes to behold, as you watch parts of it revolve around into itself, only to remerge on the other side. You can feel a low vibration through the soles of your feet. The device is being attended by eight small mutants that look like gopher-men. The gopher-men are buzzing about the ancient machine, fiddling with parts of it using hand held tools of some kind. The tiny 3' tall mutants seem to ignore your entrance into the room. There is a broken gap in the eastern section of the curved wall through which a wall of sand has spilled into the room.*

The device is an ancient Rube Goldberg machine designed to demonstrate the principles of perpetual motion. The gopher-men have modified it over the centuries to emit a subsonic vibration that repels the silane serpents who stalk them in their underground lairs.

The gopher-men's sole focus is attending the machine, which they hover over — adjusting controls and servicing it with their tools. If the machine is approached by any of the PCs, the gopher-men will move to block any access, waving their hands excitedly at the strangers. If the players press forward, the gopher-men will attempt to grapple and shove them back away from the machine.

If the gopher-men are attacked outright, they scatter and flee, diving head-first into the earthen gap in the room's walls as they quickly burrow away. They will return in 1d5 rounds armed with a sleep grenade and attempt to subdue the party. Should they succeed, the characters wake up in 1d6 turns outside the room, and will discover that the door is now barricaded from the other side. The barricaded door requires a combined Strength check of 60 to shove back open again.

Sleep Grenade: When the gopher men hurl a sleep grenade into the room, ask the players immediately what they do, then resolve the effects of the sleep grenade according to their individual responses.

Action	Result
1.) "I run out of the room."	No effect.
2.) "I hold my breath."	No effect; Fort save on next round.
3.) Anything other response	Character sleeps for 1d6 turns.

The gopher-men will continue to attempt to protect the machine with their improvised tools until one or more of their numbers is killed, after which they permanently flee the room, screaming incomprehensible gibberish over their shoulders at the party as they leave.

Divination of the purpose of the vibratorium machine is nigh-impossible for the PCs, but that is unlikely to prevent

them from trying to tinker with it and understand it. Treat the vibratorium machine as a Complexity Modifier 10 artifact. Almost any attempt to tinker with the fragile device will break it, at which time the subsonic hum ceases.

Three rounds later the party will detect a low rumbling noise as though a minor earthquake is beginning. On the next round a silane serpent will burst through the gap in the walls and attack the party.

Gopher-Men (8): Init -0; Atk crude tool +0 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 3 ea; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP tunnel through earth at full movement; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1.

Area B-3 — Tetrahedron Moon Anomaly 1: *This 60' wide circular room is awash in ruined and destroyed artifacts of the ancients — some burnt and blackened, others merely broken into tiny pieces. In the center of the room is an inert crystalline pyramid over 16' tall, surrounded on all sides by odd purple vines suspended from metal poles. You think that you hear a low, barely discernible hum in the room, but every time you stop to listen for it, the hum is no longer there.*

This chamber contains the laboratory used by the Ancient Ones to study a large, crystalline tetrahedron found buried on their moon. There is a plethora of technical equipment strewn haphazardly about the lab, but all of it has been rendered powerless, broken, and inert by the TMA-1. Inevitably, the PCs will examine the tetrahedron. At the slightest touch, a character finds himself mesmerized by the frictionless surface of the tetrahedron and unable to break contact with it for 1 round, after which one of the following things will happen to the character:

1st touch: PC gains 1d3 Intelligence (to a maximum of 18).

2nd touch: PC gains 1d5 Intelligence (to a maximum of 20) and ages 6d10 years.

3rd touch: PC further ages and drops to the floor in a coma, surrounded by a glowing envelope of pure white light. The brightness of the light increases over the next round until the PC can no longer be seen inside. On the third round the PC emerges from the cocoon of light transformed into a gigantic fetal version of his or her genotype — a Star Child (or Star Welp or Star Sprout, as the case may be). The transformed PC is now ostensibly under the control of the judge, though a willing player may continue to role play the character with special instruction from the judge.

STAR CHILD REACTIONS

If the newly transformed Star Child is left alone and unmolested, it will spend 1 round contemplating its new existence, then extend a hand towards the tetrahedron and cause it to begin glowing as each of its three exposed faces falls inwards into infinite corridors of star light. The Star Child will then fly onto one of these star gates and begin a journey of exploration across the multiverse.

Star Child: Init +20; Atk paralysis ray +0 missile fire (pa-

ralysis for 1d6 rounds, see below); AC 30; HD 10d12 60; MV 100'; Act 2d30; SP artifact power drain; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +10.

If the Star Child is attacked or interfered with by any of the remaining PCs, it will initiate combat, always going first in initiative order. The Star Child will respond to any attack by paralyzing the attacker and draining any powered items of all charges. If the attacker has an Intelligence above 12, the paralysis will place the attacking PC into the same

type of coma as the TMA-1, eventually turning that character into another Star Child. Targets below 12 Intelligence merely remain paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.

Note that this encounter could easily escalate into a TPA (Total Party Ascension). While the entire party may be wiped out, the players can at least console themselves that their once Level-0 characters are now the equivalent of transcendent gods freely exploring the planes of existence.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

However events in area B-3 transpire, the tetrahedron's star-gate will remain open for another 2 turns. Adventurous PCs may decide to willingly enter the star-gate and be instantly transported to another location in or outside Terra

A.D. Malicious judges may wish to simply have the party swept up by the star-gate and transport them to the next adventure scenario and/or game system.

APPENDIX A: ARTIFACTS OF THE ANCIENTS

DESCRIBING ARTIFACTS FOR THE PLAYERS

Because your players are members of a 21st century society, describing the Artifacts of the Ancients to their primitive characters can become problematic. If you and your group enjoy a play style unconcerned with issues of metagaming, then no caution in this matter need be exercised.

If, however, you and your group enjoy game sessions filled with elevated levels of mystery and suspense, as well as a decided "Appendix N" flavor, then it is up to the judge to describe artifacts to the players in the most abstract terms possible. This will simulate the very real sense of the unknown that primitive tribesmen would experience when discovering lost artifacts from before the Great Disaster. When the PCs stumble upon a new item, it's best to describe it simply and in extremely general terms of size and shape, always comparing it to something within the characters' realm of experience.

TECH LEVELS AND COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS

Tech Levels (TL) are only used to generally categorize artifacts, sometimes placing an upward limit on the ability of player characters to understand and master technologies too far removed from their understanding. Even the most brilliant of tribesmen cannot learn how to pilot a star shuttle or program a heuristic quantum computer, at least not without years of experience in dealing in such arcane super devices.

The maximum Tech Level that a PC can understand is based either on Intelligence score or class level, whichever is higher.

Complexity Modifier (CM) on the other hand, represent a more specific and concrete measurement of an artifacts' inherit accessibility to the untutored user. For example, a stun grenade may only have a CM of 1 (you push a button and throw it away), whereas a dazer pistol with its multiple settings and optional power sources has a CM of 4.

ARTIFACT CHECKS

The knowledge and forces used to create the artifacts of the ancients may be forever lost, but that doesn't mean that a savage mutant tribesman can't pick up a dazer pistol and figure out how to fire it. In order to attempt to understand and use an artifact, characters make an artifact check roll of 1d20 +Intelligence modifier +class Artifact bonus -the artifact Complexity Modifier, then take the total rolled and consult the table below for the result. Each standard Artifact check requires 3 turns (30 minutes) to complete.

For example, Mangarr the Mighty, a 1st level Rover with a 16 Intelligence, finds and attempts to understand a dazer pistol. Mangarr rolls a d20, adds his Intelligence ability modifier of +2, his artifact bonus at 1st-level of +2, and subtracts the Complexity Mod of the dazer pistol (CM 3). Mangarr rolls a 12 +2 Intelligence, +2 artifact bonus, -3 CM =13. Mangarr successfully activates the dazer pistol and fires a shot, but does not yet understand how to use the artifact. He may elect to spend an additional 3 turns attempting to better understand how to use the dazer pistol and make another artifact check.

Should players attempt to collaborate and have multiple characters examine the same artifact, the Artifact check will be that of the highest Intelligence character +1 for each additional character with an Intelligence above 12 to a maximum total artifact bonus of +4.

TEACHING OTHERS

Once a character understands the basic functioning of an artifact, he can share this knowledge with any other character. In order to learn how to use an artifact when being taught by someone who already understands the device, the second character must make a successful DC 10 Intelligence check. A failure means that the character cannot learn to use that artifact for the next 24 hours. On a critical failure of 1, the artifact breaks irreparably and inflicts damage as though the mutant had rolled a fumble on the Artifact check table below.

For example, after having finally mastered the dazer pistol, Mangarr decides to instruct his comrade Canus, a manimal dog with an Intelligence of 12 (no ability bonus), in its use. Canus rolls a d20 and gets a 10 – success! Canus now also knows how to use the dazer pistol, which could be handy knowledge to have later on.

COMBAT ARTIFACT CHECKS

There will arise occasions when a player character will wish to grab an unknown artifact in the middle of combat and attempt to quickly guess its function and use it. These are called Combat Artifact checks. In order to make a Combat Artifact check, the player character must immediately burn 1 point of Luck. This earns the character a one-time Combat Artifact check that takes only 1 round to execute (as opposed to the 3 turns a standard artifact check normally requires), and to which no normal bonuses apply except further Luck expenditures, i.e., a Combat Artifact check is a straight roll that does not include any Artifact Check bonuses from genotype, level or ability modifiers.

For example, the mutant Ro-Jeck is being attacked by a hard-light hologram armed with a mazer pistol. Ro-Jeck's holographic opponent rolls a 1 on his ranged attack and fumbles, dropping the mazer pistol to the floor. Ro-Jeck has never seen a mazer pistol before, but decides to scoop it up and attempt to fire it back at his opponent. Ro-Jeck grabs the mazer pistol, burns 1 point of Luck, and spends his round attempting a Combat Artifact check on the pistol. Ro-Jeck is a 1st-level mutant, so his action die is 1d20, which he rolls for his Artifact check with no additional bonuses. The mazer pistol is CM 5, and Ro-Jeck rolls very well with an 18, so 18-5 = a Combat Artifact check of 13, meaning that Ro-Jeck manages to activate and fire the mazer pistol for one use, but still does not understand how it works. Fortunately for Ro-Jeck, the mazer pistol was already set on high and he subsequently rolls a successful ranged missile attack against his opponent, resulting in 3d6 of heat damage to the hard-light hologram's projection device, and it dies. Because Ro-Jeck did not roll high enough on his Combat Artifact check to fully understand the mazer pistol's operation, he would need to spend another point of Luck and make an additional Combat Artifact check if he wished to attempt to continue to use the mazer pistol during the same combat.

d20	Result
1	Artifact breaks irreparably and inflicts maximum damage possible (or 1d6, whichever is greater) to all characters within a minimum range of 10' (or greater range, if applicable).
2-8	Artifact breaks irreparably, inflicts 1d3 damage to user.
9-11	Artifact breaks – part falls off; must make a DC 12 Intelligence check to replace part.
12-13	Artifact activates for one use; but its operation is still not understood.
14-16	Artifact activates and its operation is minimally understood; DC 10 Intelligence check to first 1d3 uses; artifact operation is basically understood afterwards.
17-19	Artifact activates and its operation is basically understood; additional ammunition or power sources may be used if available.
20-22	Artifact activates and its operation is well understood; minor repairs may be attempted with successful DC 12 Intelligence check and correct tools and materials.
23-26	Artifact activates and its operation is well understood; minor repairs may be attempted with successful DC 10 Intelligence check and correct tools and materials.
27-31	Artifact activates and its operation is precisely understood; major repairs may be attempted with successful DC 8 Intelligence check and correct tools and materials.
32-33	Artifact activates and its operation is precisely understood; major repairs may be attempted with correct tools and materials.
34-35	Artifact activates and its operation is precisely understood; major repairs may be attempted with correct tools and materials. With a successful DC 10 intelligence check, proper materials, parts, and tools, a duplicate artifact may be constructed.
36+	Artifact activates and its operation is precisely understood; major repairs may be attempted with correct tools and materials. With proper materials, parts, and tools, a duplicate artifact may be constructed.



APPENDIX B: AI RECOGNITION

AI RECOGNITION ROLLS



Whenever a player character attempts to interact with an artificial intelligence, the first step is to make an AI recognition roll to determine if the artificial intelligence even regards the character as a human being — a necessary precursor to any further attempts at communication. Many factors can potentially affect the AI recognition roll, from how closely the player character physically resembles a pre-disaster human to how functionally intact the AI's programming remains after centuries of time has passed.

The AI recognition roll is accomplished by the player calculating the PC's AI recognition check roll (1d20 ± genotype modifier ± other modifiers), rolling the appropriate die, and comparing the result against the artificial intelligence's current AI recognition target number. NOTE: Plantients do not receive AI recognition rolls, and are never recognized as humans by artificial intelligences.

The following chart gives some common examples of AI recognition modifiers.

AFTER THE AI RECOGNITION ROLL



If the player character is successfully recognized as human by the AI, communication with the artificial intelligence can commence. While the diversity of role playing options is of course rightfully left to the auspices of individual judges, it should be noted that a successful AI recognition roll only makes open communication with the AI possible — it does not guarantee sufficient security clearance to exercise authority over the AI, nor does it ensure mastery over the unit. Some AIs possess full sentience and are therefore treated as NPCs and cannot be mastered at all. Judges are encouraged to use these role playing opportunities to negotiate with the player characters for any control over an AI, as such beings can become powerful allies and perform game-changing functions for the PCs.

Table 2-2: AI Recognition Roll Modifiers

Condition	AI Recognition Roll Modifier
Genotype:	
Pure Strain Human	+2
Mutant	-
Manimal	-4
Plantient	No AI recognition possible
Player Character is:	
Mutant with no visible mutations	+1
Mutant with visible mutations	-1 to -4 (judge's discretion based on severity)
PSH is dressed as Ancient One	+1
PC possesses functioning com badge	+2 to +4 (depending upon type and security clearance)
Manimal is primate sub-type	+1
Artificial Intelligence is:	
Household appliance, toy, household-bot, or household hologram	+1
Civilian vehicle or personal computer	-
Governmental vehicle, Industrial robot, or governmental hologram	-1
Medical or scientific computer, robot, or hologram	-2
Military vehicle, robot, or hologram	-3
AI is damaged or insane	-4
AI is currently mastered by living being	-6

THE MUSEUM AT THE END OF TIME



1 SQUARE = 10 FT. 

