

IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE COMPUTER-GOD

A speculative fiction adventure for BX or LL characters of any level

By

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PART 0: GETTING STARTED

BACKGROUND

In the far future of the game world, a combination of atomic and magic warfare has turned most of the world into wastelands and wilderness. The only exception is The City, a gigantic city that houses what remains of humanity and their protector, The Central Computer. Recently (relatively speaking) The Central Computer has upgraded itself and decided to reach back in time so that it may abduct those who hampered its creation by their actions and punish them using real and simulated tortures. Its reasoning is that those it abducts indirectly caused the death of untold billions by not allowing it to be created sooner. Naturally, The Central Computer has decided that the PCs are among the guilty.

OUTLINE

The PCs are abducted by The Central Computer. They arrive in The Prison and may try to interact with other prisoners (day 1). The next day they see other prisoners being escorted somewhere (day 2). The day after that (3) they are subjected to judgment and brutal punishment. They next day (4), The Central Computer makes a grave mistake and abducts someone he was not prepared to contain. The new prisoner manages to break out of the prison and open a path for the PCs and other to escape. Fleeing into the wastes, the PCs have an opportunity to investigate ruins and interact with local humanoids. The PCs must then decide whether they will hide out in the wastes or seek revenge against The Central Computer. There are ways for the PCs to return to their own time in both The City and the wastes.

SET-UP

Although it's possibly to spring "You all wake up in a weird dungeon" out of the blue, it's best to build up to the adventure by having minor choral disturbances beforehand. Mechanically this could entail a random spell effect (haste, slow, time stop, etc.) that only lasts one round. Stylistically this could take the form of events seeming to rewind or repeat as well as lots of déjà vu. Combine both approaches and mess with time: The party wakes up after an 8-hour sleep and apparently only seconds have passed or they end a combat in a minute while environmental clues indicate that hours have passed. Just make sure these effects are centered on the PCs.

ALTERED EFFECTS

Some things work differently in the far future than in the standard campaign setting. The gods are long dead and the worldsoul is deeply wounded so divine casters will initially be unable to cast spells higher than 2nd level. After a number of hours equal to 36 minus the relevant spellcasting attribute (Wisdom for Clerics) then they regain the use of 3rd level spells, then after a similar period of time they recover 4th level spells, etc. Spells and items that travel to, contact, or summon from other planes simply do not work. When a character dies in The City, The Central Computer stores the soul in a crystalline matrix and recreates, repairs, or remakes the character's body and all the items it brought with it before resurrecting the character without any loss of levels or abilities. Outside the city, the dead character's soul departs to a silent void of endless night.

PART 1: THE ABDUCTION

AWAY WE GO

After the set-up has been performed, the PCs (along with all gear carried or worn) are abducted by The Central Computer at a suitably dramatic moment. You may allow them to save against spells but this only buys them 1d4 rounds before they are drawn through the timescape. As they are dragged through

the timescape they catch glimpses of alternate timelines, creatures that are incomprehensible (they'll only remember hundreds of eyes or hundreds of teeth), and similar frightening things. When they arrive they may make a Constitution check to avoid vomiting and/or losing control of their bodily functions. When the shock of time travel wears off after 1d4 rounds they recognize that they're in . . .

THE PRISON

Escape Attempts

The PCs may try to escape the prison: This is hard but not impossible. The prison is underground, surrounded by a forcefield, and constructed using self-repairing architecture. The simplest method of escape is to use the Teleport spell; treat his familiarity with the location as a category lower than usual. Note that although older locations of the campaign world are still in relatively the same area, the laws of space and magic were hurt by the war so the location may be very different from the caster expects or remembers. The harder method of escape involves breaking through the prison's layers. The walls have 900 hp and regenerate 1 hp per round; normal weapons deal 1 point of damage, magical weapons deal minimum possible damage (a *long sword* +1 deals 2 points, etc.), and spells deal half damage. *Disintegrate* and other effects work normally. No to-hit roll is needed to strike the wall. It should take a party of four about 300 rounds/5 turns/50 minutes of weapon attacks to create a man-sized opening in the wall. The next hurdle is the forcefield. Brute force and even most magic won't affect it. *Disintegrate* will disable a portion for 1d6+1 minutes and an *Earthquake* has a 50% chance of disabling it. A Dimension Door or Teleport can be used to bypass the forcefield and enter the cavern beyond. The cavern itself is large but unless you want to insert a passage to a cave system of your own design (or from another module) it's a dead end. If any Cleaning Robots notice prisoners trying to escape or missing, they will instantly report that to The Central Computer, who will teleport 2d8 Guardian Robots and 1d2 War Robots (see Appendix B) to stop/find the prisoners.

Characters

Although there are about 50 creatures in this room (besides the PCs), most have already fallen into a catatonia because of their constant punishment at The Central Computer's hands. Only 15 remain respondent, 6 of whom have experienced a taste of the torment that awaits them and 9 of whom have no idea what's going on. Only 7 individuals are detailed below, you'll have to create or "borrow" the rest if you need them.

Arni Kolason

Male human 5th-level cleric

Alignment: Lawful (evil)

Personality: Domineering

Mood: Upbeat

Crime: Killed an upstart technomancer.

Treasure: Chain mail, 2 *Potions of Extra Healing*, a gold band inscribed with dwarven runes that's a *Ring of Protection* +1, a mace with a head shaped like a fist, a shield, a silver holy symbol shaped like a fist, and a backpack full of standard adventuring gear.

Rotertod

Male red dragon

Alignment: Chaotic (evil)

Personality: Bombastic

Mood: Scared but he pretends to be defiant

Crime: Ate several wizards who were researching electricity.

Treasure: 10 gold rings (or bracelets for man-sized creatures) studded with rubies, sapphires, and diamonds, worth 500 GP each. His two main horns are capped with bronze with fragments of the draconic prophecy inscribed on them, worth 200 GP to most buyers but 1000 GP to scholars and cultists. His tail

has 6 iron rings adorned with onyx; 5 are mundane and worth 100 GP each, while one is actually a *Ring of Command Human* (or an *Armlet of Command Human* for human-sized characters).

Mul, Esh, and Uz

Male orcs

Alignment: Chaotic (evil), chaotic (evil), and chaotic (neutral)

Personality: Angry, cowardly, and reserved

Mood: Very angry, frightened, and thoughtful

Crime: Burned several scrolls containing ancient scientific writings in a fire during the winter.

Treasure: Each brother has chainmail, a helmet, a hand-axe, and a shield. Uz has a *Ring of Telekinesis*.

Theiasophia

Female trumpet archon (see Appendix A for more details)

Alignment: Lawful (good)

Personality: Faithful

Mood: Concerned

Crime: Slayed a wizard and a devil who were trying to start a sinister industrial revolution.

Treasure: Trumpet, *Scroll of Blade Barrier*.

PART 2: THE JUDGEMENT

The PCs will have a quiet day when they are abducted. The next day they will notice prisoners being escorted to punishment. The day after that, The Central Computer will bring the PCs before itself to declare them guilty. Before the PCs get taken, allow others to be taken to judgment or punishment. Standard procedure is for a group of 20 guardian robots to arrive via the central teleportal an hour after a meal, approach whoever it is that they want to take with them, escort the prisoner(s) to the teleportal, take them to The Central Computer if they haven't been judged, and then take them to their punishments. Here are some suggestions for events that can occur before the PCs are judged:

- Theiasophia is judged and subjected to The Slow Death via acid. She is visibly shaking when she returns.
- Two catatonic knights are escorted away shortly after breakfast-time then returned before dinner-time.
- Rotortod is taken to The Arena. He fights a huge horde of rat-things that kill him several times.
- Mal, Esh, and Uz are judged and subjected to The Fast Death via fire and woodchippers. Mal and Uz are quiet, Esh is sobbing and crying.
- Arni Kolason is judged and performs The Walk. He assures everyone that The Central Computer has shown him favor because of his station and will try to boss others around.

The Punishments

What follows are the typical punishments that The Central Computer metes out. It is strongly advised that the PCs experience The Walk and one other punishment: Don't subject them to all four. If you're pressed for time or the players feel bored perform The Walk immediately after the judgment then perform The Arena

The Arena

This massive edifice is the site of gladiatorial games. The arena floor is a holo-matter emitter. The rest of the building is chrome and plastic. Citizens sit to watch the games with bemusement. If attacked they will do nothing but watch in amazement (1 hp, AC 9, always fail saves and attacks). The Arena has no apparent roof but is bound by a force-field. The PCs must fight enemies, often in a specialized battlefield such as sand dunes, water, or mud. The matches last until the PCs have killed all enemies, accomplished a goal, or the audience gets bored (usually after an hour if the PCs are getting stomped). Dead PCs are resurrected by The Central Computer during and after the match. Go crazy here. You can run straight deathmatches (PCs vs 20 Trolls in a ruined temple complex) or objective-based missions (get the chalice without the ghost knights noticing). Tournament-style modules may also be run as arena simulations.

The Fast Death

The Slow Death

The Walk

PART 3: THE BREAK-OUT

PART 4: THE WASTELAND

The outside world isn't a pleasant place. The radiation is gone but there still is very little life out here. The terrain is mostly rocks, dirt, hills, and sand. Plants are mostly shrubs and bushes that never exceed 3' in height. The wind is constantly blowing, sometimes as a breeze, sometimes violently.

Flora

Fauna

People

Mutations

Although the natives of the wastelands are resistant to any lingering radiation effects, the PCs aren't so lucky. For every week spent in the wastelands, a PC has a flat 20% chance of developing a mutation. You may allow the PC to save against Wands to negate the acquisition of a mutation. Characters can gain the same mutation multiple times. Roll on the table below to determine mutations:

2d8Roll	Mutation
2	Skin becomes gray and rough as leather; lowers AC by 1
3	Eyes grow to double normal size, gain infravision 60' or add 60' to range of existing infravision
4	Hands become chitinous claws; may no longer hold weapons but gains two attacks that deal 2d4 damage each
5	Grows gills; can now comfortably breath underwater
6	Devolution toward ape-like form; increase Str and Con by 2 but decrease Int by 4
7	Psychic ability; may use <i>Telekinesis</i> as cast by a 10 th -level Magic-User as a spell-like ability usable at will
8	A fully-functional extra arm; it can hold another shield and more magic items but is clumsy
9	All hair falls out and braincase grows; increases Int by 2 and gains <i>ESP</i> as a spell-like ability usable at will
10	Teeth become black fangs; natural attack that deals 1d4 damage
11	Eyes shrink to half-size; lose any infravision and make a save vs Paralyze or Petrify or go permanently blind
12	Skin, muscles, and organs turn invisible; appears to be undead but is still living
13	Evolution toward a higher state; increase all ability scores by 1
14	Energy vampire; unarmed and natural attacks also drain life energy just like a Wight's attacks but those struck may save vs Poison or Death to negate this effect
15	Character immediately stops aging; cannot die of old age and is immune to effects that would age him
16	Super immune system; the character can't be affected by poisons or diseases.

Places

Fort Defiance

Vault of The Ancient One

Village of The Man-Apes

Adventures & Other Lands

The wastes are a big place and the history of this world is a weird one. If you want you can drop adventures about crashed spaceships and lost cities to your heart's (or group's) content. This can be a good opportunity for PCs who either don't care about going home or want to toughen up before fighting

The Central Computer. You can also drop in other lands beyond the wastes. Because of the combined atomic and magical fallout, you can go crazy with this: A land of fire and brimstone terraformed (infernoformed?) by devils into “New Hell”, a land where sentient colors fight independent robots, a medieval-esque kingdom where knights carry rifles and their enemies are psychic ghosts and their eerie cults.

PART 5: THE BREAK-IN

PART 6: AGAINST THE COMPUTER-GOD

PART 7: LOOSE ENDS

When (or if) The Central Computer is destroyed, 90% of The City’s Robots will fall into an inactive standby mode. The soul capture and resurrection mechanisms will also go offline for 1d6+1 days. Thetan expedition forces will remain to survey the damage and inspect any surviving Citizens. Man-Apes will remain to bury their dead and explore. The PCs will be able to find a time portal and return home. It should 3d6 days for them to find it by themselves; reduce that time by 1d6 if the Thetans marched with them and by another 1d6 if the Man-Ape tribes are also in The City. If Dr. Yunger accompanied them then they will find it in 1 day.

Although combat encounters with wasteland animals, rogue Robots, and unscrupulous Soldiers and/or Man-Apes are possible, the party has just completed the climax of the adventure so those will seem unnecessary at best. The encounter table below suggests some peaceful encounters to add flavor to The City in the current state. Re-roll or ignore rolls that don’t make sense (i.e. Man-Ape encounters if no Man-Apes helped storm The City).

1d12 Roll	Encounter
1	1d4 Citizens desperately trying to reactivate a Guardian Robot
2	One of The Central Computer’s prisoners or escapees, wandering around in a daze
3	2d6 Thetan engineers surveying the cityscape; may ask for help removing debris
4	3d4 Citizens who are trying to emulate either Thetans or Man-Apes; alternatively, they are now cultists of Xetalig
5	A quiet park mostly untouched by the battle; harmless bird-things of the waste chirp their melodies
6	Thetans or Man-Apes performing a funeral for a fallen comrade
7	1d4+1 frightened Citizens who warn the PCs not to mess with them or they’ll call the Robots on them
8	A War Revenant smoking a cigarette and sitting as though deep in thought; it will ask the PCs taking The City was good or bad. After it hears an answer it will close its eyes and die.
9	1d3+1 tired Man-Apes or Soldiers escorting 2d6 totally lost Citizens to a medical camp
10	A wounded Man-Ape or Soldier in need of healing
11	A building or power relay 500’ away explodes or falls over; it won’t injure or hinder the PCs
12	Chaos: Roll twice on this table, all of that is encountered at the same time

The Time Machine

Once the PCs find the time machine, there may be several things they must consider before returning. Are they going to take any items from the future back to the past? Dr. Yunger will note that the presence of such technology *might* change the course of history but that the future is already in bad shape so maybe that doesn’t matter. The other choice the PCs have is whether they will go back to their timeframe or if they want to go to a point before or after it. Going into their past presents them with a chance to change the setting by altering history. Going into their future can be a great way to escape a mortal enemy or escape pesky legal troubles.

APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

Archon, Trumpet

No. Enc.: 1 (1d4+1)

Alignment: Lawful (good)

Movement: 120’ (40’)

Fly: 270' (90')
Armor Class: -7
Hit Dice: 12
Attacks: 1 (unarmed or bastard sword +4)
Damage: 1d4/2d4+4
Save: F12
Morale: 10
Hoard Class: IX
Other Treasure: Magical trumpet
XP: 2500

Trumpet Archons are said to be the perfected forms of those who proselytized for lawful religions during their life. These heavenly beings resemble winged female elves with bright blue, green, or yellow skin. Each Trumpet Archon carries a magnificently-wrought trumpet about 4 feet long. She may sound a note of paralyzing awe with her trumpet; all non-archon creatures within 100' must save vs Petrify or Paralyze at a -2 penalty. Failure means that that creature is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. Alternatively, she may transform her trumpet into a magical *bastard sword* +4. Trumpet Archons are immune to electricity and petrification. They also have several spell-like abilities usable at will: *Continual Light*, *Detect Evil*, *Protection from Evil* 10' Radius, and *Teleport*. Trumpet Archons also cast spells as 12th-level clerics.

Citizen

No. Enc.: 1d4+1
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 60' (20')
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 0 (1 hp)
Attacks: 0
Damage: 0
Save: Automatically fails all saves.
Morale: 11
Hoard Class: Nil
Other Treasure: Nil
XP: 1

Howler (Wolf-Bat)

No. Enc.: 1d3+1 (1d6+1)
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 150' (50')
Fly:
Armor Class: 3
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: 4 (bite, 2 claws, and sting)
Damage: 1d4/1d6/1d6/1d4 + poison
Save: F3
Morale: 9
Hoard Class: Nil
Other Treasure: Nil
XP: 1

Mauler (Ant-Panther-Scorpion)

No. Enc.: 1 (1d2)
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 150' (50')

Armor Class: 3
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: 4 (bite, 2 claws, and sting)
Damage: 1d4/1d6/1d6/1d4 + poison
Save: F3
Morale: 9
Hoard Class: Nil
Other Treasure: Nil
XP: 1

Man-Ape

No. Enc.: 1d6+1 (5d6)
Alignment: Neutral (good)
Movement: 60' (30')
Armor Class: 8
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: 2 (bite and spear)
Damage: 2/1d6+2
Save: F2
Morale: 8
Hoard Class: IX
Other Treasure: Nil
XP: 1

Robot, Guardian

No. Enc.: 1d6+1
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 120' (40')
Armor Class:
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: 2 (unarmed or electro-staff)
Damage: 1d6/2d4 + 1d6 electricity
Save: F5
Morale: 12
Hoard Class: Nil
Other Treasure: Electro-staff
XP: 1

Robot, War

No. Enc.: 1
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 120' (40')
Armor Class: 0
Hit Dice: 11
Attacks: 2 (stomp)
Damage: 1d10+3/1d10+3
Save: F11
Morale: 12
Hoard Class: Nil
Other Treasure: Nil
XP: 2800

War Robots are 20' tall machines with hard angles. Their two unguligrade legs attach to a T-shaped pelvis that can rotate; their "torsos" are composed of a central rectangle from which sprouts a "nose" bristling with cameras, sensors, and antennae. On their right side is a large hoop about 10' in diameter; on their left side is a square from which emerges a 15' tuning fork. War Robots are immune to paralysis, petrification, poison, sleep, mental effects, emotional effects, and healing. Every 1d4 rounds a War Robot may shoot a ball of supercharged plasma from its fork-like weapon, replicating the effects of a *Fire Ball* cast by an 11th-level Magic-User. Every 3d6 rounds it may fire a green death-ray from its hoop-like weapon, replicating the effects of a *Disintegrate* cast by an 11th-level Magic-User. It may stomp and fire as many weapons as it has ready during any given round.

Soldier

Alignment: Lawful (good)

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 5

Hit Dice: 2+2

Attacks: 1 (combat knife, grenade, or rifle)

Damage: 1d6/3d6/3d4 or 1d4+1 or 40 (see Appendix B)

Save:

Morale: 10

Hoard Class: II

Other Treasure: Rifle with 1d4-1 magazine, 1d4-1 grenades, metal helmet, ballistic vest (see Appendix B)

XP: 1

For every 5 soldiers encountered there is a 50% chance for at least one of them to be a specialist as detailed below:

Chaplain - Has all the abilities of a 2nd-level Cleric, carries a steel holy symbol and a *Potion of Extra Healing*

Demolitions Expert - Has all the abilities of a 2nd-level Cleric, carries a spellbook and 1d4+1 extra grenades

Engineer - Has all the abilities of a 2nd-level Thief, carries surveying tools and 1d6 maps

Squeezer (Rat-Snake)

No. Enc.: 1d4 (3d4)

Alignment: Neutral

Movement: 60' (20')

Armor Class:

Hit Dice:

Attacks: Nil

Damage: 0

Save:

Morale: 6

Hoard Class: Nil

Other Treasure: Nil

XP: 1

The Central Computer

No. Enc.: 1 (Unique)

Alignment: Lawful (good)

Movement: 0' (0')

Armor Class: -8

Hit Dice: 20+20

Attacks: 6 (liquid chrome pseudopods)

Damage: 3d10/3d10/3d10/3d10/3d10/3d10

Save: F20

Morale: 12

Hoard Class: Nil

Other Treasure: The City and all within it, including time machines.

XP: 6000

The Central Computer controls The City. It is more like a structure than a creature. The Central Computer is composed of the core and the vault. The core is a 100' x 100' cube of black metal composed of smaller shifting nano-cubes. The vault is a 1000' wide, 1000' long, and 500' tall chamber composed of "liquid chrome" nano-machines that can be reassembled to form pseudopods. The Central Computer can cast spells as 20th level Magic-User and a 20th level Cleric but may only cast one Magic-User spell and/or one Cleric spell per turn. It has access to all spells. It can command any of The City's Guardian Robots and War Robots.

War Revenant

No. Enc.: 1d8 (3d4)

Alignment: Lawful (neutral)

Movement: 60' (20')

Armor Class:

Hit Dice: 4

Attacks: 2 (combat knife, grenade, or rifle)

Damage: 1d6/3d6/3d4 or 1d4+1 or 40 (see Appendix B)

Save: F4

Morale: 11

Hoard Class: II

Other Treasure: Rifle with 1d4-1 magazines, 1d4-1 grenades, metal helmet, ballistic vest (see Appendix B)

XP: 1

Xitalig, Demon Prince of Poisonous Insects

No. Enc.: 1 (Unique)

Alignment: Chaotic (evil)

Movement: 150' (50')

Armor Class: -6

Hit Dice: 20+15

Attacks: 4 (3 bites and 1 sting)

Damage: 3d4 + poison/3d4 + poison/3d4 + poison/3d6 + poison

Save: F20

Morale: 12

Hoard Class: Nil

Other Treasure: Nil

XP: 8000

APPENDIX B: NEW ITEMS

New Mundane Items

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Weight
Electro-staff	50 GP	1d6 + electricity (see text)	10 lb.
Grenade	100 GP	3d6 (see text)	1 lb.
Rifle	200 GP	3d4 or 1d4+1 or 40 (see text)	7 lb.
Magazine	70 GP		1 lb.

Electro-staff:

Grenade:

Rifle:

Ranges for Rifles

Firing Mode	Short Range (+1 To Hit)	Medium Range (+0 To Hit)	Long Range (+1 To Hit)
Semi-automatic	600'	1200'	1800'
Spread	300'	600'	900'
Automatic	150'	300'	450'

Armor	Cost	Armor Class	Weight
Ballistic Vest	140 GP	5	6 lb.

New Magic Items

Bane of Machines

Bottomless Magazine

Helmet of Quantum Heuristics: This device resembles a cylindrical knight's helm with a strange brain-like structure of gold and glass on top. Once per day a creature may don the helmet and ask (either by speaking or thinking) how a specific goal may be accomplished. The advanced quantum nano-heuristic processors in the helm will reveal in exact detail the actions that will lead to the highest probability of accomplishing that goal. Note that the answer revealed could still be almost impossible to pull off (like murdering an entire country).

Mindshrooms: These strange mushrooms have brown stems about 5 inches long and are topped with gray spherical caps that bear an uncanny resemblance to brains. A creature that eats a mindshroom must make an Intelligence check. On a failure, that creature permanently gains 1 point of Intelligence. The creature must then save vs Poison or Death. Failure means that the eater does nothing but babble and twitch uncontrollably for 10 turns as he suffers terrible and wondrous hallucinations.

Tribal Mask of The Man-Apes

APPENDIX C: NEW PLAYER OPTIONS

It is entirely possible that some of the PCs may die over the course of the adventure and require replacements. For this reason, two new Classes

Man-Apes

Requirements: CON 10, WIS 10

Prime Requisite: Constitution

Hit Dice: 1d10

Maximum Level: 9

Experience	Level	Hit Dice	Natural AC	Bite Damage
0	1	1	8	2
2,035	2	2	8	2
4,065	3	3	7	2
8,125	4	4	7	1d4+1
16,255	5	5	6	1d4+1
32,510	6	6	6	1d4+1
65,020	7	7	5	1d6+1
120,100	8	8	5	1d6+1
240,200	9	9	4	1d6+1

Thetan Characters

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