

COVERT *AFFAIRS*

A METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA Module, #KDJ5

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Based on the METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA setting by
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INTRODUCTION

Your once peaceful village has had enough of deprivations by brutal mutant wolf-men and has declared war! The help of every able-bodied man and mutant is needed to defeat the wolfoid horde! Your village needs YOU – will you answer the call?!

This module is designed for the 1st edition Metamorphosis Alpha system and is intended as a challenge for 4-6 player characters. It is written to follow the events that occurred in module #KDJ1 *Dire Straits*. The adventure also refers to new rules introduced in the **APPENDICES** of module #KDJ1 *Dire Straits*. The estimated play time is 4 hours.

*** IMPORTANT ***

Anyone intending to referee this module should read it in its entirety before play; however, anyone wishing to play a character in the adventure should read no further or face the wrath of the...

Game Gremlins*.

* As most players know, Game Gremlins are those vicious little beasts that enjoy jinxing your dice to roll the lowest number possible at the worst possible time, whispering devilish ideas to torment your characters to your game referee in his sleep, and generally taking whatever steps necessary to insure the party's failure if not their deaths. And they do all that without even being mad at you, so I would stop reading if I were you.

ADVENTURE FORMAT

Based on a game system developed in the late 1970's, the format of this module harkens back to the earliest days of adventure writing styles. As such, you will not find any blocks of text to be read to the players. Instead, you as referee will be given a description of a room or situation (potentially containing information of which the characters are unaware) and it is left up to your discretion to determine what information to convey to the players and how to convey it.

There are several formatting conventions followed by this document. All mutation names appear in *italics*. Additionally, whenever a creature is described in the text, the relevant creature statistics are included in the following format:

Name (number): AC; MV; HD; hp; AT type (WC, DMG) and/or *combat mutation*; *other mutation 1*; *other mutation 2*; *defect mutation*; CN; CR; DX; MR; LP; RR; ST.

where

name is the name of the creature,
number is the number of creatures appearing (not required if only one creature is present),
AC denotes the creature's armor class,
DX denotes the creature's dexterity,
MV denotes the creature's land movement in map spaces per combat turn followed by the creature's movement in yards per combat turn in parentheses (this may be followed by other types of movement if applicable),
HD represents the creature's hit dice,
hp denotes the creature's available hit points,
AT lists the various attack options available to the creature which may include mutations usable in combat,
WC denotes the weapon class of the attack,
DMG denotes the possible damage inflicted by the attack which may be separated by slashes (/) if different for humanoid beings/mutated creatures/true humans,
CN denotes the creature's constitution score,
CR denotes the creature's computer recognition score (see **MUTANT-COMPUTER INTERACTION** in module #KDJ1 *Dire Straits* **APPENDICES**),
DX denotes the creature's dexterity score,

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MR denotes the creature's mental resistance score (if different for attack and defense, the scores will be separated by slashes with the attack score reported first),

LP denotes the creature's leadership potential score,
RR denotes the creature's radiation resistance, and
ST denotes the creature's strength score.

BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, the disaster that befell the starship *Warden* adversely affected many parts of the ship and its inhabitants. These included a group of androids in a medical lab that were exposed to the strange radiation permeating the ship. The radiation caused the androids' fibrous brain cells to develop in unexpected ways, granting them a sort of animal cunning. These androids built more androids like themselves and began to explore the ship in a quest to gain control. They continued to improve themselves in many ways (superior intelligence, immunity to radiation, etc.) but were always limited by a built-in two-year lifespan.

When they gained access to Habitat Level 2 roughly 60 years ago, the androids found it full of mutated life; life which could hold the key to extending their own limited lifespans. They built a lab on the level and began experimentation. The area controlled by the androids soon became known as the Domain of the Faceless One to the human inhabitants of the level. To go there was to never be seen again. (Consult **THE DOMAIN OF THE FACELESS ONE** in the **APPENDICES** for more information.)

Over a month ago, several packs of wolfoids, tired of being preyed upon by the chemical men, joined together and attacked the android lab. It was a terrific success. Many captured wolfoids were freed and much advanced technology was pillaged. The leader of the raid even took the crystalline data core for the complex (although he didn't fully understand what purpose the crystal served).

The crystal stolen by the wolfoids held the results of the lab's experiments: invaluable information to the androids. The few androids remaining summoned assistance and mounted a war against the wolfoids. They needed their crystal back.

After the raid on the android lab, the wolfoids split back into their individual packs. This made it easier for the androids to win battles, but harder to find the wolfoid with the crystal. The androids contacted their spy within the humanoid village of Habitat, Enginer Rorke, the village shaman, and ordered him to incite the villagers into attacking the wolfoids. He had started to build support within the village when the weather for the entire level went crazy.

A pack of wolfoids, driven from the Wolf Forest by the android attacks, had stumbled upon the level's environmental control center. In their ignorance, they accidentally brought down a severe winter on everyone. Fortunately, this situation was set right by a group of heroes from Habitat: normal weather conditions were restored and hydroponic food was provided by the heroes' new ally, Habitat Control Droid HCD-31E5F3, or simply Hayseed. (For more information about the control center, consult module **#KDJ1 Dire Straits**.)

Since the weather disaster, more and more packs of the wolf-men have moved into Birnam Wood (driven there by the android attacks). Hunters from the village have gone missing and people are scared. Enginer Rorke has convinced the council of elders that the village must take the initiative and attack the largest pack of wolfoids at their lair. The beasts must be taught the fear of man.

SYNOPSIS

The party is asked by the village shaman to confront the pack leader during the village's attack on the wolfoids. They are equipped for battle and then sent to prepare the environmental control center for the village's wounded resulting from the attack. On the way to the center, they are approached with an offer to retrieve a crystal from the wolfoid pack leader. After preparing the control center, the party joins the villagers in battle the next day. During the attack, they slay the wolfoid pack leader and claim his crystal. That night, they meet their employer and receive their reward for the crystal. Their employer, a mutated raccoon, arouses their suspicions and they follow him to his own exchange for the crystal. He is met by the village shaman and his android allies. Confronting the shaman results in a pitched battle with the androids, during which the shaman will be revealed as an android. When the party returns to the village, they discover a duplicate shaman in residence. Depending on the player characters' actions, this shaman may blow himself up as well as the characters. At the end of the adventure, the android data crystal will probably be in the possession of the party, making them targets of the androids for the foreseeable future.

WAR DRUMS

As the council of elders meet, the player characters are relaxing around the village. It is mid-morning and the council has been in session for almost two hours. Rumors of war have been circulating for the past couple of days as encounters with the wolfoids have increased. Suddenly, word spreads that the council meeting has adjourned: there will be war! As the news sinks in, the player characters are all approached by Danell, the young assistant to the village shaman, Enginer Rorke. The Enginer requests their presence at his cabin as soon as possible.

ENGINEER RORKE

Engineer Rorke is a key non-player character in this adventure. He appears to be a true human around 60 years of age with white hair and a beard. To the people of Habitat, he has been a member of their community for 40 years and the village shaman, or Engineer, for almost 30 of those years. Although friendly, he has always been emotionally reserved, which is why his recent fervor against the wolfoids surprised most villagers.

Unknown to the residents of Habitat, in reality Rorke is an android patterned after a true human. Due to the limited android lifespan, the persona of Engineer Rorke has been played by roughly 20 generations of androids.

Since the player characters' discovery of the environmental control center, Engineer Rorke has met with them several times to discuss their new knowledge. If the characters learned and shared the revelation that Habitat is on a ship travelling through space, Rorke publicly expressed doubts about the story, suggesting that the characters misunderstood the strange metal man or that the robot is simply incorrect itself. However, even if he disagrees with their findings, he has praised the characters for their actions to save the village. Uncertain whether the robot could detect him as an android, Rorke has been very careful not to visit the control center himself, explaining when asked that he is too busy contemplating the problem of the wolfoids to go.

ENGINEER'S CABIN

Engineer Rorke welcomes the player characters when they arrive at his cabin and politely thanks them for their time. He also offers them refreshments before launching into the reason for their visit. He explains that the council of elders has finally decided to act against the wolfoids. The village will launch an attack against the wolf-men tomorrow afternoon! (Wolfoids are mainly nocturnal so early afternoon is considered by the council to be the most opportune time to attack.)

The characters have proven themselves both brave and competent so he has a special task for them during the attack: locate and slay the pack leader. Killing the pack leader should throw the wolfoids into confusion, potentially saving the lives of many village warriors during the battle. The leader should be easy to locate once the battle commences: he will be the large wolfoid barking orders to the others.

If the characters seem hesitant to accept the task, Engineer Rorke will apply pressure: explaining that this mission has been approved by the village council and that he doubts anyone else could accomplish it. The characters will be assigned the best equipment

available. If pressed, Rorke will even promise that the characters may keep the gear after the battle. If that is still not enough, Rorke will threaten the party: explaining that any villager unwilling to support the council in such a time of need will be expelled from the village.

After the player characters agree to the mission (and realistically, what other choice do they have?), the Engineer will present them with their gear. In addition to any equipment found in module **#KDJ1 Dire Straits**, each character will receive the following:

- plant fiber armor and a wooden shield (armor class 4),
- a bow with a quiver of 20 arrows,
- a spear, sword, or mace (player's choice),
- a dagger,
- a water skin,
- flint and tender, and
- a large belt pouch.

A character may choose to be equipped with either a heavy two-handed mace or sword instead of the standard shield and melee weapon. (Armor class increases to 5 without the shield.) Each true human also receives a dose of Berserk and a Heal Pill (see **NEW ITEMS** in module **#KDJ1 Dire Straits APPENDICES**).

The leader of the party is given the following relics to distribute as he sees fit:

- a duralloy shield (armor class 3 with plant fiber armor),
- two slug projectors (similar to small rifles roughly the size of sawed-off shotguns) with 4 dum-dum rounds each, and
- two doses of Blue Berry (see **NEW ITEMS** in the **APPENDICES**).

Rorke will teach everyone the proper prayers and rituals for loading and firing the slug projectors. After the party is equipped, Engineer Rorke mentions he has one other task for them, but as he begins to explain, he collapses to the floor. Anyone who rushes to his aid will notice that his entire right arm is covered in strange purplish-red (magenta) splotches. The splotches quickly fade as Rorke regains consciousness only a moment later. He tells the characters that he is still recovering from a recent illness and is on the mend. He should be completely well soon. The party should focus on the tasks ahead. (In reality, the color change and system failure indicate that Engineer Rorke is approaching his end-of-life. He will soon be replaced by another android.)

The Engineer finally explains that the village needs the party to travel to the environmental control center and ask Hayseed the robot to prepare his medical facilities.

Those wounded in the up-coming battle will be taken directly there once it is settled. The player characters should leave immediately in order to return in time for the attack.

AN INTRIGING PROPOSITION

As the party follows the Ranger River to the environmental control center, a huge man, almost eight feet tall, armed with a large rifle, and wearing glowing red armor, will suddenly step out from behind a tree in their path. At the same time, the characters will “hear” a friendly telepathic greeting.

The man is not really there but is actually a hologram created by a portable holographic projector (see **NEW ITEMS** in the **APPENDICES**). The projector is hidden in a tree knothole. The control glove is being manipulated by Churr, a thief beast, as he uses his telepathy to speak with the characters. He is hidden in the branches of a nearby tree.

Churr is not actually from this level of the ship. He is a wandering rogue with a taste for adventure and a steel gray engineering band. He has worked with and against many different groups on the ship, which led to his current job. The androids hired him to act as an intermediary to the player characters in order to keep their existence and goals hidden. Churr will offer the party a reward for obtaining the android lab data crystal from the wolfoid pack leader (without explaining what it actually is or how he knows the village attack details). Initially, Churr will offer a full clip of dum-dum pellets and a laser pistol (with a half-charged hydrogen power cell). He is also willing to teach the characters how to use the weapons. The weapons and knowledge will only be given once the characters have returned to this location at midnight with the crystal following the battle.

Any characters attempting to negotiate with Churr for a better reward should make a leadership potential task roll against a 13 resistance (hard). A mutant with the *economic genius* mutation may add a +2 bonus to the roll. A mutant with the *anti-leadership potential* defect suffers a -6 penalty. (Consult **TASK RESOLUTION** in the **APPENDICES** for more information about resolving non-combat actions.) With a successful roll, Churr will sweeten the pot with two Heal Pills and a fragmentation grenade (see **NEW ITEMS** in this module and module **#KDJ1 Dire Straits APPENDICES**).

During the mental conversation, alert characters may notice Churr hiding in the tree. Anyone checking their surroundings may detect the mutant raccoon with a successful mental resistance task roll against a 16 resistance (difficult). A mutant with the *heightened hearing* or *heightened vision* mutation may add a +2 bonus to the roll. A mutant with the *near-sightedness* or

double vision defect suffers a -6 penalty. If discovered, Churr will fully reveal himself, complement the party on their alertness, turn off the hologram, and continue negotiations. It does not affect his offer at all.

If Churr is not spotted and negotiations have completed (hopefully with the party accepting the offer), the holographic man will walk around the tree and seemingly disappear. Ten minutes after the party leaves, Churr will climb down from his tree and telekinetically retrieve the holographic projector before disappearing down a hidden maintenance shaft.

Churr: AC 7; MV 4 (8); HD 3; hp 13; AT sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or protein disruptor pistol (WC 8, DMG 5-20d6) or fragmentation grenade (WC 5, DMG 3d6 area); *empathy*; *illusion generation*; *light generation*; *repulsion field*; *telekinesis*; *telepathy*; CN 8; CR n/a; DX 13; MR 16; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 10. Gear: backpack, domars (31), fragmentation grenade, Geiger counter, portable holographic projector, protein disruptor pistol (10 shots), steel grey engineering band, sword.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL CENTER

Little has changed at the environmental control center since the events of module **#KDJ1 Dire Straits**. However, the door to the main entrance has been repaired. Anyone accessing the outside speaker system will be greeted by Hayseed and the robot will speak with the characters in person if asked. When told of the impending battle, Hayseed will pledge that the center's medical facilities will be available to care for any humans or their pets harmed by the wild beasts. He will also suggest that the group contact ship security instead of handling such a dangerous situation themselves. (His programming has still not adapted to the new situation on the ship.)

VILLAGERS ASSEMBLE!

When the player characters return to the village, they find it a hive of activity. Villagers are gathering equipment and practicing weapon drills. The village guards will inform the party that Enginer Rorke has asked to see them. It should not take them long to find the Enginer and Vizor Toom, the village leader, in deep conversation.

VIZOR TOOM

Toom was elected village leader (with the title of Vizor which is derived from the original supervisor) by the village council roughly five years ago. He is a natural leader, a true human in his mid-30's with fiery red hair and an impressive physic. He is slow to anger and quick

to laugh at a good joke. He respects the opinions of the other villagers and is, in turn, respected, but is not indecisive when a hard decision is required. Overall, he is simply a good leader for Habitat.

BATTLE PLANS

Vizor Toom and Enginer Rorke are discussing plans for the upcoming attack when the party arrives. Rorke will ask the player characters about the status of the environmental control center (i.e., whether it is ready for wounded). If the characters bring up their meeting with Churr (see **AN INTRIGUING PROPOSITION**), the Enginer will have very little interest in jewelry owned by the wolfoid leader. He recommends they follow through with the deal. Vizor Toom will seem surprised by this attitude, but he lets the matter drop for the more urgent issue of the attack.

Since the party has recent experience with the wolfoids, Toom asks for their advice. The villagers will be attacking with a force of roughly 50 men and women. The village scouts estimate that there are around 35 wolfoids in the camp that can fight. Wolfoids are a hardy foe and the Vizor considers the sides roughly even.

The wolfoid camp is comprised of large hide tents (very much like tepees) surrounded by a crude thick barrier of branches. There are only two entrances through the camp barrier, one to the north and the other to the east. The current plan envisioned by Vizor Toom is simple: the villagers will approach as close as they dare without being detected, then Toom will sound the attack and everyone will rush the east entrance. However, the player characters will approach the wolfoid camp from the south and once the attack is sounded, they will hack their way through the camp barrier while the wolfoids are focused on the entrances. Once through the barrier, the party will find and slay the pack leader as swiftly as possible. His death will hopefully demoralize the remaining wolfoids and throw the pack into chaos. Completely exterminating the wolfoid pack could prove too costly for the village so the few remaining wolfoids will be allowed to flee through the north barrier gate.

Allow the player characters to make whatever suggestions they like. If it sounds plausible, incorporate the suggestion into the battle plan. However, it is important to note that the villagers are not trained soldiers. The plan of attack will be kept simple by the Vizor.

WOLFOID CAMP

After an early lunch the next day, the village marches to war. Using a well-known ford across the Ranger River, the villagers reach the wolfoid camp after only an hour of travel. A map of the camp can be found at the end of this

adventure. Only a few wolfoid guards can be seen posted around the perimeter. Unfortunately, just as everyone from the village has taken their positions, howls of alarm break out from the wolfoid camp! (Due to the pack leader's pet winged biter, the wolfoids cannot be surprised.) Having lost surprise but hoping to keep the initiative, Vizor Toom will sound his horn: the attack is on!

Once the alarm is raised, the referee should roll 2d6 at the end of every round that the party is in the wolfoid camp and the pack leader has not been defeated. If not already in combat, a result of 12 indicates that a wolfoid has stumbled upon the group. A result of 10 or 11 (or 12 in combat) indicates that an arrow from the larger battle randomly hits a character in the area (player character or non-player character).

Wolfoid: AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16; AT sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (energy); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

1. BARRIER.

The defensive barrier around the wolfoid camp is composed of branches from both trees and thorn bushes. It is roughly five feet high and just as thick. Cutting a path through the barrier requires a full minute (six combat turns) of intense work by the party. Fortunately, the village attack should keep the attention of the wolfoids and none will notice the player characters cutting through.

2. TEPEES.

These tents are the homes of the wolfoids currently battling the villagers. They contain little of interest. Some tents will have a litter of savage wolfoid cubs inside, but no elderly or invalids will be present. (Per the wolfoid way, those adults unable to fight are quickly killed and eaten by rivals.)

Any character wandering through the tents who succeeds with a mental resistance task roll against a 13 resistance (hard) will notice that many tents have been patched within the last month. In fact, a few unpatched tents have small (finger-width) holes burned through the hide. This damage is a result of the laser weapons employed against the wolfoids during previous attacks by the androids.

3. EAST ENTRANCE.

According to the original battle plan, this camp entrance is the target of the village attack. If that is still the case, it

will have a mob of villagers and wolfoids fighting in the general area after Vizor Toom signals the attack.

Wolfoids: AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16 each; AT sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (energy); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

4. NORTH ENTRANCE.

The north entrance is guarded by two wolfoids. They will remain at their posts during the attack and be joined by a third.

Wolfoids (2-3): AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 16 each; AT sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or light bow (WC 1, DMG 1d6) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (energy); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

5. PRISONERS.

Two prisoners, a true man and woman, are lying on the ground next to this tree. They are tied to the tree by ropes around their necks. Both are villagers from Habitat and have obviously been treated badly.

Unfortunately, the man has died from his wounds. Both of his arms were crudely amputated and cauterized below the elbow. His name was Jord and he went missing only yesterday.

The woman is Kenda, one of the best hunters in Habitat. Her left arm is missing below the elbow and has been crudely cauterized. Her right hand is tied to her body and is missing the small pinky finger. She has many scrapes and bruises. She was captured while on a hunt three days ago.

Kenda can be revived easily enough with a bit of water, but is in no shape to assist the party. (She only has 4 hit points.) She is in a state of shock after being maimed and seeing the wolfoids dine on her own flesh. If freed and allowed to heal at the village, she may become a follower to one of the true humans who saved her.

6. PACK LEADER.

After the alert has been sounded, the wolfoid pack leader can be found outside this tent barking encouragement and orders to his pack. He is a large wolf-man wearing armor which resembles parts of Hayseed's metal body. (The armor is scavenged from a robot destroyed at the android's lab.) He is armed with a laser pistol and a large glaive (a pole ending with a large

single-edged blade). Attached to the wooden pole of the glaive is a brilliant red crystal (the data crystal from the android lab). The pack leader also has a shoulder bag containing a sonic grenade (see **NEW ITEMS** in the **APPENDICES**). He will not use this grenade against the player characters, preferring to keep it as a weapon against the androids.

A small group of wolfoids (half the number of party members, rounding down) are standing with the pack leader. Curled on the ground next to the leader is his pet winged biter. The winged biter will flap its large wings for attention before any attack is launched by the player characters, preventing the pack leader from being surprised.

Wolfoid Pack Leader: AC 3; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 24; AT glaive (WC 3, DMG 1d12/1d12/1d12) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or laser pistol (WC 6, DMG 5-15d6) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (energy); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 16; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 13; LP n/a; RR 12; ST 16.
Gear: glaive, laser pistol (2 shots), sonic grenade.

Wolfoids (1/2 PCs): AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 18 each; AT sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or light bow (WC 1, DMG 1d6) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (energy); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

Winged Biter: AC 4; MV 3/6 (5/12); HD 2; hp 7; AT *poison fangs* (WC 1, DMG 1d2, I13); *immunity* (paralysis, poison); *precognition*; *wings*; CN 10; CR n/a; DX 10; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 10.

The winged biter will attack anyone who approaches too close. If reduced to half its hit points, it will flee into the branches of a neighboring tree.

Once the pack leader is slain, the other wolfoids in the area will loose an eerie, mournful howl. Encouraged, Vizor Toom will lead a final push against the wolfoid pack which breaks their morale and sends them fleeing to the north. The villagers will collect their wounded and return to Habitat.

The *Warden* is a harsh environment. The village does not have the resources to support prisoners so Vizor Toom will not take any. If the party decides to take prisoners, they will be the characters' responsibility. Most wolfoids in the camp are able to speak a limited form of the human tongue. Any captured beast men will assume that the village is working for the androids and it will take some time to convince them otherwise. They believe that they will be nothing more than experiments

in a lab. However, their hostile comments may contain clues from the **BACKGROUND** about what is really going on.

THE EXCHANGE

If the characters agreed to the deal with Churr, he will be waiting for them at the agreed location at midnight. Assuming it worked the last time, he will continue to use the hologram as a front. A bag containing the party's reward will be sitting on the ground roughly 10 feet in front of the hologram. The party will be instructed to take the bag and leave the crystal. Churr will answer any questions about using the provided items, but cannot physically show the characters with the hologram.

At the end of the conversation, the referee should request a mental resistance task roll to spot the mutant raccoon. In this case, no matter the result, the player character with the best result will notice Churr. If confronted, Churr will reveal himself and congratulate the characters on their eyesight.

If the characters previously met Churr personally, the exchange for the crystal will still work basically the same way except Churr will be willing to interact with the characters physically. If the characters previously rejected the deal, they will be awakened in their own cabin during the night by Churr, who asks them to reconsider. Churr will peacefully accept their decision.

However the meeting takes place, once Churr has the crystal, he will shake his finger at the characters and warn them not to follow him to his meet with his employers. Churr actually intends the exact opposite: he wants the player characters to follow him, learn of the android involvement, and possibly thwart the androids' plans. He doesn't know why the androids want the crystal, but he doesn't really want to help their agenda. He hasn't met a group yet that he trusts with control of the ship. He honors his deals so he cannot overtly help the party discover the androids, but he can't help it if they are sneaky enough to follow him, can he?

If the player characters don't catch the hint, the referee should request a mental resistance task roll. Any character that succeeds against an 11 resistance (challenging) will understand Churr's intent. If all characters fail, the character with the best result will understand.

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

Following Churr is fairly easy. Any time the party loses the trail, they hear him rustling leaves or breaking twigs. They eventually catch up to him as he meets his employers in a forest clearing. Standing before him is

Enginer Rorke! Churr has already given Rorke the crystal and is accepting a full bag from the Enginer.

Standing behind Rorke is one red android per two player characters, rounding down (see **ANDROIDS** in the **APPENDICES**). One android is armed with a laser pistol. If two or more are present, another android is armed with an activated paralysis rod. Any remaining androids are armed with collapsible metal security batons. Although the player characters have never encountered androids, they have grown up with tales of the Faceless One (see **THE DOMAIN OF THE FACELESS ONE** in the **APPENDICES**).

Churr is mentally communicating with the Enginer so the deal concludes in silence. Once the mutant raccoon has his payment, he quickly leaves the clearing.

With a successful mental resistance task roll against a 13 resistance (hard), a character watching the scene will notice that Enginer Rorke's right arm seems to be lying lifelessly against his body. His right hand, all that can be seen of the flesh of the arm, is completely magenta.

If the player characters confront the Enginer, he will be surprised to see them. However, he knows that no one in the village can learn of the androids' influence. He and the other androids will attack in order to keep their secret. Note that although the androids can be harmed by the rubber rounds, they cannot be rendered unconscious by slug projectors.

Enginer Rorke: AC 8; MV 6 (12); HD 15; hp 90; AT sword (WC 3, 1d6/1d4/1d8); susceptible to sonic attack (double damage); radiation immunity; CN 15; CR n/a; DX 08; MR 15; LP 11; RR n/a; ST 10. Gear: belt pouch, wrist radio (one hour of power remaining), Enginer gown (coveralls), sword.

Androids (1/2 PCs): AC 7; MV 6 (12); HD 15; hp 90 each; AT security baton (WC 3, DMG 1d8/1d6/1d8) or paralysis rod (WC 3, 3d6 hrs unconsciousness) or laser pistol (WC 6, DMG 5-15d6); susceptible to sonic attack (double damage); radiation immunity; CN 15; CR n/a; DX 08; MR 15; LP n/a; RR n/a; ST 10. Gear: paralysis rod with chemical cell (2.5 hours of power remaining), laser pistol (5 shots).

During the battle with the androids, a character that succeeds in a mental resistance task roll against a 13 resistance (hard) will notice that the Enginer bleeds the android white fluid instead of blood any time he is wounded. If the Enginer is slain, his entire body will turn magenta.

The Enginer's wrist radio is currently configured to contact the android lab on this level or the Enginer Rorke duplicate in Habitat (see **CONCLUSION**); however, it can

be set to broadcast or receive on many different frequencies. The wrist radio has an item complexity of 4 and is powered by a chemical cell. The chemical cell provides enough power for 12 hours of continuous use.

ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

The noise of the battle with the androids will draw a group of wolfoids to the glade. These beast men are survivors of the village attack and are surprised to see villagers battling androids. After all, the villagers were doing the work of the androids when they attacked the wolfoids' camp. They will remain hidden and silently watch the battle unless the party is having difficulty defeating the androids, in which case they will attack the androids as well.

Once the battle is ended, the wolfoids will cautiously approach the party. They wish to learn why the player characters fought the androids. In response to the characters' own questions, the man-wolves will reveal that the androids have been preying on their packs for years (see **BACKGROUND**). Before leaving, they will voice their respect for the party's fighting abilities and explain that out of respect, they will not fight the player characters at this time. However, they are not allies and make no promises about future encounters.

Wolfoids (1/2 PCs): AC 5; MV 6 (12); HD 4; hp 18 each; AT sword (WC 3, DMG 1d6/1d4/1d8) or bite (WC 1, DMG 1d4) or light bow (WC 1, DMG 1d6) or *radiated eyes* (WC 6, I10); *physical reflection* (energy); *regeneration* (5 hp per round); *no sensory nerve endings* (D); CN 10; CR n/a; DX 12; MR 11; LP n/a; RR 10; ST 12.

CONCLUSION

When the party returns to the village, it is extremely early in the morning and all is quiet. Vizor Toom will listen to their story no matter the time if they wish to confide in him. Once he hears their tale, Toom will summon guards to escort Enginer Rorke to his cabin in order to address the player characters' accusations. Possibly quite surprising to the characters, the guards are able to find and escort the Enginer to the meeting. (This is the android that replaced the previous Enginer since he had almost reached his two-year life limit. The party fought the dying android.)

Enginer Rorke will claim ignorance of the androids. He suggests that the androids must have planned to replace him with the duplicate reported by the party. He will attempt to talk his way out of any kind of test that would reveal his true nature (such as bleeding). If discovered, he will set off a fragmentation grenade (see **NEW ITEMS** in the **APPENDICES**) hidden in his clothing, destroying himself and subjecting everyone in the cabin

to damage. One guard will be killed and Vizor Toom will lose an eye to the blast.

Enginer Rorke: AC 8; MV 6 (12); HD 15; hp 90; AT sword (WC 3, 1d6/1d4/1d8); susceptible to sonic attack (double damage); radiation immunity; CN 15; CR n/a; DX 08; MR 15; LP 11; RR n/a; ST 10. Gear: belt pouch, Enginer gown (coveralls).

Once everyone's medical needs are addressed, Toom will order a careful search of the Enginer's cabin. Unless the player characters participate, nothing is found. However, if the party is involved in the search, a successful mental resistance task roll against a 16 resistance (difficult) will reveal a concealed compartment in a cabinet. A second successful mental resistance task roll against a 13 resistance (hard) is required to find and disable the trigger for a trap on the compartment door. A mutant with the *heightened touch* or *heightened vision* mutation may add a +2 bonus to these rolls. A mutant with the *near-sightedness* or *double vision* defect suffers a -6 penalty.

Anyone who opens the hidden door without disabling the trap will receive a face full of intensity 10 poison powder. A wrist radio exactly like the one found on the other Enginer Rorke (see **TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER**) is within the cabinet. It is fully charged. There are also four hydrogen energy cells within the cabinet.

The party will have done a great service for their village by exposing the android menace... and made great enemies. The androids have proven that they will go to any lengths to retrieve their data crystal and it is now in the player characters' hands. What happens next is up to the players and you as their referee. There is a whole ship waiting to be explored and plenty of mysteries to be solved.

APPENDICES

A. ANDROIDS

The **Metamorphosis Alpha** rule book provides a basic description of androids but leaves much about them (such as general appearance) to be defined by the referee. This appendix seeks to fill in a few of these blanks and insure compatibility with later editions of the **Metamorphosis Alpha** system.

Advancements in nanotechnology in the 23rd century led to the development of android life. Highly advanced nanobots injected into a specialized chemical soup could actually grow the synthetic men. The nanobots built the bodies and minds of the androids to pre-programmed specifications, allowing the android abilities and skills to be adjusted as needs varied.

The standard android design on the *Warden* is humanoid and light-grey in color. Although it has a head, it has only a vague outline of a human face – having only smooth skin instead of eyes, nostrils, mouth, or ear canals. An android communicates through a speaker impeded in its chest. It has a built-in radiation detector and can see within the visible light spectrum as well as infrared and ultraviolet. It has 90 hit points and when wounded, leaks a white milky fluid instead of blood. An android cannot be rendered unconscious, but may suffer a temporary system failure at the referee's discretion. Although artificially grown, the android brain has thought patterns that may be detected and manipulated by mental mutations as described in the rules.

A variant android design is the companion model. These androids appear human, either male or female. Its synthetic skin is indistinguishable from normal flesh and is kept at a human-normal temperature. Although this model still does not have blood, internal fluid is pumped near the surface at specific points to simulate blood flow so it is possible to actually feel its blood pressure. Additionally, the android mind is programmed to simulate a personality and more easily interact with humans. Growing a companion android requires almost triple the amount of time, programming, and other resources as the standard model.

Each android is powered by a hydrogen power cell. This cell can be accessed by a hidden compartment in the android's back. Finding the compartment requires a successful mental resistance task roll against a 16 resistance (difficult). (Consult **TASK RESOLUTION** for more information about resolving non-combat actions.)

When an android is rendered inoperable, the nanobots in the body will begin to render it back to its basic components. After only 30 minutes, all that remains are a power cell sitting in a crystalline powder. As a safety

precaution, the power cell is drained of all energy during this process.

The adventure **BACKGROUND** describes a faction of androids intent upon taking control of the *Warden*. These androids were first introduced by James M. Ward in an article entitled "Notes on Androids on The Starship Warden" in **The Dragon**, issue 4. A note not mentioned in that article is that the altered minds of the androids invoked a fail-safe in their design. As a warning of their aberrant programming, the androids of this faction are all red in color instead of the standard light-grey.

B. THE DOMAIN OF THE FACELESS ONE

The Domain of the Faceless One is an area depicted on the *Warden* level map which appeared in the module **#KDJ1 Dire Straits**. According to the villagers of Habitat, It is an area controlled by the Faceless One, a terrible red mutant with the body of a man without a face. He has only been seen at a distance by a foolhardy few since any who enter his domain are never seen again. Legend has it that long ago, the Faceless One had a wonderfully handsome face but ventured too far into the wilds of *Warden* and saw something so horrible that his face simply melted away. The village shaman tells this story as a warning to those who don't keep their curiosity in check and wander too far from Habitat.

In reality, the Domain of the Faceless One is controlled by the androids described in the adventure **BACKGROUND**. It is the site of their research lab. The village shaman propagates tales of the Faceless One in order to insure no curious villagers wander too near.

C. TASK RESOLUTION

Since the 1st edition **Metamorphosis Alpha** system does not provide any methods to resolve non-combat actions, the following simple system was developed. Whenever a player character attempts a non-combat task where success is not guaranteed, the referee should determine the difficulty level and relevant ability score and then ask the player to roll 3d6. This roll may be modified by helpful mutations, defects, or even by the situation as determined by the referee.

The player's 3d6 roll is treated as a mental attack with the relevant ability score replacing the power of the being attacking on the Mental Strength Chart. The mental resistance is replaced with a target number based on the difficulty level.

TASK CHALLENGE

Difficulty Level	Target Number
Easy average character fails 16% of time	8
Challenging average character fails 50% of time	11
Hard average character fails 74% of time	13
Difficult average character fails 95% of time	16

The average character in the Task Challenge table has a 10 as the relevant ability. This is the average result of rolling 3d6.

The preceding rules only apply to situations in which an action pits a character against the environment (such as finding a secret compartment, breaking open a locked door, climbing a cliff, etc.). In situations where a character is directly opposed by another character (such as spotting a hidden enemy or wrestling), both characters should roll 3d6 and add the relevant ability score - 10. This roll may be further modified by the referee due to beneficial mutations, defects, or the unusual situation. The character with the highest result succeeds in the attempted action or prevents his opponent from succeeding.

EXAMPLE OF RESOLVING TASKS

In this example, the player characters are a mutant human named Wesell and two true humans, Jondo and Gorge. They have been exploring the ship and have just arrived at a new level after climbing a long stairwell.

Referee: The door at the top of the stairs slides into the wall with a soft hiss at your approach. Beyond, a corridor stretches ahead for roughly 20 feet before ending at the intersection with another. Many of the overhead lights are no longer working, and those that do, flicker as if they too will soon fail. Ten feet down the corridor, on the right, is another sliding door. You can see a gap of several inches where the door is not completely closed.

Caller: We will ready our weapons and cautiously approach the door.

Referee: You reach the door without any problems.

The caller momentarily consults with the other players.

Caller: Wesell will peer through the gap from at least a foot away while Jondo and Gorge guard against any attacks from the other corridor.

The referee consults his notes and knows that the area beyond the door suffers from the same poor lighting as the corridor. It was previously a hydroponics lab and has now been overrun with large fungal growths. Hidden within the growths is a winged biter. At this point, the referee could call for an opposed task roll (mental resistance versus dexterity) to spot the winged biter or simply assign it a difficulty level and ask for a simple task roll. He decides to assign it a difficulty level since calling for an opposed roll would hint that there is a creature nearby to the players. The winged biter has precognition and the lighting is poor so the referee decides that noticing the mutated snake is a difficult task.

Referee: Wesell, you look through the gap in the door to a larger room beyond. Unfortunately, the lighting in the room is having the same problems as the lighting in the corridor. Please make a mental resistance task roll.

Wesell's player rolls 3d6 for 13. Wesell's mental resistance is 12. He needed a result of 14 or higher to notice the winged biter.

Referee: In the flickering light, Wesell sees large mushrooms, some as large as four feet high, and other fungi covering the room.

Realizing that Wesell has the fear impulse defect for plants, the referee continues...

Referee: Wesell immediately begins backing away from the door in an obvious panic. His eyes rove his surroundings looking for an escape route and eventually settle on the stairwell.

Caller: Jondo and Gorge have seen this reaction before! We quickly grab him and try to hold him until he can get control of himself!

The referee ponders the situation and decides that Wesell is not particularly prepared for an attack by his friends. As such, they will be automatically able to grab him without requiring an attack roll. Keeping him held, however, is another matter.

Referee: Jondo and Gorge drop their weapons and grab Wesell just before he bolts for the stairs. Unfortunately, he is still intent upon escaping the fungal menace. You all struggle on the corridor floor. Wesell, roll an opposed strength task roll against...

The referee verifies that of the two humans, Gorge has the greater strength score.

Referee: Gorge. Gorge, you will receive a +2 bonus thanks to the help of Jondo.

Wesell's player rolls 3d6 for 11. Wesell's strength is 9 so he subtracts one from the result, leaving him with a result of 10. Gorge's player rolls 3d6 for 11 as well. Gorge's strength is 14 so he adds four to the result in addition to the bonus he received for Jondo's help. His final result is 17.

Referee: Jondo and Gorge easily hold Wesell as he flails about. After a few minutes, he calms down enough to speak of what he saw, and he is emphatic that he does not wish to explore that room!

D. NEW ITEMS

Blue Berry:

Blue Berry is a blue salve made from numerous natural ingredients, the most prominent being three different types of berries from mutated plants. A character coating himself in the salve will be immune to radiation for 20 + 1d10 minutes.

Grenade:

Grenades were recently introduced into the 1st edition game by the **Starship Warden Armory** supplement to the **Metamorphosis Alpha Deluxe Collector's Edition**. The following rules were developed and play-tested before that release, but either grenade rules could be used... or even some sort of mix of the two.

Grenades have a spherical body with a safety lever at the top. Once the lever is released, the grenade will activate within seconds. There are numerous types of grenades and they are all differentiated by color. They have an item complexity of 5.

Grenades generally weigh a pound. Throwing a grenade has the following range:

Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
1-15 yds.	16-30 yds.	31-45 yds.

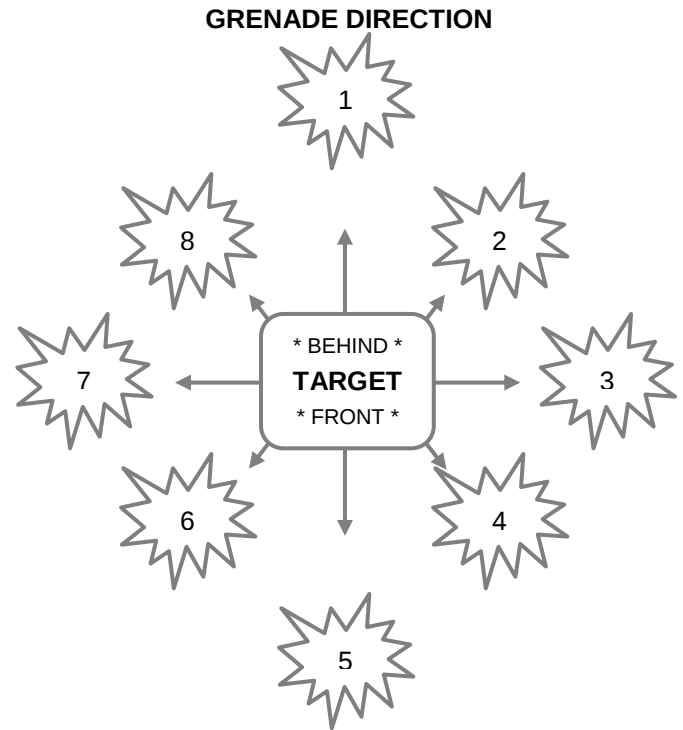
Grenades are weapon class 1 but ignore the target's armor class, treating all targets as if they had armor class 8.

Similar to bows, the following alternate hit/miss system may be used:

Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
5	8	11

Unlike bows, this chart is not modified by armor class (as specified by the official errata).

If a grenade misses a target, roll 1d8 to determine the direction where the grenade actually lands. Roll 1d6 to determine the distance from the target in yards, multiplying the result by 2 for medium range and by 4 for long range.



TYPES OF GRENADES

Type	Description
Fragmentation	Fragmentation grenades are olive drab in color with a yellow band at the top. When activated, they will explode, propelling deadly steel fragments outward. Anyone within 20 feet of the explosion receives 3d6 points of damage.
Sonic	Sonic grenades are grey in color with two tan bands along the top. The top of the grenade can be turned to set the duration (1-6 minutes). The default setting is 3 minutes. These grenades were designed for crowd control and emit a horrible screeching noise when activated. The noise will deafen anyone within 50 feet when activated. Androids within this area of effect receive 2d6 points of damage per minute (suffered at the start of the minute). A creature with human or better hearing will be deaf for 1d6 minutes after leaving the

effective range or after the grenade's duration has ended. The grenade can be heard as far away as a mile.

version. The control glove provides power to the projector and allows it to be programmed and controlled from up to 25 feet away. The system may operate for up to 5 hours on a single hydrogen energy cell.

Portable Holographic Projector:

The portable holographic projector was actually developed as an entertainment device for adolescents. The core system can project realistic holograms capable of being interacted with, and enhanced by, other devices sold separately. The basic portable holographic projector has two components: a small (3" diameter), thin projector disc and a control glove. The disc can be attached to the control glove for transport. The small lens on the projector disc creates realistic holograms within an 8 foot cube. Sound is not produced in the basic

E. ENCOUNTERS

Both the original **Metamorphosis Alpha** rule book and the recently released **Metamorphosis Alpha Deluxe Collector's Edition** contain encounter tables for the *Warden*. These tables simply list encounters by habitat, but there are times when a referee may prefer to have the party only encounter intelligent life. These encounters provide interesting role-playing opportunities for the players as well as the referee. Therefore, the following encounter tables listing only intelligent life forms were developed.

INTELLIGENT LIFE ENCOUNTER TABLES

Aquatic (1d6)	Artic/Ice (1d6)	City (1d12)	Grasslands (1d8)	Forest (1d12)	Jungle (1d4)
1-2. Craboid**	1-2. True Human	1. Bearoid	1. Dark Fungus	1. Bearoid	1. Carrin*
3-4. Merman**	3-4. White Claw***	2. Cougaroid	2. Humanoid 2	2. Cougaroid	2. Cougaroid
5-6. Peeper**	5-6. Wolfoid	3. Dark Fungus	3. Humanoid 3	3. Humanoid 3	3. Tigeroid*
		4. Hawkoid	4. Humanoid 5	4. Humanoid 5	4. True Human
		5. Humanoid 2	5. Metaled One	5. Jeget	
		6. Ratmen***	6. Shorties***	6. Metaled One	
		7. Singing Vine	7. True Human	7. Shorties***	
		8. Sword Bush	8. Reroll	8. Singing Vine	
		9. Thief Beast		9. Sword Bush	
		10. True Human		10. True Human	
		11. Warden*		11. Wolfoid	
		12. Wolfoid		12. Reroll	
Lake Shores & Swamps (1d10)	Mountains (1d20)	Roughlands & Deserts (1d10)			
1. Bearoid	1. Bearoid	1. Bearoid			
2. Craboid**	2. Cougaroid	2. Carrin*			
3. Golden Hawk	3. Dark Fungus	3. Cougaroid			
4. Humanoid 5	4. Golden Hawk	4. Hawkoid			
5. Jeget	5. Hawkoid	5. Kerask*			
6. Peeper**	6. Humanoid 1	6. Metaled One			
7. Singing Vine	7. Humanoid 5	7. Sword Bush			
8. Thief Beast	8. Metaled One	8. True Human			
9. Tigeroid*	9. Mountain Gorillaoid*	9. Wolfoid			
10. True Human	10. Purple Beast***	10. Reroll			
	11. Sword Bush				
	12. True Human				
	13. Wolfoid				
	14-20. Reroll				

* Defined in **The Dragon**, issue 8, and in **Metamorphosis Alpha Deluxe Collector's Edition**, "Still More Additions to MA."

** Defined in **The Dragon**, issue 23, and in **Metamorphosis Alpha Deluxe Collector's Edition**, "Water Adventures on the Starship Warden."

*** Defined in **Metamorphosis Alpha Deluxe Collector's Edition**.

F. AUTHOR'S NOTES

It has been several years since my last Metamorphosis Alpha adventure, #**KDJ1 Dire Straits**, and some of you may ask: "What took so long?" Well, I was *busy*... so there.

I ran **Dire Straits** a couple of times for friends and then moved on to other games (as well as, you know, lived my life). But then, it happened: Goodman Games started a Kickstarter project for the **Metamorphosis Alpha Deluxe Collector's Edition**. Of course, I had to support it. And then, when I actually received the book... wow! What a great job! The bug bit me again and I returned to the world of the *Warden*.

Although this adventure is a sequel to **Dire Straits**, my own preferences in a campaign would be to run a few short adventures for the players between the two modules. I like to keep the technology level available to the player characters at a low level, but this adventure hands out quite a few ancient weapons to the party. It had to be done to give the party a fighting chance against the androids. A few adventures before **Covert Affairs** could keep the technology level low for a while so the jump isn't so quick in a campaign. They would also allow the characters time to see Engineer Rorke push for the war.

As a final note, I'm sure at least a few of you noticed that although this module is a sequel to KDJ1, it is numbered KDJ5 instead of KDJ2. The reason for that oddity is rather simple. I write a lot of my own adventures and whenever I take the time to produce one in the same format as published adventures, I add the KDJ number. The number is incremented each time; it doesn't matter if the adventure is written for a different game system than the previous. Adventures KDJ2-4 were all written for game systems other than Metamorphosis Alpha.

For the curious, a list of all my adventures follows. These are all fan-made by me and not to be considered official products in any way. As such, many are not publically available.

Title	Description
KDJ2 White Flume Mountain	<i>A parody of the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons adventure, White Plume Mountain. It was written for the TOON Munchkin game system. The party must brave the legendary White Flume Mountain, Gateway to Adventure & More!</i>
KDJ3 Quest of the One-Armed Robot	<i>An adventure for the GAMMA WORLD game system (7th edition). It has several plot elements "borrowed" from KDJ1 Dire Straits. The party is asked to help a damaged robot recover his factory from a gang of creatures.</i>
KDJ4 Vault of the Star Captain	<i>An uncompleted adventure for the GAMMA WORLD game system (7th edition). It was intended as a possible sequel to KDJ3 Quest of the One-Armed Robot. The party has the opportunity to explore the legendary Vault of the Star Captain. It is rumored to contain all sorts of advanced technology for those who prove themselves worthy.</i>
KDJ5 Covert Affairs	<i>This document. Duh!</i>

Title	Description
KDJ1 Dire Straits	<i>The module for the Metamorphosis Alpha game system that started it all. The party must save their village from life-threatening cold weather.</i>

COVERT AFFAIRS



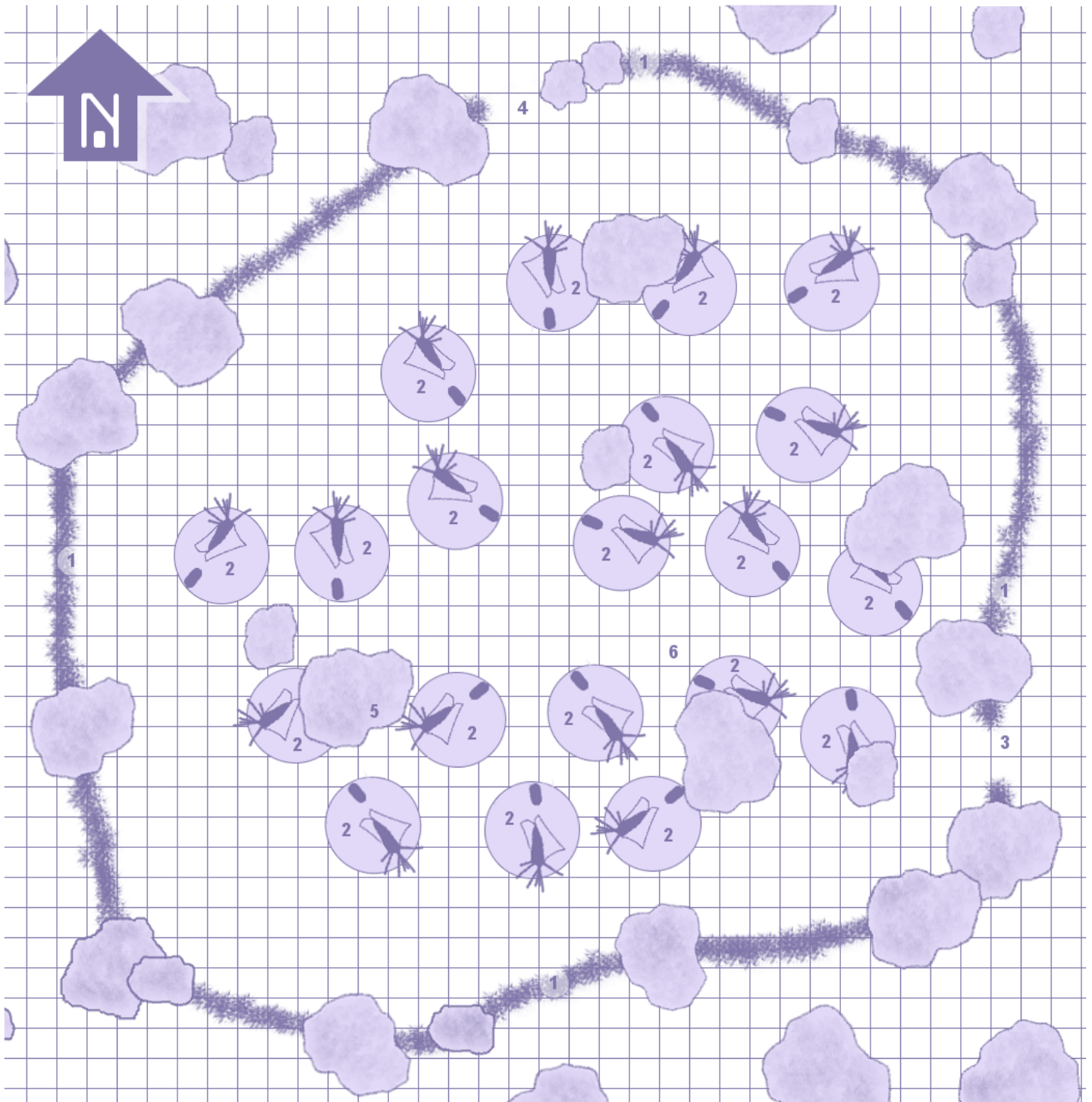
BARRIER



TEPEE



TREE



WOLFORD CAMP
SCALE: EACH SQUARE = 5 FEET