

THE ANDROID UNDERLORDS

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METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA

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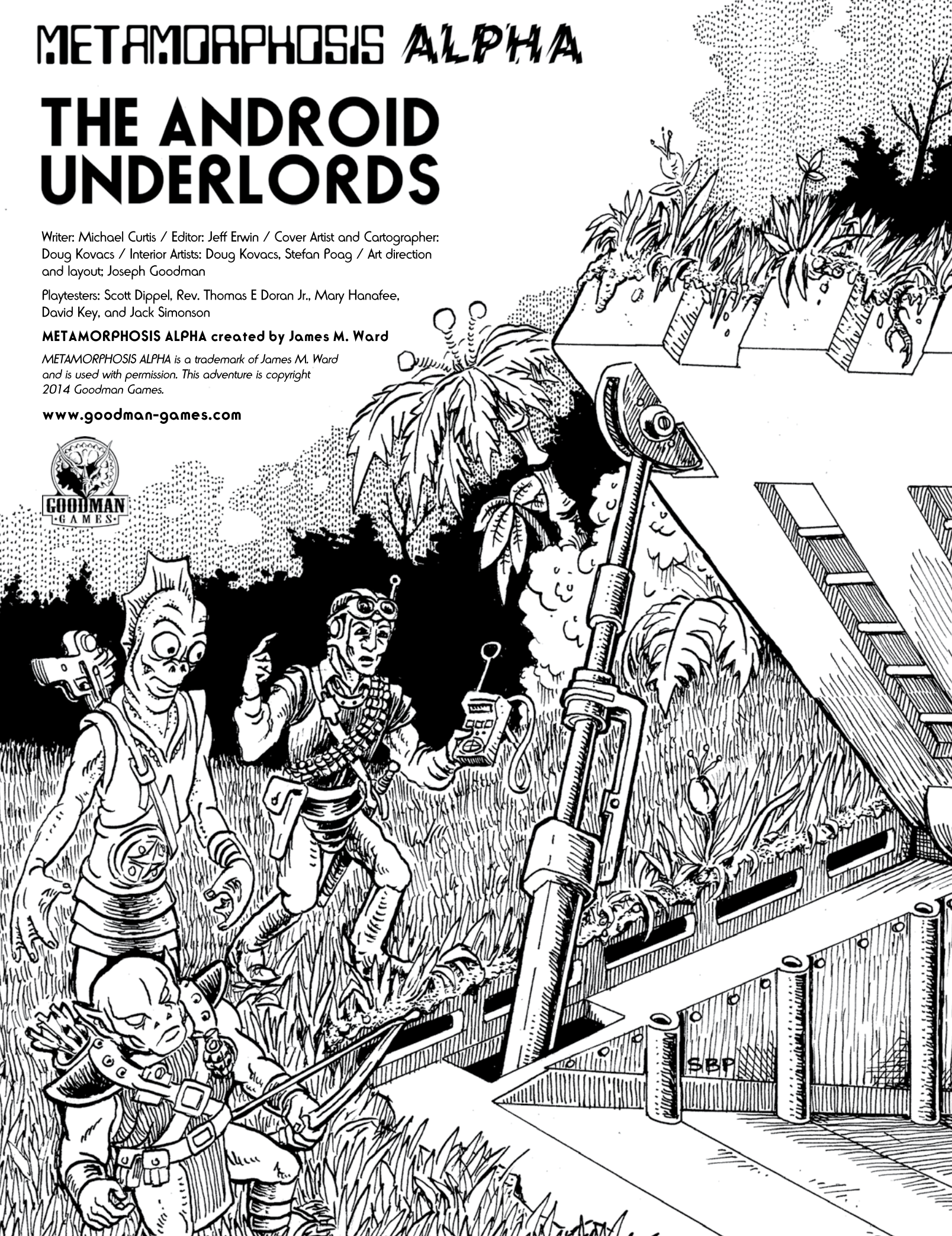
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The *Android Underlords* is designed for use with the 1st edition of *METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA* and is suitable for six to eight PCs of any type. If there are fewer players available than suggested, the referee should bolster the party's ranks with NPC hunters from the village the adventure begins in or allow the players to run multiple PCs. The adventure assumes the party has a few previous adventures under their belts and possess some useful artifacts to help them in their explorations. *The Android Underlords* begins on one of the forested levels of the *Warden*, but the referee can alter this to best suit his campaign.

BACKGROUND

The android Usu Alpha-Two loathes humans and mutants. A synthetic construct like all androids, Usu Alpha-Two was the leader of an android conclave aboard the *Warden* devoted to commandeering the ship and the utter destruction of human and mutant-kind. The enclave's actions brought them into conflict with a tribe of wolfoids and in the subsequent battles, the mutant canines proved victorious.

Alpha-Two and a small number of his fellows escaped the destruction of the enclave, fleeing from their lair to seek sanctuary below decks. There, in a seldom traveled portion of the ship, the survivors discovered a waste processing substation and claimed the installation as their new base of operations.

Alpha-Two, having suffered damage in the battle with the wolfoids, began to re-evaluate his kind's strategies against man and mutant. Perhaps it was due to the damage it sustained or because of an unprecedented deduction by its logic circuits, but Alpha-Two conceived a plan never before attempted by its kind: fighting mutation with mutation.

Obtaining DNA samples from one of the various biological storage facilities onboard the ship and commandeering scientific and medical equipment from the same, Alpha-Two and its subordinates began experimenting with DNA alteration. Their first attempts were less than successful, but with experience has come improved success. Alpha-Two has gone as far as pioneering a means for synthetic life to bond with mutant DNA, allowing androids harness those weird powers for their own use. Amongst the mutant DNA they harvested from unwilling subjects was a unique ability that allows its possessor to analyze a subject's mutational alterations. With access to this power, Alpha-Two can choose subjects possessing the most advantageous mutations to harvest for the synthetic man's use.

Despite their advances, the androids are still limited by their artificially-limited lifespans and seek a means to prolong their lives. During surveillance of nearby mutant and human communities, Alpha-Two's mutational analysis power detected the presence of a latent mutant in a particular village. This latent mutant possessed a hitherto unknown mutation that greatly extended his life. Alpha-Two and its cohorts set out to abduct this individual,

a clan shaman named the Knower of All Things due to his vast life experience (which stretched back some seven generations). Alpha-Two dispatched two of the androids' new mutant servants, gigantic isopods bred for blind service, to kidnap the Knower of All Things and return him to the androids' lair for vivisection and DNA harvesting. Alpha-Two believes the shaman's unusual mutation is the key to prolonging android-kind's reduced lifespans. In the morning following the abduction, the party comes into the picture and is hired to retrieve the kidnapped shaman.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The Android Underlords begins with the party in a primitive village, home to the Knower of All Things. This may be the PCs' home base or a pit stop on their exploration of the *Warden*. The party, having rested overnight in the village, awakens to a loud clamor. Read the following:

You awake to the sound of commotion in the village. Exiting the crude buildings in which you spent the night, you are surprised to see most of the settlement is already awake and standing in the village common space. Nervous and fearful faces are everywhere you look and many of the hunters grip spears and bows in their hands.

Near the palisade surrounding the village, the chieftain stands staring at the wooden timbers before him. A knot of tribal elders lingers nearby, likewise examining the wall. Even from this distance, you can see that the wood is scratched and gouged, and the posts gleam in several places beneath the early morning sun.

PCs questioning the villagers are told that the tribe's shaman, The Knower of All Things, was snatched away in the night by an unknown enemy. They gesture at the shaman's hut, pointing out a number of weird footprints leading from the front door to the palisade where the chieftain is standing. Inspecting these footprints determines they are 1' long gouges in the earth and lack distinctive toes. Several small puddles of a greasy, bile-colored slime are intermixed with the tracks as well. The slime smells strongly of brine and is harmless.

The door to the shaman's home is torn open and the interior is in disarray. More puddles of slime and the toeless tracks are found inside, but there's no sign of the shaman. No blood is present, suggesting the Knower of All Things was abducted rather than devoured.

The tracks lead to the palisade and from the fresh gouges in the wood, it is apparent that whatever kidnapped the Knower came and went by climbing over the palisade on multiple legs. A careful inspection suggests that at least two creatures with a dozen legs each scaled the wall. The trail picks up again on the outside of the palisade, leading in a straight line into the forest.

The chieftain and the tribal elders gather and quickly agree that a group of mighty warriors must track down those responsible for abducting the shaman and rescue him before he comes to harm. The party is chosen for this task, either because they're trusted and experienced tribe members or because they are formidable explorers well acquainted with the dangers of the *Warden*. The chieftain offers the party an appropriate reward of the referee's choosing. Suggested recompense include two weeks food (smoked meat and other non-perishables), six fully charged hy-

drogen cells, and a battered metal case containing four doses of Intensity 15 anti-toxin. The anti-toxin negates the effects of Intensity 15 or less poison if administered within 2 rounds of exposure.

If the party is small or the referee foresees the need to have quick replacement PCs in the case of character death, two or three villagers may accompany the party on their quest. These reinforcements have light shields, spears, bows and arrows, and a few days' food and water.

Assuming the party accepts this task, the trail left by the kidnappers is easy to locate outside the village palisade and can be followed without difficulty.

PART ONE: JOURNEY TO THE METAL CAVERNS

The tracks lead away from the village, following a straight path through the forest. Whatever left the tracks made no effort to obscure them and the trail is easy to follow. Thirty minutes into pursuing the mysterious abductors, the party learns they're not the only ones drawn to the saline trail. Read the following:

EVENT ONE: A LIGHT IN THE FOREST: *The trail of smelly slime puddles leads deeper into the forest, seldom veering from a near-straight path despite the occasional fallen tree or large rock in its way. Whatever left these tracks have no difficulty scaling those minor obstacles.*

As you clear a low rise covered by a thin growth of trees, you suddenly spot movement 40' ahead of you. Five large insects, with dangerous-looking tusks protruding from their jaws, crowd around the trail, greedily sucking up the bile-colored slime. Each insect resembles a nightmarish locust and measures 6' long.

Check for surprise as normal at the beginning of the encounter, using the adjusted chance for the insects indicated below. The mutated insects are aurora bugs, a gigantic version of tusked weta. They insects find the salty slime delicious and are slurping the ooze down with gusto. Due to this preoccupation, the aurora bugs are surprised on a 3 in 6 chance. If surprised, they are automatically aggressive, seeing interlopers as threats to their meal, and attack as soon as they are able. If the aurora bugs are not surprised, they chitter aggressively at the party but don't attack unless attacked first or the party approaches to within 20 feet.

Aurora bug (5): DEX 11; AC 6; HD 3; hp 15 each; YPM 5; #ATK 1; tusks (WC 2; DMG 1d8/1d6/1d8; Mutations (Mental Resistance 9) *charismatic effect*; SP jump up to 40'

These mutant tusked wetas are 6' long and resemble monstrous crickets. Each has a pair of razor-sharp tusks jutting from its lower jaw. Aurora bugs get their name from their *charismatic effect* mutation. They begin combat by throwing these blinding lights at enemies, following up by spearing enemies with their tusks on subsequent rounds. Blinded opponents suffer a -4 penalty to physical attack rolls and a -2 penalty to mental attacks. Attacks against blinded opponents are made with a +2 bonus.

EVENT TWO: THE CAVE: A half hour after encountering the aurora bugs, the party comes to the trail's end: a forest clearing with a wide cave mouth protruding from the earth. Read the following:

The strange trail ends abruptly at the mouth of a great cave situated in a pastoral forest glade. The 150' wide, 20' high cave mouth is set into one side of a wedge-shaped hill rising 30' above the forest floor. The ground around the perimeter of the hill is disturbed, the turf broken and askew as if it was recently moved or turned. The space beyond the mouth of the cave is dark and foreboding.

If the PCs are native to the area or accompanied by local villagers, they know that the cave has never been seen here before and seems to have appeared mysteriously. The "cave" is in actuality a concealed access ramp leading to engineering walk ways in-between the ship's decks, the so-called "Metal Caverns" some tribes speak of in hushed whispers. The access ramp is normally sealed and covered by the surrounding vegetation, but when activated, rises from the ground to reveal an inclined plane leading down. The disturbed earth is a result of the access hatch opening and is not dangerous. Examining the hillside reveals the metal walls of the access hatch visible through the clinging earth and grass.

The interior of the access hatch is a sloped ramp leading down into darkness. A faint light is visible in its depths. This is produced by a series of illumination panels which begin 100' down the inclined plane and continue at 50' intervals until the ramp terminates 300' below in the between decks. Although the metal plating of the ramp bears no tracks, puddles of briny slime appear regularly down the inclined plane, a sure sign of the abductors' passage.

The access hatch normally closes minutes after opening, retracting beneath the grass once more. However, lack of maintenance has affected its closing mechanism and the hatch is functioning with a delay. Three minutes after the party enters the hatch, the circuits finally fire, sealing the hatch with a loud clang that echoes down the inclined plane. An engineering color band will reopen the hatch, but without one the PCs are trapped between decks and must find the means to escape.

PART TWO: THE METAL CAVERNS

The slime puddles leads the party to the seldom-seen "Metal Caverns" of the *Warden*. These intermediate levels conceal many of the systems and machines that keep the ship running. Once the domain of the engineers, the Metal Caverns are now the home of a variety of mutants and other threats.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE METAL CAVERNS

The Metal Caverns maps covers a large area, but very few points are detailed in this adventure. It is likely the party will travel directly from the inclined plane to the android's lair, but wandering off track is a possibility with curious players. If this occurs, the referee will need to determine what they find down other corridors of the Metal Caverns, probably in an off-the-cuff manner. The map of the Metal Caverns contains a number of thumb-nail descriptions of what exists on the level. Each annotated "city block" is actually a warren of rooms and corridors, and the referee is left to determine their exact layout and contents if necessary. For more information and advice about using such a map in *Warden* exploration, see my article "Futures Past: Playing *METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA* in a Traditional Manner" in the Goodman Games edition of *METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA*.

Check for wandering monsters as normal as the party explores the Metal Caverns. Use the following table to determine what mutations are encountered if a wandering mutant is indicated.

Roll 1d10	Mutant(s) Encountered
1	1d2 cougaroids (see MA p. 17)
2	1d3 wolfoids (see MA p. 17)
3	1 humanoid #1 (see MA p. 17)
4	1 humanoid #2 (see MA p. 17)
5	2d6 humanoids #4 (see MA p. 17)
6	1 kerask (see <i>Still More Additions to M.A.</i>)
7	1 black one (see MA p. 17)
8	3d5 seldom-seens (see area 1-1 below)
9	1 wardent (see <i>Still More Additions to M.A.</i>)
10	2 android guards (see “Android Patrol” below)

THE MAIN CORRIDOR

The PCs arrive at the point marked A) on the Metal Caverns Map. Read the following when they reach the end of the inclined plane:

The slope you’ve been descending ends in a massive tunnel lined with metal walls, strange tubes, and glowing squares of light. The opposite side of the tunnel is 200 yards away and the ceiling soars 100’ overhead. The huge corridor runs north-south, stretching off as far as you can see to the north and the south. The floor is splattered with briny goo.

Anyone examining the drops of salty slime notice they lead north as far as the eye can see. The trail runs for more than two miles before ending at the Biological Waste Processing and Hydroponic Reclamation Substation (marked B on the Between Decks map).

The walls and deck of the tunnel are duralloy. The tubes are various conduits and piping. The illumination panels provide constant, but diffuse illumination throughout the Metal Caverns.

AREA 1-1—LET’S PLAY: *Blinking, colorful lights appear near a side passage leading off from the main corridor you’re traversing. Hanging 3’ above the ground are a number of geometric shapes—ovals, spindles, spheres, and cubes—each bearing brilliantly colored, glowing panels along their faces. A melodic, but mechanic voice calls out from one of the objects, asking sincerely, “WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY A GAME?”*

The geometric shapes are six in number and each measures one cubic foot in size. They float lazily in the air on internal anti-grav projectors. Each object is a child’s game designed to stimulate the mind and reward success, but radiation exposure has thrown their original programming askew. The units drift about the Warden aimlessly, looking for players to fulfill their programmed purpose.

PCs approaching the objects are again questioned if they’d like to enjoy a fun game designed to stimulate the mind. It’s a simple mnemonic game where the devices illuminate several of their colorful panels in a pattern and the PC must repeat the pattern without error. Perky, energetic music accompanies the lights as the panels glow.

If a PC acquiesces (and up to six can play at once with one on each device), the devices become excited and explain the rules before beginning the patterns. If asked what happens if the PCs win, the games simply answer “the pleasure of mental development.” Should they lose, the device explains the PCs will “learn from their mistakes and become better students.”

To simulate the game, both the player and referee each rolls a d6. If the player beats or ties the referee’s roll, he successfully repeats the pattern and a mild euphoric pleasure flows through his body before the device displays a new pattern of lights. If the player rolls less than the referee, the PC experiences an electrical shock doing 1 hp of damage. The device then displays a new pattern.

After three games, the patterns become more complex and the referee rolls 2d6 to the player’s 1d6. The player must beat or tie both of the referee’s dice to win a game. After six games, the referee rolls 3d6 and so forth until the PC decides to stop playing.

Once a PC begins playing, the device refuses to let him stop. Quitting a game results in high volume demands by the device to resume play, threatening to inform the PC’s parents and tutors about the dereliction of his studies. If the PCs attempt to leave, the device(s) “attack” by slamming into their users with anti-grav propulsion and shocking them.

Instruction Games (6): DEX 8; AC 7; HD 2; hp 6 each; YPM 0/15; #ATK 1; slam (WC 1; DMG 1d6-1/1d6-1/1d6-1 plus 1 point electrical damage); Mutations none; SP immune to mental attacks, suffers double damage from electrical attacks

The devices attack until the PCs either resume play or destroy them, following the party wherever it goes and making loud accusations (and possibly requiring another wandering mutant check). The only positive outcome of encountering the instruction games is that a PC who wins six games in a row experiences such a positive feeling of euphoria that all attack rolls (physical and mental) gain a +1 bonus for 2d6 hours.

AREA 1-2—OVERTURNED MAINTENANCE CART: *A mechanized, six-wheel cart lies here upon its side near the left-hand wall. Its frame is bent and bashed, and a long dried puddle of engine fluids stains the deck beneath it.*

The cart is wrecked and no longer functions. It has been stripped of useful objects, but now it serves as a lookout post for a squad of mutant cockroaches known as seldom-seens.

PCs approaching within 25’ of the wreckage hear a voice in their minds demanding to know their identities and their reasons for traversing the Between Decks. No source of this voice is visible as the 3” long mutant roaches are concealed inside the wreck. Certain heightened senses and mental mutations may be able to pinpoint the ten tiny creatures occupying the chassis.

The seldom-seens are both curious and wary, and form questions accordingly. They have their nest in this part of the ship (located down the corridor beyond the wreckage) and forbid any outsiders from venturing down that hallway. If the party adopts a friendly attitude, one of the seldom-seens emerges from the wreck to conduct communications face-to-face.

The mutants can provide information as to who and what has traveled the corridor recently if made friendly with gifts of food or by a PC rolling his Leadership Potential or less on 3d6. The seldom-seens reveal that the thug bugs have passed this way



PART THREE: BIOLOGICAL WASTE PROCESSING AND HYDROPONIC RECLAMATION SUBSTATION #72-F

(AREA B ON THE METAL CAVERNS MAP)

This installation is the androids' base of operations and it must be entered and the synthetic men defeated to successfully rescue the Knower of Things. The base is well-protected and guards regularly patrol its halls. The PC can either attempt a direct assault or a stealthy infiltration.

Entering the Substation can be accomplished by various methods. If the party possess either an engineering or horticulture color band, the sealed entrance is no obstacle. Lacking the proper color bands requires other tactics. The following are likely possibilities, but not the only ones crafty players might concoct.

- **Ambush a Patrol:** A patient party lying in wait near the entrance will eventually encounter a pair of android guards departing or arriving at the Substation. If swiftly overpowered, the party can acquire the proper color bands to enter without the androids inside being alerted.
- **Help from the Seldom-seens:** If the party has made the mutant cockroaches allies, these tiny masters of the *Warden's* secret ways can trip the right toggles to open the front doors of the Substation. The seldom-seens are loath to venture deeper into the Substation, so the party is on their own from that point and they may encounter problems with the doors inside.
- **The Ductway:** The Substation has a "back door" through its waste processing area, an entrance the androids are unaware of (Area 2-2). A party noticing the symbols on the vent match those on the Substation's main entrance might deduce a connection and enter through this avenue. A mutant creature stands between them and the main Substation, but if triumphant, they'll enter undetected and in possession of the correct color band to explore the installation fully.

Android Patrol: The Substation is patrolled by a pair of sentry androids on a prescribed route. They move from locations A through F (see map) on an hourly basis, taking ten minutes to reach each point (moving from point A to point C takes 30 minutes, for example). They are constantly alert for intruders and are only surprised on a 1 in 6. If combat or other loud noises occur inside the Substation, the chance of the patrol detecting the PCs depends on the position in their patrol they are currently at. Locate the nearest patrol point to the party's location when the combat/disturbance occurs and compare it with the patrol's current location. The number of steps between the two points equals the number on a d6 the patrol detects the party. For example, if the party gets into a fight with the thug bugs near point B and the patrol is currently at point E, a difference of 3 positions, indicates a 3 in 6 chance the guards hear the combat and come to investigate. Roll 1d6 when the party first enters the Substation to determine the sentries' current location. A roll of "1" indicates the guards are at Point A; a roll of "2" indicates Point B, and so on through a "6" meaning the guards are at Point F.

recently, once going out and another time returning. They carried an elderly human in their clutches when they returned. The seldom-seens also say that groups of faceless human have been in the area, coming and going regularly over the past few weeks. Both the thug bugs and android enter and leave a pair of blast doors located further down the corridor (area B on the Between Decks map).

If made friendly, the seldom-seens can help the party enter the Substation should the PCs lack the proper color bands and convince the bugs to assist them (see below).

If attacked or the party attempts to travel down the side corridor, the seldom-seens retaliate mentally, using their *mass mind* to amplify their *mental blasts*. They use their molecular disruption mutation only in dire straits.

Seldom-seens (10): DEX 13; AC 4; HD 1; hp 3 each; YPM 3; #ATK 1; bite (WC 1; DMG 1 point/1 point/1 point; Mutations (Mental Resistance 15) *physical reflection (radiation)*, *telepathy*, *mass mind*, *mental blast*, and *molecular disruption*; SP color band bypass ability

Seldom-seens are mutated Madagascar hissing cockroaches and they resemble their unchanged brethren. Measuring 3" long and possessing black and brown carapaces, seldom-seens are the unexpected masters of the *Warden's* access tunnels, conduits, and spaces in between the bulkheads. The bugs travel the ship from top to bottom in secret, accumulating a broad understanding of the ship's internal systems. They can open nearly any door or hatch as if possessing the requisite color band (except those requiring command color bands) by tripping the proper circuits and relays concealed behind the ship's plating. A resident of the *Warden* who befriends the seldom-seens gains powerful allies in their explorations of the ship.

Android Sentries (2): DEX 14; AC 6; HD 10; hp 50 each; YPM 12; #ATK 1; punch (WC 1; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4) or paralysis rod (WC 3; paralysis for 3d6 hours) or vibro blade (WC 9; DMG 12/10/12); Mutations none; SP resistant to radiation (treat as Constitution 18), suffers double damage from sonic attacks

These faceless synthetic men dress in silver jumpsuits and black boots with buckles down the side. One sentry carries a paralysis rod and the other wields a vibro blade. Each wears a utility belt around its waist containing a holster/sheath for their weapon, two spare hydrogen cells, and a communication unit with a range of up to 2 miles. Both have green color bands on their wrists.

Intruders: If the guard patrol detects the party, they immediately rush to the PCs' location. As they do so, one android alerts Usu Alpha-Two via communicator. Usu Alpha-Two contacts the thug bugs via his amplified telepathy and dispatches them to the assist the guards. The synthetic leader also alerts the androids in area 2-8. As a last ditch effort, Usu Alpha-Two will remotely open the door to Operations, letting the Broken Things loose in the complex. The Broken Things attack any creature they encounter as they run amok through the Substation.

The androids fight to subdue intruders rather than kill. Any captured humans have their DNA extracted in order to create android duplicates to use as infiltrators. Mutated humans and creatures have a far worse fate: vivisection by the androids in area 2-11 to analyze and access their mutations. Afterwards, both humans and mutants face execution.

Doors and General Features: All doors in the Substation are closed unless otherwise noted and require either an engineering or horticultural color band to open. Color band slots with orange lights above them are located in the wall beside each door. Ceilings are 10' high except in area 2-3 and 2-6. Lighting panels on the ceilings provide bright illumination in all areas.

Fire Suppression System: The Substation has a functional fire containment system to extinguish blazes before they burn out of control in the oxygen- and methane-rich environments of this section. Sensors throughout the Substation monitor ambient temperature levels and activate the system when extreme heat is detected. Activation is presaged by a blaring klaxon alarm and an automated voice announcing "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! EVACUATE THIS FACILITY IMMEDIATELY!" One minute later, the suppression system floods the area where the heat was/is detected with cocktail of inert gases designed to extinguish the fire.

These gases neutralize oxygen in the atmosphere to snuff the fire and can potentially asphyxiate a living creature caught in the cloud of white mist. The cloud occupies a 20' cube and any creature caught in the gas are considered exposed to Intensity 9 poison with the following effect:

- An "*" indicates no effect as usual.
- PCs suffering damage also have a chance equal to the # of dice indicated $\times 20\%$ of falling unconscious for 3d6 minutes (e.g. a character taking 2 dice of damage has a 40% chance of being knocked out).
- A "D" result indicates the character suffocates and dies.

Laser pistols, laser torches, an engineering systems hand unit's melter and laser functions, the *heat generation* mutation,

and simple open flame illumination sources like torches all activate the fire suppression system, extinguishing any existing heat source at the location.

Setting off the fire suppression system alerts the androids of potential intruders and guards rush to the location of the suspected fire. If they discover the party, they act as detailed under "Intruders" above.

AREA 2-1—MAIN DOOR: *Two pairs of large blast doors separated by short corridor are situated in the west wall of the tremendous tunnel. The first set of doors stands open, their diagonal edges protruding slightly from the walls. The second set is sealed tightly and bears stenciled writing upon it. An orange light blinks steadily above a slot in the wall beside them. The telltale puddles of slime you've been following end at the sealed blast doors.*

The writing reads "Biological Waste Processing and Hydroponic Reclamation Substation #72-F." An engineering or a horticulture color band opens the doors, but there are other means to achieve entrance (see above).

A party wishing to observe the entrance for a time may witness androids arriving or departing. There is a 2 in 6 chance that an android patrol (see above) either leaves or enters the lair each hour.

AREA 2-2—THE DUCTWAY: *Wisps of steam drift through a 3' diameter grate in the wall with stenciled writing above it. Beyond the grate is a metal-lined tunnel that slopes down at a 45° angle. A pair of metal flanges keep the grate sealed.*

The writing reads "Biological Waste Processing and Hydroponic Reclamation Substation #72-F Quiescent Basin Vent #4." Even illiterate PCs may notice the similarities between these markings and the ones at area 2-1.

The flanges appear formidable, but time and neglect have taken their toll. Inflicting 4 points of damage on them or a PC rolling his Strength or less on 3d6 easily snaps them, allowing the grate to be removed. The ductway behind the grate measures 5' in diameter.

The ductway extends for 20' beyond the grate before it suddenly increases in pitch, slanting downwards at an 85° angle for 30' before ending in another closed grate similar to the first. PCs climbing down the steep, smooth-sided section without rope or the appropriate mutational powers have a 5 in 6 chance of slipping and falling, crashing through the lower grate and into area 2-3 below.

AREA 2-3—QUIESCENT BASIN: *The stench in this room is overwhelming. The majority of the room consists of a large pool filled with mixture of water and brown sludge. The smell of excrement and rot is nauseatingly strong. A walkway circles the pool and a dozen thick pipes run from the ceiling into the depths of the basin. A single door with a slot set into the frame beside it allows entrance and egress. A pile of debris occupies one corner of the room.*

Sewage and waste water from around the ship is first pumped here prior to treatment, allowing the solid and liquid matter to separate. Treat the noxious matter as Intensity 4 poison if a PC become immersed in it and Intensity 7 if consumed. A mutant with the *heightened smell* mutation is overcome with nausea and incapable of doing any action but move at half speed while in this room and for 3d6 rounds after leaving the premises.

A PC falling down the ductway (area 2-2) crashes through a grate in the ceiling 30' overhead and falls into the 15' deep pool, suffering 2d6 damage. He swiftly learns the pool is occupied.

The quiescent basin is home to an aggressive mutated flatworm. It senses any non-android intruding upon its territory or splashing into his pool to rise from the muck and attack.

Mutant Flatworm (1): DEX 9; AC 5; HD 10; hp 60; YPM 8; #ATK 1; bite (WC 3; DMG 1d12/1d12/1d12); Mutations none; SP immune to poison and mental attacks

This mutant is 20' long. It has a thin boneless body and an arrow-shaped head. Its pallid white color is obscured by the layers of filth the slowly drip off it as it rises from the pool. It cannot leave the pool, but can reach any opponent in this room with its elastic body.

The debris is in truth the skeletal remains of a bearoid who discovered this area and perished here long ago. Amongst the bones are a sword, a horticultural color band, and a pouch of powdered root that raises the eater's Mental Resistance to 18 for 1 hour (one use remaining).

AREA 2-4—SLUDGE PASSAGE: *A corridor stretching between two doors stands before you. A third door stands in the western wall of the corridor. A layer of lumpy silver goo clings to parts of the walls and floor, creating an obstacle to your passage. Careful footwork is required to step around the gleaming sludge.*

The sludge is a mutated form of engineered bacterium, similar to the oil-eating microbes used on Earth to sanitize petroleum spills. It is not hazardous to biological life, but destructive to synthetic materials and possesses a ravenous hunger for energy. Its presence keeps the androids out of this section of the Substation.

Any PC without powered devices can pass down the 50' corridor without incident, but those possessing one or more powered objects traveling the hall stir the goo into motion. Silvery pseudopods lash out at the objects carried by the character, having a 3 in 6 chance of striking large or hand-held devices. Color bands are not targeted, but any object requiring a power cell (including robots) is valid sustenance for the ooze. A successful hit drains the device's power cell. Prolonged contact with the sludge (2+ rounds) dissolves plastic and similar synthetic materials.

The sludge is repulsed by heat and mental energy (treat as Mental Resistance of 3). Directing either at it causes the ooze to retreat, slipping under the door to area 2-5. It is unaffected by other forms of attack. Note that burning the ooze with lasers or other devices will activate the fire suppression system (see above) and alert the android patrol.

AREA 2-5—PROCESSING MACHINERY: *Large humming machines and running pumps fill the entirety of this room. The air is humid and smells of chemicals, burning plastic, and human waste.*

Water from the quiescent basin is pumped through here for treatment before passing on the reclamation tanks. Unless the sludge from area 2-4 has retreated here, this room is empty of danger and objects of interest.

AREA 2-6—HYDROPONIC TANKS: *A quartet of four upright cylinders occupies the majority of what seems to be a large space. A metal catwalk runs around the circumference of the*



room and another gangway cuts across its center, dividing the cylinders into two pairs. Each cylinder measures 30' in diameter and is constructed from a transparent material, allowing you to see the mixture of liquid, green plant life, and flecks of brown matter contained within. The air hums with the sound of machinery and wafting mist rises from the depths of the room, obscuring vision and filling the atmosphere with humidity.

Treated water and waste from area 2-5 flow into these tanks, supporting hydroponic gardens that assist the ship's life support systems with oxygen production. Each cylinder contains growing, non-mutated, plants, fertilizer, and water, creating a small ecosystem. The tanks are 60' high and run from floor to ceiling of the room. Metal catwalks with railings divide the room into three, 20' high open levels with doors and inclined planes leading off from each.

The clouds of mist obscure vision in this area to 20' for characters with normal vision. Such characters are surprised on a 3 in 6.

While it is possible the party encounters the android sentry patrol here (see note above), the main threat are the plated thug bugs dwelling here. The plated thug bugs cling to the underside of the catwalks or rest in between the treatment tanks, enjoying the heat and moisture. They detect the thoughts of non-androids and recognize them as intruders, and can use their unique gland to locate mutated creatures within 100'.

Plated Thug Bugs (2): DEX 8; AC 3; HD 8; hp 40 each; YPM 4; #ATK 1; bite (WC 3; DMG 1d6/1d6/1d8); Mutations *new body parts (mutant sniffing gland), mental paralysis, mental blast* (mental resistance 12), *radiated eyes*; SP sense but not read thoughts (60' range); can climb walls and ceilings.

These mutants began as giant isopods, but Usu Alpha-Two altered their forms to create unthinkingly loyal soldiers. The plated



thug bugs are horrific to behold, measuring 10' long, having a dozen legs, nightmarish eyes, and thick plating that covers their entire bodies. Originally aquatic creatures, the plated thug bugs produce a saline-based slime that coats their bodies and protects them from drying out. Although possessing limited intellect, plated thug bugs have the *metal paralysis* and *mental blast* mutations (treat as mental resistance of 12). They possess a unique gland that allows them to sniff out mutated creatures up to 100' away when actively searching for them. Plated thug bugs can also blast enemies with *radiated eyes* and have a vicious bite.

The doors connecting to this area are typical Substation entrances with one exception. The door to area 2-9 is locked and the light above the color band slot shines red instead of the typical orange hue. This door can only be opened from area 2-9, circumvented by the seldom-seens (if they can be convinced to do so), or through the application of great destructive power or mutations (referee's discretion). If the party makes a great deal of noise attempting to open the door, the androids in 2-9 hear them and contact the patrolling sentries or Usu Alpha-Two, informing them of intruders.

AREA 2-7—HORTICULTURAL DATABASE ACCESS: *A score of plants, shrubs, and small trees encased in a clear, hard substance are placed about this room in aesthetical locales. Banks of large machines covered with blinking lights and whirring spools occupy the wall. A console with a circular black plate atop it stands near the center of the room.*

This room is connected to the ship's horticultural database and library, and was once used by the hydroponic engineers in their duties. The androids have little use for this room.

The plants in the room are perfectly preserved in a Lucite-like

material and bear small bronze plates identifying the plant with both its common and Latin name. These specimens are non-mutated samples from Earth and possess no special properties. The referee is free to determine the types of plants they are if the PCs investigate.

The console allows the user to access information on the roughly 9 million species of plants found on Earth and the several thousand new mutated species located on the *Warden*. The console is Complexity 1 to understand. If its operation is deduced, the user can call up information on plant life, which appears in holographic form above the black plate on the console. A pleasant, gender-neutral voice reads off the species known properties and can answer direct questions about the plant. The *Warden* is constantly updating the database as new species are identified on the ship and an inquisitive adventurer can gain great understanding about the powers and dangers possessed by these mutated strains, as well as their edibility and other uses.

AREA 2-8—OPERATIONS: *The walls of this room are lined with metal consoles and panels. Banks of blinking lights do little to illuminate the gloom with kaleidoscopic colors. The foul odor of blood, infections, and other stomach-churning stinks fills the room like a miasma. Misshapen forms lurch out of the shadows toward you accompanied by horrible sucking and slobbering noises.*

Formerly the control room for the reclamation tanks, this space has become a cage for Usu Alpha-Two's less successful creations. Dubbed "the Broken Things" by their creator, the six mutant creatures here no longer bear any resemblance to their original animal stock. They fear their creator and his minions, but hate true humans and mutants, jealous of their more comely forms.

Broken Things (5): DEX 10; AC 5; HD 4; hp 20 each; YPM 12; #ATK 1; bite (WC 1; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4); Mutations see below; SP none

- **Thing #1** mutations: reflection power, no resistance to poison, multi-armed (-3 to hit), mental defenselessness.
- **Thing #2** mutations: absorption (mental blasts), poor respiration system, multi-armed (-4 to hit), complete mental block (bears).
- **Thing #3** mutations: electrical generation, multiple damage (x2), epilepsy (5% chance in stressful situations)
- **Thing #4** mutations: cryogenics, hemophilia (suffer 1 point of damage each round per bleeding wound), diminished senses (hearing).
- **Thing #5** mutations: quills, double vision, mental defenselessness.

Due to the number of different mutations possessed by the Broken Things, the referee may wish to use note paper or index cards to keep track of each mutant's powers and drawbacks, as well as their conditions and positions during combat, to help run this encounter.

The room is filthy with bodily fluids and waste, and the consoles are non-functioning. There is a small rectangular platform surrounded by a railing on three sides. This platform is a lift that descends to area 2-9 if its function (Complexity 9) is deduced.

AREA 2-9—DNA ASSEMBLY: *This room was once a lounge or break room, but has been conscripted for another use. The room's couches and tables have been shoved against the walls to make room for the two large tubs filled with green gel that now stand here, flanked by bulky machines displaying wavering lines on tiny glowing screens. The gray carpeting is stained by unwholesome fluids. Large, hairy forms are immersed in the green gel and attended by four faceless men dressed in silver smocks. A rack of tiny rectangular plates occupies one wall of the room.*

Android science models (4): DEX 15; AC 6; HD 8; hp 40 each; YPM 12; #ATK 1; punch (WC 1; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4) or improvised medical tool weapon (WC 3; 1d6/1d4/1d6) or vibro scalpel (WC 9; DMG 12/10/12); Mutations none; SP resistant to radiation (treat as Constitution 18), suffers double damage from sonic attacks

Three of the androids battle intruders, while the fourth attempts to contact Usu Alpha-Two with a communicator set into one of the monitoring machines. One science android has a vibro scalpel, the others utilized improvised tools as weapons. Two androids have green horticultural color bands.

The tubs are DNA formulation vats measuring 8'x4'x4' and are filled with an amniotic gel. The subjects in the gel are mutated creatures being grown in the vats. One is a half-finished mountain gorilla, its skeletal structure still visible in places where the flesh has yet to knit over the bones, and the other is a completed lion waiting to be decanted.

Decanting the lion is a Complexity 3 task which, if successful, drains the amniotic gel out and awakens the unconscious feline. It imprints on the first human it sees, becoming a loyal (never checks morale) follower of that PC. It considers the character to be its parent and acts accordingly. The lion has these statistics:

Cloned Lion (1): DEX 13; AC 6; HD 6; hp 21; YPM 6; #ATK 1; bite (WC 2; DMG 1d10/1d10/1d10) or claws (WC 3; DMG 1d8/1d8/1d8); Mutations none; SP none.

The rack contains over a hundred DNA plates either looted from biological storage facilities or extracted from area 2-10 below. The DNA contained on the plates is from both native, unaffected Earth animals and mutated specimens acquired on the Warden.

The door leading to area 2-6 is locked, indicated by a red light glowing above the color band slot. It can be opened normally using the proper color band on this side only.

There is a small rectangular platform surrounded by a railing on three sides in the SW corner of the room. This platform is a lift that ascends to area 2-8 if its function (Complexity 9) is deduced.

AREA 2-10—DNA EXTRACTION: *Four semi-cylindrical beds occupy this room, indicating it was once sleeping quarters. Three of the bunks have been pushed aside to make room for a blinking console. The device is topped by an articulated arm fashioned from metal and resembling a skeletal limb tipped with odd instruments. The arm hangs above the central bed, poised like a serpent ready to strike. A short counter along one wall holds a wire racks filled with booklets.*

The central bed's padding is stained with blood, the foam torn and twisted. Subjects are restrained on the bed while the articu-

lated arm injects sedatives and extracts biological samples from the subject. These samples are then stored on plates resembling microscope slides for later use.

The console and sampling arm are powered and any creature moving within 3' of the device activates the extraction process. The arm swivels to strike (WC 2) and if successful injects the target with a strong (Intensity 15) sedative. A "D" result knocks the target unconscious for 3d6 hours; any other result has no effect. Once incapacitated, the arm draws samples from the victim. Moments later, a "ping" sounds and a small clear plate protrudes from a slot in the side of the console. It contains the subject's DNA and other data need to clone him in area 2-9.

The booklets are operations manuals for a number of technological devices, carefully arranged here for consultation by the Substation's staff. Utilizing the manuals requires the PCs to first decipher the meaning of the complex diagrams and instructions within (treat as Class 8 complexity). Once understood, the PC treats the following devices as two complexity classes higher when trying to deduce their functions: *anti-grav sled, ecology life analyzer hand unit, underwater breathing lung, and water/hydrogen energy converter.*

AREA 2-11—VIVISECTION: *This once-sterile laboratory is now awash in blood. Metal tables bear partially dissected mutants, the agony on their dead faces suggesting the operations occurred while the creatures still lived. A quartet of cylindrical tubes rest horizontally in fields of light, their cases open to display mutilated human corpses missing limbs, eyes, and other body parts. An upright table holds a struggling human man of advanced age, who twists against his restraints. Surrounding him are four of the faceless men. The face of one of the men shows signs of damage, and exposed circuitry and a single eye sensor are visible beneath his torn, emerald green, synthetic flesh. A poncho-like wrap slick with bioluminescent gel covers his torso.*

The human is the Knower of All Things, imprisoned here and about to undergo vivisection for the removal of his organs for study. The androids around him are three science androids and Usu Alpha-Two, himself.

Android science models (3): DEX 15; AC 6; HD 8; hp 40 each; YPM 12; #ATK 1; punch (WC 1; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4) or vibro scalpel (WC 9; DMG 12/10/12) or laser pistol (WC 6; DMG 5 or 15 dice); Mutations none; SP resistant to radiation (treat as Constitution 18), suffers double damage from sonic attacks

Two of the science androids have vibro scalpels and the third has a laser pistol with 3 shots remaining. All have engineering color bands and the laser pistol-wielding android has a spare hydrogen cell.

Usu Alpha-Two, Mutation-Enhanced Administration Class Android: DEX 15; AC 5; HD 16; hp 100; YPM 12; #ATK 1; punch (WC 1; DMG 1d4/1d4/1d4) or shock pike (WC 3; DMG 3d6 electrical); Mutations (Mental resistance 15) *mutational awareness* (200'; see below), *telepathy* (amplified with a 300' range), *mental blast*, and *mental transparency*; SP resistant to radiation (treat as Constitution 18), suffers double damage from sonic attacks.

The leader of this cabal of androids, Usu Alpha-Two is approaching the end of his two-year lifespan and grows increas-



ingly desperate to extend it. He attacks fearlessly and is willing to throw all his assets and fellow chemical men against intruders to ensure their defeat and his survival. If the battle appears hopeless, Usu Alpha-Two uses his *mental transparency* mutation to attempt to escape.

The android leader has access to a unique mental mutation, *mutational awareness*. This power allows him to mentally analyze a living creature to determine what mutations (if any) it possesses. With a successful mental attack against the target, Alpha-Two discovers one mutation (determined randomly) the subject possesses. The range of this mutation is 20' per point of mental resistance, but Alpha-Two must be able to see the target to attempt this power. It can be used multiple times against a subject to learn the full cadres of mutational powers possessed by the subject. Usu Alpha-Two uses this ability to determine what useful mutations a particular subject possesses. Those with advantageous mutations are kidnapped for vivisection and DNA harvesting.

Alpha-Two has two unique items. The first is a *shock pike*, a 6' long pole similar to a cattle prod. It does 3d6 damage on contact with an opponent. It requires a single hydrogen cell that powers it for 10 hours. Like a *paralysis rod*, it requires 3d6 minutes to warm up before operation. If the party was detected prior to arriving in this room, the *shock pike* is ready for use; otherwise Alpha-Two uses his fists and mental mutations in battle.

The second object is the *nutrient shroud* he wears. Typically a utility device that replenishes the essential chemicals synthetic life requires for peak operation, this nutrient shroud has been altered by Alpha-Two and contains harvested DNA samples that have been integrated into the shroud's design. The bioluminescent gel that covers the shroud acts like a conductor allowing Usu Alpha-Two to use the mutational properties found in the DNA

clusters. This grants the android leader his mutations. The nutrient shroud only works on synthetic life and functions up to 48 hours before the nutrient gel must be replenished.

Alpha-Two owns a communicator with a two-mile range, a spare hydrogen cell, and an engineering color band.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Defeating the androids of the Substation and the successful rescue and return of the Knower of All Things to the village successfully concludes this adventure. With the androids defeated or sent into flight, the Knower of All Things is easily released from his restraints and is anxious to return to the village. Assuming no wandering mutations are encountered, the party and the shaman arrive at the settlement safely to the cheers of the villagers. The PCs are feted with a great feast in their honor and given their promised reward. In addition, the Knower of All Things gratefully grants each PC a favor of their choosing. He can provide information about the *Warden*, identify unknown objects, brew anti-toxins, provide healing salves, or other gifts the referee deems fitting for the victorious party.

If the referee is feeling devious or the PCs dally in their efforts to rescue the Knower of All Things, the adventure can end in a similar, but more sinister manner. The Knower of All Things encountered in area 2-11 is not the real shaman, but an android replicate of the venerable village elder (who has since been vivisectioned and his body disposed of). Usu Alpha-Two intends to introduce the false shaman into the village to further his plans of seizing control of the *Warden* and wiping out human and mutant kind. In this case, the adventure ends as above, but the Knower of All Things simply offers his gratitude and no further favors. In the weeks and months to come, the PCs may discover the shaman's tribe becomes more warlike as the false Knower urges them to wipe out neighboring tribes of mutants and true humans. The PCs may investigate this development and ultimately reveal the true identity of the Knower of All Things.

If Usu Alpha-Two escapes the Substation, he continues his quest to prolong his lifespan, but also dedicates himself to the destruction of the PCs. The party has gained a powerful foe who operates from the shadows and knows many of the *Warden's* secrets. If one or more of the PCs had his DNA taken in the Substation and left their biological profile behind, the party may even come into conflict with their synthetic doppelgangers intent on tarnishing their reputations or replacing them entirely. Such is life on the *Warden* and in the wild world of *METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA*!

This adventure premiered at Gary Con VI in March 2014 in Lake Geneva, WI. Visit www.garycon.com for more info!

GARY CON VI

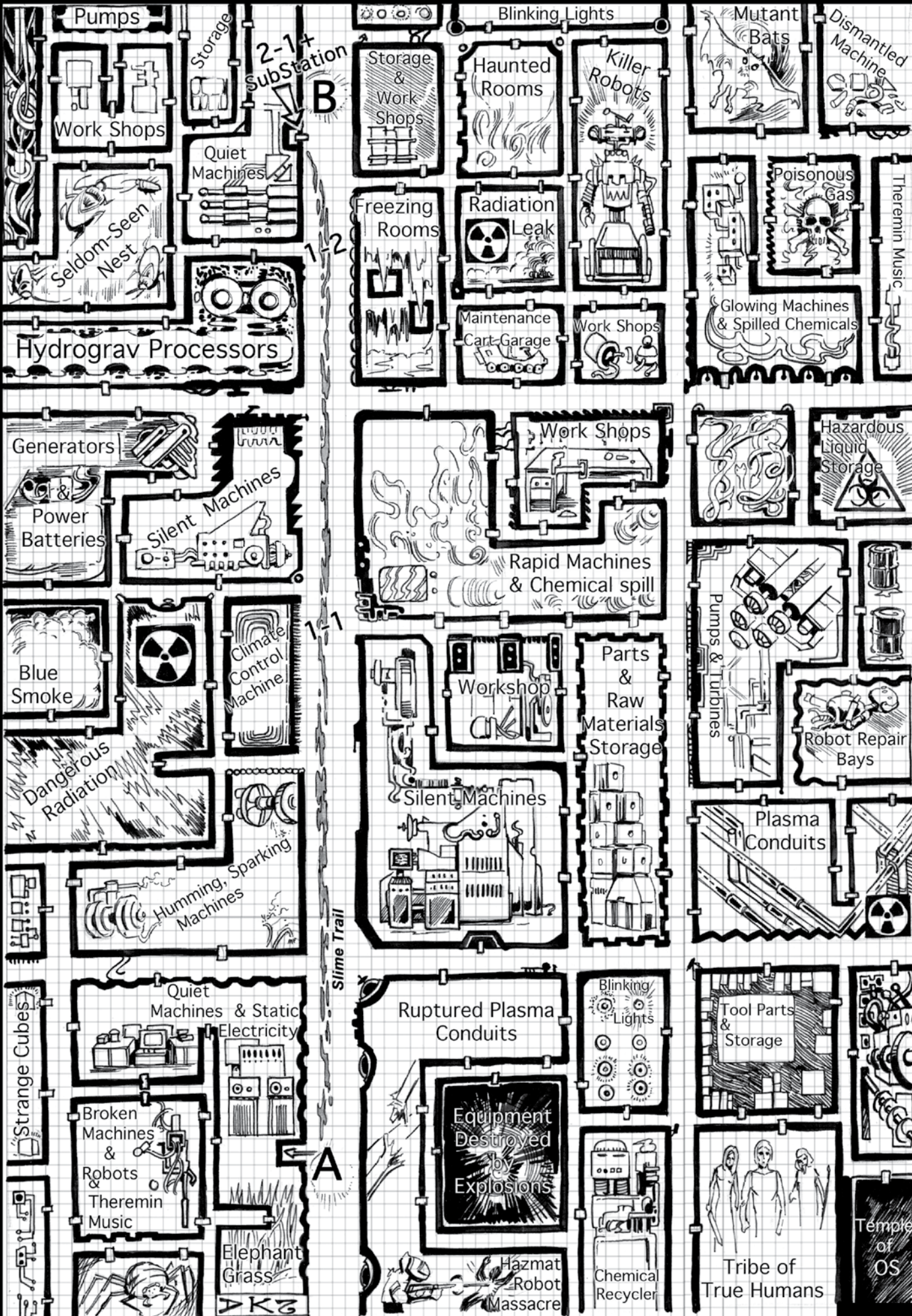
BETWEEN DECKS

□ = 50 yards

— > — = door

— = door

↑ = Inclined Plane (UP)



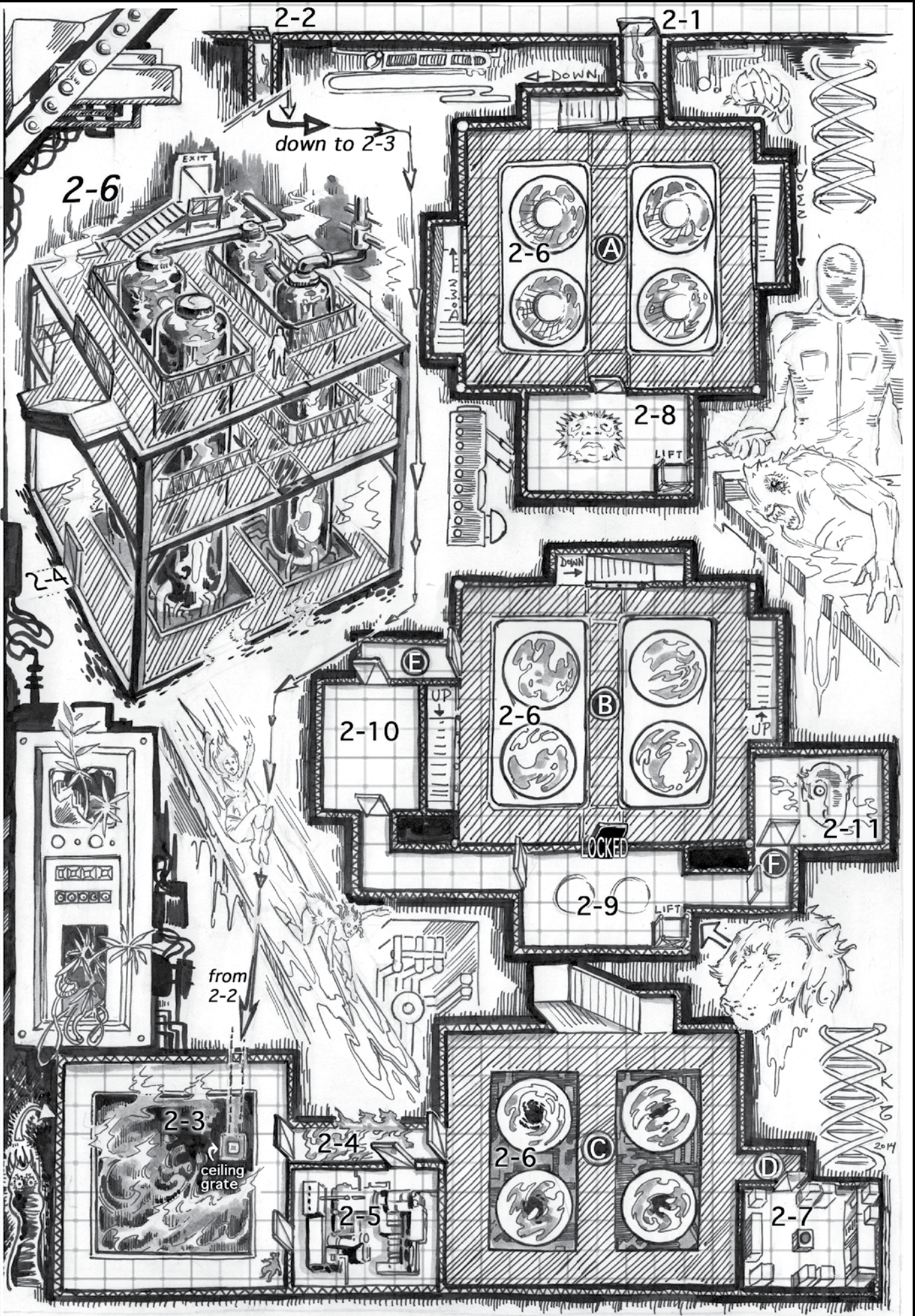
SUBSTATION #72-F

10"

1"

(A)

Sentry
Patrol
Points



THE ANDROID UNDERLORDS

By Michael Curtis

An all-new adventure for METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA, the first sci-fi RPG created by James M. Ward in 1976!

The Knower of All Things has been kidnapped! Mysterious agents have abducted the village shaman in the dead of night, leaving a hideous trail in their wake. Now it is up to the bravest and strongest members of the tribe to rescue the shaman before he falls victim to his captors' nefarious plans. Before their journey is through, the village heroes will find themselves in an undreamt-of place, battling faceless foes. Is your mutant up to the challenge?

This adventure module is designed for METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA first edition, as originally published in 1976 and re-published by Goodman Games in 2014.



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