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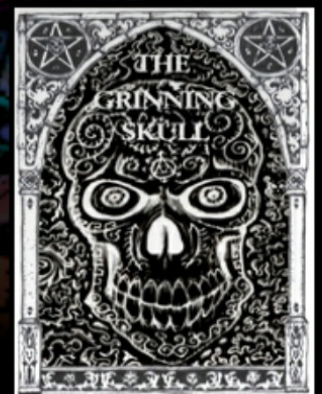
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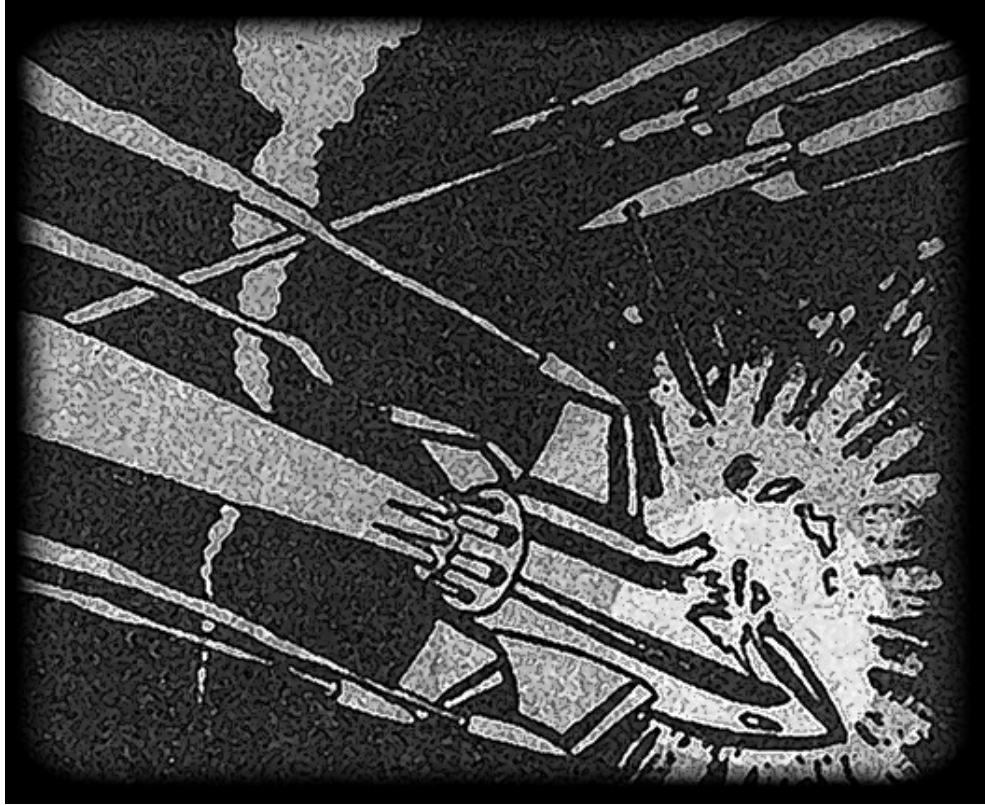
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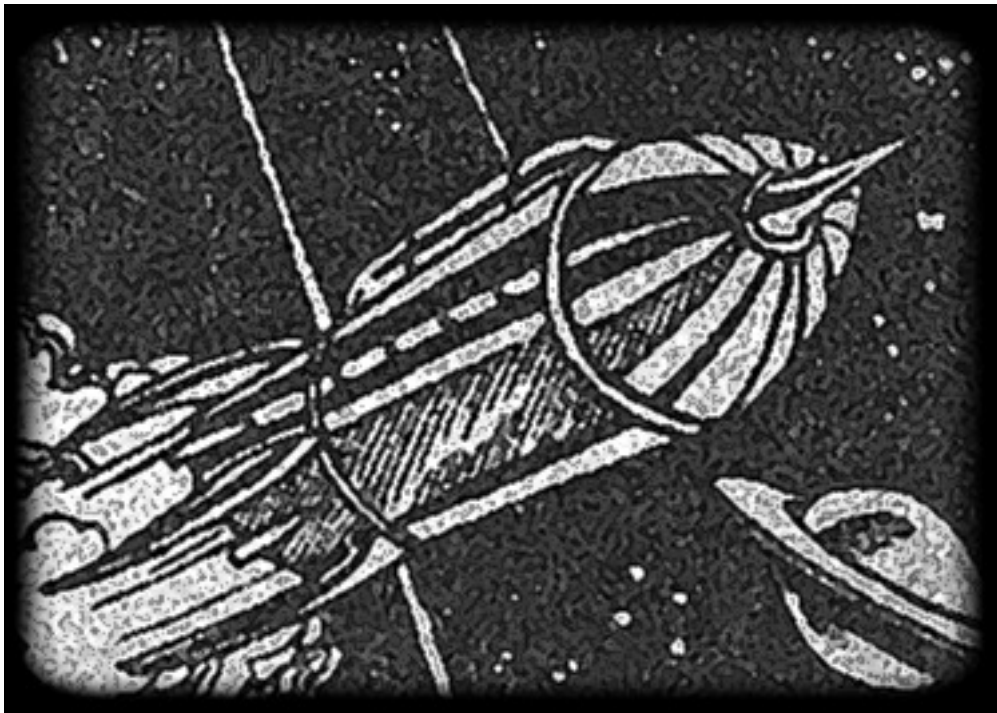


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INTRODUCTION



This new series of titles is designed to give GM's a set of six potential ideas that would serve as either a diversion to an established campaign or even to develop into fully fledged adventures or campaigns by themselves.

These adventure hooks are sometimes presented at maximum prejudice at times, so GM's might want to water them down somewhat if they feel their PC's are not up to the task, but at the end of the day, these are just simply seeds of ideas that can be used in part or full as the GM sees fit.

Even so this first title is aimed at the Sci-fi RPG genre, there will be other stalwart genres, fantasy, Horror, Post Apoc and so on, so for fans of those, there will be something there for you too!

On a side note, if you feel like you could pen an original six hooks title, then feel free to get in touch via our website, www.thegrinningskull.com and we can discuss your ideas and the possibility of working together!

Grim



ADVENTURE HOOK IDEA 1: YOU WILL ONLY FIND ETERNAL DEATH HERE...

The players pick up a faint transmission from an empty area of deep space. This message, when boosted and amplified is clearly an emergency of significance and priority, and pertains to several hundred men, women and children in imminent danger. The message is thus:

THIS IS CAPTAIN MELDON FRANG SENDING THIS REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FROM THE COLONY SHIP THE HALCYON QUEEN. WE ARE UNDER ATTACK FROM HOSTILES WITHIN THE SHIP AND ASK FOR HELP TO REPEL OR EVACUATE OUR CIVILIAN PASSENGERS. THE SITUATION IS GETTING WORSE AND PRAY THAT SOMEONE HEARS THIS MESSAGE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE...

The cries and moans in the background audio are reminiscent of hell on earth, and there is a suggestion that there is something else in the ship causing the crew and passengers to fear for life itself.

If attempts are made to isolate more data from the transmission, other than the location of the signal, the signature reveals nothing else and no star date. If the players try to trace the ship in records, then there is an omission in the files that may not be over ridden without top level planetary government clearance. If the players manage to get past this somehow (which should be virtually impossible, but not completely un do-able) all that can be found is that all files have been wiped totally around 10 years ago.

No record exists of the ship, its crew, passengers, destination, registration or anything else.

When the players arrive at the area of the transmission, they find a derelict but intact craft floating in space. Scans will reveal no damage to the systems, but no life forms are aboard. There seems to be a faint signal of something alive on the 5th deck, but scanners can not detect if this is a survivor or something else. The ship's AI and other systems show no damage, but are offline and cannot be restarted without manual access to the main frame aboard the ship in the heart of the craft. Investigating players will need to board the ship and switch the systems back on.

When on board, players will find the ship has been subject to violent attacks and many desiccated dismembered body parts are prevalent. Doors have been barricaded, often welded shut and those inside are almost mummified, with looks of terror and suffering upon their screaming faces.

Restoring power to the ship is an easy process, but no matter what, the five lowest levels of the ship (mostly engineering levels) are unable to have lighting or power restored other than auxiliary (minimum life support etc)

When rebooted, the ship's AI (Named Lancelot) will offer no real help or clues as to what has transpired. Any questions pertaining to why records have been wiped, or what cargo was carried on the fifth floor will be met with the response "That information is Classified and requires clearance."

Crew and passenger records that there were once close to 254 main crew staff, and 2148 colony passengers on route to a newly terra-formed planet in the Tresilisk alpha system. All are now dead.

The location on the fifth floor with the faint life signal, seems to be a lab of some sort, but remains on high lock down, citing that quarantine is in effect. All doors in or out are triple locked down, obviously keeping something deadly inside.

If players are clever enough to bypass the AI security somehow, Lancelot will give information about the contents of the locked down lab, and that the infected "specimen" is highly contagious and was on route to a facility on Althensis 7 to be carefully examined. No matter what the players try, the specimen cannot be accessed, with a warning that Lancelot will trigger the self destruction of the ship if this protocol is breached.

As time passes and the players make themselves more noticed aboard the ship exploring and so forth, systems will pick up signals from the lower decks, of things on the move, first a handful, soon tens, then hundreds, then over a thousand.

These things are the remains of the once living crew and colonists, infected by what lies in the fifth floor lab, a parody of life, these wretched creatures have been reanimated by a biological pathogen and are compelled to infect new hosts by clawing, biting and eating the living. Soon the ship will be crawling with these undead creatures and the players will be faced with a fight for survival.

The pathogen is very contagious, and the AI will restrict anyone who has possibly become infected through contact from leaving the ship. It will trigger a variety of in ship defences to do so, each as deadly in their own right. (These will include, laser weapons, gas, localised stunning/electrocutions, and whatever deadly traps you can throw at your players)

Will your players survive, or will the ship claim yet more to add to the hordes of the dead?



ADVENTURE HOOK IDEA 2: LET THEM RETURN THEM TO NATURE

A transmission will be intercepted by the players from a small colony on the planet of Drebin 3. This SOS is just 15 days old and reads like this:

THIS IS DR CARLOS WALKER OF DREBIN 3 COLONY BASE B3. ANY SHIPS IN THE VICINITY OF THE PLANET WOULD YOU PLEASE RESPOND. WE HAVE A SITUATION HERE AND ASK IF YOU CAN RESPOND. WE HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY A PLANT BASED ORGANISM THAT IS RESISTANT TO OUR CURRENT DEFENCE STRATEGY AND MAY NEED MILITARY FORCE TO COPE WITH THIS THREAT.. PLEASE RESPOND. THANK YOU.

This rather calm and formal communication hides the fact that the whole area around base B3 on the planet has become infested by rapidly growing plant based creatures known universally as klorzids. These creatures are highly intelligent and can reproduce indefinitely and quickly when exposed to certain sources of energy or chemicals. They are known for usually infesting death worlds but since just one single rogue spore can create an army of these deadly creatures, there must be something on the planet causing this rapid evolution.

Research will reveal the base is a chemical plant, supplying industrial heat proof paint to the military and other contractors. Dr Walker is famed in his circles for inventing a hybrid chemical able to resist very high temperatures, and his current research is that of creating a coating to be used on ships to resist the high temperatures of planetary re-entry.

If players respond, when nearing the planet they will find all communications to base B3 are down. further research on klorzids will tell them that Klorzids are extremely mutagenic and can react in unforeseen ways when compounds enter their ecological systems having almost spontaneous and random evolutions. Scans of the base will reveal that since the distress call, the klorzid takeover is more than 4 times the normal rate, and at this rate of growth, the klorzid will reach the highly populated civilian areas within the week.

The area around the base is infested, but the protected area inside is just holding, but will not for much longer. Landing a large ship is impossible, but a shuttle craft will just fit.

Inside the base, the staff are in panic stations, and are eager to get off planet side, although getting the 89 staff evacuated could take time unless the players have a good idea of how to swiftly do the job. To make matters worse, most of them have a ton of possessions and research equipment which they refuse to leave without.

Dr Walker is also adamant that he cannot leave any of his research behind, fearing that it might be lost or stolen, and his years of work wasted. With this amount of disarray and panic, things will quickly descend into chaos unless kept under control.

If the players attempt to evacuate anyone, the klorzids will react, reaching out huge tentacle vines to intercept any escape from planet side. The tentacles will aggressively attack any craft and wrap around to pull it down into the living plant mass making escape virtually impossible. Attempts to repel the klorzid vines with laser or any heat based weapons will not work either.

Under duress only will Dr Walker reveal that this resistance is down to the active heat resistant chemical "Infernitol" he has developed. Why the chemical has been introduced into the make up of this strain of klorzid is unclear and Dr Walker is clearly hiding something.

With escape looking unlikely, the players will need to find a way of either destroying the klorzids, or getting the base staff off world.

Such weapon technology like Sonic wave, cold, and anything that does not create heat, will fend off the klorzids, but the plant membranes will strengthen to gargantuan effect once heat is introduced. Since klorzids are sentient (in some sense) if players continue to attack or damage them, they will begin to intensify their attacks to fight back.

The question is, why have the klorzids reacted this way to the chemical?

At some point during the chaos, Dr Walker's research will be scattered around his quarters or the lab, and players who are savvy might spot some file folders on or around his desk marked DESTEKON INC ATTACHMENTS.

PC's with knowledge skills of industry, military orgs, politics, business or similar will recognise Destekon as a subsidiary company of the larger Valliance Corp, a well known inter-planetary contractor involved in a variety of scandalous war crimes, illegal and morally questionable atrocities over the years.

If anyone can get to the files, they will find that Dr Walker has been working in tandem with them, developing his heat resistant chemical mix to create a strain of klorzid strain, able to be employed as a bio weapon to topple governments and organisations guerilla style. He is in fact the reason why the situation exists, and he indeed has instigated the situation to test how effective his heat resistant strain is in a situation like this.

Any knowledge of this getting out will end his career, and implicate Valliance in more shady business.

If pressed with this, eventually he will relent and reveal that he introduced a failsafe in the infernitol that switches the heat properties on and off.

Walker has the chemical switch hidden in a sealed vault under the base, the trick will be injecting the parent klorzid with the switch, then within a few hours the changes should be spread throughout all the plants, and they should be easily treatable through normal heat based tech.

How the players deal with the fall out, is up to them...





ADVENTURE HOOK IDEA 3. THE CULT OF THE BLACK HOLE SONS.

The players pick up a curious deep space transmission, intriguing and strange. Is it a distress call or a trap. The message is as follows:

**HELP ME, HELP US. WE DON'T WANT TO DIE, YET WE DO. THE HOLE IS CALLING,
DRAWING ME, DRAWING US IN, HELP US...**

The message is spoken in a lyrical, almost poetic sense, by a girl or young woman. It is unclear as to if it's serious or a hoax. It repeats over and over again, the signal is strong and appears to be coming from a small spacial anomaly a few systems away. It is unclear what this anomaly is without further investigation, so probably is something that has developed over the last few weeks.

When the players arrive at the coordinates of the signal's source, it is evident that this anomaly is indeed a small black hole, slowly growing and sucking in more material in from around itself. The PC's should be made aware that approaching too closely could cause serious problems to the ships control systems and get drawn into the ever growing black hole.

Scans indicate a ship cloaked nearby, some sort of attack frigate of unknown manufacture, and there is some sort of energy field emitting from it to the newly grown singularity.

When the PCs make any real attempt to notice the ship, it will uncloak and turn all weapons toward the players ship, and arming the weapons to fire. After an uneasy face off which seems to go on for what seems like an eon, the ship begins to hail.

A very laid back voice issues forth from the comms:

"Greetings and galactic salutations visitors. I am Korron, high master of the order. May I ask what brings you to our quadrant this day?"

Korron has a slightly cocky attitude to his voice, which is probably due to his ship being armed to the teeth compared to the players ship.

During the parlay, the PCs will be invited to dine with Korron and his circle as guests. Since all the artillery is targeting the players, they may feel they have no choice (which is quite true in the circumstance.)

If the players accept, the ship will dock with the players, and an armed group of robed black guards board the ship, Korron is with them in the centre.

Korron is a average sized man, around his mid thirties, his eyes hold secrets and his grin is kindly, yet sinister. His demeanour is always polite and courteous, yet there is an air of seriousness and menace.

He invites them to dine on his ship, but leaves a group of guards on the players ship. It seems like the players could be in danger if they make the wrong moves.

They are led to the main area of the ship, past many crew members, who will eye the players suspiciously and with hidden malice.

The main area is decorated with banners symbolising the black circle of their order, and if questioned Korron will openly talk about all manner of any aspect of his cult, and while they dine he will speak passionately about how the Cult (or family) will be the salvation of the universe and such. As time goes on, he becomes more animated and triggered, until the point he will become enraged by whatever the players say and twist their words as to oppose his opinions.

At this point he orders them to be held in the brig until he decides what to do with them. Any attempt to resist will be opposed with brute strength and numbers.

While being held in the brig, a girl of around twenty dressed in a cloak will stand at the bars of the door, and tell them she will help get them out if they agree to take her to a safe place away from here. She tells them that Korron intends to jettison them into the black hole as a sacrifice for their ignorance, then strip their ship of all useful items and materials. Apparently this happens often when people respond to the distress call.

If the agree to her request, she will open the door in the quiet hours to allow them to escape, and if all sneaking and silent movement checks are successful, they will be able to escape to their ship. If caught out, they will face all manner of combat to get to escape.

When the players manage to get control of their ship, Korron will initiate ship to ship combat, and manoeuvre his ship perilously close to the danger zone that would draw him close to the black hole. The girl (who tells them her name is Delia) informs them that Korron is the one who initiated the creation of the black hole with his very own singularity generating device inside his ship, and the only way to defeat him for good is to disable his main thrusters when he is close to the black hole.

If they succeed, his ship will be disabled enough for the gravity to draw in his ship and once this happens, both the ship and the hole will swallow itself and disappear.



ADVENTURE HOOK IDEA 4: WAR GAMES MALFUNCTION

The players pick up a coded signal, which appears to be computer generated. All that can be decrypted is a few jumbled words like: "request", "require", "testing", "Attacked", "faster".

The signals originate from a barren world known as Crestor's Waste (KB420) a planetoid once used as an industrial dump for a variety of manufacturing worlds many centuries ago. No life is deemed to live there due to high levels of radiation and pollution, hence it was ideal for a dumping ground.

If the players investigate, scans of the planetoid will show very low levels of radiation contrary to the belief. There is also movement of vehicles detected, although only a handful of life forms are on the planet also.

If the players investigate by landing any craft on the surface, an unknown host will hijack the controls, and ground it, locking it from taking off again. Much of the PCs tech items may not function either, hijacked by the same control system.

The scenery is that of a barren junk yard world, nothing but dust, waste, metal, and decaying machinery and parts. Stuff can be salvaged easily, and players may find plenty of useful items for later use, but can they remove them from the planet?

Approaching any of the vehicles will be met with extreme hostility, with the piloting creatures and robotic drivers giving no quarter.

At some point, they will encounter a humanoid creature with lizardine features, he will attempt to assault them, but they will overpower him, and he will beg for his life. He will tell them that months ago, he and his crew were grounded here just as the PCs were. He says he will help them to safety, in return for his life.

The creature introduces himself as Ragno, a male of the species Morochungwa. He explains that the planet was taken over by an machine intelligence of a reactivated ancient junked military manufacturing unit, once it sprung back to life, it's corrupted systems set to putting the world right, manufacturing junk into recycled minions and equipment, repairing as much as it could as per it's programming.

As the robotic minions scoured the world for useful material, much memory units and software was scavenged and returned to the main frame for processing and added to it to create more capability, but since much of it was corrupt, each bit was assimilated becoming more and more malfunction. The tip of the iceberg was adding a broken military computer system, which over rode the program to run everything as it were a war game simulation, over and over.

Any visitors to the world were then press ganged to play these endless deadly simulations again and again in an endless cycle.

Rango will help the players try to escape the world, but they will need to disable the system locking their craft on planet side, which is located inside a cave several miles away. This place is heavily guarded by armed bots, and situated deep inside a cavern made from junk. The main machine is protected by a series of defences to stop such things happening.

Once this is disabled, the bots will cease to work, and the players (and Ragno) will be free to leave.





ADVENTURE HOOK IDEA 5: THE PRINCESS AND THE PIRATES

A wide broadcast is issued to call for the search for the daughter of Grand Senator Darian Vaughn to be found. She has been suspected as being kidnapped by brigands and pirates from the Durrans Clan, headed by the notorious fleet captain, Billy "Bull" Brightland, an insane and power hungry piratical despot, hungry for notoriety and riches.

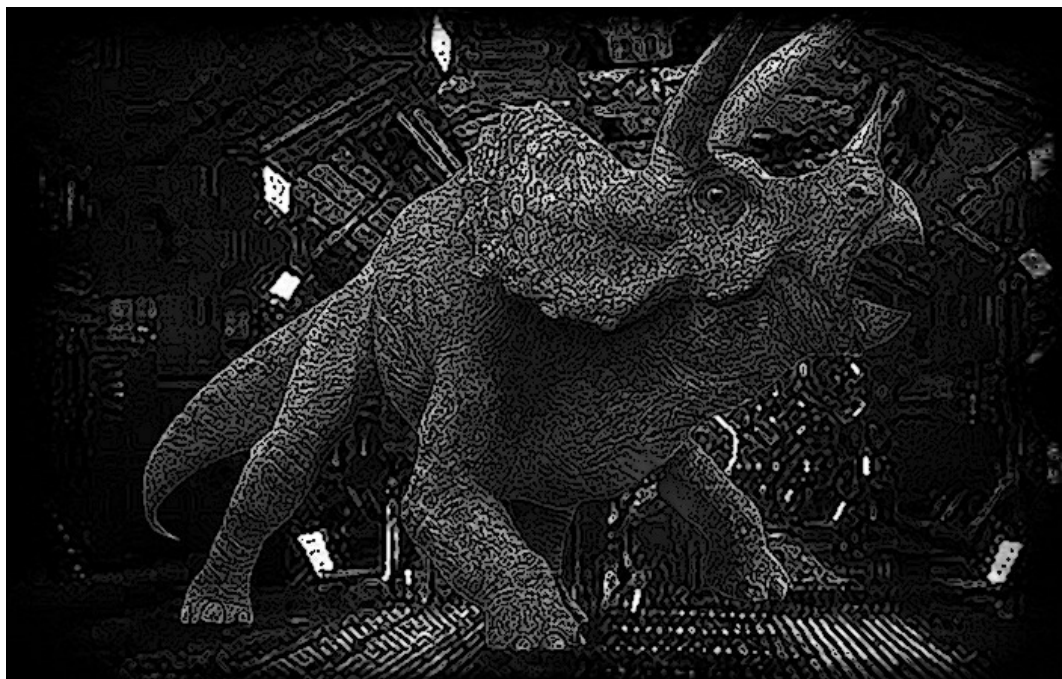
The broadcast, says that there is a reward of several hundred thousand credits, in fact the Senator would be prepared to offer what so ever her rescuers would ask for her safe return.

The Clan is not even in hiding, openly occupying the orbit around the pleasure planet Vida-Los-Vidas-69, mocking the administration and proudly mocking them and taunting them via regular vid stream broadcasts.

The Clan is made up of several large ships and countless other allied bands, heavily armed and dangerous. Indeed they are a match for many planetary governments combined. The Bull has openly offered that anyone who wishes to take her back, he will welcome any challenger melee combat one on one, and to the victor the spoils.

The truth of the matter is that she is deeply in love with the bull, and has no intention of leaving his side, she enjoys playing the role and relishes every moment.

The gauntlet is thrown, but will the players take up this difficult challenge?



ADVENTURE HOOK IDEA 6: RAMPAGE ON BOARD THE ARK12

A distress call is intercepted from the ARK 12 Cargo transporter which seems to be experiencing trouble with it's cargo. It's main job is moving live animals from one system to another for a variety of reasons.

From Zoo relocations, Circus transportation, private collectors and removing very dangerous creatures from areas they might be a danger etc.

The short coded text message reads:

**ARK12 SECTOR GAMMA VEDRIS, 201/33/90/345 CODE 44 LIVE BREAK
EMERGENCY, ARMED ASSISTANCE REQUIRED ASAP, PROCEED
WITH CAUTION**

The code 44 refers to one or more animals on board have broken free and are on the loose on the ship.

A quick cargo log check with main records at ARK HQ will show the cargo list. These animals/creatures of note include:

- A pair of Giant Arcturian fire lizards,
- A family of 3 cloned Woolly mammoth,
- A collection of 6 adult polar bears,
- A Cloned Adult Triceratops,
- A hybrid specimen Sasquatch (designer made for a theme park)
- Several assorted big cats relocated for breeding programs around the sector.



On arrival at the ship, it seems as if the crew are either dead, or have quickly evacuated via escape pods. Over 5 floors, all these creatures have got loose around the ship, and without their keepers to feed them, they wander around the vast corridors, hungry, agitated and scared, which makes for dangerous encounters.

The players are rewarded for rescuing the creatures without harming them, as these are worth a great deal of money. Killing them would be unfortunate, but the ARK12 has sufficient insurance to compensate all parties if that occurs.

Characters with revelent animal skills would be at an advantage here, but make no mistake, these creatures are dangerous indeed!

If the situation is contained, the ship can then be delivered to the nearest ARK depot or a destination on the flight itinerary.



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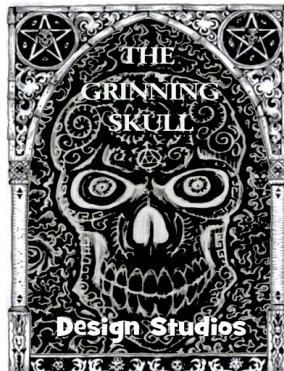
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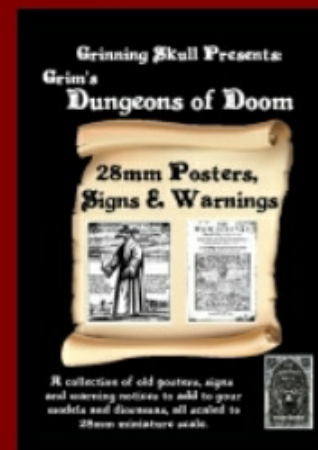
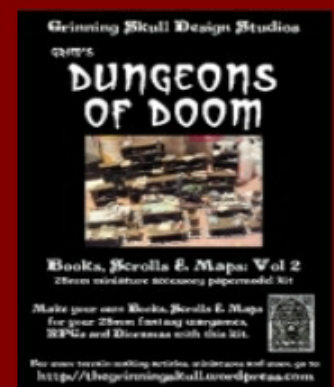
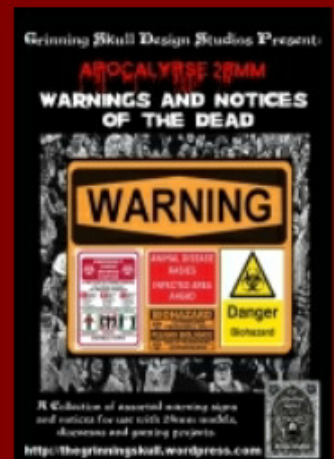
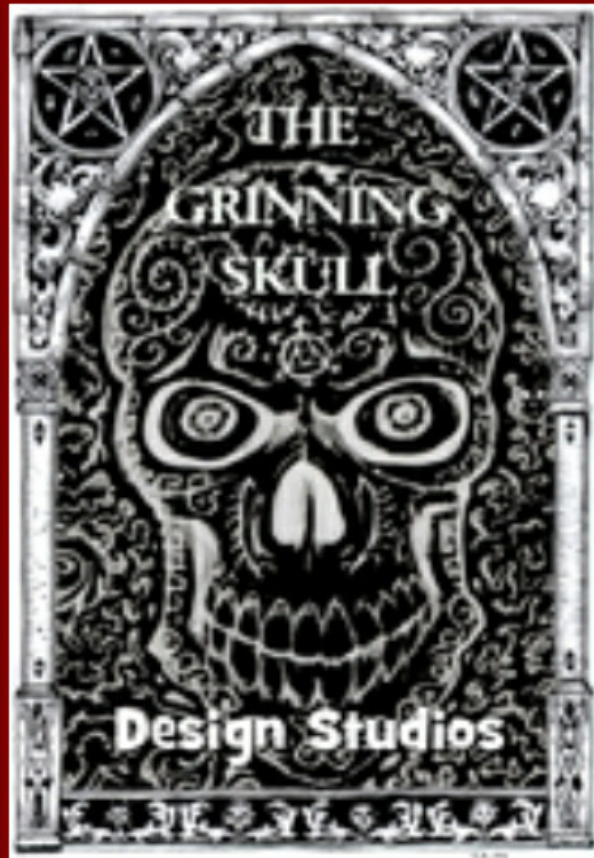
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