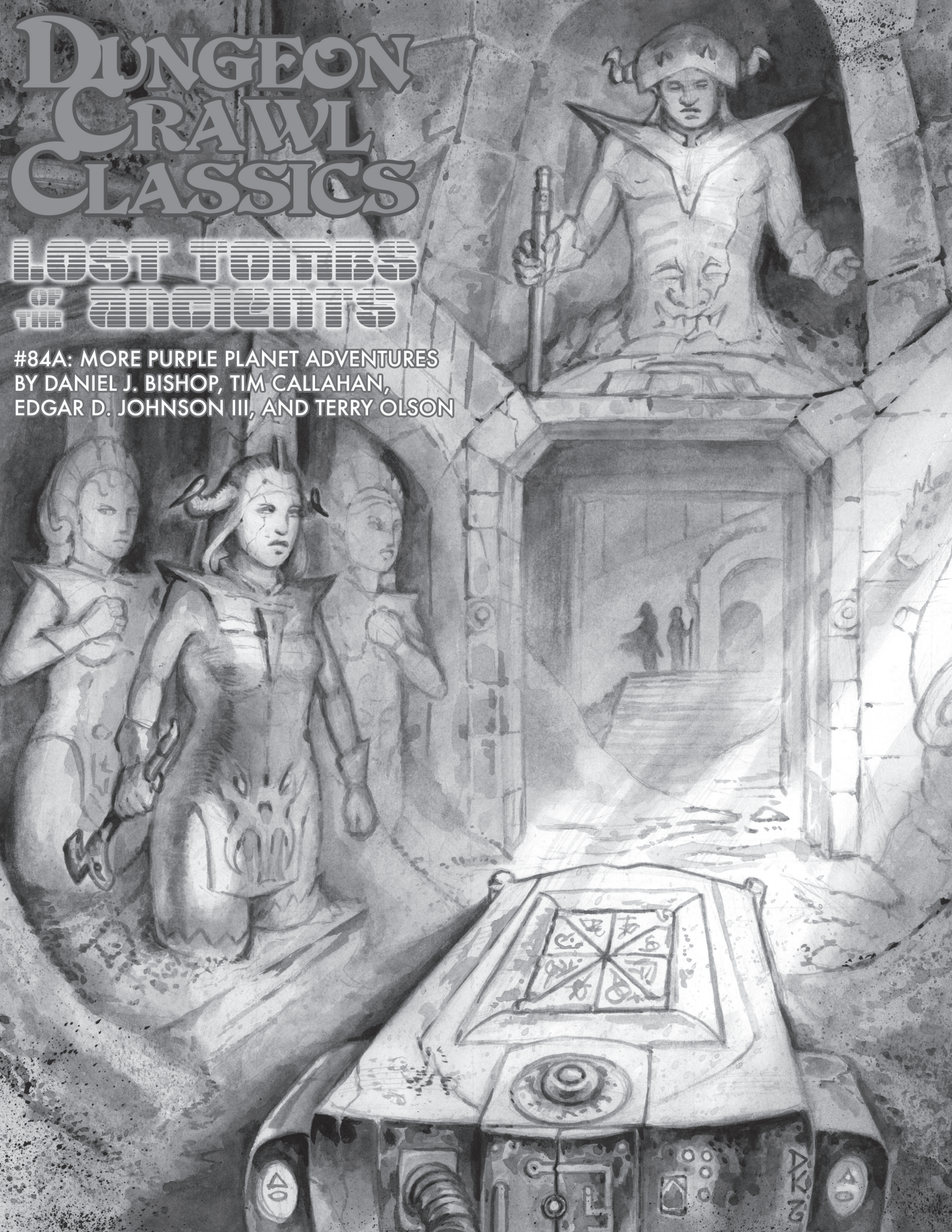


# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

## LAST TOMBS OF ANCIENTS

#84A: MORE PURPLE PLANET ADVENTURES  
BY DANIEL J. BISHOP, TIM CALLAHAN,  
EDGAR D. JOHNSON III, AND TERRY OLSON



# THE TOMB OF SOTARK THE DESTROYER

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## BACKGROUND



hen the Purple Planet began its slow decline, factions arose to vie for the final resources of the dying world. In the days of the Last Wars, the Ascendant Masters used their knowledge of cybernetics and genetic engineering to create increasingly powerful and grotesque biological weapons. One such weapon was Sotark the Destroyer of the long lost House Memniscene. Damaged and placed in a cryogenic regeneration capsule, Sotark has slept away the ages while the House above him eroded away under the weirdling sun. Over time, the capsule has failed, but still Sotark sleeps on, diminished, but not destroyed.

The hibernation chamber of Sotark the Destroyer may be placed anywhere in the wastes. The judge is encouraged to have the PCs sight the entrance at the start of a dust storm, offering both potential shelter and doom!

## Encounter List

Area	Type	Encounter
1	T, C	Ancient death ray traps, strekleons (2)
3	T	Rune panel shocks
4	T	Umbilicus trap, super-cold fluid
5	C, T	Sotark the Destroyer, super-cold fluid

Read the following when the players come within sight of the tomb:

*The ruined outlines of ancient walls, stones softened by the endless dust, appear out of the wasteland. Amid the swirling waves of dust, a dark passage is visible, partially shielded by the still-standing remains.*

**Area 1 – The Passage of Death:** *Through the opening you can see a hall, its floor coated with the dust of the wastes. After about 10 feet, the hall seems to descend along a flight of stairs, to some darker place below.*

There are three flights of stairs and two landings. Each flight of stairs descends 20' at a 45 degree angle, so that area 2 is 60' below the entrance. Examining the dust on the first flight of stairs or lower (where tracks are not obscured by wind action) reveals strekleon prints. A character with an appropriate background making a DC 10 Intelligence check can determine that there are two of the creatures.

**Death rays:** In the center of the ceiling above each of the two landings, there is a small inactive black node, not unlike a modern grocery store security camera. When active, it shoots a death ray at any creature standing on the landing. It can only shoot one ray per round, so if multiple creatures pass over the landing quickly, have each roll 1d20 + Luck modifier. The one with the lowest result is targeted.

The death ray is not as powerful as it once was, and does only 4d6 damage. The target can attempt a DC 15 Reflex or Fort save (whichever is better) for half damage.

If the black nodes are attacked, they are AC 20 and take 10 hp from a single attack to destroy. If active, they shower harmless black sparks.

Just before each landing, on the south wall, there is a panel with the 8 standard Runes. It is automatically found if looked for, but otherwise passes unnoticed unless the lead character succeeds in a Luck check. Rune 8 activates the death ray trap; Rune 3 deactivates it. (The trap begins play activated.) The other Runes have no effect. These traps also automatically operate if Sotark the Destroyer is awakened (see area 5).

**The Strekleons:** There is a 1 in 6 chance that characters will notice an animal smell at the first landing, and a 1 in 3 chance that they will notice it on the second landing (they notice automatically if they ask). Area 2 is the lair of a mated pair of strekleons. As the PCs begin their descent down the final stairway, the creatures come up out of the darkness and attack! The strekleons fight to the death.

Any character making a melee attack against a strekleon with a longsword or shorter weapon must make a DC10 Ref save or be speared by quills for 1d3 damage. Characters in plate mail armor or silver suits are immune to the quills.

**Strekleons (2):** Init +3; Atk claw +3 melee (1d6) or bite +0 melee (1d10); AC 15; HD 3d12; hp 20, 15; MV 60' or spring 45'; Act 1d20; SP quills; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N.

**Area 2 – Strekleon Lair:** *The stairs end at the entrance of a 30-foot square chamber of grey stone. The ceiling is about 10' high, but sags ominously in places, reminding you of the vast weight of stone and dust above your heads. The floor is littered with the bones of old kills – mostly those of gribb, but a few kith remains are scattered among them. The air is heavy with the smell of the dead strekleons which laired here. An archway leads into another area to the south.*

As the Purple Planet fades, conception rates among large mammals continue to decline. The strekleons had no cubs. Each breeding season, fewer are born. Both they and the kith are within a few generations of extinction.

Searching through the bones here uncovers nothing of value. The kith whose bones lie herein died elsewhere, and the strekleons left whatever arms or relics they may once have carried when they dragged the corpses back to their lair.

The secret door opens using a hidden control in area 3. When the control is depressed, the door slides rapidly but silently into the floor. If it is released, the door silently returns

to its original position. If a PC is in the doorway at that moment, allow a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid 2d6 damage. Surviving PCs have an equal chance of being on either side of the door, unless the player swiftly picks a direction to jump.

**Area 3 – Despoiled Tomb:** *The passage beyond the arch is a mere 5 feet long, opening into a rough room fully 50 feet wide and 20 feet deep. This must have been a place of burial – many cloth-wrapped kith were laid in here once, but they have been despoiled by both the strekleon and time.*

This area was not always a tomb, but it was used as one by a group of kith over a period of a century several decades ago. It was the scent of the dead kith that first attracted the strekleon to this area. Searching this area uncovers the remains of weapons, long ago fallen to ruin. In addition, a tile on the floor in the northeast corner is marked with 8 familiar runes.

Pushing Rune 6 on this tile causes the tile to depress into the floor. At the same time, the secret door in area 2 opens silently. Pushing Rune 2 resets the tile and closes the secret door. Pressing any other rune causes a shock (1d3 damage; no save). This differs intentionally from the normal activation/deactivation sequence of the Purple Planet function runes.

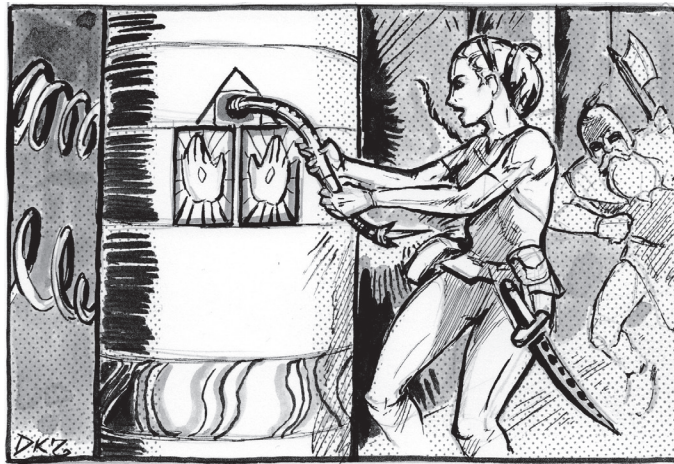
Unless a PC happens to be in area 2 when this is investigated, they are unlikely to be aware of its purpose. If they reset it before leaving this chamber, they may never discover what lies beyond.

**Area 4 – Passage of Rebirth:** *This low passage is 20' wide and 30' long, ending in a set of elaborate double doors made of an unknown reddish-brown metal. It is cool in here, almost cold. Large cylinders are spaced evenly along the north and south walls, each about 4 feet in diameter and as tall as the 7-foot-high ceiling. Thick coils run from the cylinders into the walls, and into the eastern wall on either side of the door.*

There are 12 cylinders; 6 each along the north and south walls. They are cold to the touch, as are the coils running from them. Each cylinder has an obvious location where two hands can be placed. In ages past, this allowed the extraction of genetic material from donors (willing or not) to be added to the matrix banks of House Memniscene. Now they form an unintentional trap.

If a character places both hands on a cylinder in the indicated spot, an umbilicus tube extends from the cylinder and fastens itself to him (surprise melee attack +6, 1d3 damage). If successful, it begins to drain the PC, causing 1d3 damage to Strength, Agility, or Stamina each round (determine randomly). The umbilicus can be yanked out with a DC 10 Strength check; this causes an additional 1d3 damage.

If either coils or cylinders are damaged (AC 10, 5 or 20 points of damage with a single attack, respectively), a super-cold fluid spews out, causing the room to instantly become frigid and spraying all within 5'. This fluid causes 2d6 damage from a coil or 4d6 from a cylinder (DC 15 Reflex save for half), and sprays for 1d3 rounds before the damage is automatically sealed.



The double doors have neither handles nor hinges, but contain a panel with the familiar 8 runes. Touching rune 8 causes the doors to open, sliding into the walls to the right and left. No other rune has any effect. If the doors are left unobstructed for 1 minute, they close. A similar panel is on both sides of the doors.

**Area 5 – The Hibernation Chamber of Sotark the Destroyer:** *The doors slide open to reveal a chamber some 50 feet wide and 40 feet deep, its 15 foot ceiling held up by pillars to the north and south. Cold air wafts outward, so that you can see your breath. Thick coils run from the walls to a raised object, not unlike a large casket or sarcophagus made of glass and metal. Two control panels with three levers each are located to the north and south of this “casket,” along the east wall, but they appear to be dormant.*

This is the hibernation chamber of Sotark the Destroyer. PCs examining the “casket” can see him within his stasis pod:

*Within you can see a mummified humanoid form, clearly some form of kith. Metallic helixes wind under its taut skin, and in some places protrude where the flesh has broken. The figure appears to have metal hands, or to be wearing some form of flexible metal gauntlets. One of its eyes – which are open and unseeing – has been replaced with a smooth red gem.*

There is no obvious way to open the stasis pod, and it is resistant to damage from the weapons that the PCs have available.

Each of the control panels has three levers as well as the familiar 8 runes. Rune 6 activates the control panel – there is an audible hum of power. Rune 2 deactivates the control panel. Each control panel must be activated separately to be used.

If any other rune is pressed, the power of the machine ramps up, the hum increasing in frequency and pitch. After 6 rounds (or approximately 1 minute), if rune 2 is not pressed, the control panels explode, doing 3d6 damage to all within 15' (DC 10 Reflex save for half), the stasis pod opens, and Sotark the Destroyer arises.

If the machine is active, the levers have the following effects, from north to south:

Lever	Effect
North panel, lever 1	The control panel begins to smoke. The smoke is green, cold, and stinks of rotting meat. If not returned to its original position, the control panel will begin to spark after 1d5 rounds. 1d7 rounds later, something inside burns out with a flash of green light, and the control panel becomes permanently inert.
North panel, lever 2	If south panel, lever 2 is also pulled, the stasis pod opens and Sotark arises.
North panel, lever 3	The control panel makes a whirring, clicking noise, and a warm green fluid seeps from the base of the stasis pod. It smells and tastes like honey, and is not harmful. A full gallon of this fluid seeps out.
South panel, lever 1	The room begins to cool noticeably, the temperature dropping by 1 degree each minute. Returning this lever to its original position maintains the current temperature; the room does not become warmer.
South panel, lever 2	If north panel, lever 2 is also pulled, the stasis pod opens and Sotark arises.
South panel, lever 3	The ceiling of the room emits bright greenish-yellow light, equal to daylight. 1d7 minutes later, it dims to be roughly equal to torchlight. 2d7 rounds later, it dims again to but a soft glow. 3d8 rounds later, the light goes out. No amount of playing with the lever restores this light.
All levers thrown <i>except</i> north and south panel, levers 2	The stasis pod opens without awakening Sotark. The PCs may destroy the Destroyer if they so desire.

Sotark the Destroyer has atrophied during his long hibernation. Even so, he is a formidable opponent, and is alert as soon as he is awakened. Sotark is not immediately belligerent unless the PCs are. His immediate priority is to determine who the PCs are.

After observing them for about a minute (unless they are hostile) he will be able to understand them (mostly; see **The Hands and Eye of Sotark**, below), and will demand to know what House they are allied to. If a PC claims any House other than House Memniscene, Sotark attacks. Clever characters may reverse the question, and if they claim that they are testing him after his long sleep, Sotark will answer. This allows the PCs to claim an immediate alliance with the Destroyer. If they are clever enough, the PCs might even convince Sotark that they are his superiors.

Sotark the Destroyer can cause a “sword” of green energy to appear in his right hand at will and a “shield” of green energy to appear in his left hand. Neither requires an action die, and both can be invoked or dispelled in the same round. He regenerates 1 hp/round until dead. His cybernetic eye allows him to see invisible creatures, to understand all spoken languages he observes for about a minute, and to compute optimal tactics (which is applied as a +2 bonus to any single die roll each round). Sotark has a d5 deed die (as a warrior or dwarf), but cannot apply his bonus to affect his chance of a successful deed. Sotark cannot handle greenstones or greenstone shards without destroying them (see **The Hands and Eye of Sotark**, below).

**Sotark the Destroyer:** Init +5; Atk energy blade +6 +1d5 melee (1d12+4 +1d5) or buffet +4 +1d5 melee (1d3+4 +1d5); AC 13 (17 with energy shield); HD 8d12; hp 50; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP Deed die (1d5), see invisible, regenerate 1/round, +2 bonus to one roll each round, energy sword and shield, faulty translation; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +10; AL C.

The coils contain super-cool fluid, as in area 4. While PCs may use target these coils to catch Sotark the Destroyer in their spray, Sotark’s programing prevents him from doing so. He cannot intentionally damage this chamber.

When Sotark is awakened, the death rays in area 1 become activated.

## THE HANDS AND EYE OF SOTARK

When Sotark is slain, the cybernetic cables in his body reel back into his hands, and both hands fall off. A character who is missing a hand may attach the corresponding Hand of Sotark merely by pressing it against the stump. Cables in the hand grip the arm and drill into the muscle, causing extraordinary pain (DC 25 Fort save or pass out for 1d7 x 10 minutes) as they enhance the character’s musculature. Each hand gives a +2 bonus to Strength checks; a character with both hands gains a +4 bonus.

The left hand can create a green energy shield, which grants a +4 bonus to AC with no check penalty. Each use of this shield lasts up to 1d5+5 rounds and uses 1 charge. The right hand can create a green energy blade which has a +2 bonus to hit and does 1d12 damage on a successful strike. Each use of this sword lasts up to 1d7+10 rounds and uses 1 charge. A character possessing either hand is automatically aware of this ability, and the hand’s current number of charges. When Sotark is defeated, each hand has 1d5-1 charges remaining.

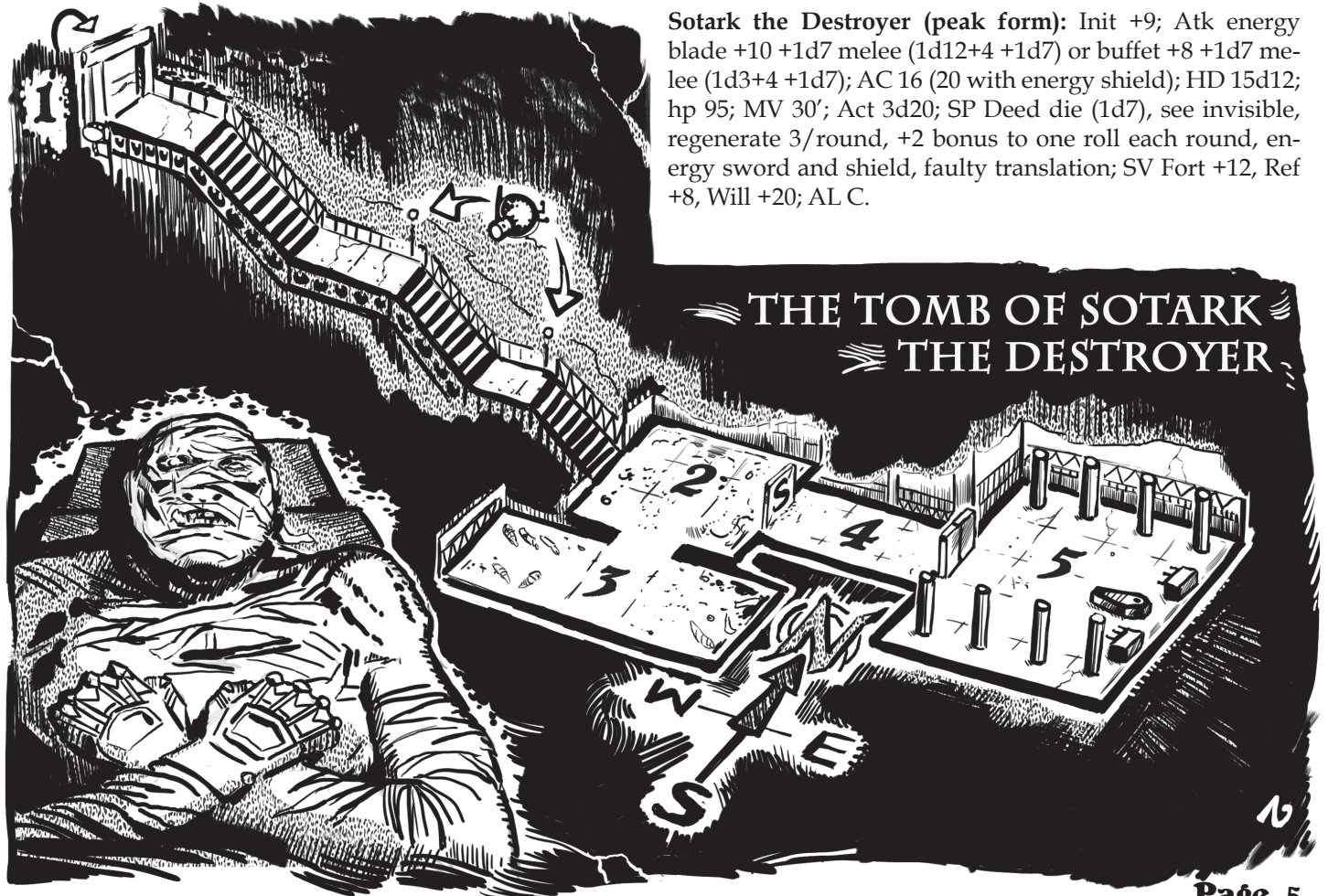
These abilities are recharged using greenstone shards. If either of Sotark’s hands comes into contact with a greenstone shard, including contact through up to 1 inch of material, the shard is absorbed, granting 1d6+2 charges to the hand. The hand can also absorb greenstones, through up to 1 foot

of material. In this event, roll 1d7 + the character's Luck modifier. If the roll is 5 or under, the hand explodes, causing the character 2d12 damage and destroying the greenstone. If the roll is 6 or higher, the hand gains 2d12+10 charges and the greenstone is destroyed.

Likewise, Sotark's cybernetic red eye may be placed in an empty eye socket, and cables will worm into the character's brain. Thereafter, the character can always see invisible creatures (although this ability does not extend to ethereal or out-of-phase creatures), can gain a +2 bonus to one die roll each round (due to the eye's computational abilities), and can understand any language he has the opportunity to observe being used for 1 minute.

This last ability is faulty; one out of every 1d100 words is mistranslated randomly, both in the character's understanding of the language, and in the character's use of it. The judge and players are encouraged to have fun with this fault.

In addition, the eye begins to rewire the character's brain, encouraging allegiance to House Memniscene in dreams and visions. Even when the character returns to his own world, the eye urges him to recreate the House Memniscene, and to make it preminent over all others! This may lead the character into many other adventures. If the character refuses to act in the interests of House Memniscene, the eye may create visual hallucinations, interfere with speech or understanding of speech, or even render the character blind.



## SOTARK LIVES!

If the characters awaken, but do not defeat, Sotark, he will become a disruptive force on the already unstable Purple Planet. Determined to restore House Memniscene, he demands the PCs' absolute loyalty and punishes any deviation with brutality and death. He demands any greenstone shards that are found, using them to fuel his cybernetic hands (and preventing the PCs from returning home thereby). He will seek the overthrow of Houses Cotcyst and Reagen'Tor, and when this is accomplished, he will seek to purify his own House.

When Sotark is first awakened, quick-thinking PCs may convince him that they are his superiors. In this event, Sotark can be a powerful weapon against the PCs' enemies. Sotark is no fool, however, and he will not remain fooled for long. After a week at most, Sotark will realize that they are not members of House Memniscene and demand that they instead serve him.

Unchecked, Sotark the Destroyer of House Memniscene will be the last living being beneath the weirdling sun before he, too, is found unworthy by the relentless programming of his cybernetic enhancements and genetic grafts. And then Sotark too shall fall.

The longer Sotark is awake, the more powerful he becomes, until he is restored to his pre-hibernation peak after 1d3+3 months. The Judge should modify Sotark's original stats incrementally towards his peak form as time passes.

**Sotark the Destroyer (peak form):** Init +9; Atk energy blade +10 +1d7 melee (1d12+4 +1d7) or buffet +8 +1d7 melee (1d3+4 +1d7); AC 16 (20 with energy shield); HD 15d12; hp 95; MV 30'; Act 3d20; SP Deed die (1d7), see invisible, regenerate 3/round, +2 bonus to one roll each round, energy sword and shield, faulty translation; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +20; AL C.

# THE TOMB OF THE IMMORTAL KAHL

By Terry Olson • Playtesters: Steve Bean, Nigel Duffy, Topher Gadd, David Leavenworth, Doug Lomas, Andrew Mcallister, Mike Olson, Aaron Teixeira

## BACKGROUND



Discovering a once-hidden passage in the Purple Planet's Ancestor Peaks, the PCs enter the tomb of the Immortal Kahl. The party must survive deadly chambers fraught with alien life and technologies while unraveling the tomb's mysteries. Ultimately, the party faces a choice unlike any encountered before, and a reward which will change them forever.

This adventure is designed for 4-6 4<sup>th</sup>-level characters.

Kahl was an ancient sorcerer-king who was born a cripple. Over his lifetime he developed an apparatus of two thrones that allows two bodies to swap consciousness. He used this technology to trade his crippled form for an athletic one. Whenever his current body became too aged or damaged, he used his thrones to swap into a young healthy physique. As the ruler of his tribe, he experimented with many lifestyles, e.g., being a woman, a combat-hardened warlord, and a gluttonous aristocrat. Eventually the multiple transfers of consciousness killed him, and his tribe interpreted this as the Gods' disfavor; he and his technology were buried with the intent of never being found. The PCs are the first in millennia to view the tomb, and his thrones are still in working condition deep within.

While exploring, the PCs will encounter both written and spoken passages from Kahl's time. His royal line used a now-extinct dialect of the Kith language that is written with a flowing glyphic script. Wizards and elves may translate "Kahlia" with a DC 15 Intelligence check; similarly, Thieves' read languages check is DC 15. Note that PCs who can read the language of Law receive a +5 bonus to their translation check. The language is terrestrial when considering results from a *Comprehend Languages* spell.

Unless otherwise mentioned, the tomb's passages are dark without any sources of light. The stair-stepped halls before and after areas 1 and 2 are too small to accommodate a full-sized skiff, should the party have one. The tomb doors are atypical from a medieval perspective; they are thin stone slabs, slightly recessed, that slide into the wall (A Strength of 8 required to move). They have no locks to pick, but have depressions to make sliding them easier.

## Encounter List

Area	Type	Encounter
1	P/T	Trapped false doors and secret door
2	C	Nanite Swarm
3	C	2 Thawed Ones
4	P/T	Trapped well shaft and hidden entrance
5	P	Kahl's thrones

**Area 1 - The Will to Transform:** *Amongst the boulder fields you note a large piece of stone unnaturally shaped. The bottom left corner has broken away, revealing a hollow darkness underneath the slab.*

A combined strength of 20 is required to move the slab. PCs investigating the darkness note the following:

*A carved, stepped hallway of stone descends steeply, ending in a square chamber roughly 30 feet below the surface. Each of the three walls of the chamber has a closed stone door. Above each is a series of characters carved into the rock with a flowing script; the characters are the same on each wall. The doors have no hinges and are somewhat recessed, appearing to require pushing or sliding to open.*

Each of the doors is a false door (DC 15 Intelligence check to spot, dwarves and elves receive +4, and thieves may make a passive find traps check). Each door is trapped (DC 15 to find and remove). If a PC disturbs a door beyond gentle-touch inspection, then Lyiart mushroom spores shoot out from hidden chambers of the disturbed door (DC 10 Will save or violent madness for 1d5 rounds, see page 9 of *Peril on the Purple Planet*). Trying to open, budge, tap, etc., a door sets off that door's trap. The spores affect all PCs in a 10' cube. The way into the tomb is via a secret door in the floor (DC 15 Intelligence check to find); a 3' by 3' stone slab slides into the other floor stones to reveal a 15 foot drop to the floor of area 2. The walls of area 2 are DC 20 to climb due to the loose sandy nature of the nanite swarm, which will not treat climbing as an aggressive act (see area 2). The identical phrases above each door are written in the Kahlia dialect. If translated (see Background), the glyphs hint at the secret door, saying, "The journey begins where your foot meets the ground."

**Area 2 - Hall of the Husks:** *You descend through the ceiling to one corner of a rectangular chamber. Along the smooth steel floor are six evenly spaced glass panels, below which float bodies in a luminescent violet liquid; the chamber is lit by this purple glow. The walls are coated with glittering metallic sand. One long wall contains six stone doors, each aligned with the glass panels in the floor.*

The glass panels are tops to individual tanks containing Kahl's discarded bodies, each of which appears well preserved. From east wall to west wall, the tanks contain:

- a young man, late 20s, with deformed shrunken legs (Kahl's original body);
- an elderly man who might have been quite an athlete in his younger years;
- a middle-aged, muscular man with a gash in his abdomen that is horribly discolored (thieves recognize it as a fatal poison wound);
- an elderly woman with a regal aura about her;
- a terribly obese man in his late 50s;
- only violet liquid (intended to house the body Kahl died with).

The “glittering metallic sand” covering the walls is actually a nanite swarm, a cloud of tiny nanoscale machines that projects images and sound, but also delivers deadly electric shocks. As discussed below, it leaves the stone walls and attacks if the PCs press incorrect runes, try to open any of the doors, attempt to break the glass panels, or are attacked themselves. Describe the swarm as a sentient cloud; if an attack misses the swarm, mention that the cloud opens a space of air around the weapon, etc. On a fumble the swarm vibrates coherently in place and receives a -2 penalty on its next attack. A critical hit by the swarm results in significant damage, debilitation, and possibly death; see the bestiary for more information.

**Nanite Swarm:** Init +4; Atk swarming shock +5 melee (2d6 + DC 15 Fort save vs. paralyzation for 1d3 rounds, -4 to save if in metal armor); AC 17; HD 8d8; hp 32; MV fly 40'; Act d20 special; SP shock all targets within 800 sq. ft. area (10' x 80', 20' x 40', etc.), half damage from non-area attacks, takes -2d electrical damage, takes +2d water damage, immune to mind altering spells. SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +8; AL N.

If a PC steps between a door and glass panel, read the following to the players:

*Rays of light erupt from the walls in green, red, blue, and two “colors” that are beyond your experience. The light coalesces above the nearby glass panel, forming a translucent colored three-dimensional person. The image speaks in a foreign tongue, its voice echoing throughout the chamber and seeming to come from everywhere at once.*

Stepping in front of any door causes the nanite swarm to produce a pre-programmed series of images and sounds. The speakers use the Kahlian dialect, saying, “I, Kahl, acknowledge the sacrifice of this vessel and pledge increasing prosperity in my continued rule.” Astute PCs (DC 13 Intelligence check) notice that the speaker is a younger version of the person lying in the succeeding tank, i.e., the person from tank *b* speaks in front of tank *a*, the person from tank *c* speaks in front of tank *b*, etc. The person who speaks in front of tank *e* is currently unrecognizable, though this may change when PCs enter area 5.

The south side of each tank is bordered along the floor with the eight runes found on Purple Planet artifacts (page 31 of *Peril on the Purple Planet*). The tanks may be opened by breaking the glass (50 hp) or by pressing rune 4. Pressing rune 3 causes the tank to go dark, while pressing rune 8 lights the tank. Trying to break the glass with force, or pressing any runes other than 3, 4, or 8, causes the nanite swarm to attack. If the PCs reach the liquid they find that it suspends all organic cellular activity, having three progressive stages that must be checked each round of exposure: numbness (DC 10 Fortitude save); paralysis (DC 15 Fortitude save), and death (DC 20 Fortitude save).

All of the doors, except that corresponding to tank *b*, are false doors (DC 15 Intelligence to spot, dwarves and elves receive +4, and thieves may make a passive find traps check). Trying to open any of the doors (even the correct one) causes the nanite swarm to attack.

**Area 3 - Hall of the Vessels:** *The stairs lead to a white-tiled square chamber housing four man-sized glass cylinders. The cylinders stand erect and are connected by a series of pipes, gears, and hoses, with some having been crushed by stones from the ceiling. A cold mist leaks from the wreckage, adding a faint hiss to the tomb’s silence. Three of the cylinders are empty, their glass shattered. The fourth contains a sleeping man with an amazing physique: sturdy, swift, and strong. The room is dimly lit by a single greenstone crystal shard atop the man’s chamber, with a green-lit script floating on the glass. Large chunks of fallen stone litter the floor, and an open doorway stands at the opposite end of the room. Clay urns lay smashed in puddles of mushroom milk amongst a partially-devoured shriveled body.*

This chamber is the repository for Kahl’s future bodies, each placed in cryo-stasis until needed. Three of these became rapidly thawed due to their machinery being crushed by ceiling stones. Violently insane from their rude awakening, they attacked each other until two survivors remained, which transformed into un-dead Thawed Ones. They currently hide in a ceiling alcove created by the falling stones (DC 15 Intelligence check to spot). They attack if spotted, if PCs attempt to thaw the remaining body, or if PCs approach the doorway toward area 4.

**Thawed Ones (2):** Init +2; Atk fist +4 melee (1d6+4) or necrotic breath +3 cone 5’x5’ (1d4 strength damage); AC 13; HD 8d12; hp 48 each; MV 30'; Act 3d20 special; SP damage reduction 3, takes +2d fire damage, un-dead traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +10; AL C.

Thawed ones appear as hairless humanoids with gray flesh mottled with blue and green patches. Their eyes are entirely black (no irises), and their fingers, toes, and lips a dark purple. Thawed Ones are un-dead, and thus can be turned by clerics. They do not eat, drink, or breathe, and are immune to critical hits, disease, and poison. As un-dead, they are immune to sleep, charm, and paralysis spells, as well as other mental effects and cold damage. The transformation from human to Thawed One creates a lithe, resilient, but shriveled body; it resists the first 3 points of damage caused by any strike (taking 1 point for damage rolls less than 4). See the bestiary for more information.

PCs searching the rubble find 3 piles of green ash near each broken cryo-station (from the exhausted greenstone shards that supplied power).

The floating green script is Kahlian for “Vessel Number One.” Vessel, the man remaining in cryo-sleep, is a genetically engineered “vessel” for Kahl. The PCs may attempt to awaken him by studying the pumps, gears, and attached controls. The process requires PCs to make a DC 15 Intelligence check (thieves may use disable traps with the same DC). Failing the check does 1d6 points of damage to Vessel’s Strength, Agility, and Stamina (roll separately for each). Fumbling the check kills Vessel instantly and causes an explosion doing 2d10 cold damage in a 10’ radius around the cylinder (DC 15 Reflex to avoid damage). Removing the greenstone shard also kills him, but does not harm the PCs.

**Vessel:** Strength 17, Agility 17, Stamina 17, Personality 4, Intelligence 3, Luck 5;

Having been bred for speed, stamina, and brawn while sheltered in a lab, Vessel has no strength of will, speaks with the vocabulary of a four-year old child (in Kahlian), and is illiterate. PCs gain limited information from him, such as his function to be the vessel for Kahl's being, and that Kahl waits beyond the "Well of Commitment." He knows nothing of Houses Cotcyst or Reagen'Tor. He can, however, teach the PCs how to safely use one artifact of the judge's choosing. Even if the party is unsuccessful in communicating with him, he says his name and points at himself. Astute PCs (DC 13 Intelligence check) notice that the same Kahlian word "vessel" was used by the projections in area 2. Vessel is extremely submissive and begs to serve his purpose for Kahl; he does not believe he can survive as he is.

**Area 4 - The Well of Commitment:** *A 10' by 10' shaft carved from the earth descends into darkness. The natural walls appear fatally smooth to the novice, but a skilled climber may be able to negotiate them.*

The walls of the well are very smooth (DC 15 to climb); it was intended to be traversed with a mini-skiff (one is in area 5). The well is riddled with blade traps sprung by hidden pressure plates along the walls (DC 15 to find and disarm, a successful check clears a 10' region). For every 10' of climbing in any direction there is a 13% chance (subtract luck modifier) that a PC springs the trap. Blades swing out of the walls in a 10' region centered on the PC, automatically cutting any ropes, causing 1d8 points of damage, and requiring a DC 15 Reflex save to keep from falling down the well. If a PC is lowered with rope and does not touch the walls, then the traps are avoided.

The "well" is 100 feet deep and ends in solid ground, so the fall is quite deadly. Recall that falling damage is 1d6 per ten feet, and every natural 6 results in a broken bone and 1 permanent loss of Strength or Agility (player's choice).

Clever players may choose to drop a torch down the well to gauge its depth. The torch has a 50% chance to extinguish when it hits the ground. Note that the doorway to area 5 is designed to be hidden from above when looking from area 3, so PCs cannot see it unless they view the falling torch from the opposite wall (e.g., a climber, magically suspended PC, etc.).

PCs descending to the bottom of the well find a few crushed skeletons, frayed rope, and a hard wooden box containing a greenstone shard wrapped in multiple straps of linen. At the well's bottom, dwarves, miners, and stonemasons note that the earth changes to a form unsuitable for further digging.

**Area 5 - Chamber of Rebirth:** *Two copper thrones sit back-to-back on a common raised dais in the center of this circular room. The now-familiar flowing script repeats a phrase around the dais' circumference. Each throne holds a slumping decayed body, one wearing the tattered clothes of royalty, both adorned with steel skullcaps. A tangled web of copper, gold, and silver wires connects the caps to each other, while braided strands snake from the thrones to the base of a waist-high obsidian obelisk at*

*the dais' edge. The top of the obelisk has two shard-sized indentations, each of which spills over with green ash. A single silvery-blue glyph adorns the obelisk's face, with surrounding grooves suggesting that it may be pressed. A three-foot diameter metallic disc rests on its side near the entrance while fifteen stone chairs encircle the dais, bearing silent witness to the thrones.*

Here lies the final resting place of the Immortal Kahl and his next vessel. Kahl changed forms too many times and could not survive the process. Astute characters (DC 13 Intelligence check) recognize the royal clothes as being those which clothed the projected speaker at area 2's tank e. The other body has traits similar to Vessel. The Kahlian script around the dais reads, "Honor to those who witness the rebirth of Kahl into the younger, stronger, healthier Vessel. Hail the Immortal Kahl!" The Kahlian glyph on the obelisk means "Rebirth."

If Vessel is present he collapses in disbelief and begs to be used on one of the thrones. He understands only that the thrones allow Kahl to inhabit his body; he does not know any of the details (what abilities are retained, the penalties, the Will save, etc.).

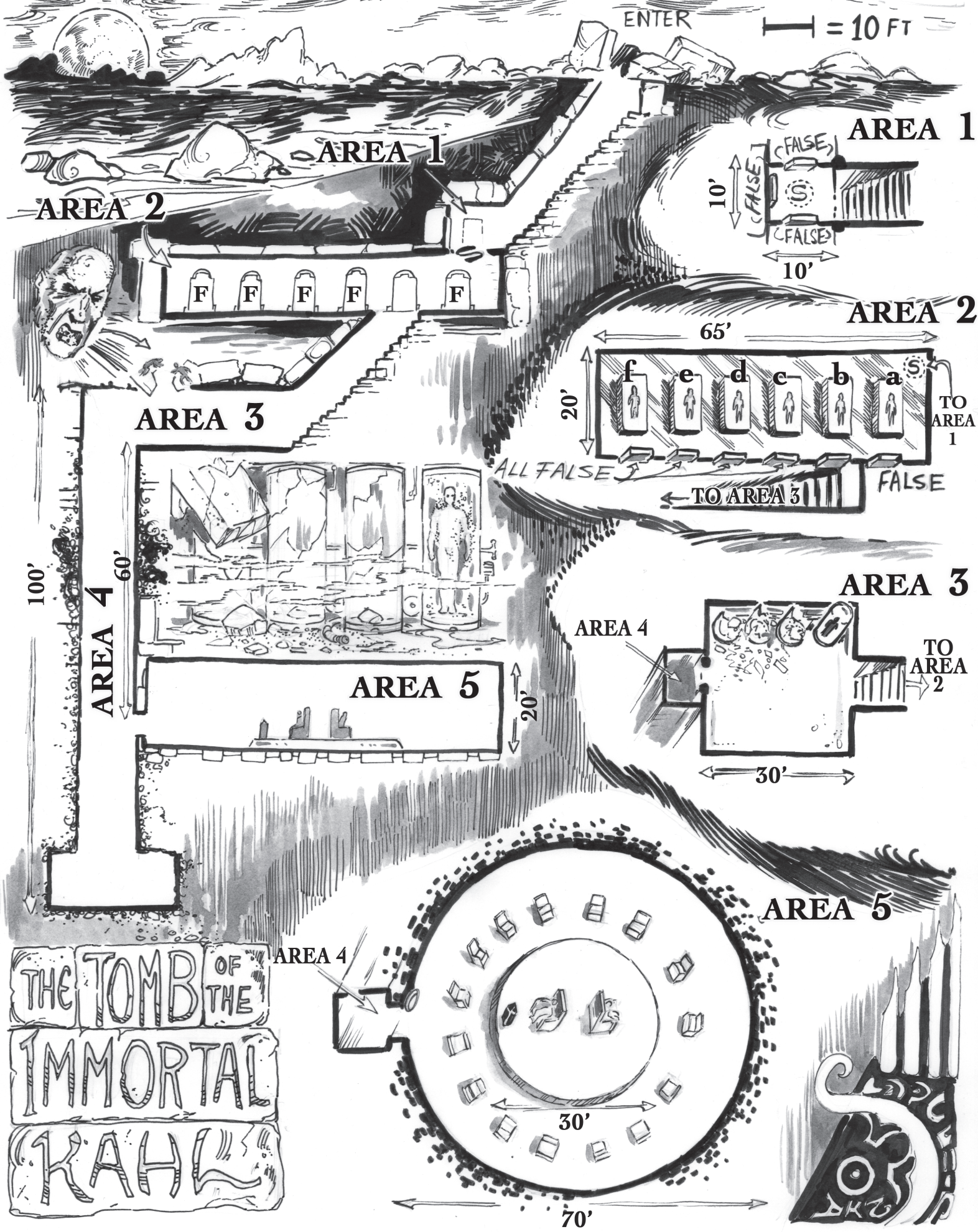
**Kahl's Thrones:** Requiring 2 charged shards for power and a single press of the silvery-blue glyph, Kahl's thrones allow two beings to permanently swap bodies via a transfer of consciousness. Each gains the Strength, Agility, and Stamina of the new body, while retaining his Personality, Intelligence, Luck, and class knowledge. Note, however, that the Gods do not approve of such blasphemy, so both participants permanently lose 1 point of Luck (this may not be regained by halflings and thieves). Transferring consciousness requires a DC 10 Will save, but additional transfers by the same being increase the DC cumulatively by 2, e.g., the first transfer is DC 10, the second DC 12, the third DC 14, and so on. Transferring to a different sex incurs a -2 penalty, transferring to a different race incurs a -10 penalty (note that Vessel from area 3 counts as human for this check). If both sitters fail their save, then they die within their own bodies. If only one fails his save, then that person dies outside his body, his soul unbound, and may not be resurrected without divine intervention.

When observing how the party decides to use the thrones and Vessel, the judge is encouraged to reward players with experience or luck, based on consideration of alignments, patrons, deities, etc.

The metallic disk by the doorway is a mini-skiff, a one-person version of the skiff vehicle described in the Purple Planet Companion (page 21). Operation via runes is the same as the skiff, although the mini-skiff cannot hover without power. This particular mini-skiff was used by Kahl to safely traverse the Well of Commitment (area 4). Note that it has no power and must be charged with a greenstone shard.

PCs gathering the metal wires collect 1000gp worth of gold wire, 100gp worth of silver wire, and 10 gp worth of copper wire. Each collection of wire is as cumbersome as 50' of rope.





# THE TOMB OF DUST

By Edgar D. Johnson III • Playtesting: Jen Brinkman, Eric Hoffman, Rick Hull, and Jürgen Mayer.

## INTRODUCTION



In the Purple Planet, amid the frosted Ancestor Peaks, the adventurers have encountered a small pyramid thrusting skyward from the bottom of a ravine. This is the Tomb of Dust, one of the ancient cairns found throughout the area. Here, the PCs find deadly puzzles, encounter the Moth Mother and her hungry brood, and face the tests of Anh-Tho the Learned, a forgotten scholar of a bygone age. If they manage to thwart these dangers they gain access to Anh-Tho's Archive, a perilous repository of potent lore!

This adventure is designed for 4 to 6 4<sup>th</sup>-level characters, and for use in *DCC# 84: Perils of the Purple Planet*, or another appropriate DCC RPG adventure.

## BACKGROUND

The Tomb of Dust is the grave of Anh-Tho the Learned, a renowned sage whose works have been lost to the sands of time...until now. Hidden within is the Archive, a strange device which can bestow great power to those who pass its test. The tomb has four major areas: a cracked pyramid, a subterranean antechamber shaped like an hourglass, a false tomb, and the Archive of Anh-Tho.

The Cracked Pyramid was carved from purple stone, and broken at some point in the past, leaving a narrow, vertical crack near its sealed entrance. The entrance portal is a monolithic slab, mortared into place. Opening it is unnecessary because the crack provides ingress for the adventurers. It already has admitted one who would oppose their intrusion: the Moth Mother. The Moth Mother resembles a huge, terrestrial moth with wildly colorful, iridescent wings, their colors swirling hypnotically, their ever-changing patterns mesmerizing its potential victims. Then it can use its tongue-like ovipositor to implant eggs in them, creating hosts for its voracious offspring. The Moth Mother is also capable of emitting a shriek that can stun its targets, and shatter glass and other crystalline substances, including greenstones.

The Hourglass Antechamber is a room with a floor deeply covered in fine, purple sand. Attempts to dig in the sand suggest great depth, except along the edges of the room. The room itself is both a portal and a trap, as it is constructed as the top chamber of an hourglass. Opening the release valve empties the room within 3 rounds, dropping any character sucked down by the sand into the lower part of the "hourglass" (area E). Releasing the sand also exposes both a curved ramp on the western side, and a panel, down to which the ramp runs. The panel hides the Archive of Anh-Tho (area D). The Antechamber also contains a door, which leads to the False Tomb (area C).

The False Tomb is the "obvious" resting place of the tomb's

host, but contains only a trap and a host of mechanical guardians.

The Archive of Anh-Tho holds a device capable of manifesting Anh-Tho and bestowing strange boons on those who pass its test. It also contains an electrical trap to punish those who prove unworthy.

## Encounter Table

Area	Type	Encounter
A	C/P	moth mother puzzle door
B	T	hourglass trap
C	T/C	trapped sarcophagus guardians of Anh-Tho
D	P/T	Anh-Tho's test of knowledge Archive of Anh-Tho

**Area A-1—Cracked Pyramid:** *The narrow crack in the side of the pyramid is a tight fit, but you are able to move through into the shadowy interior. In the center of the floor a low circle of stone rises approximately 2 feet, and several low, humped shapes litter the area beyond it, but it is difficult to see what they might be. The ceiling above rises steeply, and its highest point is lost in shadow.*

The space is 60' by 60' square, and the ceiling rises to a point 50' above the floor. Directly below the point of the pyramid rests a raised and carved circle of stone, in four concentric rings, engraved with an unknown language (area A-2).

In the shadows obscuring the ceiling lurks the Moth Mother, now at rest, camouflaged against the purple stone of the pyramid's interior. Once a PC with a light source enters the pyramid, the creature awakens and attacks.

The humps on the other side of the puzzle door are three desiccated corpses, former victims. One of them carries a greenstone shard.

**Moth Mother:** Init +2; Atk shriek (special) or mesmerize (special) or ovipositor +2 melee (1d4 + poison); AC 12 (at rest) or 17 (when in flight); HD 4d8; hp 22; MV fly 50' or crawl 20'; Act 1d20; SP shriek (area effect 30' radius, DC 18 Fort save or stunned for 1d6 rounds, each character carrying greenstones should make a Luck check; if failed, the greenstone carried is destroyed, causing an explosion), mesmerize (DC 15 Will save or drop weapons and move toward the moth mother), poison (DC 15 Fort save or sleep for 2d4 turns); SV Fort -1, Ref +0, Will +2.

The Moth Mother resembles a terrestrial moth with wildly colorful, iridescent wings, their patterns swirling hypnotically. The creature dazzles its victims with these ever-changing patterns, making them easy targets for its sharp and poisonous ovipositor. It also is capable of emitting a shriek that can stun its victims, and shatter glass and other crystal-

line substances, including greenstones. A destroyed greenstone shard explodes for 1d6 damage per shard carried. A complete greenstone explodes for 20d10 damage within 25 feet, and half damage within 50 feet. Should the moth mother strike a character with its ovipositor, the victim is poisoned and implanted with 1d3 eggs. If not removed, the eggs incubate in the host for 3 days before hatching, and the moth mother's offspring eat their way out of the host's body, causing 2d4 damage each. However, the victim may not even be aware of the growing threat within until the eggs hatch. It will just seem like a large, painful, and itchy bug bite. Judges should be careful not to let slip this detail to the players. The eggs can be removed by a lay on hands attempt resulting in at least 3 dice of healing. Rolls resulting in less than 3 dice heal the external wound but do not affect the pain and swelling, a clue pointing to the real danger.

**Area A-2 – The Puzzle Door:** *Having defeated the Moth Mother, you turn your attention to the strange device set in the floor of the pyramid. The stone circle consists of four concentric rings, each about 15 inches wide. In each ring is a socket. In three of them rest gem-like stones, purple, black, and white, going in sequence from the center. The outermost socket is empty.*

Only with a greenstone shard in the outer circle can the three inner circles be rotated. The outermost ring (with the empty socket) cannot move. When a greenstone shard is fitted into the empty socket, the other "gems" blaze with internal light, and a low hum emanates from the stone itself. To open the door, the sockets of the other three circles must be lined up the non-rotating, greenstone shard socket, but this must be accomplished in a particular order: outermost (white) first, then middle (black), and then innermost (purple). Once this is done, there is an audible thump and the stone circle recedes into the floor, and slides out of sight, revealing a shaft about 5 feet in diameter. The shaft drops 50 feet straight down before opening 30 feet above the sandy floor of a domed room (area B).

**Area B—Hourglass Antechamber:** *The floor of this dome-shaped chamber is covered with deep, soft sand of purplish hue. The interior walls are carved from the native rock of the Ancestor Peaks, their surrounding expanse broken only by a single door at the northernmost edge of the dome.*

This 50 foot diameter chamber is the topmost chamber of an "hourglass." The sand on the floor is 30 feet deep at the center of the chamber, and the walls below funnel steeply down to an opening 7.5 feet in diameter, leading to area E. In order to reach the Archive (area D) the adventurers must open a valve to release the sand. The valve itself is buried about a foot below the surface, on the wall opposite the door to area C. Though it could be difficult to find, its presence is suggested by two "bumps" in the sand, which conceal stone "columns" lying beneath the surface of the sand. These two columns are flush with the wall, about 4 feet apart, and project about two feet, toward the center of the chamber. The valve release is large lever just inside the right-most column, and a narrow, metal ladder is fixed to the wall just inside the left-most column. Both lever and ladder are buried about a foot beneath the sand. The lad-



der leads down 10 feet to a narrow (2 feet wide) ramp, circling clockwise, downward, to the other side of the funnel, and a door-sized, plain metal panel about 30 feet below the entrance to the false tomb. This panel conceals the tunnel leading to the Archive of Anh-Tho the Learned (area D). A narrow platform rings the funnel, two feet below the sand.

When the release valve is triggered, the sand at the center of the room begins to drain first, drawing anyone or anything on the sand toward the bottom of the funnel. Anyone within 3 feet of the edge of the room should make a DC 14 Ref save to reach the ring platform. Anyone on the western side of the chamber who does not manage to reach the ring platform must make a Luck check. Success allows a PC to make an additional DC 16 Ref save to grab onto the ramp that descends to the panel concealing the entrance to the Archive. Characters at the center of the chamber, or on the eastern side will have no such opportunities. They are drawn inexorably down, barring heroic efforts by their comrades, and fall through the hole at the bottom of the funnel 3 rounds after triggering the release valve. The drop below the release valve is 60 feet, onto sand (3d6+3 fall damage, with chance of broken bones as per DCC RPG rulebook, p. 96), in area E.

**Area C—False Tomb:** *Beyond the now-opened portal is a round room, about 50' in diameter, its circumference punctuated about every 15 feet with a plain metal panel (ten in all). At the center of the stone-floored chamber, a smoothly rounded capsule studded with jewels floats in mid-air above a stone bier. The surface of the capsule crawls with multicolored light resolving into weird, constantly changing symbols. The ceiling of the chamber dances with patches of light and shadow cast by the glow.*

The bier rises 4 feet from the floor. Floating above it is the sarcophagus of iridescent, alien metal, studded with precious stones (5d100 gp value) and patterned with constantly changing geometric figures and alien script.

Wizards or elves who spend some time analyzing the figures and symbols should make a DC 16 Will save. A failure causes nausea and dizziness for 1d3 turns. Those affected feel a sense of impending doom, and those who rolled less than 5 for the Will save attempt to flee from the pyramid. An additional DC 15 Will save must be made to reenter the tomb (may be reattempted once every turn). Succeeding on the initial Will save allows the reader's mind to expand to allow memorization of one additional known spell at 1d3 level.

Touching the sarcophagus or panels trigger an electrical shock (2d8 damage to all characters within 10 feet, DC 18 Fort save for half), and causes the panels to open, releasing 10 guardians of Anh-Tho.

**Guardians of Anh-Tho (10):** Init +1; Atk sword +1 melee (1d8+1); AC 15; HD 1d10+2; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20, 1d16; SP machine (immune to sleep or charm, electrical attacks cause double damage); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +2; AL N.

The Guardians of Anh-Tho are two-legged mechanical humanoids, 7.5 feet tall, with four arms arranged radially around the torso, their heads able to rotate a full 360 degrees. They may attack toward any 120 degree arc, but only with the closest two arms. The guardians carry large, kopesh-like weapons in each hand.

**Area D-1—Entry to the Archive of Anh-Tho:** *The metal panel removed, you make your way down and into a narrow corridor leading north. About 30 feet away, you see a doorway leading to another room. Every few seconds a brief flash of blue-white light illuminates the space, causing the dusty floor to shimmer like stardust.*

The tunnel is 5 feet wide and 8 feet high, its walls carved from the purple stone, and stretches northward to an open

doorway. The floor of the tunnel is covered with a fine, purple-white dust, which shimmers in the flashing light and any source of illumination carried by the adventurers.

**Area D-2—The Archive of Anh-Tho:** *Stairs descend to a floor thickly covered in sparkling dust. The room is dome-shaped, like the rest you've seen, but just below the ceiling floats an orb about 2 feet in diameter. Every few seconds, it flashes briefly and then goes dark, each pulse of blue-white light is like a lightning strike upon your eyes. On the other side of the room is a low console, shaped to fit the curve of the wall. Equally spaced around the perimeter of the room are 8 tall posts of silvery metal, topped with knobs of glass surrounded by rings of the same silvery metal.*

Beyond the doorway is a wide landing and stairs descending about twenty feet onto the floor of a domed chamber.

The console is Anh-Tho's Archive, a recording of his consciousness. It consists of a rounded, metal substructure, with three glass panels equally spaced across its angled top. The panels are dark when the characters enter the room, but touching any of them brings the console to life. When the console activates, the flashing orb begins to glow steadily and more and more brightly. Arcs of energy begin to stream between the orb and the 8 posts, and within a few moments the dust on the floor is drawn toward the center of the room, like iron filings to a magnet, slowly taking the form of a tall and regal humanoid male, aged but preternaturally beautiful. Once formed, the image begins to speak, and the language can be understood by any creature with 13 (or higher) Intelligence.

Anh-Tho regards each of the PCs in turn and says the following:

*You have come for learning? This is correct in every way. Who among you is worthy?*

He points to the least intelligent member of the party.

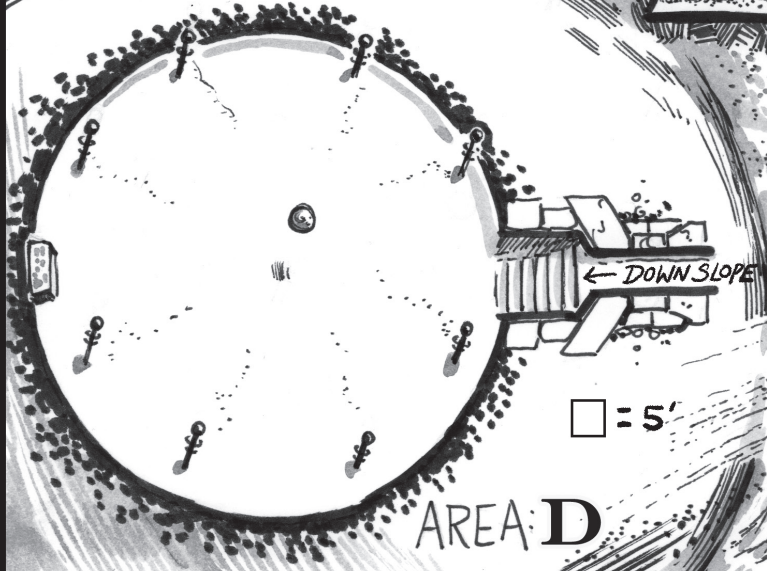
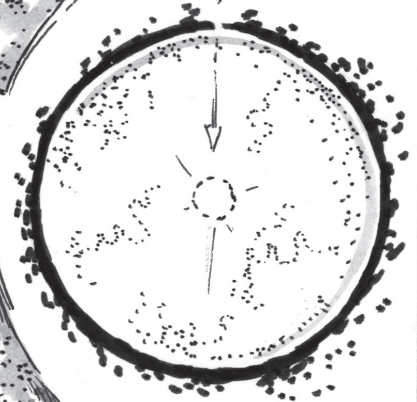
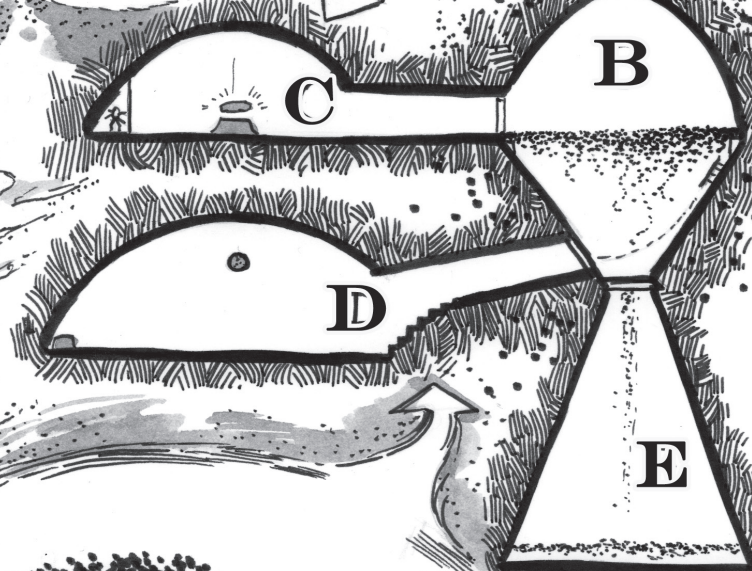
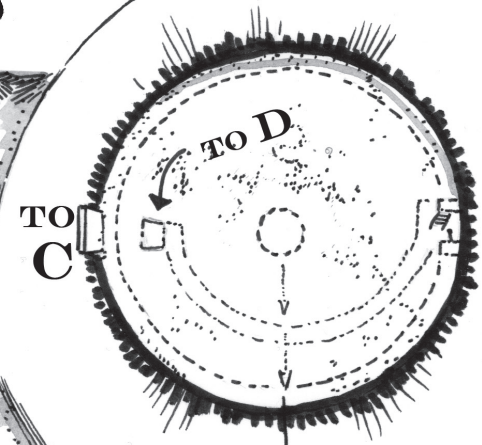
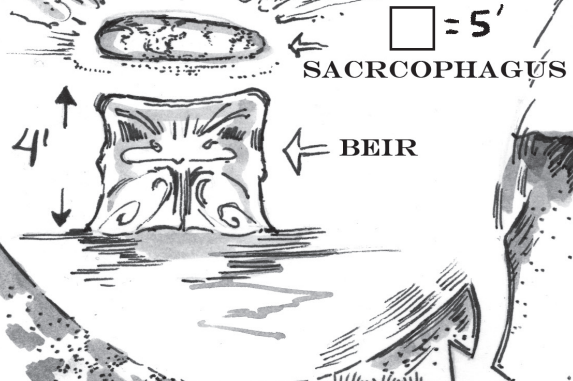
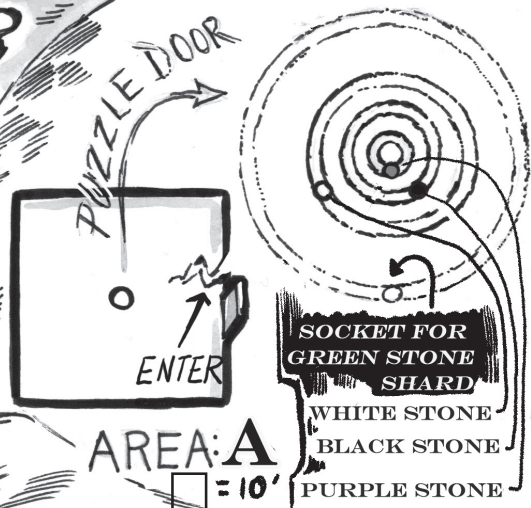
*Not you, certainly.*

And then he looks at the most intelligent member of the party.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS (AREA D-2)

Class	First Question	Second Question	Third Question
Cleric	What is the greatest abomination?	When is it sinful to heal and to harm?	What is the nature of the After-life?
Dwarf	Why do you live underground?	Who are the greatest enemies of your people?	What happened to the children?
Elf	Where do the elves really come from?	How do you avoid iron poisoning?	What are the true goals of the elven people?
Halfling	What is the essence of comfort?	Why do you adventure?	What is true happiness?
Thief	How do you choose a mark?	To whom should you be loyal?	When is it good to break one's word?
Wizard	Natural philosophy	The Planes of Existence	Techniques of necromancy
Warrior	What use is glory?	How can one win without fighting?	What is best in life?

# THE TOMB OF DUST



DK2

*But perhaps you will do.*

He cries out:

*Who then will submit to the Test of Knowledge? Stand forth and face Our reckoning!*

Anh-Tho tests each PC in turn, from most to least intelligent, until someone refuses the test. Once refused, Anh-Tho disappears and the machinery powers down. It will not restart again for this party. If any PC fails the Test of Knowledge, the Archive attacks.

**Tests of Knowledge:** Three increasingly difficult Intelligence checks (DC 8, DC 12, and DC 16) are required to pass the test. If more than one character takes the test, then these base DCs should be increased by 1 for each new testing.

Judges are encouraged to ask questions related the class of the adventurer in question (“Anh-Tho asks...”) and require an Intelligence check of the appropriate DC. The characters’ answers to these questions could add interesting new spins to the “mythology” of the judge’s campaign (see examples in sidebar). Alternately, use other resolution mechanics to run this test (e.g., answering riddles or trivia questions, recalling details of the adventure itself, etc.).

No matter which method is used to ask the questions, each check must succeed or the apparition of Anh-Tho disappears and the Archive attacks the party with lightning.

**Archive of Anh-Tho:** Init +3; Atk lightning +3 missile (4d4, DC 15 Fort save for half); AC 18; hp 55 (any damage to poles, orb, or console); MV n/a; Act 3d20; SP machine (immune to sleep or charm, electrical attacks to the console itself cause double damage), passive defense (attacks on the orb or the 8 poles causes an electrical shock to the attacker, as lightning, above); SV Fort +4, Ref -, Will -; AL N.

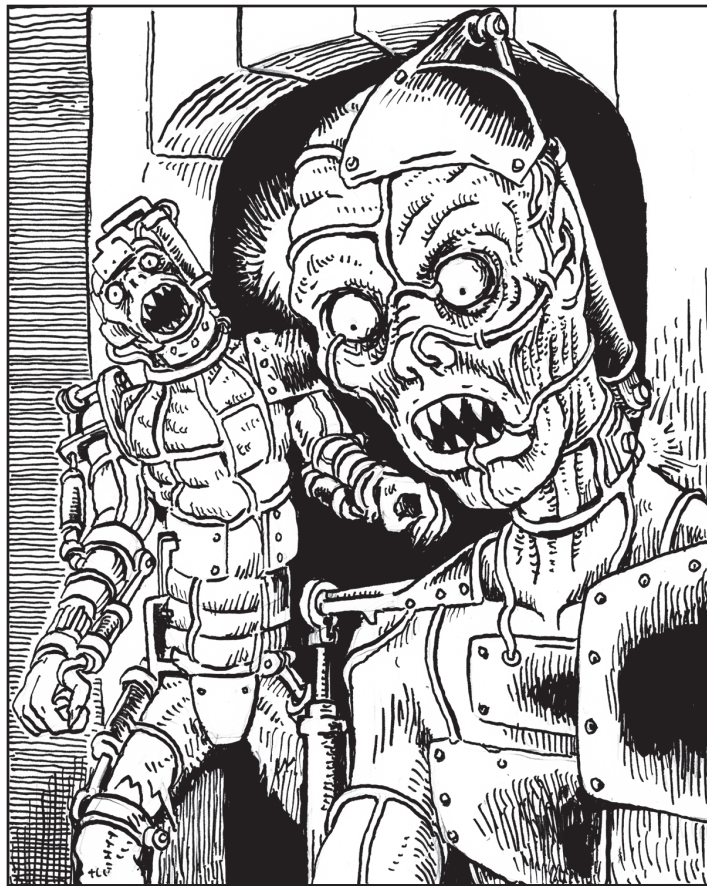
If a PC passes the test, Anh-Tho says:

*You are worthy! Now make a choice! Which is best: knowledge, power, or virtue? Choose!*

Once a choice is made, a pseudopod of sparkling, purple dust touches the PC in question, who receives the following, depending on the answer given:

- **Boon of Knowledge:** The Dust of Anh-Tho flows over your head, forming a shimmering skullcap permanently affixed to your head. Your consciousness shifts to encompass a greater truth. PC now has the capacity to learn one additional spell of 3rd level or less (choice of level is permanent).
- **Boon of Power:** The Dust of Anh-Tho flows up your arms, permanently fixing symbols of alien power to your skin. Choose one: Pick one spell to cast at +3 to the casting roll, or three spells to cast at +1.
- **Boon of Virtue:** The Dust of Anh-Tho flows over your body melding with your skin. Increase AC by 1d3+1, permanently. Skin is permanently purple and sparkly.

Note: The first two Boons of Anh-Tho are oriented strongly toward magic users. However, if non-wizard/elf characters



opt to participate, the Boon received could be adapted to the class in question. For example, a thief character could gain an enhanced die for Read Languages or Cast Spell from Scroll. A warrior could realize insight into the use of a particular weapon, gaining a second “lucky weapon.” A cleric is a bit easier, as a spellcaster, but the judge should also consider a Boon that matches with class a bit better (e.g., the Boon of Power could be applied to Lay on Hands, or enhance the cleric’s ability to appeal for Divine Intervention. Use your imagination.

**Area E—Sand Repository:** If the characters reach area E, they either fell or are investigating from above, after the funnel has been drained of sand. Choose the read-aloud text that best captures your situation:

- If PCs fall: The sand sucks you down and, though you struggle desperately, you cannot escape. Within seconds you are in freefall, and then slam into the ground below.
- If the PCs investigate from above: A chamber of indeterminate size gapes below, its walls sloping steeply down and away from you, into the darkness.

Area E is a cone-shaped chamber, containing only sand drained from the funnel above. From the sandy floor, walls slope upward and inward to the valve neck of the “hour-glass,” 60 feet above. There is no easy escape, without help from above. The walls can be climbed using *spider climb* spell. A thief attempting to climb must make a DC 30 climb sheer surfaces check, as the walls slope inward and have few handholds.

# THE BUNKER

By Daniel J. Bishop

## BACKGROUND



The Bunker transports the party from their starting hex to a destination 2 hexes away. It can be placed anywhere on the Purple Planet map that does not already contain a numbered encounter. It could be hidden beneath the fecund growth of the mushroom forests, lost in the broken lands, amid the Ancestor Peaks, or uncovered by a sand storm in the wastes.

## Encounter List

Area	Type	Encounter
1	T	Malfunctioning elevator
2	C	18 Cyber-zombies
3b	T	Collapsed tunnel floor
3d	C	3 Damaged cyber-zombies
4	T	Electrical arc trap
5	T	Malfunctioning elevator

Begin by reading or paraphrasing the following:

*You discover a rounded shape of stone, its surface marred only by a pair of gleaming double doors. Neither handles nor hinges are visible, but one of the doors is marked with the now-familiar sequence of eight runes. The doors face the northeast.*

The doors open, sliding silently into the walls, when runes 8 and 1 are pressed in sequence. After 1 minute, the doors close again, so long as nothing is blocking them. Rune 3 deactivates the doors. If any other rune is pressed, there is a 10% cumulative chance that a loud klaxon goes off, which can be heard miles away, and which requires those in the immediate vicinity to make a DC 5 Fort save each round or be deafened for 1d3 turns. Check for random encounters each round the klaxon is active. Pressing rune 3 deactivates the klaxon as well as the doors.

This klaxon also awakens the cyber-zombies in area 2, below.

**Area 1 – The Elevator:** *Beyond the doors is a circular chamber, 10 feet in diameter. The floor glows softly as you step within, illuminating all who enter with a ghoulish yellow-green light.*

The doors close 1 minute after 100 lbs or more is placed upon the floor of area 1. A panel with the usual 8 runes is set into one of the inner doors. Pressing runes has the following effects:

### Rune Effect

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Causes the room to descend as described below. If the elevator is at the bottom of the shaft, this rune causes the elevator to rise rather than descend.  |
| 2 | Causes the doors to open. If the elevator is moving at this time, it stops immediately (DC 10 Ref save to avoid being thrown to the floor; DC 15 Ref save to avoid being thrown to the floor and taking 1d3 damage if the elevator is moving quickly (see rune 4); automatically thrown to the floor and 2d7 dam- |

age if moving very fast, DC 20 Ref save for half, any natural “7” indicates a broken bone (see rune 5).

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 3      | Deactivates the elevator, with the same result as pressing rune 2 if the elevator is moving when this occurs.  |
| 4      | If the elevator is already moving, rune 4 causes the elevator to descend quickly, arriving at its destination in half the normal time. If it is not moving, there is no effect. If the elevator is ascending, this rune causes the elevator to rise quickly (rather than descend).                                     |
| 5      | If the elevator is already moving, rune 5 causes the elevator to move very fast (ascending or descending, as appropriate), arriving in one quarter the normal time. If it is not moving, there is no effect.   |
| 6 or 7 | These runes cause the elevator to begin to shudder and buck, throwing everyone to the ground for 1d3 damage. All creatures in the elevator take 1d3 damage each round until the elevator is stopped (with the usual effects) and must succeed in a DC 15 Reflex save in order to stand sufficiently to press any rune. |
| 8      | Activates or reactivates the elevator.   |

*A slight tremor shakes the room. With a grinding noise of metal on metal, ancient machinery begins to work, slowly at first, and then more swiftly. The room drops, moving down a vertical shaft, into the unknown bowels of the alien world. From time to time, the room lurches to one side, as if travelling along a horizontal shaft for a short period, before dropping once more.*

The elevator ride to area 2 takes 20 minutes normally, but can take as little as 10 or 5 minutes. On arrival, the doors automatically open to area 2, and the elevator deactivates. The doors close (and the light goes out) only when all weight is taken off the floor. Runes 8 and 1 must be pressed again in order to reactivate the elevator.

**Area 2 – The Bunker:** If the PCs have triggered the klaxon, they are immediately attacked by the cyber-zombies (see below). Barring magic, there is no way to close the doors or cause the elevator to rise until all weight within it is removed.

*The area beyond the doors is dark, but the dim lighting from the room you are in shows a large space, vaulted to a height of 20 feet. The remains of metal cots line the walls, stacked six high, many still containing dark and unmoving forms.*

From the outside, the silver doors are marked with the same 8 standard runes. Runes 8 and 1, pressed in order, open the doors, and rune 3 deactivates the doors.

The bunker is 80' long and 40' wide, with a total of 1,920 bunks along its northwest and southeast walls. 60% of these contain the mummified remains of cyber-zombies. There are also 18 cyber-zombies still active, which will arise if the

klaxon is sounded (see area 1). There is also a 1% cumulative chance of triggering the cyber-zombies if any of them are disturbed (whether an active cyber-zombie or not).

The cyber-zombies are clearly related to the kith, although they are closer to human. These creatures are neither alive nor un-dead, and cannot be turned by clerics. Rather, they are corpses which are still animated by the programming of their cybernetic implants. The machines are actually moving the bodies, which now serve no function beyond housing them.

While the cyber-zombies can be targeted by backstabs and critical hits, most critical effects do not actually impair them or cause extra damage. Cyber-zombies are immune to pain and mind-affecting attacks. See the Bestiary chapter for more information.

A PC who is bold enough to tear out the cybernetics of one of these creatures and affix it to his own body is not rewarded for his bravery; those who created these monstrosities didn't want the fallen to arm their foes. Active cybernetics attempt to dig into the body of their would-be "host" if this is attempted, causing 1 point of Stamina damage each round. A DC 10 Strength check can remove the cybernetic harness on the first round; each round thereafter the DC increases by 2. If a PC is reduced to 0 Stamina, he becomes a cyber-zombie and immediately attacks. Worse, any greenstone shards the character had are consumed in powering the cybernetics, yielding only 1d3-1 remaining shards (but never more than the character initially had) if the cybernetics do not explode when the PC is defeated.

**Cyber-zombies (18):** Init +0; Atk claw +2 melee (1d3); AC 15; HD 1d8+2; hp 7 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP death throes, immune to most critical effects, mind-affecting, and pain; SV Fort +5, Ref -4; Will -4; AL N.

Characters who perform an exhaustive search are rewarded: one of the inert cyber-zombies was a "sergeant," and has a rayrifle clutched in its hands. Moreover, this weapon still has 6 charges remaining! For information on rayrifles, see page 14 of *Peril on the Purple Planet*.

The secret door is operated by a square panel placed just above head height beside the door. If a hand is placed upon this 1'-square panel, the door slides soundlessly upwards. It remains in this position for 10 minutes, and then slides back downward. A similar panel inside the tunnel can open it from the other direction.

**Area 3 – The Tunnel:** *Beyond the doorway a tunnel stretches, 20 feet wide but only seven feet tall, the ceiling buttressed by archways every 20 feet that extend perhaps 2 feet from the wall. The tunnel continues in a straight line for as far as you can see.*

The tunnel continues for 12 miles (or 2 hexes on the overland map). It is unlit; adventurers who wish to traverse it must either supply light sources or grope in the dark. The judge must describe (or omit) the following tunnel features based on the available light:

**3A. Water:** At 1 ½ miles, water trickles from the ceiling along the northwest wall before pooling on (and eventu-

ally passing through) the floor. This water is audible if the characters have no lights, and is potable.

**3B. Collapsed Floor:** At 5 ½ miles, the floor is collapsed in a heap of rubble and dirt. The collapse reaches a depth of about 1/5<sup>th</sup> of a mile, and is half a mile long. Characters can scramble down and up the slopes easily enough if they can see, but if they have no light sources the first rank must succeed in a DC 20 Reflex save or fall down the rough scree for 2d6 damage (any "6" indicating a broken bone). If the first rank falls, the second rank must succeed in a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid falling. The third rank must succeed in a DC 10 Reflex save, and the fourth in a DC 5 Reflex save, until either the fifth rank is reached or one rank succeeds in their saves. Where the collapsed area begins to rise to the northeast, the bodies of three cyber-zombies can be found. 1d3-1 greenstone shards can still be dug out of the body of one of them.

**3C. Cyber-zombie Remains:** The remains of two cyber-zombies lie near the southeast wall 8 miles down the tunnel. One of them is missing an arm.

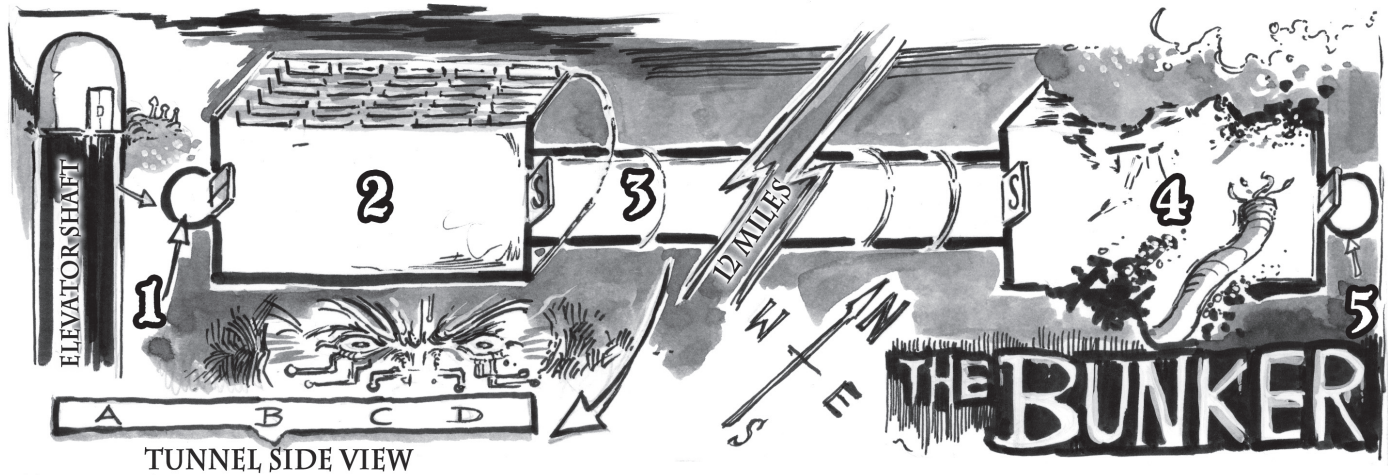
**3D. Cyber-zombies:** 10 ½ miles down the tunnel, the remains of 5 mutilated cyber-zombies are strewn across the hall. One is severed from the waist down, another has no head. Three are still active enough to arise if examined. Treat these as the cyber-zombies in area 1, except that they roll 1d16 for initiative and have 1d16 for their action die. If these cyber-zombies do not explode, they may yield 1d3-2 greenstone shards (minimum 0).

The tunnel comes to an apparent dead end, although another 1'-square panel within the tunnel opens the secret door.

**Area 4 – The Far Bunker:** *The door slides upward to reveal another large room, some 40 feet wide and 80 feet deep, lit sporadically by flickering electrical arcs coming from bare cables on the ceiling. This room once contained stacked bunks, like those in the chamber far behind you, but many have been twisted by the partial collapse of ceiling and walls. A titanic battle must have occurred here long ago, for a great death orm, nine feet in diameter, extends partially into the room from the southeast wall. What you can see of it is at least 30 feet long, and more disappears into the rubble of the collapsed wall. Dozens of the zombie-like beings you fought earlier lie around it. Both the death orm and its grisly opponents are still, covered with a thin layer of rock dust and debris. A pair of metallic double doors is placed in the center of the far wall.*

Characters who search in this room may attempt a Luck check for every 10 minutes spent. If the check succeeds, a relic is found (as indicated on the Relic Table, page 12 of *Perils of the Purple Planet*). However, every 5 minutes spent in this chamber by a character wearing metallic armor or carrying significant amounts of metal results in a 1 in 3 chance of an electrical arc lashing down to strike the unfortunate, doing 2d10 damage (DC 12 Fort save for half). Multiple characters can be struck by these arcs within the same 5-minute period, and they do not need to all occur at the same time – the judge is encouraged to check various characters throughout the 5-minute period.





## OTHER BUNKERS

The exterior of the death orb is almost mummified, but where it has been scored by electrical arcs it still oozes a fetid puss from its rotting interior. Intrepid PCs who cut into the thing discover that it takes a very long time for such a creature to dry out. About a foot below the surface is a festering miasma of rot and tiny parasitic worms. These parasites present no danger to the PCs, but there is no reason that the players must be told this!

As with the other elevator, runes 8 and 1, pressed in sequence, open the doors. Rune 3 deactivates the doors. No other runes have any effect.

**Area 5 – The Second Elevator:** *The doors slide into the wall to the right and left, revealing a familiar-looking round chamber, 10 feet in diameter, its floor glowing with a pale green radiance. There is an open panel in the wall opposite the door, about a foot square.*

This elevator is identical to that in area 1, except for the open panel. When the panel is fed three greenstone shards, it closes seamlessly and the elevator can be operated. Otherwise, this elevator no longer has the power to move, and pressing the interior buttons has no effect (except rune 2, which still opens the doors).

When the characters reach the top of the shaft (2 hexes from their starting hex), they discover that the doors are buried. This may be by rocks and scree, fungal growth, or drifted sand, depending upon where the elevator is located. The PCs should be able to clear the doors with 1d3 x 10 minutes of labor, but if they are more careful they might be able to use the hidden exit strategically.

Taking twice the time needed to clear the doors, it is possible to open a small “viewing port.” The PCs can then use the elevator like a blind, watching whatever occurs outside while remaining hidden themselves. With 4d3 x 10 minutes of labor, the PCs can carefully prepare the exit to allow them a sudden and surprising exit.

Remember that the elevator cannot be taken back down the shaft until the doors are closed, however, and that the doors will not close until all weight is taken off the floor.

If the judge chooses, other bunkers may still exist on the Purple Planet. Not all of these are in as good of condition as the bunker presented above. The opportunity to travel below the surface of the Purple Planet allows characters to avoid some dangers, but it has more than one chance to introduce dangers of its own – even if that danger is only wasted time and resources.

When an additional bunker is located, there is only a 1 in 3 chance that the elevator and doors are working; if they are not, there is a 1 in 3 chance that they can be made to work by sacrificing 1d5 greenstone shards. This allows 1d5 trips before the elevator seizes up. On the last trip, there is a 1 in 3 chance that the elevator seizes up, coming to a halt after traveling 1d5 x 10 feet. The adventurers may call upon patrons, deities, magic, or muscle power to extricate themselves from the situation.

If the lower area can be accessed, there is a 1 in 3 chance that the entire area is choked with sand and/or rubble. If not, there is a 1 in 3 chance that the tunnel is collapsed 1d3 hexes along its length. The elevator on the far side also has a 1 in 3 chance of working, with sacrificing 1d5 greenstone shards having only a 1 in 3 chance of powering it enough to use 1d5 times, with the same chance of seizing up on its last trip as described above.

To determine the direction the tunnel moves in, roll 1d6 and consult the Lost chart on page 11 of *Peril on the Purple Planet*. If the judge desires, there is a 1 in 3 chance that an additional bunker connects to two or more separate bunkers (determine the direction of each randomly) 1d5 hexes away. Roll the chance of each tunnel being blocked, or each elevator not working, separately.

The judge may place encounters or artifacts in the bunkers or tunnel as desired. Finally, there is a 1 in 7 chance that the air in the bunkers and tunnel is contain bad air, as described in the Player Start in *Peril on the Purple Planet*.

# THE TOMB OF THE ORGANON MAGISTEROS

By Tim Callahan

## BACKGROUND



uring the Last War, the ancients deployed their war-skiff assault units from elevator platforms that now dot a sector of the wasteland like a ravaged forest of rusted steel stumps. Most of the platforms are buried by the shifting sands or stand as shattered reminders of a war that was once meaningful, but one of these decaying steel stumps still remains partially energized, layered with tunnels below ground, and powered by a unique extra-dimensional reactor core beneath the surface of the planet.

Recently, the control center of this still pulsating war-skiff platform has become the hive for a tribe of half-man/half-beetle humanoids known as trillimites. They have discovered the strange potency of the energies deep underground and they have begun to breed at a hyper-active rate.

Tapping into the power of the strange reactor, the trillimite larvae now grow at an accelerated speed and their frenzied need for sustenance has triggered a kind of pheromone-drenched hypersonic beacon that lures prey to them, so they may feed their ferocious hunger.

The PCs will likely be drawn to the trillimite hive, because to ignore the hypersonic beacon causes them pain (and Intelligence loss), but the hive is a deadly blend of ancient technologies gone awry, trillimite guardians, and a frenzied larvae swarm that wants nothing more than to devour anything that enters the central nest. If the PCs find and disable the reactor core, the larvae swarm will no longer torment them with its hypersonic wails, but there's a catch: the reactor core is a living tomb for the Organon Magisteros, an extradimensional sentient being of pure geometry who was summoned by the ancient masters and used, against its will, to power this unique reactor.

The destruction of the reactor core or substantial damage to its control panel will free the Organon Magisteros and unleash a force wave of matter reconstruction as it departs from this plane of existence, leaving the PCs possibly trapped in a tomb all their own, with newly-mechanized hybrid trillimites seeking revenge in the depths of their former hive.

## JUDGE'S NOTES

The trillimite larvae beacon lures the PCs to the hive by constantly inducing pain and Intelligence loss until the PCs move toward the hive. The judge should determine the outer range of the beacon and when it begins to impact the characters, but once the PCs begin to succumb to the penalties of the hypersonic beacon, they each lose 1 hit point and 1 point of Intelligence per hour until they progress directly toward the vibrating steel stump in the distance. The effect should manifest as a faint, but shrill, hum and an inability for the PCs to sustain concentration; hit point and Intelligence loss cease as the PCs head directly toward the loca-

tion of the trillimite hive, and the PCs regain any hit points or intelligence points as soon as they spend at least 1 turn in the underground war-skiff deployment center beneath the steel stump, or if the trillimite larvae hive is destroyed or rendered silent.

Once the PCs are within closer range of the hive, the penalties for turning away increase: if the party is within 100 feet of the hive and they move away from it for more than 1 turn, or make no progress toward entering the vibrating steel stump and climbing down into the tunnels below, each character takes 1 hp of psychic damage per round and also loses 1d3 Intelligence points per round. Again, the hit points and Intelligence points will cease if they continue to progress underground toward the hive or toward the reactor core, and the hit points and Intelligence points will be restored if the PCs spend at least 1 turn in the trillimite hive or destroy or silence the larvae.

The steel stump and the trillimite hive are both places fraught with danger. For each turn spent exploring any of the areas in and around those locations prior to the deactivation of the reactor core or the release of the Organon Magisteros, the judge should roll a d8 to determine if a random encounter occurs, and, if a 1 or 2 is rolled, roll a d6 to determine the type of encounter on Table 1-1 below: (For random encounters *after* the deactivation of the reactor core, or the release of the Organon Magisteros, see Table 1-4 on page 24.)

### Table 1-1: Random Encounters (1d6)

- Defective war-skiff engine.** A sleek metal cylinder embedded within a corroded frame begins to crackle and shake, revealing a sliver of greenstone shard as a power supply. Anyone or anything making contact with the cylinder or the shard will trigger a small explosion, dealing 1d10 damage to everyone within 20' of the cylinder, unless they make a DC 20 Reflex save. After the explosion, a single greenstone shard is recoverable to any one character who makes a successful Luck check.
- 1d3 Trillimite Outcasts:** Init +2; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or barbed chains +2 (1d8) or special; AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 14 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, pheromone blast 20' radius once per turn – all living creatures in range must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or become confused and attack a random target in the area; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; AL L.
- Energy field malfunction.** Ancient wiring running beneath the ground has decayed and begun to create an energy feedback loop in what used to be a component of a force field generator. The energy field is visible as an arc of crackling electric energy, and it strikes all targets within 30' wearing metal ar-

mor (or, if no metal armor is worn, the closest target within range holding a metal weapon) at +8 to hit, dealing 1d12 damage. The arc of electric energy continues to strike metal-laden targets until they move outside of the 30' range or throw water or another form of liquid on the ground to short out the wiring.

4 **1 Spined Trillimite:** Init +2; Atk rusted sword +3 (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 16; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, any successful attacks against this trillimite deals damage, but any melee attacker must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or take 1d8 damage from the sharp spines and then succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or take an additional 1d6 poison damage; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

5 **1d4 Trillimite Guardians:** Init +2; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or spear +3 (1d6); AC 18; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, on any successful melee attack against Trillimite Guardian damage is dealt as normal but non-magical weapons shatter unless attacker succeeds on a Luck check; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

6 **Telepathic Contact by the Organon Magisteros.** All PCs are contacted by the entombed being of pure geometry. Lawful characters will get a brief glimpse of the reactor core and a vision of lifting the metallic sphere out of the reactor stabilization fluid. Neutral characters will get a brief glimpse from inside a sphere—the orb glows blue and yellow and fills them with warmth. Chaotic characters will get a glimpse of an explosion of blue light inside the reactor core and new tunnels opening up underground as the bedrock tears open.

### Encounter Table

Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	C	Trillimite guardians (6)
2-1	T	Waste disposal unit
2-2	C	Trillimite outcasts (4)
2-3	P/C	Bypassing electrified wires, prisoners (3)
3-1	C	Trillimite acid spitters (8) Sentient bacteria tendrils (3)
4-1	T	Feeding frenzy in the larvae nest
4-2	C	Trillimite overlord, egg-mothers (3)
4-3	P	Deactivating reactor via the control room
5-1	P/T	Freeing Organon Magisteros from reactor

## PLAYER START

*The sands of the wastes are speckled with shimmering gems and rusted fragments of twisted metal. The shrill hum that has been so distractingly painful seems to emanate from a large vibrating reddish gray stump in the distance. As you move toward it, though the hum continues, the pain lessens.*

The “shimmering gems” are small fragments of shattered glass, caused by the intense heat of the ancient war-skiff battles and the utter devastation of the Last War. The glass fragments are essentially worthless as trade items. The twisted metal represents pieces of war-skiff platforms, now in ruins. Only one platform remains, and that is the reddish gray stump, vibrating like a tuning fork from the trillimite larvae beacon below.

**Area 1-1 – Steel Stump/War-skiff Platform:** *The concave rusted steel walls rise twenty feet into the air around this vibrating circular structure. The arched doorway is piled to the top with metal plates and stones, blocking any clear passage as they shake from the vibrating hum echoing through this edifice.*

There is no roof on this structure, and a party may attempt to gain entrance a number of ways, including climbing over the walls or pulling the blockage out of the doorway. Six trillimite guardians stand ready inside the steel stump, expecting more victims to be lured toward the hive below by the subsonic beacon of the larvae, which has been magnified by the strange acoustics of this still-standing structure. The vibrating walls are unpleasant for the trillimite guardians, though they will climb up to position themselves to pounce down on any party that shifts the blockage from the archway and enters via that passage. If a party climbs over the walls, two trillimite guardians will stand their ground inside the steel stump while the remaining four will attempt to close in on the intruders by climbing along the walls on either side.

The interior of the steel stump is almost completely clean of ancient machinery and the remnants of the war-skiff elevator platform have been torn away long ago, leaving just a hint of what was once here via the gouges in the wall where the platform would have been tracked for upward movement. In the floor of the steel stump, a maw door lays partially open, leading to a ladder descending into level 2 below.

This maw door, circular, with metal “teeth” that open and close, is disabled, leaving just a hint of its potential danger in the form of jutting blades of metal that line its perimeter. Unless precautions are declared, all PCs must make a Luck check when climbing down through this maw door to the ladder below. Failure results in the character taking 1 hp of damage from the sharp edges of the not-fully-open maw. The ladder downward is illuminated by thin glowing yellow strips along its edges, faintly powered by the still operational reactor in Area 5-1.

**Trillimite Guardians (6):** Init +2; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or spear +3 (1d6); AC 18; HD 2d8; hp 12 each; MV 40' or special; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, on any successfully melee attack against a trillimite guardian damage is dealt as normal but non-magical weapons shatter unless attacker succeeds on a Luck check; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

**A Note about Levels 2 through 5:** All areas on these levels are lit with thin glowing yellow strips along the ceiling, and these provide sufficient, but dim, light, unless the reactor core shuts down. The maw doors leading to each room on level 2 are closed and locked. They can be each be pried open with a DC 20 Strength check, disabled with a DC 22

lockpicking check, or destroyed if dealt 30 points of damage or more (the trillimites come and go by easily prying the doors open with their multiple tarsal limbs). If pried open, the blades will hold in place temporarily, but unless the door is wedged open by something made of steel or sturdier, the blades have a chance of slamming shut on any character passing through the open door. Each character who walks or crawls through a pried-open maw door must roll a Luck check. Failure results in the blades closing on the victim, dealing 1d12 damage immediately, and an additional 1d6 damage each round until the victim is freed from the closed maw door by opening it again or destroying the teeth.

**Area 2-1 – Trillimite Guardian Nest:** *Sickly greenish goo sticks to the walls, and other than piles of rags in each corner of this white room, the only notable feature is the pillar near the center of the far wall. The pillar seems unable to support any weight, with its midsection completely missing.*

This is the sleeping area for the trillimite guardians, who normally rotate their watches with four guardians in area 1-1 and two guardians sleeping at all times, but with the increased feeding frenzy of the larvae, all six guardians have remained on watch for three days straight, and they have not used this room during that time.

The pillar with the midsection missing is a remnant of ancient technology – a kind of waste disposal unit that disintegrates anything placed in its opening. Powered by the reactor in area 5-1, this unit lacks any kind of markings to indicate any way to turn it on or off. To use it, someone must simply place an object (organic or inorganic) into the opening, and within one second, beams of brilliant blue light will flash from the top and bottom of the pillar, immediately disintegrating what was placed inside. If a PC places his hand or any other body part inside the opening, a DC 20 Reflex save is needed or that body part disappears forever, though the PC takes only 1d3 damage, since any wound is immediately cauterized. The judge may determine additional penalties.

The greenish goo on the walls is trillimite saliva used to mark their territory and is utterly harmless.

**Area 2-2 – Trillimite Outcast Area/Prison Guards:** *Four men with multiple insectoid legs glare out from the doorway for an instant before grabbing spiked chains off the floor and charging directly toward you.*

Subtle mutations have turned a small group of trillimites into outcasts from the main nest and they have currently been redeployed by the trillimite overlord to serve on prison duty, protecting some of the recent victims who have been lured to the nest by the larvae beacon. This is fresh meat, maintained in area 2-3 for the next larvae feeding time, the outcasts' most important job has been making sure the trillimite guardians haven't tried to steal away any of the prisoners for their own meals. But the outcasts immediately recognize the PCs as potential threats to the hive, and a captive party to be used to feed the larvae would please the trillimite overlord. Unconscious PCs will be immediately chained up and brought into area 2-3 once any fighting has ended. Dead PCs would be brought into that area also, awaiting orders for the next round of feeding.

This room was once the heart of the control room for war-skiff deployment, metal panels and blackened rectangles of glass line the walls, one on each side marked by the eight ancient runes that can be used to activate this information center, though many of the runes are splattered with green goo from the trillimites. The PCs would not be able to activate the terminals in any meaningful way to control any part of the underground area from here due to the damage to the infrastructure over the years. But if they seek information, a PC who activates Rune 8 then immediately activates Rune 1 before touching anything else can discover the basic layout of the tunnels, the location of the reactor core and the reactor control room, and the blackened rectangles of glass will provide brief glimpses of each room in Levels 2-5.

Any PC who touches any of the runes in this area, whether successful at activating the information center or not, will trigger telepathic contact for the whole party by the Organon Magisteros. He will embed the following image in the characters' mind (read aloud to all players): *You go blind for an instant, then see a series of geometric shapes – a sphere transforming into a cube, then a pyramid then a shape that you can't quite understand, and it fills your field of vision – pulsating with light and soothing calmness. You feel connected to something greater than yourself, but you also feel that whatever is reaching out to you needs your help. The final vision you see in your mind is a horizon line with an inverted pyramid pointing downward. A rainbow arcs along the left-side of that pyramid, then pulses with blue light before the images disappear.*

**Trillimite Outcasts (4):** Init +2; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or barbed chains +2 (1d8) or special; AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 14 each; MV 40' or special; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, pheromone blast 20' radius once per turn – all living creatures in range must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become confused and attack a random target in the area; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; AL L.

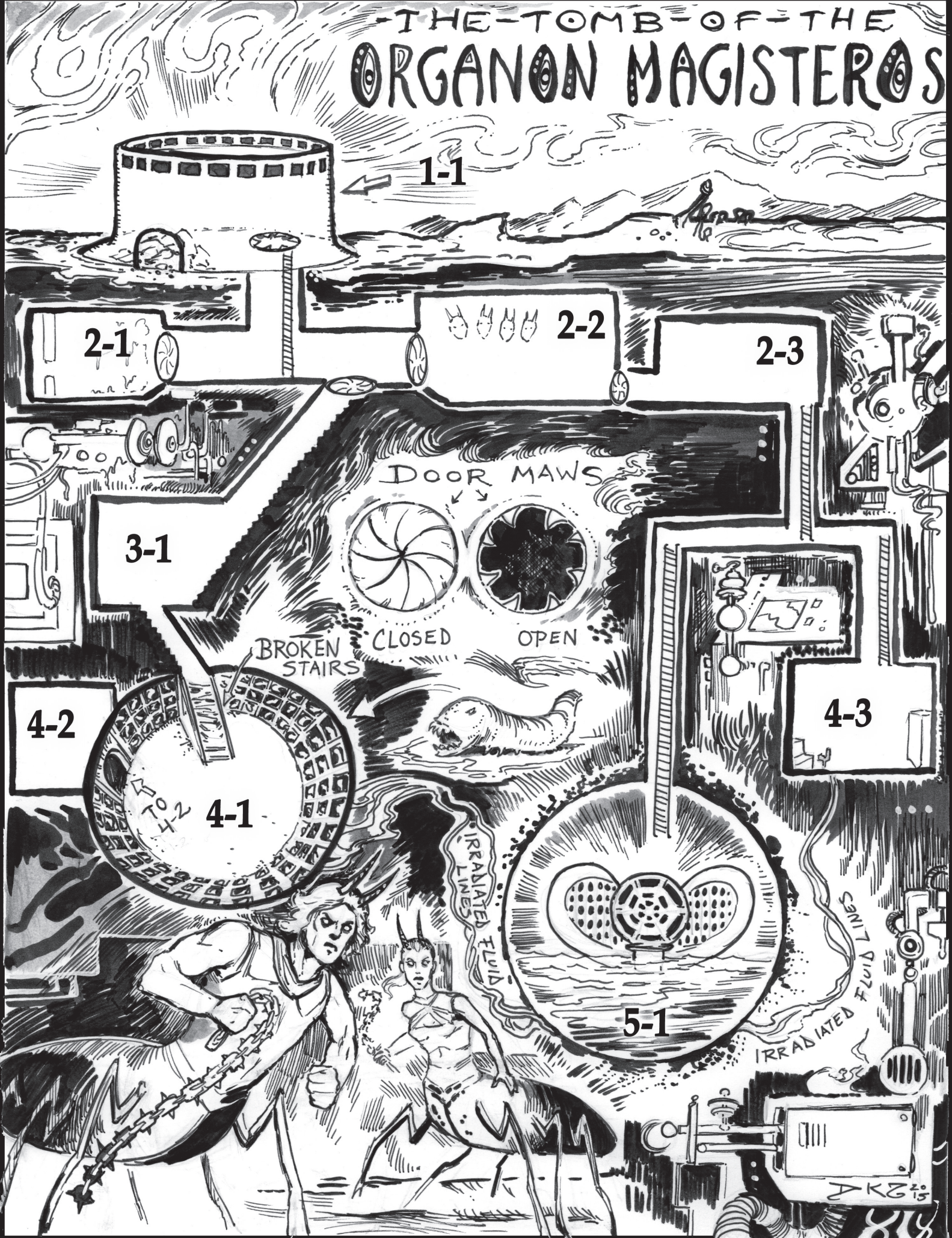
Note that the outcasts' pheromone blast also affects themselves, and yet they will use it as their first response to any stressful situation, which is why they have been pushed away from the central hive area.

**Area 2-3 – Trillimite Prison Area/Food Supply:** *Three strange creatures wriggle inside metal nets that crackle with energy. One vulture-like reptile, one white-skinned humanoid with a missing arm, and a shaggy boar with protruding tusks, all trapped and clearly suffering.*

This room was once a control annex and war-skiff workshop, but now this makeshift prison area has been repurposed by the trillimites as a food storage room. The metal nets holding the prisoners are barbed chains lined with ancient hard-wired circuits pulled from the walls. The nets pulsate with electric power coming from the reactor core, keeping the prisoners paralyzed, though they still kick with an occasional involuntary spasm. The wires of the netting crisscross the room, making it impossible to traverse the room and avoid contact with the nets unless a DC 20 Agility check is made.

Any contact by the PCs with the circuitry netting will deal electricity 1d8 damage to each prisoner and to the PC who

# -THE-TOMB-OF-THE-ORGANON MAGISTERS



touched the net (with a body part or with a metal object). The only way to disable the electrified net is to turn off power to the complex by disabling the reactor core or by smashing the source of the wiring – the metal wall panels in this room – by dealing 20 points of damage to each side. If the 20 points is dealt, the PC dealing the final blow to a wall panel must make a DC 20 Reflex save or become blinded for 1d6 turns by the flare-out, unless precautions are taken.

If the PCs free the prisoners, intentionally or unintentionally, the gribb and kith will try to escape to the surface and attack anything standing in their way, while the tusk terror will accompany the party for the rest of their time on the Purple Planet and attack any obvious enemies, becoming a loyal companion animal to the PC with the *lowest* Personality score.

A thorough search of the walls of this room will reveal a series of drawers containing components for war-skiff manufacture and a greenstone cache with 1d5 greenstone shards still intact.

The far corner of this room also contains a ladder leading down to the reactor areas below.

**Prisoner #1 – Gribb:** Init +2; Atk beak +3 melee (1d4) or talon +0 melee (1d6+2); AC 13; HD 1d10; hp 5; MV 50' (fly); Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

**Prisoner #2 – One-Armed Kith:** Init -2; Atk punch -1 melee (1d3) or improvised weapon +1 melee (varies); AC 10; HD 1d12+2; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +1; AL Var.

**Prisoner #3 – Tusk Terror:** Init +3; Atk adhesive spew +3 missile fire (special) or charge +6 melee (1d12 or special); AC 14; HD 8d6; hp 23; MV charge 60'; Act 1d20; SP target immobilized by adhesive spew unless Ref save is made against the attack roll, *charging gore* after successful adhesive attack for +10 to hit, dealing 2d12 damage; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

**Area 3-1 – Trillimite Nest (Former Hydroponic Garden Walkway):** *Dripping vines of glowing reddish-brown reach aggressively from a murky rectangular pool toward a cluster of five-legged beetle men who defend themselves by spitting green globs of burning acid from their mouths. The humming sound has become increasingly louder.*

This former hydroponic garden has become stagnant as the water supply has not been properly maintained, and the bacteria carried into the room inadvertently by the trillimites has mixed with the radioactive energy remains inside the pool to become a hostile, sentient force, lashing out at anything nearby. The trillimite acid-spitters are the equivalent of soldier ants working to protect the hive, and as they cut down the tendrils from the water, new tendrils rise up.

The southern edge of this area overlooks the nest in area 4-1, and the broken stairway leads downward towards the hyperactive buzzing of the frenzied trillimite larvae below.

**Sentient Bacteria Tendrils (3):** Init +1; Atk toxic touch +4 melee (1d8); AC 10; HD 1d8 plus special; hp 4 each; MV special; Act 1d20; SP destroyed tendrils regenerate completely in bacteria-laded water after 3 rounds unless water

is treated with soap, alcohol, or a purification spell, tendrils cannot move out of the water, but can reach 30' from the water; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

**Trillimite Acid-Spitters (8):** Init +4; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or acid spit +2 missile fire (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 11 each; MV 40' or burrowing 30'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, acid spit range 20'; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

**Area 4-1 – Larvae Hive:** *The stairway below leads to an arched vault of a room filled with nooks that seem to be writhing with greyish pink worms the size of small cats. The worms have teeth, and their screeching echoes off the metal walls in a deafening hum.*

Note, if the reactor has been de-powered previously, the "deafening hum" would be replaced with "muffled hum."

The damaged stairway is difficult and dangerous to climb, with loose metal slats and jagged edges. A character attempting to climb up or down the stairs in this area must make a DC 15 Agility check or fall prone to the ground and take 1d8 damage.

If the 100 trillimite larvae are still frenzied (because the reactor is still operational, pumping irradiated fluids into the walls of the nest), then they will attack via the rules outlined below. Otherwise, a small group of them attack defensively as individual small creatures, while the rest remain curled up and quivering.

**Frenzied Trillimite Larvae Swarm (special):** Roll initiative for the Larvae Swarm at +5. Any PC in the Area – on the stairs or lower – will be attacked with a roll of 3d24 and subtracting the PC's full armor class. If the result is a positive number, that character takes that many points of damage. If the result is zero or a negative number, that character takes no damage.

The trillimite swarm has an effective AC of 15, and any successful attacks against the swarm reduce its attack by one die along the dice chain, regardless of the damage dealt. Thus a successful attack against the swarm would reduce the swarm to a 3d20 attack, while a second successful attack would reduce the swarm to a 3d16 attack, etc. If an opponent succeeds on an area attack, a magical effect, or a mighty deed which hits 2 or more targets, the Swarm attack is reduced by two dice, so 3d24 would immediately drop to 3d16 for the Swarm's next attack. Note, when the swarm dice reach 3d3 and then take any additional damage beyond that, the swarm is considered destroyed as the remaining larvae curl up and play dead.

If the swarm is *not frenzied* due to reactor shutdown, then 2d10 of them crawl from their resting areas and attack individually:

**Regular Trillimite Larvae (2d10):** Init +1; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 1d8; hp 1 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will -2; AL C.

**Area 4-2 – Trillimite Overlord:** *A bloated, grotesque beetle-man lies across several piled mattresses. He is attended to by three females with multiple insectoid legs that pull cabbage-sized tubers from beneath the skin of his belly with a horrible splurching sound.*

This former living quarters area for a forgotten ancient

master has been taken over by the trillimite overlord who has become the egg-bearer for his tribe. According to trillimite biology and culture, the females of the species lay small eggs in the flesh of the belly of the most corpulent male in the hive, and that male becomes the tribal overlord as the eggs grow ready to hatch beneath his skin, attended to by the trillimite egg-mothers.

Because of the effects of the radiation from the reactor, this trillimite overlord is engorged to an extraordinary degree, nearly filling the room with his girth, as the egg-mothers pull six eggs from his body each hour, some ready to hatch, some deformed and rancid with radiation rot.

The egg-mothers will ferociously protect the well-developed eggs and the safety of the trillimite overlord, who is unable to move in his current state. But he may still reach out feebly with his tarsal claws and infect nearby enemies with radiation rot.

The walls of this room feature three secret compartments, each holding an ancient relic: 1 suit of silver armor, 1 ray-rifle, and 1 plasma torch.

**Trillimite Egg-Mothers (3):** Init +4; Atk barbed tarsal claw +4 melee (1d8+2) or deformed irradiated egg throw +3 missile fire (1d6+special); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 17 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, may throw up to two deformed irradiated eggs (range 30') which cause minor corruption effects at anything hit by them in addition to damage dealt; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; AL L.

**Trillimite Overlord:** Init -5; Atk infected tarsal claw -2 melee (1d3+special); AC 9; HD 4d8; hp 21; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP unable to move, but may reach out with infected tarsal claw attacks at anyone within 5' and anyone hit by the attack must succeed on a Reflex save (DC = attack roll) or become inflicted with a radiation rot disease which prevents all normal healing during rest and requires the daily consumption of 1 greenstone shard or the victim takes 1d4 damage each night; SV Fort +3, Ref -5, Will +2; AL L.

**Area 4-3 – Abandoned Reactor Control Center:** *Green goo covers metallic panels along the walls. Eight golden, glowing runes surround a circular mirror of cracked, blackened glass.*

The ancient relic in this room can be used to monitor and control the reactor core in area 5-1. The trillimites explored this area when they first arrived here weeks ago, and their tampering led to some damage, resulting in feedback that killed a trillimite explorer (who was since eaten by the trillimite outcasts).

The runes around the blackened glass mirror can be used to trigger the ancient technology in this control panel in three different ways: (a) as an *observation portal*, (b) as an *irradiated liquid drain*, and (c) as *general reactor power control*. The three effects work as follows:

#### **Control Panel**

**Activate:** Rune 8

**Function:** Rune 1 (activates *observation portal*), Rune 4 (activates *irradiated liquid drain*), Rune 3 pressed twice in a row (activates *general reactor power control*)

**Deactivate:** Rune 8

The control panel will not respond at all until Rune 8 is pressed, at which point the runes will glow a bright blue, and it will become active. Pressing rune 1 immediately after activation will create a vision of the interior of area 5-1 on the cracked, blackened glass mirror, and the vision will rotate 360 degrees to show the viewer all sides of the room and give a full picture of what they would see inside (though it does not show the interior of the sphere where the Organon Magisteros remains entombed). Pressing Rune 4 immediately after activation will cause a loud clanking sound below and then the sound of swiftly running water as the irradiated liquid in the tomb is drained into a reservoir below. Pressing rune 3 twice, immediately after activation, will shut down the reactor core and turn off all power to the complex, turning everything dark and reducing the frenzy of the trillimite larvae.

If any other runes are pressed, or if two of the different function runes are pressed without first deactivating and reactivating the relic, bluish lightning will fly out from the cracks in the blackened glass, dealing 1d12 damage to everyone in the room unless they make a DC 20 Reflex save.

If the reactor core is shut down, this control panel may not be activated again unless a greenstone shard is held up to the runes, transferring its power into the relic.

**Area 5-1 – Reactor Core:** *A bluish glow fills this circular room, reflecting from the shimmering water below. In the center of the room a large metallic sphere, pulsating with energy along its strange markings, atop a winged pedestal. You can feel an alien mind reaching out to you.*

The Organon Magisteros is imprisoned here in this “tomb” of a reactor core, trapped by the ancients to power this special energy supply. This extradimensional being of pure geometry – manifesting as a display of multi-colored lights in different shapes depending on viewer alignment (see Table 1.2) – is trapped inside the metallic sphere in the center of the reactor core. If the sphere is shattered by dealing 40 points or more damage to it, the Organon Magisteros will escape immediately and restructure the matter in and around the area of the trillimite hive, rewriting the direction of passageways or room locations and recombining organic and inorganic materials into strange hybrids of ancient relics and insectoid creatures, leaving the PCs trapped and in need of a new way out (see Table 1-3 to determine the restructuring of the facility and Table 1-4 to determine the new random encounters that emerge). If the reactor is shut down via the control panel in area 4-3, the Organon Magisteros will be able to escape after 1d10 rounds if the PCs don't smash the sphere before then, and the matter reconstruction will take place after that.

If the irradiated water in this area has been drained away via the use of the control panel in area 4-3, then the PCs may safely stand upon the pedestal or atop the sphere. Otherwise, even if attempts to avoid the irradiated water are made, there is a 10% chance that a PC on the pedestal will be afflicted with a greater corruption and a 70% chance that a PC on the pedestal will be afflicted with a minor corruption. Only by draining the water, or avoiding contact with the sphere or the pedestal, can this be avoided.

After being set free from his entombment, the Organon Mag-

isteros will telepathically communicate with the PCs via colors and shapes and will not directly affect the matter of their minds or bodies. He does not realize, or does not care that he has possibly trapped the PCs underground with some deadly enemies. He bathes the PCs in multi-colored lights of various geometric patterns that are beyond their comprehension before floating up through the walls of the complex and up into space where he will teleport back to his home dimension.

### Table 1-2: The Organon Magisteros, Manifestation by Alignment

**Lawful Characters:** See the Organon Magisteros as flickering cubes of red, yellow, and blue. The cubes dance around each other in perfect harmony.

**Neutral Characters:** See the Organon Magisteros as a golden orb, radiating with blue-white light in its center. It throbs like a heartbeat.

**Chaotic Characters:** See the Organon Magisteros as a blue pyramid that shifts into an orb, and beams of light continually explode from its center, shooting out spiked silver and gold cones in irregular fashion.

### Table 1-3: Reconfigured Passageways After Release of Organon Magisteros

Roll 1d5 twice and incorporate both changes.

- 1 The entire complex shifts 20' underground, leaving the maw door in the steel stump buried under 20' of wasteland and no open exit to the surface without substantial digging.
- 2 Area 4-2 switches places with area 4-3.
- 3 The maw door connecting area 2-2 and area 2-3 becomes replaced by a solid metal wall and no trace of a door. It would take 30 points of damage to destroy and reopen the passageway.
- 4 Area 3-1 switches places with area 2-1.
- 5 A new tunnel opens up to directly connect area 3-1 with area 5-1.

### Table 1-4: Random Encounters After Release of the Organon Magisteros

Random encounters on a roll of 1-5 on 1d8. Check each turn; if a random encounter occurs, roll 1d6 below. Ignore each result if rolled a second time.

- 1 **Insectoid War-Skiff:** Init +1; Atk rocket claw +2 melee (1d10+2); AC 14; HD 2d8+2; hp 17; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will -1; AL L.  
  
This hideous hybrid of a trillimite and war-skiff components can fly and attack with razor-sharp rocket claws. Significant damage to this creature will expose 1 greenstone shard in its back that can be reused if recovered.

- 2 **Cyborg Trillimite Outcast:** Init +4; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or laser eye +2 missile fire (1d8+2, 100' range) or special; AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 11; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, pheromone blast 20' radius once per turn - all living creatures in range must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or become confused and attack a random target in the area; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2; AL L.

A trillimite with metal plates across its face and a glowing red eye, this cyborg trillimite outcast is suffering from intense pain but will lash out at any potential threats to its survival.

- 3 **Floating Field Wave:** A sheet of blue energy zaps through the room at 6', causing anyone of human height or taller to succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or take 1d8 damage.

- 4 **1d3 Trillimite Sand Striders:** Init -1; Atk stone claws +2 (1d6); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 16 each; MV 40' or special; Act 1d20; SP may move at 20' per round through solid objects (including walls), no need to breathe and are unaffected by *sleep* effects or mind control spells; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +0; AL L.

A few trillimites were merged with the sand and rock of the wasteland by the matter manipulation of the escaping Organon Magisteros, leading to these hybrid creatures who look like carved trillimites made from wet sand and stone. These creatures can shift their own body mass in such a way as to move through the earth of the wasteland as they travel, seeking to quench their now-insatiable thirst with the blood of living creatures.

- 5 **1d3 Trillimite Guardian Disintegrators:** Init +1; Atk tarsal claw +2 melee (1d4) or disintegration ray +2 missile fire (2d6+special, range 50'); AC 18; HD 2d8; hp 12; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP cannot be surprised by normal means, wall-crawling, disintegration ray may be used once every two rounds and any victim hit by the ray must make a Luck check or one item in his possession disappears in this order shield> armor> melee weapon> ranged weapon> backpack> boots; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; AL L.

- 6 **Telepathic Boon from the Organon Magisteros.** All PCs are contacted by the Organon Magisteros, who is attempting to leave this plane of existence, and once again thanks the PCs in a complex geometric pattern inside their minds that they cannot fully comprehend. As a reward for their help in his escape from his entombment, any Lawful PCs permanently gain one point of Luck. Any Neutral PCs permanently gain one point of Intelligence. Any Chaotic PCs permanently lose one point of Luck.