

MUTANT

YEAR ZERO



OYARSSON.2014



The sun turns black, earth sinks in the sea,
The hot stars down from heaven are whirled;
Fierce grows the steam and the life-feeding flame,
Till fire leaps high about heaven itself.

Now Garm howls loud before Gnipahellir,
The fetters will burst, and the wolf run free;
Much do I know, and more can see
Of the fate of the gods, the mighty in fight.

Now do I see the earth anew
Rise all green from the waves again;
The cataracts fall, and the eagle flies.
And fish he catches beneath the cliffs.

The Poetic Edda

MUTANT

YEAR ZERO

PROJECT MANAGER & LEAD DESIGNER

Tomas Härenstam

CO-PUBLISHER

Chris Birch

OTHER WRITERS

Petter Bengtsson (The Helldrivers, The Nova Cult, metaplots), Chris Birch (The Big Smoke), Anders Blixt (Rust Castle), Thomas Johansson (The Nova Cult, threats and monsters), Nils Karlén (Zone features, gear), Kosta Kostulas (For a Mouthful of Water), Chris Lites (The Dead Apple)

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Christian Granath

LAYOUT & PREPRESS

Dan Algstrand

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Ola Larsson

MAN-FLY DESIGN

Jonas Skoog

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Reine Rosenberg

MAPS

Joakim Ericsson, Johan Nohr

REVIEW & FEEDBACK

Petter Bengtsson, Henrik Bergendahl,
Jonas Ferry, Peter Larsson, Nils
Karlén, Kosta Kostulas

PROOFREADING

Peter Larsson, T.R. Knight, Nils
Karlén, Kosta Kostulas

GUEST ILLUSTRATOR

Stella Pukk Härenstam

PLAYTESTERS

Miranda Algotsson, Jonas Als fjärd, David Altsäter, Simon Andersson, Karl Ask, Henrik Bergendahl, Nicklas Brandin, Andreas Bylger, Hans Börjesson, Jörgen Dellenäng, Niclas Dristig, Dennis Edgren, Staffan Falkenström, Jonas Ferry, Claes Flörvik, Robin Hagblom, Daniel Hallbäck, Johan Jacobsson, Fredrik Jarl, Christoffer Johansson, Thomas Jonsson, Dan Kallin, Martin Kallin, Petra Kallin, Mattias Landin, Anders Lekberg, Fredrik Lifvendahl, Mattias Lilja, Christian Magnusson, Niclas Magnusson, Magnus Muhr, Jonas Möckelström, Frida Otterhag, Nils Ragnarsson, Tomas Sandell, Kristoffer Sjö, Jenny Stavaeus, Anders Sveen, Patrik Svensson, Magnus Svärd, Martin Svärd, Johanna Tallar, Sebastian Vasselbring, Amanda Villanen, Helene Villanen, Tina Wangenfors, Martin Wessman

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THE PEOPLE AT THE END OF TIME

Of course the world ends. It happens quickly, faster than anyone could predict. The Red Plague hits a world already on the brink of collapse. Extreme climate change, global economic crisis, increasing conflict between old and new superpowers. When the pandemic comes, the last thin veneer of stability crumbles.

One billion people die in the first year. Utter panic reigns supreme, solidarity between nations is non-existent. Wars break out over the last, dwindling resources of the world. For the first time since 1945 nuclear weapons are used in armed conflict. Mushroom clouds rise from east to west.

Everyone tries to save themselves. The rich and powerful start monumental projects to escape the surface of the dying Earth: going deep underground, to the bottom of the oceans, into the cold darkness of space. The seats in these final lifeboats for mankind are desperately few. For most of the world's inhabitants, there is no way out.

Once it's all over, Earth is still. Nature invades ruined cities. Winds sweep through empty streets turned into graveyards. Time gnaws the windows

off skyscrapers, panes falling to the ground in a slow rain of glass.

Yet life remains. Slivers of humanity survive the Apocalypse. In the Ark, a small settlement at the edge of a dead city, the People live. You are the spawn of humanity, but not quite human. You are twisted funhouse images, mutated freaks. Your bodies and minds have incredible powers, but you are unstable. Fragile. None of the People are over 30 years old.

Except the Elder. Your leader, but not like you. One of the Ancients. For decades he has warned you: be on your guard, don't leave the Ark. Stay here, or the Rot will get you. Or something even worse. So far, you have obeyed his commands. Lived off rations from the Old Age. Chased off every stranger who came close to the Ark. Few dared to go out into the Zone. That is what the Elder calls the outside world.

But the safe days are over. Food is running scarce, and the fight for what's left is turning violent. You starve. Factions are forming, bosses on top and slaves at the bottom. In the middle, fixers who

try to turn a profit from anyone and everyone. And the Elder can't stand up on his own anymore. They say he can't even take a piss without help. You're on your own now.

It's time to venture out. To explore the Zone, to search for artifacts and knowledge. Build, grow the land, seek out others, create a new civilization on the ruins of the old one. Seek your origin. No children are born to the People – if you do nothing, you will perish. Maybe, one day, you will find the Eden of legend, the Ancients' haven from the encroaching hellscape. That's where salvation and truth await, the stories say.

Maybe it's all fairytales. It doesn't matter. You have no choice. This is the beginning.

This is Year Zero.

A ROLEPLAYING GAME

Welcome to *Mutant: Year Zero*. In this roleplaying game you play mutated human beings in a fallen world. On your shoulders rests the greatest responsibility of all: to save the last glimmer of human civilization from total annihilation.

PLAYERS

Every player except one takes the role of a mutant, a Player Character (PC). You decide what your PC thinks and feels, what he does and says – but not what happens to him. It's your job as a player to immerse yourself in your PC. He may be a mutant with supernatural powers – but he is still, at his very core, a human being in a desperate world. Imagine yourself in your PC's shoes. What would you do?



**WARNING TO PLAYERS:
DON'T READ SECTION II**

If you're a player in this game and not the GM, you should not read Section II of this book. Chapter 9–18 are for the GM's eyes only. This is especially important for Chapter 18, which contains huge spoilers for the metaplot and backstory of the game. If you read it beforehand you'll ruin the fun for yourself!

Your PCs are always the protagonists of the story. This game is about you. Your decisions, your lives.

Assembly: Sometimes you as players have influence over the People as a whole. At so called Assemblies you speak for the entire population of the Ark and make decisions about which projects the People should undertake. Read more about Assemblies in Chapter 7.

THE GAMEMASTER

The final player is the Gamemaster (GM). She describes the ravaged world to you, she plays the other mutants in the Ark (so called Non-Player Characters, or NPCs), she controls the monsters roaming the Zone, she decides where the artifacts are hidden. It's the GM's job to put obstacles in your path and challenge your PCs, make them show what they are really made of. But it's not up to the GM to decide everything that happens in the game – and certainly





not how your story ends. That is up to the game. That is what you are playing to find out.

Use the players! Being the GM can feel like an overwhelming responsibility, as if the entire game rests on your shoulders. It doesn't. In Section II of this book you will find many useful tools. One important piece of advice: don't be afraid to let the players help you. Can't think of anything to say when describing a ruined building or an NPC? Let a player describe it instead!

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

In *Mutant: Year Zero* no one will hold your hand and show you where to go. You and the other players create the stories in the game, they are not

pre-written. You have the power to decide the fate of your mutants, and, in the end, of the People as a whole. And there is much to do:

FIGHT FOR GRUB, WATER, BULLETS

Starvation is never far away in *Mutant: Year Zero*. Clean water is a luxury. If you don't have grub and water you'll have to fight to get it – and if you do have what you need, you can be sure some other freak will try to take it from you. And then you'll need bullets to load your gun, or to buy protection from someone stronger.

TAKE PART IN THE PROJECTS

Every day is a fight for survival, but the People want more than just to survive. A new society must be built, or the Ark – your home – will sooner or later

face collapse and ruin. The People's projects can be anything from building a palisade or growing mushrooms to creating a militia or opening a theater. The projects increase the Ark's Development Levels (DEV's). Read more about that in Chapter 7.

PROTECT THE ARK

The Ark is an island in an ocean of chaos. The People have made it so far, but the threats to the Ark are getting worse and becoming more frequent. Acid rain, disease, attacks from wild beasts or savages from the depths of the Zone – when danger looms someone has to stand in the front line and protect the People. Will you do your part?

PROTECT YOUR OWN

You won't make it far without friends, but your friends are also your weakness. When someone threatens a friend you need to stand up for them – or you'll be alone when it's your turn to face the heat. And it will be, sooner or later. The grub is too scarce, the bullets too few to meet everyone's needs. No one gets far in the Ark without making enemies.

EXPLORE THE ZONE

The Zone is a dangerous and devastated wasteland, where the Elder has told you never to go. But if the People are to endure, you have to go out there. To search. For other mutants, for artifacts from the Old Age, for knowledge. The Zone is unknown territory, where the invisible Rot will kill you if savages or ancient war machines don't do it first. But you have no choice. In the Zone, your future awaits.

SEARCH FOR EDEN

Maybe it's just a fairytale. A collective figment of the imagination. Stories whispered around the flickering trashcan-fires in the Ark. But you cannot stop believing. Believing that salvation – or at least the truth about the origin of the People – is somewhere out there in the Zone. The People call this place Eden.

The hunt for Eden relates to the so called meta-plot, an overarching storyline that is a big part of this game. This is explained in depth in Chapter 16 (for the GM's eyes only).

TOOLS OF THE GAME

Mutant: Year Zero requires you to improvise, but the game gives you many tools to help you create your own story.

CHARACTER SHEETS

The People are far from an anonymous mass of mutants. You are individuals with different roles and tasks, unique skills and abilities, relations and dreams. In *Mutant: Year Zero* you create your own PC and write down everything you need to know about him or her on a character sheet. You will find one of those at the back of this book, and you can download them for printing from the Modiphius and Free League Publishing websites. You will learn how to create your PC in the next chapter of this book.

DICE

You are mutants – chance carved in flesh. No matter how strong you are or how well you play your hand, chance will have the final say.

There is a unique dice set for this game, available for purchase separately. The set contains 15 custom six-sided dice, in three different colors. The

D6 AND D66

Players and the GM sometimes roll what's called a D6 or a D66. D6 means you ignore the symbols ☠ and ☣, and just read the number on the die. 2D6 means you roll two D6's and add the results together, 3D6 that you roll three dice and add, etc. Another type of roll is the D66, which means you roll two D6's of different colors – like a Base Die and a Gear Die. Consider the first die the tens and the second die the ones. That gives your a result between 11 and 66. You can even roll a D666 – roll three dice and consider the first die the hundreds, the second die the tens and the third die the ones. That gives you a result between 111 and 666.



yellow ones are called *Base Dice*, the green ones *Skill Dice* and the black ones *Gear Dice*. You roll the dice when you perform a dramatic action that might determine if your mutant lives or dies.

As you can see, the dice have symbols on some sides, with the numbers next to them in tiny font. The ☸ symbol usually means something good happens. The ☠ symbol means your mutant powers rage forth in your body. The ⚙ symbol means your gear might break. How all that works you will learn later.

Note: You can play this game with any normal six-sided dice. It does help, however, if you have them in three different colors. If you use normal

dice, a six means ☸ for all types of dice. A one means ☠ on a Base Die and ⚙ on a Gear Die.

THE MUTANT CARD DECK

The Card Deck for *Mutant: Year Zero* (available for purchase separately) contains playing cards of three types: *Threat Cards*, *Mutation Cards* and *Artifact Cards*. The cards help you play the game, but they are not absolutely necessary. All information on the cards is repeated in this book, and you can roll dice instead of drawing cards to get a random result.

Threat Cards: The Ark is your home, but no longer a safe haven. The Threat Cards describe threats that



the People have to deal with. Draw a Threat Card at the start of every game session, or whenever you want to add drama to the game. If the game was a television show the Threat Card would be a teaser of what the episode – the session – is about. You can draw Threat Cards openly, or the Gamemaster can keep them hidden. A third option is for the GM to choose a Threat Card. Threat Cards are explained further in Chapter 10.

Mutation Cards: Most aspects of your PC are yours to decide, but there is one major exception: mutations. You draw Mutation Cards to decide which mutations you get, and you keep them by your

character sheet as you play. Read more about mutations in Chapter 5.

Artifact Cards: To build a new world you need to learn how the old one worked. Out there in the Zone there are artifacts, objects from the Old Age that still work – or at least can be repaired. To determine which artifact you find, you draw an Artifact Card. An artifact can give you the extra edge over other mutants in the Ark – but if you instead let the People study the artifact, the whole Ark can learn and benefit from the object. Read more about artifacts in Chapter 16.

MAP OF THE ZONE

When the game starts the Zone – that is, the world outside the Ark – is alien and unknown. All the People know is what a few brave Stalkers (page 30) have seen, seldom more than the coastlines and major landmarks.

On the inside covers of this book, there are maps of example Zones. These maps and more example Zones are also available for free download from the Modiphius and Free League websites.

The Zone maps have plenty of empty space – during the game you will explore the Zone sector by sector, and draw or note down what you find. Square by square the map gets ever more detailed, until your campaign is over. Read more about exploring the Zone in Chapter 8.

On our websites you can also find an empty map template, with nothing but the grid and coordinates. You can use this template to draw a map of your own Zone – perhaps based on your own hometown?

FAST-FORWARDING

During the game you say what your character does and the GM tells you how the world reacts, back and forth. But to describe every minute of your mutants' life would get tedious. When nothing important is going on, you can fast-forward the story, and continue playing at a new time and place. Usually it's up to the GM to decide when it's time to fast-forward, and where to continue. But players are free to make suggestions. Usually it's pretty obvious when to fast-forward.

Cutting between PCs. When your characters are in different locations, the GM will cut between you when appropriate. Cut pretty often – every 15 minutes or so is a good rule – so that no player is left out for too long. And if your PC isn't in the scene, this doesn't mean you have to be quiet – instead, stay engaged, immersed and comment on the action. Maybe you can even play an NPC for a little while?

Don't over-do it. *Mutant: Year Zero* is a game about surviving and exploring a deadly world. There is no comfort zone, no safe haven where nothing bad can

happen. Threats are everywhere – even in the Ark – and expeditions into the Zone are always a gamble with your life at stake. In the Ark you can fast-forward the story every now and then, even jump forward days or weeks when appropriate – but do it sparingly. Out in the Zone you should play every day, hour by hour, and every sector you pass.

TEAM PLAY VS INDIVIDUAL PLAY

Your mutant has his own dreams and relationships, but he's also part of a team of PCs. Where you put your focus in your gaming group – on the individual or on the team – is a matter of personal preferences. Talk about it before the game so that everyone knows what to expect.

INDIVIDUAL PLAY

If you focus on individuals, you get more space to explore each PC personally, and you can let them choose their own paths through a ravaged world. The GM can tailor specific challenges for your individual PCs. The drawback is that the game can feel scattered and unfocused, as your PCs will pretty often be in different places. Individual play often works best in and around the Ark, where there are plenty of NPCs to interact with.

TEAM PLAY

If your game is focused on the team, your PCs form a small gang in the Ark, a (mostly) loyal band of mutants who are not always friends but who very rarely split up. You are usually in the same place, which makes it easier for the GM to keep the story focused. The drawback of team play is that you have to agree on what you want to do and where you want to go, which leaves less space for developing your individual PCs.

Team play is often the natural play style in the Zone, where you have to work together to survive the dangers lurking among the ruins.

HYBRID PLAY

A third way is to move your focus back and forth during the course of the game. Your PCs are a team that usually sticks together, but every now and then you make individual excursions.

HIM & HER

The Ark may be a hellhole, but at least it doesn't discriminate. Hunger doesn't care if you're male or female, and neither does the Rot. To reflect both genders in the way the rules are written, and still keep the language consistent, we use "he" for unnamed players, PCs and NPCs, while the GM is always a "she". In every one of these cases, what it really means is "he or she" – but it would be too cumbersome to spell that out each and every time.

ROLEPLAYING? WHAT'S THAT?

If you have made it this far without knowing what a roleplaying game is – congratulations! Welcome to a creative and very rewarding hobby. Roleplaying is a unique form of gaming that combines dice-rolling and storytelling. In a way that books, movies and even video games cannot match, roleplaying games let you create your own story together with your friends, using the rules as a guide and support.

GETTING STARTED

Mutant: Year Zero lets you get started quickly. The GM should preferably read the entire book, but the players need only get acquainted with the basic mechanics before the first game session. It's often best to learn the system by actually playing the game.

1. First, create your player characters. Grab a character sheet and follow the instructions in Chapter 2 of this book.
2. Then, choose your Zone and create your Ark. Chapter 7 explains how this is done.
3. You're done and ready to play! If you like, start the game with *For a Mouthful of Water*, an introductory sector of the Zone (GM, look it up in Chapter 17).

The strength of a roleplaying game can also be its weakness – the freedom to create the story yourselves can feel overwhelming. But *Mutant: Year Zero* contains a lot of story hooks, events, locations and personalities for you to fill your stories with, as well as plenty of tools for the GM to use. And if you need help or advice, there is a forum dedicated to *Mutant: Year Zero* at www.modiphius.com as well as at www.freeleaguepublishing.com.

Welcome!

ABBREVIATIONS

PC = Player Character
 XP = Experience Points
 GM = Gamemaster
 NPC = Non-Player Character
 DEV = Development Level

A TYPICAL SESSION

Game sessions of *Mutant: Year Zero* can vary a lot, but this is the typical rundown:

1. Bring out your map of the Zone, character sheets, dice and, if you have them, playing cards for mutations and artifacts.
2. Add a number of new Mutation Points equal to the number of mutations you have (page 19).
3. Hold an Assembly (Chapter 7), where you as players decide on which projects the People should undertake. Skip this step if no PCs are in the Ark.
4. Let the GM introduce a new threat to the Ark, using Threat Cards or a dice roll (see Chapter 10). Skip this step if no PC is in the Ark, or if enough is going on already.
5. Play your characters. Put yourself mentally in their shoes and act as if they were real – but play boldly and push their limits.
6. Hold a debriefing. Discuss which actions during the session should be rewarded with Experience Points (page 25).
7. Decide if you want to change your relations to the other PCs and to NPCs, and if you want to change your big dream (page 22).





YOUR MUTANT

Your Player Character (PC) – your mutant – is your most important asset in *Mutant: Year Zero*. He is your weapon, your eyes and ears in the world. But he, in return, depends on you making the right decisions for him. Don't screw it up. Take your PC seriously and play him as if he was a real person. It's more fun that way. At the same time, don't try to protect your PC from every conceivable danger. The goal of the game is to create a good story. For that to happen you need to take risks – if you never dare, you'll never win.

ROLE

The first thing you pick for your mutant is his role. The role determines who you are and what you do in the Ark, your position in the Dawnworld. There are eight roles to choose from, each described on pages 26–41 at the end of this chapter. Avoid having several players pick the same role for their characters, as this would make the group less diverse.

EXAMPLE

The player Joanna is creating a PC, and she decides that she wants to play a Stalker. She takes a character sheet and writes down her chosen role.

AGE

When were you born? You don't know. Nobody in the Ark does. But you are all young adults. There are no older people except for the Elder. And there are no children. Unlike the scrawny mutts that live off the Ark's refuse, the People bear no children. You all realize what this means. If no children are born, and no one arrives from elsewhere, it's only a matter of time before the People are extinct. Can you find Eden before your time is up?

OTHER ROLES

The eight roles are those most common in the Ark, but others can be introduced – especially once the Ark develops into a more advanced society (Chapter 7). New roles will be published in the future, and you can of course create your own. Every role needs a key attribute, a specialist skill and three unique talents. The skill and the talents should be useful but not overly powerful. Try to avoid overlap with existing skills and talents.

NAME

Every role description gives you ten typical names, five male and five female. Choose one of these names, or make up your own name if you prefer.

EXAMPLE

Joanna picks the name Krin for her Stalker.

ATTRIBUTES

Your four attributes determines what basic strengths and weaknesses you are born with. They are measured on a scale from 1 to 5 for PCs and other regular mutants. A higher score is better. Your attributes are used when you perform important actions. The attribute scores are decreased when you suffer different types of *trauma*. If an attribute reaches zero you are *broken*. Read more about this in chapter 6. There you can also find out how you recover lost attribute scores - by consuming a different resource for each.

Starting scores: When you create your PC, you should distribute a total of 14 points across the four attribute scores. Each attribute must have a starting value from 2 to 4 - except one. The attribute listed as your "key attribute" by your role description may have a starting score of 5.

STRENGTH

Raw physical power and endurance. Strength is decreased by *damage*, and recovered by *grub*.

AGILITY

Your overall body control and motor skills. Agility is decreased by *fatigue*, and recovered by *water*.

WITS

Intelligence, alertness and sharpness of mind. Wits is decreased by *confusion*, and recovered by *sleep*.

EMPATHY

Your charisma and ability to read and affect others. Empathy is decreased by *doubt* and recovered by *sympathy*.

CREATE YOUR CHARACTER

Take a character sheet, and then follow these twelve steps:

1. Choose your role.
2. Choose your name.
3. Define your appearance.
4. Distribute 14 points across the four attribute scores.
5. Distribute 10 points across your skill levels.
6. Choose a talent.
7. Draw a mutation.
8. Define your relationships to the other PCs and NPCs.
9. Choose your big dream.
10. Choose your gear.
11. Create the Ark (Chapter 7).
12. Describe your den.

EXAMPLE

Joanna gives Krin Strength 3, Agility 5, Wits 4 and Empathy 2. She is allowed to set Agility to 5 because Agility is the Stalker's key attribute.

EXTRA MUTATION

If you choose to start the game with an extra mutation, one of your attribute scores must be decreased one step (read more about mutations below).

SKILLS

Your *skills* are trained abilities and learning, things you have picked up along the way in the harsh post-apocalyptic world. In this game there are twelve basic skills that all mutants can use. In addition, every role has a unique, thirteenth skill - a specialist skill.

Skills are measured by skill level, from 0 to 5. You can use a basic skill even if you don't have a skill level. To use a specialist skill, you need at least skill level 1. Read more about skills and how they work in chapter 3.

Starting Levels: When creating your character, you get to distribute 10 points across your skills. The maximum starting level for any skill is 3, and you must have at least level 1 in your specialist skill – apart from that, you choose your skills freely. You can increase your skill levels during play (page 29).

EXAMPLE

Krin buys skill level 3 in Shoot, level 2 in Sneak and Find the Path, and level 1 in Move, Know the Zone, and Heal.

TALENTS

Talents are tricks, moves and minor abilities that give you a small edge. They are more specialized than skills and give you a way to fine-tune your character. Talents are further explained in Chapter 4.

You can pick one talent when creating your character – but your choices are limited. Your role description indicates which talents you can choose from. You can learn more talents during the course of the game, at which point you will have many more talents to choose from.

EXAMPLE

Joanna gets to choose one from the talents Monster Hunter, Rot Finder and Scavenger for Krin. She picks Scavenger.

MUTATIONS

Your mutations are superhuman abilities. Where the mutations come from, no one among the People knows. The problem is that they are both unpredictable and dangerous – even to yourselves. Besides, they can't always be activated on command. Sometimes the power is there, ready to unleash, sometimes it's not.

THE MUTATION DRAW

Normally, you get only get one mutation from start. You don't get to choose your mutation – instead you draw a random Mutation Card, or roll D66 once on

the Mutation Table on page 71. Learn to make the most of the mutation you've got, even if you would have preferred another. Mutations are random. Deal with it.

Two mutations? Once you have drawn your first mutation, you can, if you want to, draw a second mutation and start the game with two. The price you pay is that you must decrease one of your attribute scores by one step – your mind or body is more mutated than most, but also more degenerated.

If you choose to have two mutations, you may end up starting the game with the score of 1 in an attribute – however, this is hardly advisable.

New mutations: Your PC can develop more mutations during the course of the game. Read more about that on page 70.

Using Cards: If you use Mutation Cards, no two PCs will ever have the same mutations. This is a good thing, it makes your group more diverse. If you don't have Mutation Cards, we suggest you re-roll any mutation that another PC already has.

MUTATION POINTS

How the individual mutations work is set out on the Mutation Cards and in Chapter 5. To activate a mutation you must spend at least one Mutation Point (MP). Without MPs, you can't use any mutations. You can never fail when activating a mutation – all you need to do is to expend an MP. But the power of the mutation can have unpredictable side effects (page 69).

- ❑ At the beginning of every game session, you get a number of MP equal to the number of mutations you have.
- ❑ You can win more MP by *pushing* a dice roll (page 50).
- ❑ You can never have more than 10 MP.

EXAMPLE

Joanna rolls a mutation for Krin and gets Rot-Eater – very useful in the Zone.

CHARACTER SHEET

MUTANT

YEAR ZERO

ATTRIBUTES

Strength	3	Damage	●●●●●
Agility	5	Fatigue	●●●●●
Wits	4	Confusion	●●●●●
Empathy	2	Doubt	●●●●●

CONDITIONS

Starving	●	Dehydrated	●
Sleepless	●	Hypothermic	●
Critical Injuries:			

SKILLS

Endure (Strength)	
Force (Strength)	
Fight (Strength)	
Sneak (Agility)	2
Move (Agility)	
Shoot (Agility)	3
Scout (Wits)	
Comprehend (Wits)	
Know the Zone (Wits)	1
Sense Emotion (Empathy)	
Manipulate (Empathy)	
Heal (Empathy)	1
FIND THE PATH	2

ROT POINTS

●●●●●●●●●●

EXPERIENCE POINTS

●●●●●●●●●●

Name: KRIN	Role: STALKER
------------	---------------

APPEARANCE

Face: HIDDEN UNDER A HOOD
Body: WIRY, SKINNY
Clothing: CAMOUFLAGE GEAR

GEAR

1 SCRAP RIFLE
2 WATER, 2 RATIONS
3 GRUB, 4 RATIONS
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Bullets: 4

WEAPONS

	Bonus	Damage	Range	Special
SCRAP RIFLE	+1	1	LONG	JURY-RIGGED

RELATIONSHIPS

	Buddy
PC 1: NAPHTA HAS WALKED IN THE ZONE WITH ME	⊗
PC 2: DENRIK IS A POMPOUS IDIOT	●
PC 3: HUGUST MIGHT ACTUALLY UNDERSTAND ME	●
PC 4:	●
I Hate: THE STALKER YASSAN, WHO HAS GONE DEEPER INTO THE ZONE	
I Need to Protect: THE SLAVE ERIEL. SHE DOESN'T DESERVE A LIFE IN CHAINS.	
My Big Dream: TO GO DEEP INTO THE ZONE AND FIND EDEN	

TALENTS

SCAVENGER

MUTATIONS

ROT-EATER

MUTATION POINTS

⊗●●●●●●●●●●

ARMOR

	Rating

CHARACTER SHEET

MUTANT

YEAR ZERO

PEOPLE I'VE MET	Role	Notes
YASSAN	STALKER	
ERIEL	SLAVE	

MY DEN

Description: THE WRECK OF A VAN AT THE EDGE OF THE ARK

Gear Stashed:

TINY ITEMS

NOTES

RELATIONSHIPS AND DREAMS

Without friends to back you up you won't survive for long in the Ark – and even shorter in the Zone. But you have to know who you can trust. Turning your back to the wrong mutant can kill you faster than the Rot.

Relationships are not the only things connecting you to the world. You also have a personal dream of a better future.

Your relationships and dreams affect how you earn Experience Points (XP). These choices are also important to the GM, who will use them to create story elements for the game. This is explained further in Chapter 9.

RELATIONSHIPS TO PCs

When creating your PC you must describe your relationship to all of the other PCs. You only need to write one sentence per PC. Your role description gives you premade options to pick from. If you prefer, you can ignore these options and create your own relationships.

Buddy: When you have noted your relationships to the other PCs you must choose which one of them you feel closest to. That PC is your buddy. Mark your choice in the checkbox on the character sheet.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Next, choose two NPCs that you have a strong relationship to in some way. You must choose one NPC whom you hate and another whom you want to keep safe. Your role description provides premade options here as well. If you prefer to make these NPCs up by yourself (or together with the other players in the group), that's fine too.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Finally, choose what your big dream is, what you want more than anything in the world. As in the case of relationships, your role description provides you with premade options to choose from. Use them if you want to.

CHANGING DREAMS & RELATIONSHIPS

Events during the course of the game can change your PC fundamentally. Your relationships to other PCs, which NPCs matter most to you, and what your big dream is – all of this is subject to change. After every game session, when XP have been distributed, you may change any or all of these freely. You are not allowed to make changes during the session, only after.

EXAMPLE

Krin is part of a group that includes the Gearhead Naphta, the Fixer Denrik and the Enforcer Hugust. Joanna chooses relationships to them from the premade alternatives. Naphta has roamed the Zone with Krin, and survived. Krin thinks Denrik is an arrogant fool. If he messes with her, he's going to get what he deserves. Krin respects Hugust and thinks he might understand her, but she is afraid to let him get too close.

Next, Joanna chooses Krin's relationships to NPCs, and her big dream. Joanna decides that Krin hates the Stalker Yassan - because he has ventured deeper into the Zone than she has. Krin wants to keep the Slave Eriel safe - because she doesn't deserve a life in chains. Krin dreams of walking deeper into the Zone and finding Eden.

YOUR GEAR

The People are hungry and the struggle for grub and clean water is hard. To keep others away from your grub and water you need weapons – preferably guns. And guns need bullets from the Old Age. There is no money in the Ark, all business is done through barter, but bullets are often used as an unofficial currency.

In the Ark, there are no shops. But you can trade with other mutants, and there are fixers and bosses who can get you almost anything – for something valuable, or some service, in return. It's all about how much you need it, and what you're willing to pay – or do – to get it. The supply of grub and other things is also affected by the development of the Ark itself (page 100).



Starting Gear: Your role description tells you what weapons you can choose from when starting the game, and how much grub, water and bullets you have at the outset. Note that the Gearhead also gets to draw a random Artifact Card (or roll once on the Artifact table in Chapter 16) right at the start. If you want to, you can use your bullets to buy extra gear from the start. Use the gear list at the back of this book.

Grub & Water: You must consume one ration of grub and one ration of water per day, or you'll suffer. Read more about this on page 92.

ENCUMBRANCE

There's a limit to how much gear you can carry - and you don't want to make yourself a target for robbers anyway. You can carry a number of regular items equal to double your Strength score. Use your base

Strength for this, not the temporarily decreased value you get when you are hurt (page 88).

Write it down! You must list everything you are carrying on the character sheet. List up to one regular item on each row of the sheet. If an item is not on your sheet, you've forgotten it or lost it somehow. You've only got yourself to blame.

HEAVY & LIGHT ITEMS

Heavy or otherwise cumbersome items are harder to carry. An item designated as heavy counts as two regular items, and takes up two rows on your character sheet. Some objects may need as many as three or even more rows on your sheet. At the opposite end of the spectrum, there are items that are light - they count as half of a regular item, and you can list two of them on the same row on your sheet.

GRUB, WATER & BOOZE

Four rations of grub or water count as one regular item. That means you can list four rations on one row on your character sheet, or two rations plus one light item.

Booze is normally kept in a bottle that counts as one regular item. One such bottle contains ten doses of the strong stuff (see chapter 6 for effects of booze).



WHAT ARE YOU EATING?

The Ark has an ancient stockpile of canned food from the Old Age, but it's almost gone now. What little is left is strictly rationed by the Elder and the people close to him, an arrangement that has been accepted by the bosses – so far.

At the start of the game, your grub is probably mostly rusty old cans, filled with nasty, decaying sludge. As your campaign progresses, the canned food will be supplanted by potatoes, mushrooms and other vegetables grown in the Ark or growing wild in the Zone. Maybe you can even find fresh meat – but from what?

Technically, grub is an abstract unit in this game, but try to describe what you actually eat in some detail. It's a great way to immerse yourselves in the post-apocalyptic world.

TINY ITEMS & BULLETS

Things even smaller than light items are called tiny. They are so small and light that they don't encumber you at all. The rule of thumb is: if the item can be hidden in a closed fist, it's tiny. Tiny things must be noted on your character sheet even if they don't encumber you.

Bullets: Individual bullets count as tiny items. However, more than 10 bullets count as a light item, more than 20 as a basic item and more than 40 as a heavy item.

OVER-ENCUMBERED

You can temporarily carry more than your normal limit ($\text{Strength} \times 2$ items). The drawback is that you have to make a roll for the skill Endure (page 24) when you want to walk a significant distance, for example crossing into a new sector when in the Zone (page 122). The same rule applies if you drag some other heavy object, like a broken mutant who needs care in the Ark. If you fail your skill roll you have to drop what you are carrying, or stay where you are.

CARTS & RAFTS

In the Zone, you can use rafts, carts, vehicles and the like to load heavy stuff onto. That way, you won't be over-encumbered by it. It's up to the GM's judgment how much can be loaded onto the cart or raft.

EXAMPLE

Krin starts the game with 4 bullets, 2 rations of grub and 4 rations of water. She also chooses a scrap rifle. Krin has Strength 2, and thus she can carry one more regular item without being over-encumbered.

YOUR DEN

When you sleep you are a potential victim, incapable of protecting yourself and your gear. Choose where you sleep, and who you sleep next to, carefully. Note the location of your den on your character sheet. Here you can also keep any gear, grub, water and bullets that you can't bring with you. You have to keep a record of everything you have in your den.

Your den should be located in the Ark or just outside of it. You can share a den with other PCs or NPCs – if you trust them. It's a good idea to hold off choosing your den until after you have decided what the Ark looks like.

DEVELOP YOUR MUTANT

Your character won't walk through the Zone unaffected. The harsh realities of life after the apocalypse will change you, that's all you can be certain of in an uncertain world. You can develop your mutant in several different ways during the game.

NEW MUTATIONS

Every time you activate a mutation, there is a small risk that your body or mind will suffer permanent trauma. If that happens, you also gain a new mutation (page 70). Simply draw a new Mutation Card or roll up new random mutation. Over time, this means you will slowly become weaker – and more mutated. This does not mean that you suddenly develop completely new mutation – rather, latent abilities awaken inside you. That's what it means to be a mutant.

EXPERIENCE

As a mutant, it is your fate to slowly decay and mutate – but you can learn much before your end comes. Such learning is measured in Experience Points (XP). You get your XP at the end of every session. Hold a debriefing and let the entire group talk about that session's event. For each of the following questions that you can answer with a “yes”, you get one XP:

- ❑ Did you participate in the session? (You get one XP just for being there.)
- ❑ Did you perform a Day's Work for a project in the Ark (page 103)?
- ❑ Did you explore at least one new sector in the Zone?
- ❑ Did you sacrifice or risk something for you PC buddy (page 22)?
- ❑ Did you sacrifice or risk something for the NPC you want to keep safe?

- ❑ Did you sacrifice or risk something to mess with the NPC you hate?
- ❑ Did you sacrifice or risk something to reach your big dream?

The GM has the final say on how many XP each PC should get, but let all players around the table take part in the discussion. Mark your XP total in the check boxes on your character sheet.

RAISE A SKILL OR GET A TALENT

Once you have collected five XP you can improve your PC – either raise a skill of your choice by one level, or learn one new talent. You can raise any basic skill you like (even if you had no level in it to begin with), but not specialist skills from another role. You can choose a talent specific to your role, or any of the general talents (Chapter 4), but not a talent from another role. Once you have made an improvement, erase all XP marks and start over. Once you have gained another five XP you can improve your character again.

NEW RELATIONSHIPS AND DREAMS

After every session, after XP have been awarded, you may revisit your choice of important PC and NPC relationships, as well as your big dream.

ARTIFACTS

A different way to improve your mutant is to find artifacts in the Zone. Many artifacts give you a Gear Bonus that can give you the edge over those cowards who never dared to leave the Ark.

DEVELOP THE ARK

The final – but perhaps most important – development in the game does not happen to your character, but to the entire Ark itself. Chapter 7 describes how the People's projects can strengthen the Ark and increase its Development Levels.

ENFORCER

Every day is a fight for survival. No one knows that better than you. As long as you can remember, you have been fighting. For grub, for bullets, for respect. Your knuckles and your soul are hardened, crushing a jaw no longer hurts. You have learned the fighter's secret: It's not about who is the strongest. It's about who will never quit.



Typical Names: Hugust, Lenny, Marl, Pontis, Otiak, Ingrit, Mubba, Nelma, Rebeth

Key Attribute: Strength

Specialist Skill: Intimidate

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** broken nose, dead eyes, scarred head, welding mask, hockey mask, metal jaw.
- ❑ **Body:** scarred, muscular, compact, wiry, huge, arm prosthesis
- ❑ **Clothing:** worn leather coat, dirty coverall, undersized T-shirt, cut-up car tires, hubcaps

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Barge Through**
- ❑ **Mean Streak**
- ❑ **Sucker Punch**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... was still standing after one of your punches.
- ... fought by your side.
- ... left you to die.
- ... is wonderful. Some day he/she will be yours.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Boss Johammed, who killed your previous Boss and tortured you.
- ❑ The Enforcer Elon, the only one who beat you in a fair fight.
- ❑ The Fixer Milix, who you think stole your stash of grub.

You need to protect:

- ❑ The Boss Marlotte, who provides grub for you.
- ❑ The Chronicler Astrina, whom you secretly desire.
- ❑ Nobody. No one in this rotten world deserves to live.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ To crush everything that is pretty.
- ❑ That your beloved will love you back.
- ❑ To build rather than destroy.

GEAR

You start the game with D6 bullets, 2D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water.

Choose one of these starting weapons: Spiked bat, brass knuckles (light weapon), scrap axe (heavy weapon). You can buy extra gear with your bullets.

GEARHEAD

For other people, the Zone is an empty wasteland, littered with useless scrap and garbage. For you, it's a gold mine that is never depleted. There are remains from the Old Age everywhere, broken technical wonders. You have mastered the art of turning them into new, working contraptions. They're not pretty. But they work. Most of the time. And the People have learned to value your craft.



Typical Names: Quark, Octane, Plonk, Zingo, Zippo, Delta, Iridia, Loranga, Nafta, Zanova

Key Attribute: Wits

Specialist Skill: Jury-Rig

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** goggles, grinning, spiked hair, hairless, bloodshot eyes, dirty, always chewing
- ❑ **Body:** thin, wiry, extremely skinny, midget, abnormally fat
- ❑ **Clothes:** dirty yellow coverall, bicycle chains, patched-up raincoat, T-shirt with heavy metal motif, cables and light bulbs.

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Inventor**
- ❑ **Motorhead**
- ❑ **Tinkerer**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... is awesome. Keep close.
- ... is a bit slow on the uptake. Best explain stuff. In detail.
- ... makes you nervous. You don't like the way he looks at you.
- ... is out for your gear. Keep it close.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Gearhead Pontiak, who thinks he's so smart.
- ❑ The Fixer Sixter, who tricked you out of an artifact.
- ❑ The Stalker Kara, who left you in the Zone.

You need to protect:

- ❑ The Boss Johammed, who pays well for jury-rigs.
- ❑ The Enforcer Elon, who is always there when you need him.
- ❑ The Stalker Yassan, who has promised to take you deep into the Zone.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ To build something that will change the People's life forever.
- ❑ To find Eden and explore all the technical marvels hidden there.
- ❑ To build a weapon that causes widespread destruction.

GEAR

You start the game with 2D6 bullets, D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water. You may also roll for one artifact, which you will start the game with.

Choose one of these starting weapons: brass knuckles, bicycle chain, scrap pistol. You can buy extra gear with bullets.

STALKER

Let them stare at you in disgust. Let them shy away from you, afraid the Rot will infect them. Let them fear you like death itself. Let them. They hate you, but they need you. Only you know the way through the Zone, the safe paths crossing the gravelands of the Old Age. You know where the artifacts are hidden, you know where the monsters roam. You are a Stalker.



Typical Names: Danko, Endel, Franton, Hammed, Max, Felin, Jena, Katin, Krin, Tula

Key Attribute: Agility

Specialist Skill: Find the Path

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** hidden under a hood, scarred face, hairless, sickly pale, bandaged
- ❑ **Body:** androgynous, wiry, muscular, short
- ❑ **Clothes:** raincoat, coverall, camouflage gear, army boots, backpack

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Scavenger**
- ❑ **Monster Hunter**
- ❑ **Rot Finder**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... walked with you in the Zone and lived.
- ... is a pompous idiot. If he gets in your way, he's going down.
- ... might actually understand you. Do you dare to open up?
- ... is a danger to everyone. Keep your distance.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Stalker Yassan, because he went deeper into the Zone than you.
- ❑ The Enforcer Jonats, who killed your only friend.
- ❑ The Chronicler Astrina, who won't leave you alone.

You need to protect:

- ❑ The Gearhead Pontiak. A pain in the neck, but without you he's dead.
- ❑ The Slave Eriel. No one deserves a life in chains. Especially not her.
- ❑ No one. If they can't protect themselves they deserve to die.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ To venture deep into the Zone and find Eden.
- ❑ To some day stop wandering and find peace.
- ❑ To find something worth dying for.

GEAR

You start the game with D6 bullets, D6 rations of grub and 2D6 rations of water.

Choose one of the following starting weapons:

scrap rifle, scrap pistol, bow (with 5 arrows). You can buy extra gear with your bullets.



FIXER

Bullets? Grub? Water? Artifacts? A warm body next to yours? Whatever people want, you can get it. Somehow. Seeing the needs of others and fulfilling them, that has been your strategy for survival as long as you can remember. Since your were a weak little runt and learned to survive by staying close to the strong kids.

Typical Names: Abed, Denrik, Fillix, Jonar, Leodor, Jolisa, Lula, Marlian, Monja, Novia

Key Attribute: Empathy

Specialist Skill: Make a Deal

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** pleasant, always smiling, unnaturally attractive, greasy
- ❑ **Body:** slender, skinny, midget, abnormally fat, no legs
- ❑ **Clothes:** suit, dress, colorful T-shirt, leather coat, hat, gloves

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Wheeler Dealer**
- ❑ **Vicious Creep**
- ❑ **Juicy Info**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... scammed you out of some bullets. He's going to pay for it.
- ... saved you from trouble. What does he want in return?
- ... is your way to the top. Stay close.
- ... is stupid and easy to manipulate.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Fixer Milix, who owes you bullets but won't pay up.
- ❑ The Boss Johammed, who double-crossed you and had Enforcers beat you up.
- ❑ The Gearhead Pontiak, who never delivers what he promises.

You need to protect:

- ❑ The Enforcer Jonats. You need him and he needs you.
- ❑ The Stalker Yassan, because of the loot he can find in the Zone.
- ❑ The Boss Marlotte, who is your protector in the Ark.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ To make a deal big enough to give you bullets to last a lifetime.
- ❑ To one day become a boss and get a gang of your own.

GEAR

You start the game with 2D6 bullets, 2D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water.

Choose one of the following starting weapons:

scrap knife, brass knuckles, scrap derringer (all are light weapons). You can buy extra gear with your bullets.

DOG HANDLER

If there's something the Ark is not in short supply of, it's wild mutts. Unlike you mutants, the dogs breed constantly and survive by feeding on refuse and – when needed – each other. You can't even remember how your sorry excuse for a dog became yours, but now it's worth more to you than any mutant. You live in a symbiotic mutual dependency – you give your dog grub, and it will tear the jugular off anyone who stands in your way.



Typical Names: Finn, Jony, Mohan, Montiak, Rasper, Anny, Brie, Krinnel, Linna, Sofin

Dog Names: Grim, Grock, Fingo

Key Attribute: Agility

Specialist Skill: Sic a Dog

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** hairless, scarred, pastry pale, unblinking, disfigured
- ❑ **Body:** wiry, scrawny, short, hunched
- ❑ **Clothes:** overalls, padded jacket, leather jacket, hoodie, heavy boots

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Bloodhound**
- ❑ **Fight Dog**
- ❑ **Mutant's Best Friend**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... is disliked by your dog. And therefore, by you as well.
- ... thinks he is all that. Idiot.
- ... clearly dislikes you and your dog.
- ... is the object of your secret desires.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Fixer Sixter, who has seen you cry and needs to die.
- ❑ The Enforcer Jonats, who kicked your last dog to death.
- ❑ The Boss Marlotte, who tries to control you.

You need to protect:

- ❑ The Boss Johammed, who gives you and your dog grub.
- ❑ The Chronicler Astrina, who loves you but won't admit it.
- ❑ Your dog. Her life is worth that of ten of those lousy mutants.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ To kill the next mutant who looks at you sideways.
- ❑ For the one you desire to feel the same way about you.
- ❑ To leave the Ark with your dog and find a better life elsewhere.

GEAR

You start the game with D6 bullets, D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water.

Choose one of the following starting weapons: bicycle chain, scrap knife, slingshot, scrap rifle. You can buy extra gear with your bullets.



CHRONICLER

Everything must be recorded. All the People does must be taken note of, nothing forgotten. The Elder has been saying that as long as you can remember. The most gifted among you he made Chroniclers, tasked with writing down the fate of the People in yellowed notebooks. You have filled many books by now. The Elder will soon be gone – but you won't betray your pledge to him.

Typical Names: Erister, Olias, Maxim, Silas, Victon, Amara, Danova, Johalin, Hanneth, Miri

Key Attribute: Empathy

Specialist Skill: Inspire

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** sickly pale skin, hairless head, friendly face, piercing eyes, serious
- ❑ **Body:** skinny, hunchback, abnormally tiny, gnarled
- ❑ **Clothes:** worn coverall with a number on it, raincoat, worn suit, covered by paraphernalia from the Old Age.

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Bonesaw**
- ❑ **Agitator**
- ❑ **Performer**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... is the hero of your story, but doesn't know it.
- ... doesn't understand his own good, and needs to be saved.
- ... is a threat to the entire People.
- ... will die soon. It's only a matter of time.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Chronicler Davin, whose lies the People love listening to.
- ❑ The Boss Marlotte, who is an uncivilized barbarian.
- ❑ The Stalker Kara, who refused to be the hero of your story.

You need to protect:

- ❑ Your worn notebook.
- ❑ The Boss Johammed, who wants what's best for the People.
- ❑ The Gearhead Pontiak. His talents are needed in the Dawnworld.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ For the Ark to become a place of culture and learning.
- ❑ To write the great story of how the People finds Eden.
- ❑ To bring children to the People and teach a daughter or son all they need to know about the Dawnworld.

GEAR

You start the game with D6 bullets, D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water.

You get no weapons for free, but you can buy gear with your bullets.

BOSS

Human civilization may have collapsed, but the world hasn't ended equally for all. Some lead and others follow - now as in the Old Age. You lead. Through intrigue, manipulation and naked violence you have convinced a gang of mutants to follow you as their leader. That doesn't mean your life is simple - there is always another Boss who wants to break you or some underling who wants to take your place.



Typical Names: Augustian, Kristor, Maximon, Mohamin, Oskartian, Brik-toria, Elona, Gunitt, Natara, Bristin

Key Attribute: Wits

Specialist Skill: Command

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ☐ **Face:** moon face, scarred face, hairless, greasy hair, watery eyes
- ☐ **Body:** standing upright, short, abnormally fat, has no legs and needs to be carried
- ☐ **Clothes:** suit, dress, protective coverall, fur coat, hat, jewelry

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ☐ **Commander**
- ☐ **Gunslingers**
- ☐ **Racketeer**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... is your right hand, who you trust with your life.
- ... stole from you, and thinks you don't know.
- ... is a useful tool.
- ... dared to defy you, and needs to pay for it.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ☐ The Boss Marlotte, who is your worst rival.
- ☐ The Enforcer Jonats, who refuses to join your gang.
- ☐ The Stalker Kara. She led you into the Zone and tried to kill you.

You need to protect:

- ☐ The Fixer Sixter, who runs your business.
- ☐ The Chronicler Astrina, you want her to write an epic about you.
- ☐ The Enforcer Elon, who is a human shield protecting you from your enemies.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ☐ To eliminate all of your rivals and become the ruler of the Ark.
- ☐ To build a new and better civilization in the Dawnworld.
- ☐ To one day be relieved of all responsibilities and finally be free.

GEAR

You start the game with 2D6 bullets, 2D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water.

Choose one of the following starting weapons:

spiked bat, scrap knife, scrap pistol. You can buy extra gear with your bullets.

SLAVE

It feels good to be a slave. To know your place. To have a purpose. Not having to choose your own path, doing your owner's bidding. To make her proud. And still. Somewhere, deep inside, you have a dream of a new place, a new life. Where everything could be different.



Typical Names: Dink, Fils, Hent, Mart, Wilo, Alia, Eria, Henny, Kim, Lin

Key Attribute: Strength

Specialist Skill: Shake it Off

APPEARANCE

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ **Face:** expressionless, disfigured, rough, dead eyes, hairless
- ❑ **Body:** powerful, muscular, skinny, hunchback, ape-like
- ❑ **Clothes:** none, chains, torn T-shirt, dirty coverall

TALENTS

Choose one, you can learn more later. Talents are explained in Chapter 4.

- ❑ **Cynic**
- ❑ **Rebel**
- ❑ **Resilient**

RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ... is your owner. His will is your law. For now.
- ... wants to hurt your owner. Keep an eye on him.
- ... treats you like garbage.
- ... is your ticket to freedom. Stay close.

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

You hate:

- ❑ The Boss Johammed, your previous owner who always tormented you.
- ❑ The Enforcer Elon, who beats you whenever he gets the chance.
- ❑ The Fixer Milix, who promised you freedom but let you down.

You need to protect:

- ❑ The Fixer Sixter. You feed him secrets about your owner.
- ❑ The Enforcer Jonats, who gives you some grub now and then.
- ❑ The Slave Eriel. The people at the bottom need to stick together.

YOUR BIG DREAM

Choose from the options below or decide for yourself.

- ❑ To rebel, kill all of the Bosses and free all Slaves.
- ❑ Nothing but to please your owner and make him proud.
- ❑ To escape the misery in the Ark and find a better life elsewhere.

GEAR

You start the game with no bullets, D6 rations of grub and D6 rations of water.

Choose one of the following starting weapons: spiked bat, bicycle chain, slingshot.



03

SKILLS

Roleplaying is a conversation. The GM sets the scene, you describe what you do, the GM tells you how NPCs react – then you respond, and so on – back and forth. The story grows one step at a time. But the world of *Mutant: Year Zero* is a desperate place inhabited by desperate people. Sooner or later things will come to a head, a point of no return, a conflict that cannot be settled by just talking it through. Then it's time to bring out the dice and use one of your *skills*.

ROLLING DICE

There are twelve basic skills in this game. Any mutant can use these. Furthermore, every role has one unique thirteenth skill. Every skill is connected to one of the four attributes – Strength, Agility, Wits and Empathy. Skills are measured in skill levels, from 0 to 5.

♣ MEANS SUCCESS

When you use a skill, first describe what your character does or says. Then, grab a number of Skill Dice (green) equal to your skill level, and a number of Base Dice (yellow) equal to the current value of the attribute connected to the skill. If you are using the right tool, you also get a number of Gear Dice (black). Then just roll all the dice together.

THE BASIC SKILLS

- Endure (Strength)
- Force (Strength)
- Fight (Strength)
- Sneak (Agility)
- Escape (Agility)
- Shoot (Agility)
- Scout (Wits)
- Comprehend (Wits)
- Know the Zone (Wits)
- Sense Emotion (Empathy)
- Manipulate (Empathy)
- Heal (Empathy)

For your action to succeed, you must roll at least one ♣ symbol – if not, your action fails. If you roll more than one ♣, you can perform stunts (page 48 and forward).

The ☞ Symbol: On the Base Dice, the “one” is replaced by the symbol ☞. These have no effect on this first roll – only count them when you push your roll (page 44).

ROLLING WITHOUT SKILL LEVEL

You can always roll for a skill, even if your skill level is zero – just roll Base Dice for the attribute, plus any Gear Dice. The exception to this rule are the roles' specialist skills – to use these, you need at least skill level 1.

EXAMPLE

Krin spots some Zone-Ghouls in a ruined house. She wants to Sneak closer. Krin has Agility 5 and a Sneak skill level of 2, which means she gets to roll five Base Dice and two Skill Dice.

THE ART OF FAILURE

If you roll no , something goes wrong. You're now at the GM's mercy. The only thing she *can't* say is "nothing happens". Failure should always have consequences. For each skill listed below, there are guidelines for what failure can mean, but the final decision is up to the GM. It could be that you suffer trauma, lose something valuable, need to make a detour, or face a new threat of some kind. Sounds harsh? You have a final lifeline if you really want to avoid failing – you can push your roll.

Conflicts: In conflicts (Chapter 6), a failed roll doesn't need to have very severe consequences in itself. It's usually enough of a consequence that your attack misses the enemy – making it his turn to act and get back at you. The GM *can* impose additional consequences of a failed roll even in conflicts though – such as your missed gunshot hitting someone other than who you were aiming for.

EXAMPLE

Despite her seven dice, Krin rolls no . She stumbles on a piece of wreckage, and the sound alerts the Zone-Ghouls. They shriek in anger and charge at her!

ROLLS WITHOUT SKILL

If an action you want to perform in the game does not fit any skill, you and the GM should consider if this really is a situation worth a dice roll. The GM can just make a quick judgement call and move on. If you still feel dice should be rolled, the GM

USING NORMAL DICE

If you don't have access to the custom dice for *Mutant: Year Zero*, you can use normal six-sided dice instead – preferably of three different colors.

For Base Dice, count ones as  and sixes as .

For Skill Dice, count ones normally but sixes as .

For Gear Dice, count ones as  and sixes as .

decides what attribute is most useful in the situation, and you roll only Base Dice.

PUSHING YOUR ROLL

If you are desperate to succeed, you can *push* your roll. That means you grab all dice that didn't come up with a ,  or , and roll them again. You get a new shot at rolling . You can never push dice that show  or  – they stay as they were on the table.

(If you're using normal dice, you can push Base Dice and Gear Dice that show 2-5, and Skill Dice that show 1-5.)

Usually, you would only push a roll if you failed it – although you can push a roll even if you did get  in your first roll, to get more of them to perform stunts. Pushing a roll is not without risk – read more about that below.

How a pushed roll plays out in story terms depends on what skill you are using. It can take the form of a great physical exertion, total mental focus or emotional strain.

Gear Dice: If you push a roll, you must also push any Gear Dice (page 46).

Only Once: You can only push your roll once. If you don't succeed on your second try you are done for, all you can do is take the hit and suffer the consequences. There is one exception to this rule: fully automatic fire (page 86).

☢ MUTATES YOU

When you push yourself this hard there is a risk that you will exhaust yourself in the process – even to the point of breaking. When you push a roll you suffer one point of *trauma* to the attribute used for every ☢ you have rolled. All ☢ count, even the ones in your first roll, before you re-roll. How trauma works, and how you recover from it, is explained in Chapter 6.

But there is an upside too. Pushing yourself to the limit of your ability can release powerful mutant energies in your mind or body. When you push a roll, you also get one Mutation Point (MP) for every point of trauma suffered (that is, equal to the

number of ☢ rolled). You need MP to activate your mutations (Chapter 5).

In short – to connect with your mutant powers you need to push so hard you risk hurting yourself – but if you do you’ll be able to command unstoppable powers...

EXAMPLE

The Enforcer Hugust wants to beat up Sixter, a Fixer. Hugust rolls three Skill Dice (skill level 3 in Fight) and five Base Dice (Strength 5). He gets two ☢ but no ☢. If he chooses to push the roll, he knows he will suffer at least two points of damage (trauma to Strength) – the ☢ he rolled stay on the table. Hugust takes the hit and rerolls six dice. He gets one ☢ but also one more ☢. Hugust succeeds, but suffers three points of damage himself and gets three Mutation Points. He hits Sixter in the face, but strains a muscle in the process.



DESCRIBE YOUR ACTION

Roleplaying is all about the story. Just stating what skill you use and to what end is not enough. First, set out what you want to achieve, so that everyone around the table knows what’s at stake. Then, roll the dice. If you succeed, interpret the result and explain what happens. Describe what your character does in some detail; what he says or even what he thinks. If you push your roll, describe what you do. Do it right away, don’t wait for a prompt from the GM – but if your roll fails, then it’s her job to describe the consequences.



FIGHT

ONE SHOT ONLY

As a general rule, you only get one shot at particular action. When the dice have been rolled – and pushed, if you so choose – you can't roll again to achieve the exact same thing. You'll have to try something else or wait until the circumstances have changed in some major way. Or let another PC try.

In conflicts (Chapter 6), the GM should be more forgiving. You can attack the same enemy over and over if he won't go down – it's enough if you describe what you do differently this time.

NPCs AND SKILLS

NPCs use skills just like PCs do. The GM rolls dice for them, they can push their rolls, suffer trauma and get Mutation Points just like PCs. But the GM should only roll for actions that directly affect a PC – for example, when the NPC is Fighting or Caring

for a PC. In other cases, the GM should generally just decide the outcome of the action, without rolling dice.

GEAR BONUS

To improve your chance of success, you can use *gear*. A piece of gear can be a baseball bat to hit someone with, a rope to climb with or a pair of sunglasses from the Old Age to impress someone with.

A useful object will give you a Gear Bonus – a number of Gear Dice to roll (the black ones). You can see your Gear Bonus on the weapons tables on pages 86 and 87, and on the general gear list at the end of the book.

You roll your Gear Dice together with your Base Dice and Skill Dice when you perform an action. This way, you improve your chances of rolling  and succeeding.

Normally, you can only use one piece of gear at a time. You can't get Gear Bonus for the same roll from more than one object.

GEAR BREAKS

When you use a piece of gear and you push your roll (above), the gear might get damaged. When you push a roll, you must reroll all Gear Dice that don't show  or  (one or six on a normal die). For every Gear Die that shows  after you have pushed the roll, the Gear Bonus decreases by one. The gear has been damaged and is not as effective anymore. Gear Dice *won't* give you Mutation Points – only Base Dice do that.

If the Gear Bonus reaches zero the gear no longer works at all. If it's an artifact, it also won't give a bonus to the DEV levels of the Ark (page 113).

Fixing Gear: Gear can be fixed by Gearheads (page 55). It takes a few hours and a roll for Jury-Rig. If successful, the piece of gear is repaired and the Gear Bonus fully restored. If the roll fails, the Gear Bonus is permanently reduced to the current level. If the Gear Bonus is currently zero and the repair roll fails, the gear is permanently destroyed. So don't let just any hack tinker with your gear!

EXAMPLE

Sixter draws his scrap gun and fires at Hugust. Sixter has Agility 3, Shoot skill level 1 and the gun has Gear Bonus +1. He gets to roll three Base Dice, one Skill Die and one Gear Die. He rolls no  but one . He chooses to push the roll, knowing that will break the gun. Now he rolls a  and hits, but the gun's Gear Bonus is reduced to zero.

MODIFICATION

Sometimes external factors help you to succeed. This gives you extra Skill Dice to roll. On other occasions, something hampers your action. In those cases, you roll fewer Skill Dice than normal. Either way, such adjustments are called *modifications*.

Modification +1 means you roll one extra Skill Die, +2 means you roll two extra Skill Dice, and so on. Modification -1 means you roll one Skill Die fewer than normal, -2 means two fewer, and so on.

Modification only ever affects Skill Dice - never Base Dice or Gear Dice.

If several modifications apply to the same roll, add them together. Modification +2 and -1 added together gives you a modification of +1.

Negative Dice: If, after modification, you end up with exactly zero Skill Dice, you just roll your Base Dice (and any Gear Dice). If you go below zero, you must roll this negative number of Skill Dice. Any  on negative Skill Dice eliminate an equal number of  on Base or Gear Dice. If you push your roll you must reroll negative Skill Dice too (except the ones showing  of course).

You can get modifications in two ways: through the difficulty of the action itself, or through help from others.

DIFFICULTY

Normally, the GM doesn't assess how difficult an action is. You only roll dice in challenging situations - period. But sometimes, the GM might want to underscore that external factors help or hinder an action. Use this table for guidance:

DIFFICULTY	MODIFICATION
A Breeze	+3
Simple	+2
Easy	+1
Normal	±0
Demanding	-1
Hard	-2
Insane	-3

There are also cases when modifications are imposed by the rules, like when you aim carefully with a gun (page 85), shoot at long range or if you're in a bad bargaining position when trying to Manipulate someone (page 82). Some talents (Chapter 4) can also give you a positive modification in certain situations.

CHANCE OF SUCCESS

When you roll lots of dice it can be hard to get a feel for your chance of success. The table below shows the probability, in percentages, of making a roll with 1 to 10 dice. The third column shows the chance of success if you push the roll.

NUMBER OF DICE	CHANCE OF SUCCESS	PUSHED ROLL
1	17%	29%
2	31%	50%
3	42%	64%
4	52%	74%
5	60%	81%
6	67%	87%
7	72%	90%
8	77%	93%
9	81%	95%
10	84%	96%

EXAMPLE

Sixter has locked himself into his trailer. Hugust wants to push the entire trailer into the dirty creek nearby. Hugust has Strength 5 and Force skill level 1, but the GM says the action is hard and gives Hugust a -2 modification. Accordingly, he rolls five Base Dice and one negative Skill Die. He rolls one  on the Base Dice but also on the Skill Die! This  eliminates the other, and the roll fails. Hugust needs to consider whether it's worth it to push the roll.

HELP FROM OTHERS

Other PCs or NPCs around you can help you succeed. They have to say so up front, before you roll your dice. It also has to make sense in terms of the story – they have to be physically present and be able to support your action in a direct way. The GM has final say.

For every person helping you, you get a +1 modification. No more than three people can help you make the roll, which means your maximum modification for help from others is +3.

Specialist Skills: You can *not* get help when using your specialist skill. When using a specialist skill, you are always on your own.

Conflicts: If you help someone in a conflict (Chapter 6) you lose your own action in the turn. You can still perform a *maneuver*, however (page 80).

Chroniclers have the specialist skill Inspire, which is also used to help others perform actions. See more on page 59.

NPCs can help each other in the same way as PCs. Letting NPCs act in groups rather than individually is often a useful way to handle a large number of NPCs in conflicts.

EXAMPLE

Krin and her friends are back out in the Zone. Krin wants to climb into a ruined house, where she thinks there might be artifacts. Hugust helps her up, and Krin gets a +1 modification to her roll.

SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS

You and the other PCs can *not* help each other when you're acting *simultaneously*, that is, performing the same action side by side. Examples are struggling your way through a fierce snowstorm (Endure) or sneaking up on a group of Zone-Ghouls (Sneak). In this case, you all roll separate rolls. If you want to help someone, you can't perform the action yourself.

Stunts: If you roll several  and get stunts, some skills let you use them to help a friend. They then don't need to roll the dice themselves. They can even receive this help if they have already rolled and failed.

BASIC SKILLS

In this section, the twelve basic skills which all PCs and NPCs can use, are described. For each skill, you get short descriptions of what failure and success mean. These should not be taken too literally – you need to adapt them to the situation at hand.

Stunts: Furthermore, most skills list stunts – bonus effects – that you get if you roll more than one . Every extra  after the first one gives you one stunt.

ENDURE (STRENGTH)

When the Zone takes its toll, when your legs won't carry you any more, you roll for Endure. For example, this skill is used when you are traveling in rough weather or when you suffer severely cold conditions (page 93).

Failure: You just can't take it anymore. You have to rest, if just for a couple of hours. But what if some predator spots you?

Success: You manage to push on, ignoring the pain just a little longer.

Stunt: For every  you roll, you can help a friend (PC or NPC) in the same situation as you. He can keep moving, and doesn't have to roll himself. You

can even choose this stunt when you only roll one ☢ – that means you help your friend while sacrificing yourself.

FORCE (STRENGTH)

When wreckage or debris block your way and you need to push or lift something heavy, roll for Force. Use this skill for any feat of strength.

Failure: It's just too heavy. You need to find another way. And what if the noise you made attracted unwanted company?

Success: With a groan, you push through and get whatever it was out of your way.

Stunts: If you roll extra ☢ beyond the first, choose one of these stunts:

- ❑ You push or throw the object with great force. One target of your choice within Arm's Length suffers damage equal to the number of extra ☢.
- ❑ If applicable in the situation, you find or reveal a hidden passage or object. The GM decides what it is.

FIGHT (STRENGTH)

The world of *Mutant: Year Zero* is a brutal place. Sometimes, you have no choice but to fight for your life, eye to eye. Roll for this skill when you attack someone in close combat. Read more about conflicts in Chapter 6.

Failure: You stumble and miss. Now it's your opponent's turn...

Success: You hit, and inflict weapon damage (page 87) on your opponent.

Stunts: For every extra ☢ you roll, choose one of these stunts:

- ❑ You inflict one more point of damage. You can choose this stunt multiple times, if you roll several ☢.
- ❑ You subdue or tire your enemy. He suffers one point of fatigue (page 88).
- ❑ You increase your initiative score by 2 (page 80), taking effect next turn.
- ❑ You knock or pull a weapon or other object from your opponent. You choose which. During a conflict, picking up a dropped object counts as a maneuver (page 80).
- ❑ Your opponent falls to the ground or is pushed back, for example through a doorway or over a cliff.

ENDURE





SHOOT

- ❑ You hold the opponent in a grapple. He needs to successfully Fight you to break free, and can't perform any other action (or any maneuver) until he has done so – or until you are broken or let him go.

Weapons: When you Fight you can use weapons such as clubs, knives and spears. Read more on page 83.

Defense: When someone Fights you, you can try to *defend* yourself. When you defend, you also roll for Fight, with a specific set of stunts available. Read more on page 84.

SNEAK (AGILITY)

Often enough, it's wiser to avoid conflict and instead Sneak by your enemies. Use this skill when you try to move without being noticed, when you set up an ambush or when you attempt a sneak attack (page 81).

Failure: Your enemy sees you or hears you, and the element of surprise is lost.

Success: You move like a shadow in the night, noticed by no one.

Stunt: When setting up a sneak attack, you get a +1 modification to your first attack for every extra 🎲 rolled after the first.

MOVE (AGILITY)

When the heat is on and you are trying to dodge the jaws of death, you need to keep a cool head and Move fast. Roll for Move when you want to get out of a conflict or some other hazardous situation. Read more about how this skill is used in conflicts in Chapter 6.

Failure: You are pinned down, backed into a corner with no way out. Get ready for a fight.

Success: You get out of the sticky situation, and live to fight another day.

Stunt: For every 🎲 you roll, you can help a friend (PC or NPC) in the same spot of trouble as you. He makes it out, and doesn't have to roll himself. You can even choose this stunt when you only roll one 🎲 – that means you help you friend while sacrificing yourself.

Acrobatics: Also use the Move skill when balancing, jumping or climbing. Failure in these cases can be fatal!

SHOOT (AGILITY)

If you have a gun, and a bullet to load it with, you can take down your enemy from a distance without getting your hands bloody. You can barter for Jury-Rigged guns in the Ark (see the list at the back of the book), and more powerful weapons from the Old Age can be found in the Zone.

Failure: The shot misses your target. Maybe it hits something else? And the sound of gunfire could attract unwelcome attention...

Success: You hit and inflict weapon damage (page 87) on your target.

Stunts: For every extra ☢ you roll, choose one of these stunts:

- ❑ You inflict one more point of damage. You can choose this stunt multiple times, if you roll several ☢.
- ❑ You pin down your enemy. He suffers one point of fatigue (page 88).
- ❑ You increase your initiative score by 2 (page 80), effective as of the next turn.
- ❑ Your target drops a weapon or another handheld object. You choose which.
- ❑ Your opponent falls to the ground or is pushed back, for example through a doorway or over a cliff.

Reloading: Scrap guns are usually loaded with just one bullet at a time. When you have fired it, you'll need to reload before you can fire again. Reloading is a *maneuver* in conflicts. Some scrap guns (page 55) and artifacts have magazines with several bullets, letting you fire again and again without reloading.

SCOUT (WITS)

In the Zone you need to keep your eyes open if you want to stay alive. When you spot something in the distance, you roll for Scout in order to learn more about it. It can be a place, a person, or a creature.

Failure: You can't really make out what it is, or you mistake it for something else (the GM feeds you false information).

Success: You are able to make out what it is, and if it appears like a threat to you or not. The exact information you get is up to the GM.

Stunts: For every extra ☢ you roll, you get to know the answer to one of these questions:

- ❑ Is it coming for me?
- ❑ Are there more of them close by?
- ❑ How do I get in/past/away?

DON'T ROLL TO SPOT HIDDEN THINGS

Don't roll for Scout when searching for hidden objects close to you, such as secret doors or hidden clues. If you describe searching in the right place, the GM should simply let you find whatever is there. No dice roll is needed.

Comment: Only roll to Scout when you are *actively* looking at or for something. You don't roll when another person or creature is sneaking up on you – instead, they roll to Sneak.

COMPREHEND (WITS)

The world after the Apocalypse is a strange, incomprehensible place for most mutants. The knowledge of the Old Age has been worn out, just like the crumbling ruins of the dead cities. Roll for Comprehend





COMPREHEND

when you want to read an old text, know what a particular ruin was used for, or understand and use an artifact whose DEV level is higher than the Ark's. Read more about using artifacts in Chapter 7.

Failure: The object of your study makes no sense to you at all, or you are mistaken (in this case, the GM can feed you false information about the object):

Success: You understand the nature or function of the object. If it's an artifact, you can use it.

Stunts: For every rolled beyond the first, you can teach someone else how to use the artifact.

KNOW THE ZONE (WITS)

The zonelands beyond the Ark's borders are unknown wastes to most of the People. But there are some individuals – mostly Stalkers and some daring Chroniclers – who have ventured out and seen what is out there. Roll for Know the Zone when you encounter some creature or phenomenon in the Zone and want to know stuff about it. The GM will give you a modification depending on how rare it is (Chapter 13).

Failure: You have no, or the wrong, idea. The GM can feed you false, or a mix of true and false, information (in this way, you will know that you have failed your roll, but not what information to trust.)

Success: You know what it is, and its basic traits or effects.

Stunts: For every extra you roll, you get the answer to one of these questions about the creature or phenomenon:

- How can it hurt me?
- How can I hurt it?

SENSE EMOTION (EMPATHY)

To be able to read another mutant like an open book can be a mightier weapon than even a firearm from the Old Age. Roll for Sense Emotion when you want to know an NPC's mood or intent toward you. You need to be within Short distance (page 80) and it takes a few minutes.

Failure: You fail to read, or misread, the NPC. The GM can feed you false, or a mix of true and false, information.

Success: The GM must reveal the NPC's most powerful emotion at this point in time – hate, fear, contempt, love, etc.

MANIPULATE



Stunts: For every extra ☢ you roll, you get the answer to one of these yes/no questions about the NPC:

- ❑ Is he telling the truth?
- ❑ Does he want to hurt me?
- ❑ Does he want something from me?

Strangers: If the NPC is not of the People you get a -1 modification to your roll – strangers are harder to read.

MANIPULATE (EMPATHY)

Lie, argue, threaten, seduce, or just reason sensibly. There are many ways to get another mutant to see things your way. The GM will give you a modification depending on your *bargaining position* (page 82).

Failure: He won't listen and he won't do what you want. He might start to dislike you, or even attack you if provoked.

Success: He reluctantly does what you want, but wants something in return. The GM decides what this is, but it must be something you can reasonably do. It is up to you whether to accept the deal or not.

Stunts: Extra ☢ on your roll mean you sow fear and doubt in your opponent's heart. He suffers one point of doubt (page 88) for every additional ☢ you roll after the first one. If he is broken by doubt, he does what you want without demanding a return favor.

Being Manipulated: NPCs and other PCs can Manipulate you. If their roll succeeds, you must offer them a deal of some sort. It's then up to the GM (or the other player) to accept or decline it.

HEAL (EMPATHY)

When you can't take it anymore, when the Zone has broken you and you've bitten the irradiated dirt, you need friends to help you back up. The Heal skill can be used in two ways:

Mend the Broken: A person who has suffered enough trauma to reduce any of the four attributes to zero is broken, and can't carry on. If you successfully Heal a broken person, he gets back to his feet and immediately recovers a number of attribute points equal to the number of ☢ you rolled. No resources are needed for this recovery. A failed roll has no further effect.

Save a Life: The most important use of the Heal skill is to give first aid and stabilize critical injuries – which might save your patient's life. A failed roll in this situation could kill him, however, so be careful. Read more about this on page 90.



SPECIALIST SKILLS

Beyond the twelve basic skills, each role has one unique specialist skill. These are described below.

THE ENFORCER'S SKILL: INTIMIDATE (STRENGTH)

Everyone in the Ark knows you're bad news. Often you don't even need to hit anyone to make them back off. You know exactly which buttons to push to subdue them – or provoke them. Roll for Intimidate when you use your sheer physical presence to get someone to do what you want. The rules for bargaining position (page 82) apply, just like for the Manipulate skill.

Failure: He won't be pushed around by a bully like you. He might even attack you now, or hold the grudge for the opportune moment.

Success: Your opponent must choose – either attack you right now (by Fighting, Shooting or using a mutation), or bow to your will.

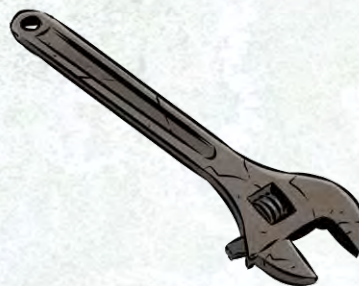
Stunt: Additional ♣ mean you strike fear into your opponent's heart. He suffers one point of doubt (page 88) for every additional ♣ you roll on top of the first one.

THE GEARHEAD'S SKILL: JURY-RIG (WITS)

The Zone is your own personal promised land. Everywhere things from the Old Age lie about, things you can use to build something new. You constantly pick up odd bits of scrap, and at any point in time you can sit down for a few hours to Jury-Rig a working contraption. Some examples:

- ❑ A scrap gun (page 87).
- ❑ Four arrows.
- ❑ Scrap armor, Armor Rating 3 (page 88).
- ❑ A shield, made from a road sign. Armor Rating 3.

- ❑ A Rot suit. Protection Rating 3 against the Rot (page 126).
- ❑ Cold suit. Gives you Gear Bonus +3 to Endure severe cold.
- ❑ An explosive charge, Blast Power 6 (page 94).
- ❑ A flaming torch.
- ❑ A lamp, lit by booze (one dose per hour) or the Battery artifact.
- ❑ Binoculars. Gives you Gear Bonus +1 to Scout.
- ❑ A foghorn. Can be heard for miles around.
- ❑ Destillator. Produces D6 doses of booze in a few hours.
- ❑ Camouflage. Gives you Gear Bonus +2 to Sneak.
- ❑ Scrap raft. Can carry up to five mutants over water.
- ❑ A cart. Can carry plenty of scrap and gear.
- ❑ Balloon. Can lift one person a few hundred meters through the air, until the hot air runs out.
- ❑ Scrap cannon (page 87). Every shot requires an explosive charge.



Components: Before rolling to Jury-Rig your device, you must describe what parts you use and how you put them together. Choose freely, as long as you use simple, broken items from the Old Age. To hold the device together you can use steel wire, string, duct tape or rusty nails and bolts. What your device is made of has no technical effect on the game, but describing it creates immersion.

Requirements: Some things are harder to build than others. For more advanced devices, The GM can set one or more requirements:

- ❑ The device will take several days to finish.
- ❑ You need a particular piece of scrap, that you don't have. But you know who does...
- ❑ You need a certain artifact to make the device work.

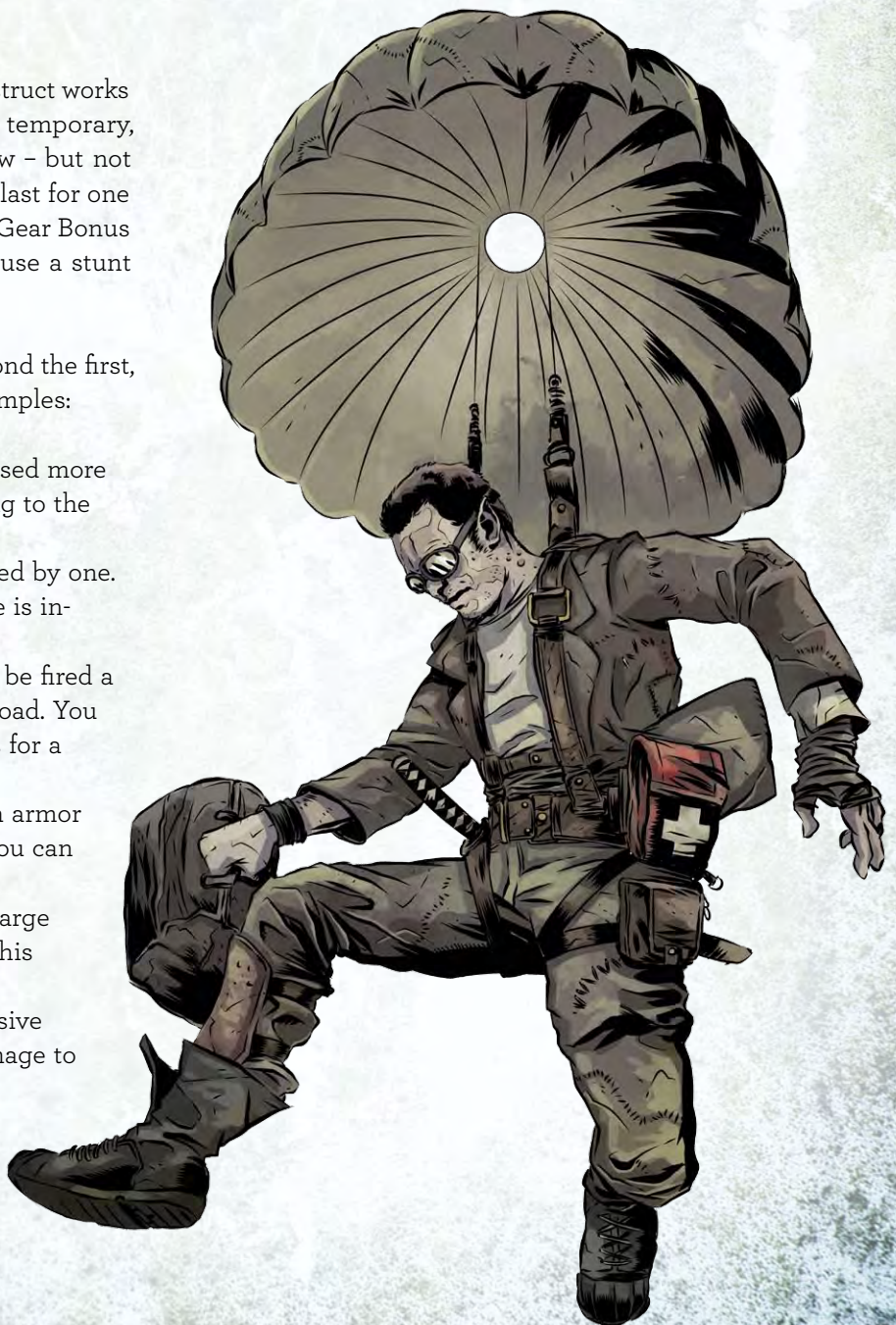
Failure: If you fail the Jury-Rig roll, bad things happen. The device will fall apart when you really need it, or even blow up in your face. You can't roll for the exact same device again, unless you find new scrap to use. Alternatively, the GM can set a new precondition.

Success: If you make the roll, your construct works – once. Most Jury-Rigged devices are temporary, made to solve a problem here and now – but not to last. Normally, your device will only last for one action or use, then it will fall apart (the Gear Bonus automatically drops to zero). You can use a stunt to make it last longer (below).

Stunts: For every extra 🎲 you roll beyond the first, you get to choose one stunt. Some examples:

- ❑ The device is durable and can be used more than once. It breaks down according to the normal gear rules (page 46).
- ❑ The device's Gear Bonus is increased by one.
- ❑ If it's a weapon, its weapon damage is increased by one.
- ❑ A gun gets an extra barrel and can be fired a second time before you need to reload. You can choose this stunt several times for a multi-barrel gun.
- ❑ The Armor/Protection Rating of an armor or a Rot suit is increased by one. You can choose this stunt multiple times.
- ❑ The Blast Power of an explosive charge is increased by 3. You can choose this stunt multiple times.
- ❑ You fit deadly shrapnel to an explosive charge, increasing the weapon damage to 2 (page 94).
- ❑ A scrap raft can carry twice as many people.

Repairs: You can do more than just build things – you can also fix things that are broken. With a successful Jury-Rig roll and few hours work you can repair an object with reduced Gear Bonus. If you succeed, the Gear Bonus is completely restored. If you fail, the Gear Bonus is permanently reduced to the current value. You can repair an object whose Gear Bonus has been reduced to zero – but if you fail the roll, the object is permanently destroyed.





Vehicles: Some Gearheads have a special passion for cars, motorcycles and other vehicles from the Old Age. Their biggest dream is to find a vehicle, repair it, and rework it into a proper Zone ride. How vehicles work is explained in Chapter 6.

If you find a vehicle in decent shape, you can repair it with a successful Jury-Rig roll. With a second, separate roll, you can custom build the vehicle in a number of ways. For every , choose one stunt below. Each of these stunts be chosen several times:

- ❑ Souped-up engine. The Gear Bonus of the vehicle is increased by one.
- ❑ Spikes and blades. The weapon damage of the vehicle (normally 1) is increased by one.
- ❑ Armor. The Armor Value of the vehicle is increased by 3 (only for cars).

You can only roll once to improve a vehicle. If you rework it again, all stunts from the previous roll are lost.

Mounted Weapons: You can fit a scrap cannon or any other weapon to a vehicle. It requires no die roll, beyond building the weapon itself.

EXAMPLE

The Gearhead Naphta wants to build a sled to help her group escape across the frozen waters of the Zone. The GM decides this construct doesn't have any special requirements, so Naphta can roll right away. She has Wits 5 and Jury-Rig skill level 2, so she rolls five Base Dice and two Skill Dice. She rolls two  and gets to choose a stunt. She makes the sled durable – robust enough to last for a few rides.

THE STALKER'S SKILL: FIND THE PATH (AGILITY)

Any fool can walk into the Zone. But if you don't know what you're doing you'll soon end up a corpse, bones gnawed clean by the beasts of the wasteland. Stalkers are a special breed, loners who went into the Zone and came to know it even as kids. Other mutants in the Ark look at you sideways, fearing you will spread the Rot or just distrust you for being different.

Roll for Find the Path when you go into a new sector of the Zone. Read more about Zone travels in Chapter 8 and, for the GM, in Chapter 13.

Failure: Any NPCs or monsters in the sector spot you before you spot them, and if hostile, they might ambush you (page 56).

Success: You find a safe path and spot any threats in the Zone before they spot you.

Stunts: For every extra  you roll beyond the first, you get to choose one stunt. Each stunt can only be chosen once per roll:

- ❑ You find an artifact in the sector, if it's there to be found. You still might have to struggle to get your hands on it.
- ❑ You can assess the general level of Rot in the sector (page 125).
- ❑ You find D6 bullets, still live.
- ❑ You find D6 rations of grub contaminated by the Rot. It can be edible plants or leftovers from the Old Age. A Zone cook (page 67) can cook the Rot out of the food.
- ❑ You find D6 rations of Rot-free water (rotwater is usually plentiful).
- ❑ The exploration of the sector only takes half the time (page 122).
- ❑ You rush through the sector in a quarter of the time it would take to explore it. You avoid all threats, but the sector does not count as having been explored and you find no artifacts, grub or water in it.



Keep Looking: You usually only roll to explore sectors that you haven't explored before. An explored sector should be considered empty, and contains no threats unless the GM decides otherwise. You can roll for Find a Path to find artifacts, grub and water in a sector that has already been explored, however – as long as you haven't already chosen these stunts. Each new roll takes as long as exploring the sector did in the first place.

Multiple Stalkers: If your group has several Stalkers, only one of you get to roll to Find a Path when you enter a sector. Which one is up to you. If you later roll to find grub, water and artifacts you can all roll individually.

THE FIXER'S SKILL: MAKE A DEAL (EMPATHY)

Hunger, strife and conflict – your livelihood. Earlier, when there was plenty of grub and the Elder looked after you like you were his own children, you were a weak nobody. Now, you have found good use for your talent of seeing people's needs and fulfilling them – for a price. You have dirt on almost everyone in the Ark, and there is hardly anything you can't get your hands on.

The most common use of the Make a Deal skill is to find a contact to get you something you need – be it grub, water, gear or a particular favor.

Failure: You get stonewalled and nobody wants to deal with you. Or worse, you step on somebody's toes and now you're looking over your shoulder...

Success: You know who probably has what you need. If he wants to give it to you is another matter entirely – you need to roleplay this out. Often you'll need to Manipulate someone to get what you want.

Deals on the Side: There is second way to use the Make a Deal skill. You can do business on the side, whenever you have a few hours to spare in the Ark. You can only roll once per session. First, choose what you're trading in and with whom:

- ❑ Deal in grub – where's it from, and who's the buyer?
- ❑ Deal in water – what's the source, and who's the buyer?
- ❑ Deal in scrap – who's the supplier, and who's the buyer?
- ❑ Deal in booze – who distills it and who's the buyer?
- ❑ Act as a courier or negotiator between rival Bosses.
- ❑ Guard something or someone. What, who and why?
- ❑ Steal something. What, from whom, and who want's it?



Answer the above questions with help from the GM. Then, roll to Make a Deal. If you fail, someone ends up feeling cheated by you and you could be in a world of hurt. If you succeed, choose one option for every 🎲 you roll:

- ❑ You gain D6 bullets.
- ❑ You gain D6 rations of grub.
- ❑ You gain 2D6 rations of Rot-free water.
- ❑ You gain 2D6 doses of booze.
- ❑ You get dirt on someone. The GM decides on who, and what the information is, but you are free to make suggestions.

Deals on the side can be handled summarily, just roll the dice and move – as long as you make your roll. If you fail, the consequences could be painful and should be played out in more detail.

THE DOG HANDLER'S SKILL: SIC A DOG (AGILITY)

Your dog is worth more to you than any mutant in the Ark. The bond between you is almost telepathic. You instinctively know what the animal wants, and the dog can always read your state of mind and defends you against any threat.

Stats: This skill works a little differently. Skill level 1 means you have a dog that follows your every lead. The dog has *Strength* 4 and *Agility* 6. You can use the dog in several different ways:

Fighting: Your dog can Fight for you. Use your skill level in Sic a Dog, and the dog's Strength. You can push the roll (risking damage to the dog), but it won't give you any Mutation Points.

To Sic a Dog on you enemy counts as an action, meaning you cannot perform any other action in the same turn. You can perform a *maneuver* in the same turn, however.

Scouting: The dog can Scout for you. Use your skill level in Sic a Dog and your Wits score (the dog doesn't have Wits). You can push the roll normally.

Tracking: Your dog can track a person or a creature, even when there are no obvious tracks to follow. All you need is a fresh scent or some object that has been in possession of the prey recently. Roll to Sic a Dog, using your Wits score. If successful, your dog picks up the trail and can indicate in which direction the prey has gone. For every extra 🐾 you roll, choose one stunt:

- ❑ How far behind (in hours) are you?
- ❑ Is the prey wounded?
- ❑ Is the prey alone?

Damage: An enemy can choose whether to attack you or your dog. The dog suffers and recovers damage just like a mutant. If the dog's Strength reaches zero it dies – something you'll surely make your opponent pay dearly for!

Finding a new mutt in the Ark isn't hard – it takes a few days and a successful Sic a Dig roll to tame a new one. A failed roll will result in a fight. Out in the Zone, wild dogs are less common.

Grub and Water: Your dog is a survivor, eating garbage and drinking rotwater. You don't need to supply its daily grub and water – but you do need to give it extra grub or water to recover its trauma (page 90).

Sympathy: Your dog gives you all the sympathy you need to recover lost Empathy. You don't need the company of another mutant (page 90).



EXAMPLE

Jony wants to Fight the Stalker Yassan and Sics his dog on him. Jony uses his skill level in Sic a Dog (3) and the dog's Strength score (4), meaning he rolls three Skill Dice and four Base Dice. Yassan is hurt but fires back and hits the dog with his scrap gun, causing two points of damage. The dog loses two points of Strength and Jony can feel his rage rising...

THE CHRONICLER'S SKILL: INSPIRE (EMPATHY)

Your mission in life is to witness and record the People's fate in the dawnworld – but also to interfere when needed. When other mutants lose their resolve you can help them find their courage again – and when they stray from the right path, you can guide them back. Roll for Inspire when you wish to help or hinder another person rolling for a skill.

Help: When using this skill, you can give all of your rolled 🐾 to the person you are helping. It counts as if he had rolled them himself, and he simply adds them to the 🐾 he did roll. This effect replaces the normal help effect (modification +1).

Hinder: When you hinder someone, every 🐾 you roll eliminates one 🐾 rolled by your subject. If all of his 🐾 are negated, his action fails. The GM can modify your Inspire roll according to your bargaining position (page 82).

Conflict: In a conflict, you can Inspire whenever someone around you performs an action that you want to help or hinder, as long as you haven't used up your action in the turn yet. Be quick about announcing this, though – you must roll to Inspire before they roll their dice.

Failure: If your roll fails, you get in the way of whatever action you're trying to help or hinder, and can suffer the adverse effects of it. The details are up to the GM.

Literate: Most of the Ark's inhabitants can't read or write, at least not as long the Culture DEV level is low (page 101). Chroniclers are different – dutifully, you have maintained the knowledge of letters, words and numbers, taught to you by the Elder when you were children.

EXAMPLE

Krin is climbing up into a tall ruined building in the Zone, and must roll to Move. The Chronicler Silas Inspires her. He rolls five Basic Dice (Empathy 5) and three skill dice (skill level 3 in Inspire), and gets one 🎲. That's very good news for Krin, who doesn't roll any 🎲 herself. With the encouragement from Silas, she makes the climb.

A little later, Krin wants to Shoot an attacking Zone-Ghoul. Silas wants to stop her believing the conflict can be resolved without shedding blood. He rolls for Inspire, and gets one 🎲. Now, Krin must roll at least two 🎲 to hit the ghoul.

THE BOSS'S SKILL: COMMAND (WITS)

As a Boss, you are never alone. You always have your gang of mutants nearby, ready to rush to your aid. Command works a little differently from other skills.

Size: Your skill level is an indicator of how large your gang is – every level represents about 3–4 members.

Stats: A basic gang mostly consists of Enforcers, and maybe a Dog Handler and a Fixer. The gang members will have typical NPC stats for their roles – see Chapter 9. You can improve their stats with talents (Chapter 4). Try to give all of your gang members roles and names.

Weapons: Your basic gang is armed with clubs and other improvised melee weapons. Their weaponry can also be improved with the Armed Gang talent.

Grub, Water and Bullets: As long as you are in the Ark, your gang members have enough grub and



water to survive. If they have guns, they also have just enough bullets. Out in the Zone, it's another matter – there, you have to provide food, water and bullets for your gang members.

Command: Your gang members are all NPCs, under the GM's control. But you can order them around – all of them or some of them – with the Command skill. Your roll is modified according to the task you

want done the table below, and any other factors the GM finds relevant.

Failure: If your Command roll fails, someone in your gang rebels against you! You'll need to fight him one-on-one, to make an example of what happens to anyone who questions your leadership. If you lose this fight (and live), your gang abandons you. You can find a new gang, but it will take some weeks and a successful Command roll. This process should be at least partly roleplayed out.

Success: If the Command roll succeeds, your gang (or the individual members given the order) performs the task you want. If any of the factors in the table change during the task, you'll need to roll again.

Racketeering: Bosses thrive on the fear of others. You can use the Command skill to demand bullets, grub and other resources from people in the Ark. Decide who your target is, and roll to Command. It takes a few hours, and you can only roll once per session. For every 🎲 you roll, choose what you get from the list below.

- ❑ D6 bullets.
- ❑ D6 rations of grub.
- ❑ 2D6 rations of Rot-free water.
- ❑ 2D6 rations of booze.

You can play out the encounter, or handle it summarily with a dice roll. You don't even have to go

THE COMMAND ROLL

- | | |
|--|----|
| ❑ You offer a significant reward. | +1 |
| ❑ The task has a low risk of harm. | +1 |
| ❑ You will perform the task with them. | +2 |
| ❑ You offer no reward at all | -1 |
| ❑ The task is obviously lethal. | -2 |
| ❑ The gang is outnumbered. | -1 |
| ❑ The gang is outgunned. | -1 |
| ❑ The gang is already hurt. | -1 |
| ❑ The gang is going hungry. | -1 |

yourself, you can send you gang to do your dirty work for you (in this case, use the modifications table above). If the racketeering Command roll fails, something goes wrong. Maybe someone refuses to pay up and attacks you, maybe your gang runs into henchmen of another Boss. Details are up to the GM.

Projects: You can order your gang to work on the People's projects instead of doing the hard labor yourself. Roll to Command instead of the skill listed for the project. Read more about the projects in the Ark in Chapter 7.

THE SLAVE'S SKILL: SHAKE IT OFF (STRENGTH)

It's the Slave's fate in life to endure pain and suffering. As a Slave, you have learnt to shake off the abuse – whether physical or psychological. You can shut out the outside world and let the pain fade away. Roll for Shake it Off any time you suffer trauma, of any kind (page 88). You can't use the skill against trauma suffered when you push a dice roll.

Failure: The pain is just too great, and you can't shut it out. You suffer the full amount of trauma (but no other adverse effect).

Success: For every 🎲 you roll, one point of trauma is eliminated. If all trauma is eliminated, you suffer none at all.

Conflict: You can use the skill any number of times in a turn of a conflict – using the skill does not count as an action or as a maneuver.

EXAMPLE

The Fixer Sixter Manipulates the Slave Eriel to get his way, and gives Eriel one point of doubt. Eriel rolls for Shake it Off and gets one 🎲. She ignores Sixter's words and suffers no doubt.





TALENTS

To get a much needed edge in a world fallen into ruins you must find your own niche, something you and no one else can do. Such special abilities are called *talents*. Talents can affect how you use skills or how you recover from trauma, or even let you do things that are quite simply impossible to others.

STARTING TALENTS

You can choose one talent for your PC at the start of the game. Your role decides which you can choose from – see the role descriptions on pages 26–41.

NEW TALENTS

You can learn new talents by earning Experience Points (page 25). When you have earned five XP, you can trade them in for a new talent. When this happens, you can either choose one more from the three available from the start, or you can pick one from a set of general talents that are available for everyone.

Only Once: As a general rule, you can only choose each talent once, but there are some exceptions. Always write down new talents that you learn on your character sheet.

EXAMPLE

Krin has earned five XP and can learn a new talent.

She picks Flyweight, that gives her an edge in close combat despite her low Strength score.

THE ENFORCER'S TALENTS

❑ BARGE THROUGH

You can Move using Strength instead of Agility.

❑ MEAN STREAK

When you Intimidate someone and give your victim doubt, he suffers one extra point of it.

❑ SUCKER PUNCH

The weapon damage of your unarmed attacks is 2 instead of 1.

THE GEARHEAD'S TALENTS

❑ INVENTOR

You get a +2 modification when you use Jury-Rig to create a new device (page 54) – but not when you repair something.

❑ MOTORHEAD

You get a +1 modification when you use a vehicle to ram someone (Fight) or to escape from a conflict (Move). You also get a +1 when you Jury-Rig to repair or modify a vehicle (page 56).

❑ TINKERER

You get a +2 modification when you Jury-Rig to repair a piece of gear – but not when you build something new.

THE STALKER'S TALENTS

❑ MONSTER HUNTER

You get a +2 modification when you Scout a beast of any kind.

BONESAW



❑ ROT FINDER

When using Find a Path you have access to a new stunt that you can choose when you roll extra ☠ – to find the most Rot-free route through the sector. The Rot level counts as one step lower during this visit to the sector.

❑ SCAVENGER

You get a +2 modification to Find a Path – with success you find any artifacts that may exist in a sector. To identify threats, you must instead get stunts. You can choose whether or not to use this talent when you enter a new sector.

THE FIXER'S TALENTS

❑ JUICY INFO

Choose one important NPC of whom you have incriminating information. Decide the nature of this information together with the GM. Don't overuse this hold over the NPC – it could come back to haunt you...

❑ VICIOUS CREEP

When you Manipulate someone and give him doubt, he suffers one extra point of it.

❑ WHEELER DEALER

When you use the Make a Deal skill to make small business on the side (page 57), you earn twice as much of the commodity you choose.

THE DOG HANDLER'S TALENTS

❑ BLOODHOUND

You have trained your dog to be a skilled tracker. You get a +2 modification when you use your dog to follow a track (page 59). If the dog dies, you lose this talent.

❑ FIGHT DOG

You have trained your dog to be a deadly little monster. You get a +2 modification when you use the dog to Fight (page 58). If the dog dies, you lose this talent.

❑ MUTANT'S BEST FRIEND

Your dog can get you out of any trouble. It can help you Endure and Move. Use your Sic a Dog skill level instead of these skills, and the dog's attribute scores – Strength and Agility, respectively. You can push the rolls normally. Any trauma is suffered by your dog instead of you, but you don't get any Mutation Points. If the dog dies, you lose this talent.

THE CHRONICLER'S TALENTS

❑ AGITATOR

You get a +2 modification when you Inspire someone to Fight or Shoot.

❑ BONESAW

You have learned the art of sawing bones and sewing skin – all in the interest of saving lives, of course. You get a +2 modification when you roll to Heal a critical injury (page 90), but not when tending to someone who is broken by trauma.

❑ PERFORMER

Once per session, if you're in the Ark, you can perform for the People. You can tell a story by a trashcan fire, recite poetry or sing a song. Roll to Inspire. Every ♣ gives you D6 bullets or rations of grub. A failed roll means someone doesn't appreciate your art...

THE BOSS'S TALENTS

❑ COMMANDER

You get a +2 modification when you order your gang to fight for you. You don't get the modification in any other situations, nor for racketeering.

❑ GUNSLINGERS

The members of your gang all have scrap guns (pistols or rifles). As long as they're in the Ark, they have enough bullets to get by (but not more). In the Zone however, you have to supply the bullets.

❑ RACKETEER

You get a +2 modification when you use the Command skill for racketeering in the Ark (page 61), but not for other uses.

THE SLAVE'S TALENTS

❑ CYNIC

You get a +2 modification to Endure, but only when suffering doubt (and for no other kinds of trauma).

❑ REBEL

When rolling to Endure, for every ♣ you roll, you get a +1 modification to your next action. You must use this bonus at the earliest possible opportunity – that is, in the current turn or the next if you already acted in the turn.

❑ RESILIENT

You get a +2 modification to Endure, but only when suffering damage (and for no other kinds of trauma).

GENERAL TALENTS

❑ ADMIRER

One NPC is very impressed by you, and will do anything to help you or just to be near you. Create this NPC together with the GM.

❑ ARCHEOLOGIST

You get a +2 modification when trying to Comprehend a ruined building or other installation from the Old Age.

❑ ASSASSIN

When you Shoot someone and hit, the target suffers one extra point of damage – but only if you fire at Near range or at Arms Length.

❑ BAD OMENS

You can Scout using Empathy instead of Wits.

❑ BODYGUARD

If someone Shoots at and hits a person at Arms Length or Near you, you can dive in to take the bullet. Roll to Move. It doesn't count as an action in conflict. If you roll one or more ♣ you take the hit instead of your friend. You can push the roll.

❑ BUTCHER

When you've killed a monster in the Zone, you can extract a number of rations of grub from the carcass

equal to the creature's original Strength. It doesn't work on swarms (page 176). The meat will usually be contaminated by the Rot. That means it's a good idea to combine this talent with Zone Cook.

❑ COMBAT VETERAN

You keep your cool under fire and can act effectively when your enemy hesitates. This means you get to add +2 to your initiative roll (page 79).

You can also use this talent to increase your initiative score by +2 during combat – but this will cost you a maneuver. You can do this as many times as you like during a conflict.

❑ COOL HEAD

You can Move with Wits instead of Agility.

COUNSELOR



❑ COUNSELOR

When you help someone, he gets an extra +1 modification – but only if he is doing something you told him to do.

❑ COWARD

If someone Shoots at you and rolls a hit, you can take cover behind a friend at Arms Length or Near you. The friend has to accept taking a hit for you. Roll to Move. It doesn't count as an action. If the roll is successful, the shot hits your friend instead of you.

❑ FAST DRAW

You can draw your weapon so fast it doesn't cost you a maneuver (page 80)

❑ FLYWEIGHT

When you defend yourself in close combat (page 84), you can use Agility instead of Strength.

❑ GADGETEER

You get a +2 modification when you try to Comprehend an artifact from the Old Age.

❑ GOOD FOOTWORK

You get a +2 modification when you defend in close combat (page 84).

❑ HARD HITTER

You get a +2 modification to Fight if you sacrifice your maneuver in the turn. You can't use the talent for parrying.

❑ WORKHORSE

You get a +2 modification when you work on a project in the Ark (Chapter 7).

❑ JACK OF ALL TRADES

You adopt a new role and immediately achieve skill level 1 in the specialist skill of that role. You keep your current skill level in the specialist skill of your old role, but you can no longer improve it. You also keep those of your talents that are specific to the old role, but you can't get new talents tied to the role. It must make sense in the story for you to get

the new role. For example, to become a Boss you need to find a gang that will follow you.

Limitation: This talent requires more experience than others. You can't get it until you have learned at least three other talents first.

☐ LIGHT EATER

You need only to eat one ration of grub per day to avoid losing Strength.

☐ LONER

You can recover lost Empathy (page 89) without the company of others – all you need is to be by yourself for a few hours.

☐ NEVER SURRENDER

When you are broken by damage (your Strength hits zero), you can get back on your feet immediately, without anyone Healing you. Roll to Endure, but without Base Dice (your Strength being zero). For every ♣ you roll, you get one point of Strength back can keep fighting a little while longer. You can't push the roll. The talent has no effect against serious or critical injuries.

☐ PACK MULE

You can carry twice as many objects as normal without being encumbered (page 23).

☐ PERSONAL ARITHMETIC

You can Sense Emotion with Wits instead of Empathy.

☐ SHARPSHOOTER

When you Shoot someone and hit, the target suffers one extra point of damage – but only if you fire at Long or Distant range.

☐ SLEEPLESS

You can recover lost Wits by several other means than sleeping (page 90):

- ☐ Jury-Rig a device (page 54).
- ☐ Enter an unexplored sector of the Zone.
- ☐ Comprehend an artefact.

☐ STOIC

You can Endure using Wits instead of Strength.

☐ THERAPIST

You get a +2 modification when you Heal someone who is broken by doubt.

☐ WEAPON SPECIALIST

You're an expert at using a certain type of weapon – choose one from the weapon lists (page 86) or an artifact. When you use this weapon, you get a +2 modification. You can choose this talent several times, once for each weapon type.

You can be a specialist at fighting unarmed or at using a “blunt object” – there are plenty of those in the Zone.

☐ ZONE COOK

You have mastered the art of cooking contaminated food from the Zone well enough to purge it from the Rot. You can also purify contaminated water. Roll to Know the Zone – every ♣ rolled purifies D6 rations of grub or water.



COMBAT VETERAN





MUTATIONS

Your mutations are your trump cards, superhuman and unstoppable powers wired into your very DNA. No one in the Ark – except maybe the Elder – knows their origin. Can the answer be found in the place of myth called Eden?

You get one mutation at the start of the game, and you can develop more later, during play. You don't get to choose your mutations – they are random, and you draw a Mutation Card or roll dice on the table below to determine which you get.

ACTIVATING MUTATIONS

When you activate a mutation, no one can stop you and you never risk failure. Most mutations have several effects – you must choose which one of them you want to use. To activate your mutation, you need a Mutation Point (MP) – or more than one, to increase the effect.

- ❑ At the beginning of every game session, you get a number of MP equal to the number of mutations you have.
- ❑ You can win more MP by *pushing* a dice roll (page 44).
- ❑ You can save MP from one session to the next.
- ❑ You can never have more than 10 MP.

Conflict: In a conflict (Chapter 6), activating a mutation usually counts as an action. This is not true

for reactive and enhancing effects, read more about those below.

MISFIRE

That you can't fail when using a mutation doesn't mean it's without risk. Roll one Basic Die for each MP you use to activate the mutation. If you roll one or more , the mutation *misfires*. It has its desired effect, but something else happens too. Roll one Basic Die to determine what:



-  Your mutant powers run amok, and you suffer one point of permanent trauma. You choose which attribute is affected. At the same time, you develop a new mutation.

- 2 You suffer the effect of the mutation, and take as much trauma as your target. If the mutation doesn't cause trauma, you get disoriented instead and can't act at all in the next turn.

- 3 The mutation consumes twice the amount of MP you intended to spend on it – without increasing the effect. You can't drop below zero MP.

- 4 The mutation locks down after this use. You can't use it again for the rest of the session.

- 5 The mutation changes your appearance in some way. You choose how. The effect is only cosmetic, but it is permanent.

-  The mutation gets supercharged. You get back the MP you just spent, and you can immediately – in the same turn – activate the same mutation again, against the same target or another.



Permanent Trauma is truly permanent – your attribute score is permanently reduced by one step. This means your body and mind will slowly degenerate, as you get more and more mutated. This is what it means to be a mutant.

New Mutations: When you manifest a new mutation, just draw one new Mutation Card or roll once on the mutations table in this chapter. You can never have more than four mutations. Read more on page 25.

EXAMPLE

Naphtha has the Flame Breather mutation and spends three MP to fry an enemy in a cascade of fire. She rolls three Basic Dice and gets one 6 – misfire! She rolls one Basic Die and gets a 3, meaning she loses another three MP. She only had four MP to start with, meaning she's now down to zero. Her target takes three points of damage from the attack.

REACTIVE EFFECTS

Some mutations have what's called *reactive* effects. These are marked (R) on the Mutation Cards and in this chapter. In a conflict, you can activate a reactive effect any time you want, and any number of times in a single turn. Activating a reactive effect does not count as an action or as a maneuver – all you need is MP to spend.

ENHANCING EFFECTS

Another type of mutation effect is the *enhancing* effect. These are marked (E). You activate an enhancing effect at the same time as you perform an action or a maneuver, to enhance it. Using an enhancing effect does *not* count as an action or a maneuver in itself.

When using an enhancing effect with a skill roll, roll for the mutation first and then for the skill.

NPCs AND MUTATIONS

Mutations for NPCs are handled exactly as for PCs. A typical NPC mutant has one mutation, but there are NPCs with more than one that exist. When the GM introduces a new mutant NPC she can draw Mutation Card(s) or roll on the table to determine which

mutation(s) he has – or simply pick something appropriate.

If the GM uses the cards to determine an NPC's mutations, these should be shuffled back into the deck so that PCs and other NPCs can draw the same mutations later on.

Mutation Points: Normally, an NPC enters the game with three MP. This is not an absolute rule – powerful mutants can have more MP from start. The GM keeps track of MP for NPCs just like the players do for their PCs, but there is one difference – the MP for all NPCs are restored to their starting value at the end of every session.

ACID SPIT

Glands in your mouth generate a potent acid. You can:

- ▣ Spit acid at a target at up to Near range. Costs 1 MP, deals one point of damage directly and one more each turn until the victim rolls to Move. Armor works against the acid.
- ▣ Use your acid to melt a thin rope or bar, or a small object. Costs 1 MP.
- ▣ Open a simple lock. Costs 1 MP.

PERMANENT TRAUMA

To have your attributes permanently decreased can feel discouraging. See it as a ticking clock, showing how much time you have left to make your mark on the dawnworld. What can you accomplish before your time is up? Also, to have your attributes go down doesn't mean you'll actually perform worse in the game – as compensation, you get more mutations and more Mutation Points, which are your most powerful tools. Finally, there is a legend among the People about an ancient drug called **REGEN**, that is said to completely restore a degenerated mutant.

MUTATIONS LIST

D66	MUTATION
11	Acid Spit
12	Amphibian
13	Corpse-Eater
14	Extreme Reflexes
15	Flame Breather
16	Four-Armed
21	Frog Legs
22	Human Magnet
23	Human Plant
24	Insectoid
25	Insect Wings
26	Luminescence
31	Manbeast
32	Mind Terror
33	Puppeteer
34	Parasite
35	Pathokinesis
36	Pyrokinesis
41	Reptilian
42	Rot-Eater
43	Sonar
44	Spores
45	Sprinter
46	Telepathy
51	Tracker
52-66	Re-roll

AMPHIBIAN

Your body has inherited traits from fishes and reptiles, making you equally at home under water as on land. With this mutation, you can:

- ▣ Breathe underwater for a few minutes. Cost: 1 MP. You swim quickly and smoothly like a fish.

- ▣ Use your slippery scales to absorb damage from external attacks. Every MP spent eliminates one point of damage. (R)
- ▣ Bite an enemy at Arm's Length with your numerous, small and very sharp teeth. It inflicts damage equal to the number of MP you spend.

CORPSE-EATER

Your metabolism is abnormally robust, as well as your jaws and teeth. You can:

- ▣ Eat raw meat, even several days after the prey's death, without suffering Rot Points (page 125). Small game counts as one ration of grub each. Bigger creatures – or humanoids – count as two rations.
- ▣ Bite a victim at Arm's Length. The attack inflicts damage equal to the number of MP spent.



INSECTOID

EXTREME REFLEXES

You have superhuman reflexes, and you can:

- ❑ Add +5 to your initiative roll at the beginning of a conflict. You can even use this effect to increase your initiative score by +5 during combat – but then it will cost you a maneuver.
- ❑ Fight or Shoot an enemy several times in the same turn. Every extra attack costs you 1 MP. (E)
- ❑ Dodge when someone Fights you, or Shoots at you. Every MP spent reduces the damage

you take by one. You must activate the effect before you roll for armor (page 88). (R)

FLAME BREATHER

You can spew out flammable gases and ignite them on the way through your gullet to create a deadly cascade of fire. You can:

- ❑ Set fire to a flammable object. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Spew fire at an enemy at up to Near range. You inflict damage equal to the number of MP you spend.
- ❑ Breathe fire at a number of enemies equal to MP spent. Each one takes one point of damage.

FOUR-ARMED

You have four arms rather than two. You can:

- ❑ Fight twice in a row, in the same turn. The extra attack costs you 1 MP and your maneuver for the turn. (E)
- ❑ Defend yourself against several close combat attacks in the same turn. Every defense after the first one costs you 1 MP. (E)
- ❑ Climb with ease. You can spend 1 MP instead of rolling to Move when performing a difficult climb.

FROG LEGS

With your powerful, frog-like leg muscles you can perform superhuman leaps. You can:

- ❑ Jump about 30' horizontally or 15' vertically. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Leap on an enemy at up to Short range and immediately Fight them in the same turn. It will cost you 1 MP and your maneuver for the turn. (E)
- ❑ Get out of a dangerous situation by jumping to safety. Spend 1 MP instead of rolling

HUMAN MAGNET



to Move when you want to escape from a conflict.

HUMAN MAGNET

You have the ability to generate strong magnetic fields at will. You can:

- ❑ Push away or attract metal objects within Short range, weighing no more than yourself. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Throw metal objects at a target at up to Short range. The damage is equal to the number of MP you spend.
- ❑ Shield yourself against bullets and other metal weapons. Every MP spent reduces the damage from such an attack by one. (R)

HUMAN PLANT

Your body has inherited traits from the plant world. You can:

- ❑ Get nourishment from sunlight. Spend 1 MP instead of eating one ration of grub. Only works outdoors.
- ❑ Your body is covered in sharp thorns that you can use in close combat. Inflicts one point of damage for every MP you spend.
- ❑ Use your bark-like skin to absorb damage from external attacks. Every MP spent reduces the damage by one. (R)

INSECTOID

Your body has inherited traits from the insect world. You can:

- ❑ Use your hardened skin to reduce damage taken from external attacks. Every MP spent reduces the damage taken by one. (R)
- ❑ Climb a completely vertical surface for a few minutes, at the cost of 1 MP.



INSECT WINGS

- ❑ Quickly heal light wounds. Every MP spent heals one point of damage – even if you are broken. The mutation can't heal serious or critical injuries.

INSECT WINGS

You have grown fly-like or butterfly-like wings on your back. You can:

- ❑ Fly up to 100' – then you must land.
- ❑ Fly up to an enemy at up to Short range and immediately Fight them in the same turn. It costs you 1 MP and your maneuver for the turn. (E)
- ❑ Create an intense buzzing noise that drives people up the walls. A number of persons equal to MP spent suffer one point of doubt each.

LUMINESCENCE

Just like fireflies and certain types of fish, your body has a natural ability to emit light. You can:

- ❑ Release a burst of light at a target at up to Near range. For every MP spent, the victim is completely blinded for one turn, and during this time suffers the effects of total darkness (page 93).
- ❑ Light up an area around you, up to Short distance (about 100') for a few minutes. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Briefly bend the light around you, to obscure your presence. You can use this effect to escape from a conflict without rolling to Move (page 81).

MANBEAST

You are half human, half savage beast. You can:

- ❑ Attack one or more enemies at Arm's Length with your fangs and your claws. They will take a total amount of damage equal to the number of MP spent.
- ❑ Let rip a bestial roar. One enemy per MP spent, at up to Near range, suffers one point of doubt.
- ❑ Never give up. When you are broken by damage or fatigue you can get up again and recover trauma points equal to MP spent. You will still suffer the effects of any critical injuries (page 90).

MIND TERROR

Your brain has the ability to affect the minds of others and create vivid hallucinations, at up to Near range. You can:

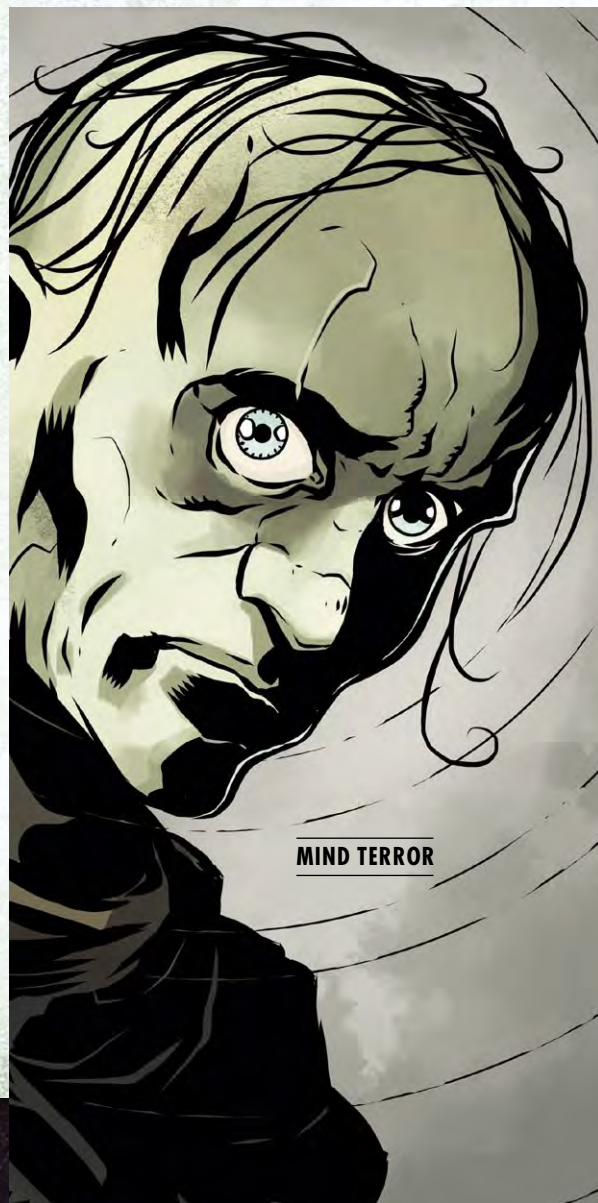
- ❑ Torment your victim with visions that inflict confusion or doubt (your choice) equal to the number of MP spent.

- ❑ Confuse others to make them miss their next action. Only works on humanoids. Costs 1 MP per victim.
- ❑ Create an illusion so grand the victim will believe it to be real. Costs 2 MP.

PUPPETEER

By sheer force of will you can take control of other humanoid creatures and turn them into your puppets. You can:

- ❑ Decide what the victim's next action is. Cost is 1 MP. You need to look the victim in the eyes, which is only possible at up to Near range. The victim rolls for the action



normally. If you want him to use a mutation, you must spend the extra MP yourself. If you force the victim to hurt himself, he suffers weapon damage plus one for every MP spent.

PARASITE

You are a human parasite, capable of absorbing the life-force of other living humanoid beings at Arm's Length. You can:

- ❑ Steal one point of any attribute from the victim for every MP you spend. You cannot exceed your own maximum score. This effect does not heal serious or critical injuries, and has no effect on permanent trauma.
- ❑ Steal a mutation from another mutant. Costs 1 MP. You can use the mutation in the next turn – after that, the victim gets it back.
- ❑ Heal another humanoid's trauma. Every point to be healed costs 1 MP, and will inflict the same amount (and type) of trauma on you. You can even heal serious or critical injuries – this will cost you 2 and 4 MP, respectively, but not damage you.

PATHOKINESIS

You have the ability to affect the emotional state of others, at up to Near range. You can:

- ❑ Instill fear or anxiety in others. Your victim suffers one point of doubt for every MP you spend.
- ❑ Heal one point of doubt per MP spent. This effect requires you to touch your target. You can heal your own doubt.
- ❑ Affect the mood of a group. You cannot control specific actions, only spread a general sense of anger, joy, sorrow, love or fear. This effect, which is roleplayed, lasts a few minutes. Costs 1 MP.



PYROKINESIS

PYROKINESIS

You have the ability to set things on fire with pure force of will. You can:

- ❑ Set fire to a flammable, inanimate object. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Make a living being burst into flame, at up to Near range. Inflicts one point of damage per MP spent. Armor has no effect.
- ❑ Melt ice or heat a cold area, eliminating the effects of severe cold (page 93) for one hour. Costs 1 MP.

REPTILIAN

Your body has inherited traits from reptiles. You can:

- ❑ Change the color and pattern of your skin, like a chameleon. You automatically succeed a Sneak roll, and attacks against you are performed as in total darkness (page 93). You need to be mostly naked. The effects last for a few minutes. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Contort your body to push yourself through a hole or passage only a few inches wide. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Entrance a humanoid at up to Near range with your reptilian eyes. Your victim suffers one point of confusion per MP spent.

ROT-EATER

You are totally insensitive to the effects of the Rot. You take Rot Points normally (page 125), but you can:

- ❑ Spend 1 MP to eliminate one point of trauma from the Rot. (R)
- ❑ Spend 1 MP to use one of your Rot Points to recover one point of any attribute. You can't use permanent Rot Points (page 126).
- ❑ Emit concentrated Rot at an enemy at Arm's Length. Inflicts one point of damage for every MP you spend. Each point also requires one point of Rot, which is consumed in the attack. You can't use permanent Rot.

SONAR

By emitting a high frequency sound and listening to its echoes you can:

- ❑ Sense your surroundings and effectively see in total darkness for a few minutes. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ Stun enemies at up to Short range. A number of victims equal to MP spent suffer one point of fatigue each.
- ❑ Disrupt an enemy at up to Short range who is Shooting. Every MP you spend eliminates one ♣ he has rolled. (R)

SPORES

You have hidden spore sacs on your body, capable of spraying spore clouds against targets at up to Near distance. The spores can:

- ❑ Make you victim's eyes sting and his skin itch. For every MP spent your victim suffers one point of fatigue.
- ❑ Stink so horribly that the victim chokes or suffers severe nausea. For every MP spent your target suffers one point of damage. Armor has no effect.

REPTILIAN



- ❑ **Obscure you.** Hidden in the cloud, you can escape from a conflict without rolling to Move. Costs 1 MP.

SPRINTER

Your leg muscles are extremely powerful, and you can run extremely fast over a short distance. You can:

- ❑ **Double your movement speed during one turn.** Every maneuver you spend on movement counts as two (page 80). Costs 1 MP. (E)
- ❑ **Escape from a conflict without rolling to Move.** Costs 1 MP.

TELEPATHY

By pure force of will you can read and affect the mind of other humanoid creatures, at up to Near range. You can:

- ❑ **For every MP you spend, get the answer to one of these questions:** Is he lying? Is he hiding something? What is he thinking right now?
- ❑ **Plant a simple thought in your subject's mind.** He will think it is true. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ **Create a mental short circuit to fry your victim's brain.** You inflict one point of confusion per MP spent.

TRACKER

Your sense of smell is extremely well developed. You can:

- ❑ **Follow the trail of a person or monster – like a bloodhound.** Costs 1 MP per day.
- ❑ **Sense an enemy Sneaking up on you** (page 81). Every MP you use knocks out one ☢ rolled by him. Costs 1 MP.
- ❑ **Smell grub out in the Zone.** Costs 1 MP and gives you D6 rations of Rot-contaminated grub.



TELEPATHY





CONFLICT & TRAUMA

When someone gets in your way, you sometimes have no choice but to force him to move. Some of the skills described in Chapter 3 let you affect other people, via manipulation, threats or physical force. When someone wants to break you, and you want to break him just as bad, you have a *conflict*.

Conflicts can take a heavy toll on you character and could even kill him. Before entering a conflict, always ask yourself: Is it worth it?

URNS & INITIATIVE

A conflict starts when you try to Manipulate, Shoot, Fight or Intimidate someone – or when someone does the same to you. Then it's time to *roll initiative*. Roll initiative before you make any skill roll.

INITIATIVE ROLL

Roll a D6 each and add your respective current Agility scores. No skill is used and you can't push the roll. The one who rolls highest, acts first. If it is a tie, leave it to chance (any unmodified die roll, keep rolling until the tie is broken).

When both of you have acted the *turn* is over, and a new turn starts. The order of initiative is set for the entire conflict – you only roll initiative in the first turn.

Mutations & Talents: The Extreme Reflexes mutation and the Combat Veteran talent can affect your initiative roll.

Time: In the game, a turn can represent between ten seconds and several minutes, depending on circumstances and the skills used.

MORE COMBATTANTS

If you're lucky, you have friends on your side in the conflict. If you're unlucky, your enemy has company too. Anyone who wants to join the conflict rolls for initiative at the beginning of the first turn. Your results create a *turn order*, that you will follow for the entire conflict. Write down your initiative scores, so that you don't forget. Break ties using any random die roll.

NPC Groups: For groups of NPCs with identical stats, the GM only needs to roll one initiative roll for the entire group. These NPCs act at the same point in the turn order. The order in which these NPCs act is up to the GM.

CHANGING THE INITIATIVE

You never reroll your initiative during a conflict, but there are a few ways that you can increase your initiative scores – and thus change your position in the turn order for the next turn and onwards. You could:

- ❑ Use the Extreme Reflexes mutation (page 72).
- ❑ Use stunts when you Fight or Shoot (page 83).

EXAMPLE

Krin, Naphta, Marl and Silas are passing through an old abandoned amusement park when four Zone-Ghouls attack. Everyone rolls initiative – current Agility score plus D6. The GM rolls one joint roll for the Zone-Ghouls. Krin gets 10, the GM 8, Naphta 4, Marl 5 and Silas 6. The turn order is thus Krin – Zone-Ghouls – Silas – Marl – Naphta.

ACTIONS & MANEUVERS

When it's your turn, you are allowed to perform *one action and one maneuver*, or *two maneuvers*. An *action* can be to:

- ❑ Roll for a skill.
- ❑ Activate a mutation (unless reactive or enhancing).

A *maneuver* can be to:

- ❑ Move one range step (below).
- ❑ Seek cover (page 89).
- ❑ Get an item from your gear.
- ❑ Pick up an item from the ground.
- ❑ Draw a weapon.
- ❑ Aim with a gun (page 85).
- ❑ Reload a gun (page 85).
- ❑ Use an item.

NPC GROUP ROLLS

Groups of NPCs that work together can attack with a single, joint roll helping each other (page 48) instead of all rolling individual rolls. This will make the GM's job easier.

IN A TURN YOU CAN:

- ❑ Perform an action and a maneuver
...or...
- ❑ Perform two maneuvers.

HELPING & HINDERING

If you help or hinder another person (page 48), this takes the place of your own action that turn. You can, however, perform a maneuver while helping or hindering.

MUTATIONS

Activating a mutation normally counts as an action. This means you cannot, as a rule, activate a mutation and use a skill in the same turn. Some mutations break this rule – those with *reactive* or *enhancing* effects. This is explained on page 70 in Chapter 5.

RANGE & MOVEMENT

In a conflict, the distance between you and your enemy is expressed in *range categories*:

- ❑ **Arm's Length:** Just next to each other.
- ❑ **Near:** A few steps away.
- ❑ **Short:** Up to 20–30 yards.
- ❑ **Long:** Up to a few hundred yards.
- ❑ **Distant:** As far as you can see.

ADVANCING & RETREATING

To move towards or away from an enemy, you use maneuvers. As long as you start *and* end up within Short distance or less, moving one range category

takes *one* maneuver. For any movement beyond Short distance, you need *two* maneuvers in direct succession in the same turn to move one range category – meaning you can’t perform an action in the same turn.

Mutations and vehicles can help you move faster than normal.



MOVEMENT		
BETWEEN	AND	REQUIRES
Arm’s Length	Near	One maneuver
Near	Short	One maneuver
Short	Long	Two maneuvers



FLEEING THE CONFLICT

If you’re losing a fight, it’s often better to run away, and survive, than to stay and fight to death. If you want to get out of a conflict, roll to Move – a successful roll means you have found some way out, and the conflict is over. However, you can’t use the flee roll to move *past* an enemy blocking your way – you can only flee back the way you came from.

The GM can modify your roll depending on how hard the terrain is to hide in. The distance to your closest enemy also matters – see the table below.



FLEEING CONFLICT	
DISTANCE	MODIFICATION
Arm’s Length	–2
Near	–1
Short	±0
Long	+1
Distant	No roll needed



Note that you only need one successful roll to get out of harm’s way, and leave the conflict. Also note that you don’t need to roll at all if you’re at Distant range.

If your roll fails it means that you are pinned down and unable to get away for the moment – you remain at the same range. The GM can let some other misfortune happen to you as well. You can try to flee again next turn.

EXAMPLE

The distance between the PCs and the Zone-Ghouls is Short. To reach the enemies in the first turn of conflict, Marl must use two maneuvers. In the next turn, Marl can attack them in close combat. If he had had a scrap spear (that can be used at Near range) he could have attacked them in the first turn.

Naphta wants to escape from the conflict, which means she must roll to Move. Since the distance is Short, she gets no modification to the roll.

OTHER TYPES OF MOVEMENT

There are of course other types of movement in conflict besides advancing, retreating and fleeing. For these, the GM assesses the situation and what you are trying to accomplish. To run a short distance to seek cover, for example, only requires a maneuver. If the movement is harder to complete, like lunging through a bunker gate that is about to close, you’ll need a Move roll to succeed.

AMBUSHES & SNEAK ATTACKS

The key to winning a conflict is often to attack when your enemy least expects it. You can achieve this advantage in several ways.

MIXING DIFFERENT ATTACKS

Mutant: Year Zero does not separate the different types of conflict. Nothing stops you from Shooting someone in turn one, Manipulating him to give up in turn two, and Shooting him again in turn three. You freely choose which skill you want to use. Being in the middle of a firefight can make your bargaining position (page 82) worse, however.

Surprise: If you attack in a way that the GM deems likely to surprise your enemy, you get to add +3 to your initiative roll.

Sneak Attack: When you stalk someone and your attack catches them unawares, it's called a *sneak attack*. First, roll to Sneak. You get a modification according to how close you go, see the table below. To attack in close combat, you'll most often need to get within Arm's Length. If you fail, your target spots you at your starting distance – roll initiative. If you succeed, you get a *free action* (but not a maneuver) before you roll initiative.

If several people attempt to sneak attack together, all must make separate rolls for the sneak attack to work. If anyone fails, the attackers are spotted.

Ambush: A special kind of sneak attack is the *ambush* – you lie in wait for your enemy and attack when he passes. When you ambush someone, roll to Sneak modified for the distance to your target. You automatically get a +2 modification because you are still and the enemy moves.

Tracker: Note that the Tracker mutation can be used to notice sneaks attacks and ambushes.



SNEAK ATTACK

DISTANCE	MODIFICATION
Arm's Length	-2
Near	-1
Short	±0
Long	+1
Distant	+2



COMBAT MAPS

Generally, you don't need a detailed map of the battlefield. The GM sets the scene by pointing out a few main features, and you're all ready to go. However, if you prefer to play the combat out in detail on a combat map, you can do so – even using appropriate miniatures if you want to. Use a map grid, where each square is two yards across.

On the combat map, each maneuver spent on movement lets you move five grid squares. Diagonal movement is allowed. Note that vehicles and some mutations will double movement speed, letting you move ten squares per maneuver. To take cover behind something, that object must be in your square or in a square next to you.

As for range on the combat map, Arm's Length is in your square or a square next to you, Near range is two squares away, Short range is up to 15 squares away, and anything beyond that (unless your map is huge) is at Long range.

SOCIAL CONFLICTS

For non-violent conflicts you use the Manipulate skill (page 53). The Enforcer can also Intimidate (page 54).

BARGAINING POSITION

To be able to Manipulate or Intimidate someone, you need:

- Your subject must be able to hear and understand you.
- What you want must be something that isn't completely unreasonable.

If the GM thinks both of these conditions are met, she will determine your bargaining position and give you a modification based on it.

Each of the following factors gives you a +1 modification:

- You have more people on your side.
- What you ask for doesn't cost your opponent anything.

- ❑ The opponent has suffered trauma.
- ❑ You have helped your opponent earlier.
- ❑ You plead your case very well (GM's judgement).

Each of the following factors give you a -1 modification:

- ❑ Your opponent has more people on his side.
- ❑ What you ask for is valuable, or dangerous.
- ❑ Your opponent has nothing to gain by helping you.
- ❑ You have difficulties understanding each other.
- ❑ The range between you is Short or longer.

GROUPS IN SOCIAL CONFLICTS

When you want to Manipulate or Intimidate a group of people, it is normally the group's leader or spokesperson that is the object of your skill roll. Remember that you get a -1 modification if he has more people behind him. If you push the leader in your preferred direction, the other NPCs will generally follow. If there is no clear leader in a group of NPCs, you'll need to Manipulate or Intimidate them separately.

GEAR

Some gear – most often artifacts – can provide a Gear Bonus to your attempts to Manipulate or Intimidate.

EXAMPLE

Silas tries to Manipulate the leader of the Zone-Ghouls. The GM determines his bargaining position to be bad – in the middle of the shootout the Zone-Ghouls have trouble hearing him, they don't know his language very well, and they have no obvious benefit from listening to him. The GM gives Silas a -3 modification.

EFFECTS

When you successfully Manipulate someone this usually means that they do what you want – but only if you give them something in return. They decide what it is they want, but it must be something

that you can reasonably accomplish. It is up to you whether to accept the deal or not.

If you successfully use the Intimidate skill (page 54), your opponent must either do what you want or to attack you immediately (by Fighting, Shooting or using a mutation).

Stunts: Extra ☠ on your roll mean you sow fear or doubt in your opponent's heart. He suffers one point of doubt (page 88) for every additional ☠ you roll over and above the first one. If he is broken by doubt, he does what you want without demanding a return favor (or getting the option to attack you, in the case of Intimidate).

CLOSE COMBAT

When you attack in close combat you use the Fight skill. Close combat usually happens at Arm's Length. With some weapons – like a scrap spear – you can attack from Near range.



SPIKED BAT

EFFECTS

If your Fight roll succeeds, you hit and your opponent suffers weapon damage (below). For every extra ☠ you roll beyond the first, you get to choose one of these stunts:

- ❑ You inflict one additional point of damage. You can choose this stunt multiple times, if you roll several ☠.
- ❑ You subdue or tire your enemy. He suffers one point of fatigue (page 88).
- ❑ You increase your initiative score by 2 (page 80), taking effect next turn.
- ❑ You knock or pull a weapon or other object from your opponent. You choose which. Dur-

ing a conflict, picking up a dropped object counts as a maneuver (page 80).

- ❑ Your opponent falls to the ground or is pushed back, for example through a doorway or over a cliff.
- ❑ You hold the opponent in a grapple. He needs to successfully Fight you to break free (below).

SCRAP AXE



DEFENSE

When someone Fights you, you can try to *defend* yourself. When you defend, you also roll for Fight. Roll your dice at the same time as the attacker. For each  you roll, choose one stunt:

- ❑ You eliminate one  rolled by the attacker. If he has no  left, his attack has no effect on you.
- ❑ You increase your initiative score by 2 (page 80), taking effect next turn.
- ❑ You knock or pull a weapon or other object from your opponent.
- ❑ Your opponent falls to the ground or is pushed back, for example through a doorway or over a cliff.
- ❑ You tire your enemy. He suffers one point of fatigue.
- ❑ You counter-attack against your enemy and inflict weapon damage. You cannot increase this damage by using several .

Note that you can choose to make a counter-attack instead of stopping your opponent's attack. That means you may hit each other simultaneously.

Limitations: There are several limitations to the defense move:

- ❑ You must declare that you defend before the attacker rolls his dice. If he misses anyway, your defense is wasted.
- ❑ If you defend, you lose your next action – in this turn if you haven't acted yet, otherwise in the next turn. You do keep your maneuver, however.
- ❑ You can only defend yourself against one attack per turn. If you defend and get attacked again in the same turn, you can't defend again.
- ❑ If the attacker uses a close combat weapon of some kind but you don't, you get a -2 modification to your defense roll.

GRAPPLING

As a stunt when you Fight someone, you can choose to grapple him. He then needs to successfully Fight you to break free. Until he has, he can't perform any other action (or any maneuver) – or until you are broken or you choose to let him go.

While you grapple your opponent, the only actions you can perform are to Fight him or use mutations against him.

EXAMPLE

Marl lunges at a Zone-Ghoul. The Zone-Ghoul wants to defend itself. Marl rolls two , the Zone-Ghoul only one. The Zone-Ghoul chooses to eliminate one of Marl's , meaning Marl will only inflict weapon damage and does not get a stunt. Since the Zone-Ghoul parried, he loses his next action.

RANGED COMBAT

When you attack someone at a distance you roll for the Shoot skill. You'll need a ranged weapon, if only a rock to hurl. The table on page 87 indicates the range of each weapon, i.e. the maximum distance at which the weapon can be used.

Cover: You cannot defend yourself against ranged attacks. Instead, you would be wise to seek cover (page 89) when the bullets start to fly.

MODIFICATION

The farther away your target is, the harder it is to hit. At Short range you get a -1 modification, and at Long range you get -2. At Arm's Length you get -3, because it's hard to aim at an enemy in close combat. You don't get this modification if you fire at a defenseless or unwitting enemy.



RANGE MODIFICATION

DISTANCE	MODIFICATION
Arm's Length	-3*
Near	±0
Short	-1
Long	-2

* Does not apply for defenseless enemies.



AIMING

Before you Shoot you can spend one maneuver to aim carefully. That gives you a +1 modification. If you also have some solid piece of cover to lean on, the bonus increases to +2. You must aim and fire in the same turn – you cannot save the bonus for a later turn.



SCRAP PISTOL

RELOADING

Jury-Rigged firearms are normally loaded with one bullet at a time. Every time you have fired a shot you need to spend one maneuver to reload the weapon, until you can fire again. Bows and slingshots also need to be prepared with one maneuver before they can be fired.

Clip: Some artifact-guns have a clip that holds several rounds, letting you fire again and again without reloading. You don't need to keep track of how many bullets remain in the clip – just assume it lasts until the end of the combat.

Multiple barrels: Some Jury-Rigged firearms (page 54) and certain artifacts have two or more barrels, loaded with one bullet each. You can only fire one barrel at a time, but you don't need to reload until both of the barrels have been discharged.

EXAMPLE

Krin has sought cover behind a car wreck and fires at a Zone-Ghoul. First, she aims carefully (one maneuver) which gives her a +1 modification. In her next turn, she fires again. This time, she can't get the aim bonus, because she needs to use her maneuver in the turn to reload.

EFFECTS

If your Shoot roll succeeds, you hit and your opponent suffers weapon damage. For every extra ☢ you roll, choose one stunt:

- ☢ You inflict one more point of damage. You can choose this stunt multiple times, if you roll several ☢.
- ☢ You pin down your enemy. He suffers one point of fatigue (page 88).
- ☢ You increase your initiative score by 2 (page 80), effective as of the next turn.
- ☢ Your target drops a weapon or another hand-held object. You choose which.
- ☢ Your opponent falls to the ground or is pushed back, for example through a doorway or over a cliff.



SCRAP RIFLE

EXAMPLE

Krin fires at a Zone-Ghoul again and gets two ☼. The scrap rifle has weapon damage 2. She chooses to spend her extra ☼ to increase the damage, inflicting a total of 3 damage points on the Zone-Ghoul.

FULL-AUTO FIRE

Some rare artifact weapons are capable of full automatic fire. When firing full auto, roll as usual for the Shoot skill. You can push the roll normally – but it will cost you one extra bullet. You can then continue to push the roll, again and again. Every reroll costs you one bullet. As usual, you risk fatigue and the weapon risks being damaged every time you reroll. You can push the roll as many times as you want, until you run out of bullets or until you collapse or the weapon breaks.

Multiple targets: When firing full auto, you can direct a pushed roll – including the first one – against a different target. The first ☼ you roll for a new target will inflict weapon damage on that target. Further ☼ for the same target gives you stunts to use on that target.

SCRAP SPEAR

EXAMPLE

The Gearhead Naphta has come across an ancient assault rifle. She opens fire at a Zone-Ghoul and rolls two Base Dice (she has Agility 2), two Skill Dice (she has Shoot skill level 2) and

three Gear Dice (for the gun). On her first roll, she gets no ☼, but a Gear Die shows ☼. Naphta pushes the roll, knowing this will damage the weapon. She uses up another bullet and rerolls six dice (all except the one showing ☼). Now she rolls two ☼ and no ☼ or ☼. The Zone-Ghoul is hit and collapses to the ground.

But Naphta keeps shooting. She fires at another Zone-Ghoul, pushing the roll again. She uses up another bullet and rerolls the four dice now showing neither ☼ nor ☼. She rolls another ☼, hitting the second Zone-Ghoul too. She still has three dice to push, but chooses not to. Two enemies are hit, but Naphta has spent three bullets and the Gear Bonus of the assault rifle is reduced to +2. After combat, she can repair the weapon with a Jury-Rig roll and bring the Gear Bonus back up to +3.

SCRAP RIFLE



WEAPONS

Weapons will make you more effective in close combat, and they are a requirement for any kind of ranged combat. Below, you will find tables of common weapons that any Gearhead in the Ark can build and that you can barter for in the Ark.

MELEE WEAPONS

WEAPON	BONUS	DAMAGE	RANGE	COMMENT
Unarmed	—	1	Arm's Length	
Blunt Instrument	+1	1	Arm's Length	
Bicycle Chain	+1	1	Near	
Brass Knuckles	+1	1	Arm's Length	Jury-Rigged. Light weapon.
Scrap Knife	+1	2	Arm's Length	Jury-Rigged. Light weapon.
Baseball Bat	+2	1	Arm's Length	Can be found in the Zone.
Bat with Spikes	+2	2	Arm's Length	Jury-Rigged.
Machete	+2	2	Arm's Length	Jury-Rigged.
Scrap Spear	+1	2	Near	Jury-Rigged.
Scrap Axe	+1	3	Arm's Length	Jury-Rigged. Heavy weapon.

CALIBER

In the basic game rules, we make no distinction between rounds of different types and calibers – any bullet can be used in any weapon, to keep things simple. If you like a little more realism, bullets can be divided into three types: pistol, rifle and shotgun. In this case, a Gearhead building a scrap gun must decide what type of ammunition it is made for. For artifacts, the type of bullet needed is self-evident.

You can find better weapons from the Old Age out in the Zone – if you're lucky.

Bonus indicates how many Gear Dice the weapons gives you to roll. Remember that the Gear Bonus can be reduced if you push your skills roll. If the Gear Bonus is reduced to zero, the weapon is broken and must be repaired by a Gearhead before it can be used again.

Damage indicates how many points of damage your target will suffer if your attack succeeds. If you roll more than one ☢, you can deal extra damage.

Range indicates the maximum range category (page 80) at which the weapon can be used.

Scrap weapons can be constructed by a Gearhead (page 55). The Bonus and Damage ratings for these indicated in the weapons table are just standard

values – skilled and/or lucky Gearheads can build weapons with higher scores. Scrap guns can also be constructed with multiple barrels, so that they can be fired repeatedly without reloading.

Light weapons only take up half a line in the inventory section of your character sheet.

Flamethrowers require one dose of booze for every attack. Anyone hit catches fire and continues to burn and takes one more point of damage until he makes a Move roll. Every attempt counts as an action.



FLAMETHROWER

Scrap cannons are heavy weapons, not easily moved by hand. Each attack requires an explosive charge with minimum Blast Power of 6.

Artifacts: Stats for weapons from the Old Age can be found on the Artifact Cards and they are collected in a table on page 189 of this book.

RANGED WEAPONS

WEAPON	BONUS	DAMAGE	RANGE	COMMENT
Thrown Rock	—	1	Short	
Slingshot	+1	1	Short	Jury-Rigged.
Bow	+1	1	Long	Jury-Rigged.
Scrap Pistol	+1	2	Short	Jury-Rigged.
Scrap Derringer	+1	1	Near	Jury-Rigged. Light weapon.
Scrap Rifle	+1	2	Long	Jury-Rigged.
Flamethrower	+1	2	Near	Jury-Rigged. Heavy weapon.
Scrap Cannon	+1	4	Long	Jury-Rigged. Can't be carried.

TRAUMA

There are four types of *trauma* in this game. Each type will decrease one of your four attributes. You indicate trauma that you suffer by using the checkboxes on your character sheet.

Damage: Bruises, bleeding wounds and broken bones. Decreases your Strength.

Fatigue: Physical exhaustion, sweating and panting. Decreases your Agility.

Confusion: Lack of clarity, bewilderment and misjudgement. Decreases your Wits.

Doubt: Lack of confidence, distrust, disappointment and sadness. Decreases your Empathy.

You can suffer trauma in several different ways:

- From external attacks. When someone successfully Fights you or Shoots at you, you suffer damage equal to the weapon damage – more if the attacker gets stunts and spends them on increasing the damage. You can suffer doubt when someone Manipulates or Intimidates you. Mutations can also give you trauma, of all types (see Chapter 5).

- By rolling ☠ when you push a die roll. You then suffer one point of trauma of the kind connected to the attribute you rolled for (above) for each ☠ rolled. This is not only negative – you also get one Mutation Point for each point of trauma suffered in this way.
- From exposure to the Rot (page 124), from dehydration, starvation and extreme cold (page 92) and from explosions (page 94).

ARMOR & SHIELDS

To protect you from damage (not other types of trauma), Gearheads build armor from scrap – and if you're lucky, you can find functional body armor from the Old Age out in the Zone.

The effect of armor is determined by the Armor Rating. You can only wear one type of armor at a time. When you suffer damage, roll a number of Gear Dice equal to the Armor Rating. For every ☢ you roll, the damage you suffer is reduced by one. For every ☠ you roll, the Armor Rating is decreased by one. The armor roll does not count as an action and cannot be pushed. Armor can be repaired by Gearheads (page 55).

Armor has no effect against damage from dehydration, starvation, hypothermia or from pushing dice rolls.

Shields: Gearheads can also make shields from road signs, trash-can lids and other kinds of scrap. They work just like armor, and typically have an Armor Rating of 3. You can carry a shield and wear armor at the same time – when you get hit, first roll for the shield, then for the armor.

Mutations: Some mutations can protect you from damage. Read more in Chapter 5.

EXAMPLE

Marl is hit by a blow inflicting two points of damage. He wears scrap armor with Armor Rating 3. He rolls three Gear Dice, getting one ☠ and one ☠. He only suffers one point of damage, but the Armor Rating of his armor is reduced to 2. After the fight, Naphta can try to repair Marl's armor.



COVER

When you enter a firefight, finding cover may save your life. Look for something solid, like a brick wall or a wrecked car. Taking cover counts as a maneuver (page 80).

Cover has a Protection Rating and works exactly like armor (above) – but is only effective against ranged attacks. Cover is reduced by  results, just like armor. Cover can be combined with armor – roll for cover first, then for armor.

Aiming: Cover can also be useful to rest your arms on when Shooting. The bonus for aiming carefully (page 85) increases to +2 when firing from cover.



TYPICAL COVER

COVER TYPE	PROTECTION RATING
Shrubbery	2
Furniture	3
Wooden Door	4
Car Door	5
Brick Wall	6
Sand Bag	7



EXAMPLE

Krin lies in cover behind the car wreck (Protection Rating 5). A shot hits her, inflicting one point of damage. Krin rolls five Gear Dice for the cover. She gets one  and suffers no damage. In the next turn, she's hit again. This time she rolls two  but no . Krin is hurt and the Protection value of the car wreck is reduced to 3. Krin would do wisely to find new cover (costing her a maneuver if it's nearby).

BROKEN

When an attribute score hits zero, you are *broken*. You've had enough and lack the will or ability to keep going. Exactly what it means to be broken depends on what attribute has been depleted.

Strength: You're knocked out, or in paralyzing pain. Being broken by damage is much more dangerous than by other types of trauma, because it also means you suffer a *critical injury* (below).

Agility: You're physically exhausted.

Wits: Your brain is overloaded and you can't think straight.

Empathy: You break down in fear, self-pity or sorrow.

EFFECT

When broken, you cannot use any skills, perform actions or activate mutations (not even reactive ones). You can, however, perform one maneuver per turn (page 80).

GETTING BACK UP

The fastest way to recover from being broken is for someone else to successfully Heal you (page 53).

In most cases though, you don't *need* to be Healed to get back on your feet. As long as you're not dehydrated, starving or hypothermic (below), you recover after D6 hours even if no one Heals you. You get one point in the relevant attribute score back, and you can keep going.

Once back on your feet, you can recover the rest of your trauma with the help of resources (below).

Critical Injuries: If you are broken by damage and have suffered a critical injury (below), you might die unless someone Heals you in time. Read more below.

COUP DE GRACE

When broken, you're an easy target. An enemy can attempt to give you a coup de grace and kill you outright. To do this, he only needs to make a Fight or Shoot roll. As long as he rolls at least one , you're dead. Conversely, you can finish off broken enemies in the same way.

RECOVERY

To recover trauma and restore lost attribute points, two things are needed:

- At least four hours rest.
- A resource depending on the type of trauma.

When both these conditions are met, you restore all lost attribute points of the relevant type. You can even recover multiple types of trauma simultaneously, as long as you have access to the resources needed. These are:

- **Strength:** A ration of grub.
- **Agility:** A ration of water.
- **Wits:** At least four hours of sleep.
- **Empathy:** A moment of closeness with another mutant. It can be a talk by the campfire, a moment of shared silence, or physical contact.

The resources needed for recovery come on top of your daily needs of grub, water and sleep (below).

MUTATIONS

Some mutations let you recover trauma instantly. This requires no resources, only Mutation Points (see Chapter 5). However, mutations cannot normally heal critical injuries (below).

CRITICAL INJURIES

Being broken is always bad, but being broken by damage is especially dangerous – it can mean death.

Before you are broken, damage points represent bruises and minor cuts. Painful, but quickly recovered with some rest and a little grub to give you new energy (above). But when your Strength falls to zero, you suffer a *critical injury*.

BROKEN NPCs

NPCs are broken in the same way as PCs. An NPC can Heal a PC, and vice versa. However, the GM doesn't roll dice when an NPC Heals another NPC – instead, she simply dictates the outcome. The GM can also rule that a minor NPC who is broken by damage is simply killed outright.

Roll D66 on the table on page 91 to determine what your critical injury is. Note it on your character sheet.

DEATH

If your critical injury is listed as *lethal*, someone must make a successful Heal roll to save you – otherwise you die when the time period indicated has passed. If you get back up on your own accord (above) before you die, you can try to Heal yourself – but with a -2 modification to the roll. Each person trying to Heal you can only roll once.

Instant Kill: Note that there are two critical injuries that kill you outright. If you roll either of these, that's it. Time to reduce the Ark's population by one and create a new mutant.

HEALING

Each critical injury has a specific effect that you suffer during the healing time indicated (measured in days).

Care: If someone rolls to Heal you during the process of healing a critical injury, the remaining healing time is reduced by half. Any roll to save your life (above) does not count toward this – a new Heal roll needs to be made to reduce the healing time.

Trauma: Note that you can restore all of your Strength (all damage points are recovered) but still suffer the effect of your critical injury.

EXAMPLE

Marl is hit again, and loses his last point of Strength. He is broken. He rolls on the critical injury table, and gets a 52 – bleeding gut. He rolls a D6 to see how long he's got to live until he bleeds out, and it comes up a 5. He has five hours.

No one is around to Heal him. He rolls to see how long it takes for him to get up on his own. He rolls a 2. After two hours on the cold ground, Marl finally gets back on his feet, and gets one point of Strength back. He tries to Heal himself, but fails. He has three hours to find someone to help him.

CRITICAL INJURIES TABLE

D66	INJURY	LETHAL	TIME LIMIT	EFFECT DURING HEALING	HEALING TIME
11	Lost Breath	No	—	None.	—
12	Stunned	No	—	None.	—
13	Sprained Wrist	No	—	-1 to Shoot and Fight.	D6
14	Sprained Ankle	No	—	-1 to Move and Sneak.	D6
15	Concussion	No	—	-1 to Scout and Comprehend.	D6
16	Damaged Shin	No	—	-1 to Move and Sneak.	2D6
21	Broken Nose	No	—	-1 to Manipulate, +1 Intimidate, Tracker mutation disabled.	2D6
22	Broken Fingers	No	—	-1 to Shoot and Fight.	2D6
23	Broken Toes	No	—	-1 to Move and Sneak.	2D6
24	Teeth Knocked Out	No	—	-1 to Manipulate, +1 Intimidate.	2D6
25	Groin Hit	No	—	You suffer one point of damage for every roll you make to Force, Move or Fight.	2D6
26	Thigh Wound	No	—	-2 to Move and Sneak.	2D6
31	Biceps Wound	No	—	-2 to Shoot and Fight.	2D6
32	Severed Achilles Tendon	No	—	-2 to Move and Sneak.	2D6
33	Dislocated Shoulder	No	—	-3 to Force and Fight, can not use two-handed weapons.	D6
34	Broken Ribs	No	—	-2 to Move and Fight.	2D6
35	Broken Forearm	No	—	Can not use two-handed weapons.	3D6
36	Broken Leg	No	—	-2 to Move and Sneak.	3D6
41	Ear Torn Off	No	—	-1 to Scout, Sonar mutation disabled.	3D6
42	Gouged Eye	No	—	-2 to Shoot and Scout.	3D6
43	Punctured Lung	Yes	D6 days	-2 to Endure and Move.	2D6
44	Damaged Kidney	Yes	D6 days	You suffer one point of damage for every roll you make to Force, Move or Fight.	3D6
45	Crushed Knee	Yes	D6 days	-2 to Move and Sneak.	4D6
46	Crushed Elbow	Yes	D6 days	-2 to Force and Fight, can not use two-handed weapons.	4D6
51	Crushed Foot	Yes	D6 days	-3 to Move and Sneak.	4D6
52	Bleeding Gut	Yes	D6 hours	You suffer one point of damage for every roll you make to Force, Move or Fight.	D6
53	Crushed Face	Yes	D6 hours	-2 to Manipulate.	4D6
54	Busted Intestine	Yes	D6 hours	You suffer one Rot Point per hour until Healed.	2D6
55	Damaged Spine	No	—	Paralyzed from the waist down. Effect is permanent unless Healed during healing time.	4D6
56	Neck Injury	No	—	Paralyzed from the neck down. Effect is permanent unless Healed during healing time.	4D6
61	Internal Bleeding	Yes, -1	D6 minutes	You suffer one point of damage for every roll you make to Force, Move or Fight.	2D6
62	Severed Arm Artery	Yes, -1	D6 minutes	-1 to Endure and Move.	D6
63	Severed Leg Artery	Yes, -1	D6 minutes	-1 to Endure and Move.	D6
64	Severed Jugular	Yes, -1	D6 turns	-1 to Endure and Move.	D6
65	Pierced Heart	Yes	—	Your heart beats one last time, then you die. Time to make a new PC.	—
66	Crushed Skull	Yes	—	You die instantly, and will never see Eden.	—
—	Non-Typical Damage	Yes	D6 days	You are incapacitated until you die or you are Healed.	—
—	Pushed Roll Damage	No	—	None.	—

After two hours of wandering, Marl finds his friends again. Silas gets to work and tries to Heal Marl. His roll fails. He pushes the roll, knowing Marl is probably a goner if he fails. He makes it, rolling one  but also two . Marl lives, but Silas suffers two points of doubt from the harrowing experience.

Marl can now eat and rest to restore his Strength after a few hours, but the critical injury will stay for D6 days. Marls rolls a 4. For four days, Marl will suffer one point of damage every time he rolls to Force, Move or Fight. If Silas cares for him and makes another Heal roll, Marl's critical injury will be gone in two days.

NON-TYPICAL DAMAGE

For some types of damage – for example from noxious gases, acid, or fire – the critical damage table doesn't work very well. If you are broken by a non-typical kind of damage like this, don't roll on the table – instead, use the line at the bottom named “Non-Typical Damage”.

PUSHED DAMAGE

There is one case where you don't suffer any critical injury at all when broken by damage: When you push a Strength roll so hard that you break yourself (page 45). It's very rare, but it can happen. This means you can never kill yourself by pushing a dice roll.

CONDITIONS

In the game, there are four conditions: starving, dehydrated, sleepless and hypothermic. These conditions can cause trauma and block recovery.

STARVING

Every day, you must eat at least one ration of grub, on top of what is needed to recover lost Strength (above). After one day with no grub you are *starving*. Note this in the checkbox on your character sheet. Being starving has several effects:

- ❑ You cannot recover damage (restore Strength) in any way. If broken by damage, you need to eat some grub before you can get back

SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM

If you feel that the critical damage system creates too much dice rolling and book-keeping, you can use a simplified system. Count all critical injuries as “Non-Typical Damage”. That means:

- ❑ If your are broken by damage, someone must Heal you within D6 days, otherwise you die.
- ❑ You are unconscious until you die or someone Heals you successfully.

on your feet. You can recover other types of trauma.

- ❑ You suffer one more point of damage per day without grub. If broken by damage while starving you will die after another day has passed, unless you are given grub.
- ❑ As soon as you have eaten one ration of grub, you are no longer starving and you can recover normally. To recover all damage (above) you need to consume another ration of grub.

DEHYDRATED

Every day, you must drink at least one ration of water, on top of what is needed to recover lost Agility (above). After one day with no water you are *dehydrated*. Note this in the checkbox on your character sheet. Being dehydrated has several effects:

- ❑ You cannot recover any type of trauma. If broken, you need to drink some water before you can get back on your feet.
- ❑ You suffer one point of damage *and* one point of fatigue per day without water. If broken by trauma (of any type) while dehydrated, you will die after another day has passed.
- ❑ As soon as you have imbibed one ration of water, you are no longer dehydrated and you can recover normally. To recover all fatigue you need to consume another ration of water.

SLEEPLESS

Every day, you must get at least four hours of continuous sleep. After one day without enough sleep, you become *sleepless*. Note this in the checkbox on your character sheet. Being sleepless has several effects:

- ❑ You cannot recover confusion (restore Wits) in any way. If broken by confusion, you need to sleep for four hours or more before you can get back on your feet. You can recover other types of trauma.
- ❑ You suffer one more point of confusion per day without sleep. If broken by confusion while sleepless you will collapse and fall unconscious for four hours or more.
- ❑ As soon as you have at least four hours of sleep, you are no longer sleepless and you can recover Wits normally. To recover all confusion you need to sleep another four hours.

HYPOTHERMIC

In the Ark, you can warm yourselves by the trashcan fires or huddle up close to each other under old tarpaulin and cloth when the Zone cold is bitter. Out in the Zone, the cold can be a threat as deadly as the Rot.

When you are exposed to a cold environment, the GM can make you roll to Endure at regular intervals. The colder it is, the more often you must roll. Around the freezing point, once per day or so is enough – in the deep atomic winter, you might need to roll every hour. Things that can keep you warm, like an old blanket or a jacket, can give you Gear Dice to use.

If the roll fails, you become *hypothermic*. This has several consequences:

- ❑ You immediately suffer one point of damage and one point of confusion – the cold makes the blood flow more slowly to your brain.
- ❑ You may experience strange hallucinations – the details are up to the GM. It is said that someone who is freezing to death will experience a burning heat, making them tear their clothes off in the final moments before dying.
- ❑ You keep rolling to Endure at the same intervals, with the same effect if you fail a roll. If

broken by damage when hypothermic, you die the next time you are called upon to roll.

- ❑ As long as you are hypothermic, you cannot restore Strength or Wits. It is only once you are warm again, even if only heated by a meagre campfire, that you can sleep and eat to recover.

BOOZE

When you are screaming in pain, when the hunger tears at your guts or when shivering in fear, you can dull your senses with booze. In the Ark, Gearheads can brew alcoholic drinks from plants that they grow or find in the Zone. At a later stage, the People can build a Distillery (page 108). One bottle of booze counts as a normal item and contains up to ten doses.

One dose of booze immediately recovers one point of damage *and* doubt. The drawback is that the booze also causes one point of confusion. Furthermore, the damage and doubt recovery from booze is temporary – after D6 hours, the trauma returns. If you have suffered more trauma in the meantime, you can be broken when the effect of the booze wears off.

DARKNESS

They say that in the Old Age, the world was illuminated by so many and bright artificial lights that night turned into day. That was many years ago. Now, the world is silent and dark. When the Zone smog obscures the sky, which it usually does, the night is black like death itself. And inside the old ruins, the darkness is often deep even in the middle of the day.

When you are in compact darkness, and you don't have any gear or mutations to light your way, you have no choice but to feel your way around – a potentially lethal risk to take in the wastelands. To make your way through the darkness, you need to make a Move roll. As a general rule, you suffer one point of damage or doubt (the darkness is frightening) if you fail the roll.

In total darkness you can attack targets at Arm's Length or Near range normally, but first need

to make a Scout roll to get a good look at them. That roll does not count as an action in conflicts – you can Scout and attack in the same turn. You can't Shoot at targets at Short range or more in total darkness.

EXPLOSIONS

In some parts of the Zone, the ground is covered by deep craters, traces of the Ancients' mighty weapons of mass destruction. Such weapons are rare now, if they exist at all, but Gearheads can Jury-Rig some pretty powerful explosive charges (page 54).

The force of an explosion is measured in Blast Power. When the detonation occurs, the GM – or the player whose PC built the bomb – rolls a number of Base Dice equal to the Blast Power for each person within Near range of the blast. For every ☼ rolled, the victim suffers one point of damage. The roll cannot be pushed. Victims at Arm's Length from the detonation suffer one extra point of damage.

Effect Radius: Powerful charges, with a Blast Power of 7 or more, can harm people even at Short range. The Blast Power is then reduced by 6. If there are many people within Short range of the blast, the GM can simplify the process by rolling just one roll and apply the result to all victims.

Shrapnel: Normal explosions have a weapon damage of 1 – the damage is simply equal to the number of ☼ rolled (except at Arm's Length, where it is one more). A mean Gearhead

can arm his bomb with small bits of scrap, like ball bearings or nails, to increase the effect. This is a stunt when using the Jury-Rig skill. If so armed, the Blast Power of the bomb is increased to 2.

Vehicles: Explosions can harm vehicles (below). Roll for the damage to the vehicle as it was a person.

EXAMPLE

Naphta has built a pipe bomb with Blast Power 9 and weapon damage 2. When it detonates, one Zone-Ghoul is within Near distance. Naphta rolls two ☼, which together with the weapon damage inflicts three points of damage on the Zone-Ghoul. Within Short range, there are five more Zone-Ghouls. They are exposed to a blast with Blast Power 3. Naphta rolls a joint roll for them, and gets one ☼. The five Zone-Ghouls suffer two points of damage each.

VEHICLES

In the Zone, there are countless rust-ridden wrecks of vehicles from the Old Age. Only a few of them are in good enough a condition for a Gearhead to repair them and make them run again. Several vehicles are described on the Artifact Cards – these and more are also listed in Chapter 14.

Gear Bonus: Every functioning vehicle has a Gear Bonus, which indicates how powerful and fast it is. The Gear Bonus can be increased by a Gearhead, by souping up the engine (page 56).

Start a Vehicle: To jump into (or onto) a vehicle requires a maneuver. To start the engine of a motor-powered vehicle takes another maneuver to accomplish. Thus, if you get into a vehicle and start the engine you can do nothing else in the same turn.

Fuel: Most vehicles require fuel to run – gasoline from the Old Age or freshly distilled booze. The artifact description indicates how much fuel the vehicle consumes.

Passengers: Most vehicles can carry passengers. The artifact description indicates how many.



Zone Travel: Riding in a vehicle, exploring a sector of the Zone map requires half the time compared to walking (page 122).

VEHICLES IN COMBAT

In a conflict, you can move faster in a vehicle than on foot. Every maneuver spent on movement counts as two. For example, with only one maneuver you can move directly from Short distance to Arm's Length, or from Long to Short distance.

Escaping From Danger: In a tight spot you can use your vehicle to escape. Roll to Move as usual, but use the Gear Bonus of the vehicle.

Ramming Enemies: Most vehicles can be used as weapons, to simply run over your enemies. The attack must occur at Arm's Length. Roll to Fight, but use your Agility and your Move skill instead. The weapon damage is normally 1, but can be increased by a Gearhead (page 56).

EXAMPLE

The Gearhead Naphta has found an old Volvo (Gear Bonus +3) and got it running again. She wants to ram a savage mutant from Short range. She uses her maneuver in the turn to get to Arm's Length, and then uses her action to ram her enemy. She rolls three Base Dice (Agility 3) two Skill Dice (Move skill 2) and three Gear Dice. She initially fails her roll but decides to push it, ending up with one  and two . The savage mutant suffers two points of damage, but the Volvo's Gear Bonus is decreased to +2.

DAMAGE TO VEHICLES

Just like any other gear, vehicles can break down and lose Gear Bonus when you use them. When the Gear Bonus reaches zero, the vehicle won't start any more, and needs to be repaired.

Resilience: The Gear Bonus of a vehicle can also be reduced by external damage. When a vehicle has taken a number of damage points equal to its Resilience rating, its Gear Bonus is reduced one step. When the total amount of damage inflicted

on a vehicle reaches twice the Resilience rating, the Gear Bonus is reduced another step, and so on.

Armor: Some vehicles have a metal hull protecting the vehicle itself and its occupants. Gearheads can improve the Armor Rating with the Jury-Rig skill.

Ramming a Vehicle: You can also use a vehicle to ram another vehicle – but only if your vehicle has an equal or higher Resilience rating than the target vehicle. You carry out the attack in the same way as you ram a person (above).

If you hit, first roll for the armor of the target vehicle. Any remaining damage is inflicted on every occupant in it. The target vehicle itself also suffers this damage, but multiplied by the Resilience of the attacking vehicle.

EXAMPLE

A mutant savage hurls a rock at Naphta's Volvo. The attack hits and causes one point of damage. Naphta rolls for the car's armor, but rolls no . The car takes one point of damage. As it has Resilience rating 2, the damage has no immediate effect. If it takes one more point of damage, the Volvo's Gear Bonus will be reduced one step.







THE ARK

The Ark is your home. This is where you have grown up together with the other mutants, protected from the horrors in the Zone around you. The Elder has kept you safe during the long winter, but the safe haven is no more. The Elder is dying. The People have become young adults, and grub is getting scarce. Mutant is turning on mutant, pacts are formed and plots whispered in the dark. But you must find a way to work together. The People of the Ark need to overcome their differences and find a new path forward. Evolve, build a new civilization on ruins of the old. If you can't, the legacy of mankind will be lost forever.

CREATE YOUR ARK

The Ark, a settlement with a few hundred inhabitants, is the starting point of the game. All PCs live in the Ark and have grown up there. Maybe you have never even left the Ark. The outside world, the Zone, is unknown and dangerous. Only Stalkers and other fools head out there.

To create your Ark is the first thing you should do when you have created your characters. It's a simple process – just follow the steps below. Use the Ark Sheet at the end of this book, or download it from the Modiphius website.

1. ZONE LOCATION

Before you create the Ark itself, you need to determine what Zone it is in. Start by deciding where in the world the Zone is located. It may well be somewhere in your home country, or could be anywhere in the world. Preferably the Zone should, at least partly, contain the ruins of a city – why not your own home town?

Decide, as a group, what the general environment in the Zone looks like. Is it flat or hilly? What major rivers or coastlines are there, what landmarks?

Premade Zones: In the next chapter, you can find two premade Zone examples: *The Dead Apple* and *The Big Smoke*. You can choose to play in either of these Zones, or just use them only as inspiration for your own Zone.

2. THE ZONE MAP

The next step is to create a general map of the Zone. This map is based on reports from Stalkers or fading charts from the Old Age. On the inside covers of this book you will find maps of the two sample Zone mentioned above. You can choose either of these maps or draw your own, together with the GM. A map template is available at the Modiphius website.

The Zone map has a square grid. Every square is called a sector, and is roughly one mile wide. The entire Zone map should show an area at least 20

miles wide. You might think this is small, but remember that the Zone is a strange, labyrinthian landscape, often covered in smog – movement in the Zone is slow.

Most of the Zone map will be blank at the start of the game – only coastlines, major rivers or lakes, prominent landmarks and places rumored to hold great treasures or horrible dangers will be marked out. As play evolves, you will fill in the map (or the Zone Log) with details. Read more about exploring the Zone in the next chapter.

3. TYPE OF ARK

Once your Zone map is done, it's time to look closer at the Ark itself and decide what it is. The People's sanctuary may be located in a variety of different kinds of ruins from the Old Age. Examples:

- ❑ Airplane Wreck
- ❑ Bridge
- ❑ Farm
- ❑ Gated Community
- ❑ Junkyard

- ❑ Mall
- ❑ Oil Rig
- ❑ Prison
- ❑ Scrap Village
- ❑ Shelter
- ❑ Shipwreck
- ❑ Skyscraper
- ❑ Small Island
- ❑ Subway Station
- ❑ Trailer Park

Discuss in the group and agree on something you all like.

4. ARK POSITION

Decide jointly in the group which sector to place the Ark in. Don't put it right in the middle – the central parts of the Zone are usually those most contaminated by the Rot – but also not on the very edge. It is recommended, if not totally necessary, to place the Ark near the sea, a river or a large lake.

5. THE ARK MAP

The next step is to draw a rough map of the Ark, that will make it easier for you to visualize where things happen during play. Mark your PCs' shelters on the map, as well as the Elder's refuge (step 6 below), the dens of the most important Bosses (step 7) and the water source of the Ark (step 10).

In this chapter you will find two sample maps of typical Arks – a scrap village and a beached passenger ferry. If you don't have the time or the inclination to draw your own map, use one of these. You can also download the maps at www.modiphius.com/mutant.

6. THE ELDER

Determine where in the Ark the Elder lives. He is rarely seen in person these days, but his den is still a hub of activity in the Ark and this is where the Chroniclers of the Dawn Vault (page 113) most often can be found. Mark the spot on your Ark map.

7. THE BOSSES

The most influential people in the Ark are the Bosses. They are the focal points for most conflicts.

ABOUT THE APOCALYPSE

"How did the world end? Some Stalkers and other braggarts say they know what happened. That a great plague swept the world and killed everyone. That the bosses of the Old Age fired their weapons of mass destruction at each other and drowned the world in flames. That the gods among the stars, the Ancients' overlords, had enough of mankind's hubris and decided to end it all in fire and brimstone. Maybe it's true, maybe it's just lies and tall tales. The truth is, no one knows for sure. Except maybe the Elder. And he refuses to talk about it. We learned as children not to ask, he would curse and rave at us every time the subject came up. But I've heard him mumble in his sleep. He said that the Ancients ended themselves."

– Hanneth, Chronicler



You should already have established some Bosses when creating your characters, and one of your PCs might even be a Boss himself. Before the game starts, it can be a good idea to describe the Bosses of the Ark a little, and even add one or two more. Bosses come in different types, see the list below.

ABOUT THE ELDER

"Do you remember what it was like before the Elder got sick? He used to walk around in the Ark and talk. Talk and help us with anything we needed. During the days, it was school time and he taught the People to read and count. At night, we'd sit around the fires and listen to stories about the Old Age. The Elder said he hadn't seen it with his own eyes, but that he had read books and seen moving images that showed what a fantastic time it must have been. When the Elder got sick, all that stopped. Maybe it's the Rot that finally got to him. Maybe he's just old. I don't care which. I just want to sit in his lap again, to hear him talk about the green fields, the blue lakes and the great cities full of people."

– Silas, Chronicler

BOSS TYPES

The Despot. Is obsessed with power and loves to demonstrate it. Lets others do his dirty work. Sees enemies everywhere. Reacts with extreme violence to any threats or signs of mutiny.

The Commander. Drills his underlings as if they were soldiers in an army. Does not mind getting blood on his own hands every now and then – that's good for morale.

The Agitator. An inspiring figure who uses fiery speeches to make the People dream of a better future. Is able to rally the crowds and is often seen as a threat by other Bosses.

The Revolutionary. Wants to topple the Elder once and for all, and create a new, fair and equal order in the Ark. Wants to ban private ownership, demote all Bosses and introduce decision-making by consensus.

The Kingpin. Treats most of his underlings as little more than slaves – as his own private workforce. Often undertakes big and megalomaniacal projects, and doesn't hesitate to use violence to get them done.

The Bureaucrat. A low-key leader who rules by referring to the rules and commandments of the Elder. Thinks that the People should do as they always have.

The Cultist. Has attracted a fanatical cult to himself, and is seen as a divine being by his followers. Any doubt of the leader's wisdom is punished harshly. Cults tend to isolate themselves and are often viewed upon with suspicion by the rest of the People.

The Collector. Is obsessed with artifacts from the Old Age, and is constantly trying to expand his collection. Will never turn anything over to the Dawn Vault. Lives in his own world and rarely leaves his lair.

The Hard Worker. Prefers to stand knee-deep in the dirt and work side by side with his henchmen. Has no interest in plotting and scheming, and wants to build something new rather than dig into the past.



8. OTHER NPCs

When you created your characters, several NPCs were mentioned in the premade questions set out in your roles. These are NPCs that you either hate or want to keep safe.

Discuss these NPCs a little more, and let the GM take some notes about them. What are these NPCs like? What do they want? If you like, you can already expand the Ark with some further NPCs, but you don't need to – the GM will introduce more NPCs during play. In Chapter 9, the GM will find typical stats for NPCs.

9. POPULATION

Decide exactly how many inhabitants the Ark has at the start of the game. Keep it around 200 – big enough to create fractions and gangs, but small enough for everyone to know everyone. The population size is important because no children are born in the Ark, and after every game session some in-

habitants will have died – from violence, hunger or disease (page 115).

10. WATER SOURCE

Rot-free water is almost as rare and valuable as grub in the Ark – and thus, a source of power and influence. Decide what your source of clean water is. Some possibilities: an old well, an uncontaminated creek, a small purification device, a collector of rainwater, an old waterpipe.

11. DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

Distribute 12 points across the four Development Levels of the Ark (below).

12. THE SEASON

Searing summer heat, rainstorms in fall, icy winter snow, or the slow thaw of spring. Decide which of the four seasons it is when the game starts.

EXAMPLE

Joanna's gaming group is setting up a new campaign. They begin by choosing a Zone, and decide on the premade Zone "The Dead Apple". The players agree that the Ark is an old subway station, and draw a crude map of it. They mark the Elder's quarter on the map, as well as the dens of three Bosses: Johammed (Collector), Marlotte (Commander) and Oscartian (Cultist). All in all, 212 mutants live in the Ark. The water source is a broken old water pipe that passes the subway station. When the game starts, it's early spring.

DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

Just struggling to survive is not enough. The People need hope for a better future, or you will perish. The End of the World is not only cause for despair, but also a great opportunity. It has given you the ultimate freedom: To create a new society, the way you want it, not shackled by the chains of history and tradition. If only you can agree on which path to take in the Dawnworld. The development of the Ark is measured in four numeric values, called Development Levels (DEVs):

Food Supply: The Ark's ability to feed the hungry.

DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

FOOD SUPPLY

The Food Supply DEV rating determines how hard it is to find something to eat in the Ark.

0–9	The struggle to find grub is desperate. The People only have a meagre stockpile of food left in the Ark, and whatever edible plants and animals individual mutants manage to grow or kill. One ration of grub is typically traded for one bullet.
10–19	Starvation still isn't far away, but the People have enough grub to cover their day to day needs – as long as the harvest or the hunt isn't threatened. Typically, you can get two rations of grub in return for one bullet. Decrease the Session Body Count (page 115) by one.
20–29	Almost everyone in the Ark can fill their stomach every day, and there is even enough to put some aside for hard times. A bullet will typically buy you three rations of grub. Decrease the Session Body Count by two (to a minimum of zero).
30+	No one in the Ark needs to go hungry. The People have the luxury to care about the taste of what they eat and drink, and they have refined their skills of cooking and brewing. A bullet will normally buy you four rations of grub. Decrease the Session Body Count by three (to a minimum of zero).

CULTURE

The Culture DEV rating helps the People understand artifacts and other remains of the Old Age (page 124).

0–9	With the exception of Chroniclers, the People completely lack any form of cultural expression beyond tales by the trash-can fire.
10–19	Most of the People can read and write to a basic level. Some forms of cultural expression – like a place of worship, simple staged plays or exhibitions of scrap and artifacts – may exist.
20–29	Writing skills are more advanced and widespread – there might even be an organized school. There are most likely several forms of cultural expression in the Ark.
30–39	The People have learned much about the ideals of the Ancients, and might even have developed some form of extended suffrage and inclusive governance of the Ark.

TECHNOLOGY

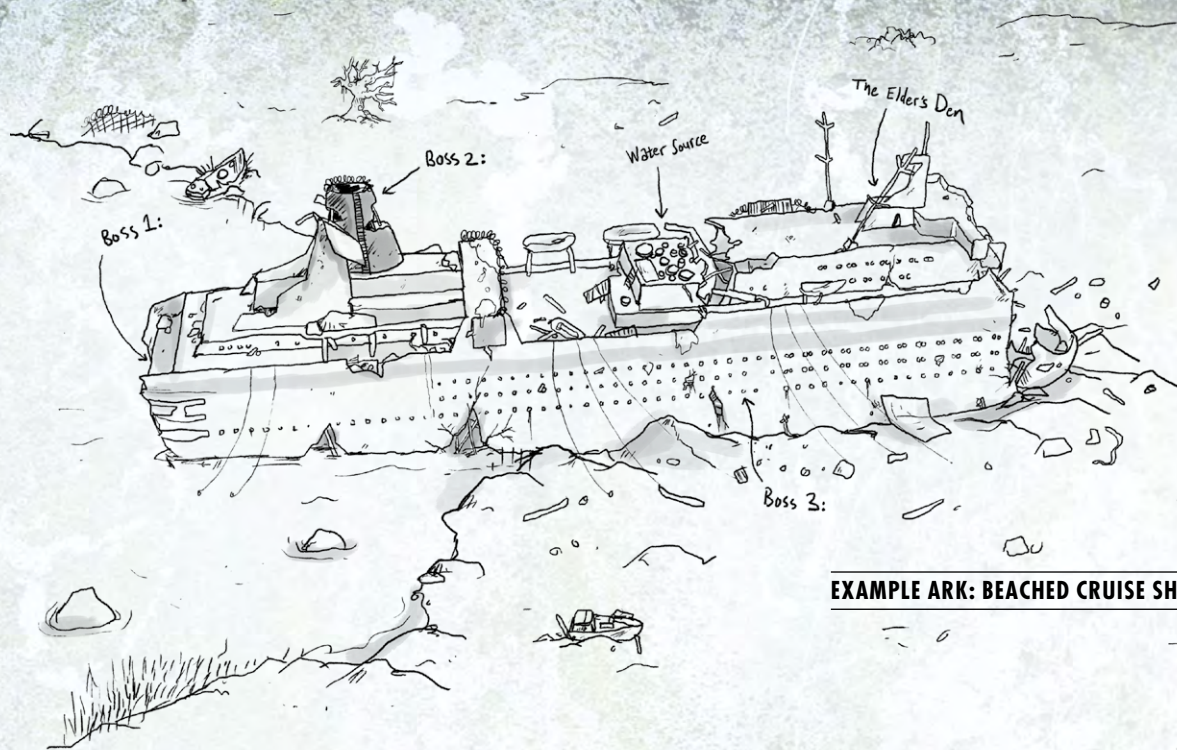
The most important use of the Technology DEV rating is to help the People to understand how artifacts are used.

0–9	Apart from Gearheads, none of the People really understand technology at all. What little the Elder has taught them has largely been forgotten. Most artifacts are incomprehensible riddles.
10–19	The People have achieved a basic technical knowledge by collecting artifacts from the Zone and studying them. Simple constructions, such a mill or a distillery, can be built.
20–29	The People master the basics of mechanical construction, and have most like built a workshop. They can build new roads in the Zone and can create more advanced machines, such as a printing press.
30–39	The People are on the brink of a technological revolution, and can recreate some of the miracles of the Old Age: the steam engine, the heliograph, electric lights and breech-loaded guns.

WARFARE

The Warfare DEV rating determines how well the Ark can stand up against a large-scale attack (page 114).

0–9	Apart from some simple barricades, the Ark is totally defenseless against enemies from the outside. Battle Level 1.
10–19	More solid fortifications, like scrap palisades and lookout towers, defend the Ark. There might be some form of watch patrols. Battle Level 2.
20–29	The Ark likely has an organized militia. If the Technology DEV is high enough, there might be an armory. Battle Level 3.
30–39	The Ark has a standing army that can protect the People, but also attack enemies out in the Zone with great force. The Ark is defended by scrap cannons and flamethrowers. Battle Level 4.



EXAMPLE ARK: BEACHED CRUISE SHIP

Culture: The People's ability to express themselves in writing, art and other forms of cultural production.

Technology: The People's ability to understand artifacts and create new technical innovations.

Warfare: The Ark's ability to defend itself against attacks, and stomp out enemies both outside and within its walls.

At the start of the game, you get to distribute 12 points between these four DEVs. Do it in any way you like – you can set a DEV to zero if you like. Later in this chapter you will see what the DEVs actually mean in the game world. During the course of the game, you can increase the four DEVs in two ways:

- ❑ You can let the People undertake projects.
- ❑ Your PCs can turn in artifacts to the Dawn Vault.

EXAMPLE

Joanna's group distributes 12 DEV points before starting the game. They set Food Supply to 0, Culture to 3, Technology to 3 and Warfare to 6.

THE PEOPLE'S PROJECTS

During the course of the game, you can develop the Ark by having the People undertake *projects*. A project can be anything from building a palisade or starting a mushroom farm to setting up a tribunal or opening a theater. A project does not only involve your particular PCs directly, but is undertaken by a large section of the People.

On page 104 and onward, you will find a list of projects. All projects have *minimum DEV ratings* (the lowest possible score in one or several DEVs

PLAYING WITH PROJECTS

How working on projects affects the role-playing is up to you as a group. You can handle it summarily – just roll dice and move on – but the projects and working on them can also generate dramatic events played out in detail. Projects can be threatened or even sabotaged, often a source of desperate conflict. Projects can also be used as a backdrop for other events in the game.

“STATE OF EMERGENCY”

If the GM deems the situation in the Ark to be very chaotic, she can declare a state of emergency at the beginning of the session. When this happens, no Assembly is held and no new projects can be started. You can work on existing projects, however.

for the project to be started) and a *DEV bonus* that is added to the DEV once the project is completed.

Choose projects carefully – the projects you undertake determine what kind of society you create.

Zone Expeditions are a special type of project, and follow a different rule set. Read more about them in Chapter 8.

ASSEMBLY

At the start of every session, as long as one or more PCs are in the Ark, the players should hold an Assembly. That means you step out of your characters for a short while, and instead represent the entire People. Consider – as players, not as PCs – what projects you think the People should undertake. An Assembly follows these simple steps:

- ❑ Discuss which projects you think the People should undertake at this time. Remember that you can't start a project if the Ark's DEV ratings are too low. You cannot choose a project that has been completed before (with some exceptions). If one or more projects are already underway, you don't need to start a new one.
- ❑ After a few minutes of deliberation, each player can nominate a project that he thinks should be undertaken by the People. The players don't need to agree on one project, but as we will see, projects will be completed much faster if they do.
- ❑ Every player that has chosen a project notes it down on the Ark map and on the Ark Sheet (at the back of the book). Also note how many Work Points remain to complete the project.

WORK POINTS

The list of projects (below) tells you how much work a certain project needs to be completed, measured in so called Work Points. The number of Work Points is always multiplied by the number of PCs in your group. Thus, a Palisade needs 4 Work Points for a group with four PCs, but only 2 Work Points in a group with two PCs.

WORKING ON PROJECTS

That a project has been started doesn't mean that it will be completed. For a project to progress during a session, your *characters* must work on it. Of course, it's not just your PCs who are actually working, but their interest is used as an indicator of the commitment of the People as a whole.

Whenever you like during the session, as long as you are in the Ark, you may choose to work on a project. You can only do this once per session. It doesn't matter if you as a player started this project or not. Describe what you do and roll dice for one of the skills listed by the project. If you have useful gear, roll Gear Dice for it. You can push your roll normally. You can help or hinder another PC, but then you can't roll for yourself during the session.

For every ☢ you roll, the remaining Work Points for the project is reduced by one – decrease the number on the Ark Sheet. When the number

NO PCs IN THE ARK?

If there are no PCs in the Ark at the start of the session, don't hold an Assembly. Instead, the GM can decide to start one project that the People undertake while the PCs are absent. The GM can also decrease the number of remaining Work Points for one project by the number of PCs in the group. No dice are rolled.

The GM can only do this if no PC is present in the Ark at the start of the session. She can use this power to make the Ark develop in a direction the players might not want.

of remaining Work Points is reduced to zero the project is completed, and can be used in the game by PCs and NPCs alike.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

When a project is completed, draw a circle around it on the map. The effect of a completed project is set out in the project description – usually it is only a DEV bonus, but in some cases goes beyond this. To determine the DEV bonus, roll one or more D6.

DESTROYED PROJECTS

PCs and NPCs can sabotage projects, whether completed or not, during play. Projects can also be destroyed by an attack against the Ark (page 114).

A destroyed project is erased from the map. If the project was complete, roll as many D6 as when the project was completed and reduce the DEV ratings accordingly. The People can undertake the same project again at a later time.

Scrapping a Project: The People can deliberately destroy an ongoing or completed project. This must be decided at the Assembly, and all players must be in agreement.

ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE

“Did you ever think about where we come from? About the source of our mutant powers? The People have lived in the Ark as long as we can remember, everyone knows that. But before then? Are we born here, or have we come here from somewhere else? The only one with answers is the Elder. And he always refused to tell us. ‘Don’t look back,’ he’d say. ‘The past holds nothing but death and destruction. Look ahead. Build a new and better world.’ Now he’s on his deathbed, they say. Now we might never know. Unless the answer is in Eden.”

– Victon, Chronicler

LIST OF PROJECTS

DEFENSES

Palisades, earthworks or even a moat. Protects the Ark against enemies on the outside, and makes it harder to slip in or out unnoticed.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Force or Scout

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +2D6

HUNTING PARTY

The People organize expeditions into the Zone to track and kill wild beasts for grub.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Endure or Shoot

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +2D6

CANNIBALISM

If the Ark is on the brink of starvation, the People can resort to desperate measures.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Fight or Manipulate

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +3D6, Culture -D6

Special: Increase the Session Body Count (page 115) by D6.

CROPLAND

A plot of land is set aside for the organized cultivation of grain, corn, turnips, radishes, or even mushrooms. Simple tools like plows and harrows are made and utilized.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Endure or Know the Zone

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +3D6

SLAVE MARKET

The Bosses of the Ark start trading in slaves, taken from the People or other groups in the Zone. They trade with each other or with traveling slavers.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Fight or Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs



DEV Bonus: Food Supply +D6, Warfare +D6

❑ PIGSTY

Pigs and other farm animals from the Old Age roam free after the Apocalypse and have turned into wild and often heavily mutated creatures. Yet, they can be caught and brought into the service of the People.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Endure or Know the Zone

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +2D6

❑ TEMPLE

A shrine where the People can worship the Ancients in the Sky, the Firstborn Mutant or why not even the Rot itself.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Endure or Manipulate

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ ZONE WRESTLING

A metal cage where the strongest mutants fight each other for bullets and glory. Less physically

inclined mutants bet on the outcome. No weapons are allowed in the cage, but mutations are considered fair play.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: Fight or Manipulate

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +D6

❑ ZONE EXPEDITION

An expedition into the Zone is a special type of project, described in detail in Chapter 8. It requires no Work Points and can be undertaken several times over. Only one Zone Expedition can be launched per Assembly. The PCs can decide whether to join the expedition or not.

DEV Requirement: None

Skills: None

Work Points: None

DEV Bonus: Variable

❑ MUSEUM

An exhibition of objects from the Old Age. The People can come here to learn about the ancient world.

DEV Requirement: Culture 5

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6, Technology +D6

□ STATUE

A grand effigy of the Elder or a Boss with an inflated ego.

DEV Requirement: Culture 5

Skills: Endure or Sense Emotion

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ SUNDIAL

A device consisting of a stick placed on a flat disc of some kind, letting the People tell time by watching the shadow of the stick move.

DEV Requirement: Culture 5.

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

□ WATCHTOWER

Up here, you can spot enemies from afar.

DEV Requirement: Technology 5

Skills: Endure or Scout

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +D6

□ HARBOR

A simple quay that makes is easier to load and unload from boats and ships.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

Other Requirement: The Ark must be close to water.

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: —

Special: This project is a requirement for a building a Ship (below).

□ MILL

A simple mechanism that will grind plants into flour for baking bread. Is powered by hand, a Water Wheel or a Windmill.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

Other Requirement: Cropland

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

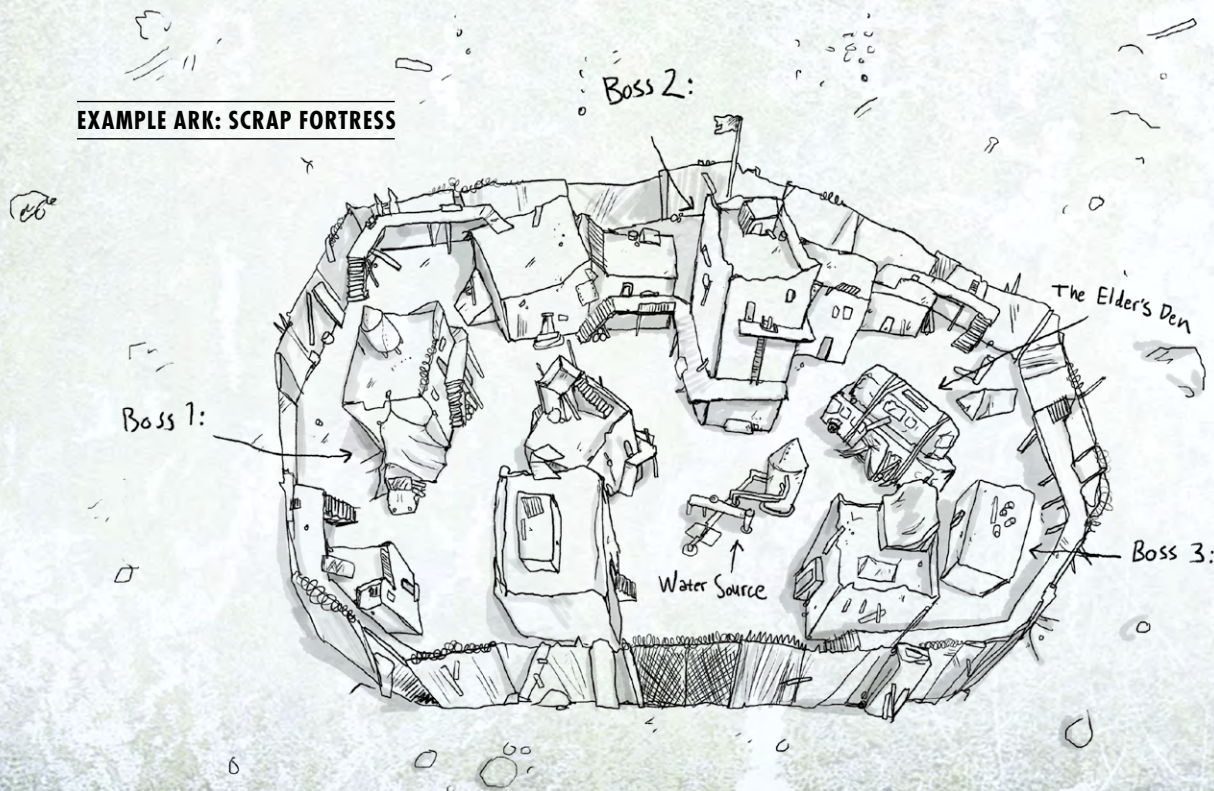
Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +2D6

□ SMOKEHOUSE

A small house or shed where meat or fish caught in the Zone is cured by smoke, making it last much longer.

EXAMPLE ARK: SCRAP FORTRESS



DEV Requirement: Food Supply 5, Technology 10

Other Requirement: Hunting Party

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply + D6

□ MARKETPLACE

Bartering has always taken place in the Ark, but with a designated marketplace, trade is more organized.

DEV Requirement: Food Supply 10, Culture 10

Skills: Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +D6, Culture +D6

□ MILITA

An armed force given the job to protect the Ark against external enemies and maintain order internally.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 10

Skills: Fight or Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +2D6

□ LIBRARY

A collection of books, magazines and newspapers from the Old Age.

DEV Requirement: Culture 10

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +3D6

□ STABLES

Bitterbeasts (page 178) and other animals in the Zone can be caught to be used as mounts by the People – but they need to be tamed and trained first.

DEV Requirement: Food Supply 10

Skills: Endure or Know the Zone

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +D6, Warfare +D6

Special: With completed Stables the People can trade and use mounts for riding.

□ TAVERN

A place where the People can gather to eat, drink and swap stories.

DEV Requirement: Food Supply 10

Skills: Endure or Sense Emotion

ABOUT THE BARREN PEOPLE

“Our days are numbered. The People are doomed to wither and die. We’re not like the wild mutts or the Zone-Ghouls that seem to multiply every day. Not like the Ancients, who filled the world to the brim with their offspring before the end. We mutants cannot breed. We are barren. No children are born in the Ark. You know that, you say, everyone knows that. Sure. But there is hope. We must go into the Zone, seek contact with others. They say there are other Peoples out there, that we can join to grow stronger. What if we are only barren to each other? What if there are artifacts that can help us? Listen to me. If we just stay here in the Ark, we will perish. We have no choice. We must go into the Zone. We must search for others.”

– Astrina, Chronicler

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ THEATER

A stage and ensemble, entertaining the People with stage plays about life in the Ark or the fall of the Ancients.

DEV Requirement: Culture 10

Skills: Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +2D6

□ TORTURE CHAMBER

In this confined area, suspected evildoers and traitors in the Ark can be tormented until they divulge everything they know – and more.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 10, Culture 10

Skills: Fight or Manipulate

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +D6

□ TRIBUNAL

A court given the power to mete out punishment on mutants who steal, murder or disrupt the order

of things. Corporal punishment is the norm, as the Ark can hardly afford to keep people locked up for very long. Hard labor or even exile are also possible penalties.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 10, Culture 10

Skills: Fight or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6, Warfare +D6

❏ WATER WHEEL

A large wheel built from wood or scrap metal and plastic, fitted with a number of blades or buckets.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

Special: Placed in a creek or waterfall, the Water Wheel can power a Mill or a Generator.

❏ WORKSHOP

This is the place to go if you need your broken gear fixed – but it will cost you bullets to get anything done.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

Special: The Workshop is a requirement for several other projects.

❏ SURVEILLANCE

A system of informers, where the People spy on each other and report suspicious activity to one or several Bosses.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 10, Culture 10

Skills: Sneak or Manipulate

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +D6

❏ CALENDAR

Using a few simple astronomical observations (when the Zone smog lifts enough to let the People see the stars), the People manage to recreate a yearly calendar of 365 days.

DEV Requirement: Technology 15, Culture 10

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

ABOUT MEN & WOMEN

“No children are born in the Ark. So what? I think that’s a good thing. During the Old Age, men were in charge and women had to take care of the children, did you know that? Not any more. Now I call the shots.”

– Marlotte, Boss

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❏ WINDMILL

A large fan-like structure placed on a tower of some sort, ingeniously built to always turn into the wind.

DEV Requirement: Technology 15, Food Supply 10

Other Requirement: Workshop

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

Special: The Windmill can power a Mill or a Generator – but only when the wind is blowing.

❏ INK & PAPER

The People have discovered a method of turning tattered paper from the Old Age, or plants growing in the Zone, to paper – and can create simple inks to write with.

DEV Requirement: Technology 15, Culture 10

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +2D6

Special: Ink & Paper is a requirement for the Printing Press (below).

❏ DISTILLERY

This contraption of tanks, bottles and tubes can be used to extract a great number of chemical substances from burning wood or plants. One of its many uses is to brew booze (page 93).

DEV Requirement: Food Supply 5, Technology 15

Other Requirement: Workshop

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: None

Special: Reduces the price of booze in the Ark by half. Needed for several other more advanced projects.

□ ARMY

An Army is more powerful than a Militia, and can be used for actual military campaigns in the Zone.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 20

Skills: Fight or Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +2D6

□ BANK

A place where the People can deposit their valuables and be reasonably sure they are kept safe.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 10, Culture 20

Skills: Comprehend or Manipulate

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ SHIP

A ship built of scrap, bigger than anything a single Gearhead could construct on his own. It could be steam-powered if the People have completed the Steam Engine project (page 111). If not, it is fitted with sails or oars.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

Other Requirement: Harbor

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +D6, Culture +D6, Warfare +D6

Special: The Ship can carry about 50 passengers and can be used to explore coastal sectors of the

Zone. The time required is halved compared to exploring on foot (page 122). The ship can also be used to escape from threats at sea, and gives Gear Bonus +1 in such situations. Armor: 3. Resilience: 20.

□ GENERATOR

A machine built of wires and magnets, capable of generating an electrical current.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

Other Requirements: Workshop. Also requires a Steam Engine, a functional vehicle from the Old Age, or mutants on a treadmill.

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

□ HELIOGRAPH

A device capable of quickly sending short messages over long distances, using light signals and mirrors.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

Other Requirements: Workshop – and the People must have made contact with another settlement, or established one of their own (below).

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ SCHOOL

Here the People can learn about the Old Age, and all about what you have discovered about the dawnworld.

DEV Requirement: Culture 20

Skills: Comprehend or Know the Zone

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6, Technology +D6

□ SHELTER

Hidden tunnels and escape routes dug underneath the Ark. Here, you can seek shelter or make your getaway if the Ark is invaded.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 20, Technology 10

Skills: Move or Scout

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +2D6

ABOUT THE GRUB

“The Elder always took care of us. Protected us, comforted us, gave us grub. There was a stockpile of canned grub, and he knew how to grow more right out of the ground. Now the stockpile is almost gone, and nothing is growing. Grub is scarce and what little there is, is controlled and rationed by the Bosses. Soon there won’t be any grub left. Then we’ll starve – unless we learn how to grow grub or kill beasts and eat them, like the Ancients did.”

– Maxim, Chronicler



❑ PRINTING PRESS

With this heavy piece of machinery the People can print simple pamphlets, papers and books.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20, Culture 20

Other Requirement: Workshop, Ink & Paper (above)

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Culture +2D6

❑ SETTLEMENT

The People find a new spot to live and establish a new settlement in a different sector. When the settlement is complete, decide how many of the Ark's inhabitants move there.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 20, Culture 20

Other Requirements: The new settlement must be located in a sector explored by the PCs or a Zone Expedition (Chapter 8), and at least 2D6 sectors away from the Ark.

Skills: Endure

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: —

Special: The new settlement will have its own DEV ratings, and will start at zero in all of them. New projects are undertaken in the new settlement, separately from the Ark. Some projects, such as the Road, Heliograph and Railroad, connect two settlements. They give their DEV bonus to both settlements when completed.

❑ ROAD

Transforms one of the paths in the Zone into a road, which can be used by carriages or motor-driven vehicles. This project can be undertaken many times over – every sector to be traversed by a Road counts as a separate project.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs per sector

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +D6, Culture +D6 – but only when the Road reaches another settlement in the Zone. The DEV bonuses are for the entire Road, not for every sector.

Special: Traveling through a sector on a Road (page 122) takes half the time.

❑ FOUNDRY

In this steaming furnace the People can melt metal scrap from the Old Age, and mold it into new items.

DEV Requirement: Technology 25

Other Requirement: Workshop

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: —

Special: The Foundry is a requirement for several advanced projects.

❑ EXPLOSIVES LAB

A specialized workshop used to produce gunpowder and other explosive substances.

DEV Requirement: Technology 30, Warfare 10

Other Requirement: Distillery

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 1 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +D6

Special: Combined with the Foundry, the Explosives Lab can be used to manufacture bullets. Bullets are then bartered in the Ark at half the normal cost.

❑ AUTOCRACY

One Boss becomes the sole ruler of the Ark. His word is law.

DEV Requirement: Warfare 30

Other Requirement: Cannot be combined with Suffrage.

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +2D6

❑ FREE ENTERPRISE

The People establish a system where every mutant is free to seek his own fortune. Slavery is outlawed.

DEV Requirement: Technology 30

Other Requirement: Cannot be combined with Collectivism, Autocracy or a Slave Market.

Skills: Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

❑ COLLECTIVISM

All private ownership is outlawed. All mutants must work for the common good, and all resources are distributed equally.

DEV Requirement: Food Supply 30

Other Requirement: Cannot be combined with Free Enterprise.

Skills: Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +2D6

❑ SUFFRAGE

All mutants of the People get the right to vote about issues that are important to the Ark.

DEV Requirement: Culture 30

Other Requirement: Cannot be combined with Autocracy.

Skills: Manipulate

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

❑ STEAM ENGINE

A marvelous machine that runs on firewood and water.

DEV Requirement: Technology 30

Other Requirement: Foundry, Distillery

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

Special: Can power a Generator, a Train or a Steam Car (below).

❑ STEAM CAR

A steam powered vehicle that can thunder through the Zone at considerable speed and noise.

DEV Requirement: Technology 30

Other Requirements: Steam Engine

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: —

Special: A Train can carry around ten passengers, increases the speed of movement in combat and cuts the time it takes to explore a sector in the Zone by half. How vehicles work is explained in Chapter 6. The Steam Car be used to escape from threats or to ram enemies.
Gear Bonus: +1. Armor: 3. Resilience: 3.



❑ RAILROAD

To build a rail link through the Zone is an advanced and very demanding project. Every sector to be traversed by railroad counts as its own project.

DEV Requirement: Technology 35

Other Requirement: Foundry

Skills: Endure or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: —

Special: Makes it possible to build a Train (below).

❑ TRAIN

When steam trains start to roll across the Zone, a great step toward rebuilding the Ancients' civilization has been taken.

DEV Requirement: Technology 30

Other Requirements: Steam Engine, Railroad

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 3 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Food Supply +D6, Culture +D6, Technology +D6 – but only when the Train runs on a rail track that reaches another settlement in the Zone. The DEV bonuses are for the entire railway, not for every sector.

Special: A Train can carry around 50 passengers and will cross a sector in the Zone in mere minutes – as long as nothing blocks the tracks. The Train can also be used to escape from threats or to ram enemies. Gear Bonus: +1. Armor: 3. Resilience: 15.

❑ ARSENAL

In this specialized workshop, the People can mass-produce breech-loaded firearms. An Arsenal is often combined with an Explosives Lab (above).

DEV Requirement: Technology 35, Warfare 10

Other Requirement: Foundry

Skills: Shoot or Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Warfare +2D6

Special: Breech-loaded firearms become available in the Ark.

❑ SURGERY

The bonesaws of the Ark have learned the anatomy of the mutant body, as well as the use of ether or other forms of anesthesia, and can perform simple surgical operations.

DEV Requirement: Technology 35

Other Requirement: Distillery

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: None

Special: Any rolls to Heal a critical injury at the surgical clinic get a +2 modification. The Session Body Count (below) is reduced by one.

❑ ELECTRIC LIGHTS

Illuminates the Ark like in the Old Age, and turns it into a beacon seen for miles at night.

DEV Requirement: Technology 40

Other Requirements: Workshop, Generator

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

RADIO

A very basic device capable of radio communication, using a crystal of some sort to rectify the current.

DEV Requirement: Technology 50

Other Requirements: Workshop, Generator

Skills: Comprehend

Work Points: 2 × number of PCs

DEV Bonus: Technology +2D6

EXAMPLE

In their first Assembly, Joanna and her fellow players decide to start growing a Cropland close to the Ark. There are four PCs in the group, which means the project will require a total of 12 (3 × 4) Work Points. During the first session, all PCs work on the new Cropland and they roll a total of five ☢. At the start of the next session, 7 Work Points remain. During this session, the PCs put in some more work and roll three ☢. 4 Work Points now remain until the Cropland can be used to feed the People.

THE DAWN VAULT

The Elder no longer controls the Ark, the old man's word is no longer law. But one of his commandments is still held in high regard by the People: To collect artifacts from the Old Age, study them and learn from them. Keep them in a safe place. The Elder called this place the Dawn Vault.

When you grew up, it was strictly forbidden to keep artifacts that you found for yourselves. Everything had to be turned over to the Dawn Vault, studied and filed. In theory, that is still the rule. But as hunger sets in and the old order falls apart, mutants increasingly keep artifacts for themselves or even barter them for grub.

Still, the Dawn Vault remains, and is guarded by a group of loyal Chroniclers who refuse to abandon the Elder's principles. Following his will, they continue to collect artifacts, study them and teach what they learn to anyone willing to listen.



ARTIFACTS

You can find artifacts during treks through the Zone – read more about that in Chapter 8. Apart from their primary use, artifacts have two numeric values: DEV Requirement and DEV Bonus, just like projects in the Ark. All artifacts are described on the Artifact Cards and in Chapter 14 of this book.

The *DEV Requirement* is the minimum level in one of the four DEVs that the Ark must have reached for all of the People to be able to easily understand and use the artifact. This is explained further in Chapter 8. The *DEV Bonus* is added to the Ark DEV rating indicated – but *only* if the item is handed in to the Dawn Vault.

All this means that if you find an artifact, you must choose between using it for yourself and handing it in, to the benefit of all of the People.

EXAMPLE

When Naphta found her automatic rifle she had to roll to Comprehend to be able to use it, since the Ark's Technology DEV was below 20. Had the Technology DEV been 20 or more, she would have automatically understood how the weapon works. If Naphta turns her gun over to the Dawn Vault, the Ark's DEV ratings in Warfare and Technology each increase by D6.

ATTACKS AGAINST THE ARK

You all know there are threats out there. Someday, sooner or later, enemies will come to your gates to try to kill you, to eradicate the People. It is only a question of time. When the time comes, you need to be ready to fight.

When an enemy attacks the Ark in large numbers, one of your players roll dice against the GM to see how the battle unfolds. The roll will not decide the final outcome – that's up to your PCs – but only how the battle starts off, which side gets the upper hand.

The strength of each force is measured by its Battle Level. The Battle Level of the Ark is equal to one-tenth of the Warfare DEV rating, always rounded up. If the Ark is alert and combat-ready, its Battle Level is increased by one. The attackers'

ABOUT BURNING THE DEAD

"Why do we burn the dead? Why not just throw the corpses into the Zone or bury them in the ground like they did during the Old Age? Because we have always done so. It's the People's way, like the Elder taught us when we were children. When our bodies burn we rise to the sky with the smoke, back to the other world from whence we came. So said the Elder. Do I believe it? I don't know. It doesn't matter. We have to do something with all the corpses. We can't have them lying stinking in the Ark."

– Danova, Chronicler

Battle Level is up to the GM – from 1 for a small band of ill-equipped fighters to 5 or even more for a large, heavily armed army.

RESOLUTION

When the battle starts, each side rolls a number of Base Dice equal to its Battle Level. Every ☘ means that something goes right for this force – it advances, a key position is taken, enemies are killed. All players and the GM should cooperate to describe the scenes of battle. Every ☹ rolled means that the force suffers losses and loses morale – its Battle Level is reduced one step.

When both sides have rolled, you can each settle or you can push your roll – reroll all dice that don't show ☘ or ☹. You can push the roll any number of times you like – irrespective of whether the enemy force pushes its roll or not.

Keep this up until neither side can or wants to push its roll any more. Then, count the number of ☘ each side has rolled and subtract the enemy's number from the Ark's. Enter the result in the table below. A negative number means the enemy rolled more ☘ than the Ark.

LOSSES

The Ark's Battle Level after the battle is a temporary value. If the People's fighters are tended to and get a chance to rest, the Battle Level is recovered one

BATTLE RESULTS

-2 or lower	Enemies flood into the Ark and destroy everything in their path. The People are hacked up and shot in droves. There's no winning this battle, all you can hope to do is to save yourself and escape. The People's population is decreased by 4D6. Roll one D6 to determine how many projects in the Ark are destroyed (the GM decides which).
-1	The enemy has the upper hand, and the Ark's defenses are breached in several places. The situation is desperate, but the PCs still have a chance to strike back and save the Ark from destruction. The People's population is decreased by 3D6. One project in the Ark is destroyed (the GM decides which).
±0	Stalemate – no side gets the upper hand. A few enemies may have breached the Ark. The battle could go either way. The People's population is decreased by 2D6.
+1	The Ark's defenses hold well, but the enemy is not deterred. A siege might ensue. The People's population is decreased by 1D6.
+2 or higher	The enemies break against the Ark's walls like ocean waves against a cliffside. Any attackers who aren't killed run for their lives, and some are taken prisoner. The People's population is unaffected.

step per day – unless destroyed projects have decreased the Ark's Warfare DEV enough to cause a permanent decrease in Battle Level.

The enemy's Battle Level is recovered at the same speed – but only once they are back in their home territory.

EXAMPLE

A large force of Zone-Ghouls attack the Ark in the dead of night. The Ark has a Warfare DEV of 13, giving it Battle Level 2. The attackers are many and have Battle Level 3. The players roll two Base Dice, the GM three. The players roll no ☠ or ☠. The GM rolls one ☠ but also a ☠ – the Zone-Ghouls advance, but take losses as they go. Both the players and the GM want to push their rolls. Now the players roll two ☠! The GM rerolls one die, it comes up neither ☠ nor ☠. The People counterattack and get the upper hand. The GM wants to push again, while the players (obviously) are happy with their two ☠. The GM rolls again – and gets a ☠! The Zone-Ghouls are beaten. The Ark wins the battle with a +1 difference, indicating that the defenses held up well. The Ark only lost D6 inhabitants in the battle.

SESSION BODY COUNT

Life in the Ark is hard. Violence, hunger and the Rot claims victims almost every day. At the end of every gaming session, one of the players – which one is up to you – rolls one D6. The result tells you how many inhabitants of the Ark that have died in

the meantime, beyond any PCs or NPCs who might have lost their lives “on screen” during actual play.

The GM is responsible for keeping track of the Ark's current population figure. She should always note it down on the Ark Sheet. The figure will steadily decrease during the course of a campaign. Unless you find some solution – that outsiders move into the Ark or that you somehow find a way to bring children into the world – the People are doomed. It's only a matter of time.

Modified Body Count: The session body count can be decreased when the Ark's Food Supply DEV rating increases (page 100). On the other hand, the Ark can lose additional inhabitants during a large-scale attack (above).

ELABORATE THE BODY COUNT

It's not a necessity, but recommended, to elaborate a little on the session body count. Players or the GM can describe how the poor souls met their fate. Did they starve, did the Rot get them, or did they kill each other over some grub? Avoid complex intrigue and events that the PCs would have been able to prevent or affect. These little stories can give color to the Ark and create a sense of things happening beyond the PCs' control.





ZONE TRAVEL

The Zone, the wasteland surrounding the Ark, is a labyrinth of decaying ruins and dark forests. It's a vast mass grave, full of crumbling monuments to the Ancients' hubris and arrogance. Out there, feral savages and mutated monsters roam. And if you're lucky enough to survive the beasts, the invisible, lethal Rot will sooner or later kill you.

For as long as you can remember, the Elder has warned you not to stray into the Zone. Yet, that's exactly where you need to go now, deep into the unknown. To find knowledge. To find clues to the origin of the People – and a path to your future.

THE ZONE MAP

The first thing you do, before starting your campaign, is to define your Zone. Create your own Zone – based on your own home town or any suitable metropolitan area – or use one of the two premade Zones described in this chapter, with maps on the inside covers of this book.

The Zone map is a central component of the game. At the start of the game, most of the Zone map is empty. During the course of play, you will fill it with content. You can make notes directly on the map itself, or use a *Zone Log*, which you can find at the back of this book or download from the Modiphius website. There, you will also find a template that you can use to draw your own Zone maps.

SECTORS

The Zone map has a grid overlay. Every square in the grid is called a *sector*. A sector is roughly one square mile in size. The map, as well as the sectors, is not only a tool for players – both are used by the People too. Stalkers have divided the map into sectors to help exploration, and they draw new things on the map as they explore the Zone further.

EXAMPLE ZONE 1: THE BIG SMOKE

Outside, it's a jungle, the old pictures show what it was like, but not anymore. Now it's choked by the growth, and the mist ... the mist that gets everywhere, always probing, driftin'...

The few of us who've been out there have got some stories alright. The roads full of machines, broken and smashed, the crumbling piles teetering on edge, one whiff and they'll fall like the others. Then there's the big ol' places in the center of town. Massive with huge stone blocks and columns, not much left inside – but sometimes there's hidden places.

In the East we can see the towering blocks, light glinting off the glass, apparently they used to be covered in it, now between those broken towers there's mist deep as a river, and weird cries like we've never heard before. There's a big swamp

around it and great pickings inside if you can make the jumps between the broken stepping stones of buildings to get there, and survive to tell. No one goes east anymore though.

Out West there's streets where somethin' pushed everything back, rubble and machines. Like they was looking to fix the streets but got nowhere. Maybe they got lost in the mist like people do. There's a big place looks like it was used for fighting by the Serpent Lake. Roof's all broken, just banks of rotten seats around a pool. They say the water is blood red and there's blades and stuff under the water.

North there's a palace on the hill, an overgrown tower they say and a vast glass house full of light, can't believe everything you hear but apparently a princess lives in the tower called Alexandra. I always dreamed I'd meet her one day. Still, sometimes there's a glow in that direction at night so maybe I will.

South there's the big eye, creepy overgrown thing, but there's often a glow in the middle that

makes it look like a big eye, people say it's just the sunset shining through the middle but I dunno ... now and then the whole thing creeks, sounds like wires stretching, or something big settling. Like it's breathing!

Not many of us been south though, there's only a couple of ways across the river and seriously, you don't wanna fall into that dark mess! Since the other bridges collapsed you've got the 'Minster but for half the span there's just a crumbling rubble arch, good enough for single file but you can feel it wobbling, I don't figure it will be there next year.

If you follow the river East, before it gets too hard to see in the mist, there's a big castle and a bridge with two towers. Some ol' raven still squawks at the top of the castle so apparently we're still safe though dunno what a stupid bird has to do with anything. The castle is like out of a fairy tale, it's surrounded by water, and there's no way across unless you want to risk the river - like I said, don't fall in! The only



On the premade Zone maps there are already some notes – markings denoting ruins, warnings of Rot-infested areas and monsters, even wild guesses about the location of Eden. Take these notes with a big pinch of salt – all they reflect is what Stalkers think is out there, and they may very well be wildly inaccurate!

I can still see ol' Ben, he's leaning bad almost as if he'll topple over, kind of looks wrong but he's still there every morning, still says 6 o'clock. Sometimes

Be careful around the Square (most the roads are blocked with rubble there so you'll be lucky to make it that far anyways), the statue that was on the top of the big column is smashed on the ground. Now something else is on the top of the column but the mist is so thick around there you can't make it out. Dunno if I ever wanna find out though, just amazed it's still standing.

Another thing on the river – the old ship, with big guns, half sunk but sometimes there's lights up top, a few people headed over 'Minster to get a closer look but never came back.

Lastly be careful of the tunnels, they're mostly flooded, just a lot of bad stuff down there, they say there's lot of ways to get around under the city quick, come up in all kinds of cool places but well the people usually saying that stuff ain't the ones who been so just be careful right?



steal from them though. Bridgers have a defensive militia. I mean, look at it, it's a bridge, yeah? There's only two ways on. That's pretty easy to defend. Many a group has tried, and failed, to take the bounty the Bridgers have made for themselves. Bridgers take care of each other.

Out there in the water is the Fallen Lady. She's got all these spikes on her head. No one can tell you for sure why. Today, she lies partly in a great bay, but some bits of her can be reached. You can go inside if the people who live there let you. Call themselves Lighthouse Keepers, though I ain't never seen a lighthouse. They're a crazy bunch. Don't argue too much with them, yeah? At night, The Lady's torch is lit by large fires to warn oncoming ships that they are about to enter an area where ruined buildings could rip their hulls and sink them like stones. There's salvagers that'll hope that very thing happens.

The ancients buried their dead beneath large stones on which they wrote their names. Few of

those names are readable now, and fewer still want to venture out to the place where they buried them. I done it though, 'cause I guide people when things get tight. People whisper that the dead here don't all rest, but I never seen anything like that. Then again, I only went once. I ain't no fool. They call this place The Deadlands. I know enough to respect a name like that, yeah?

Not for nothing, but Walled Island is the most fortified place in the city. Walled Island is out in the water, some say it always was. Pirates are there. Powerful ones that'll cut your head off for a scrap of copper. Descended from nasty pieces of work and ruled by a crazy man called "Calico Jack," this small city is one place you need to stay away from. No lie.

That's the main sites. I mean most of the place is underwater right? Had to be one hell of a city back when things were good, and we weren't killing each other for food. Those must have been some fat days indeed, yeah?



ZONE TRAVEL

Trekking into the Zone is not a venture to be undertaken lightly. Prepare yourselves well, plan where you want to go and how long you will be gone for carefully. Bring plenty of grub, clean water and bullets. Weapons, preferably firearms, are a given. If you can, have a Gearhead make you some Rot-suits (below). They won't make you immune to the Rot, but they can help a little. If you can find a Rot-Eater (page 76) to bring along, that's a big bonus. And finally, the most obvious advice of all: never walk into the Zone without a Stalker to lead the way.

MOVEMENT ON THE ZONE MAP

In the Zone, you move from sector to sector. You can move diagonally. Each time you enter a new sector, your Stalker can roll to Find the Path. If you have several Stalkers, only one of them may roll. If the terrain is very difficult, the GM can make you roll to Endure just to get into the sector.

EXPLORING A SECTOR

Each time you enter a new sector, you generally need to *explore* it. That means the GM describes the general terrain and any prominent ruins or other landmarks. You tell her what you want to take a closer look at, or what you want to avoid. In a new sector, you can run into all kinds of threats, but also find priceless artifacts.

TIME & TRAVEL

A typical sector takes four hours to explore, including any encounters. This might seem like a long time, but bear in mind the Zone is a twisted maze of overgrown ruins. You need to proceed very carefully. Sectors with especially difficult terrain can take even longer to explore, while fairly open sectors can be explored in half the time. The GM has the final call.

The Stalker: A Stalker who Finds the Path (page 56) can use a stunt to reduce the time it takes to explore a sector by half – typically from four to two hours. He can also rush you through a sector in a quarter of the time and avoid all threats, but then

you will miss any artifacts, grub or clean water in the sector.

Vehicles: If you are traveling in a vehicle (page 94), the time it takes to explore a sector is also cut in half. This effect is cumulative with the Stalker's stunts – meaning a mounted Stalker can use a stunt to explore a typical sector in one hour and rush through the same sector in about 30 minutes. However, very difficult terrain can make it impossible to use a vehicle.

Nighttime: Only fools would travel in the Zone at night. All exploration takes twice as long in the dark, and Zone-Ghouls and other predators tend to stalk the Zone in great numbers at night.

GRUB & WATER

A Stalker can use stunts to find grub and Rot-free water in the Zone (page 56). Water will most likely be plentiful in the Zone (depending on where in the world it is located), but almost all water is contaminated by the Rot. Don't forget that you must eat and drink every day to avoid trauma (page 92).

BACK AGAIN?

When you have explored a sector, you don't need to explore it again if you return. You now know your way through the sector and can pass quite quickly. Typically, it takes one hour (30 minutes in a vehicle). As a rule, there are no threats or artifacts in sectors that are previously explored – but the GM is free to break this rule.

The Stalker can use his skill Find the Path to look for artifacts, bullets, grub and clean water in a previously explored sector, as long as the GM deems there is more to find (page 57).

SCOUTING FROM A LOOKOUT POINT

One of the best things a Stalker can find in the Zone – apart from artifacts – is an elevated position from which to watch nearby sectors. A normal ruined building is not enough – it needs to be a tower, skyscraper or bridge. From such a lookout, the Stalker can view adjacent sectors and “explore” them. He can roll to Find the Path in the sector he scouts, at little or no risk.

Only one roll is allowed per sector and lookout post, but the Stalker is allowed to roll again when he actually enters the sector. The Stalker can, if nothing blocks the view, roll to explore all eight adjacent sectors.

THE ZONE FOR THE GM

How the GM handles Zone travel and creates the environment that the PCs explore is discussed further in Chapter 11.

ZONE EXPEDITIONS

A *Zone Expedition* is something beyond just a minor journey through the Zone, it is a bigger project that involves the entire People. To undertake a Zone Expedition is therefore a decision that must be taken at the Assembly (page 103).

THE GOAL

When a Zone Expedition is undertaken, the Assembly must first agree on its goal. In game terms, it must always be to increase one of the four DEV ratings of the Ark: Grub, Culture, Technology or Defense. More than half of the players in the group must be in agreement – if not, the expedition doesn't happen.

TARGET SECTOR

When the Assembly has agreed on the goal of the expedition, you need to decide on the target location: choose a sector on the Zone map and what the People believe it contains.

To select the target sector, you must first pick a *starting sector*. The starting sector must be one that has been explored previously by the PCs, but it must also be located next to an unexplored sector. (If no sectors have been explored yet, the starting sector is simply the one where the Ark is located.) Then roll 2D6. The result indicates the distance, in sectors, between the starting sector and the target sector – in a straight line into unexplored Zone territory. Decide together, in the group, exactly where the target sector is located.

The Ruin: Finally, decide what kind of ruin or other structure the People believe is in the target sector. It

needs to be something that can reasonably increase the chosen DEV rating. Some examples:

Grub: Old supermarket, lush valley, overgrown farm.

Culture: Museum, library, movie theater.

Technology: Factory, workshop, airplane wreck.

Defense: Military base, stockpile of explosives, shelter.

EXPEDITIONS WITH PCs

If PCs join a Zone Expedition, play it out using the normal Zone travel rules (above). The other expedition members are NPCs. If you reach the target sector, the GM decides whether it actually contains what the People believed. If so, the chosen DEV rating increases by 2D6 when – and if – the expedition returns to the Ark with its loot.

ABOUT ZONE-GHOULS

“There are many dangers out in the Zone, but trust me, the Zone-Ghouls are the worst. They are wretched creatures of the Rot, spawned by the Zone itself. They are skinny and short like children, but don't be fooled – they hunger for mutant flesh and don't have an ounce of humanity left in them! Thankfully, there are ways to avoid them. First of all, only move through the Zone during daytime. The Zone-Ghouls can't stand the sunlight, not even through the smog – that's why they all dress in hoods and wrap up their heads and hands with cloth. Some say the Zone-Ghouls aren't even living beings at all, that they are evil spirits from the Old Age. But I know better. I know they can bleed, I know they can die. My advice – bring a scrap rifle and never let them get close. If you see one Zone-Ghoul, you can be sure there are at least two more nearby.”

– Franton, Stalker

EXPEDITIONS WITHOUT PCs

If no PC joins the expedition, it simply leaves and is then handled in a summary fashion. Make a note of what the target DEV rating and target sector of the expedition is. In the next session, roll a D6 on the table below at any convenient time:



One or a few survivors stagger back into the Ark. They are hurt, exhausted, unhinged – or all of the above. The GM decides what has happened to the expedition – and if someone or something has followed the survivors back to the Ark.

2

The entire expedition returns to the Ark, having failed to reach the target sector. Something has forced them to turn back – the GM decides what.

3–4

Nothing is heard from the expedition, and rumors spread in the Ark regarding its fate. Roll again on this table in the next gaming session. If you roll this result three times, the expedition is lost for good and never comes back. Its actual fate is up to the GM to decide.

5

The expedition returns, apart from D6 members who have been killed along the way. It didn't reach the target sector, but found something else that is valuable or interesting. One DEV rating other than the chosen one (the GM decides which) is increased by 2D6.



The expedition returns in triumph. Its mission is accomplished and the chosen DEV rating is increased by 2D6. One D6 expedition members have been lost along the way.



ARTIFACTS

Artifacts – items from the Old Age that still work or can provide the People with useful knowledge – are the single most important reason to venture into the Zone. If you find a powerful artifact, you will be praised as a hero in the Ark – but also envied by many.

FINDING ARTIFACTS

You can find artifacts by searching the sectors of the Zone. When the GM says you have found an artifact, draw an Artifact Card or roll on the table on page 189. Alternatively, the GM can decide what artifact you find. Unless it's possible, story-wise, to keep your artifact hidden from the other PCs, you must let the other players know what artifact you have found.

ABOUT OTHER ARKS

"Some nights, when the smog lifts, you can see faint lights at the horizon. Have you seen them? Some say they are just a mirage or some Zone phenomenon best left alone, but I don't think so. I'm sure there is something over there. Something important. I once walked as far as I could in that direction, before the grub ran out or the Rot got me. I didn't make it all the way, but pretty far. Do you know what I saw? Other mutants, just like us. Believe it if you want, but I'm sure there is another Ark out there. We are not alone."

– Krin, Stalker

COMPREHENDING ARTIFACTS

Every artifact has a DEV Requirement. This is the minimum score in one of the Ark's four DEV ratings that is needed for you to automatically understand what the artifact is and how it is used. If the Ark's DEV rating is lower than the DEV Requirement, you must roll to Comprehend the artifact (even if you as a player understand what it is). If your Comprehend roll fails, you can't use the artifact until the Ark's DEV rating meets the Requirement or until someone else shows you how the artifact works.

SCRAP

Artifacts are functioning items from the Old Age. The Zone is also littered by broken things, useless to anyone but the Gearheads. Such objects are called scrap. Scrap has no practical function for most mutants, but can be of some value and can give you understanding of the Old Age. Scrap can be used for trade, but what others will be willing to barter for it varies greatly. You can use the table at the end of the book to quickly roll up a piece of scrap.

THE ROT

Some say the Rot is the lingering effect of the Ancients' weapons of mass destruction. Others say it's the result of some experiment gone horribly wrong.

Maybe it was just Nature's revenge on the human race for consuming the Earth's natural resources too greedily.

For you, for the People, it makes no difference. All you know, all you need to know, is that the Rot kills. It's out there, everywhere. It's stronger in some places, weaker in others. The effects of the Rot are unpredictable – it can be anything from shivers and a fever to hair loss and vomiting blood.

ROT LEVEL

The worst thing about the Rot is that it permeates your body and builds up inside you over time. When you are contaminated by the Rot, you suffer Rot Points. Mark them in the check boxes on your character sheet.

Every sector in the Zone has a *Rot Level*, from zero and up. When you go into a new sector in the Zone, you will usually not know the Rot Level in

it – so be careful and make sure you can get out quickly if you need to. And when you learn the Rot Level, don't forget to note it down on the Zone map or the Zone log.

The Rot Level determines at what frequency you take Rot Points:

	
0	Zone oasis. The sector is as good as free from Rot. You suffer no Rot Points here. The Ark is located in such a sector.
1	Weak Rot. In these sectors you get one Rot Point every day.
2	Strong Rot. In such a sector you suffer one Rot Point every hour.
3	Hotspot. Here, you will die quickly. You get one Rot Point every minute.
	



ROT ATTACK

You can also get Rot Points from individual events or actions in the Zone, such as consuming contaminated grub or drink, wading through Rot-water or coming into contact with contaminated creatures. In these situations, you suffer one or more Rot Points directly. This is called a *Rot attack*.

Grub and Water: Eating or drinking one ration of contaminated grub or water will typically give you one Rot Point.

EFFECTS OF THE ROT

Every time you suffer a Rot Point, you must immediately roll a number of Base Dice equal to your total amount of Rot Points. For every  you roll, you suffer one point of damage (trauma to Strength).

ROT SUITS

Gearheads can construct primitive Rot suits from bits of scrap (page 55). Typically, they provide a Protection Rating of 3 against the Rot – this means you get to roll three Gear Dice every time you suffer a Rot Point – if you roll one or more , the suit absorbs the Rot Point. But for every  you roll, the Protection Rating decreases one step. The suit can be repaired, just like any piece of gear.

There are artifacts that can give you an even better protection against the Rot. The Rot-Eater mutation makes you immune to the effects of Rot-related trauma – you suffer no damage from it – but you still accumulate Rot Points.

DECONTAMINATION

When you are back in the Ark or take refuge in some other Rot-free area, one Rot Point will leave your body every day. If you wash your body in clean water, half of your Rot Points (rounded up) go away immediately (you only get this effect from your first wash on returning to the Ark).

PERMANENT ROT POINTS

When you are contaminated by the Rot, there is a risk that it will stay in your body forever. Every time you are about to lose one Rot Point, roll one Base Die. If you roll a , the Rot Points stays, and

becomes permanent. Mark this on your character sheet.

Permanent Rot Points stay with you for the rest of your life, no matter how hard you scrub yourself. Permanent Rot Points cannot be used by the Rot-Eater mutation.

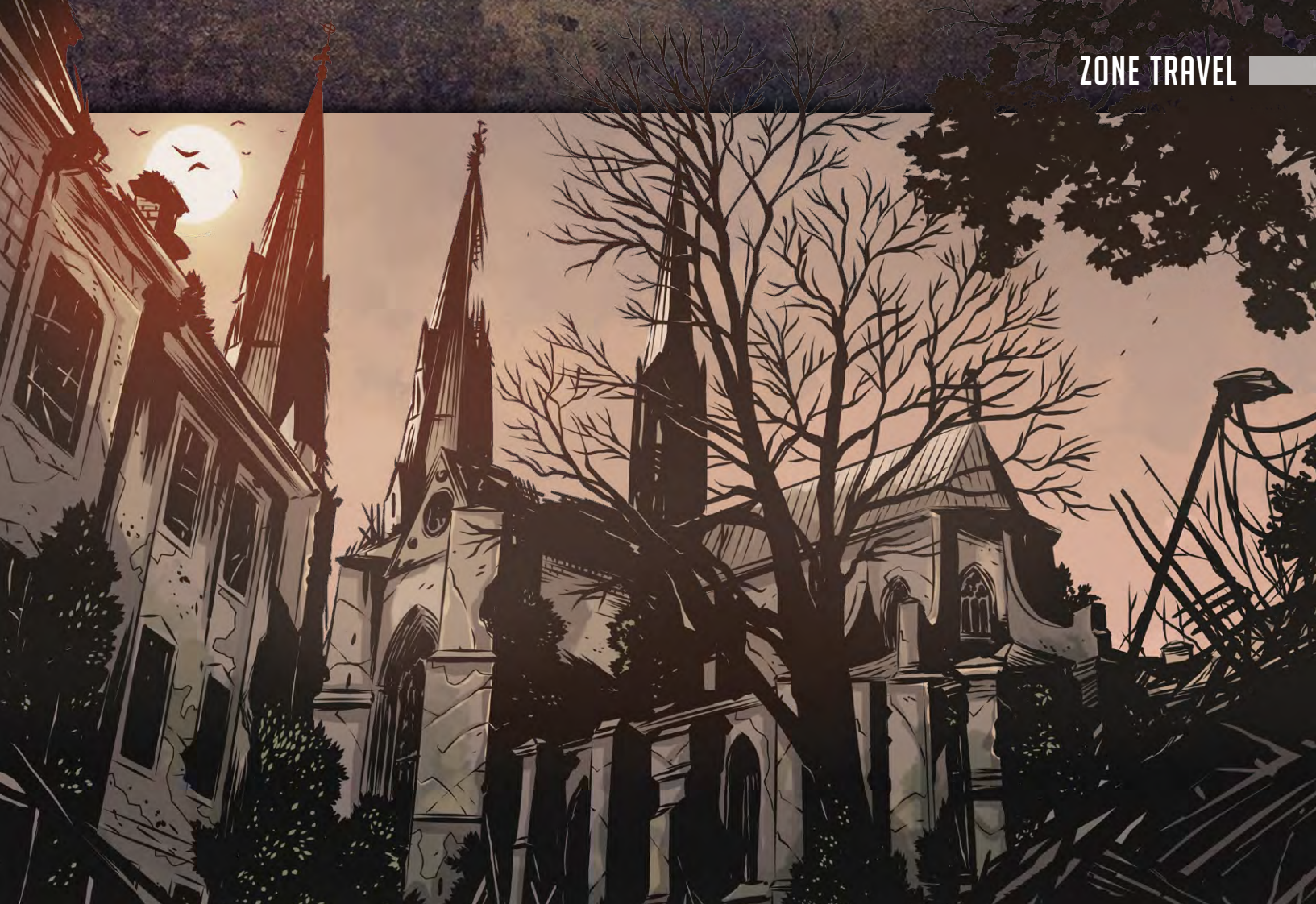
EXAMPLE

Krin is out in the Zone. On the first day, she only moves in sectors with Rot Level 1. In the evening, she suffers one Rot Point. She rolls on Base Die but does not roll , so she suffers no damage – but the Rot Point remains. The next day, Krin walks into a sector with Rot Level 2 and spends an hour there. She suffers another Rot Point and rolls two Base Dice. Still no . Later that day, Krin wades across a contaminated creek – at Rot attack – and suffers another Rot Point. She now rolls three Base Dice, but stays lucky and gets no . At night, by the campfire,

ABOUT THE ROT

“So, you want me to take you into the Zone? You think you have what it takes? You have no idea what it’s like out there. No idea. Let me tell you about the Rot, and we’ll see if you still want to go after that. The good kind of Rot is the kind you can see. Green sludge floating on a still pond. If you get it on your body, it will seep into your wounds, your mouth and eyes. It will slowly break you down. The bad kind of Rot is invisible. You won’t know it’s there until your bones and muscles ache. If you go too close to the hotspot, your hair will fall off. You puke blood. If you don’t get away quickly, you’re done for. How do I survive in the Zone, you ask? I know where to go, and where not to go. I know what water to drink, what food to eat. And I know how to endure pain. The Rot hurts more than you could imagine. Are you still sure you want to go?”

– Yassan, Stalker



the GM gives her another Rot Point for spending the day (mainly) in Rot Level 1 sectors. She rolls four Base Dice and gets two . Krin suffers two points of damage.

The next day, Krin returns to the Ark to be decontaminated, which would eliminate two of her Rot Points immediately. She rolls two Base Dice, and gets one - one Rot Point washed away, but the other becomes permanent. After her decontamination, Krin has one permanent and two temporary Rot Points. As long as she stays in the Ark, she loses one temporary Rot Point per day - but for each one, she must roll to see if it becomes permanent.



ABOUT THE ENCLAVES

"When the world ended, not all people died. We are proof of that. They say some people fled the Apocalypse. They dug deep underground, dove to the bottom of the ocean or left the Earth to build floating cities in the sky. These sanctuaries were called enclaves. But the Apocalypse didn't let people get away that easily. They say a great war broke out between the enclaves, that the last people tried their hardest to annihilate each other. Mighty weapon-strikes crushed underground enclaves and felled others from the sky in a rain of fire. How the war ended? Who knows? Maybe it's still going on?"

- Hanneth, Chronicler





YOUR JOB AS GAMEMASTER

You are the Gamemaster. You are the Ark, you are the Zone, you are the Rot itself. You are the friends and enemies of the PCs, you are the monsters stalking them among the ruins, you are the artifacts waiting to be discovered. You are the truth about the People, you are the journey to discover that truth. It's a tough job, but also great fun. This chapter tells you how to do it, and the following chapters give you all the tools you need – on top of your own imagination.

Mutant: Year Zero doesn't require much preparation on your part. There is no preset course of events that you need to memorize, instead you and the players create your story together, using the tools of the game and your own creative minds.

In this chapter, you will find the basic principles of the game, as well as typical events in the Ark and in the Zone. There are also guidelines to help you run your first session of *Mutant: Year Zero*, and advice on how to create and manage your NPCs.

GAME PRINCIPLES

Twelve basic principles underpin this game. Their purpose is to help you set the right tone for the game, and to be there as a support when you handle various situations that can arise during play.

1. EVERYTHING ROTS

In the world of *Mutant: Year Zero*, nothing endures. The PCs themselves decay and mutate, their gear breaks, the Ark is about to tear itself apart. There is no safe haven. If the players start to feel safe and comfortable, it's time to break something. Let the players build things – gear, projects, relationships – then threaten these things and make the PCs fight to keep them.

2. THERE IS NEVER ENOUGH GRUB

To survive, the PCs must go out and look for resources. The game mechanics will create a constant need for grub and clean water, and it's your job to make them fight for it. But don't make the resources *impossible* to get. In the Ark, there is always a Fixer

or a Boss who can get grub – for a price. Out in the Zone, Stalkers can find grub, but it will probably be contaminated by the Rot...

3. IF YOU'VE GOT IT, YOU'RE A TARGET

If the PCs – against all odds – come across a large amount of grub or bullets, or if they find a powerful artifact, it doesn't mean their troubles are over. They will draw the envy of other mutants in the Ark, who might try to cheat them or just plain kill them and take their stuff. Make the PCs fight to keep what they have.

4. MUTATIONS ARE THERE TO BE USED

The mutations are a central part of the game. Give the PCs plenty of opportunities to use them. Since the mutations are random and not chosen by the players, they may find it difficult to find uses for them. Help them by creating challenges tailored to

the PCs' specific mutations. Is a PC Reptilian? Give him an enemy to sneak by. Does another PC have Insect Wings? Show her a lookout post to fly up to.

5. EVERYTHING IS PERSONAL

In *Mutant: Year Zero*, the PCs are not faceless adventurers killing for gold. They are individuals, with dreams and relationships. Sure, they may strive toward a common goal and they may work for others in return for grub or bullets – but in the end, the game is about what the PCs want for themselves. Treat your NPCs the same way – give them names, give them goals, make them individuals.

6. THE PLAYERS LEAD THE WAY

Mutant: Year Zero is about discovering the mysteries of the Old Age and building a new society among the ruins. That's only going to be fun if the players are allowed to go where they want and build

THE DERELICT OIL RIG (PAGE 147)



what they want. That doesn't mean you should give them everything they desire – on the contrary, the more they want it, the more you should make them fight for it. Your job is to challenge the PCs and give their actions interesting consequences.

7. THE PLAYERS HAVE THE ANSWERS

Ask the players questions about their PCs. How they feel, what they think, what has happened before and what they plan to do next. Ask follow-up questions, be specific. Use their answers when planning new challenges for the PCs.

You can even let the players decide minor things not related to their PCs. What does that ruined building look like? Who meets them at the gate of the Ark? You don't have to describe every detail – let the players contribute.

8. THE END IS NEVER SET

It's fine to consider what twists and turns your campaign might take beforehand. If you want to prepare possible encounters with NPCs or monsters, do so – but *don't become a slave to your plans*. Never decide beforehand how a gaming session or a campaign should end. Challenge the PCs, let them face dangers and misery, but don't try to control how the players react. Instead, let their actions have consequences, and create new challenges based on those consequences. That's how the game world comes alive.

9. DEATH IS A PART OF LIFE

The world of *Mutant: Year Zero* is a harsh place. To kill PCs is not a goal in itself – but if it happens, let it. Don't fudge dice or throw in some miraculous *deus ex machina* to save a PC's life. The players should feel vulnerable. Creating a new PC is a quick process and introducing him to the group is usually easy, since the Ark is small and everyone knows everyone.

10. FEEL THE APOCALYPSE

Paint a vivid mental picture of the post-apocalyptic world for the players. Describe the blackened ruins and the dead forests of the Zone, make the mutants and the misery in the Ark come alive. Let them feel hunger and thirst when grub and water runs out, have them shiver in the atomic winter. But don't get long-winded – don't list everything the PCs see,

hear and sense. Pick some detail – an object from the Old Age, a particular mutant, or something else – and let that thing set the tone for an entire scene.

11. HOPE NEVER DIES

Mutant: Year Zero isn't only about pain and suffering. The darkness needs to be contrasted with hope of a new life, a better life. Threaten the PCs' dreams, but don't snuff them out. Even in the dark night of the Zone there is always a speck of light at the horizon.

12. IT CAN BE FUNNY, TOO

Mutant: Year Zero depicts a grim and gritty world, but that doesn't mean you need to sit stone-faced by the table at all times. The juxtaposition between the old and the new, between what the players know and what the PCs believe, can often give rise to hilarious situations. Embrace that – some humor every now and then will give you a break from, and accentuate, the darkness, and give you all a deeper experience.

EVENTS IN THE ARK

In *Mutant: Year Zero* there are no pre-scripted scenarios to follow, no stories written beforehand. It's you – the GM and the players around the table – who create your story together, by playing the game.

Sometimes, this freedom can feel overwhelming. To help you when you feel lost and lack ideas for what should happen next, you have ten typical events to spring on the PCs in the Ark and ten others when they are out in the Zone. How often you use these events is up to you.

DANGER AHEAD

A new threat appears, but not exactly where the PCs are. They see or hear something in the distance, or they learn something worrying. You can use this event to introduce a new Threat Card against the Ark (Chapter 10), or create a conflict with an existing NPC. Examples:

- ▣ *You hear angry shouts in the Ark. They seem to come from the Boss Marlotte's den. Suddenly, you hear gunfire.*

- ▣ *The Fixer Jonats comes running. Catching his breath, he pants: "The Enforcers Marl and Lenny are on their way here. They're going to beat you up."*
- ▣ *"I swear by the Ancients - I'm not lying," Astrina says. "I saw a creature made of metal moving on the outskirts of the Ark last night."*

FIGHT OVER PROJECTS

During the Assembly (Chapter 7), the players decide which projects the People will undertake. Having NPCs try to sabotage or control the projects is usually an effective way to engage players. Examples:

- ▣ *The Boss Oscartian turns up with two Enforcers in tow. He demands the construction of the temple to be stopped, and threatens to kill anyone who doesn't obey.*
- ▣ *The Generator, the machine meant to give the People light in the darkness of the Zone, has been bludgeoned into useless scrap. Someone has sabotaged it during the night.*
- ▣ *The Boss Johammed spits a mouthful of blood on his rival Maximon's mauled body. "Alright, you work for me now," he says. "The palisade goes there."*

A THREAT ESCALATES

Each of the 25 Threat Cards describes an internal or external threat to the Ark. These threats usually cannot be ignored by anyone in the Ark, nor by the PCs. In Chapter 10, these threats are described in more detail, with suggestions on how to escalate them.

You will usually draw or roll up a new threat at the start of each session, but you can escalate them whenever you want. Always try to make the threats personal. Let them affect the PCs, or NPCs who are important to them, in some concrete way.

FIGHT OVER GEAR

In *Mutant: Year Zero*, the PCs' grub, bullets, weapons and other gear can make the difference between life and death. Want to instantly increase the intensity of a gaming session? Have an NPC try to steal a PC's gear. It can be a stealthy theft leading to a frantic chase for the perpetrator, or brute robbery. Examples:

- ▣ *The Gearhead Quark stares at the ancient weapon you found in the Zone. "Can I hold it?" he whispers. "Just for a minute?"*
- ▣ *The baseball bat hits you square over the head and you fall headlong in the mud, stunned. "Give me your bullets," Montiak hisses.*
- ▣ *A heavy fist pounds the door of your den, waking you up. "Come on out. You have something we want," the Boss Marlotte shouts from outside.*

AN APPEALING OFFER

The PCs' personal goals are central in this game, but a juicy offer from some NPC can also create drama. It can be simple missions in the Ark or in the Zone, it can be trades with artifacts and other gear. Make sure there is catch to every deal, something that gives the PC cause to hesitate. Maybe the risks are too great, the price too high or maybe the deal will get another NPC or PC into trouble. Examples:

- ▣ *The Fixer Sixter smiles. "You need bullets? Why should I help you? But sure, if you do something for me first, I'll see what I can do."*
- ▣ *"We want in on the expedition," Marlotte says calmly. "I can help you get the grub we need. I hear that creep Denrik has more than what's good for him."*
- ▣ *The Boss Johammed toys with the shiny bullets in the palm of his hand. "I'll give you ten bullets if you off Astrina. I know she's sleeping with your friend Jony. That's your problem."*

A PC GETS INTO TROUBLE

Pick one PC, and shower him with misery. Maybe he gets scammed trying to strike a deal, robbed in a dark corner of the Ark or threatened by a powerful Boss. Will the other PCs stand by his side, or leave him to fend for himself? Your best tool for events of this type are NPCs who the PC hates from the start of the game, or made enemies with along the way. Examples:

- ▣ *Montiak stops you in the middle of the Ark. He has some goons in tow. "This creep killed Endel," he says. "She needs to be punished."*

- ❑ *"You tried to play me," the Boss Johammed hisses. "20 bullets before dawn, or we'll kill you and hang your corpse from the palisade."*
- ❑ *The sharp smell of smoke billowing into your den wakes you up. "We don't take orders from you any more!" your rival Lorango shouts from outside. "Time to die!"*

AN NPC GETS INTO TROUBLE

All PCs have enemies – but they also have people they care about and need to protect. The players established who these people are when they created their characters (Chapter 2). If you want to create instant drama, pick one of these NPCs and threaten to kill him – or worse. This should make the player spring into action! And should he choose to leave his friends to a horrible fate, he will soon realize he will be very alone when he is in trouble himself. Examples:

- ❑ *Jony breaks down in front of you. "What am I going to do?" he sobs. "If I don't pay Marlotte before dawn, I'm dead."*
- ❑ *Astrina is nowhere to be found. No one has seen her since yesterday night. Apparently, she was talking about going into the Zone.*
- ❑ *The rumor spreads like wildfire in the Ark. The Boss Johammed is about to get lynched. Who will get you grub if he dies?*

PC vs PC

The PCs may be friends, but in the world of Mutant, all friendship is tested – sooner or later. The most effective way to make PCs turn on each other is to use an NPC that both PCs have some relationship to. Other methods include spreading rumors in the Ark, or giving something to a PC that you know another PC really wants. But be careful – you don't want a conflict between PCs to become a conflict between players. Be sure to know your gaming group well before you use this type of event. Examples:

- ❑ *Astrina hesitates before she speaks. "I know you enjoy spending time with Hugust. But there is something I need to tell you about him."*
- ❑ *"Come on in," Marlotte says. "I have grub, booze and a warm cabin. But not for your friend there. He stays outside."*

- ❑ *Franton lazily swings his bat through the air. "Step aside. I have no fight with you. I only want Silas."*

UNWANTED CONSEQUENCES

The Ark is a small and fragile society. Everything the PCs do will have consequences – sometimes not the ones they expect. Sometimes these consequences will be immediate and obvious for all to see, other times the fallout of a particular action can come much later. Creating new scenes and challenges based on what a PC has done earlier is a very effective way to create drama and engage the players in the story. Examples:

- ❑ *Your shot misses Franton by an inch. Krin – who stood behind him – grabs her stomach. Blood wells out between her fingers.*
- ❑ *The Fixer Sixter shows up outside your den with two Enforcers in tow. "You tried to sell booze to Johammed's crew? Idiot. No one intrudes on my business without getting hurt."*
- ❑ *With your final blow, you feel something break in Hugust's face, and he stops fighting. You look up. Jolisa is staring at you, her eyes burning with hatred.*

A GLIMPSE OF THE DREAM

Every PC has a "big dream" (Chapter 2). The dream is something that seems distant, something the PCs fantasize about when the realities of life are too hard to bear. But every now and then, a PC can get a little glimpse of his dream – the beginning of a path that maybe, just maybe, might lead to all the way there. Examples:

- ❑ *"It's time," Dink whispers in the cage next to yours. "Tonight, we rebel. Tonight, we'll be free. Are you with us or against us?"*
- ❑ *"Franton has found a ruin that contains writings from the Old Age. He can show you the way. I just need something from you first..."*
- ❑ *Suddenly, you feel Astrina's hand on yours. Your whole body shivers. She pulls her hand away, pretends like nothing happened.*

ZONE-GHOULS (PAGE 176)



EVENTS IN THE ZONE

Out in the Zone, the game takes on a different character from in the Ark. Instead of projects, power struggles and intrigue, the PCs are generally alone and exposed to the nightmares hunting among the ruins. In the Zone, cooperation tends to be the norm. Some of the typical events in the Zone are similar to the ones in the Ark, but others are completely different.

To play these events out, you'll generally want to use one of the specific groups, monsters and phenomena described in Chapter 13.

A BEACON IN THE DISTANCE

The Zone is full of threats and dangers, but also of opportunities. Give the PCs something to strive for, to journey toward. It can be a mysterious light in the distance, a building that seems strangely intact, a gate to an ancient shelter, a group of strange people in the distance, or something else. For inspiration, have a look in Chapter 12 and Chapter 13. Examples:

- ❑ *When darkness falls, you see that the Zone tower ahead of you is illuminated. Across the facade of the huge building, you see several pools of light.*
- ❑ *In the room beyond, you spot what looks like machinery from the Old Age. You can't see exactly what it is without going closer.*
- ❑ *"I swear," the water trader says. "One day's walk that way, there is a huge metal gate in the cliffside. It seems to be intact."*

DANGER AHEAD

Just like in the Ark, you can create dramatic tension in the Zone by describing a looming threat, something unnerving at the horizon. It's most effective if you have just used the *Beacon in the Distance* event above, enticing the PCs to keep going forward. The new threat creates an interesting dilemma. Examples:

- ❑ *When you get closer to the old warehouse you see a flickering light, as if from a fire, inside the ruined old building. Someone is there.*

- ❑ *At the horizon, you see a black wall forming. "Dust storm," the Stalker Yassan hisses. "We have to seek cover."*
- ❑ *Krin nervously scouts the surroundings. "It's getting dark, soon this place will be crawling with Zone-Ghouls. I know your friend is out there, but it's too dangerous to keep searching for him."*

A HARD CHOICE

Present a difficult dilemma to the players. It can be the result of the two events listed above, *Beacon in the Distance* and *Danger Ahead* – when they have some enticing goal ahead of them, place a dangerous threat or obstacle in their way. Will they press on or turn back? You can also show them two different things to strive for, and make them choose one of them – or split up. Or offer them two separate paths to the same goal, and let them choose which one to take. Few things engage players as much as a meaningful choice. Examples:

- ❑ *You start to climb over the remains of the bridge, but realize the support-beams are badly corroded by time. Your other option is to wade through the water, but it could be contaminated by the Rot. What do you do?*
- ❑ *The leeches fall from the ceiling and land around you with heavy thuds. In the room beyond them you see several, seemingly intact, artifacts from the Old Age. What do you do?*
- ❑ *Krin reaches her hands toward you through the narrow basement window. "Give me the child! It won't survive the acid rain!" Do you hand the child over to her?"*

GEAR IS LOST

Out in the Zone, the PCs' gear – weapons, grub, bullets and artifacts – can be the difference between life and death. If you really want to make your players sweat – take their stuff. But always give them a chance of getting it back some way. Examples:

- ❑ *You heave yourself up onto the rusted support beam, out of reach for the Zone-Ghouls. But in the climb you drop your scrap rifle. Helpless, you watch it fall to the ground far below.*

- ❑ *You struggle your way across the canal, but your clothes and your gear are soaking wet. All of your grub is drenched in Rot-water.*
- ❑ *When you wake up, Yassan is gone. It seems he has taken all the grub you had.*

SLEEPLESS NIGHT

To keep their Wits intact, the PCs need at least four hours of unbroken sleep per night. It doesn't sound like much, but if you disturb their sleep several nights in a row, it can drive them to the brink of desperation. In the Zone, there is much to keep the PCs awake at night. Example:

- ❑ *The bitter winter cold creeps right through your thin blankets. If you fall asleep now, you might never wake up.*
- ❑ *At first, you think it's just the wind. But the eerie howls grow stronger. Some kind of beast is out there. And it's getting closer...*
- ❑ *You hear a faint electric hum, and the hairs on your skin stand straight out. The hum never stops, it invades your minds and makes it impossible to sleep...*

A PC GETS INTO TROUBLE

Pick one poor sod among the PCs and unleash the full force of the Zone on him. Let the ground give in underneath his feet, have him get lost in the thick smog of the Zone, let a monster bite into his leg and drag him off to a fate worse than death. Sometimes, just dealing some trauma to the PC will be enough. In any case, putting a PC on the spot will test the other PCs' loyalty – what are they willing to risk to save their fellow mutant?

- ❑ *You stumble on debris and fall over. Your ankle is throbbing with pain. When you look up, the others are nowhere to be seen – lost in the Zone smog.*
- ❑ *Suddenly, the ground underneath your feet gives way. Helpless, you fall through the roof of a pitch black basement below the ruined building. Something in your arm breaks when you land. Then, you see something move in the corner of your eye...*

- ❑ *The Zone-Ghoul's iron bar hits Franton square across the eyebrow, and he drops like a log. The rest of you see him being dragged away. What do you do?*

AN NPC GETS INTO TROUBLE

Try to always bring at least one NPC on every journey into the Zone – preferably an NPC that one or more PCs have a relationship to. These NPCs are perfect tools for creating drama in the Zone – place the NPC in lethal danger and the PCs react. Will they leave him to his fate? It is even more interesting if the PCs have different relationships to the NPC, which can mean some may want to save him while others would rather see him gone...

- ❑ *Suddenly, heavy black lumps fall from the ceiling and hit Silas. He screams for help as the leeches bite into his flesh and start drinking his blood. What do you do?*
- ❑ *When you get there, Astrina is lying lifeless on the ground. Some feral mutants stand crouched over her, poking her with their scrap spears.*
- ❑ *The air is moldy and the ground covered by mud. Danko, leading the way, screams for help as his feet and legs are suddenly being pulled down by the quicksand.*

PC vs PC

A Zone trek is always challenging and can make the PCs show what they're made of. Bonds of friendship can be strained to the point of breaking – and beyond. Have a PC find an artifact that another PC would have more use for. Lure one PC in one direction, and the rest in another. Have a PC's grub or artifact go missing and insinuate that an NPC that another PC has a relationship to is guilty of the theft. These kinds of events should be used with great care. Examples:

- ❑ *Franton would probably make better use of the ancient weapon than you are able to. But you're the one who found it, right? Do you keep it, or do you give it to him?*
- ❑ *Ok, are you sure you want to ignore the old tower and keep going? Delta, you're the Gear-head – what do you think?*

PRE-PREPARED EVENTS

Generally, you should keep the typical events above at hand to use at the spur of the moment. Use them when they are needed in the story, and improvise the details. However, you can also pre-prepare a small number of events to use whenever the action stalls. These "loaded" events can be very useful if you feel your inspiration drying up during a game session. They can be directed at individual PCs or at the team as a whole. When using pre-prepared events, remember this:

- ❑ **Make them short and avoid details.** A sentence or two is enough.
- ❑ **Never make one event dependent on another.** Don't create chains of events.
- ❑ **Never be a slave to your pre-planned events.** If they don't seem relevant, scrap them!

- ❑ *Hugust, you need grub to heal your injuries. Will the rest of you give him what he needs? What if there won't be enough for the trip home?*

THE ZONE vs EVERYONE

The Zone can divide, but it can also unite. Every now and then, present the PCs with an obstacle that they'll need to cooperate to overcome. It can be a group of Zone-Ghouls they need to get past, a ruined building they need to go through, or acid rain they need to take cover from. Give the PCs the opportunity to use their skills and mutations for the good of the team.

- ❑ *The sky turns dark and soon heavy snowflakes start to fall. Each time one of them touches the ground, you hear a faint hiss. Soon, acid slush is roaring down on you.*
- ❑ *The Zone-Ghouls are closing in behind you. Ahead you spot a tall ruin that should be a good defensive position. Climbing it won't be easy. What do you do?*

RANDOM EVENTS

If you feel you have no idea what should happen in the game, you can randomly generate an event for the PCs. Roll D66 and use the result from the tables below. If the result doesn't fit with the current situation in the game, reroll or just choose another event.

IN THE ARK

11-14	Danger Ahead
15-22	Fight over a Project
23-26	A Threat Escalates
31-33	Fight over Gear
34-41	An Appealing Offer
42-45	A PC Gets into Trouble
46-53	An NPC Gets into Trouble
54-56	PC vs PC
61-63	Unwanted Consequences
64-66	A Glimpse of the Dream

IN THE ZONE

11-14	A Beacon in the Distance
15-22	Danger Ahead
23-25	A Hard Choice
26-33	Gear is Lost
34-36	Sleepless Night
41-44	A PC Gets into Trouble
45-52	An NPC Gets into Trouble
53-55	PC vs PC
56-62	The Zone vs Everyone
63-66	An Unexpected Encounter

- ❑ *A sharp ozonic smell fills the air and you spot large, semi-transparent bubbles drifting toward you. Thin antennae protrude from their strange, spherical bodies. What do you do?*

AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

In the wasteland that is the Zone, there are many enemies and threats. But if the PCs are lucky, they might also run into people who are friendly – or at

least ready to negotiate. Read more about factions in the Zone in Chapter 13.

Let encounters with other factions be tense meetings. Keep the players guessing. Let the PCs meet a group of friendly mutants – who turn out to be blood-thirsty cannibals. Or let the PCs meet some wild Zone-Ghouls – who seek to bargain, not to kill. Examples:

- ❑ *The mutant strangers lay down their weapons. “Come with us,” their leader says. “Come to our settlement. We have enough grub for everyone there.”*
- ❑ *One of the Zone-Ghouls stops the others. Slowly, he puts his scrap spear on the ground and holds his hands up to show he’s not armed.*
- ❑ *A mutant sits on a wrecked car, dressed in a pieces of junk and scrap. He salutes you all by name, and tells you he’s been waiting for you to give you a message from your future.*

FIRST SESSION

Your first session as GM for *Mutant: Year Zero* can feel a little intimidating. You have no script to follow, no pre-prepared story to lead the players through. Don't worry! The game mechanics – in the form of Ark projects, Threat Cards, and the events above – will give the players plenty to sink their teeth into. Here are some thoughts and advice you might want to take a look at before your first session:

Don't Make a Grand Plan. Do not, prior to play, think up a grandiose story for the PCs to follow. The plot will grow organically, during play. Keep an open mind and play to find out what happens.

Make the Most of PC Generation. Be active and engaged when the players generate their characters. During the process, they establish their relationships to each other and to key NPCs. Take note of all of these NPCs and use them during play.

Begin with a Project and a Threat. The game will typically begin in the Ark. Before the actual role-playing starts, the players will hold an Assembly to choose a first project for the Ark (Chapter 7).

Then, you draw a Threat Card (or roll up a threat, see Chapter 10). The project and the threat are your basis for the first session of play. Start play with a scene related to the project, and bring in the threat to the Ark to escalate the situation.

Take Your Time. During the first session, the players get a feel for their characters. They need to find their place in the Ark, to test their relationships to the NPCs. Give it some time. Listen more than you speak. Use the projects, use the threat, use the relationships to NPCs when you feel the need to move the story along, but don't push it too hard. Ask questions, take notes. See the first session as a prologue, before the real action starts.

Use What You Learn. When the first session is over, things will already have happened. Conflicts have been established, relationships tested. Planning your second session, you'll have plenty of threads to pull. You'll have an idea of where the story will go.

PREPARING SESSIONS

From the second session and onward, you can prepare a little more. Build on what you have established earlier, and spend a little bit of time before the session to think about what might happen next. You can:

- ❑ Think up a few pre-prepared events, but no more than one or two per PC.
- ❑ Choose a new threat against the Ark (Chapter 10), unless you prefer to keep drawing random Threat Cards.

STARTING IN THE ZONE

An alternative way to start your first session is to play the special Zone sector *For a Mouthful of Water* in Chapter 15. In this case, play begins out in the Zone, with the PCs on expedition. This way, you get a chance to familiarize yourselves with the basic game rules before jumping into the intrigue of the Ark.

- ❑ If the PCs are in the Zone, prepare an encounter with a group, monster or phenomenon (Chapter 13).
- ❑ Choose a special Zone sector (Chapter 15) to place in the PCs path or lure them toward.
- ❑ Choose one of the clues pointing the way to Eden (Chapter 16), and consider how the PCs might find it.
- ❑ Make up something completely different.

Avoid preparing too much – the more detailed your plans are, the harder they are to adapt to the players actions. 15-30 minutes of prep time before a session is usually enough. Trust the players and the mechanics of the game to create story and drama!

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

You command acid storms and atomic winters. Zone monsters and battle droids follow your every word. Yet, your most powerful tools are your NPCs. If you want to create tension and drama, it's very effective to use the NPCs that the PCs hate or need to protect.

CREATING NPCs

Start by deciding if the NPC should belong to one of the game's eight roles, and if so, which one. NPCs may have roles, but they don't need to. Role-less NPCs in the Ark are usually people on the sidelines – loners or followers of some Boss lacking a specific task. Furthermore, strangers from outside of the People often lack a role in game terms.

Attributes: In the box on the next page, you will find typical Attribute scores for NPCs. The numbers given are just typical scores – you are free to create NPCs with a higher or lower total if you like. No NPC can have attribute scores higher than 5, however.

Skills: Typical skill levels for the eight roles are also listed in the table. Change these levels as you see fit. An NPC with a role must have at least level 1 in that role's specialist skill.

Talents: NPCs normally don't have talents, extraordinary persons can have a talent or two if you like.

TYPICAL NPC STATS

ROLE	STRENGTH	AGILITY	WITS	EMPATHY	SKILLS
Enforcer	5	3	2	2	Intimidate 3, Fight 2, Force 1
Gearhead	2	2	5	3	Jury-Rig 3, Comprehend 2, Scout 1
Stalker	2	5	3	2	Find the Path 3, Shoot 2, Sneak 1
Fixer	2	2	3	5	Make a Deal 3, Manipulate 2, Move 1
Dog Handler	3	4	3	2	Sic a Dog 3, Shoot 2, Sneak 1
Chronicler	2	2	4	4	Inspire 3, Comprehend 2, Heal 1
Boss	3	3	2	4	Command 3, Shoot 2, Fight 1
Slave	4	4	2	2	Shake it Off 3, Endure 2, Fight 1
No Role	3	3	3	3	Level 2 in one skill

The Coward talent (page 66) can be very useful to keep an important NPC alive for longer.

Mutations: A typical NPC has one random mutation and three Mutation Points. If you want to make a particular NPC a tougher opponent, you can give him more mutations and more MP than normal. Giving an NPC a mutation with a defensive effect is also a good way to protect him.

LET THEM LIVE

If you can, avoid having NPCs dying too quickly. An NPC who survives and can come back is much more interesting than a dead NPC. In the Ark, there is always some Bonesaw around who can save a dying NPC.

Avoid giving the PCs the chance to get to an important NPC at an early stage – if they have enough MP, nothing can stop them. Try to place henchmen in the way, so that the PCs need to deal with them first.

If the PCs despite your best efforts kill off an enemy Boss or some other important NPC – let it have real consequences! Allies of the dead Boss might want revenge, or people might now turn to the PCs for protection and grub that the Boss used to provide for them.

Name, Appearance, Goal: Beyond the numeric stats, there are three things you need to know about every NPC:

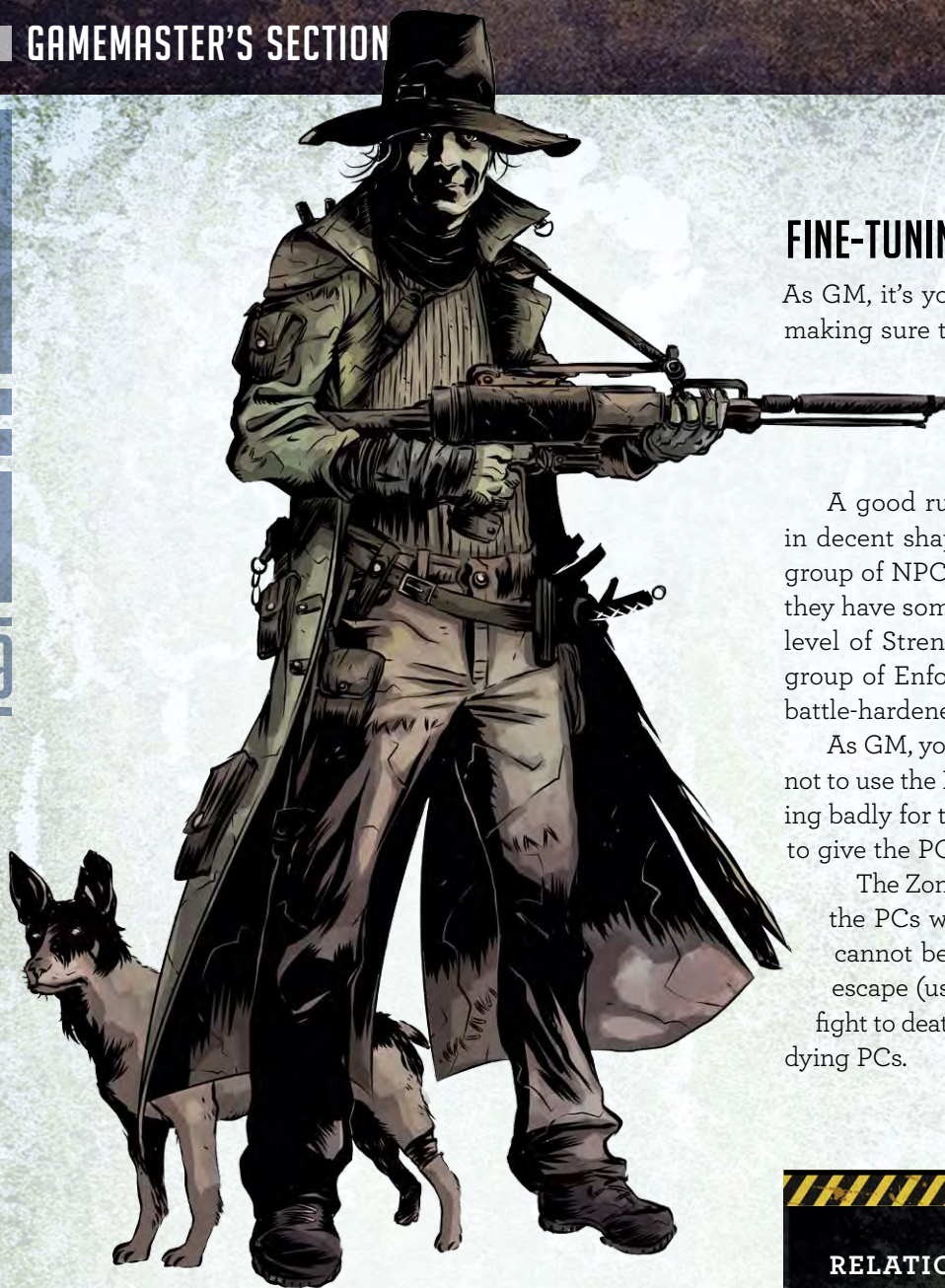
- ❑ What's his name?
- ❑ What does he look like and how does he act?
- ❑ What does he want?

To help you to quickly create an NPC, there is an extensive table at the end of this chapter. Pick the stats and traits that you like, or let the dice make the choice for you. Write the information down. Make a list of all NPCs that have been introduced, and keep it at hand when you play.

PLAYING NPCs

Technically, NPCs work just like PCs. They need resources in the same way, they need to be Healed if broken, and they can develop new mutations. But in practice, you should ignore all game mechanics for NPCs as long as they don't directly affect a PC. Don't count grub and water for every NPC who follows the PCs into the Zone – instead keep the freedom to decide when their resources run out, for maximum dramatic effect. Don't roll dice for NPCs' actions unless they attack or Heal a PC. You can roll for NPC actions in other situation too if it heightens the drama, but as a rule, don't.

NPCs in Groups: When you handle several NPCs with identical stats, you can let them perform actions in a group instead of individually. See Chapter 3.



FINE-TUNING THE OPPOSITION

As GM, it's your job to make conflicts exciting by making sure the PCs face challenging opposition.

Use the number of opponents, their mutations and their weapons as measures to calibrate the difficulty.

A good rule of thumb is that a group of PCs in decent shape will generally be able to defeat a group of NPCs of similar size and gear, as long as they have some MP to use. In combat, the enemies' level of Strength is also important to look at – a group of Enforcers can be a hard to beat even for battle-hardened PCs.

As GM, you are always free to decide whether or not to use the NPCs' Mutation Points. If a fight is going badly for the PCs, hold off using the NPCs' MP to give the PCs a fighting chance to turn the tide.

The Zone is a dangerous place, and sometimes the PCs will encounter opponents they simply cannot beat. Remind the players that they can escape (using the Move skill) and don't need to fight to death. Also remember that NPCs can Heal dying PCs.

BRING NPCs INTO THE ZONE

Back at home in the Ark, the PCs are surrounded by NPCs that they already know. You can let a PC run into an NPC that wants something from him. In the Zone, most NPCs the PCs meet will be strangers. It can be a good idea to let some of the plots in the Ark follow the PCs into the Zone, by sending one or more NPCs with them for the journey. Use these NPCs to help the PCs, or create trouble for them. They may have hidden agendas – maybe they secretly serve a rival Boss.

RELATIONSHIP MAP

A convenient way to handle NPCs is to use a relationship map. Grab a blank piece of paper and write down the PCs' names in the corners. In the middle, note down the names of the most important Bosses in the Ark. Between them, wherever there is space for it, write down the names of other NPCs that the PCs have relationships to. Then, draw lines between names to mark a relationship, and write a word or two next to the line to describe it. The relationship map will grow as play progresses and becomes a valuable tool for you as a GM. It can give you lots of ideas for dramatic events to spring on the players.

DEALING WITH RESOURCES

Bullets, grub and Rot-free water are scarce commodities, and the game will often revolve around acquiring these resources. It's an important part of your job as a GM to make the PCs fight for these resources – but don't make them impossible to come by. Some roles have their own ways of getting grub and water written into the rules (the Fixer and the Boss in the Ark, the Stalker in the Zone), but most of the time, you as GM are in control of how much the PCs can get their hands on. Some advice:

Vary the Supply. Let the PCs find grub easily now and then, in particular when the focus of the game is on something else. Other times, make them risk their lives for a single ration of grub. This will teach the players not to take the resources for granted, but at the same time not make them spend all their time looking for them.



Err on the Side of More. Don't be afraid to give the PCs plenty of grub and water every now and then. When in doubt, give more rather than less. The PCs can't carry all that much anyway, and if they get their hands on a big stash, someone is sooner or later bound to try to take it from them!

RANDOM GENERATION OF NPCs

ENFORCERS

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Hugust	Hulking posture, ape-like arms, grunts	Stop fighting and build something instead	Brass knuckles
2	Ingrit	Short and stocky, hoarse voice	Beat up anyone in her way	Bicycle chain
3	Lenny	Wiry, skinny and muscular	Live another day, there is nothing else	Spiked bat
4	Marl	Fat and with a wheezing voice	Torment others and hear them scream	Scrap knife
5	Nelma	Grotesquely tall, abnormal face	Please the Boss	Scrap axe
6	Rebeth	Weathered and scarred, hissing voice	Show who's strongest	Scrap pistol

GEARHEADS

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Quark	Skinny, spiked hair, always smiling	Find Eden and the truth about the People	Scrap pistol, Gear Bonus +2
2	Lambda	Old blue coveralls, tools in every pocket	Recreate the technical marvels of the Old Age	Scrap pistol with three barrels
3	Loranga	Bald, extremely dirty, kind	Build things to help others	None
4	Naphta	Burn-scarred skin, goggles, smells of smoke	Blow stuff up	Flamethrower
5	Tetris	Wears a headpiece made of scrap, mumbles constantly	Create a device that controls the minds of others	—
6	Zippo	Wears a coat adorned by scrap	Build a huge scrap sculpture in the Ark	Bicycle chain

STALKERS

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Danko	Always wears a gasmask, never speaks	Go farther into the Zone than anyone else	Scrap rifle, Gear Bonus +2
2	Franton	Scarred face, brags a lot	Be revered as a hero by the People	Scrap pistol with two barrels
3	Hammed	Dead eyes, coughs from Rot damage, smells of booze	Walk into the Zone and let the Rot take him	Scrap spear
4	Jena	Camouflage gear, constantly fiddles with her gun	Stalk a victim for days and then kill it	Scrap rifle, weapon damage 3
5	Krin	Skinny and wiry, always on her guard	Keep out of trouble, avoid others	Bow, Gear Bonus +2
6	Tula	Wears a torn raincoat, pulls an old shopping cart	Find something worth fighting for	Slingshot

FIXERS

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Abed	Bald and pudgy, constantly smiling	Make the deal of a lifetime	Scrap knife
2	Denrik	Unnaturally handsome, shiny hair	Make others feel good and take advantage of it	—
3	Fillix	Stares at others' gear, kleptomaniac	Collect a large stockpile of grub and gear	Scrap pistol, Gear Bonus +2
4	Jolisa	Skinny, large staring eyes	Abnormally interested in artifacts and scrap	Bicycle chain
5	Lula	Abnormally short, talks constantly	Swindle the last bullet from everyone else	Scrap pistol
6	Monja	Wheezing voice, always wants to trade something	Become a Boss one day	Scrap knife

DOG HANDLERS

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Anny	Chews on a root, spits constantly	Find someone other than her dog to care for	Slingshot
2	Brie	Black bangs cover a deformed eye	Kill anyone who comments on her appearance	Scrap knife
3	Finn	Greenish, rough skin, mostly drunk	Forget his sorrows	Baseball bat
4	Jony	Face shaded by hood, silent and aggressive	Leave the Ark and find a better life	Scrap axe
5	Krinnel	Only talks to her dog, never to people	Give her dog something good to eat	Bow
6	Montiac	Crew cut, irritable and violent	Beat up anyone who speaks ill of his dog	Brass knuckles

CHRONICLERS

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Astrina	Red mohawk, sees good in everyone	Find a hero who can save the People	Scrap knife
2	Danova	Wears a dress from the Old Age	Understand what the Elder needs, and make it happen	—
3	Hanneth	Black bangs, silent, takes notes constantly	Rise from the misery and dedicate her life to study	—

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
4	Maxim	Skinny and weak, aged beyond his years	Write the story of how the People finds Eden	—
5	Silas	Unnaturally pale, translucent skin, sad	To make the Ark evolve into an advanced society	—
6	Victon	Boyish, reddish complexion, always happy	Become the hero in the story about the People	Scrap knife

BOSSES

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Briortia	Cold eyes, scarred face, crew cut	Turn the People into an army and conquer the Zone	Scrap rifle, Gear Bonus +2
2	Gunitt	Short, skinny, wears a top hat	Collect large amounts of artifacts	Scrap pistol with three barrels
3	Cristor	Tall and skinny, fiery eyes	Topple the Elder and establish equality in the Ark	Spiked bat
4	Marlotte	Cool and detached	Develop the Ark and lead the People to a better life	—
5	Mohamin	Legless and is carried around by Slaves	Rally more followers and leave the Ark with his cult	Scrap knife
6	Oscartian	Extremely fat, can hardly move	Get rid of all rivals and take sole power in the Ark	Scrap pistol, weapon damage 3

SLAVES

D6	NAME	APPEARANCE	GOAL	WEAPON
1	Dink	Silent and observant, bitter and treacherous	Find someone to use to get free	—
2	Eria	Arms and legs like logs, grim	Toil away without complaining	—
3	Henny	Dirty, always hums on some melody	See the bright side of things	—
4	Hent	Massive body with knobby skin, hunchback	Work and suffer until death sets him free	—
5	Lin	Wiry and grumpy, fights a lot	To take her aggressions out on anyone	—
6	Wilo	Skinny and weak, a dreamer	To escape from the Ark and never come back	—

OTHER COMMON NAMES

Abar, Alia, Alix, Almenkir, Amala, Augustian, Bark, Benso, Delta, Doda, Dunk, Edin, Elona, Emalina, Emdor, Endel, Ergom, Erian, Erister, Felin, Fils, Gerber, Grits, Gros, Hild, Ibit, Iridia, Johalin, Jol, Jonar, Juna, Juperia, Kalgu, Kaska, Katin, Kim, Koli, Leodor, Landon, Lard, Linna, Margot, Marlian, Makron, Markot, Mart, Max,

Mintel, Miri, Mohan, Molger, Morris, Mubba, Natara, Nelma, Nely, Novia, Octane, Olias, Olli, Oslo, Otiak, Plonk, Piro, Pontis, Rasper, Regis, Rog, Rutger, Sagabet, Sari, Savik, Silia, Siniss, Slabados, Sofin, Styx, Tegra, Torry, Vabb, Vang, Vilip, Visek, Vorhan, Zanova, Zeb, Zeke, Zingo.





THREATS AGAINST THE ARK

The Threat Cards describe internal and external threats to the Ark. Draw a new Threat Card at the start of each session, or whenever you feel like stirring things up. There are three ways to draw a Threat Card – you should agree in the group beforehand which method to use:

1. Let a player draw a Threat Card and read the text out loud.
2. Draw a Threat Card yourself, without revealing its content.
3. Deliberately choose a Threat Card, rather than picking one randomly.

INTRODUCING THREATS

The new threat will, together with any new or ongoing project, create a backdrop for the session. All of the People will be affected by the threat, including the PCs. If they are not affected directly, then have an NPC they care about get into trouble.

However, the threat does not have to dominate the session completely. If the PCs are already knee-deep in intrigue and action, leave them to it. Or why

not throw the new threat into the mix, to shift the balance of power in some interesting way?

It's your job as a GM to introduce the new threat into the game. Use the threat as a basis for events that you unleash on the PCs (Chapter 9). You should introduce a new threat pretty early in the session, but it doesn't need to be the very first thing that happens.

ESCALATING THREATS

The texts on the Threat Cards are brief and leave many questions unanswered. That's intentional – the cards don't give away the full truth behind the threat, since the players are meant to be able to read them. The rest of this chapter repeats all the information on the Threat Cards, and expands on it with suggestions about how the threats can escalate.

To Escalate a Threat is one of the ten standard events in the Ark, as set out in Chapter 9. Of course, you are free to change or add to these threats as you see fit, or make up something completely different. How the threats play out also depends on the PCs' actions. Note which threats you have

introduced into the game, and keep a record on how they evolve.

BOSS vs BOSS

A Boss sees an opportunity to become top dog. During one bloody night, she tries to wipe out all of her competition and become the sole ruler of the Ark. But one of her rivals survives, and launches a counter-offensive. No one in the Ark is unaffected – if you don't pick a side, no one will protect you against the raging violence.

- Both rivaling Bosses try to recruit the PCs to their cause – with force, if necessary. PCs can end up on opposing sides.
- A third Boss preaches calm and unity, and wins the People's support. Soon, he is targeted in an assassination attempt. The PCs can carry out the deed or try to stop it.
- Finally, the Elder steps forward and speaks to the People. But is it too late to stop the violence, will the People listen?

A CHILD OF THE PEOPLE

The Slave Sira has complained of stomach pains for some time, but who cares about a Slave? Now everyone cares. They say that Sira will give birth to a child. The news spreads like wildfire in the Ark. If it's true, it's the first time that anyone can remember that a child is born to the People.

- A violent power-struggle erupts between Bosses who want to claim Sira and her unborn child for themselves. She quickly becomes a symbol of the People's future. Someone might try to kidnap her – or hire the PCs to do it.
- Sira refuses to say who the father is. Perhaps it's a mutant in the Ark, and the conception is just a random accident of nature. Or the father is someone from outside, like The Man on the Beach (page 148), one of the Wanderers (page 152) or even a Zone-Ghoul (page 176).

RANDOM THREATS TABLE

If you don't have access to the *Mutant: Year Zero Card Deck*, roll D66 on the table below instead. All of the information on the cards is repeated – and expanded on – in this chapter.

THREATS AGAINST THE ARK

11	Boss vs Boss
12	A Child of the People
13	The Derelict Oil Rig
14	The Helldrivers
15	The Hunger
16	The Killing Machine
21	The Last Drop
22	Lost Treasure
23	The Man on the Beach
24	Missing Person
25	Murder in the Ark
26	Mutant Messiah
31	The Mysterious Ruin
32	A New Kind of Beast
33	The Other People
34	Project Sabotaged
35	Revolution!
36	The Sinkhole
41	Starfall
42	The Wanderers
43	The Zone Cult
44	Zone Fever
45	Zone-Ghouls Attack
46	The Zone Monster
51	The Zone Quakes
52–66	Re-Roll

- After some time, Sira gives birth. The People celebrate, but the joy doesn't last. The baby is ill. Maybe there is a cure somewhere in the Zone? In the meantime, the rivalry continues between Bosses who want to take care of Sira

and the child. She might react by fleeing the Ark – and if she does, she will be hunted.

THE DERELICT OIL RIG

Through the thick fog of the Zone it comes floating slowly – a gigantic rusting metal hulk. The four-legged oil platform, as tall as the ruins at the heart of the Zone, beaches and casts its ominous shadow over the Ark. What secrets could be hidden inside it?

- ❑ Someone, preferably PCs, climb on board the oil rig. They find several artifacts, but also dozens of corpses. Strangely enough, they seem to have been beaten to death – very recently. Some are still warm. The dead don't seem to be mutants, but some carry deformations.
- ❑ Log books show that the crew has lived on the oil rig for generations – may ever since the Fall. This find may make the players wonder about the People's own origin – how and when did they actually come to the Ark?
- ❑ Deep inside the oil rig, there is a survivor. He is completely out of his mind and is guilty of killing the others. He now stalks the intruders and tries to kill them off one by one. If caught, he rambles on about “Project Eden” and seems terrified of the mutants.

THE HELLDRIERS

It sounds like a thunderstorm in the distance. But coming closer, the noise turns into the loud revving of powerful engines, and every mutant in the Ark runs to see what is coming. Dozens of cars and motorcycles with grim drivers and riders roll up to the gates. Stalkers have told stories about the fearsome Helldrivers, few thought they were real. Now, they are here.

- ❑ The Helldrivers (page 173) besiege the Ark. They demand booze and grub in return for not burning to the Ark to the ground with their mounted flamethrowers.

- ❑ The Helldrivers try to recruit a PC, or an NPC with a relationship to a PC.
- ❑ The situation sooner or later escalates to open violence – unless the Helldrivers can be persuaded to leave, or somehow be out-manuevered.

THE HUNGER

Grub has been scarce in the Ark for some time, but now the situation is truly desperate. The stockpile of canned food is gone, and every mutant has to find their own means to feed themselves. Starvation sets in and the fight for grub will be brutal.

- ❑ Desperate fights over grub erupt all over the Ark. Riots break out. Someone tries to steal a PC's grub.
- ❑ A Boss tries to steal what little food the Elder and his circle of Chroniclers still have. The PCs might be hired for the job, or try to stop it.
- ❑ A Boss has a radical solution to the problem. If there is nothing else to eat, the People must consume – each other. But who will be sacrificed?

THE KILLING MACHINE

A small Zone expedition returns, bloody and exhausted. Several members of the group have been killed, and the survivors are delirious. They claim to have been attacked by a walking machine. Has the Rot driven them all insane?

- ❑ A Boss with an interest in the Old Age wants to know more about the machine, and organizes a hunting expedition. The PCs are invited to join.
- ❑ Another faction in the Zone (Chapter 13) is also hunting for the machine. As you may have guessed, it is a robot. Maybe there are more of them out there?
- ❑ The hunt for the robot could end in a dramatic showdown. Perhaps the machine can show the way to a hidden bunker?

Comment: Read more about robots on page 177. They will be described in depth in an upcoming expansion to *Mutant: Year Zero*.

THE LAST DROP

The water source in the Ark fails. The well goes dry, the water purifier breaks down or the cistern bursts – whatever the reason, it's a disaster. Whatever Rot-free water is left in cans and bottles will only last a few days.

- ❑ A Boss tries to take control of what little water is left. Things get violent.
- ❑ Dehydrated mutants turn to drinking rotwater from puddles and streams, and Rot fever spreads in the Ark.
- ❑ In the end, the People have no other choice than to find a new water source – or spare parts if they can fix the old one.

LOST TREASURE

An expensive and important item in the Ark has disappeared without a trace. It can be something the People have built: a tool, a spare part, or an artifact from the Old Age. The item has been stolen in the dead of night. Now, everyone suspects everyone else.

- ❑ A PC, or an NPC with a relationship to a PC, is accused of the theft.
- ❑ A PC learns who is behind the theft. What does he do with this information?
- ❑ The perpetrator – or someone who is unjustly accused – flees the Ark. A lynch mob is organized to find him.

THE MAN ON THE BEACH

No one knows where the man without memory came from. One cold morning he lies shivering with hypothermia on a beach near the Ark, where some scavengers find him. He speaks in a strange,

foreign accent, but manages to explain that he can't remember who he is. Apart from a worn coverall with strange markings, there are no clues to his origin. He seems to lack all mutations.

- ❑ The stranger's arrival causes a great stir in the Ark. Several Bosses want to lock him up and question him. The Chroniclers of the Dawn Vault want to talk to him. The struggle over what to do with him could turn violent.
- ❑ The man is confused, but step by step, his memory returns. His cryptic harangues usually make no sense, but at some point he mentions Project Eden. He can even give a clue to the location of Eden (Chapter 16).
- ❑ The stranger's mind seems to clear up, he seems more lucid, when suddenly, he takes his own life. The event causes shock and anger in the Ark.

Comment: The man is one of the cryo-frozen lab assistants from Project Eden. He may have escaped from Eden to find the Ark, or have been sent by Dr Retzius with a mission to report on the current status of the colonies. In any case, the cryo-sleep will have strained and ravaged his mind to the point where no amount of interrogation will make him reveal the truth about the Ark.

MISSING PERSON

An NPC disappears from the Ark without a trace. It might be someone close to a PC, a revered Chronicler or some other important person. Soon, the Ark is awash with rumors about what has happened. Has the missing person been killed? Have the Zone-Ghouls taken him away? Or – has he found Eden?

- ❑ It turns out the missing person had been in touch with another faction in the Zone prior to his disappearance. It could be another Ark, Wanderers (page 152) or even Zone-Ghouls.
- ❑ A Boss or someone close to the missing person wants to send an expedition to search for him.

- ❑ The expedition makes contact with another faction in the Zone.

MURDER IN THE ARK

A generally well-liked person in the Ark, or someone close to a PC, is found brutally murdered one morning. The body has been hacked to pieces. Nothing like this has ever happened in the Ark before.

- ❑ Soon, the killer is found, sitting catatonic and covered in blood in his den. He has only one excuse: The voices made me do it.
- ❑ It happens again. One mutant in a seemingly happy couple beats her partner to death, and then blames the “voices”. Paranoia grips the Ark.
- ❑ A PC is affected. Suddenly, he just knows a another PC must die, right now. He must immediately Fight, and won't stop until he is broken or grappled down. Then, suddenly, the voices stop.
- ❑ The source of the murderous voices is a dying mutant, whose mind is falling apart. His psionic nightmares randomly affect innocent victims. When the People find out – how will they deal with him?

MUTANT MESSIAH

A minor Boss dreams strange dreams and begins to proclaim his visions of death and destruction to the People. Fatalistic hopelessness and the futility of all things are the core elements of this message, which attracts a growing number of followers.

- ❑ A friend of a PC joins the cult, and soon asks the PC to join too. The cult grows daily, causing concern among the other Bosses.
- ❑ The cultists begin refusing to take part in any of the projects in the Ark, instead spending their days performing bizarre rituals. The rest of the People suffer, and resentment towards the cult grows.

- ❑ Finally, things come to a head – the cult must be disbanded, leave the Ark or be destroyed. Maybe the PCs get caught in the middle.

THE MYSTERIOUS RUIN

A Stalker has seen a strange building in the Zone. Could there be grub or bullets there? A Boss wants to send out an expedition, and is looking for volunteers.

- ❑ If the PCs don't volunteer, an NPC they have a relationship to asks them to come.
- ❑ A rival Boss tries to sabotage the expedition. He sends along a secret provocateur, who tries to make everything go wrong.
- ❑ If the PCs visit the strange building and return, some people in the Ark (possible the rival Boss above) publicly questions their story.

Comment: This threat can be used to lead the PCs to visit one of the special sectors in Chapter 15.

A NEW KIND OF BEAST

Wandering in the Zone is always dangerous, but these last few days, even the most fearless Stalkers hardly dare leave the Ark. They say a new kind of beast is hunting out there. Not slow-witted monsters, but creatures with the intelligence of mutants and the ferocity of wild beasts.

- ❑ A Boss rallies a group of volunteers – preferably including some PCs – to go out and face this new threat. Another Boss thinks this is an unnecessary risk, and wants to stop the expedition.
- ❑ The hunting party finally leaves, and soon encounter the strange beasts. The risk of violence is high, but the beast mutants (page 171) are ready to parley. Can mutants and animals get along?
- ❑ One mutant loses his cool, and rashly kills one of the animal mutants. The chance of

peaceful coexistence vanishes quickly, and a violent showdown ensues.

Comment: Read more about beast mutants in Chapter 13. They will be described in depth in a coming expansion to *Mutant: Year Zero*.

THE OTHER PEOPLE

They come walking out of the smog without warning. A group of mutants just like the People – but not as skinny and miserable. They say they come from a settlement out in the Zone, another Ark – and they want an alliance. They ask some of the People to come with them to their Ark, as guests.

- ❑ The visitors tell the People about the good life in their Ark. They say it's ruled by the benevolent "Chairman", and no mutant has to go hungry. The visit divides the People into two camps – one wants to visit the other Ark, the other wants the visitors dead or in chains.
- ❑ Finally, the People decide to send an expedition the other Ark. Try to get the PCs to join.

Comment: Read more about other Arks in Chapter 13. A complete example of another Ark can be found in Chapter 15.

PROJECT SABOTAGED

Under the cover of darkness, someone has sabotaged an important project in the Ark (Chapter 8). All of the hard work is lost, and needs to be redone from scratch. Everyone whispers about who did it and why, and the People start to regard each other with suspicion.

- ❑ A rumor spreads that the guilty person is an NPC (preferably a Chronicler or Gearhead) with a relationship to a PC.
- ❑ The suspected NPC comes to the PC for protection, to save himself from being lynched. A Boss wants him punished.

- ❑ The NPC reveals that he actually is the guilty party. He wants to stop all attempts to build a new society, to avoid another Apocalypse at any cost.

Comment: Chapter 7 explains what happens rules-wise when a project is destroyed.

REVOLUTION!

Discontent is brewing among the People. The mutants hunger, while the Bosses have their fill. All it takes is a spark – an Enforcer strikes his Boss – and soon the entire Ark is set aflame as Slaves rise against their owners and take revenge for years of abuse.

- ❑ A Boss that a PC has a good relationship with is about to be lynched. Perhaps an NPC that a PC is close is part of the mob?
- ❑ A freed Slave proclaims himself "Leader of the People" and installs himself in the den of a dead Boss. He accuses one of the PCs of betraying the revolution.
- ❑ Several new Bosses appear, demanding that everyone in the Ark – including the PCs – say where their loyalties lie. In the end, the Ark is largely back to where it was before the revolt, only with new Bosses having replaced the old ones.

THE SINKHOLE

In the dead of night, the Ark is shaken by a terrible rumble and tremor. When the dust settles, the People realize that nothing but a deep hole is left where some make-shift huts used to stand. The walls of the hole are steep and it is so deep you cannot see the bottom of it.

- ❑ A group of mutants (preferably including the PCs) climb down, and find themselves in an ancient hall with a caved in ceiling. Dark tunnels lead further into the depths.

- ❑ In the tunnels, the explorers may find an old supply room, with thick layers of dust but also some useful artifacts.
- ❑ Further down, there is big mysterious machine that still seems to be active. The machine can activate robots (page 177) or the remains of a computerized defense system.

STARFALL

Suddenly, night turns into day. A light in the sky, stronger than any star, shoots across the night sky from east to west. The fireball disappears for an

instant, darkness briefly falling over the Zone again. Then the horizon suddenly lights up in a massive but silent explosion.

- ❑ The starfall spreads fear in the Ark. A cult leader begins to preach that the People should all leave the Ark and travel to the place of impact. Among his followers is an NPC close to a PC.
- ❑ The cult is about to leave, but is stopped by force by another Boss who refuses to let the People split apart.
- ❑ An expedition is sent to the point of impact. There is nothing there, apart from



Rot-contaminated debris of some strange vessel and a deadly robot (page 177) with orders to kill all mutants it comes across...

THE WANDERERS

They come wandering through the Zone, a scrawny and grim-faced bunch in tattered old clothes. They speak in a strange and foreign accent, but manage to explain that they have wandered for several years from the mountains far away. They ask the People for grub and protection. None of the wanderers seem to have any mutations at all.

- ❑ It turns out that the wanderers intend to settle in the area for good – inside the Ark, or just outside of it. Some of the wanderers treat mutants as subordinate beings.
- ❑ Some Bosses grow increasingly hostile towards the wanderers, who start to act as if they owned the place. Arguments and fist-fights break out.
- ❑ One fight ends with a wanderer getting killed by a mutant. The conflict risks escalating into open war, unless the two sides find a way to coexist peacefully. Whatever happens, the wanderers intend to settle in the Zone for good.

Comment: The unmutated humans and their origin will be described in depth in a future expansion to the game.

THE ZONE CULT

There are rumors about a cult said to live in an ancient bunker out in the zonelands. Stalkers have seen men and women in long robes, strangely untouched by the filth and cold of the Zone. Who are they? Where do they come from? Do they have knowledge or artifacts that can benefit the People?

- ❑ An NPC close to a PC says that she has met one of the robed people near the Ark. She says they are magical beings, and wants help

to visit them. She thinks she knows where their bunker is.

- ❑ A few robed cultists suddenly appear by the gate of the Ark. They are not talkative, and reveal nothing about themselves. They want to know if there are any unmutated humans in the Ark (such as the Wanderers, page 152, or the Man on the Beach, page 148). If so, they want to barter goods in exchange for these humans coming with them. If the People refuse, the cultists will attempt a kidnapping at some point.
- ❑ The People start to distrust the cultists and fear their mental powers, if these have been demonstrated. One Boss takes a cultist hostage, to trade for grub and artifacts. The situation could turn violent.

Comment: The Nova Cult is a sect of mutants with mental powers only. You can read more about them in Chapter 13 and about their base in Chapter 15.

ZONE FEVER

This deadly, bloody disease strikes suddenly and without mercy. From one day to the next mutants go from healthy to dying in a horrible fever, bleeding from all bodily cavities. The fever spreads like wildfire in the Ark. If nothing is done – quickly – the People will perish. But where is the cure?

- ❑ NPCs that the PCs care about are infected and die. The People are split into two camps – one that wants to try to treat the sick and another that just wants to quarantine them and let them die off.
- ❑ A Boss organizes an expedition to reach an old hospital in the Zone, where it is said healing drugs from the Old Age might still be stored.
- ❑ It turns out one of the first infected mutants has had contact with another faction in the Zone – other mutants, morlocks, the Nova Sect or the Wanderers (see Chapter 13). Could they have a cure?

ZONE-GHOULS ATTACK

They attack before dawn, without warning or mercy. They come from the deeps of the Zone, and enter the Ark while the People are sleeping. Then, the massacre begins. The Zone-Ghouls kill, burn and plunder with a feverish frenzy. Can the People stop them – or is this the end?

- ❑ One PC witnesses how an NPC he has a relationship to is surrounded by frenzied Zone-Ghouls.
- ❑ The Zone-Ghouls set fire to part of the Ark. The flames spread quickly.
- ❑ An NPC or a Boss tells a PC to flee with him. The Ark is lost and staying is suicide, he says.

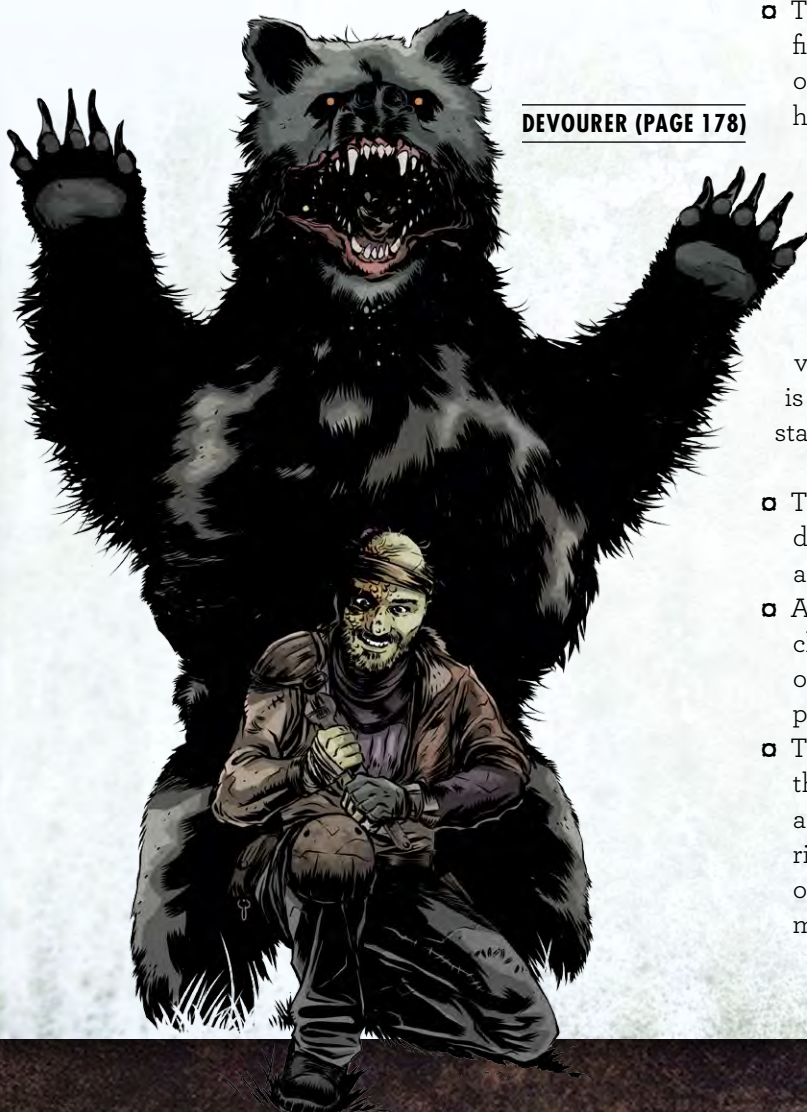
Comment: Read more about the Zone-Ghouls on page 176. Use the rules for attacks against the Ark

(page 114) to determine the flow of the battle. The attackers have Battle Level 2, or higher.

THE ZONE MONSTER

The People have had enough. There is a wild beast about that has torn mutants to pieces out in the Zone, and even started attacking people collecting scrap right outside the Ark's walls. A Boss wants to lead a hunting expedition into the Zone to deal this threat once and for all.

- ❑ The expedition leaves to hunt the beast. PCs are asked to join.
- ❑ The beast can be a razorback (page 180), a devourer (page 178), or some other ferocious monster in Chapter 13. The hunting party finds the beast's lair, riddled with remains of Zone-Ghouls and mutants.
- ❑ The hunting team confronts the beast in a fight to the death. An expedition from another Ark, or a group of Zone-Ghouls, can help or hinder.



DEVOURER (PAGE 178)

THE ZONE SHAKES

It starts as a deep rumble from the very ground itself. Then the earth shakes, soon violently. Anyone not holding on to something is thrown to the ground. Then, as suddenly as it started, it's over. For now.

- ❑ The quakes return, even stronger. The Ark is damaged by the tremors, perhaps destroying a project.
- ❑ A Boss (preferably a Cultist, page 100) proclaims that the quakes are a bad omen, a sign of the Ancients' dissatisfaction with the People and a call for repentance.
- ❑ The PCs and other mutants might search for the cause of the tremors. It is detonations in a bunker deep underground, a war between rival security systems that were never turned off. If the PCs find the entrance they might meet robots (page 177).





CREATING THE ZONE

The Zone is your playground, your fighting ring where you create deadly challenges for the PCs to overcome – or succumb to. Chapter 8 explains the basics of Zone travel from the PCs’ perspective. There, players can read about what kind of gear to bring, how long it takes to explore a sector (map grid square), and more. In this chapter, we take a closer look at how you as the GM can create the geography and inhabitants of the Zone, sector by sector. When the PCs enter a sector you can determine its contents, with the help of dice rolls if you like, in a few simple steps.

SPECIAL ZONE SECTORS

The tables in this chapter help you to quickly populate sectors on the Zone map. But nothing stops you from describing certain sectors in greater detail. You can place them in specific locations on the map, but it is usually preferable to write them in such a way that they can be placed in almost any grid square on the map. Otherwise, you run the risk of the PCs simply not visiting your carefully crafted adventure locations.

Five ready-made such “Special Zone Sectors”, complete with maps and illustrations, can be found in Chapter 15. They work in most Zones and can be used as they are written or as inspiration to your own creations. More Special Zone Sectors will be published in the future.

EXPLORED SECTORS

Sectors that have been explored by the PCs are normally safe ground, emptied of both threats and artifacts. The Zone travelers can pass without risk – maybe. Nothing stops you from breaking the general rule every now and then, it’s an effective tool to keep your players on their toes. Roll up or just choose a new threat. If you want to be nice to your players, you can have the PCs find artifacts that they missed on their first pass too. The Threat Level and Rot Level don’t change, however.

CREATING A SECTOR

The rest of this chapter describes how you create a sector in the Zone. Choose freely from the tables

A GM ZONE MAP

The Zone is explored on the players’ Zone map, sector by sector. If you like, you can have your own version of the map, where you note down things you want to keep secret from the players – such as Rot Levels (Chapter 8), Threat Levels (below) and special sectors. You can also decide if there is any truth to the markings on the premade maps, or if they are pure fantasies.

below or roll dice. Never be a slave to the dice – take the general area of the Zone into account, and reroll accordingly or simply pick whatever suits you. Follow these simple steps:

1. Determine the general terrain.
2. Decide on a dominant ruin.
3. Set the Rot Level.
4. Set the Threat Level and roll the Threat Roll.
5. If there is a threat in the sector, determine what it is.
6. If there is an artifact, determine what it is.
7. If there is a Stalker in the group, let him roll for Find the Path.
8. If you like, roll or choose a sector mood element.

The Season: When you create a new sector, don't forget to consider the current time of year in the campaign. If you roll up threats that don't fit with the season, reroll or pick something else.

1. SECTOR ENVIRONMENT

Start by determining the general environment in the sector. Roll D66 or choose:



D66	ENVIRONMENT	RUIN	THREAT	ARTIFACT
11–12	Thick Woods	No	Yes	No
13–15	Scrublands	No	Yes	No
16–21	Marshlands	No	Yes	No
22–24	Dead Woods	No	Yes	No
25–26	Ash Desert	No	Yes	No
31	Huge Crater	No	Yes	No
32	Glasified Field	No	Yes	No
33–35	Overgrown Ruins	Yes	Yes	Yes
36–42	Crumbling Ruins	Yes	Yes	Yes
43–51	Decayed Ruins	Yes	Yes	Yes
52–56	Unscathed Ruins	Yes	Yes	Yes
61–64	Derelict Industries	Yes	Yes	Yes
65–66	Settlement*	—	—	—

The columns Ruin, Threat and Artifact tell you if there *typically* is an explorable ruin in the

sector, if there is a presence of threats, and if there is chance to find artifacts. Remember, these are just guidelines, not rules – you are free to place ruins, threats and artifacts in any sectors you like.



SETTLEMENT

Settlements in the Zone are uncommon and unique locations. There can be ruins, threats and artifacts in a settlement, but don't roll them up the normal way. Instead, describe the sector in greater detail. Use the Special Zone Sectors in Chapter 15 if you like – all of them are settlements of different sorts.

2. RUINS

If the sector environment (above) has a “Yes” in the Ruins column, you should determine a ruin that dominates the sector. Of course, there are generally many ruined buildings in any sector, but this is the one that catches the PCs' attention and invites exploration. Furthermore, feel free to add a ruin to any sector you like, even if the general environment table says “No”.

There are two different tables for ruins below – one for normal buildings, the other for industrial sites. The individual ruins are described in some detail in Chapter 12. Roll D66 or choose:

YOU'RE THE BOSS!

The random tables in this chapter help you to populate the sectors in the Zone with ruins, threats and artifacts. Choose freely from the tables or roll dice – whatever method you use, remember that the charts are nothing more than a tool for your benefit. You decide what's out there in the Zone for the PCs to run into, your goal is to create the best possible gaming experience. Remember the typical events from Chapter 9, and use the tables in this chapter to give those generic events specific content.



RUINS, NORMAL

D66	ENVIRONMENT
11	Airplane Wreck
12	Amusement Park
13	Battlefield
14	Bus Station
15	Car Park
16	Church
21	Cinema
22	Crater
23	Dilapidated Mansion
24	Fast Food Joint
25	Gas Station
26	Highway
31	Hospital
32	Hunting Store
33	Mall
34	Marina
35	Museum
36	Office Building
41	Overgrown Park
42	Playground
43	Police Station
44	Radio Station
45	Residential Blocks
46	Road Tunnel
51	Ruined Bridge
52	School
53	Shelter
54	Skyscraper
55	Sports Center
56	Suburbia
61	Subway Station
62	Supermarket
63	Swimming Hall
64	Tank
65	Theater
66	Train Station

RUINS, INDUSTRY

D66	ENVIRONMENT
11–13	Factory
14–16	Military Base
21–23	Oil Cistern
24–26	Pipeline
31–33	Purification Plant

PLAYING ZONE TRAVEL

Zone travel is an important and fun part of the game – don't be surprised if the first thing the players want to do in the first session of the game is to rush out into the Zone. Here is some advice on how to make the Zone expedition a rewarding experience:

Follow the Players. Let the players explore what they want. Do they feel like digging around in a ruined building that you just mentioned in passing? Let them! Consider expanding this location and place a Zone event (Chapter 9) there. Add an extra threat or artifact, or at least some fun scrap.

Don't Get Stuck. Despite the above paragraph – every sector can't contain threats and treasures. When you think the players have looked around enough and there is nothing more to be found in the sector – tell them. Avoid getting stuck for a long time in every sector. Some sectors are just empty wasteland and can be passed quickly.

Give Them Scrap. Don't forget the scrap table in the back of the book. Giving the PCs scrap often creates fun situations and helps to set the mood of the game, without making them more powerful. You don't need to worry about giving them too much!

D66	ENVIRONMENT
34–36	Power Line
41–43	Radio Mast
44–46	Refinery
51–53	Rubbish Dump
54–56	Shipwreck
61–63	Shooting Range
64–66	Windmill



3. ROT LEVEL

Choose or roll the Rot Level in the sector, a number from 0 to 3. Level 1 is by far the most common. No sector has Rot Level 3 in its entirety, only in specific locations in sector – so called *Rot hotspots*. You can read more about Rot Level and how it works in Chapter 8. If you have a secret GM Zone map (above) you can determine Rot Levels in advance.



D66	ROT LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
11–12	0	Rot Oasis. The PCs are safe from the Rot here.
13–55	1	Weak Rot. The PCs suffer one Rot Point per day spent in such sectors.
56–66	2	Rot-Heavy Area. The PCs suffer one Rot Point per hour.



4. THREAT LEVEL

The next step is to determine the Threat Level, a number from zero and up. You set the Threat Level yourself, with the below table as a guideline. A high Threat Level means a more dangerous sector, but with a greater chance of finding untouched artifacts.



THREAT LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
1–4	Fringe Zone Sectors

THREAT LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
5–8	Central Zone Sectors
9+	Unusually Dangerous Areas

When the PCs walk into the sector, roll a number of Base Dice equal to the Threat Level. If the sector environment (above) has a “Yes” in the artifacts column, every  you roll means there is one artifact in the sector. If you roll at least one , there is a threat in the sector, and the more  you roll, the more dangerous the threat is – see point 5 below.

Nighttime: After dark, it’s even more risky to travel in the Zone. As a rule of thumb, increase the Threat Level by three at night.



5. THREATS IN THE ZONE

Threats in the Zone come in three types: humanoids, monsters and phenomena. Read more about them in Chapter 13. Roll D6 or choose:



D6	THREAT TYPE
1–2	Humanoid
3–5	Monster
6	Phenomenon

Humanoids are individuals or groups of intelligent beings, often connected to one factions of the Zone (page 170). Roll D66 or choose:

D66	HUMANOID THREAT
11	Amnesiac
12–13	Beast Mutants
14–16	Cannibals
21–22	Doom Cultists
23–25	Exiled Mutants
26–32	Expedition from another Ark
33–35	Helldrivers
36–42	Morlocks

HANDLING THE THREAT ROLL

You can handle the threat roll in several different ways, depending on the preferences in your gaming group:

- ❑ Reveal the Threat Level and roll the dice openly. This way, the players will know if there are artifacts and threats in the sector, but not what or where they are.
- ❑ Roll the dice without showing the players the result.
- ❑ Don't roll dice at all, instead decide for yourself if there are artifacts and threats in the sector. In this case, you don't even need to set a Threat Level at all.

D66 HUMANOID THREAT

43-44	Nova Cultists
45-46	Patrol from the Ark
51-52	Scrap Oracle
53-54	Wanderers
55-56	Water Trader
61-62	Wreckers
63-66	Zone-Ghouls

Monsters are mindless beasts, roaming the wastelands. Some are mutated versions of common animals, others are different beings entirely. Roll D66 or choose:

D66 MONSTER THREAT

11-12	Acid Grass
13	Air Jellies
14	Automaton
15-16	Bitterbeasts
21-22	Deathworm
23-24	Devourer
25-26	Grazers
31	Gutfish (infected water)
32	Killer Tree

D66 MONSTER THREAT

33	Mind Mosquitoes
34	Nightmare Flowers
35	Parasite Fungus
36	Razorback
41-42	Rot Ants
43	Rotfish
44-45	Scrap Crows
46	Trash Hawk
51	Worm Swarm
52-54	Zone Dogs
55-56	Zone Leeches
61-63	Zone Rats
64-65	Zone Spider
65-66	Zone Wasps

Phenomena are threats of a non-living nature. Roll D66 or choose:

D66 PHENOMENON THREAT

11-13	Acid Rain
14-15	Ash Storm
16-21	Dust Tornado
22-23	Electric Storm
24	Ghost Lights
25	Inertia Field
26-31	Magnetic Field
32	Mirage
33-34	Mud Puddles
35-36	Night Lights
41	Obelisk
42-43	Pillars of Light
44-46	Rot Hotspot
51-52	Rot Wind
53-54	Sinkhole
55-56	Temperature Drop / Heat Wave
61-62	Unexploded Ordnance
63	Vacuum
64-66	Zone Smog



THE STALKER & THREATS

A Stalker who successfully Finds the Path when entering a new sector will spot the threat in time to avoid it. To move ahead, the PCs will often need to deal with the threat anyway – but they can engage it prepared and from some distance. If the Stalker fails his roll – or if there is no Stalker in the group – the PCs will walk right into the threat. If the threat is a living being, it will likely try to ambush them (page 81).

Comment: It's important that even a group with a skilled Stalker doesn't feel safe in the Zone. If the Stalker is too confident, let him spot the first threat in time, but then throw in another one when he least expects it. The Find the Path skill should be very useful, but not protect the group from all dangers.

6. ARTIFACTS

If the threat roll (step 4 above) determines that there are artifacts to be found in the sector – or if you decide that it is the case – it's now time to determine what they are. Draw random Artifact Cards or choose artifacts that you think are appropriate for the location or that would be interesting for the PCs to have. Don't forget to slip them clues to Eden every now and then (Chapter 16).

Read more about artifacts in Chapter 14. There you can also find a random table to use if you don't have access to the Artifact Cards.

THE STALKER & ARTIFACTS

If a Stalker Finds the Path and spends a stunt on finding artifacts, he will find one if it's there to be found. He might not spot it immediately, but will have a pretty good idea of where to look.

Make them Fight for It: You are perfectly within your rights to put some obstacles in front of the

artifact. Most likely it won't just lie on the ground to be picked up. If there is a humanoid threat in the sector it is likely that this threat possesses the artifact, and the PCs will need to fight for it.

No Artifact Stunt? If the Stalker doesn't spend a stunt on finding artifacts, or if there is no Stalker in the party, it doesn't mean no artifacts will be found. You can still have the PCs find an artifact if you like, but you should have them work even harder for it! Which PC who spots the artifact in this case is up to you. You can use the situation to create tension by giving it to someone other than the one who needs it the most.

Keep Looking: The Stalker can roll for Find the Path several times in a sector to look for artifacts, bullets, grub and Rot-free water – if he didn't spend a stunt on it the first time. Each stunt can only be chosen once per sector. You are within your rights to state that a sector simply doesn't contain any of the objects.

SCRAP

Don't forget to give the PCs scrap every now and then. Scrap is objects from the Old Age with no particular effect, but that can still be valuable or just help to set the mood. There is an extensive scrap table at the end of this book.

MOOD ELEMENTS

Some sectors in the Zone contain neither threats nor artifacts. Some sectors are just empty wasteland, and can be passed quickly by the PCs. To give even sectors like these some life and character, you can use the tables below. Roll D66 or choose a mood element, something that catches the PCs' attention, but is not an immediate threat. If you like, you can expand on these elements as you see fit.

MOOD ELEMENTS

D66	PEOPLE
11	Wanderers. Some silhouettes are seen in the distance. Who walks in the Zone?
12	Camp. The remains of a campsite, perhaps embers are still smoldering in the fireplace.
13	Final Rest. D6 shallow graves, marked with pieces of scrap. Who is buried here?

D66 PEOPLE

- 14 **Victim.** A corpse, hanged or bound to a pole. Who did this, and why?
- 15 **Message.** Someone has written something on a wall. What does it say, and how recent is it?
- 16 **Tracks.** They lead deeper into the Zone. Who walked here and where did they go?

NATURE

- 21 **Boulder.** A huge piece of rock. Protection from the Zone winds or a good lookout point?
- 22 **Tree.** A lonely tree still grows in the desolate wasteland. Does it hide some secret?
- 23 **Creek.** A narrow stream flows through the landscape. Is it a source of life or of death by the Rot?
- 24 **Zone Flowers.** Out of place in the pale zonelands, a field of strange flowers with striking colors grow.
- 25 **Thistles.** A thick undergrowth covers the sector. Boots and gear gets stuck in it. Do the bushes hide some secret?
- 26 **Vines.** Lots of thick vines cover the ruins here. Are they dead and shriveled or still alive?

WEATHER

- 31 **Torrential Rain.** A sudden downpour or heavy snowfall hits the PCs. They'd better seek cover.
- 32 **Fog.** A thick haze blankets the area. Visibility is reduced to a few yards, and sounds muffled. What lurks in the fog?
- 33 **Blazing Sun.** Scorching sunlight bakes the PCs. Their skin burns and their clothes are soon wet from sweat.
- 34 **Blue Sky.** The ever-present dirty Zone haze suddenly evaporates, revealing a stark blue sky. It is both beautiful and frightening.
- 35 **Dark Clouds.** The sky darkens and the wind picks up. Dust whirls around across the broken old pavement. A storm is brewing.
- 36 **Thunder.** The deep sound distant thunder rolls over the Zone. Sudden lightning flashes across the ruins.

REMAINS

- 41 **Road Sign.** A metal sign stands alone, left from the Old Age. Does it show the way to something, or warn of some danger?
- 42 **Wreck.** The remains of some old vehicle, rusted beyond repair. Its metal husk is still intact. Has someone sought shelter there?
- 43 **Movie Poster.** A torn and worn old poster from the Old Age shows a strange scene. What do the PCs make of it?
- 44 **The Dead.** D6 withering skeletons from the Old Age. What story could these old bones tell?
- 45 **Checkpoint.** A roadblock from the final dying days of the Old Age. Could there be useful scrap here?
- 46 **Railroad Track.** These rusty old tracks are completely overgrown. Where does the track lead?

EVENTS

- 51 **Hole.** There's a deep dark hole in the ground in front of the PCs. Is it an old well, or a path into tunnels below?
- 52 **Howling.** An inhuman, long howl echoes across the Zone. Is someone in dire need of help - or is a Zone monster nearby?
- 53 **Collapse.** A ruined building suddenly collapses in a deafening roar. Perhaps something interesting is revealed?
- 54 **Birds.** A flock of small Zone birds suddenly take to the air. Did something startle them?
- 55 **Noise.** A deep bellowing sound echoes across the Zone. It's repeated a few times, then falls silent.
- 56 **Hut.** Someone has built a nest or a hut made of scrap. Is someone home?

TERRAIN

- 61 **Lake.** A small black lake appears in the Zone haze. What is hidden underneath the mirrorlike surface?
- 62 **Escarpment.** A sudden steep slope in front of the PCs. How do the PCs get down, and what awaits down below?
- 63 **Crevice.** A deep fissure, several yards wide, cuts across the landscape. How do the PCs get across?
- 64 **Swamp.** Foul Zone-water has engulfed the area, submerging the old crumbling streets. Dark, cold water leaks in to the PCs' shoes.
- 65 **Copse.** A dark copse of dark, dead trees cast their shadow over the PCs. What could be hidden among them?
- 66 **Hill.** A steep hill or mound appears in the middle of the Zone. What is it, what's on top of it?





RUINS IN THE ZONE

Ruins, the remains of the buildings from the Old Age, are something the mutants will see a lot of when they leave the Ark. All of the example ruins included in the tables in Chapter 11 are described in greater detail here. Use these texts as inspiration when describing what the PCs see in the Zone. You should amend these descriptions to account for the general terrain of the sector (page 156).

NORMAL RUINS

❑ AIRPLANE WRECK

A huge metal tube lies broken and crushed on the ground. It is scorched by fire and inside there are rows of ancient seats, all blackened by flames. Stretching away from the tube, the ground is scorched and all houses destroyed, as if the tube had come crashing from the sky at incredible speed.

❑ AMUSEMENT PARK

A bizarre huddle of rusting machines and decrepit large tents, in colors that once were stark. The remains of the tent cloth flaps in the wind. On a picture, a man with a white face and a large red nose smiles at you. One machine is a large wooden disc with plastic horses mounted on it. The disc is placed on a motor and seems to have been able to rotate.

❑ BATTLEFIELD

This area is completely devastated. Rusty rebars protrude from broken blocks of concrete that once were the walls of homes. The ruins are scorched by explosions and riddled with bullet holes. Small craters pockmark the ground.

❑ BUS STATION

Among flaking road signs with illegible numbers and letters, several big old motor vehicles stand rusting away. Some have two decks, others have an accordion-like contraption in the middle and can bend. The Ancients' machines are truly mysterious.

❑ CAR PARK

The concrete pillars have given in and the entire, circular building has collapsed like an accordion pressed together. In the debris, lots of motor vehicles from the Old Age are buried. Maybe some of them could be repaired?

❑ CHURCH

The ancient spire on the stone building reaches far into the sky, its sharp point lost in the Zone haze. Inside, there are rows of rotten wooden benches, all turned toward the figure of a man hanging on a cross. The Ancients used to come here to talk to their Boss in the sky. Now, all is quiet. If there is a god, it has abandoned this place long ago.

Comment: This ruin can of course be replaced by a temple or a mosque, if that fits better with your campaign environment.

❑ CINEMA

Next to a large entrance leading into the dark interior of this building, a number of yellowing posters hang in huge frames. Each of the posters depict dramatic motifs from the Old Age. In this cavernous building, the Ancients watched moving images on a screen.

❑ CRATER

A gigantic hole appears in the ground, at least 50 yards across. Some ancient weapon of annihilation must have struck here, destroying everything nearby. In the bottom of the crater, there is a small lake of greenish rotwater.

❑ DILAPIDATED MANSION

This dark and decrepit house was old even before the Fall. It's built of wood and stone and has somehow managed to withstand the decades of neglect. What could be hidden inside its dark halls?

❑ FAST FOOD JOINT

A large M in the shape of two dirty yellow arcs adorn the facade of this ruined building. There are many facilities like this in the Zone. What used to be in them no one knows any longer, but Stalkers tend to avoid them because of the strong Rot inside.

❑ GAS STATION

Underneath an open roof next to a low house, a number of car wrecks are left to rust. Next to them there are machines with hoses and faucets. Anyone who knows his way around the Zone knows that this is a place where the Ancients repaired their vehicles and filled them up with fuel.

❑ HIGHWAY

The concrete is cracked and the markings on the road surface are all but worn away. Before the Fall, the Ancients would whizz by here at incredible speeds in their shiny motor carriages. Now, the old

cars stand by the roadside, burnt out and rusted beyond repair.

❑ HOSPITAL

When the Apocalypse came, the Ancients flooded this concrete hulk of a building, desperately hoping to be saved. Now, this is a crumbling ruin. Decayed corpses lie everywhere in rooms and hallways, on beds and on the floors.

❑ HUNTING STORE

Among the decrepit shelves in this place you can find fishing poles, hooks and lines. A skilled Stalker can use these items to find edible fish in the Zone waters (page 56). On the walls, yellowed pictures of rifles hang. In one corner, there is a heavy metal locker tall as a mutant – perhaps there is something valuable in there?

❑ MALL

A city within a city reveals itself, huge halls with ancient shops and restaurants in several levels. Everything in here is scorched by fire long ago and covered in soot, but perhaps something valuable is hidden among the ashes? Here and there strange plastic figures stand in strange poses, as if preaching to a crowd.

❑ MARINA

Just off the shore, a great number of boat wrecks lie half sunken in the rotwater. Sailing boats, motor boats and canoes that the Ancients used for recreation have turned into a dangerous reef of cracked plastic and metal beams.

❑ MUSEUM

Large steps in broken stone lead up to this grand building. Inside, there are dark halls with strange items from the Old Age and even ages before that, all showcased for the Ancients to see.

❑ OFFICE BUILDING

In this dark ruin you can find large halls, all filled with identical tables in small booths. On the floor, there are yellowed papers everywhere. Before the Fall, important work was probably done here.

Now, the Zone dust blows in through the broken windows.

❑ OVERGROWN PARK

Tall trees and thick bushes grow wild here and have completely overgrown the area. Benches, walking paths and fountains are hidden by thick weeds and the lawns are turned into marshlands. There are many rumors about the creatures that roam the old parks in the Zone.

❑ PLAYGROUND

Car tires hang in rusty chains from a metal frame. A wooden sandbox has turned into a stinking pool of mud. Acid rains have gnawed holes in the metal slides long ago. Here, the Ancients played with their children. A few cracked plastic toys have survived the decades of wear and still lie abandoned in the sand.

❑ POLICE STATION

Outside of this large building, wrecks of identical blue and white cars are rusting away. The tires and long since gone, but the blue plastic lamps on their roofs are still there. In the basement of the building, there are rooms that cannot be opened from the inside.

❑ RADIO STATION

A forest of rusty antennae and metal discs protrude from the roof of this massive building. A sign on the facade shows an antenna with rings around it.

❑ RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS

Several identical tall buildings, made of concrete that is now cracked and crumbling. On the ground between these monoliths, there are rotted benches and tall weeds. Car wrecks are everywhere, most rusted beyond repair. Each of the buildings has a large number of identical apartments. Inside, you can find decrepit furniture, clothes and other items.

❑ ROAD TUNNEL

The entrance to this broad tunnel looks like the maw of an enormous beast. Outside, an innumerable amount of cars, trucks and buses stand tightly

packed together, slowly rusting into nothing. Whatever horror the occupants of these vehicles were fleeing from, it is obvious few survived.

❑ RUINED BRIDGE

The remains of a majestic bridge rise tall in the Zone haze. It has collapsed in both directions and only two thick pillars remain, but if you can climb up onto the remaining roadway you'll have a great lookout position.

❑ SCHOOL

On the crumbling brick facade of this building hangs a clock that stopped long ago. Below it someone has written text on the wall, no longer legible. On the concrete ground in front of the building there are two rusty metal rods, each a little taller than a mutant and with a metal ring at the top.

❑ SHELTER

A massive rusty metal door in the rockside leads deep underground. Down there, the Ancients sought refuge from the horrors on the surface. Now, it's a perfect place to look for artifacts. But who knows what's lurking down here, who else might have found this dungeon full of treasure?

❑ SKYSCRAPER

A tall building rises toward the yellow haze of the Zone sky. The concrete is withered and broken, and all of the hundreds of windows have fallen from their frames long ago. Now, the Zone wind blows right through the many floors of this majestic building. Every floor is filled by small and identical apartments or offices. Only the top floor looks different, with bigger and more luxurious accommodations – if you can get all the way up there...

❑ SPORTS CENTER

A large, spacious hall made of rusty corrugated steel. Inside, there are strange objects like thick mattresses covered in red plastic, large nets on frames, clubs with holes in them and balls in all colors and sizes. They say the Ancients went to places like this to exercise.



❑ SUBURBIA

A street with identical small houses in even rows on each side. The grass and bushes have withered away long ago, everything is covered in ashes. Inside the houses, decomposing clothes and other personal items remain. The inhabitants must have left in a hurry. Car wrecks, and other remains from the Ancients who used to live here, abound. Much has decayed over time and some of the houses have completely collapsed.

❑ SUBWAY STATION

By a stairway leading down into the underground a large sign with flaking paint hangs. All Stalkers know what this sign means. This is an entrance to the tunnels under the Zone. In the deeps, terrible dangers await – but perhaps also many untouched artifacts.

❑ SUPERMARKET

A grand building rises among the ruins. Its large windows were broken many decades ago, and the Zone dust drifts in unhindered. Before the Fall, this building housed an unimaginable amount of food, drink, kitchen utensils and other things that the

Ancients consumed at a dizzying rate. Now, most of it is looted, burnt or decayed.

❑ SWIMMING HALL

Inside this large ruin, there are big pools filled with mud and slimy algae. Noxious and toxic fumes meet anyone who enters. It's hard to imagine that the Ancients went here voluntarily to bathe in the pools.

❑ TANK

A massive and awe-inspiring metal vehicle blocks the path. Its enormous tracks have rusted stuck long ago and no death or destruction has spewed out from its cannon for many decades, but coming close to this metal beast still strikes fear into the heart of almost any Zone wanderer.

❑ THEATER

Inside of this dark ruin is a great hall, filled with rows of seats facing a large stage with a grand red curtain. The Ancients came here to see singing, dancing and stage plays.

❑ TRAIN STATION

Ancient railway cars stand rusting on overgrown tracks. In these, the Ancients used to travel quickly

and effectively all across the Zone and beyond. Now, the only passengers are decaying corpses.

INDUSTRIAL RUINS

❑ FACTORY

The metal roof of this large, flat building has caved in long ago. Inside, there are machines and strange vehicles with huge forks in the front. Everything in here is ravaged by decades of rain and wind. Some rusty old barrels have fallen over and a greenish sludge has leaked out onto the floor.

❑ FIRING RANGE

Empty shell casings litter this large open area. In one end, there is a large earthwork with lots of pockmarks from bullets. In a shed close by there are targets in the shape of humans and animals. In the Old Age, they could afford to spend bullets on shooting at paper figures.

❑ MILITARY BASE

A large square courtyard with brick buildings on each side. In the buildings, there are a great number of identical rooms with metal bunk beds. Beyond these buildings there is a large garage with several burnt out vehicles inside.

❑ OIL TANK

This large cylinder-shaped metal building has a narrow stairway winding its way around the outside wall, all the way to the top. Up there, you could spot any threats from a safe distance. The building contains a huge tank filled by a sticky, black liquid. A Gearhead could use this as fuel. The problem is just getting it out...

❑ PIPELINE

A thick rusty metal pipe runs through this part of the Zone. It's wide enough for a mutant to crawl through. The gas and oil has stopped flowing through these pipes long ago. Now, they can only serve as scrap.

❑ POWER LINE

A tall tower made of rusty metal beams rises into the Zone sky. It has collapsed halfway up, and the

sharp spire has folded down toward the ground. Thick cables, that once supplied electricity to the entire Zone, now lie draped across the ground.

❑ PURIFICATION PLANT

The stench intensifies for each and every step closer to this building. But Stalkers know that the smell of decay can hide an invaluable treasure. These large pools, tanks and machines purified the Ancients' drinking water. Could there still be clean water in any of the tanks?

❑ RADIO MAST

A tall metal mast rises high above the zonescape. It is held up by thick metal wires, and at the top big rusty antennae sprout. Once, wireless transmissions were sent from here to the people of the Old Age, for their amusement and education. Now, there is nothing to hear but the Zone wind.

❑ REFINERY

An entire landscape full of rusting and decaying machinery covers this part of the Zone. Enormous tanks are connected by metal tubes, some wide enough for a mutant to crawl through. If you dare, you can climb through these metallic deadlands on ladders, girders and walkways.

❑ RUBBISH DUMP

A mountain of trash blocks your path. Here, the Ancients dumped everything they didn't need. Most has been ground to dust by the passage of time, but plastic items and large chunks of rusty metal protrude from the heap.

❑ SHIPWRECK

A big rusty ship lies wrecked just off the shore, half sunken beneath the waves. The empty portholes make the ship look like a huge beached whale. Could there still be useful scrap in the engine room?

❑ WINDMILL

A thin, white tower rises tall over the zonelands. At the top, a huge propeller is mounted. They say the Ancients started to build windmills like this one to get energy when the oil in the ground started to run out. It was much too late, of course.





THREATS IN THE ZONE

The Zone might seem empty and lifeless, but hidden amongst the ruins there is life. Strange and alien creatures, but life all the same. For the mutants of the People, isolated in the Ark for decades, meeting these alien creatures is a frightening experience. This chapter describes the humanoid beings and monsters that live in the Zone, as well as other phenomena that the PCs can encounter. Collectively, these are called *Zone threats*.

THREATS AND EVENTS

When you want to spring a typical event (Chapter 9) on the PCs in the Zone, you can go to this chapter to choose what specific threat the PCs encounter. You can also let a random dice roll make the choice for you – see Chapter 11. Regardless of whether you choose threats or roll them up – always try to use them in ways that are interesting and challenging for the PCs and the players themselves. This is what the typical events in Chapter 9 are for.

In the Ark: The PCs generally encounter the threats described in this chapter when traveling in

the Zone. But they can meet, or at least hear about, the Zone threats in the Ark too. Some of them appear on the Threat Cards (see Chapter 10 for more information).

MAKE EVERY THREAT UNIQUE

The threats of the Zone should feel alien and frightening for the PCs – and for the players. As a rule, don't let the PCs encounter the same threat several times – at least not in the same way. Make every encounter with a threat unique, a new experience for the players. Also, don't use the name of a threat unless the PCs know it (like Zone-Ghouls, who are fairly well known to the People). Let the description of the threat speak for itself. If the players make up their own names for creatures they meet, let them.

COLD & DARK

Whatever threat you let the PCs encounter, you can use cold and darkness to make the situation even more challenging. See Chapter 6 for rules on this.

HUMANOIDS

For a long while, the mutants in the Ark thought they were all that remained of human civilization in this fallen world. They were wrong. Among the

ruins several other groups live, big and small tribes of mutants and other beings. They can become the People's allies – or enemies. These humanoids come in two forms – *mutants* and *humans*.

Mutants: The PCs' Ark is not the only one in the Zone (the boxed text below). Technically, other mutants function just like NPCs from the PCs' Ark (Chapter 9). Mutants in other Arks can have roles and specialist skills just like PCs, while mutants not living in an Ark generally don't have roles or skills.

Humans: There are other people out there, who are not mutants. They are humans, who somehow have survived the Apocalypse. Non-mutants generally don't have roles or specialist skills. Naturally, they don't have mutations or use Mutation Points. Humans will be described further in a coming expansion to the game.

Languages: Most groups in the Zone share the same original language, but having lived separated from each other for years or decades, distinctly different dialects have evolved. Usually, the PCs can communicate with people they meet in the Zone on a basic level. However, to manage a more complex dialogue with another group, have the PCs make a Comprehend roll. A failed roll means there is some kind of misunderstanding.

Stats: All attribute scores and skill levels indicated for the humanoids below should only be seen as typical ratings. Feel free to change them for individual NPCs whenever you like.

MAIN FACTIONS

Some humanoids form groups that can become major players in the Zone, wielding influence that can rival that of the Ark itself. Encounters with people from these major factions are described in this chapter. More information about some of them can be found in the special Zone sectors in Chapter 15, and in the threats to the Ark in Chapter 10.

The Zone-Ghouls. Page 176. Also see the Threat Card "Zone-Ghouls Attack" (page 153) and the special Zone sector "For a Mouthful of Water" (page 201).

The Other Ark. Page 207. Also see the Threat Card "The Other People" (page 150).

The Helldrivers. Page 173. Also see the Threat Card "The Helldrivers" (page 147) and the special Zone sector "The Helldrivers" (page 217).

The Nova Cult. Page 173. Also see the Threat Card "The Zone Cult" (page 152) and the special Zone sector "The Nova Cult" (page 212).

The Wanderers. Page 174. Also see the Threat Card "The Wanderers" (page 152).

OTHER ARKS

The PCs' Ark is not the only one in the Zone. As they will learn during play, there are other Arks, with other mutants. This insight will have monumental consequences for the PCs, and for all of the People.

The different Arks have evolved into unique societies different from the People – very different, in some cases. Some Arks have been lost altogether – their former inhabitants,

KNOW THE ZONE

When PCs meet a threat in the Zone, they can roll for the Know the Zone skill to know something about it (page 52). For every threat in the Zone, there is a modification to the roll, depending on how rare the threat is and how alien it is to the People. The modification is indicated in a yellow road sign, like this one.

±0

the ones that still survive, live as savages, roaming the Zone.

For a detailed example of another Ark, see Chapter 15. When the PCs visit another Ark, use this one or make your own based on the guidelines in Chapter 7.

**AMNESIAC**

-2

A human woman staggers through the Zone. Her eyes are glazed over and seem to focus on some imagined horror. She mumbles alien words, barely audible. She wears dirty and torn coveralls with strange markings. She doesn't respond to the PCs and collapses on the ground if they try to stop her. Unless Healed, she dies in a couple of hours. If she survives the PCs can talk to her, but her dialect is foreign and she seems to have lost all memory of who she is and where she came from. She might have a clue to the location of Eden (Chapter 16).

If you have played the Threat Card called The Man on the Beach (page 148), the PCs can recognize both the clothing and the dialect – the woman has the same. She also reacts in a similar way if brought to the Ark. Just like the man on the beach, the woman is one of the cryo-frozen lab assistants from Project Eden – see Chapter 16.

Attributes: Strength 2 (currently 1), Agility 2 (currently 1), Wits 4, Empathy 2.

Skills: Comprehend 2, Heal 1.

Mutations: None.

Weapons: None.

**BEAST MUTANT****BEAST MUTANTS**

-1

Out in the Zone, there is a tribe of beings that are different from all others. They are not human mutants and they are not wild beasts – they are both. They are animals, but they walk upright on their hind legs, use tools and have a spoken language – primitive and coarse, but a language nonetheless. They are newcomers to the Zone, on their guard or even hostile to strangers. Despite their few numbers the beast mutants seem to belong to several different species – some look like ragged dogs or wolves, others are short and rodent-like, and a third variety are monkey-like climbers.

The truth is that the beast mutants – like the People themselves – can trace their origin to the genetics labs of the Ancients, bred to be able to

survive the harsh world after the Apocalypse. They are animals given parts of the human intellect and fine motor skills. The small tribe that recently arrived in the Zone has fled from an old research facility located in a distant mountain range, where many of their kin still are being held captive by the mysterious Watchers. The escapees have journeyed to the area of the Zone to find a new home.

The beast mutants and their origin will be explored in a future expansion to *Mutant: Year Zero*.

Dog: Strength 4, Agility 5, Wits 3, Empathy 2, Fight 1, Move 1.

Bear: Strength 5, Agility 4, Wits 2, Empathy 3, Fight 2.

Rodent: Strength 2, Agility 5, Wits 5, Empathy 2, Sneak 2.

Monkey: Strength 3, Agility 5, Wits 4, Empathy 2, Move 2.

Mutations: These beasts are mutants, but of a different kind than the People. They don't have mutations and they don't use Mutation Points.

Weapons: Scrap spear, slingshot, fangs (weapon damage 2, no Gear Bonus).

CANNIBAL



CANNIBALS

±0

A group of wiry mutants wearing rags and white face paint. These mutants come from an Ark where the scientists died early on (see Chapter 16), and the abandoned children developed a very brutal society. They are sly and bloodthirsty, and they hunger for fresh mutant meat. They can't easily be reasoned with (modification -3 to any Manipulation attempt, and even a successful roll will only buy the PCs time until the cannibals get hungry again). Only a very clear show of force will deter the cannibals. Any fallen mutants in their own ranks will soon become grub for the survivors.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 4, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 2, Move 1.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Scrap spear or slingshot.

DOOM CULTISTS

±0

A small band of mutants, expelled from their Ark years ago, who worship a particular ruin or artifact in the Zone. They have lost all common sense and live only to worship the object, which they think will bring the Ancients back to Earth. The cultists may try to recruit PCs and NPCs, or capture them to sacrifice them to their deity. The cult may be in possession of a clue to Eden (Chapter 16).

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 2, Wits 3, Empathy 4.

Skills: Fight 1, Manipulate 2.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Scrap weapons.

EXILED MUTANTS

±0

A dozen mutants in a sorry state. Their clothes are in tatters, some are limping, others have untreated and infected wounds. They are all starving and badly contaminated by the Rot. Some might even be infected by Parasite Fungus (page 180) or the Gutfish (page 179). These mutants come

from another Ark, but have been exiled for some reason. They beg the PCs for help, but they also take the first chance they get to attack and steal the PCs grub – or worse. If the PCs are friendly, the exiles can tell them about their Ark – and they might even have a clue about the location of Eden (Chapter 16).

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 2, Wits 2, Empathy 2.

Skills: Move 1, Fight 1.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Blunt instrument or slingshot.

Special: Physical contact with one of the exiles counts as a Rot attack (page 126).

EXPEDITION FROM ANOTHER ARK

+1

An expedition, not unlike the PCs' own, but from another Ark. The strangers are about as many as the PCs. If they haven't met mutants from another Ark before (through the Threat Card called "The Other People", see page 150), this meeting can be a turning point in the history of both peoples. The expedition may have an artifact with a clue leading to the location of Eden (Chapter 16).

Attributes: Depends on role (page 139). At least one of the patrol members is a Stalker.

Skills: Depends on role.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Spiked bat or scrap rifle.

HELLDRIVERS

±0

Thunder as from an approaching storm rolls across the zonelands. Soon, a horde of bizarre vehicles comes rolling. Cars, buses, motorcycles and trucks – all adorned with sharp spikes, skulls and scrap. The feared Helldrivers are mutants who left their Ark long ago and were lucky enough to come across a big garage with operational vehicles from the Old Age.

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 5, Wits 2, Empathy 3.

Skills: Shoot 3, Fight 2, Jury-Rig 1.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Bicycle chain, scrap rifle, scrap armor (Armor Rating 3).

Vehicles: The Helldrivers have a number of vehicles (see page 94 for rules and page 199 for stats), often fitted with flamethrowers or even scrap cannons.

MORLOCKS

±0

Some degenerate wild mutants from lost Arks have taken refuge underground, in tunnels and shelters. These are called morlocks. During the years, the morlocks have lost what little civilization they started with. Now, they are little more than savages and communicate with grunts and snarls. They are not hostile to strangers, but on their guard. If given something in return, they can provide help or information. If attacked, they defend themselves with animal ferocity. They may be in possession of an artifact that gives a clue to the location of Eden (Chapter 16).

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 5, Empathy 2.

Skills: Move 2, Fight 1.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Scrap spear.

NOVA CULTISTS

-1

A procession of men and women with shaved heads, dressed in long robes. They leave some cloth bundles on the ground and leave quietly. If the PCs investigate, they find that each bundle contains a small mutant baby. They are hypothermic and weak, and will die unless the PCs Heal them. Any surviving children will develop powerful mental mutations.

The robed people belong to the mythical Nova Cult (page 152). If the PCs confront the cultists, they treat them like air or are spoken to like children. If the PCs resort to violence, the cultists won't hesitate to use their mental mutations. If the PCs are



NOVA CULTISTS

careful, they can track the cultists back to their lair (page 212).

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 5, Empathy 4.

Skills: Move 2, Heal 1.

Mutations: One random mutation, but mental ones (Mind Terror, Puppeteer, Pathokinesis, Pyrokinesis, Telepathy). The Nova Cultists are powerful and normally start out with 6 MP instead of 3.

Weapons: —

PATROL FROM THE ARK

This patrol from the PCs' own Ark has found a valuable artifact, or they say they know where to find one. The leader either wants help to bring the artifact back to the Ark, or help to retrieve it. One of the members of the patrol can very well be an NPC that a PC has a relationship to.

Attributes: Depends on role (page 139). At least one of the patrol members is a Stalker.

Skills: Depends on role.

Mutations: One random mutation each.

Weapons: Spiked bat, scrap knife, scrap rifle.

SCRAP ORACLE

—1

A short and stocky mutant, dressed in a bizarre outfit made of scrap of all shapes and sizes. He's an oddball character with powerful mental mutations, a telepath that can see visions of the PCs' possible future. His powers can help the PCs interpret a clue to Eden or guide them in some other way. You can use the scrap oracle to nudge the PCs in some direction that you'd like the campaign to go.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 4, Empathy 3.

Skills: Manipulate 2.

Mutations: Telepathy, Pathokinesis, Rot-Eater. 6 MP.

Weapons: —

WANDERERS

—1

A scrawny and grim-faced band of humans in tattered clothes with a strange look come walking through the zonelands. They are on their guard but not hostile. If the PCs show that they mean no harm, the wanderers can tell – in a strange and foreign dialect – that they have walked for years from a mountain range far away. They ask for grub and water. They want to know where the PCs' settlement is, and may get hostile if they refuse to answer.

See the Ark threat called “The Wanderers” (page 152) for more information on what might happen if the wanderers come to the Ark. If you have already used this Ark threat, this can be a splinter group that has left the main community after some internal strife. Finally, the wanderers might have a clue to Eden (Chapter 16).

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 3, Wits 4, Empathy 3.

Skills: Shoot 3, Fight 2, Comprehend 1.

Mutations: None.

Weapons: Scrap knives, scrap axes, one or more artifacts.

WATER TRADER

±0

A lonesome traveler who defies the dangers of the zonelands to trade with clean water. He’s a tall mutant pulling a simple cart, followed by two scrawny mutts. On the cart there are old plastic bottles, big jerrycans and a strange contraption built of pipes and bottles (a Jury-Rigged purification set). The water trader is friendly sort and always ready to do business – and quite ready to defend himself if he needs to. He knows much about the Zone and can tell the PCs where other settlements are located. He may also have a clue to Eden, which he could trade for. He will ask where the PCs live and will try to get to the Ark to do business.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 4, Empathy 5.

Skills: Manipulate 2, Shoot 1, Jury-Rig 1.

Mutations: One random mutation.

Weapons: Scrap pistol (5 bullets)

Special: The water trader can sell Rot-free water. It may contain spawn of Gutfish however (page 179). The price – as always – is a matter of demand. The more desperate for water the PCs are, the more the trader will charge for it.

WRECKERS

±0

A surprisingly intact big old vehicle wreck sits in a clearing in the Zone. Its windows are dirty and its hatches locked. The wreck is a trap. A band of savage mutants or Zone-Ghouls uses it as bait for unwitting Zone travelers. Their typical plan is simple:

They charge out and try attack their victims before they see what’s coming. They will steal everything and take any survivors as slaves in their tribe. The wreckers haven’t been able to open the armored car themselves. If the PCs manage to get in, they will find an artifact. The car engine is decayed beyond repair.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 3, Shoot 2, Sneak 1.

Mutations: One random mutation each if the wreckers are mutant savages, none if they are Zone-Ghouls (below).

Weapons: Spiked bats, slingshots.

THE TRUTH

ABOUT THE ZONE-GHOULS

What the People don’t know is that the Zone-Ghouls are descendants of the humans who survived the Apocalypse. Against all odds, they have survived the Rot and the lack of food. But they don’t grow old – most Zone-Ghouls are teenagers. Underneath their wrappings and clothing they are pale and skinny, often deformed.

Over the decades the Zone-Ghouls have lost all memories of human civilization, and they view the People as a grave threat. If the two groups could overcome their mutual fear of each other, they could become valuable allies. The Zone-Ghouls could also be a solution to the People’s inability to reproduce (Chapter 16).

In the Ark, let the PCs hear stories about the Zone-Ghouls’ barbaric deeds. When the PCs run into Zone-Ghouls for the first time, describe them as monsters – threats stalking them in the ruins, always on the prowl. In combat, the Zone-Ghouls fight viciously and without mercy. Then, if the PCs meet Zone-Ghouls again at a later time, give them a chance to see a different side of the hated enemy. For example, they could find a wounded Zone-Ghoul in need of help.

ZONE-GHOULS

±0

When Stalkers tell harrowing stories by the trash-can fires in the Ark, they are most often about the Zone-Ghouls. These aggressive people live like nomads in the Zone, moving in the shadows and attacking other travelers without warning. They are most active at night. There are many rumors about the Zone-Ghouls – it is said that they flay and eat mutants taken captive.

Zone-Ghouls are generally shorter than mutants, and they move in large groups. They hide their faces in hoods or masks made of scrap from the Old Age, and often wear scavenged plastic cloaks to protect them against sunlight and acid rains. Their hands and feet are wrapped in plastic or cloth.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Move 3, Shoot 2, Fight 1.

Mutations: None.

Weapons: Bicycle chain, slingshot.

Special: In direct sunlight, the Zone-Ghouls take one point of damage per hour, despite their protective clothing.

MONSTERS

The variety of mutated beasts out in the Zone are collectively known as *monsters*. They lack the advanced intelligence and intricate social skills of mutants and humans, and therefore don't have the attributes Wits and Empathy. They cannot suffer confusion or doubt, and they cannot be Manipulated or Intimidated. Some monsters even lack Agility – they can't suffer fatigue.

Skills: Some monsters lack skills – that means they only roll Base Dice when performing an action. If they lack an attribute that a skill is based on, they cannot roll for that skill at all. Monsters cannot push dice rolls and they generally don't use Mutation Points.

Maneuvers: Just like humanoids, monsters can perform one action and one maneuver, or two maneu-

vers, in each turn (page 80). The only maneuver that monsters generally use is movement.

Weapons: Monsters often have natural weapons like claws or fangs. These weapons have a weapon damage, but don't provide a Gear Bonus.

Swarms: A special type of monster is the swarm, that is actually a great number of small creatures that rules-wise count as one being. Swarms function like other monsters, with two differences:

- ❑ A swarm can divide its attack across several targets. You simply divide the Base Dice across the victims the way you see fit.
- ❑ Swarms cannot be damaged by most normal weapons – only fire (for example flamethrowers or mutations) or explosions can harm them. If the PCs have no such weapons, they are well advised to run for their lives.

Special Effects: Some monsters have unique effects or attacks that are not represented by normal skills. These effects are described individually below.

ACID GRASS

-1

A field of tall grass. A sharp smell hangs in the air, and in the undergrowth remains of dead animals can be seen. The grass moves back and forth as if in a wind – despite the air being dead calm here.

The grassy field is actually a predatory plant. If any animal or mutant walk in to the grass, it will start to entangle itself into the victim's feet, legs and gear. Then, the grass starts to excrete a potent acid, slowly melting the target into a stinking sludge that the grass can feed on.

Effect: A PC who actively and successfully Scouts the area will notice the old bones in the grass. Anyone moving into the field is immediately attacked by six Base Dice. On a hit, the victim is snared and suffers one point of damage from the acid. To get free, the victim needs to make a Force roll (others can help, page 48). Until then, he suffers another point of damage every turn.

The grass can only be damaged by fire. Count its total Strength as 10. When it reaches zero, the grass is dead and the area can be passed without risk.

AUTOMATON



AIR JELLIES

±0

Air Jellies are strange creatures, translucent fleshy bubbles the size of an open palm. Thin, long feelers hang down from the main body. They are lighter than air and hover, blowing wherever the wind takes them. Anything that the feelers come into contact with is covered by a sticky, acidic liquid – not harmful to human skin, but corrosive to metal.

Effect: Air Jellies don't attack mutants themselves, but rather their gear. Roll to attack against using six Base Dice (the Strength score of the swarm). Every ♣ decreases the Gear Bonus of the target item by one step. The attacks continue until the Air Jellies are destroyed or the victims manage to escape.

Swarm: Air Jellies can only be hurt by fire or explosions.

AUTOMATON

-2

In the dark depths of the enclaves (Chapter 16), the Titan Powers built machines of metal, plastic and circuits, so advanced that they could compete with their own creators in intelligence, adaptability and creativity. Some researchers even experimented in melting together man and machine, in the hope of creating a being more adapted to surviving in the postapocalyptic world.

Robots and biomechatronic beings, in many shapes and sizes, will be explored in a future expansion to *Mutant: Year Zero*. But already in the base game, PCs can run into a rare automaton that for some reason has found its way to the Zone. For the People, such a being will be seen as a horrible abomination, a walking or hovering metal being with weapons mounted in its very body.

Attributes: Strength 8, Agility 6.

Skills: Fight 4, Shoot 4.

Armor: 10

Weapons: Chainsaw (weapon damage 2), laser weapon (weapon damage 2, Long range). The weapons are built-in, cannot be used by others and don't give a Gear Bonus.

Special: The Automaton cannot suffer fatigue at all. Its Agility score never decreases.

BITTERBEAST

+1

Dangerous creatures that Stalkers call Bitterbeasts often prowl the Zone close to lakes and swamps. These are giant lizards, twice the size of a normal mutant. Bitterbeasts are fairly intelligent and it is even said they can be tamed and used as mounts. That's not without risk however. The Bitterbeasts are known for their foul temper and the ability that has given them their name – they spit acid with alarming accuracy.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 4 (lower in cold weather).

Skills: Endure 3, Fight 2, Shoot 3.

Armor: 2

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 2), acid spit (Short range, weapon damage 1).

DEATHWORM

±0

A mutated abomination that hunts by burrowing through the ground and waiting for an unwitting victim to pass by. The Deathworm is twice the length of a mutant and thick as a leg. It's covered in scales, has innumerable small legs and a big gaping maw with several rings of small but very sharp teeth. The beast is very tenacious and will keep attacking until its victim or it is dead. It lacks the intelligence to flee.

Attributes: Strength 8, Agility 3.

Skills: Fight 3, Sneak 5 (underground), Move 5 (underground).

Armor: —

Weapons: Maw (weapon damage 2). On a hit, the Deathworm attaches itself to the victim and tries to drag it underground. The victim must make a Force roll (one action) to break free. In the meantime, the Deathworm can keep attacking the victim with its inner rings of teeth, and gets a +3 modification.

DEVOURER

±0

A large and savage predator, taller than a mutant when it stands on its hind legs. It has grey fur and looks a little like a bear, but the similarities end there. The Devourer has an insatiable hunger for flesh, can move with extreme silence, and has abnormally huge jaws. It sneaks up on its prey, who often doesn't realize what's going on before it's half-way down the gullet of the beast. The jaws can be dislocated to fit the whole upper body of a grown mutant. Corrosive saliva quickly kills the prey, who won't be released until it's dead or the Devourer is forced to flee.

Attributes: Strength 6, Agility 4.

Skills: Fight 3, Sneak 4.

Armor: 2

Weapons: Claws (weapon damage 1), jaws (weapon damage 3, but can only be used in a sneak attack (page 82)). If successful, the victim is caught in the maw and must make a Force roll to break free (modification –2, but friends can help).

GRAZERS

+1

Here and there in the Zone, herds of relatively peaceful grazing animals roam. These are mutated versions of sheep, goats, pigs and cows. They have gone feral and won't hesitate to attack Zone travelers that they see as threat to the herd. Grazers are good targets for hunting (see the Butcher talent in Chapter 4).

Attributes: Strength 2–5, Agility 2–4.

Armor: —

Weapons: Horns, teeth or tusks (weapon damage 1).

GUTFISH

±0

The Gutfish is a feared parasite that spreads through drinking water. Even Rot-free water can be infected – the only way to be safe is to boil the water. The Gutfish spawn grow inside the stomach of the host, feeding off whatever the host eats. When the Gutfish, which looks more like an eel than a fish, is fully grown (approximately six feet long) it bites its way out and slithers away to the nearest lake or creek.

Effect: After the infection, the host gets incredibly hungry and must eat at least two rations of grub per day not to become starving (page 92). After 2D6 days, the Gutfish is fully grown and tries to gnaw its way out. This will automatically break the host (Strength drops to zero) and suffers the Bleeding Gut critical injury (entry 52 on the table on page 91).

KILLER TREE

-1

An overgrown area that is unnervingly still and quiet. This is the home of one of the most feared and bizarre beings in the entire Zone – the Killer Tree. Its thick, dark trunk ends in a gaping maw, that is surrounded by slithering tentacles. Among the tree's thick and gnarled roots lie bones, skulls and rusty gear – remains of the Killer Tree's many victims.

The most astonishing parts of this semi-sentient plant are its humanoid seed pods. They can mimic human (or mutant) appearance and even speech, but lack actual intelligence. The seed pods prowl the area, hunting for victims to feed their ever hungry mother tree.

Attributes: Strength 10, Agility 6.

Skills: Fight 3.

Armor: 6

Weapons: Tentacles (Near range, the Base Dice and Skill Dice can be distributed across several victims, weapon damage 1, upon a hit the victim is snared and must make a Force to get free), maw (weapon damage 3, can only be used on a snared victim).

Mind Control: The Killer Tree can lure its victims close with powerful telepathic pulses. Anyone within Short range must roll to Move – a failed roll

means the victim suffers one point of confusion and must move closer to the tree.

Seed Pods: Victims who manage to withstand the tree's mind powers are usually attacked by its humanoid seed pods. In their natural state, the pods have greenish hue and lack both body hair and any distinct facial features. A typical seed pod has Strength 3, Agility 5 and Fight skill level 2.

A seed pod can mimic the exact appearance of a human or mutant, by pushing tendrils into the brain of the victim and extracting its stem cells. The victim, who needs to be held down or broken by damage for the attack to be made, dies in the process. A seed pod becomes totally identical to its victim and can even mimic its voice, but is completely without emotion and cannot be Manipulated or Intimidated.

MIND MOSQUITOES

-1

In the Zone, there are areas buzzing with mosquitoes that can have direct impact on the human (or mutant) mind. Anyone moving in the area starts to feel depressed and despondent. The victims feel a growing urge to just sit down and do nothing at all, which lets the mosquitoes suck blood unhindered. The attack in itself is not harmful, but the mental effects can have dangerous consequences.

Effect: Victims affected by the Mind Mosquitoes each turn suffer an attack with a number of Base Dice equal to the Strength of the swarm – a typical starting value is 8. Each ☘ rolled inflicts one point of doubt. To get away, a victim needs to make a Move roll. The swarm can only be hurt by fire or explosions. When its Strength reaches zero, it is completely destroyed.

NIGHTMARE FLOWERS

-1

An area filled with large flowers, clinging to every surface. Heavy and moist petals, stamens and pistils grow with intense colors. If anyone moves through the area, the flowers will exude a cloud of spores with a strong sedative effect. When a victim falls unconscious to the ground, the plants' thorny vines burrow into its flesh and suck the blood out of them.

Remains of previous victims litter the ground, but can be hard to spot beneath the greenery. There might even be an artifact here.

Effect: A PC who Scouts the area successfully will notice the bones of previous victims. Anyone who walks into the greenery must make a Move roll or be incapacitated by the powerful spores. Lying on the ground, the victim suffers one point of damage per turn until he is broken or until someone pulls him out (a Force roll). The Nightmare Flowers can only be destroyed by fire. Count the flowers' combined Strength as 10. When it reaches zero, the flowers are dead and the area can be passed without risk.

PARASITE FUNGUS

±0

This deadly fungoid life form infects its victims through mycelium at close contact with an infected body. The Parasite Fungus grows inside the host's body and brain, with horrible pain as a result. The victim's behavior is also affected.

RAZORBACK



Effect: After the time of infection, the victim suffers one point of damage per day. This damage can be healed by rest and grub, but this will mean the victim needs to eat more to keep from being broken. If broken, the victim suffers a critical injury from non-typical damage (page 92).

At irregular intervals (whenever you want) the Parasite Fungus affects the victim's brain in order to make it come close to another host, to keep spreading the infection. The victim needs to make a Wits roll (no skill can be used) to resist the impulse. The only way to be cured is to be broken by damage and then Healed.

RAZORBACK

±0

A huge monster of a boar, standing taller than a mutant and angrier than a dozen. Despite its rather small legs, this beast can achieve an astonishing speed, and its rugged tusks can tear a car wreck apart. Anything seems to set the Razorback off on a killing frenzy, and stopping it is nigh impossible. The beast is not a predator and generally does not hunt to feed – instead it feeds on anything from corpses to Zone plants.

Attributes: Strength 10, Agility 6.

Skills: Fight 4

Armor: 8

Weapons: Charge (weapon damage 2 – this is a combined move/attack that must start at Short range and ends up at Arm's Length), tusks (weapon damage 3).

ROT ANTS

±0

The Rot Ants are a legend among Zone travelers. The worst thing is not the insect as such – nasty as it is, the size of a fist and with powerful jaws – but the overwhelming numbers. Rot Ants don't build anthills. Instead, they barrage through the Zone in millions upon millions, devouring everything in their path. They are blind and consider any living thing as food. Stalkers claim to have seen a swarm of Zone Ants kill a Devourer in under a minute. As if that was not enough, these insect spread the Rot wherever they go.

Attributes: Strength 6.

Armor: —

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 1).

Rot: Any attack from Rot Ants, whether successful or not, inflicts one point for Rot on the victim.

Swarm: The Rot Ants' swarm is huge. It simply cannot be decimated by any weapons the PCs could conceivably get their hands on. The only way to survive is to run.

ROTFISH

±0

In the murky waters of Zone lakes and rivers, the Rotfish lurk. This monster varies greatly in shape, from scaly flatfish to eel-like beasts with sharp fins. The Rotfish can attack swimmers or careless Zone travelers walking close to the waterline, and often pulls its prey down under water to drown it.

Attributes: Strength 7, Agility 5.

Skills: Fight 3, Move 4 (underwater).

Armor: 5

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 2).

Drowning: In the turn after a successful Fight attack, the Rotfish can pull its prey down under water to drown it. The victim will suffer one point of damage per turn (unless Amphibian) and must make a Force roll to break free.

SCRAP CROWS

+1

Big, ash-feathered birds that live in flocks in the Zone. They can attack Zone travelers careless enough to walk out in the open, hacking at the eyes with their sharp beaks. These Rot-ridden birds are called Scrap Crows by the People because they are attracted by anything shiny especially valuable scrap from the Old Age.

Attributes: Strength 7, Agility 6

Armor: —

Weapons: Beak and claws (weapon damage 1).

Swarm: Can only be harmed by fire or explosions.

TRASH HAWK

±0

Perched on the roofs of tall ruins, the Trash Hawk watches the Zone for prey. Yellow and brown feathers make it blend in well in the wasteland. This predatory bird has claws long and sharp as knives, and attack by quickly swooping down at its target and simply ripping off a large piece of flesh. If big enough, it even grabs its prey and flies off with it. Stalkers claim to have seen Trash Hawks with a wingspan of 25 feet.

Attributes: Strength 6, Agility 8.

Skills: Fight 3, Sneak 4, Move 4, Force 2.

Armor: 1

Weapons: Claws (weapon damage 2).

Swooping Attack: A Trash Hawk can swoop down from Long distance and Fight its target immediately. The bird takes one point of damage itself in the attack.

Lift Off: In the turn after a successful attack, the Trash Hawk can fly off with its prey if it makes a Force roll.

WORM SWARM

-1

This enormous cluster of black worms, each a few inches long, has developed a collective mind and behaves like an individual being. A typical Worm Swarm consists of millions of maggots. These bizarre beings often dwell in dark and damp places, attacking prey that happen to pass by. The swarm moves rapidly to engulf the victim and cause it to panic, and then proceeds to eat it alive.

Attributes: Strength 8 (typical starting score, see below).

Armor: —

Weapons: Engulfing attack (weapon damage 1). In the first turn only, the attack causes doubt instead of damage. For each point of damage that the victim suffers, the Strength of the Worm Swarm increases by one (even above its starting value).

Swarm: The Worm Swarm counts as a swarm and can only be damaged by fire and explosions.

ZONE DOGS

+1

Packs of ever hungry mutated mutts are common in the Zone. They are scrawny, wiry and often lack fur.

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 6.

Skills: Fight 2, Move 3.

Armor: —

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 2).

Attributes: Strength 8, Agility 5.

Armor: —

Weapons: Teeth (weapon damage 1).

Swarm: Can only be damaged by fire or explosions.

Rot: Every attack from a Zone Rat, whether successful or not, inflicts a Rot Point on the target.

ZONE RATS

+1

These scrawny but unnervingly large rats live in hordes in the Zone. The Rot just seems to make them bigger and meaner. They are long as a mutant's arm and will chew into any meat they come across, alive or dead, with their long, yellow teeth.

ZONE SPIDER

±0

In dark tunnels and ruins, mutated spiders grown to absurd sizes dwell. Careless Zone travelers who step right through old decayed tunnel roofs or who explore ancient ruins can end up right in the middle of a nest. The Zone Spiders feed on anything from corpses and refuse to living prey that they first paralyze with their poisonous bite.



ZONE RATS

Attributes: Strength 5.

Skills: Fight 2, Move 2.

Armor: 3

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 1 and poison).

Poison: If the spider's bite inflicts damage, the poison enters the victim's body and causes one point of fatigue per turn until the victim is broken. A successful Heal roll (modification -2 if attempting it on oneself) to suck the poison out will stop the process.

ZONE WASPS

±0

The first thing the victims hear is the buzzing sound, unnaturally deep and repulsive. The Zone Wasps are black and yellow like their ancestors in the Old Age, but big as fists and just as hard. Their sting injects a potent hallucinogenic poison that confuses the prey and makes it easier for the insects to tear it apart. As if that was not bad enough, in combat the Zone Wasps emit pheromones that alert other Zone Wasps nearby, quickly swelling their numbers.

Attributes: Strength 5.

Armor: 2

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 1).

Hallucinogenic Poison: All attacks that give the victim one or more points of damage also inflicts one point of confusion.

Pheromones: The Strength of the swarm increases one step every turn until the victims are either dead or have escaped.

Swarm: The Zone Wasps can only be damaged by fire or explosions.

ZONE LEECHES

±0

Fist-sized critters that dwell in thick undergrowth or in dark ruins, sensing the heat of passing prey

and falling onto it. These slimy beasts have neither legs nor eyes, only a maw ringed by small and sharp teeth. If a leech lands on a living being, it immediately bites into the flesh and starts sucking blood out at an alarming rate. A dozen leeches can completely drain a grown mutant.

Attributes: Strength 6.

Armor: —

Weapons: Bite (weapon damage 1). If the initial attack is successful, the leeches attach to their victim, which will suffer one more point of damage every turn until the leeches are removed. To pull or cut off the leeches from someone requires a successful Fight roll. Doing it on yourself is possible, but gives a -2 modification.

Swarm: Zone Leeches can only be hurt by fire or explosions.

ZONE LEECHES



PHENOMENA

The very foundations of the world have been shaken by the great Apocalypse. Weapons of mass destruction and extreme scientific experimentation have had a profound impact on nature as we know it. *Phenomena* is the umbrella term for strange, bizarre and positively lethal non-living threats that Zone travelers can encounter.

ACID RAIN

+1

Heavy raindrops start to fall from the Zone sky. But this is no ordinary rain. The strongly acidic drops burn whatever they land on, and the PCs need to seek cover. When the Acid Rain is over (after D6 hours), everything in the area is pockmarked by the acid drops, and puddles of burning acid cover the ground.

Effect: Anyone caught in the Acid Rain suffers an attack with a number of Base Dice determined by the intensity of the rain – 6 is normal, but anything from 4 to 10 is possible. Every ☘ rolled inflicts one point of damage. Armor works normally. The victims suffer one attack like this per turn until they manage to find a shelter that protects them from the rain – this normally requires a Move roll.

ASH STORM

+1

A strong gale sweeps across the Zone, whipping up the ashes that lie in droves among the ruins. The ash cloud reduces visibility to a few feet, stings the eyes and makes it hard to breathe. After a few hours, when the air finally clears, everything is covered in a fine layer of ash.

Effect: Zone travelers who want to push on in the Ash Storm need to make an Endure roll. A failed roll means the travelers must stop and find shelter. The storm lasts D6 hours.

DUST TORNADO

-1

The wind suddenly picks up and the air is filled by sand and ashes. Around the PCs, black twirling funnels of tornados appear. Suddenly, an old house is pulled apart by a black twister, moving right toward the PCs.

Effect: Anyone in the path of the Dust Tornado needs to make a Move roll to get away in time. Failure results in an attack with 12 Base Dice (weapon damage 1). Cover and armor have their normal effect.

GHOST LIGHTS

±0

A pale green shimmering light moves among the ruins or trees in the area. If anyone tries to get close to the light, it moves away, as if aware of their presence. The strange light remains in the area for some minutes, then suddenly disappears.

Effect: None – but feel free to let the players think otherwise. The PCs cannot affect the Ghost Lights in any way.

ELECTRIC STORM

±0

Dark clouds descend on the area. The air smells like metal, hairs stand straight up and all metal objects start to spark. Suddenly, lightning starts to strike everywhere. Again and again, the area is bombarded. The flashes of light are blinding and the thunder deafening. The Electric Storm only lasts a few minutes, but they feel like a lifetime.

Effect: Anyone caught in the storm is subject to an attack with four Base Dice (weapon damage 1). A victim located on high ground or on something made of metal suffers an attack with eight Base Dice. Cover helps, but armor does not. Roll again in every turn until the PCs have found cover – which requires a successful Move roll.

HEAT WAVE

±0

The temperature suddenly peaks to an extreme level. The PCs find themselves panting and sweating profusely. Metal objects are painful to touch.

Effect: Anyone caught in the heat must make an Endure roll after performing any physical action. This roll doesn't count as an action in itself – roll it immediately. Failure means suffering one point of fatigue. In addition, everyone suffering the Heat Wave must drink one ration of water every hour, or become Dehydrated (page 92). The Heat Wave lasts D6 hours.

Comment: Use this phenomenon only in summer. In the wintertime, use Temperature Drop instead.

INERTIA FIELD

-1

Some distance away, the PCs spot a monster or a humanoid who seems completely frozen in the middle of a motion. If anyone moves closer, others see how this person seems to move in slow motion. In this area, there is a strange force field that makes time itself slow down. To anyone moving into the field, the outside world seems to move more quickly. The effect increases further into the field. It is possible to talk to someone inside of the field, but to him the voices will speak very quickly and be very shrill. His own voice will be slow to persons outside of the field.

Effect: Being at the outer rim of the field is not dangerous, but anyone moving toward its center risks being caught in it forever. Let a PC who moves into the field (or who seems someone else caught in it) roll to Know the Zone. If successful, the PC realizes the risk.

MAGNETIC FIELD

-1

The remains of some sort of ancient underground power plant creates a strong magnetic field in this area. The PCs hear a low humming sound and get goosebumps on their skin. If they linger in the area, they will feel metal objects being pulled toward a particular point.

Effect: The PCs must either drop all metal objects that they are carrying, or make a Force roll to get out of the Magnetic Field with their metal gear. Anyone wearing scrap armor must make a Force roll, it's not possible to get out of the armor fast enough. Anyone who fails the roll can try again in the next turn, but with a -1 modification. The modification grows to -2 in the third turn, etc. Suddenly and inexplicably (whenever you decide), the Magnetic Field dissipates.

MIRAGE

-1

The terrain close to the PCs suddenly blurs and deforms. It changes appearance completely and



now looks like it did in the Old Age – no decay, no debris, everything clean and orderly. The PCs have walked into a hologram, the remains of ancient defensive perimeter.

Effect: The PCs risk bumping into things that they cannot see, and therefore must act as if in total darkness (page 93). The hologram is approximately 50 feet across.

MUD PUDDLES

±0

This foggy area is covered by large puddles of thick, warm mud. There is solid ground underneath the mud, but it will reach to the knees of anyone who walks through the puddles. In addition, there are hidden wells of steaming hot water in some places. Walking through the area risks triggering geysers of hot water, scalding everyone nearby.

Effect: A PC who successfully Scouts the area will notice bubbles and steam coming out of the mud at certain locations. Wading through the area requires a Know the Zone roll – failure means triggering a steam geyser. Roll six Base Dice to attack everyone within Near distance. Every ♣ rolled inflicts one point of damage. Armor has the normal effect. Anyone who suffers one or more points of damage also gets one Rot Point. Staying in this area has one useful effect – the hot steam keeps the area warm, and thus protects against severe cold (page 93).

NIGHT LIGHTS

-1

Huge, billowing lights in sickly colors fill the night sky. Artifacts and other gear that run on electricity start to work erratically, or not at all. Some see a bad omen in these lights, others the sign of a new dawn for the world. Some just find the lights pretty. The lights last until morning.

Effect: All electric artifacts (such as the Flashlight, Cassette Player, and Video Camera) won't work properly as long as the Night Lights linger.

Comment: If you roll up this phenomenon in the daytime, have the Night Lights appear the following evening.

OBELISK

-1

In the middle of wasteland, the tall black Obelisk stands. It seems to be made of some kind of very durable metal. The PCs cannot find any visible hatches or slits in the metal, and the Obelisk seems to be completely untouched by the passage of time. The Obelisk seems alien to the PCs, and it can even affect their minds in strange ways.

Effect: The energies emanating from The Obelisk can induce psychedelic hallucinations. Anyone within Short range of it must make a Know the Zone roll – failure means suffering a point of confusion.

PILLARS OF LIGHT

±0

Two big pillars of light appear by the horizon, beaming up toward the black Zone sky. Where do the lights originate? And why have they appeared now?

Effect: None. But have NPCs tell tales of these lights, saying that the lead the way to Eden, to another Ark, or that they are a bad omen.



ROT HOTSPOT

±0

The coast seems clear. There are no visible threats around, and the exploration can commence unhindered. But in this place, the Rot is very strong and can kill unwitting Zone travelers or scar them for life.

Effect: Give the players a chance to notice that something is amiss, such as a number of cadavers on the ground or a pipe leaking green sludge. Anyone who proceeds despite the warning signs suffers one Rot Point per minute in the area.

ROT WIND

±0

A wind carrying foul Rot-ridden fumes sweep across the sector. The air is filled by dust and a sickening stench.

Effect: The Rot Wind immediately inflicts one Rot Points on every person caught in it. In addition, any water or grub carried by the PCs will be contaminated by Rot, inflicting one Rot Point per ration consumed. The Rot Wind lasts D6 hours.

SINKHOLE

±0

The ground suddenly gives in, and a huge hole into the ground or into some ancient underground facility opens up.

Effect: Anyone close to the collapse must make a Move roll to avoid falling into the Sinkhole. Doing so inflicts one point of damage in itself – and can expose the victim to any number of underground threats, such as monsters or Rot. Climbing up can also be difficult, usually requiring a Move roll.

TEMPERATURE DROP

±0

Suddenly, the wind picks up, the temperature drops and a heavy snowfall starts. Then, the wind and the snowing stops. A wall of white clouds forms a tall cylinder right above the PCs. A crystal blue sky can be seen above. The serenity comes with a cost – the temperature drops dramatically. Exposure can be lethal.

Effect: Any Zone travelers caught out in the open must immediately roll to Endure severe cold (page 93). One roll every 15 minutes is required, until the cold spot passes (after D6 hours) or the PCs move out of the sector. Lighting a fire can keep the cold at bay, but it requires firewood and an Agility roll (no skill used).

Comment: Use this phenomenon only in winter. In the summertime, use Heat Wave instead.



UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

+1

This entire area is scarred by gunshots and explosions. In the ground, mines and/or unexploded grenades and bombs are hidden. Walking through this area is very dangerous.

Effect: Anyone who walks through the area must make a Move roll. Failure means triggering a Blast Power 6 explosion at Arm's Length (page 94).

VACUUM

-1

The PCs pass an area completely void of air. There is no visible explanation as to why the air does not fill this void. The first thing the PCs notice is that they cannot speak or breathe.

Effect: Anyone caught in the Vacuum must make a Move roll. Failure means that the victims panics and remains in the Vacuum another turn. Every turn in the Vacuum inflicts one point of damage. One roll to get out of the Vacuum is allowed per turn.

ZONE SMOG

+1

A thick, yellowish fog rises from the ground. At first, it stays at knee-height, but soon it completely obscures vision. Eyes tear up and the smog burns the nose and mouth when breathing.

Effect: Everyone caught in the Zone Smog suffers one Rot Point. Vision is limited to Near range – the PCs cannot see (or Shoot at) anything farther away. Some Zone monsters take advantage of the Zone Smog to hunt – feel free to choose or roll one up. The only way to escape the smog is to find an elevated position like a tall building or a hill. The Zone Smog stays at ground level, and dissipates after D6 hours.





ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are the most valuable things the PCs can find. These rare functional items from the Old Age can give them power over other mutants, bring knowledge to the People, and even show the way to Eden.

The text on all of the Artifact Cards in the *Mutant: Year Zero Card Deck* is repeated here, and some of the more intricate artifacts are described in more detail.

How PCs can find and understand how to use artifacts is explained in Chapter 8.

HANDLING ARTIFACTS

You as GM decide when and where a PC may find an artifact. When the PCs explore a new sector in the Zone a Stalker can use the Find the Path skill to find artifacts, but remember that you are not bound by this roll. You can also let the PCs find artifacts in other places, like in a settlement or carried by an NPC.

Use artifacts as a reward for exploration, but also to create drama and tension within and around the group of PCs. Artifacts are powerful and valuable things – whoever finds an artifact will gain influence over others, but also risks becoming a target for NPCs or other PCs.

THE ARTIFACT CARDS

Normally, you let the player who finds an artifact draw an Artifact Card or roll on the artifact table

below. If you want to root the artifact more firmly in the environment, you can draw the card without showing it and describe the surroundings, before handing the card over. A third option is that you simply choose which artifact a PC finds.

The title on the Artifact Card (or the entry on the table) tells you what the artifact is, while the rest of the text describes the item without mentioning its name. When a PC gets an Artifact Card, have the player first read the description without revealing the headline. It's fun for the other players to guess what the artifact is before it is revealed. That the players realize what an artifact is doesn't mean that the PCs do.



THE ARTIFACT TABLE

If you don't have access to the *Mutant: Year Zero Card Deck*, you can roll D666 on this table instead of drawing a card to randomly determine what artifact a PC finds.

D666	ARTIFACT
111–114	Air Mattress
115–122	Antidepressants
123–126	Assault Rifle
131–134	Automobile

D666	ARTIFACT
135-142	Battery
143-146	Bicycle
151-154	Binoculars
155-162	Bow & Arrow
163-166	Canoe
211-214	Cassette Player (Metaplot)
215-222	Chainsaw
223-226	Comic Book
231-234	Compass
235-242	Crossbow
243-246	Diary
251-254	Diving Gear
255-262	Dress
263-266	Energy Pills
311-314	Flashlight
315-322	Flare Gun
323-326	Gas Mask
331-334	Generator
335-342	Guitar
343-346	Hand Grenade
351-354	Hockey Helmet
355-362	Hunting Rifle
363-366	ID Card (Metaplot)
411-414	Jerrycan
415-422	Katana
423-426	Kevlar Vest
431-434	Lifestyle Magazine
435-442	Map of the Zone
443-446	Motor Boat
451-454	Painkillers
455-462	Painting
463-466	Perfume Bottle
511-514	Protective Suit
515-522	REGEN
523-526	Revolver
531-534	Scooter
535-542	Semi-Automatic Pistol
543-546	Shotgun
551-554	Smoke Grenade

D666	ARTIFACT
555-562	Soda Can
563-566	Stimulants
611-614	Sunglasses
615-622	Tuxedo
623-626	Umbrella
631-634	Video Camera (Metaplot)
635-642	Wrench
643-666	Re-Roll



THE DAWN VAULT

Any mutant who finds an artifact is supposed to hand it over to the Dawn Vault, for the good of the People (page 113). These days, far from all mutants follow that rule, but the general principle is still there and helps the development of the Ark – each artifact handed in gives a bonus to the Ark's DEV level. Use this to place PCs in moral dilemmas – should they help themselves or act for the common good?

Q AIR MATTRESS

This inflatable old bed offers unbeatable sleeping comfort! It's dirty and worn, and hard to inflate if you don't know how to do it.

Effect: Sleeping on the air mattress is very effective. A single hour is enough to recover all of your lost Wits (page 90).

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

Q ANTIDEPRESSANTS

When life in the Zone feels dark and hopeless, these little pills in a plastic bottle can give you chemical relief.

Effect: When eating these pills, you immediately heal all doubt that you have suffered. Unfortunately, there are only enough pills left for D6 doses. When you have consumed them all, you must discard this artifact. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: —

❑ ASSAULT RIFLE

A rusty but awe-inspiring weapon, capable of unleashing a hail of bullets at your enemies. Bullets are usually far too valuable to waste in this way, but the weapon itself will give you respect among the People.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to Shoot. Weapon damage 2, Long range. Has a clip, which means that you don't need to reload after every shot. Capable of full automatic fire (page 86).

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Warfare +D6

❑ AUTOMOBILE

This motor-driven carriage is a rust-ridden wreck, but it can be repaired. With a successful Jury-Rig roll, a Gearhead can get it running again. The engine can run on gasoline or on booze (one dose per Zone sector traveled).

Effect: The car can carry five mutants, increases the movement rate in combat and cuts the time it takes to explore a sector in the Zone by half. It can also be used to escape from threats or to ram enemies. How vehicles work is fully explained on page 94. Gear Bonus: +3. Armor Rating: 3. Resilience: 1.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6



❑ BATTERY

A heavy lump of metal that the Old Ones used to connect to machines to make them work. There still seems to be some power in it...

Effect: Used to power other artifacts that require electrical power. Can be recharged with a Generator (the artifact or the project).

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ BICYCLE

This rust-infested old vehicle from the Old Age is simple yet ingenious in its design. It has two thin wheels, a handlebar and pedals. The rubber tires are thick and rugged – perfect for navigating the Zone terrain.

Effect: The bicycle can carry one mutant, increases the movement rate in combat and cuts the time it takes to explore a sector in the Zone by half. It can also be used to escape from threats. How vehicles work is fully explained on page 94. Gear Bonus: +2. Resilience: 1.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ BINOCULARS

A strange metal object made of two connected tubes with pieces of glass inside each. If you look through the tubes, everything around you looks much bigger. Useful for watching enemies at a distance.

FIXING THE DECK

Even if you let the players draw random Artifact Cards, you can remove cards that you don't want the players to find from the deck. In particular, you might initially want to remove the three artifacts that tie into the game's metaplot: the Cassette Player, the Video Camera and the ID Card. When the players have all three, they can find the location of Eden. The Diary also provides some information about Eden, but doesn't help to reveal its location. Read more about this in Chapter 16.

If you don't have access to the Artifact Cards and want to keep certain artifacts off-limits, we recommend that you simply decide what artifacts the PCs find.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to the Scout and Find the Path skills. Light item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

□ BOW & ARROW

The People can create bows, but not like this one. It is constructed in some type of ancient material, and packs a massive punch.

Effect: Gear Bonus +2 to the Shoot skill. Weapon damage 1, Long range. Needs arrows.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Technology +1, Warfare +1

□ CANOE

A strange, oblong vehicle made of dented metal. It has two seats and two plastic paddles tucked away underneath.

Effect: The canoe can carry up to four mutants over water and can be used to explore coastal sectors of the Zone. It can be used to escape from threats on water, and gives a +2 Gear Bonus to the Move skill in such situations. Resilience: 1.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Technology +1

□ CASSETTE PLAYER (METAPLOT)

A cracked and yellowed plastic contraption with buttons and knobs and a lid along one side. Inside, there is a piece of plastic with two holes in it. On top of the device a thin metal rod is mounted.

Effect: Requires a Battery or Generator (the artifact or the project) to work. Can play music

from the Old Age and receive radio signals, if anyone is still transmitting...

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Culture +D6

Comment: This artifact can help the PCs find Eden. Read more in Chapter 16.



□ CHAINSAW

This rattling monster of a contraption can be wielded as a melee weapon to horrible effect. But starting the engine takes a full turn and requires a dose of gasoline or booze.

Effect: Wielded as a weapon, the chainsaw gives you a +2 Gear Bonus and has weapon damage 3. Heavy item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

□ COMIC BOOK

A booklet made of brittle old paper from the Old Age. You can hardly turn the yellowed pages without tearing them apart. They show images of muscular men and women in tights, fighting each other. The fashion sense during the Old Age was clearly very odd.

Effect: None. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ COMPASS

A piece of plastic with a dial on it. A needle spins and points in the same direction no matter how you turn. The Old Ones used this device to find their way in the wilderness.

SCRAP

There are a lot of things from the Old Age lying around in the Zone that aren't useful artifacts. Such items are called scrap. You can let the PCs find scrap anywhere. Make up something appropriate for the location, or let the players roll on the scrap table at the end of the book.

HOW MANY ARTIFACTS?

Don't let the PCs find too many artifacts too soon. Artifacts should be rare and valuable. As a general rule, don't let the PCs find more than one or two artifacts per session, in total. You can let some NPCs have artifacts, but that should also be a rare occurrence – NPCs' artifacts have a tendency to end up in the hands of the PCs. And if the PCs still would come across a large amount of artifacts – remember that others will try to get their hands on them...

Effect: The compass gives you Gear Bonus +2 to the Find the Path skill.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

□ CROSSBOW

A silent and deadly ancient weapon, made of a light-weight metal. Easier to aim and fire than a normal bow.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to the Shoot skill. Weapon damage 1, Long range. Uses arrows, not bullets.

DEV Requirement: Technology 5

DEV Bonus: Technology +1, Warfare +1

□ DIARY

A worn notebook with hand-written text on the waterlogged pages. If you can read the Old Ones' script, you can make out what it says.

Effect: This artifact connects to the game's meta-plot. Read more about it in Chapter 16.

DEV Requirement: Culture 20

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ DIVING GEAR

A full-body suit in a rubbery material from the Old Age. The strange suit comes with shoes like the feet of a frog, a plastic facemask and a rusted metal cylinder with tubes and gauges.

Effect: Heavy item. It gives you Gear Bonus +3 to using the Move skill underwater. It also

protects you against gases and gives you Protection Rating 3 against the Rot.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

□ DRESS

A large and wide piece of clothing in thin, ancient cloth that still glitters despite decades of dirt and dust. The cloth hardly covers your upper body at all, but hangs around your legs and makes it hard to walk. Very impractical – but pretty.

Effect: Gear Bonus +2 to Manipulate. Does not count as an item when you wear it.

DEV Requirement: Culture 10

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

□ ENERGY PILLS

The pills in this bottle will quickly give you your energy back when you're exhausted.

Effect: When eating these pills, you immediately heal all fatigue that you have suffered. Unfortunately, there are only enough pills left for D6 doses. When you have consumed them all, you must discard this artifact. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: —

□ FLASHLIGHT

A powerful portable lamp, projecting a bright cone of light into the dusky smog of the Zone. Needs a Battery (artifact or project) to work.

Effect: Disperses darkness (page 93) at up to Short range, allowing you to Shoot and Scout.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

□ FLARE GUN

A heavy pistol with a cartridge in the barrel. This weapon cannot be loaded with normal bullets.

Effect: The gun fires a brightly burning flare into the air, which can be seen several sectors away. You can use the flare gun as an artifact too. Gear Bonus +2, weapon damage 2, short range.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ GAS MASK

This crusty old black rubber mask covers your entire face and has a big filter in front of your mouth. The mask is worn and scratched, but still works.

Effect: Light item. Protects you against gases and gives you Protection rating 3 against the Rot.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6



❑ GENERATOR

A heavy, rusty old machine that seems completely worthless at first glance. But a Gearhead knows that this contraption is worth its weight in gold. If you fill it up with fuel it can generate electrical power.

Effect: Heavy item. Requires one dose of booze per day. Can power other artifacts or projects.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ GUITAR

A strange and brittle wooden contraption with strings stretched across a hole in the middle. Against all odds it has survived the Apocalypse with hardly a scratch, and if you pull on the strings, beautiful sounds are heard.

Effect: If you learn to play the guitar, you'll be popular around the campfire. Provides +3 Gear Bonus to Manipulate, but only in situations where you get a chance to play.

DEV Requirement: Culture 20

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ HAND GRENADE

A rusty metal lump that explodes with a deafening bang if you pull the pin out. Handle with caution!

Effect: Light item. You throw the grenade using the Shoot skill. It has no Gear Bonus and the range is Short. If the attack succeeds, the grenade lands within Near range of the target, if not it lands within Short range. The explosion has Blast Power 9 and weapon damage 2.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Warfare +D6

❑ HOCKEY HELMET

An ancient piece of headgear made of blue plastic. It's a little cracked and worn, but still provides solid protection for your head.

Effect: Protection Rating 3 against damage.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Technology +1

❑ HUNTING RIFLE

This long firearm is worn and scratched, but its great firepower and range will make sure you are feared in the Zone.

Effect: Gear Bonus +2 to Shoot. Weapon damage 2, Long range. Has a clip, which means that you don't need to reload after every shot.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Warfare +1



❑ ID CARD (METAPLOT)

A worn and dirty card made of ancient yellowed plastic. "ID Card Type VII" it says on one side, and on other side, hardly legible "Eden Security".

Effect: Tiny item. Cards like this were used in the Old Age to open doors to locked rooms. The question is – what door does this card open?

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

Comment: This artifact can help the PCs into Eden. Read more in Chapter 16.

❑ JERRYCAN

A rusted but intact metal jerrycan filled with fuel, which stinks and is very flammable. The fuel can power up ancient vehicles again – or be used as a firebomb.

Effect: The fuel can be used to fill up the tanks of old vehicles (page 94). If used as a weapon, you light a fuse stuffed into the nozzle and then throw the can with the Force skill. No Gear Bonus, Short range. If the attack succeeds, the can lands within Near range of the target, if not it lands at Short range. The explosion has Blast Power 6.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +1



❑ KATANA

In a crumbling sheath lies a long, thin sword. It feels good in your hand and the blade is still sharp – very sharp.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to the Fight skill. Weapon damage 2.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ KEVLAR VEST

This heavy vest already has some holes in it, but still gives you great protection from bullets and others attacks.

Effect: Armor Rating 6 against damage from external attacks.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6



❑ LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

A thick bundle of waterlogged paper that once was glossy. On the front cover and everywhere inside the magazine, there are pictures of the Old Ones. They all smile and look healthy and happy. Their homes are bright and beautiful, their motor carriages shine in the sunlight. Between the pictures, texts describe what life was like in the Old Age. It must have been heaven.

Effect: None. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ MAP OF THE ZONE

This brittle and torn map shows what the Zone looked like in the Old Age. It is very valuable to a Stalker to navigate among the ruins, but can also bring valuable knowledge to the People.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to Find the Path. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Culture 10

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ MOTOR BOAT

A dinghy in cracked and dirty plastic. It still seems to float. It has an outboard motor, but to make it run again a Gearhead needs to make a Jury-Rig roll. The motor can run on gasoline or booze (one dose per sector traveled in the Zone).

Effect: The boat can carry up to seven mutants, increases the movement speed in combat and cuts the time it takes to explore a coastal Zone sector by half. It can also be used to escape from threats or to ram enemies at sea. How vehicles work is fully explained on page 94. Gear Bonus: +3. Resilience: 2.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ PAINKILLERS

These little pills quickly numb the pain from your wounds and bruises.

Effect: On eating these pills, you immediately heal all damage points that you have suffered. They have no effect against critical injuries. There are only enough pills left for D6 doses. When you have consumed them all, you must discard this artifact. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: —

❑ PAINTING

A large piece of art in a wooden frame. The image shows a skinny man on a bridge, holding his hands to his face and screaming. The Old Ones were truly a strange lot. This artifact is of no obvious use, but you can always use it to adorn the walls in your den – or hand it in to the Dawn Vault.

Effect: None.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ PERFUME BOTTLE

A small, thick glass bottle with a clear liquid inside. When you press the button on top, a small spray of liquid comes out. You have never smelled anything this good before.

Effect: Gear Bonus +2 to the Manipulate skill. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Culture 10

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

❑ PROTECTIVE SUIT

A coverall made of a thick yellow fabric. It's worn and dirty but actually seems intact.

Effect: Protection Rating 6 against the Rot (page 126).

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ REGEN

A short orange plastic rod with a button at one end and a sharp needle at the other. The text along the side is worn away, but still legible, spelling the word REGEN.

Effect: The clear liquid in this autoinjector is the legendary drug REGEN. On injection you immediately heal all permanent trauma that you have suffered (page 70). You keep all of your mutations. The autoinjector only contains one dose. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 30

DEV Bonus: —

❑ REVOLVER

A gun made of heavy steel, resting comfortably in your hand. The weapon is a little rusty, but still in surprisingly good condition. It's easy to use too.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to the Shoot skill. Weapon damage 2, Short range. Has a drum that can be loaded with several bullets, so you don't need to reload after every bullet fired.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

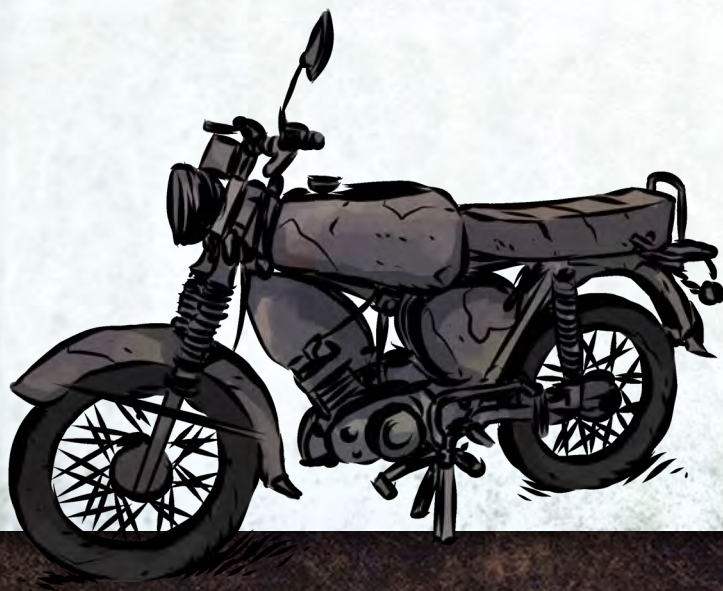
DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Warfare +1



❑ SCOOTER

Two wheels, an engine and a rusted handle – the perfect Zone vehicle. To make the scooter operational a Gearhead must first make a roll for the Jury-Rig skill. The engine can run on gasoline or on booze (one dose per two Zone sectors traveled).

Effect: The scooter can carry two mutants, increases the movement speed in combat and cuts the time it takes to explore a sector in the Zone by half. It can also be used to escape from threats or to ram enemies. How vehicles work is fully explained on page 94. Gear Bonus: +2. Resilience: 1.



DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

❑ SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL

A light-weight and easily concealable handgun, small enough to hide in your sleeve. Very handy in a tight spot.

Effect: Light item. Gear Bonus +2 to the Shoot skill. Weapon damage 2, Short range. Has a clip, meaning you don't need to reload after every shot.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Warfare +1

❑ SHOTGUN

A sawed-off firearm with two heavy barrels. At close range it is a fearsome weapon that inspires awe in every mutant in the Ark.

Effect: Light item. Gear Bonus +3 to the Shoot skill. Weapon damage 3, Short range. Can be fired twice before it needs to be reloaded.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6, Warfare +1

❑ SMOKE GRENADE

With a hissing noise, this old metal tube spews out black smoke that blocks vision. You can use this effect to escape from a fight that is going against you.

Effect: You can use the smoke grenade to escape from conflict (page 81) instead of using the Move skill. You can even roll first and use the grenade if the roll fails.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +1, Warfare +1

❑ SODA CAN

A red can with white, squiggly text on it. The brown drink inside it is bubbly and very refreshing to tired Zone wanderers. The Old Ones' drinks were really something else.

Effect: When you drink this, you immediately heal three points of damage. Once you have opened your can, you must discard this artifact. Light item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: —

◻ STIMULANTS

These tiny white pills look unimposing, but if you eat them they will immediately sharpen your senses and make you very alert. You might not sleep for a few days though.

Effect: When eating these pills, you immediately heal all confusion points that you have suffered. There are only enough pills left for D6 doses. When you have consumed them all, you must discard this artifact. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: Technology 20

DEV Bonus: —

◻ SUNGLASSES

A pair of glasses with darkened lenses. The glass is scratched but intact and covers your eyes – a useful edge in tough negotiations.

Effect: Gear Bonus to the Manipulate and Intimidate skills. Tiny item.

DEV Requirement: —

DEV Bonus: Culture + 1

◻ TUXEDO

A set of clothes with a black jacket, pants and a shirt. On the front of the shirt, a wrinkled strip of cloth hangs. These ancient clothes will impress everyone around you.

Effect: Gear Bonus +2 to Manipulate. Does not count as an item when you wear it.

DEV Requirement: Culture 10

DEV Bonus: Culture +D6

◻ UMBRELLA

With a simple motion you can unfold this contraption to create a protective dome of cloth and metal – useful against the Rot and the acid rain in the Zone.

Effect: Protection Rating 3 against the Rot (page 126).

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

◻ VIDEO CAMERA (METAPLOT)

A fist-sized device with a tube at one end. Along the side, there are several buttons and a small screen that can be folded out. This contraption needs a Generator or a Battery to work (artifact or project).

Effect: This device can record moving images and sound. Perhaps something is already recorded on it?

DEV Requirement: Technology 30

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

Comment: This artifact can help the PCs find the way to Eden. Read more in Chapter 16.



◻ WRENCH

A heavy metal tool from the Old Age, rusted but worth its weight in gold for Gearheads. Useful for bludgeoning other mutants too.

Effect: Gear Bonus +3 to the Jury-Rig skill and +2 to the Fight skill. Weapon damage 1.

DEV Requirement: Technology 10

DEV Bonus: Technology +D6

OTHER ARTIFACTS

There are 50 artifacts in this book. Considering that the PCs shouldn't find more than one or two artifacts per session, these 50 should suffice for quite a number of sessions. More artifacts will be published in future expansions, and you are of course free to make up more yourself – just be careful not to make them too powerful.

WEAPONS & VEHICLES

Weapons and vehicles are two types of artifacts that are especially sought after in the dawnworld. Some

are included in the Artifact Cards. These and others can be found in the tables below.

Bonus: The number of Gear Dice that a weapon gives to the Shoot or Fight skill, and a vehicle gives to the Move or the Fight skill (when ramming an enemy, see page 95). Some vehicles cannot be used to ram – these are marked with an asterisk (*).

Resilience: The number of points of damage that needs to be inflicted on a vehicle before its Gear Bonus is reduced one step.

Armor: The Armor Rating that the vehicle provides to all passengers in the vehicle.

Occupants: The number of people who can fit into or onto the vehicle, including the driver.

WEAPON	BONUS	DAMAGE	RANGE	COMMENT
Assault Rifle	+3	2	Long	Clip, Full-Auto.
Chainsaw	+2	3	Arm's Length	Heavy item.
Compound Bow	+2	1	Long	
Crossbow	+3	1	Long	
Flare Gun	+2	2	Short	
Hunting Rifle	+2	2	Long	Clip.
Katana	+3	2	Arm's Length	
Revolver	+3	2	Short	Clip.
Semi-Auto Pistol	+2	2	Short	Clip, light item.
Shotgun	+2	3	Short	Two barrels.
VEHICLE	BONUS	ARMOR	RESILIENCE	OCCUPANTS
Bicycle	+2*	—	1	1
Scooter	+2	—	1	2
Motorcycle	+3	—	1	2
Buggy	+2	2	2	3
Automobile	+3	3	2	5
Bus	+2	3	5	40
Truck	+2	6	5	4
Steam Car (page 111)	+1	3	3	10
Canoe	+2*	—	1	4
Motorboat	+3	1	2	7
Scrap Ship (page 109)	+1*	6	20	50
Steam Train (page 112)	+1*	3	15	50





SPECIAL ZONE SECTORS

This chapter describes five Special Zone Sectors that you can place anywhere in the Zone. They are complete scenario locations and contain NPCs, conflicts and the events that PCs can get involved in.

Each Special Zone Sector stands on its own, but you can link them together to create longer scenarios if you like. Several of them are also connected to Threat Cards (Chapter 10), and some of them have suggestions about where clues to Eden can be placed for the PCs to find. Each Special Zone Sector has a map overview, shown in two versions:

- ▣ The GM map has small inset pictures showing the important locations in the sector.
- ▣ The player map lacks these inset pictures, and can therefore be shown to the players openly when the PCs arrive to the sector. The player maps sit at the end of the chapter, and can also be downloaded from the Modiphius website.

FOR A MOUTHFUL OF WATER

The lack of grub and Rot-free water is an ever present threat in *Mutant: Year Zero*. This Special Zone Sector is focused on the second of these two vital resources. Somewhere out in the Zone there is a rich source of clean water, worth more than its weight in gold to the People – and to other groups in the Zone.

This sector can be used early in your campaign, as it introduces several central elements of the game: the shortage of resources, the Zone-Ghouls and the search for Eden. This Special Zone Sector can even be used as the starting point for the entire game (see the boxed text).



INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO

For a Mouthful of Water works well as an introduction to *Mutant: Year Zero*. The game then doesn't start in the Ark, but rather with the PCs already on a Zone expedition. Pick

a sector on the Zone map 5–6 squares away from the Ark – that’s where the PCs are when the game starts. Add one or two NPCs to the expedition too. If none of the PCs are a Dog Handler and none have the Tracker mutation, an NPC should have that role or mutation. To kick the game off, read or paraphrase this text to your players:

“The most precious resource of all in the Ark is something that we take for granted – clean water. Some time ago, the Ark’s water supply started to dry up. The People were getting scared and edgy. Two weeks ago, the Boss NN [insert the name of a Boss that the players have established during the character generation] decided to send an expedition into the Zone. The mission was meant to explore an ancient ruin that the Stalkers claim has an endless supply of clean water. They called it the Pure Plant. The problem was that the area was crawling with Zone-Ghouls. Several days passed, but the expedition did not return as planned. Two days ago, NN sent out another group of volunteers to search for the first expedition. You are these volunteers. For the past two days, you have trekked through the Zone. You have survived acid rain, been attacked by Zone Rats and hidden from Zone-Ghouls. Now, on the morning of the third day, you are approaching the Pure Plant...”



OVERVIEW

In the distance, huge tanks and thick rusty pipes rise from the wasteland. In the middle is a tall, concrete tower, still standing after decades of decay. When the PCs come closer, they realize the Pure Plant is located on a small island in a mist-covered lake (or bay, depending on where in the Zone you have placed the sector). The island is about 100 yards from the shoreline. Apart from the tanks, pipes and pools, several low ruined buildings can be seen on the island, which is overgrown with weeds.

In the Old Age, this installation was a water purification plant. The entire island is penetrated by

tunnels and underground reservoirs with water of different Rot levels. Thanks to maintenance work done by the Zone-Ghouls (below) the plant actually still works, and still pumps out clean water into the lake.

The lake itself is dark and the water turbid from algae, but is actually harmless to wade through. The Rot here is very weak (which a successful Know the Zone roll will reveal). The lake is also very shallow, no more than three feet deep. Therefore, the PCs won’t need a raft or boat to reach the island (don’t let them know this though). In the wintertime, the lake stays largely free of ice as the water pumped out from the plant is warm.

These are the main locations on the island:

The Smokestack: At the top of this 120 foot tall chimney, there is a tangle of wood branches and metal scrap. This is the nest of the Trash Hawk (below). In the nest, there are remains of the bird’s victims – both the Stalker Vorhan and the mysterious woman (below). A rusty old ladder leads to the top. Climbing it requires a Move roll (Gear Bonus +1 for the ladder).

Control Room: In a low building of rusty corrugated steel, there is a control room with dusty computer terminals and screens. Sometimes the terminals beep and blink – signs that the purification plant is still operational. In this building, the surviving members of the first water expedition from the Ark are holed up, hiding from the Zone-Ghouls. They have used broken furniture and other types of scrap to barricade the doors and windows, and they will shoot at anyone who approaches the building.

In the basement of the building, there are metal doors leading to the tunnel system and the reservoirs.

Reservoirs: A series of huge connected underground halls. In each of them, there are a large number of tanks where water is bubbling from the purification processes. On the ladders and walkways over the tanks, the Zone-Ghouls (below) have built camps with hammocks, tents, planks and tarpaulins.

In one of the bigger tanks, a huge Worm Swarm lives. The Zone-Ghouls treat this monster as a deity and make sacrifices to it.

Tunnels: Service tunnels penetrate the entire island. Having lived here for years, the Zone-Ghouls know these passages very well. There is a tunnel leading from the control room building to the reservoirs, but the water expedition members have not dared go down there. In this tunnel, there is a solid metal door that can be closed and locked with a successful Force roll.

THE SITUATION

When the Apocalypse came, the purification plant stayed operational, thanks to an internal emergency power plant and a group of workers who chose to stay. Thanks to the clean water they survived, but they could not completely escape the Rot. During the generations that followed, they turned into what the People now call Zone-Ghouls. They are very territorial and their leader Lutrell views any visitors to the island as threats.

The first water expedition from the Ark got into trouble the instant they set foot on the island. Their leader, the Stalker Vorhan, was attacked by the Trash Hawk and carried off to the nest at the top of the smokestack. The noise alerted the Zone-Ghouls, who attacked the intruders. After a brief but bloody battle the visitors sought refuge in the control room, where they have now barricaded themselves and don't dare go out. The Zone-Ghouls are planning a final attack.

INHABITANTS

Today approximately 50 Zone-Ghouls live on the island, half adults and half children. Most of them have typical stats (page 176), only their leader Lutrell is described in more detail below. The water

expedition from the Ark has been decimated since it arrived to the island – the leader Vorhan was taken by the Trash Hawk, and two others were killed by the Zone-Ghouls. The three that remain – Nelma, Grit and Lambda – are scared and very hostile to the Zone-Ghouls.

Nelma: After Vorhan's death, the Enforcer Nelma has become the unofficial leader of the group. She lives only to make her Boss happy, and she's is very unreasonable. She is determined to bring back Vorhan's gear from the nest on the smokestack, and to chase the Zone-Ghouls off for good. She sees the arrival of the PCs as the opportunity to reach these goals. Nelma is abnormally tall and heavily built, and has a deformed, hairless head.

Attributes: Strength 5 (current score 4), Agility 3, Wits 2, Empathy 3.

Skills: Intimidate 3, Fight 3, Force 1.

Mutations: Manbeast, 5 MP.

Gear: Scrap axe, two bullets.

Grit was Vorhan's Slave, and now takes orders from Nelma mostly just to have someone to follow. Grit is skinny and weak, and dreams of leaving the misery in the Ark. The PCs could win him over to their side if they play their cards right.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4 (current score 3), Wits 2, Empathy 3.

Skills: Shake it Off 3, Endure 2, Fight 1.

Mutations: Mind Terror, 3 MP.

Gear: Spiked bat.

Lambda is a Gearhead dressed in dirty blue coveralls, with pockets bursting with scrap. She is fascinated by the wonders of the Old Age and wants to learn the secret of how rotwater can be purified. She wants to chase off the Zone-Ghouls, but can be talked into other solutions.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 2, Wits 5, Empathy 3.

Skills: Jury-Rig 3, Comprehend 2, Heal 1.

Mutations: Human Magnet, 3 MP.

Gear: Scrap pistol (three barrels), 5 bullets.

FAMILIAR NPCs?

If you like, you can replace the three NPCs from the first water expedition with NPCs that the PCs have relationships to. This will make the interaction more interesting. If this is the first time these NPCs appear in the game, you can just change their names and use the stats as written.

Lutrell is the leader of the Zone-Ghouls on the island, who call themselves the “Pure Ones”. Lutrell is a man who lives and dies by upholding the ancient traditions: the daily water measurements with litmus paper, the bathing in Tank 3A every evening, the cleaning of the water filters. Traditions have kept the Pure Ones alive and will continue to do so, Lutrell believes. Intruders on the island are not welcome. However, Lutrell is no fanatic. If the PCs try to negotiate with him, he might make a deal. He can even consider giving the People access to the clean water – if given something substantial in return, of course. The Pure Ones all wear worn plastic coveralls, and most of them use protective face masks whenever they leave the reservoirs.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 3, Wits 5, Empathy 3.

Skills: Fight 2, Shoot 3, Move 2, Manipulate 2.

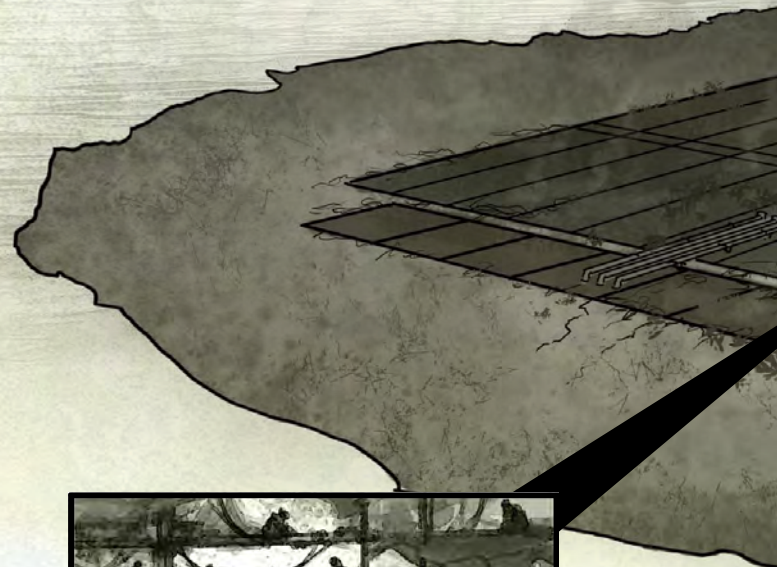
Gear: Scrap knife, bow (seven arrows), old litmus papers, torn wetsuit.

The Trash Hawk has its nest at the top of the smokestack, but it’s often out hunting. Normal stats (page 181).

The Worm Swarm in the pool hall is a huge specimen with a starting Strength score of 10. Otherwise it has typical stats (page 181). The Zone-Ghouls worship this beast, which they call the “Deep One”. Every week they sacrifice animals to it.

The Woman in the Tower: In the nest of the Trash Hawk, bones and other remains of the bird’s prey of are scattered, including the fresh corpse of Vorhan. One of the old skeletons is fairly intact, and still dressed in old and hacked up coveralls with strange markings. A PC who examines the skeleton and makes a Know the Zone roll, will realize that this is a skeleton of a non-mutated human woman. In her pocket, a waterlogged and yellowed diary can be found – it is still legible. This diary is an artifact that provides information about Eden. You can read more about it in Chapter 16.

THE PURE PLANT

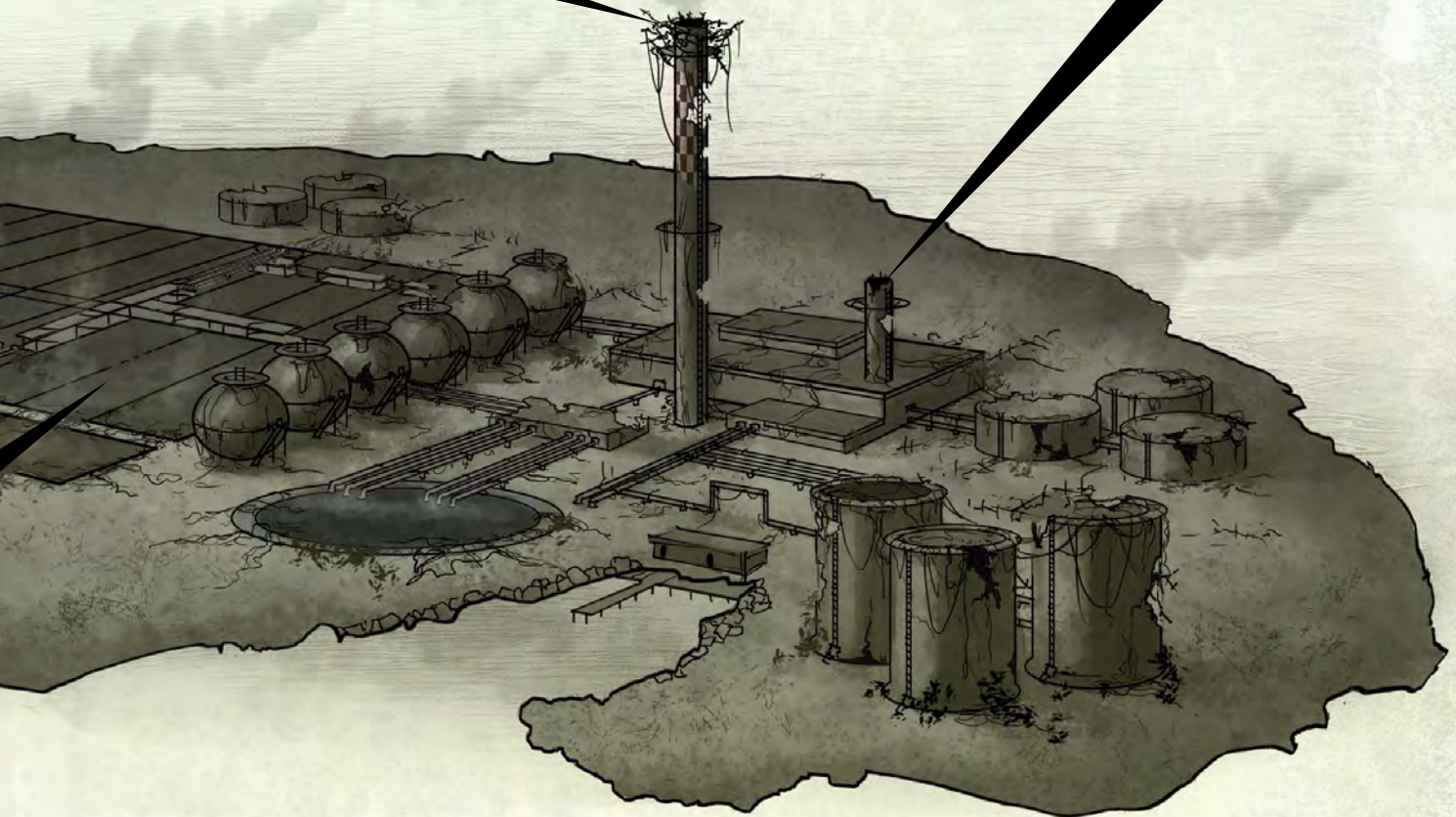


THE RESERVOIRS

THE SMOKESTACK



THE CONTROL ROOM





GEAR & ARTIFACTS

- ❑ The members of the first water expedition have no grub or water at all, and are getting desperate.
- ❑ Among the gory remains of the Stalker Vorhan's body in the Trash Hawk's nest, the PCs may find a scrap rifle (twin barrels, Gear Bonus +2), six bullets, three rations of canned food, five rations of clean water in plastic bottles and one random artifact.
- ❑ The dead woman in the nest on the smokestack has the Diary artifact.
- ❑ The Zone-Ghouls have dozens grub rations, but are not likely to share them with the PCs. Much of this grub is contaminated by Rot. The Zone-Ghouls have 1-2 random artifacts in their possession.
- ❑ In the reservoirs there is a practically endless supply of clean water – the PCs just need to make sure they drink from the right vats...

EVENTS

- ❑ The PCs are attacked by Zone-Ghouls soon after they set foot on the island. The Zone-Ghouls are as many as the PCs, and try to ambush them (page 82). As soon as one of them suffers damage, they will retreat. They are not trying to kill the PCs (yet), just warning them and testing their mettle. If the fight goes very badly for the PCs, Nelma and her crew may come to the rescue.
- ❑ The PCs find the remains of the first water expedition: Nelma, Grit and Lambda. They demand grub and water. They say that there are Zone-Ghouls on the island and want the PCs' help to kill them or chase them off. First, Nelma wants someone to climb the smokestack to see if their leader Vorhan is still alive. Nelma says that a "flying monster" grabbed him and flew off. Vorhan had grub and valuable artifacts that must be retrieved.
- ❑ In the nest at the top of the smokestack the PCs will find Vorhan very much dead – hacked to pieces by the Trash Hawk. Among the remains, the PCs may find plenty of useful gear (above). Make sure the PCs also find the Diary on the dead woman. Nelma

demands that the PCs hand over everything they found in the nest, including the Diary. She will pass everything on to the Boss NN, she says.

- ❑ The Trash Hawk attacks. The bird can strike when the PCs are up in the nest, on their way down, or at some other dramatically appropriate time. The Trash Hawk can also attack the Zone-Ghouls. The bird will generally fly off when wounded and return later.
- ❑ Nelma wants to attack the Zone-Ghouls head on, and secure the clean water in the pool halls. She demands that the PCs take part in the attack. Without the water in the pools the People are doomed, she says.
- ❑ Lutrell leads a delegation to talk to the intruders. He is wary of the mutants' powers and makes sure he stays at Short range. If the PCs can understand him (a Comprehend roll), he will make it clear that he offers them safe passage off the island with as much clean water as they can carry. In return, he wants their firearms and a vow that the People will never come back to this place. Nelma will never accept the deal, and the situation could escalate into violence.
- ❑ The Zone-Ghouls attack in full force. This will only happen when Lutrell feels truly threatened. The Zone-Ghouls greatly outnumber the intruders, who would do wisely to flee or negotiate – unless the PCs have very powerful artifacts or lots of Mutation Points.
- ❑ Any violence in the pool halls wakes the Worm Swarm, which attacks everyone nearby. The Zone-Ghouls run for their lives from the Deep One. If the PCs have the right mutations or powerful weapons they might be able to defeat the monster. The Zone-Ghouls have long feared the monster, and this event will make them very grateful to the PCs.

THE OTHER ARK

Sooner or later the People will realize that they are not the only mutants in the Zone – there are other Arks. All Arks share the same origin (Chapter 16), but have developed in very different directions over

the years. Some have simply collapsed. This Special Zone Sector is an Ark that has survived – in its very own way.

The PCs can find their way here by chance or be led here as the result of a Threat Card or an encounter in the Zone (Chapter 13).



EXPLICIT CONTENT

This text depicts cannibalism and can be disturbing to sensitive readers. If this Special Zone Sector is played with minors, we recommend that you tone down or completely remove these elements.



OVERVIEW

When darkness falls, this ruined skyscraper can be seen several sectors away. It is illuminated. All over the towering building, lights twinkle off and on – just like in the Old Age. When the PCs get closer they can see that the tower is heavily fortified. Car wreckage and scrap has been piled to make a wall encircling the base of the entire building. Along the top of the wall, silhouettes carrying guns can be spotted. Next to a big gate in the wall, a powerful ancient spotlight casts a cone of bright light into the darkness of the Zone. Here and there on the ground outside of the wall, corpses of Zone-Ghouls lie in various stages of decomposition.

If the PCs come closer, a gunshot is fired over their heads and a coarse female voice tells them to stop. If the PCs declare that they mean no harm, they will be let in through the gate. Other mutants are as rare to the inhabitants of this Ark as to the People themselves – and, as we shall see, of great interest here. If the PCs come here in the company of someone from this Ark (page 150) they will be let in immediately.

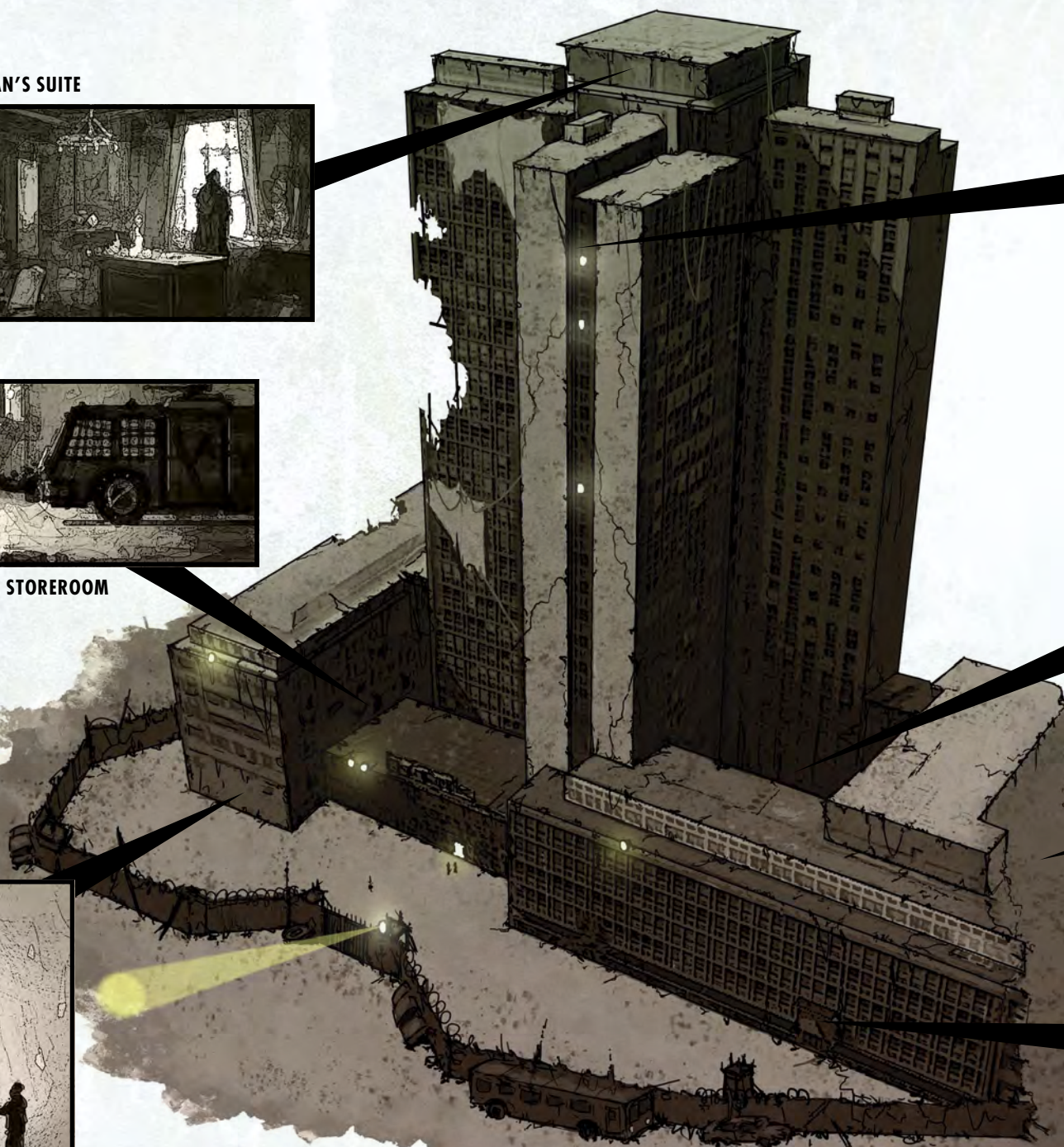
Inside the walls, the first thing the PCs will notice is that there are children here – dozens of them, of all ages. Considering the inability of the People to have children, this should come as a great surprise to the PCs. They probably haven't met children before, not since they were children

THE OTHER ARK

THE CHAIRMAN'S SUITE



THE ARTIFACT STOREROOM



HAND-CRANKED ELEVATOR**PUSHWHEEL CONNECTED TO GENERATOR****SLAUGHTERHOUSE****CAGES FOR THE "GIVERS"**

themselves. The second thing that the PCs will soon notice is that it is the women who call the shots around here – the men are underlings and slaves.

After having been gawked at by the children and guardedly greeted by the adults, the guests will be stripped of their clothes and scrubbed with hot water – a rather heavy-handed Rot decontamination (page 126). They are then offered grub, as much as they want, of some kind of dried meat. Any questions – about the meat or anything else – are met by silence or answers “not to worry about it”. The PCs hear about the “Chairman”, who seems to be the ruler of this Ark and is mentioned with deep reverence and respect. Some call him “the source of all life”.

The PCs are free to move around inside the settlement, except for the basement and the Chairman’s penthouse (below), but are constantly being watched. Inside the building there is even working electric light, but the lamps flicker and sometimes go out completely.

THE SITUATION

The Chairman rules this Ark as a dictator. The source of his power is that he – and only he – can father children with the women of the Ark. All other men and women here are barren to each other, just like the People in the PCs’ own Ark. The explanation behind this is that the Chairman is no mutant. He is a Zone-Ghoul who was adopted by Eden scientists in this Ark at a young age – so long ago that none of the inhabitants remember it (or do they?). As a consequence of this, all other men in the Ark are treated like slaves (or worse, see below).

In this Ark, starvation set in much earlier than in the PCs’ Ark. To survive, the inhabitants went out into the Zone and started to hunt – and eat – Zone-Ghouls, who are numerous in this area. The hunting raids triggered violent counterattacks. A low-intensity war has now been raging for years between the Zone-Ghouls and the Chairman’s Ark.

When the Zone-Ghouls no longer were enough to feed the inhabitants – and the increasing number of children – the Chairman decreed that the men of the settlement should be sacrificed so that the children and women – and he himself – could live



on. Many of the men are now dubbed “Givers” and work hard as slaves until they are butchered and eaten. But the number of Givers is running low, and discontent is simmering. When the Chairman hears about the PCs and their Ark he sees a new source of food for his ever-growing flock of children...

INHABITANTS

In this Ark, there are NPCs with the same roles as in the PCs own Ark – create stats for typical inhabitants just like you would in the Ark (page 139). Stats for a few important NPCs follow below.

The Chairman is consumed by his desire for power and control. He views himself as a divine being. He is skinny and pale, and wears a black robe and a hood to protect his translucent skin against the sun

– which hurts him just like it does all Zone-Ghouls (page 176). The Chairman’s goal is to find a new source of grub for his children.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4, Wits 5, Empathy 5.

Skills: Fight 2, Move 3, Shoot 4, Manipulate 5.

Gear: Revolver (artifact, 5 bullets).

Rebeth: An Enforcer who is blindly loyal to the Chairman. She is tall, wears her black hair in a long ponytail and has no other goal than to prove herself to the Chairman.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 4, Wits 2, Empathy 3.

Skills: Fight 4, Move 2, Shoot 3.

Mutations: Four-Armed, Extreme Reflexes, 6 MP.

Gear: scrap rifle (three-barreled, 6 bullets), spiked bat.

Krin: A Stalker who secretly doubts the rule of the Chairman. She has not dared to tell anyone else – but she could try to use the PCs as a catalyst for a revolt.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 5, Wits 4, Empathy 2.

Skills: Move 2, Shoot 4, Heal 2, Find the Path 2.

Mutations: Flame Breath, 3 MP.

Gear: scrap rifle (weapon damage 3, 4 bullets), scrap knife.

Dink: Krin's slave and companion on her Zone travels. He suspects that Krin doubts the Chairman, and considers ratting on her in order to gain favor with the Chairman and be spared the fate of a Giver.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 3, Wits 2, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 2, Move 2, Endure 4.

Mutations: Rot-Eater, 1 MP.

Gear: Scrap spear, road sign (artifact).

Naphta: A Gearhead who prefers to spend her time alone, delving into the mysteries of the Old Age. Tries to stay away from trouble, but could be recruited to either side in case of a revolt.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 5, Empathy 3.

Skills: Fight 1, Shoot 3, Jury-Rig 3.

Mutations: Pathokinesis, 3 MP.

Gear: Bicycle chain, scrap pistol (twin-barreled, 4 bullets).

ARTIFACTS

This Ark has a sizeable collection of scrap and artifacts in the tower's basement. In a dark garage there are lots of broken items from the Old Age, as well as 4–5 functional artifacts. One of the artifacts leading the way to Eden (Chapter 16) may be located here. In addition, in the garage there are three ancient buses that have been repaired and fitted with armor plating, flamethrowers and scrap cannons by Naphta. These rolling fortresses are sometimes used for larger raids against the Zone-Ghouls, and could be used against the PCs' Ark.

GRUB, WATER & BULLETS

In this Ark there is enough dried meat (below) to feed all inhabitants for a week. Most of it is stored in the basement, where there is also a broken old

water pipe that still carries enough Rot-free water for everyone to drink. The female inhabitants usually carry D6 bullets each, but there is no central stockpile. The men (except the Chairman) have no guns and no bullets.

EVENTS

- ❑ The PCs are led to meet the Chairman in person. This will happen whether they ask to see him or not. His den is a large penthouse suite at the top of the skyscraper, filled with furniture and items from the Old Age. To get up here the PCs can ride the elevator – it is hand-cranked by Givers and slowly creaks its way up the 25 floors. The Chairman wants to know everything about the PCs and their Ark. He prefers to talk to women and treat men like air. He proposes an alliance between his Ark and the PCs', and gives a speech about the dawn of a new era. It's all a ruse to learn the location of the PCs' Ark, in order to plunder it or rule over it.
- ❑ The Gearhead Naphta approaches a PC, preferably a Gearhead or a Chronicler. She shows this character the hidden garage full of artifacts (above), and talks about a mysterious bunker a few sectors away – could it be Eden? – and offers the PC the prospect of an expedition there. Naphta's mission from the Chairman is to gain the trust of the PCs to get information from them, but Naphta is a gentle soul and she might become a true friend. If the bunker she speaks of is real or not is up to you to decide.
- ❑ Suddenly, a great commotion erupts when a male mutant, bloody and dirty, comes running towards the gate. Unless the PCs intervene, he knocks down a guard and runs out into the Zone – only to be shot down by another guard on the scrap wall. The mutant was one of the Givers who tried to escape. When they don't work they are held captive in a large, dark empty warehouse in the basement. They sit chained inside crude metal cages. In an adjoining room, the power source for illumination of the tower can be found – it is a large, ancient generator connected to a big

horizontal wheel pushed around by 5–6 Givers, hour after hour until they collapse. In another cold basement room, the darkest secret of this Ark is hidden – a slaughterhouse where Givers who are too exhausted to work are butchered for food. The entrance to the basement is guarded by two Enforcers with scrap pistols. The escape attempt can be the spark that triggers a revolt against the Chairman, and the PCs might get caught in the middle of it.

- ▣ If the PCs reveal where their Ark is located, or if the Chairman finds out some other way (by having the PCs followed, for example), he will lead a raiding party there. The three armored buses (above) will roll through Zone to the PCs Ark. If it is wintertime, then they can drive across frozen rivers or lakes. The raid has Battle Level 3 (page 114), but the Chairman doesn't attack head on – instead he besieges the Ark. He demands that ten mutants be handed over to him as slaves. If the People give in to this demand the Chairman will leave, but come back at some later time and demand even more “slaves”. Any slaves given to the Chairman will be turned into Givers (if they are men) or impregnated by the Chairman (if they are women). Sooner or later the People will need to confront the Chairman and deal with him once and for all.

THE NOVA CULT

In the world after the Fall, many strange cults have appeared. The psionic sect that calls itself “Nova” is one of the strangest – and most dangerous of them all.

OVERVIEW

In a flat scrubland in the Zone, there is a large circular metal slab, ten yards across, on the ground. Nearby, there are a few simple wooden sheds with corrugated metal roofs. From inside the sheds, animals can be heard grunting and squealing. Moving closer, the PCs smell animal manure. A hunchback mutant with reptilian features walks between the sheds (this is Ohm, see below). Inside the sheds about 30 pigs are kept, all mutated and surly.

On occasion (i.e. at a moment of your choosing) the large metal slab will slide away with a loud scraping noise. A deep rumble rises from the underground silo that is revealed, and a plume of steam and smoke rises from the deep. As this happens, a crowd of pale mutants in long robes appear. They dance and sing strange songs as if in a trance, oblivious to whatever else might be happening around them. If the PCs attack, the cultists will defend themselves with their mutations (below), and retreat into the bunker below. They will try to capture the PCs alive if they can, but they won't risk their lives to do it.

Underground, there is a fully operational missile silo, built in the early days of the Apocalypse. The Nova mutants have turned this silo into a temple. The entrance to the facility a small hatch in the ground near the pigsties. Underneath the hatch, a narrow ladder leads into the deep. Ohm keeps an eye on the hatch.

THE SITUATION

Some years ago, in a distant Ark, Plutonia – a charismatic mutant with strong psionic mutations – preached that a holy, burning light will one day cleanse the world of all evil. She gained a following, and the group soon turned into a cult. They called themselves Nova. Most members had mental mutations only, just like their leader, and they all took great interest in the wonders of the ancient world.

The Nova cult eventually left their Ark and wandered the Zone. By chance, they came across an old and deserted defense facility. It contained an operational missile silo, including a huge missile with unknowable powers of mass destruction. Plutonia saw this as a sign of the impending Doomsday, the day when the world would finally be cleansed. Nova settled in the old bunker.

Inspired by ancient religious writings that she has misinterpreted, Plutonia has preached that the Doomsday will be heralded by the birth of a luminescent child – the Doomsday Child. Just like the People, the Nova Cult members cannot have children with each other, but they have discovered that they can conceive children with unmutated humans. To bring about Doomsday, Plutonia has therefore let the donor Verter (below) impregnate the women of the cult. Several children have been

born, but none of them have been luminescent so far. The fanatical Plutonia has forced the mothers to leave the infants to die in the Zone. Now, the young priestess Abbetina (below) is pregnant, and has decided that she will never let Plutonia take her child from her.

Plutonia believes that Abbetina bears the luminescent child and that the Doomsday will come soon. She has managed to start up the missile launch system, and is now considering an appropriate target for this weapon of mass destruction. In the meantime, several cult members are starting to question Plutonia's leadership. She has responded by handing out "holy pills" (sedatives), to make the cult members more docile. But this state of affairs cannot last...

INHABITANTS

The first creatures the PCs meet in this Zone sector are probably Ohm and his surly mutant hogs, that he keeps for the cult. The Nova Cult itself has 20 members. Mostly, they stay down in their underground "temple" where they meditate and study artifacts from the Old Age. Sometimes, they go on patrols in the Zone, to leave infants to die (above and page 173) or to search for artifacts.

All Nova Cult members have shaved heads and wear long robes. Some adorn themselves with glittering items they have found in the Zone. A few wield simple scrap weapons like spears and knives, but most are unarmed. All cult members are powerful psionic mutants. For stats, see page 174.

Ohm, Pig Farmer. A large, reptilian hunchbacked mutant with a cloven tongue. He moves jerkily, speaks with a lisp and is dressed in blue coveralls. He has followed Plutonia from the start, but he is not accepted as a full member of the cult as he does not have any psionic mutations. He is sick of being treated like a second-rate mutant, and might take the chance to get back at the cultists, given the chance. Deep inside, he still loves Plutonia however. And his hogs.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 3, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 3, Move 2.

Mutations: Reptilian, 3 MP.

Gear: Scrap knife, gas mask (artifact).

Plutonia, Cult Leader. Tall and anemic woman with a shaved head. Walks with regal strides and constantly watches everything and everyone with her piercing blue eyes. She loves to hold long, repetitive speeches, addressing her followers. Dreams of one day giving her life for the cult and becoming a martyr. Plutonia might have a clue to the location of Eden.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 5, Wits 5, Empathy 5.

Skills: Move 3, Shoot 3, Comprehend 3, Manipulate 4.

Mutations: Puppeteer, Pyrokinesis, 6 MP.

Gear: Hand grenade, sedative, (artifacts), launch key.

Abbetina, Pregnant Priestess. A short young woman with dark eyes and large glasses. The fact that Plutonia believes that Abbetina carries the Doomsday Child has made her a revered person in the cult. She pretends to enjoy the attention, but the fact is that she doubts Plutonia's leadership. She wants to topple Plutonia or escape before her child is born, but has not found the right time to act. Abbetina detests the father of her child, the donor human Verter.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 1, Wits 3, Empathy 4.

Skills: Fight 1, Move 2, Heal 3.

Mutations: Pathokinesis, 3 MP.

Gear: Lifestyle magazine (artifact).

Verter, Human Donor. A handsome young human in a tight-fitting silver jumpsuit. Has long, blond hair, which clearly sets him apart from the cultists. He was bought by Plutonia from slavers to impregnate the women of the cult, a job he has taken to with great joy. Verter suffers from total memory loss, and has no recollection of where he came from. He obeys Plutonia's every command, and will fight anyone who threatens his privileged position. Verter is cheerful, vain and a coward.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 2, Wits 2, Empathy 5.

Skills: Move 2.

Gear: None.

ARTIFACTS

The Nova cultists have collected many odd things from the Old Age, but most of them are useless scrap. However, a few artifacts can be found

scattered throughout the bunker. Let the players draw random Artifact Cards, or choose something appropriate from Chapter 14. It might even be one of the artifacts leading the way to Eden (Chapter 16).

The missile in the silo is of course also an artifact. However, it is set up within the silo and next to impossible to remove. It is launched by a launch key (carried by Plutonia at all times) and a simple six-digit code (which only Plutonia knows). The destructive power of the missile warhead is horrendous. In the sector where it strikes, and in all eight surrounding sectors, all buildings are leveled and all life wiped out. Anyone within ten sectors of the detonation suffer a Rot attack – the number of Rot Points immediately suffered is equal to 10 minus the distance to the detonation sector. This entire area is then contaminated and all sectors within it suffer from Rot Level 2 (Chapter 8).

GRUB & WATER

In locked cabinets, there is grub enough to feed the cult for a week. There is meat from the pigs, some grub grown by Ohm, and some canned food from the Old Age. Only Plutonia has the key to the cabinets. Clean water, enough to last a week, is stored in plastic jerrycans and bottles scattered in the underground complex.

EVENTS

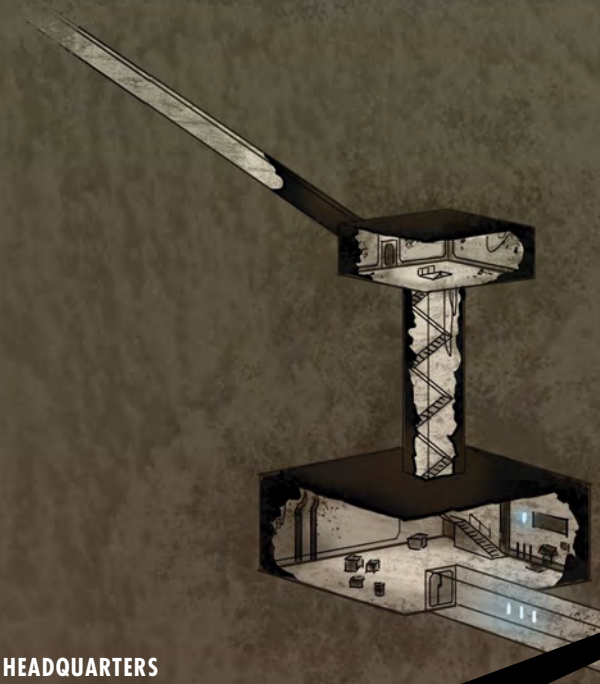
Present the Nova cultists as aloof and mysterious. They can show up in many places and be enemies as well as allies to the People. See the Threat Card The Zone Cult (Chapter 10) and the Zone threat Nova Cultists (Chapter 13) for examples of how the PCs can come into contact with the cult. They can also hear about the cult from NPCs that they meet when traveling in the Zone. When the PCs have found their way to the cult's headquarters, many things might happen:

- ❑ A PC with the Luminescence mutation would be seen as a holy creature by the cultists. They all kneel in reverence, handing the PC scrap and artifacts as gifts. It is up to the PCs how they wish to handle the situation. Plutonia will feel threatened by the newcomers and might resort to drastic action.

THE NOVA CULT

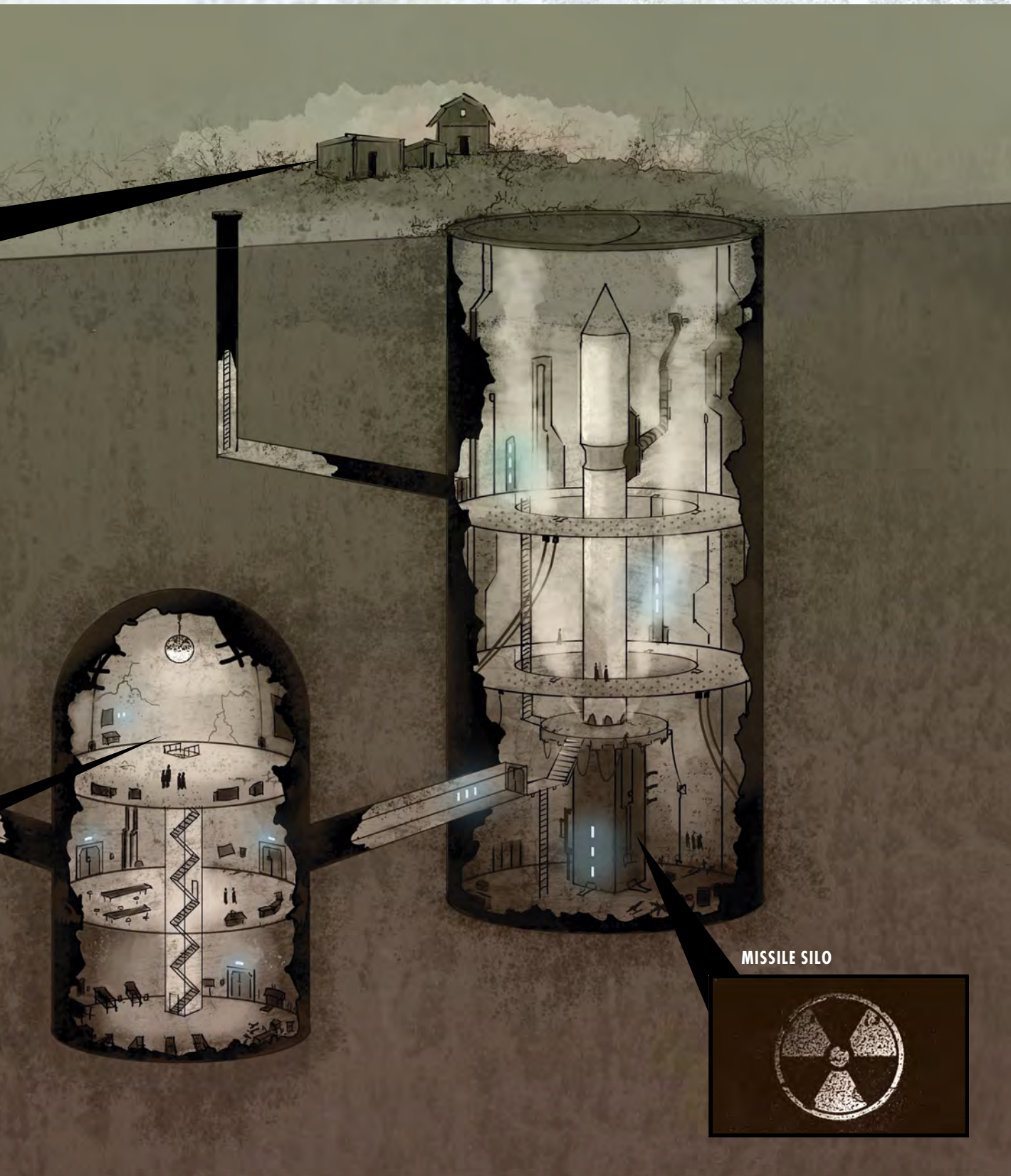


OHM'S PIGSTY



CULT HEADQUARTERS





- ❑ If the PCs come into conflict with Nova, Plutonia wants them captured and questioned to find out if they have seen any unmutated humans anywhere. After the interrogation – whatever answers the PCs give – they will be chained in the missile silo to be incinerated when the missile is launched.
- ❑ Abbetina turns to the PCs for help to get rid of Plutonia – and kill her if necessary. Abbetina may free the PCs if they have been captured. She may even take this initiative if she meets the PCs somewhere else, for example in the Ark. In this case she might offer some

reward in the return for their help, such as a clue to the location of Eden.

- ❑ Plutonia suddenly decrees that the Doomsday will take place in just a few days. The cult assembles in the temple and chants incessantly. The PCs show up at the bunker, or are already there. Do they try to stop her? If pressed, Plutonia may very well launch the missile even if Abbetina hasn't given birth yet. You decide what target Plutonia chooses, if the missile lands somewhere in the Zone or far away – perhaps hitting someone who will retaliate?



THE HELLDRIEVERS

The Helldrivers are a gasoline-guzzling mutant clan that the PCs can meet by the Ark (see the Threat Card described in Chapter 10) or out in the Zone (page 173). This Special Zone Sector describes the Helldrivers' main base of operations.

OVERVIEW

Even at a distance, the silhouette of a large, cubical building can be seen against the horizon. The building consists of eight open floors, with rows of vehicles and wrecks seen on every floor.

In the rubble around the main building, there are a number of sheds, motorhomes, tents and vehicle wrecks turned into living quarters. There is also a large metal cage with crude spectator stands on either side. Several dozens of people – most with colorful mohawk haircuts and black leather outfits – mill about the area. Some are busy tinkering with their vehicles, some lift weights and others sit by a fire, eating. The rumble of engines is heard constantly.

The entire compound is encircled by a barbed-wire fence. At some points on the fence, red STOP-signs are mounted. Here and there, decomposing remains of humanoids and animals lie on the ground. The stench of death is pungent.

THE SITUATION

This settlement is the home of the Helldrivers, and band of rough and tumble mutants who have been exiled from their Arks (or left voluntarily). They are led by Ilona the Corpse-Eater who first found this old car park, packed with working vehicles. Using these, the Helldrivers have raided other settlements in the Zone, increasing their number and improving their weaponry over the years. The basement levels of the car park are filled with loot from these raids. The Helldrivers have also taken slaves, who now toil as chain-gang servants to the Helldrivers.

Ilona the Corpse-Eater is a large mutant who has killed every rival who has tried to challenge her leadership. She rules her horde with an iron fist – the only way to control such an unruly bunch. Most Helldrivers are violent and impulsive types, driven

by hatred and bitterness. Violent internal rivalry is common. Lately, the supply of food and slaves has been running low, and the Helldrivers are getting anxious. Their raids go deeper and deeper into the Zone.

INHABITANTS

Approximately 75 people live in the camp around the old car park. Of these, 50 are Helldrivers and 25 are slaves. Most Helldrivers are Enforcers, but there are also several Gearheads and Stalkers. Flame Breather, Manbeast and Tracker are the most common mutations. Almost everyone carries a melee weapon like a baseball bat, brass knuckles or a scrap knife. About a dozen carry scrap firearms – rifles, pistols and flamethrowers. They wear colorful mohawks and black leather outfits adorned with nuts and bolts. Most enjoy moonshine in huge quantities – every now and then resulting in very lax security within the compound.

The slaves are a mixed bunch. Most are mutants, but some are Zone-Ghouls and some might even be Wanderers (page 174). They are extremely gaunt and underfed. Most want to escape, but they are too afraid to try. Ten of the slaves are chained in the basement of the car park, the others work among the Helldrivers' sheds and trailers. Each slave is chained to a metal beam or some other heavy item.

Ilona the Corpse-Eater. A seven-foot tall and blue-haired mutant with powerful muscles, big shoulderpads, a black leather outfit and a grim look. She solves conflicts by killing quickly and effectively. She recently strangled her lover and ate him, in front of a cheering crowd. Ilona is a strategist and a sadist. She spends her time on her motorcycle riding in the Zone, or in her trailer reading books. She has a great interest in artifacts from the Old Age.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 5, Wits 3, Empathy 4.

Skills: Fight 3, Move 4, Shoot 4, Jury-Rig 1.

Mutations: Corpse-Eater, 6 MP.

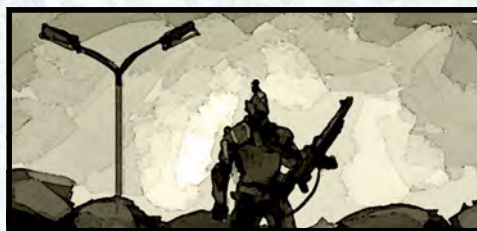
Gear: Motorcycle (page 199), binoculars (artifact), jerrycan (artifact), roadmap (partially burned), hunting rifle (artifact).

THE HELLDRIVERS

ILONA'S ARMOR-PLATED TRAILER



GUARD ON THE ROOF



HELLDRIVER CARS

WORKSHOP



Gaffa, Roadwarrior in Love. A tall, wiry Helldriver dressed in black leather and long, stark red hair. She has lots of scrap piercings in her face. She is Ilona's bodyguard and follows her everywhere. She sought this position for one reason only – she loves Ilona more than her own life. Gaffa is obsessed, jealous and bloodthirsty.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 4, Wits 3, Empathy 3.

Skills: Fight 3, Move 4, Shoot 4, Jury-Rig 2.

Mutations: Sprinter, 3 MP.

Gear: Motorcycle, hockey helmet (artifact), scrap pistol, scrap knife.

Raff, Forgotten Thief. A short and skinny character who prefers to stay in the background. He uses nuts and bolts as ear piercings and wears his hair in a purple mane, but is not much of a Helldriver. He lives in constant fear of being beaten by other Helldrivers, and always agrees with whatever others tell him. Raff is a kleptomaniac and fills his pockets with whatever he can find. He has no real loyalty to Ilona, and only looks after his own interests.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 4, Wits 2, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 1, Move 4, Jury-Rig 1.

Mutations: Human Magnet, 3 MP.

Gear: Wrench (artifact).

ARTIFACTS

A number of artifacts can be found in the base of the Helldrivers – if the PCs can get close enough to get their hands on them.

- ❑ 10–20 armored and operational buggys and cars (page 199).
- ❑ 200 car wrecks (of which 5–10 might be possible to repair).
- ❑ 5–10 operational motorcycles.
- ❑ 30 motorcycle wrecks (of which 2–3 can be repaired).
- ❑ 10 motorhomes and trailers (not operational).



ARENA FOR CAGE FIGHTS

GEAR, GRUB AND WATER

Scattered around the sheds and trailers, there is lots of scrap that the Helldrivers have found on their raids. Most of it is useless.

Behind the garage, there is an operational well with clean water. On the top floor of the car park, there is a stockpile of grub – enough to feed all of the Helldrivers for a few days.

EVENTS

The Helldrivers can become dangerous enemies of the People, perhaps one of the greatest threats out there. However, manipulative PCs might strike up an alliance with Ilona and her band of road warriors. Here are three possible events that can lead to major campaign events:

- ❑ Seven mutants from the Ark have been taken prisoner by the Helldrivers. One or more of them should be an NPC that a PC has a relationship to. One might be a Boss. The PCs are sent – or go on their own initiative – to scout the Helldrivers' base and plan a rescue operation. It turns out that some of the captives are being held in the car park basement. One or two have been sold as slaves to some other faction in the Zone.
- ❑ The Helldrivers have had a huge drinking binge. Most of the road warriors are sleeping it off in and around the car park. The PCs can fairly easily enter the compound, steal some gear and free at least some of the slaves. Sooner or later, some Helldrivers will wake up and spot the intruders.
- ❑ Two rival factions of Helldrivers duke it out inside the compound. They drive around the car park with their vehicles, trying to ram each other. The fight escalates quickly and soon a fuel tank explodes. The fire spreads rapidly. A large pillar of smoke rises and can be seen for miles. About 20 Helldrivers die in the battle and the fire. The smoke attracts some other faction in the Zone, who seizes the opportunity and attacks the compound without mercy. The PCs can get involved at any stage. They can join the attackers, help the Helldrivers, or just use the chaos and confusion to their own ends.

RUST CASTLE

This Special Zone Sector is a trading post, a sanctuary where travelers from all corners of the Zone can meet. It is also a place of intrigue – the calm in Rust Castle is a thin veneer. We suggest that you don't let the PCs visit Rust Castle until they have had a chance to explore the Zone to some extent and have already met one or two other factions.

The PCs can find their way to Rust Castle in several different ways – they can hear about the trading post and actively seek it out, they may stumble upon the old wreck by chance, and they may encounter the steamboat Steelcrest (below) while traveling. The small ship may have engine trouble or be under attack. If the PCs help the Mechies onboard, they will be invited to Rust Castle as a reward.

OVERVIEW

In a dark lake, river or bay in the Zone, a wall of rusty metal rises from the water. Coming closer, visitors realize that it is in fact a huge, beached passenger ferry. On the deck far above, child-sized humanoids can be spotted, watching the intruders. Anyone scouting the wreck for some time will see canoes, rafts and small boats enter and exit through a huge opening in the aft of the wrecked ferry. The small vessels are operated by mutants – most of them tiny, a few very tall and heavy.

THE SITUATION

The wreckage, called Rust Castle by its inhabitants, is an old passenger and car ferry that was beached in the days of the Apocalypse. Algae and seaweed partly cover the now rust-colored hull, which lost most of its paint decades ago. Onboard, the so-called Mechies live. They are a small mutant clan of 30 individuals with one common feature – none of them are more than four feet tall. The Mechies are survivors from an Ark that was lost very early on, when they were still children. They found the wrecked ferry, sought refuge there and have stayed there ever since.

The Wreck: The old ferry is a wreck used by the Mechies as a sort of mine – an almost endless

supply of pipes, metal plates, bolts, nuts, cables and anything else a Gearhead might need. The Mechies live on the top two decks of the ship, where they also have a kitchen and some common rooms. The lower decks of the wreck are a dark and tangled maze of passageways and steep ladders. At strategic locations, the Mechies have built hidden traps. The lightweight Mechies won't trigger them, but a fully grown mutant might suddenly fall into a pit fitted with sharp spears - or suffer some other deadly fate. Spotting a trap requires a Scout roll, which is only allowed if the PC actively looks for it. Anyone who triggers a trap must make a Move roll (-2) to avoid being injured. If the Move roll fails, roll for an attack using 4-8 Base Dice (weapon damage 1). The attack cannot be parried.

The Marketplace: The aft ramp of the ship fell off long ago, and the lower car deck is partly filled with water. It has turned into a small harbor, safe from the wind and the rain. By the gate, the Mechies have fitted a big portcullis built out of scrap. It can be hand-winched up and down, to close and open the gate as the Mechies see fit. Inside, on the upper car deck, there is a marketplace where mutants gather from all over the Zone to barter and exchange information with the Mechies and each other. Very few visitors are ever allowed to go further into the ship - most are only allowed on the car deck.

The marketplace of Rust Castle has come to be used as neutral ground where even sworn enemies leave their weapons at the door. Here, the PCs can, for example, meet representatives from the main factions of the Zone - like the Nova Cult or the Helldrivers. Anyone is allowed to barter in Rust Castle, after they have been approved by the Mechies' leader Nikkil and have paid a fee - a few bullets. Nikkil keeps an eye on the market to make sure the trade is free and fair.

Nikkil and the other Mechies are protected by the "Whoppers" - four colossal mutant guards. They make every visitor turn over their weapons before entering the semi-darkness inside Rust Castle. The Whoppers will use force against anyone who causes trouble or breaks the rules. The perpetrator will be expelled from Rust Castle, banned from entering for life.

INHABITANTS

Being four feet tall and weighing 25 pounds makes you very vulnerable in the Zone. That's why the Mechies are a tightly knit clan, on their guard against all strangers.

Poison: The Mechies use stealth and cunning to survive. A favored type of weapon is a blowpipe with poison darts. In close combat, they use scrap spears with poisoned blades. Anyone who is hit by a poisoned weapon and suffers at least one point of damage must roll to Endure once per turn (this roll does not count as an action). Failure means the victim suffers another point of damage. A successful roll means the victim's body overcomes the poison, and no further rolls are needed.

Craft: Apart from trade, the Mechies live from fishing and handicrafts. They make two notable types of goods: leather canoes and fishing nets. The leather canoes, made from wood, bones and leather, work just like the Canoe artifact (page 192). The nets are well made and very durable. A net gives Gear Bonus +2 to any Stalker who uses the Find the Path skill to search for grub in the Zone - but only in a sector next to the sea, a lake or a river.

Nikkil is a bald mutant who wears an eye patch since a hunting accident some years ago. He likes interacting with people and he enjoys doing good business, but he is always on his guard when strangers visit Rust Castle. He fears for the future of Rust Castle (below).

Attributes: Strength 1, Agility 4, Wits 4, Empathy 5.

Skills: Sneak 4, Move 4, Shoot 2, Comprehend 3, Heal 3.

Mutations: Telepathy, 3 MP.

Elwith is the captain of Steelcrest (below). She is a robust and weatherworn woman, short-haired and usually a friendly sort. Elwith is curious and wants to explore the Zone because she believes that the Mechies will eventually need to leave Rust Castle. Elwith and Ylora are sisters and stick together through thick and thin. Elwith loves music and dancing.

RUST CASTLE

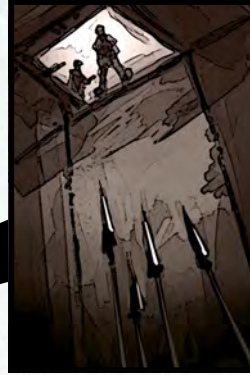
THE MECHIES' QUARTERS



UNDERWATER SUPPORT BEAMS



SPEAR TRAPS



MARKETPLACE

Attributes: Strength 1, Agility 5, Wits 5, Empathy 3.

Skills: Move 4, Shoot 4, Know the Zone 3, Heal 3, Find the Path 3.

Mutations: Extreme Reflexes, 3 MP.

Gear: Twin-barrelled scrap rifle, seven bullets. The steamboat Steelcrest (below).

Ylora is the Mechies' Chronicler and teacher. She is bony, blond and has a pug nose. Ylora sees knowledge of the world as an end in itself. She can often be found in the Mechies library and schoolroom on the top deck of Rust Castle, where she studies books from the Old Age and teaches what she knows to the other Mechies. Ylora travels the Zone with Elwith, to document it and map it out. They are sisters and stick together. Ylora is very verbose and never hesitates to speak her mind about anything.

Attributes: Strength 1, Agility 4, Wits 5, Empathy 4.

Skills: Move 3, Comprehend 3, Heal 4, Inspire 4.

Mutations: Insect Wings, 1 MP.

Gear: Books, paper and pens.

The Whoppers are the Mechies' bodyguards, all Enforcers. They are two sisters and two brothers: Elli, Roggi, Tir and Cad. They are all over seven feet tall and weigh as much as two regular-sized mutants. The Whoppers don't originally belong to the Mechie clan – they were wandering mutants who were hired as guards by Nikkil a few years ago, and have stayed on. All except Roggi like it here – in Rust Castle, they get company, grub, shelter and booze.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 4, Wits 2, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 4, Shoot 2.

Mutations: Four-Armed (Elli), Corpse-Eater (Roggi), Acid Spit (Tir), Sonar (Cad), 3 MP.

Gear: Each Whopper has a scrap pistol with three bullets.

STEELCREST AND SCRAPFLASH

The steamboat Steelcrest was built five years ago by the Mechie Konior, who was a very skilled Gearhead. He was killed by a Rotfish, and no one is likely to build something like Steelcrest again. She is the most prized possession of the Mechies, used to travel the waters of the Zone.

The boat is about 30 feet long and can carry ten passengers. It cuts the time it takes to explore a coastal Zone sector in half. It can also be used to escape from threats or to ram enemies at sea. How vehicles work is fully explained on page 94. Gear Bonus: +2. Armor: 3. Resilience: 2. Elwith has fitted Steelcrest with a small scrap cannon, called Scrapflash.

GRUB, WATER AND BULLETS

In Rust Castle, the Mechies have enough grub and Rot-free water to last them a week or two. Konior has built contraptions that collect rainwater and purify it from the Rot. The Mechies smoke fish that they catch.

Nikkil can trade some of the Mechies' grub and water for bullets, artifacts and even information. In total, the Mechies have about a hundred bullets stashed away, deep inside the wreck.

EVENTS

When metal has started to rust, it is nigh impossible to stop the chemical process. Millimeter by millimeter, the beams and bulkheads of the old ferry are crumbling to red dust. The Mechies have realized that they live on borrowed time. In secret, they search the Zone for chemicals that could stop their metal home from rusting away, so far without success. One day – and it might be soon – Rust Castle will collapse into the water and be gone forever.

This is not the only threat to the Mechies. It is rumored in the Zone that the Mechies have a huge treasure hidden inside the old wreck, some say it's an artifact that will bestow long life and riches onto its owner. The rumor is false (or is it?), but it has nonetheless attracted the attention of one faction in the Zone who now wants to chase off the Mechies and seize Rust Castle for themselves. Which group this is, is up to you. It could be the Helldrivers, mutants from another Ark or even the Nova Cult.

This enemy has already infiltrated Rust Castle. The Whopper Roggi is a Corpse-Eater and generally disliked by Mechies and visitors. His bitterness toward the Mechies has driven him to conspire with the enemies as a spy and traitor. They have promised him status and respect in the new marketplace that they intend to establish after destroying Rust Castle.

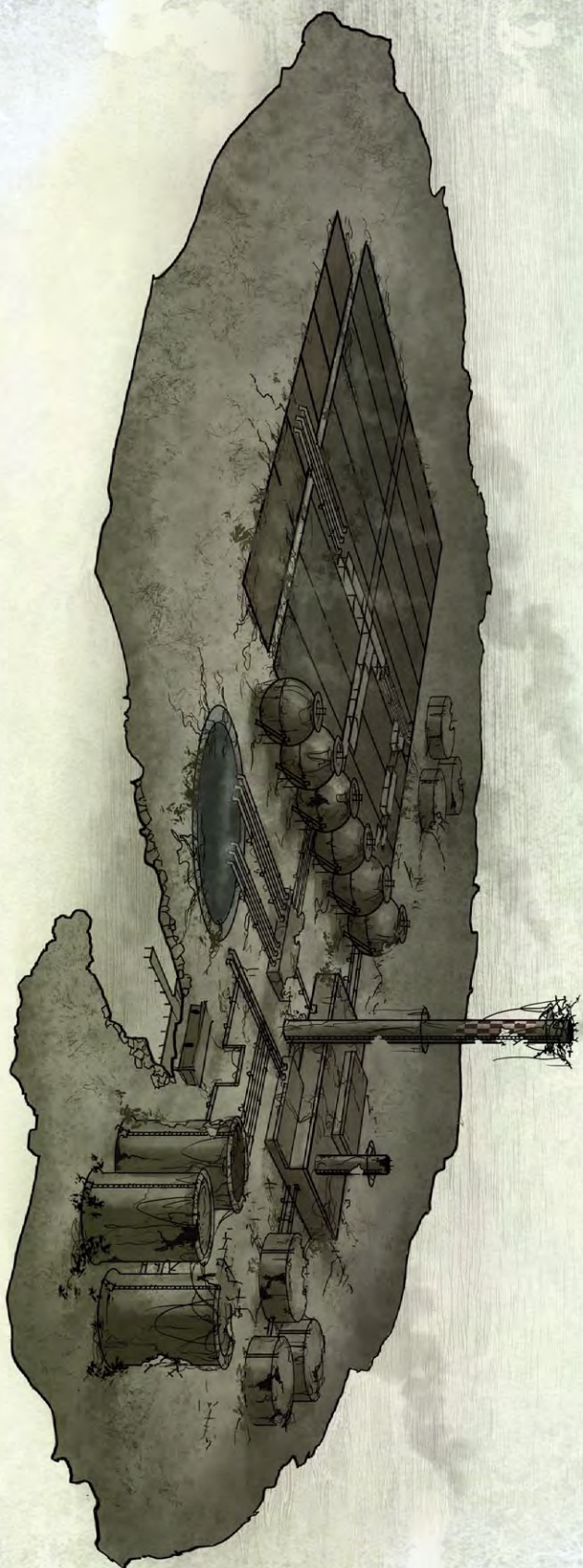
- ❑ Suddenly, a deafening thunder shakes Rust Castle, and the entire wreck tilts. Visitors to the marketplace flee in their boats, fearing the old ferry will sink. If the PCs stay and if they are on friendly terms with Nikkil, he admits that Rust Castle is crumbling from the bottom up. It is only a matter of time before the wreck collapses entirely. To make matters worse, it seems like someone has deliberately sabotaged the hull.
- ❑ Nikkil asks the PCs for help. He wants to send Elwith and Steelcrest to search for metal beams that can support the wreck, but he needs extra manpower – preferably Enforcers

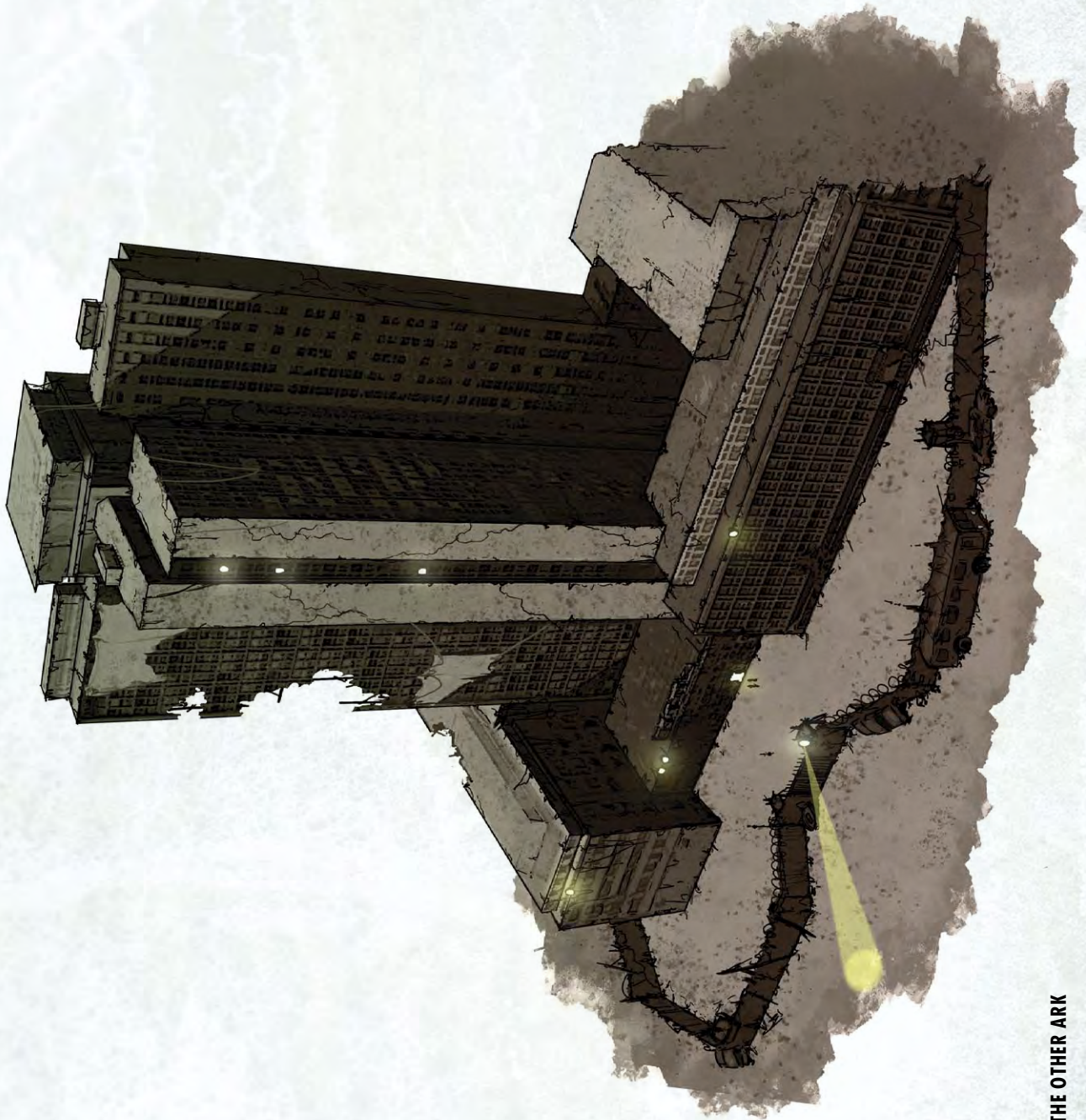
and Gearheads, but anyone willing to help is welcome. Ylora and the Whopper Roggi also join the expedition. During the journey, Roggi will try to sabotage Steelcrest and – if he can – get the PCs killed.

- ❑ The enemy faction conspiring against the Mechies (above) attack Rust Castle in full force. They try to blow holes in the old wreck using explosive charges, in order to gain entry and steal the treasures that they believe are hidden inside. If they don't succeed, the attack could turn into a siege. The PCs can choose to join the attackers or to help the Mechies in the defense.



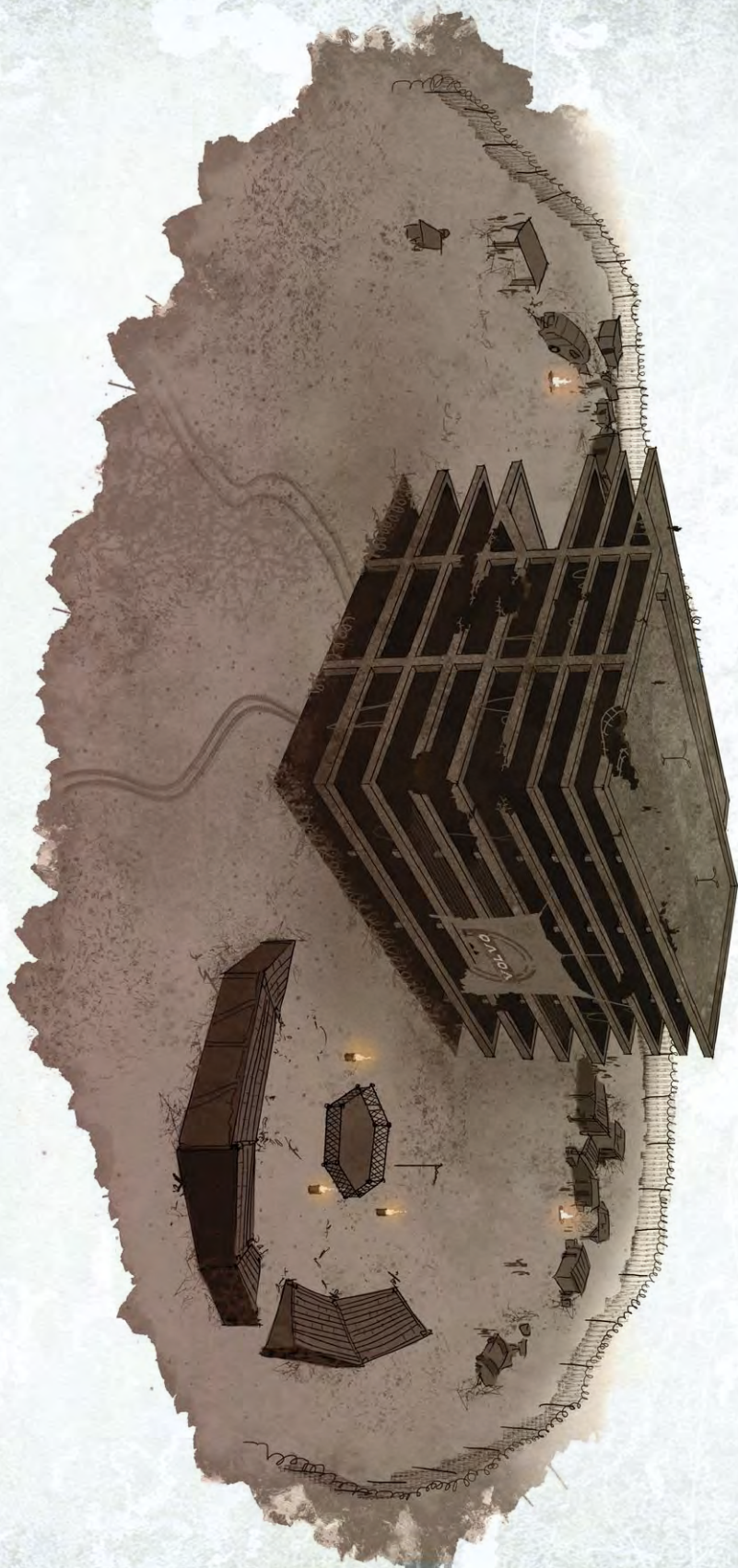
PLAYER MAP 1: THE PURE PLANT





PLAYER MAP 2: THE OTHER ARK

PLAYER MAP 3: THE HELDRIVERS





PLAYER MAP 4: RUST CASTLE



EDEN
Command
Center
DELTA



THE PATH TO EDEN

Where do the People come from? What is the origin of their supernatural powers? Who is the Elder? Where is Eden – and what happens if the People find it? These existential questions might not be something the PCs ponder every day in the harsh post-apocalyptic world – but sooner or later they will wonder. Search for answers. And these answers are there for them to discover. But first – some background. Do not read this if you are a player in *Mutant: Year Zero*. This text is for the GM's eyes only.

JEREMIAH ATWOOD

During the final years of the Old Age, before the final Fall, the scientists of the world searched for answers to the mounting threats against human civilization – war, disease, pollution, financial meltdown, social unrest. One of the most brilliant – but also the most controversial – of these scientists was Professor Jeremiah Atwood, an acclaimed geneticist. In his view, suffering, misery and destruction were hardwired into the very nature of the human race. He questioned whether the survival of humanity was actually desirable. Unsurprisingly, he was heavily criticized, and withdrew from the world to devote himself entirely to his radical science projects.

PROJECT EDEN

Professor Atwood's vision was to create a new, mutated human race, free from selfishness and

aggression, to replace its human ancestors. The work was to be his crowning achievement, and with considerable resources at his disposal he was able to delve deeper into human DNA than anyone had done before. At its very core, he found an untapped potential for change and adaptation, the very building blocks of a new and improved being. He called his vision Project Eden, as his goal was to create a new and unspoilt society on Earth.

THE RED PLAGUE

As if from nowhere, a virus spread across the globalized world, bringing death and destruction on a scale that humanity had never seen before. The contagion came to be known as the Red Plague, named after the first symptom of the disease: bloodshot eyes, that soon started to bleed profusely. At that point, a painful death was only a day away. Professor Atwood died in the sudden pandemic, before he had time to finish his project. Some accused the eccentric scientist of having created the virus himself. He never denied the accusation.

THE LAST WORLD WAR

The pestilence was the final blow to a world already ravaged by global economic crisis, natural disasters and growing political conflict. Fear and confusion fueled simmering antagonism between old and new superpowers, and soon the hostility turned to

open violence. Under the threat of total annihilation posed by the Red Plague, no one hesitated to use the ultimate weapon. Global nuclear war broke out, and one after another mushroom clouds rose over the world's major cities. Human civilization was on its deathbed.

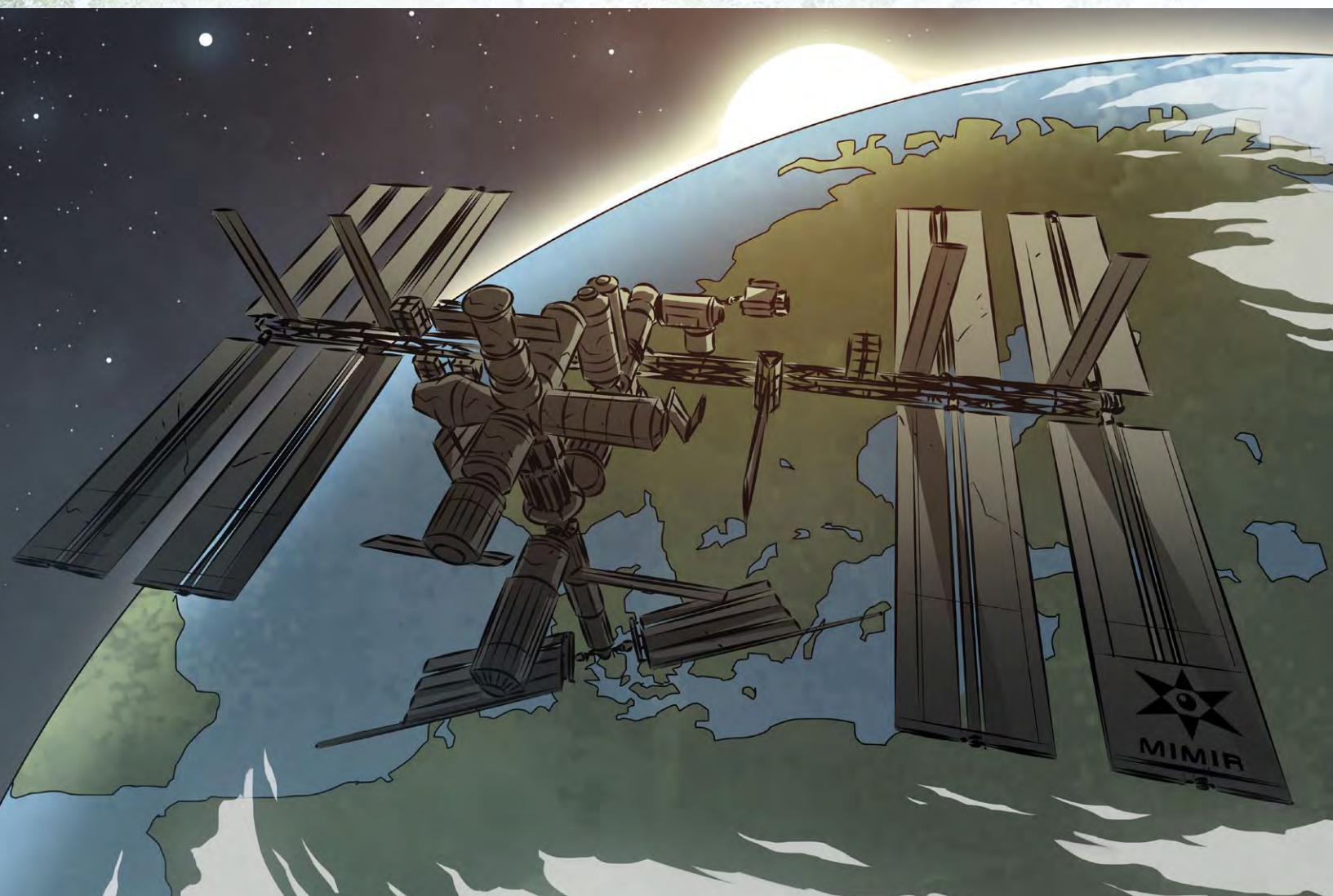
THE GREAT ESCAPE

The end of the world came fast, but humanity did have time to try to save itself, like rats off a sinking ship. The rich and powerful escaped the devastated surface of the Earth and sought refuge underground, at the bottom of the ocean – and out in the solar system. Huge shelters and space stations, the size of small cities, were built. These were called enclaves. The enclaves were big, but only had room for a fraction of the world's population – the ones chosen for

their intelligence or skills, or simply the ones rich enough to buy their way in. The rest of humanity was left on Earth's surface. Almost everyone was lost. Just a few poor souls survived the horrors of the Apocalypse, against all odds.

THE TITAN POWERS

The purpose of the enclaves was to preserve a small remnant of human civilization. The enclaves were built to be self-sufficient and peaceful, ruled by the best scientists, philosophers and politicians that humanity could muster. But the settlers brought old grudges into the enclaves, and in the deep isolation and hopelessness they grew into suspicion and hostility. The enclaves started to spy on each other, accused each other of stealing resources from the dying Earth and seeking dominion over others.



THE TITAN POWERS

Noatun: Based underwater. Motto:
“Strength through Unity”.

Mimir: Based in orbit. Motto:
“For Freedom, For the Future”.

Elysium: Based underground. Motto:
“Tradition, Resolution, Courage”.

These three Titan Powers will be explored further in future expansions to the game.

Pacts were made and soon broken. Over time, a handful of more established alliances among the enclaves were formed, and became known as Titan Powers. These were enclaves with a similar history or ideology, or just a common enemy to overcome. Research in the enclaves was increasingly turned toward military purposes. Weapon systems and robotic creatures, more advanced than a previous generation could ever imagine, were created in the darkness.

THE ENCLAVE WAR

Who first pressed the button is lost in the oblivion of history. When the cold war between the Titan Powers turned into a hot war, no enclave was left untouched. Weapons of ultimate destructive power that had been developed during the decades that had passed since the Fall, were powerful enough to cripple an enemy enclave with a single strike.

More than half of the existing enclaves were destroyed in the first few weeks of the war. Most of the surviving enclaves were badly damaged and many lost communication with the outside world. The Enclave War entered a low-intensity phase, where dying enclaves often did not know if their enemies and allies were still out there or not. But the fear and distrust ran deep, and no one ever called a ceasefire. The Enclave War is still going on, far above and below the mutants of the Ark.

PROJECT EDEN, PART 2

One enclave – a colossal structure orbiting the devastated Earth in low orbit like a metal moon – survived the Enclave War relatively intact. It belonged to the Titan Power called Mimir. While other refugees from the dead planet fled further out into the solar system, a group of scientists in this orbital enclave harbored a burning desire to return to their ancestral home.

These Mimer scientists worshipped Jeremiah Atwood like a betrayed messiah, and dreamt of completing his plans. The field of genetic engineering had evolved rapidly and was being used to adapt humanity to a life in space. Could not the same technology be used to adapt humanity to the ravaged environment on the Earth’s surface?

Project Eden was brought back to life, on a small scale and hidden from the rulers of the enclave, who had given up all hope of the Earth every harboring human life again. By manipulating human DNA and often splicing it with genetic material from now extinct animals, creatures with superhuman abilities were created – abilities that could protect them from the dangers on the Earth’s surface. The scientists called these beings *mutants*.

THE ARKS

An appropriate location was chosen in a relatively untouched part of the planet, and a command central was established in an old bunker facility. A few dozen scientists, ready to give their life for this cause, left their safe lives in orbit to personally monitor Project Eden. With them, they brought genetic material that could generate a new type of super-powered beings. Of human form but still not quite human.

The plan was to settle the mutants at certain locations in the area surrounding the Eden command central. These settlements were called Arks. In every Ark, a handful of scientists would raise the children and personally monitor their development and adaptation to life on the ravaged Earth. But the project went wrong after only a few years. The mutants’ growing bodies turned out to be unstable and their powers uncontrollable. The project leader, Doctor Retzius, decided to stop the project and destroy all test subjects. Some of the Eden scientists

refused to carry out her orders, and chaos ensued. In the end, these scientists fled with the children into the Zone, to the Arks. The doors to Eden closed behind them forever.

In the Arks, many of the scientists soon succumbed to the Rot or were killed by grotesque mutated monsters. They had no way to contact Mimer. Some could not bear the isolation, misery and filth, and took their own lives. Project Eden was lost. But the young mutants lived on, unaware of their origin.

THE METAPLOT IN GAME

The People's settlement is of course one of the Arks of Project Eden. And the Elder is a surviving scientist. This means the PCs are actually not survivors of the Apocalypse, but rather research experiments planted on Earth's surface much later.

These fundamental truths can be revealed by the players during the course of the game.

To do so, they must find the old Eden command center – that is, the Eden of the People's myths. If the PCs get there and survive the threats in the deeps, they will also get an opportunity to leave Earth on a one-way ticket and join humanity's new civilization in the solar system. What happens there is beyond the scope of this core rulebook and will be explored in a future expansion.

THE ELDER

The Elder is one of the researchers of Project Eden. He knows the truth about the People, but despite the collapse of Project Eden he has followed the order to keep quiet during all these years. To reveal the truth to the test subjects would affect their behavior and disrupt the experiment, and

was therefore strictly forbidden. The Elder, or doctor Sebedius as his real name is, hoped that a rescue mission would come to his aid. It never did. As the years went by, the Elder became less and less interested in his old life. And lately, he has become weak and frail, harrowed by age, Rot and the hard life in the Ark.

As GM, you can use the Elder to give the PCs clues about Eden and other things, but as he is so diminished both physically and mentally that they won't be able to force any information out of him that you don't want them to have. If they interrogate him, he can simply lapse into a confused state or pass out.

A BARREN PEOPLE

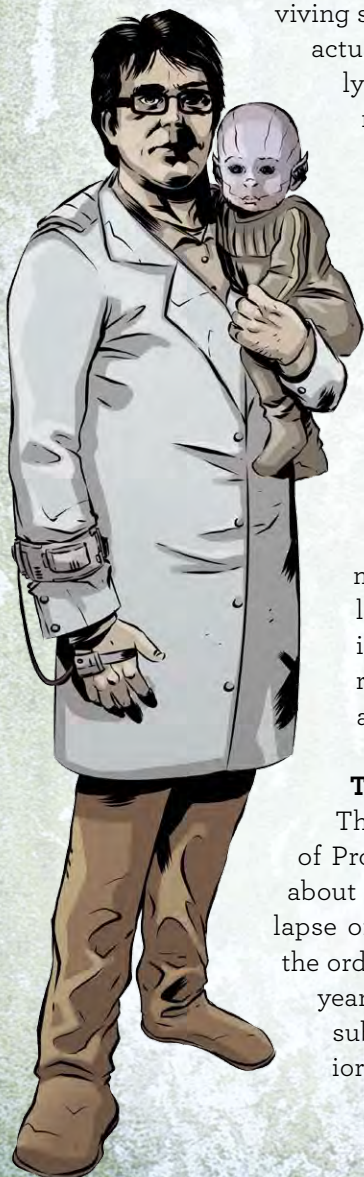
The mutants of Project Eden are unable to conceive children with each other. This was done by design by the Eden scientists, who wanted to avoid the experiment population spreading uncontrollably. The mutants can however have offspring with humans that they meet in the Zone, such as the Wanderers (page 174) or Zone-Ghouls (page 176). This means the People will need to intermingle with other factions in the Zone. The alternative is the inevitable end for the People – it is only a matter of time.

The Next Generation: A child who is born to a mutant and a human will become a mutant. But the mixing of mutant and human genes will make this new generation of mutants capable of breeding with each other. The barrenness of the People is thus gone forever.

CLUES TO EDEN

During the course of your campaign, you can plant clues and leads that will lead the PCs to Eden. It is up to you to decide how quickly that happens, in this way you can control the length of your campaign.

Three specific Artifact Cards, when combined, will show the PCs the location of Eden and give them access. You can let the PCs find them randomly, or place them wherever you like in the Zone. To make it more interesting, you can have the PCs fight for these artifacts. You can also first give them clues to where one of these artifacts might be located, rather



than giving them the artifact itself right away. Consider each of the three artifacts as plot devices that you can use in whichever fashion you prefer.

The three artifacts are the Cassette Player, the Video Camera, and the ID Card. A fourth artifact, the Diary, will tell the players a little about the back-story, but will not help them locate Eden.

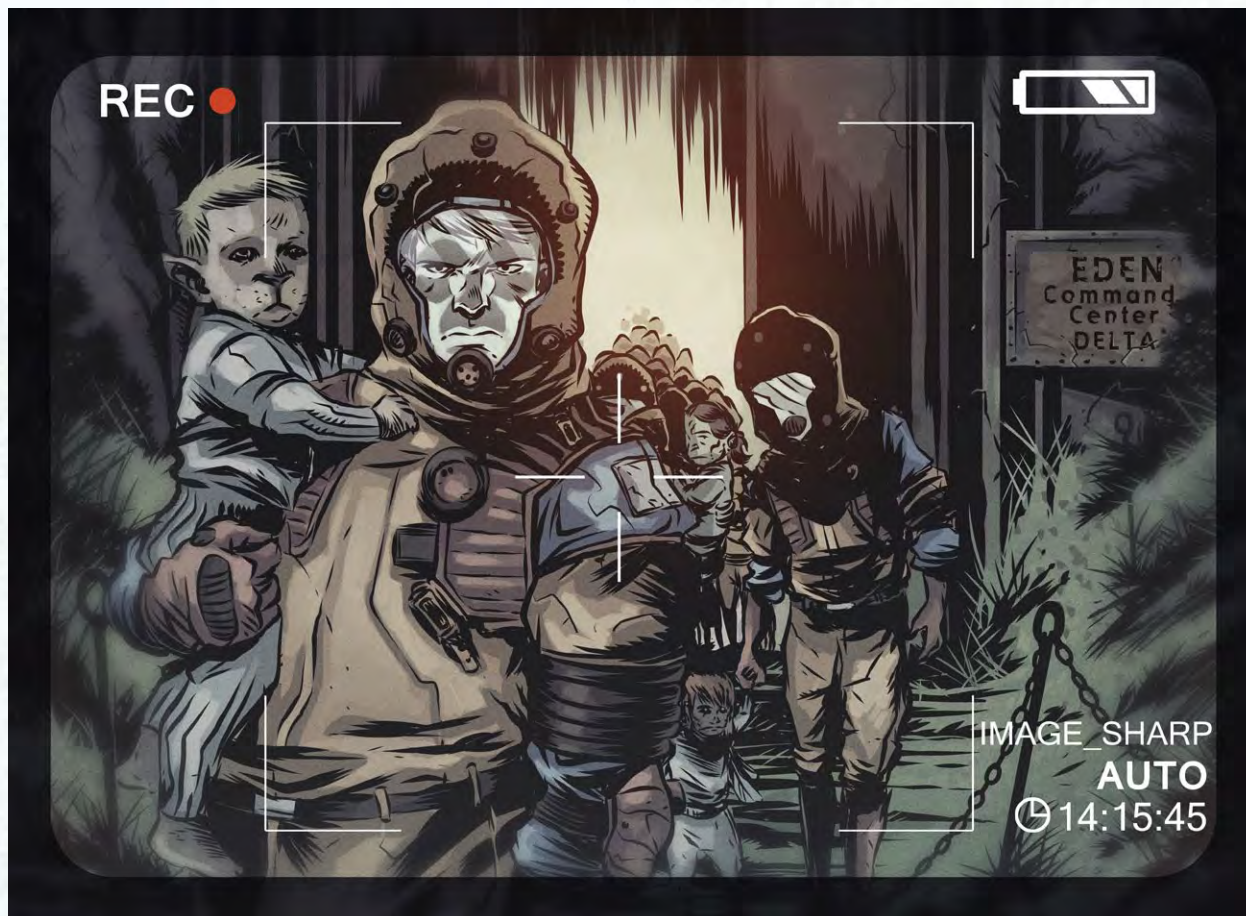
THE CASSETTE PLAYER

This device has a radio receiver, and if they manage to turn it on the PC will hear an ancient emergency transmission that has been repeated for decades, since the days of the Apocalypse. A stern voice calls on everyone with “security clearance level 5 or higher” to go to the nearest “command center”. The voice then lists five such command centers, named Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta and Echo, and lists the coordinates where each of them is located. All other citizens are told to stay in their homes.

A PC who hears the transmission and makes a Comprehend roll will be able to figure out which sectors of the Zone the five command centers are located in. Simply choose any five sectors on the map that you like. Have them scattered all over the Zone. Command Center Delta is Eden, but the PCs have no way of knowing that without the Video Camera.

THE VIDEO CAMERA

This artifact holds a short video clip that shows how the Eden scientists leave the bunker. Wearing heavy protective gear, they walk out through a big metal door in the rockside. The scientists are followed by thousands of children, no more than three or four years old. Some of the children have obvious mutations. On the partly opened gate a flaking text says “Eden”, and below that, “Command Center Delta”. Using this artifact, the PCs can both learn about their origin and understand that Eden



and Command Center Delta are the same place. They can also see what the terrain looks like in the immediate vicinity of the gate to Eden.

On the previous page, there is a picture that shows a scene from the video clip. Show it to the players when they watch the film stored in the Video Camera.

THE ID CARD

Using this scratched and dirty ID card the PCs can open the gate to Eden. The text on the card says “Eden Security” which should make the players understand its significance. Without this card, the PCs will have no way to open the gate.



THE DIARY

This worn and waterlogged notebook used to belong to one of the Eden scientists – not the Elder, but one of his colleagues who left Eden at the same time. A good place for the PCs to find the diary is the old purification plant (page 201). If they find the book and make a Comprehend roll, show them Handout #1 (also available for download from the Modiphuis website). Note the Mimir logo on the page – it will mean nothing to the PCs when they first see it, but it will return inside Eden.

COMMAND CENTER DELTA – EDEN

Mythical Eden is a very important location in *Mutant: Year Zero*. Finding the old bunker and exploring it may very well be the culmination of a long campaign – even though you certainly can play on after Eden has been found.

HANDLING THE CLUES

You can just let the four metaplot Artifact Cards stay in the deck with the other cards, and let chance determine when the PCs find them. However, in order to control the length and pacing of your campaign, we suggest that you remove these cards from the deck and decide for yourself when the PCs should get the chance to find them.

An effective method is to place some of these artifacts in the hands of another faction in the Zone, or having some NPCs claim that they know where such an artifact is located. You can use this to motivate the PCs to visit a particular Special Zone Sector, for example. Remember that an NPC with such an artifact in their possession will hardly give it up without a fight – or something in return...

HISTORY

The underground facility that the People call Eden has a long history and has been thrown between desperate hope to deep despair – twice. The bunker complex was first built before the Fall as a shelter for the people of the Old Age. It had been closed and almost forgotten when the Red Plague came and the wars broke out.

Panicked people filled every shelter they could find. In the biggest shelters, command centers were established. From here, the leaders of the nation could continue to rule from a safe location. In the shelter with the code name Command Center Delta, more than six thousand souls had sought refuge when the gates were sealed. Most of them were leading politicians and civil servants, others just rich or lucky enough to squeeze in.

The relief of having found protection did not last long. Days turned into weeks and months, but no one came to the rescue. Contact with other command centers was sporadic, rumors spread like wild-fire and suspicions grew unhindered in the darkness. Food supplies started to dwindle and frustrations simmered. The leaders insisted on following



November 14.

I left the Ark like a thief in the night. I had no other choice. They would never understand why I had to leave them. They must fend for themselves now. I have to get back to Eden.

November 17

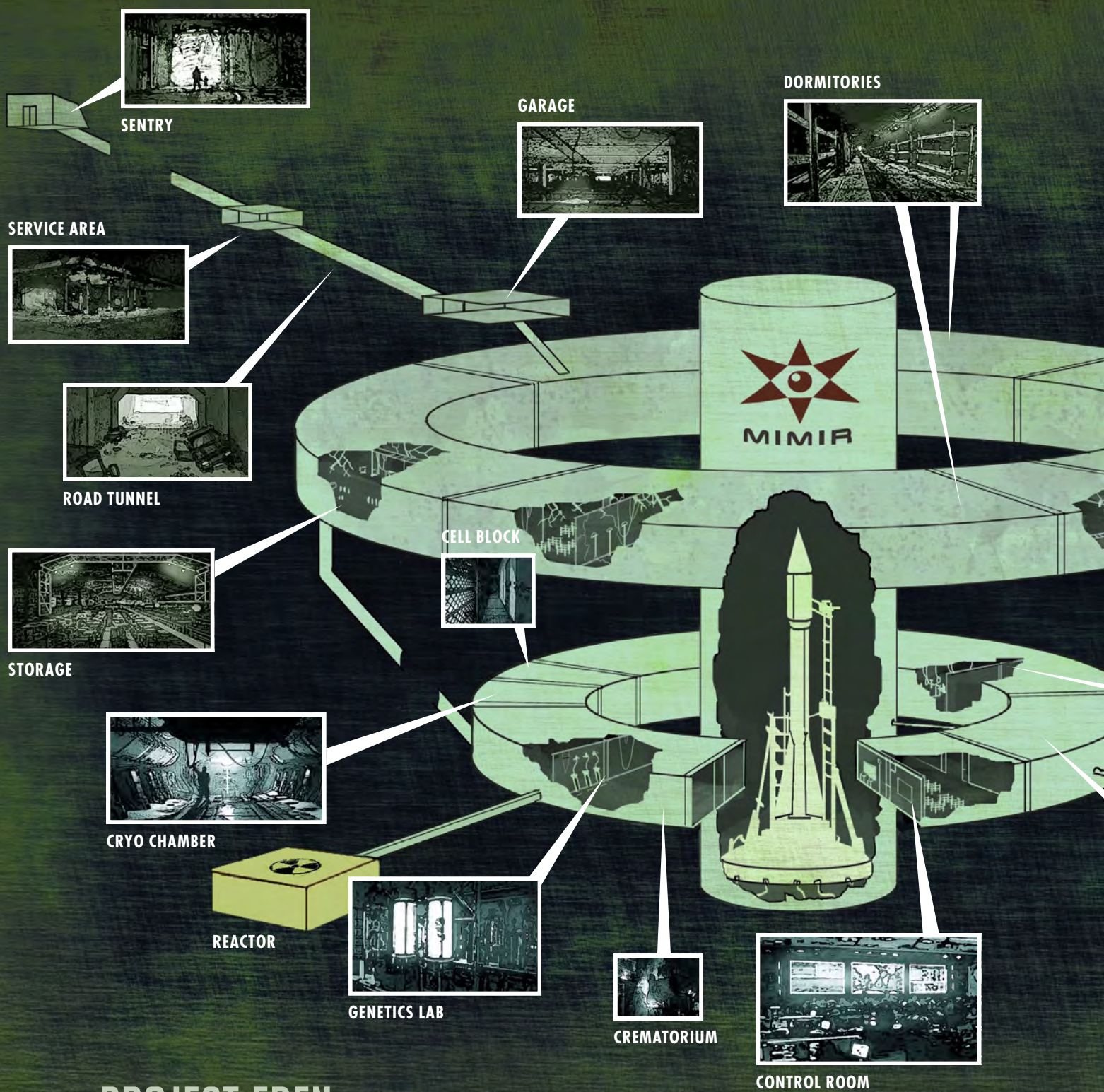
I have walked through the Zone for three days. I think Zone-Ghouls, or something worse, are stalking me. Am I on the right path? I can't remember the way. I have to find a lookout point somewhere.

November 18

Was I right to leave my post? There was still so much to learn, to discover. And I miss my children more than anything.

November 19

The damned Zone-Ghouls attacked me just before dawn. Only my insomnia saved my life. All food and water is gone. The keycard to Eden as well. The bastards might as well have killed me. There is no hope.



PROJECT EDEN

KITCHEN/CANTEEN



COMMAND BRIDGE



INFIRMARY



NURSERY



LIVING QUARTERS

protocol – to stay put and wait for the rescue and ration the food. The resulting hunger fueled the discontent, and finally the inevitable revolt broke out. The leaders' security guards, fearing for their lives, resorted to violence. It turned into a blood-bath. The few survivors decided to leave the shelter and venture out, in search of food. They never returned. Command Center Delta, one of humanity's last flickering lights of civilization, went out.

Decades passed. Command Center Delta became a forgotten crypt in a ruined world – until the Project Eden scientists searched ancient data files for a good place on the Earth's surface to base their grand experiment in. They chose Command Center Delta, which the scientists renamed Eden. With their hyper-advanced technology, they quickly restored the old shelter and added a genetics lab and rocket launch silo to it. Yet again, this facility would turn out to be a curse rather than the salvation of humanity. When Project Eden collapsed, most of the scientists fled into the Zone. Only the leader and founder of the project – Doctor Retzius – and a few of her most loyal assistants, remained.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

When the PCs finally find Eden they might expect the old bunker to be empty and deserted. This is not the case. Doctor Retzius has lived in the deeps during the last two decades. Her assistants are forced to spend most of their time in cryosleep, in order to ensure the survival of Project Eden. With desperation descending into madness she has tried to create the perfect mutant race as professor Atwood envisioned it, a resilient being who can withstand the rigors of the Zone – and exterminate the “defective” mutants from Project Eden's first generation. She thinks she has succeeded. The PCs might take a different view when they meet the Omega Mutants, as Retzius calls them.

When the PCs knock on Eden's door, Retzius is in the final stages of preparation for releasing the Omega Mutants into the Zone. She is not prepared for the intrusion and reacts with fear and anger. When she realizes that the first generation of mutants has returned, she is consumed by hatred. At all cost, she wants to destroy the traces of the failed experiment, two decades earlier.

As the PCs explore Eden they may find clues about the history of the bunker as well as their own origin. Sooner or later they will run into the Omega Mutants, and finally Doctor Retzius herself. It may turn into a violent confrontation – but the PCs can get unexpected help. Firstly, there is one “Alpha Mutant” – as Retzius calls the first generation – who has lived hidden in the darkness of the bunker for all these years, and now sees an opportunity to fight Retzius. Secondly, the doctor is over-confident regarding the loyalty of the Omega Mutants – some of them have doubts about their “mother” and can change sides at a critical stage.

THE GATE

The entrance to Eden is a massive steel door in the cliff face, big enough for a truck to drive through. Despite its size, the gate is not easy to spot from a distance, as it's partly overgrown by weeds. Next to the gate, there is a sign with the worn and almost illegible text “Command Center Delta” on it. Above that, there is somewhat clearer but still damaged text that says “Eden”.

The Gate: Below the sign, there is a small electronic card reader and a camera. Both seem out of order, but if the ID Card (page 236) is held up against the card reader, a small green diode will light up. Then, the three feet thick solid metal door will slowly start to rumble and slide aside, revealing a tunnel leading into the darkness...

Checkpoint: Just inside the gate, on the right-hand side, there is a small sentry box. It's empty, apart from some random scrap. There is a terminal and a screen, but neither seem to work.

The Tunnel: A road tunnel slopes down, deep into the ground. The air is cold and smells of damp rock. It is pitch black (page 93), so without a torch, a flashlight or a Luminescent mutant, the PCs will have to feel their way down. Along the sides there are several car wrecks that have rusted away completely.

The Garage: After about 200 yards, the tunnel ends in a large subterranean garage. There are more car wrecks here, some of which are possible to Jury-Rig

into working order. On the far wall, there is a large metal double blast door. There is card reader here as well, and the PC can open these doors with the ID Card artifact too. They are as thick as the outer blast doors and slides to the side on wheels. Inside, a broad staircase leads down to a long corridor then veers off the left and to the right. An ancient fluorescent lamp blinks weakly off and on. This is the Upper Circle of Eden.

The Floor Plan: On the cold concrete wall next to the inner blast doors, there is an old floor plan of Command Center Delta. It is withered but legible, and gives the PCs an overview of the bunker complex. Show the players Handout #2.

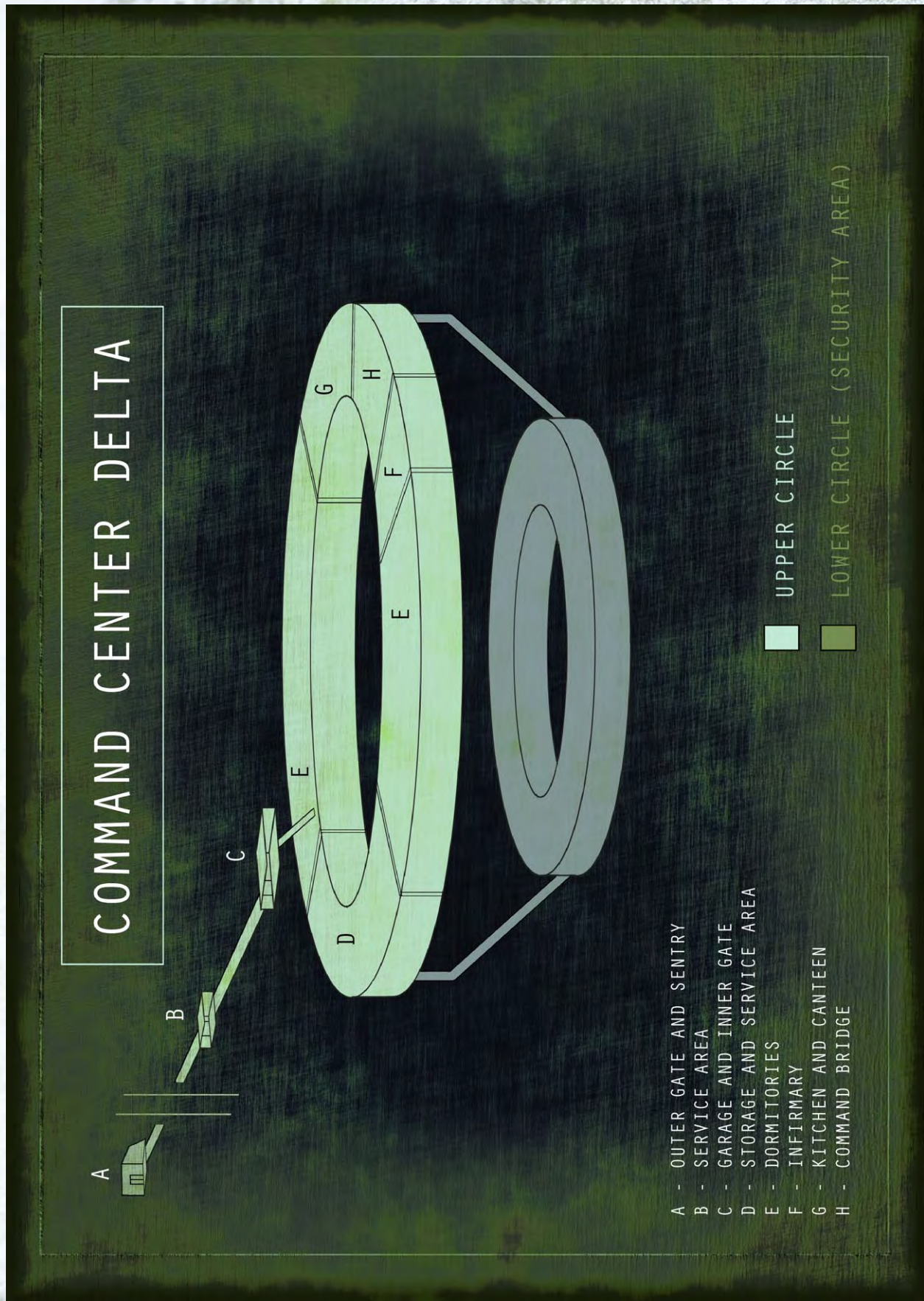
THE UPPER CIRCLE

The Eden facility has two main levels, each a large oval ring-shaped tunnel blasted into the bedrock. Encircled by the rings lies a rocket launch silo with an operational rocket and space vessel inside – more about that later. In the Upper Circle, the old Command Center Delta has been left largely left to decay – the Eden scientists did not need this space and chose to settle in the Lower Circle instead.

The Upper Circle is dark and cold, and everything is covered by many decades of dust. However, by opening the blast doors from the garage (above) the PCs activate emergency lights. The bunker's old surveillance system is also activated. The only passage from the Upper Circle to the Lower Circle is next to the Command Bridge (below).

Events: From the moment the PCs set foot inside the Upper Circle, you can start springing events and threats on them. See the Events section starting on page 253. Some of the events suggested work best in the Upper Circle and others in the Lower Circle – how you use them is up to you.

The Downfall: The further the PCs explore the Upper Circle, the more traces they see of the violent end that befell Command Center Delta: trashed furniture, soot from fires, bullet holes and hack marks in walls and doors, and old corpses. Lots of corpses. The dead number well into the hundreds, and most seem unarmed. A PC who makes a Comprehend



HANDOUT #2: FLOOR PLAN OF COMMAND CENTER DELTA



roll will realize the dead have been here for many decades, as they are now little more than skeletons. A handful of corpses seem to have been soldiers in some kind of uniform, now decayed. Few weapons are to be found, but if the PCs search thoroughly you may allow them to find a semi-automatic pistol, a kevlar vest or even an assault rifle.

Main Corridor: A main corridor runs all around the Upper Circle. On both sides of the corridor, there are doors leading to other rooms. At irregular intervals, the main corridor is blocked by thick metal doors. Some are open but others are closed, the latter can easily be opened manually by turning the operating wheel. On the concrete walls warning signs, arrows and numbers are printed in yellow paint, now flaking and worn. Water pipes and

electricity cables run along the ceiling of the main corridor.

Dormitories: Command Center Delta was built to accommodate 5,000 poor souls, and each and every one of them was provided with a bunk bed. In these deserted halls, there are thousands of narrow metal beds. Now, there is little or nothing of value here. The PC might find some scrap or a minor artifact.

Canteen: A large room filled with long tables and benches. Next to the canteen there is a simple kitchen. There is plenty of old kitchen gear, but not a single ration of grub.

Infirmary: A number rooms of with narrow hospital beds and medical equipment. The rooms are filled

September 23

Still no contact with Command Center Alpha. It has been weeks now. Has it been attacked? Are they willfully ignoring us? Have they allied with our enemies?

October 17

All contact with other Command Centers has ceased. Why is no one coming to our aid? Are we the only ones left alive? We have been forced to cut the food rations in half. The civilians starve.

November 01

Renewed contact! Our technical staff today received a transmission from a facility with which we have not had contact before. They call themselves Elysium - the land of eternal spring. They say they are part of a new alliance of shelters, the beginning of a new nation. They say they are coming to our rescue. For the first time in months I feel hope.

November 06

Again, silence. Elysium is no longer responding to our signals. What has happened? Have they abandoned us too? Has something happened to them? Or was this just some kind of cruel hoax?

November 19

Today civilians protested outside the Command Bridge. Demanded food. I wanted to go out there and speak to them. Major Hendricks stopped me. Too dangerous, he said.

November 23

The civilians are in uproar. I watch them on our monitors. They chant, smashing furniture. They must understand that Major Hendricks and his men had no choice. Some civilians attacked them, tried to take their weapons. That kind of behavior is unacceptable. It is unfortunate that blood was spilt. Major Hendricks has my full support in quenching this rebellion. My responsibility is not only to help the civilians. It goes far beyond that - to safeguard what is left of our nation. Our knowledge, our culture, our civilization. My responsibility is the greatest one imaginable. Why can't they understand that?

December 04

It will soon be over now. This will be my last entry in this log. I hear them beating at the door. It won't be long now. So many have died. Soon I will join them. But I won't let those bastards get me. I have no regrets. I did my duty. History will be my judge. If mankind still has a future.

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by decomposed corpses, little more than skeletons, lying on the beds and in piles on the floor. Most of the dead have obvious damage from bullets, cuts and blows. All medicine and everything else of value have been looted long ago.

Storage: Simple store rooms, also looted long ago.

Incinerator: Here, the inhabitants of Command Center Delta would get rid of their refuse – and many of their dead. A PC who makes a Comprehend roll can get the incinerator to work again.

Command Bridge: At the farthest point from the entrance, the facility that used to be the seat of governance for Command Center Delta is located. The metal door that leads into this area has been battered down by force from the outside. Around the gate, there are many corpses, both civilians and soldiers. Inside the Command Bridge are screens, terminals, telephones, file cabinets and computers. Most of the equipment is vandalized and covered by a thick layer of dust. The dead lie everywhere, mummified by the dry air here.

A corpse dressed in a suit and tie sits by a desk, reclined on a chair. He has an obvious gunshot wound to his head, and a functional revolver lies on the floor next to him. On the desk, there is a print-out of a computer log book. The log book describes the final days of Command Center Delta. If the PCs make a Comprehend roll, give them Handout #3. They can also take the suit and the revolver (both are artifacts).

The Way Down: Next to the smashed gate leading into the Command Bridge, there is another, smaller metal door. It is also battered, but has not been broken down. The door has a card reader and slides open if the PCs use their ID Card. Inside, a steep and narrow staircase leads deeper into the bedrock. A faint light can be seen below. After a descent of about a hundred feet, the PCs reach the Lower Circle: the very heart of Project Eden.

THE LOWER CIRCLE

The first thing the PCs notice when stepping into the lower circle is that it is warmer, drier and

brighter here, in stark contrast to the Upper Circle. A pale blue light shines from light strips in the ceiling. Some parts of the Lower Circle have been deserted for ages, but there are no corpses or signs of destruction here. Items that the PCs find look alien and strange – not like artifacts found in the Zone. The Mimir logo is painted on the walls in many areas.

Terminals: In the Control Room and the Genetics Lab, there are terminals that can be used to control doors and traps in the Lower Circle as well as the surveillance system throughout the facility. There are cameras in just about every section in both the Upper and Lower Circle, as well as in the Rocket Silo. Doctor Retzius can lock/open a door, activate a trap or turn on/off a camera if she is within Arm's Length of a terminal and spends one maneuver. Endel (below) can do the same. Before a PC can operate a terminal in the same manner, he must spend a few minutes at the terminal and then make a Comprehend roll.

Main Corridor: The Lower Circle has a circular corridor just like the Upper, with metal doors between each section. These are normally not locked, but can be remotely locked and unlocked at a terminal. The ID Card does not work on these doors.

Nurseries: The dormitories are unlike the ones in the Upper Circle. Instead of bunk beds, there are hundreds of metal cages here, stacked three stories high. In every cage, there is a small cot – far too small for an adult to sleep in. On the outside of each cage, there is a medical journal, with a name and diagrams of length and weight measurements. A PC who makes a Comprehend roll will realize that young children must have been kept in these cages – the journals describe individuals about three feet tall and weighing less than 30 pounds. The names in the journals are interesting too – have one PC notice a name familiar from the Ark, choose any NPC. If they spend time at searching the journals, they will eventually find their own names.

In these rooms, the Alpha Mutants – that is the PCs and their kin – were kept in the early days of Project Eden. The scientists kept the mutant

children caged at night, since a simple nightmare could have very serious consequences. Here and there, childrens' drawing hang on the walls. One of them, depicting Doctor Retzius and Doctor Sebedius (the Elder) is drawn by one of the PCs. Choose one PC who looks at the drawings and tell him that he suddenly is overcome by a strong sense of déjà vu. Give the player Handout #4. The PC remembers nothing about the people in the drawing.

Scientists' Quarters: This section contains separate suites that were once used by the top management of Command Center Delta – and later, by the scientists of Project Eden. They are sparsely furnished and rather worn. There are few personal belongings here apart from some clothes, but in one of the suites the PCs may find a yellowed photo. It is a team picture of the leading Eden researchers. Give the players Handout #5. They immediately recognize Doctor Sebedius as the Elder – but much younger.

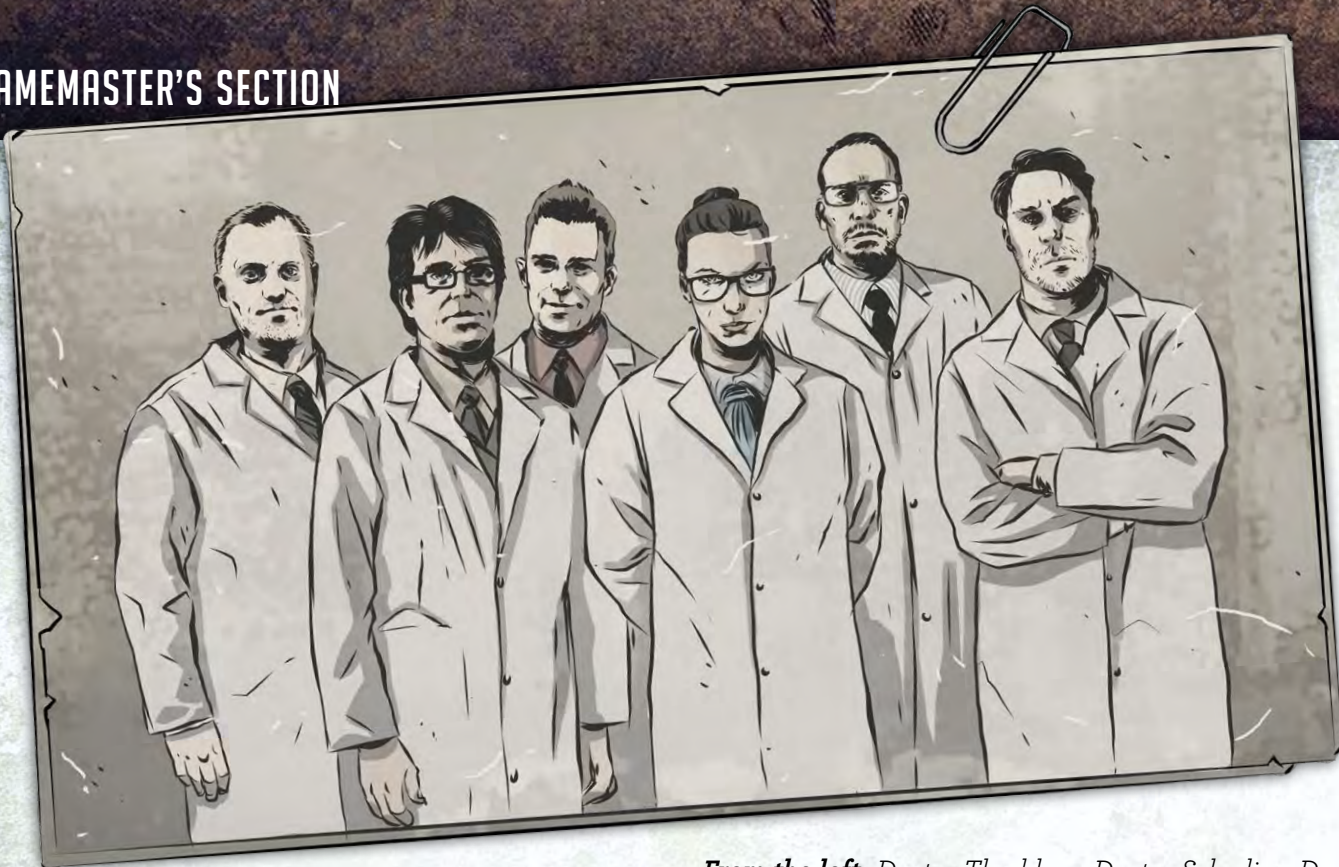
Emergency Exit: From the Scientist's Quarters, a narrow tunnel leads away from Eden. Where this exit leads to in the Zone is up to you. It may even be connected to a whole network of tunnels in the bowels of the Zone.

The Genetics Lab is the heart of Project Eden. Here, the first mutants were grown using DNA that the researchers had brought with them from their enclave in orbit. Later, Doctor Retzius continued her work here and finally created the Omega Mutants.

To the PCs, this room looks like a horror show. Among test tubes, screens and terminals, there are big glass vats with dead mutant infants and fetuses. Some of them look like Alpha Mutants, others are grotesquely deformed blends of animal and human forms, still others have tentacles and other strange outgrowths. Doctor Retzius has saved certain specimen from failed experiments, to learn from them. This environment is very suitable for having the



HANDOUT #4: THE CHILDS' DRAWING



HANDOUT #5: THE PHOTOGRAPH

From the left: Doctor Thaddeus, Doctor Sebedius, Doctor Barnabas, Doctor Retzius, Doctor Lucas, Doctor Nathanael.

PCs be attacked by an Omega Mutant – or even meet Doctor Retzius herself.

All of the technology in this room would take years to Comprehend, if such comprehension is even possible. But they can find interesting information here by just quickly browsing a terminal. A PC who does that and makes a Comprehend roll can read an electronic log from Project Eden. Give the players Handout #6.

In the Genetics Lab, there are terminals that control doors and traps throughout the Lower Circle (above). Artifacts may also be found here, for example Sedatives, Painkillers and – if you feel generous – a dose of REGEN.

Cryolab: A smaller room next to the Genetics Lab houses ten cryosleep pods with transparent lids. Humans lie in three of them, two women and one man, frozen solid but still alive. These are Doctor Retzius's lab assistants, whom she wakes from cryosleep at regular intervals (below). The PCs can wake them too, but this requires a successful Comprehend roll. Failing the roll will kill the patient.

Control Room: The walls of this room are covered by video screens showing the Rocket Silo with the

rocket and space capsule at the top of it. To start countdown and launch the rocket, a PC must first Comprehend the terminals. An automated countdown from ten minutes then starts – if the PCs want to fly off with the rocket, they have this long to get into the capsule. The countdown cannot be stopped once it has started.

A metal door in the Control Room is marked Rocket Silo, and leads to a narrow corridor to the launch pad. Near the door, there are six small booths with glass doors. Each booth contains a silvery space suit with helmet in the shape of a glass bubble. In the Control Room, there are also normal terminals that control the doors and traps in the Lower Circle.

Cell Block: A section of the Lower Circle with 20 very cramped isolation cells. The floor, the ceiling and the walls are all made of rusty metal. Each cell has a door with a small observation hatch. These cells were originally built to hold miscreants in Command Center Delta behind bars, but they have been rebuilt by the Eden scientists. Now, Doctor Retzius keeps the Omega Mutants here, when they are not prowling the facility. In one of the cells, the Titan is kept.

The doors to the cells have keypad locks. Only Retzius (and possibly Endel) knows the six-digit codes. A PC who makes a Comprehend roll can lock an open cell door, and then pick the code used to open the lock again. The cell doors cannot be opened from a normal terminal (above).

Crematorium: An incinerator like the one in the Upper Circle, this one is however operational. Doctor Retzius uses it to dispose of failed genetic experiments. Anything living thrown into the incinerator is killed instantly.

Nuclear Reactor: A narrow concrete corridor leads to the nuclear reactor that powers Eden. The reactor is leaking, and this section therefore has Rot Level 3 (one Rot Point per minute). There is a small control room next to the reactor core.

TRAPS

The experiments of Project Eden have always been dangerous – the scientists knew that their genetically engineered beings could turn against them. To protect themselves, they installed defense mechanisms in selected locations in the Lower Circle – hidden traps based on gas, electricity or microwaves. Where these traps are located is not set – as GM, place them where you like. The traps can be triggered from a terminal in the Genetics Lab or the Control Room.

Electric Trap: A hidden circuit in the floor, ceiling and walls creates a strong electric current. This works as an explosion with Blast Power 6, but it inflicts fatigue (trauma to Agility) instead of damage. Armor gives no protection, but mutations might. Anyone who suffers fatigue from the attack must make a Move roll to be able to move at all (this roll does not count as an action). Failure means that the victim is paralyzed and will be attacked again in the same manner in the next turn.

Gas Trap: Metal doors close behind and in front of the victims, who must make a Move roll to avoid getting trapped between the doors. In the next turn, a gas is pumped into the enclosure and anyone trapped in it will be subject to an attack with six

Base Dice – every ♣ rolled inflicts one point of confusion (trauma to Wits). The person who activated the trap chooses when the doors open and the gas disperses. Breaking one's way out of the trap is hard – each door can take 25 points of damage before giving way.

Microwave Trap: This trap is an enclosure just like the Gas Trap (above), but instead of gas, the victims are cooked like in a microwave oven. The effect is the same as in the Gas Trap, but inflicts damage (trauma to Strength) instead of confusion. This means the Microwave Trap is the only one that can kill its victims outright. Use it with caution.

THE ROCKET SILO

The biggest single addition the Eden scientists made to the Command Center Delta was to blow a deep silo right down the middle of the two Circles. In this silo a launch pad was built for the rocket and space capsule that would bring the scientists back to their mother enclave in orbit once Project Eden was completed. The capsule has never been used, and the rocket it is mounted on is ready to launch. The launch sequence can be activated from the Control Room (above).

A narrow tunnel leads from the Control Room to the Rocket Silo, and the space capsule on top of the rocket can be reached via a series of ladders. The capsule itself is very cramped. It can fit up to six people, but no cargo. Wearing a spacesuit is not necessary to survive the trip, but it's a very good idea to strap in using the safety belts provided. When the rocket launches, anyone still in the silo (and not in the capsule) is killed immediately.

DOCTOR RETZIUS

The leader of the Eden researchers and the mastermind behind the entire project is a brilliant scientist. Long ago, Doctor Retzius was a highly respected figure in the orbital enclave where she lived, but her fanatic fascination with Jeremiah Atwood and his ideas tarnished her reputation and effectively ended her career. Project Eden was her final shot at fame and glory, but in the end, it all went horribly wrong.

MARCH 5

Phase 1 is complete. Everything is going according to plan. Proposed sites for the Arks of Project Eden are all examined and approved. The growth of the test subjects are within expected parameters. They must be planted in the wild at a young age so that we can study the effects of the toxins and radiation on the mitosis in their bodies.

We are humanity's heroes. Professor Atwood was our savior, not our executioner. When we finish his work, Mimir will understand. Everyone will understand. History will prove us right. ■

MAY 21

The test subjects exhibit unexpected and irregular behavior. Fits of insubordination and violence, combined with their hypergenetic abilities pose a direct security risk. I have instructed Doctor Sebedius to install defense mechanisms in the facility, using a fentanyl-based gas, high voltage and microwaves, to protect the science team. In all probability, it is just a temporary phase. ■

JUNE 07

The insubordination of the test subjects is escalating. Doctor Aylo passed away this morning, after yesterday's attack from a test subject exhaling ignited gases at him. Three test subjects were terminated by Doctor Sebedius microwave traps. Adequate functionality. ■

JUNE 09

A total of 23 test subjects have now been terminated in total. Some individuals in the science team exhibit lapses of loyalty. Today, I revealed the genetic security mechanism that is wired into every test subject of Project Eden: even

when reaching a sexually mature age, they will be unable to reproduce with each other, in order to avoid an uncontrolled population growth. Doctor Sebedius's emotional response can only be described as unprofessional. ■

JUNE 17

My decision is made. The test subjects must be terminated. After last night's riot, that cost nine science team members their lives, there is no other choice. The test subjects are much too unstable to be released into the external environment. The fault is mine. We must start over. Project Eden is too important to take any chances. ■

JUNE 18

The science team members protest against my decision. Their emotional bonds to the test subjects have grown too strong for them to react rationally. I will not change my mind. They cannot stop me. My personal research assistants will follow my orders. The terminations will commence tomorrow. ■

JUNE 19

Mutiny. During the night, the entire science team — Doctor Sebedius, Doctor Barnabas, Doctor Thaddeus, Doctor Lucas and Doctor Nathanael — have left Eden with all of the test subjects and almost all of the research assistants. Only a few loyal individuals remain by my side. I could not stop them. ■

JUNE 23

After a re-evaluation of the current situation, the decision is made: Project Eden will continue. New test subjects, with improved genetic code, will be created. ■

Now, after more than 20 years on Earth, Retzius is obsessed with the idea of “correcting the mistake” of the Alpha Mutants and replacing them with her own “improved” version – the Omega Mutants. She is an old woman now, and not quite as on top of things as she once was. She can switch between murderous rage, deep confusion and sudden tenderness toward the PCs, as if they were her own children – and then suddenly try to kill them again.

When lucid, Retzius calls the PCs “freaks” and treats them with contempt. But she also wants to tell them about Project Eden and explain her version

of what happened. She will deploy her Omega Mutants and the Titan (below) to defend her if attacked, and she will draw her Maser Pistol if cornered only. If she feels that she is losing the battle, she will try to start the launch sequence for the rocket in the silo and then try to flee in the capsule.

Retzius always has her research assistant Melvind at her side (below), but he is little more than a mindless drone.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4, Wits 5, Empathy 3.

Skills: Move 2, Shoot 3, Comprehend 5, Heal 4.

Gear: Retzius wears a protective suit that gives her Armor Rating 3 against both damage and the Rot. In a holster, she carries a Maser Pistol (see the boxed text below).



THE OMEGA MUTANTS

After the meltdown of Project Eden, Doctor Retzius worked desperately to create “perfect” mutants in the Genetics Lab. After a series of failed attempts, all ending up in the Crematorium or in vats of formaldehyde, she succeeded in creating a breed of

THE MASER PISTOL

Doctor Retzius’s firearm looks like nothing the PCs have ever seen out in the Zone. It’s an energy weapon called a Maser Pistol. Maser is an acronym for Microwave Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. It is a light item with Gear Bonus +2, weapon damage 3 and Short range. The gun emits a powerful burst of energy that is invisible to the naked eye, but creates an explosion-like effect when it hits a solid surface. The best thing about the Maser Pistol is that it does not require any bullets. The energy stored in the pistol will last for hundreds of discharges. The drawback is that if the pistol’s Gear Bonus drops, it cannot be repaired without special tools that are not available in Eden and hardly anywhere else in the Zone either. UN Requirement: Technology 75

mutants she calls “Omega” – the final species. They are fast and strong, resilient to physical damage and Rot, and have the ability to suck energy from their victims. However, their intelligence and speech are limited, about on level of a human three-year-old child.

Appearance: The Omega Mutants are hairless and their bodies are covered by thick and dark lizard-like grey scales. Their eyes are also reptilian. They can navigate in pitch darkness using a form of sonar, emitting a squealing noise painful to humans and Alpha Mutants. You can use this sound to scare the players when the PCs are exploring Eden.

Behavior: There is a total of ten Omega Mutants in Eden. Most are kept behind bars in the Cell Block in the Lower Circle, but Doctor Retzius often lets out one or two at a time to be experimented on or to carry out physical labor. When Retzius realizes that there are intruders in Eden, she will release more Omega Mutants to hunt them. She is reluctant however to let them all out, fearing another revolt. This fear is not unfounded – some of the Omega Mutants have a vague dream of freedom. These doubters may view the PCs arrival as a chance to break out of their slavery.

Language: The Omega Mutants’ speech is limited and hard to understand for others. A PC who wants



to Manipulate an Omega Mutant must first speak to it for a while and make a Comprehend roll.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 4, Wits 2, Empathy 3.

Skills: Fight 4, Move 4, Sneak 5, Scout 4.

Armor: The Omega Mutants' thick scales give them Armor Rating 6 against both damage and Rot.

Weapons: Claws and fangs (weapon damage 2).

Mutations: As opposed to the Alpha Mutants, the Omega Mutants all have the same mutations: Parasite and Sonar. All start out with 5 MP.

THE TITAN

In one of the cells in the Cell Block, Retzius keeps a horribly mutated creature whom she calls the Titan. It is an early failed prototype of the Omega Mutants that completely lacks the capacity for higher intelligence. Retzius kept the Titan alive anyway, because it exhibited extreme aggressiveness and resilience – two attributes that she wanted to instill in the Omega Mutants.

If Retzius has her back against a corner, she may very well release the Titan. It is completely mindless and will try to kill and eat every living thing in its path. The Titan looks like a 10 feet long slug with a large ring-shaped maw, ringed by three-inch long spike-like teeth. It normally moves slowly, but is capable of sudden attacks with unexpected speed and power.

Attributes: Strength 10.

Skills: Fight 5.

Weapons: Maw (weapon damage 1). A target that is hit and suffers one or more points of damage will be partially engulfed by the maw and suffers a new attack every turn until the victim or the Titan is broken. If the Titan is damaged, it will immediately heal one point of damage for every point suffered by the victim. While trapped in the maw, the victim can Fight or Shoot the Titan, but perform no other action. The Titan dies if it is broken.

THE LAB ASSISTANTS

In the Cryolab, Doctor Retzius keeps three of her trusted lab assistants – Reodor, Solan and Redic – in cryonic sleep. The fourth, Melvind, is awake and can usually be found by Retzius's side. All of them are unmutated humans.

Retzius keeps her assistants mostly frozen in order to prolong their lives, so that they can continue Project Eden after her death. However, the repeated thawing and refreezing has caused irreparable damage to the assistants' brains and nervous systems, to the point where they now have difficulty carrying out even simple menial tasks.

The lab assistants dream of escape but have so far not dared to act. When they encounter the PCs, they might very well seize the opportunity to turn on Retzius.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 1, Wits 1, Empathy 2.

Skills: Comprehend 3.

Gear: None.

ENDEL

When the Eden scientists fled into the Zone with the Alpha Mutants, one small child was left behind. His name is Endel, and even as a child he was an outsider who preferred to be alone. He has now stayed hidden in Eden for years thanks to his mutations, mostly in the Upper Circle, without being discovered by Retzius. Endel has lived off refuse and by stealing food from Retzius's stockpiles. She believes that Omega Mutants were behind the thefts and has punished them harshly for it.

Endel will notice the PCs the moment they set foot in Eden, and will then shadow them as they explore the bunker. Use Endel as you see fit. He may come the PCs aid if they need it, but he may also get in their way or try to steal from them. He will initially try to stay hidden, but will sooner or later reveal himself. He does not trust the PCs, but can start to if they treat him well or Manipulate him. If they are patient, the PCs can learn much about Eden and Retzius from Endel. He also knows how to use the terminals that can operate doors and traps in the Lower Circle.

Endel is skinny, has grayish green reptilians skin and big, black eyes. He is mostly completely naked, in order to use his chameleon skin to greatest effect.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 5, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 3, Move 4, Heal 3.

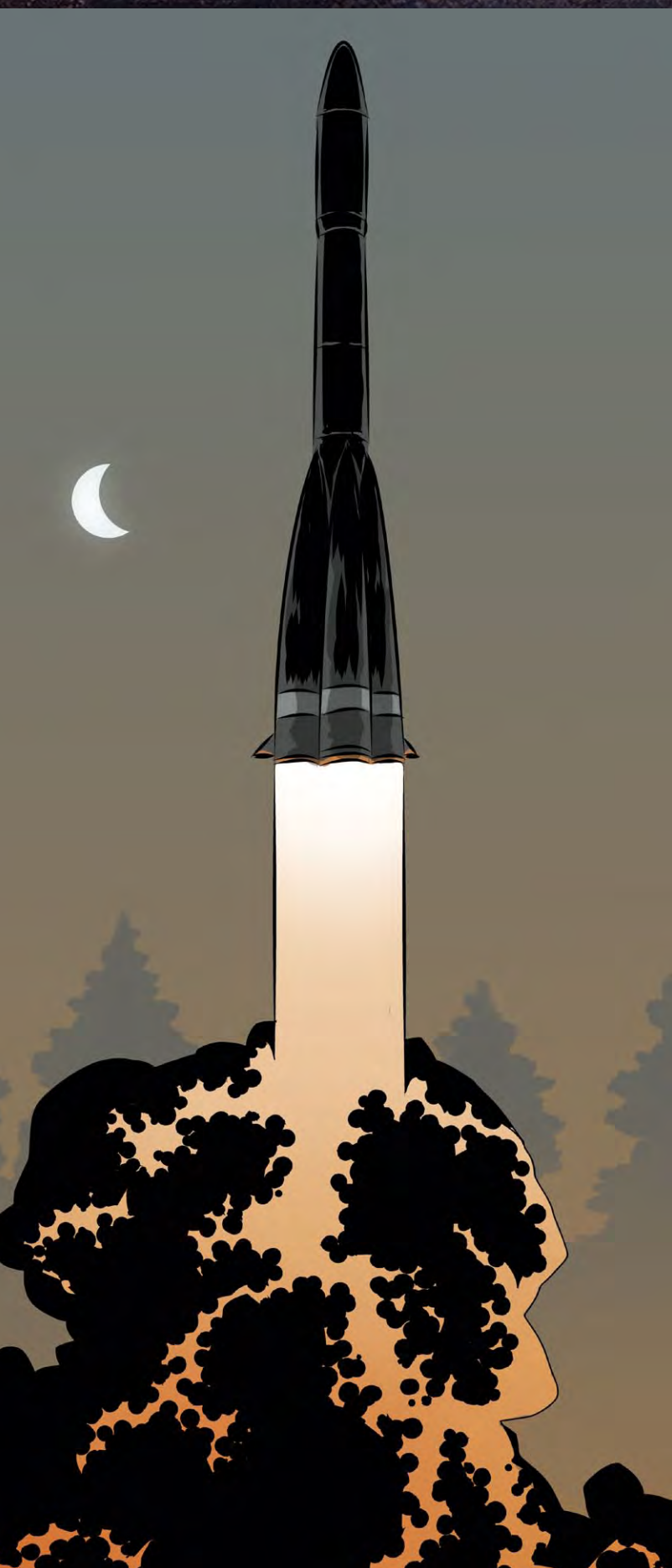
Weapons: Scrap knife.

Mutations: Reptilian, Sonar (3 MP).

EVENTS

In this section, suggested events and encounters during the PCs' visit to Eden are listed. They don't need to come in any particular order, and you decide which you want to use. Most of the events are more suitable in the Lower Circle, but the first signs of Endel and the Omega Mutants should occur in the Upper Circle already.

- ❑ A PC hears a sound or sees movement in the corner of the eye. It's either Endel or an Omega Mutant. A Dog Handler PC or one with the Tracker mutation can follow the trail, and even confront the creature. This event can be used multiple times.
- ❑ A chilling shriek echoes through the catacombs of Eden. It's an Omega Mutant using his Sonar to navigate in the darkness.
- ❑ A dead video monitor suddenly flickers to life. Bright green text appears against the black screen. "Turn back while you still can," it says. Doctor Retzius has spotted the intruders and this is her first warning.
- ❑ Doctor Retzius speaks directly to the PCs through the bunker's old loudspeaker system. She warns them and tells them to leave "this restricted area", but does not reveal who she is and does not respond to questions. The players may believe the voice comes from an automated system. Retzius may contact the PCs several times in this manner.
- ❑ The PCs find Endel's den in a small service room. There are blankets, trash and moldy old crackers here, as well as old children's drawings that Endel has saved.
- ❑ Endel reveals himself to the PCs. A good opportunity to use this event is when the PCs have gotten into serious trouble, or if they get stuck and don't know how to proceed. Endel is on his guard and scared of the PCs, but also hope they can help him escape.
- ❑ One or more Omega Mutants ambush the PCs. The attack is quick and sudden, perhaps from the ceiling. Remember that the Omega Mutants know the facility very well. If the PCs seem to be losing the battle, Endel can step in to help them. The Omega Mutants will not fight to the death unless told so by Retzius, preferring to retreat and attack again later.
- ❑ A wounded Omega Mutant pleads for mercy. If not sooner, the players can now realize that these creatures are mutants like themselves, not mindless monsters.
- ❑ The PCs find a clue about the history of Command Center Delta and Eden (above).
- ❑ A PC experiences a sudden memory flashback from his early childhood in Eden. A good place for this is the Nurseries. Flashbacks are a convenient way of revealing bits of Eden's history to the players.
- ❑ Doctor Retzius activates a trap, targeting the PCs, in the Lower Circle (above).
- ❑ The PCs find the lab assistants, either Melvind who is awake or the ones in cryosleep.
- ❑ The PCs meet Doctor Retzius personally. She will try to avoid a direct encounter as long as she can, but sooner or later she wants to reveal everything to the PCs – before killing them. She will try to face the PCs in a location where she has the upper hand, for example where she can activate a trap. Let Retzius fill in all (or at least most of) the blanks for the players regarding Project Eden, the Arks and the origin of the mutants. If you want, she can also tell the story about Jeremiah Atwood and the Red Plague, but Retzius's version will be colored by her affection for Atwood. The one thing she will not say much about is her own history in orbital enclave the Mimir Titan Power – she is old and her memories of her old life in orbit are vague and fleeting.
- ❑ A third party arrives to Eden. It can be a rival expedition from the Ark or from one of the other factions in the Zone. This is a very effective method to raise the stakes and increase tensions. The newcomers can help or hinder the PCs in the fight with Retzius and her minions.



- ❑ The countdown to the rocket launch starts. If the PCs do not activate the countdown themselves, have Retzius or even Endel do it.

THE END

The faceoff in Eden can end in many different ways, but sooner or later the PCs will confront Doctor Retzius. Make sure the players get most of the answers they have sought – this is their final chance to learn the truth about the People and the Ark.

The confrontation with Retzius can end in violence. She will not let herself be taken captive, unless broken by trauma. If the fight goes against her, she will activate the launch sequence and make a run for the space capsule. If stopped, she will fight until broken. At that point, the Omega Mutants will stop fighting for her as well.

The Countdown: One way or another, the countdown to the rocket launch will start. Unless the PCs activate it themselves, have Retzius, Endel, or one of the lab assistants do it. The countdown cannot be stopped. The players must immediately make the monumental decision of whether to leave Earth on the rocket or stay behind.

Toward the Stars: If one or more PCs do want to go – pause the game for a minute and speak directly to the players, so that they fully understand the consequences of the decision. Explain that this will mean the campaign is over for these PCs – at least until a planned future expansion, about life in the solar system after the Fall, is released. In the meantime, the campaign in the Zone can continue, with other PCs. If one or more PCs go with the rocket, read or paraphrase the boxed text on this page.

Back to the Ark: PCs that don't want to leave Earth with the rocket can travel back home to the Ark. Finding Eden is a feat that causes great excitement, but life in the Ark does not change that much. Chroniclers and Gearheads will certainly go out to study the bunker in detail, but the technology is so far advanced that it is hard to understand and learn from. Increase the Ark's DEV levels in Technology and Culture by 2D6 each, then continue the game.

A possibility is that the People choose to move to Eden and settle there.

An open question is what happens to any Omega Mutants and cryo-frozen lab assistants that survive. Maybe they join the People (if allowed), maybe they flee into the Zone toward an uncertain fate.



THE LAUNCH

All you hear is your own breath against the glass visor and the calm female voice, counting down. "T minus 10 seconds. 9, 8, 7, 6, 5". Memories from the Ark flash before your eyes. Of the People. Of your friends. The living. The dead. "4, 3, 2". No return. "1". The capsule shakes, a shiver in your seats grows to a roar. Behind your backs, a pillar of fire lights up. You are pushed into your seats, you feel your veins struggling to keep blood flowing to your heads. The vibrations get worse, your teeth clatter, the instruments on the panel in front of you become a madly blinking blur. The roar gets louder, hammering at your eardrums. Then, a respite, a sudden silence. Metal rubs against metal, something comes loose. Then, the next kick. The roar and the vibrations are back, closer, hotter. You feel the heat of the fire right through the metal and the plastic, right through your shaking bodies, kicked off the surface of the Earth. A small light in front of you is buzzing, angrily red. Warning. Warning. Warning. Then, it's over. The roar is gone, the utter silence deafening. The vibrations replaced by absolute stillness. Your bodies, lead heavy a second ago, now weightless. Soundlessly, the canopy around your capsule falls off. Bright light cuts through the portholes. It's black out there. But not dark. Above you, the stars paint their way. Beneath you, the ravaged Earth curves off, covered in a yellowy haze. In front of you – a weak light, growing stronger, above the bent horizon. Not a star. An outpost. A city of glittering metal. A new home.



OTHER METAPLOTS

The game is not over because Eden has been found. You can easily create your own metaplots, providing material for your campaign for many sessions. The new metaplots can take many different forms. Below are some guidelines for creating metaplots, followed by two examples.

The Challenge: A good starting point for a metaplot is a major, even existential, challenge for the People. This can for example be a new group arriving to the Zone, an atomic winter lasting an entire year, or finding a huge underground complex taking weeks to explore. The challenge should be a lasting one and cause conflict – preferably both within the Ark and between the People and other factions.

The Secret: Another useful ingredient is secrets. There should be something for the PCs to discover, like a hidden treasure, a great conspiracy or an NPC with unexpected capabilities. The secret can preferably be revealed step by step. It's often effective to let the secret somehow be linked to the Old Age.

The Locations: A metaplot is generally limited to certain locations, apart from the Ark. Write your own Special Zone Sectors or use the ones described in Chapter 15 (more will be published in the future) and tweak them if you want to fit them into your metaplot somehow.

The Grand Finale: The last, and perhaps most important, ingredient in your metaplot is the final climax. A metaplot should not last forever, but have clear end in sight. That does not mean it can end in one way only – just that there is an ending. The finale may be a location (like Eden) but it may also be a dramatic battle, a painful farewell or a major project that is completed. A metaplot is like a season of a television series – it has an epic season finale that might lead to something new.

THE NEWCOMERS

A few dozen Wanderers settle down in a sector near the Ark. Over a short period of time, the humans build an advanced settlement with a water supply,



medical care and a disciplined militia. A marketplace is established inside the walls of the settlement, which rapidly becomes a major power in the Zone.

Humans and mutants unite in the fight against a common enemy, such as the Helldrivers or the Nova Cult. Together, they are victorious, and a formal alliance is formed. The People quickly come to depend on their human neighbors, who provide medical care, grub and work in all kinds of projects. The human settlement expands and soon grows into a proper town.

A new watchtower is to be built in the human settlement. Many of the People take part in the work. Then – disaster strikes! The tower collapses, and several mutants die. A wild protest breaks out, tearing a rift between mutants and humans. But most mutants remain dependent on their new human masters.

More humans arrive by the dozens, in trailers drawn by Bitterbeasts. The population of the human settlement doubles in a matter of weeks. New houses are built, trade routes with other factions in the Zone are established. Some of the humans grow very rich, while most of the mutants remain dirt poor. Discontent is brewing.

The conflict between humans and mutants intensifies. A militant human faction holds hate-stirring speeches in the marketplace, preaching that mutants are second-rate beings that have no place in the dawnworld. Some mutants are caught and beaten or burnt to death.

The mutants have had enough of the abuse. In secret, they plan an attack against the humans. A bloodbath is imminent unless someone – the PCs? – can defuse the situation and give mutants and humans a common purpose.

THE HYDRA

A strange humanoid is seen close to the Ark. It looks like a mutant, but is far too big – twelve feet tall, they say. The giant is very dangerous, Stalkers have seen it kill monsters with his bare hands. The killings instill the creatures of the Zone with fearful respect. A horde of monsters and savage mutants follow this strange leader wherever it goes. Everyone who tries to oppose it is slaughtered.

The giant, whom followers call “the Hydra”, is a near-immortal creature, a result of ancient experiments. It has powers equivalent to the following mutations: Corpse-Eater, Puppeteer, Parasite, Telepathy and Manbeast. The Hydra lusts for power and explodes in sudden outbursts of rage and violence.

One day, the People see a large pillar of smoke rising in the distance. An expedition (including the PCs) is sent to investigate. On the journey, they witness how the Hydra and its horde brutally butcher the inhabitants of another settlement. Do they dare act?

Following this event, the Hydra is seen ever closer to the Ark. Panic grows. Some of the People decide to join the mutant giant and become its servants, which causes internal strife within the Ark.

The Hydra and its growing horde besiege the Ark. Bizarre negotiations between it and the Bosses of the People begin. The Hydra demands macabre tributes, such as large amounts of mutant flesh. The strains on the besieged People intensify. Can they find a way to escape?

Another faction in the Zone – such as the Wanderers or the Nova Cult – approach the People and offer an alliance in the fight against the Hydra. The grand finale may be a great battle.

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GEAR & SERVICES

The list below contains items and services commonly traded in the Ark. The cost (in bullets) is only a guideline – remember, there are no set prices in the Ark. Requirement tells you what projects need to be completed in the Ark for the item to be generally available. Weight tells you how many lines on your gear list that the item requires.



ITEM	COST	REQUIREMENT	WEIGHT	COMMENT
Grub (Ration)	1	—	¼	Restores Strength.
Clean Water (Ration)	½	—	¼	Restores Agility.
Booze (Dose)	¼	—	1 per bottle	A bottle can contain 10 doses.
Arrow	½	—	¼	—
Rope	1	—	1	Gear Bonus +2 to Move roll when climbing.
Grappling Hook	1	—	1	Gear Bonus +2 to Move roll when climbing (requires rope).
Torch	½	—	¼	Lights up the area within Near distance for an hour.
Oil Lantern	1–2	—	1	Lights up the area within Near distance. One dose of booze lasts a day.
Tinderbox	1	—	½	Used to light torches and oil lanterns.
Flashlight	3–6	Workshop, Battery	1	Lights up the area within Near distance.
Jacket/Coat	1–2	—	-	Gear Bonus +2 to Endure severe cold.
Boots	1–2	—	-	Gear Bonus +1 to Endure a harsh Zone trek.
Spade	1	—	1	Gear Bonus +1 to any roll to work on an Ark project.
Blanket	1	—	1	Gear Bonus +2 to Endure severe cold.
Tent	3–6	—	2	Gear Bonus +1 to Endure severe cold for every occupant.
Rot Suit	4–8	—	-	Protection Rating 3 against the Rot.
Scrap Binoculars	3–6	—	½	Gear Bonus +1 to Scout.
Tools	1–2	—	1	Gear Bonus +1 to Jury-Rig.
Pots & Pans	1–2	—	1	Gear Bonus +1 when cooking Rot-contaminated food (page 67)
Brass Knuckles	1	—	½	Gear Bonus +1 to Fight, weapon damage 1.
Scrap Knife	1	—	½	Gear Bonus +1 to Fight, weapon damage 2.
Baseball Bat	1	—	1	Gear Bonus +2 to Fight, weapon damage 1.



ITEM	COST	REQUIREMENT	WEIGHT	COMMENT
Spiked Bat	1–2	—	1	Gear Bonus +2 to Fight, weapon damage 2.
Machete	1–2	—	1	Gear Bonus +2 to Fight, weapon damage 2.
Scrap Spear	1–2	—	1	Gear Bonus +1 to Fight, weapon damage 2, Near range.
Scrap Axe	3–6	—	2	Gear Bonus +1 to Fight, weapon damage 3.
Slingshot	1	—	½	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Short range, weapon damage 1.
Bow	1–2	—	1	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Long range, weapon damage 1.
Scrap Pistol	3–6	Arsenal	1	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Short range, weapon damage 2.
Scrap Rifle	4–8	Arsenal	1	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Long range, weapon damage 2.
Derringer	3–6	Arsenal	½	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Near range, weapon damage 1.
Flame Thrower	5–10	Arsenal	2	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Near range, weapon damage 2.
Scrap Cannon	10+	Arsenal	—	Gear Bonus +1 to Shoot, Long range, weapon damage 4.
Bitterbeast Mount	5–10	Stables	—	—
Dog	3–6	—	—	—
Pig	3–6	Pigsty	—	—
Slave	5–10	Slave Market	—	—
Healer	3–6	—	—	Heal skill level 3–5, Bonesaw talent.
Gearhead	10+	—	—	Jury-Rig skill level 3–5
Stalker	4–8	—	—	Cost per day. Find the Path skill level 3–5.
Bodyguard	3–6	—	—	Cost per day. Intimidate skill level 3–5.
Chronicler	3–6	—	—	Writes a poem of your choice.

SCRAP TABLE

D666	ITEM
111	Action figure (He-Man)
112	Alarm clock, mechanical
113	Aquarium, no fish
114	Barbie doll
115	Baseball bat (page 86)
116	Basket ball, flat
121	Beard trimmer
122	Beret, red
123	Bible
124	Bicycle chain (page 86)
125	Bicycle frame, no wheels
126	Bicycle pump
131	Binder, full of financial records
132	Boots (Gear Bonus +1 when hiking)
133	Bouncing ball
134	Box of cereal, unopened
135	Box of chocolates (still edible, D6 rations of grub)
136	Boxing glove
141	Briefcase
142	Bullhorn (broken)
143	Can opener
144	Candelabra
145	Car tire
146	Carving knife
151	Cash register
152	Cat 5 cable, 2D6 feet long
153	Ceiling fan
154	Champagne glasses, D6
155	Chandelier
156	Charcoal grill
161	Children's drawing
162	Cigarettes, half-empty pack
163	Clothes hanger
164	Coffee cup with print
165	Coffee table
166	Coloring book for kids (half done)
211	Comb

D666	ITEM
212	Comic book, very violent
213	Concrete mixer, rusty
214	Cooking pot
215	Credit card
216	Crime novel
221	Cutlery, D6 pieces
222	Cylinder hat
223	Dala horse
224	Deodorant bottle
225	Desk lamp
226	Detergent, bottle
231	Dice, D6
232	Diving snorkel
233	Doll
234	Downhill ski (only one)
235	Dress shoes, worn down
236	Dumbbell, 10 lb
241	Easel, for painting
242	Eating knife (scrap knife)
243	Electric guitar, broken
244	Electric mixer
245	Electric shaver
246	Electric toothbrush
251	Empty frame
252	Extension cord
253	Face mask, Donald Duck
254	Face mask, skeleton
255	Facemask, Santa Claus
256	Fake fangs
261	False teeth
262	Fantasy novel, very thick
263	Fire extinguisher
264	Fireworks, D6, still functional
265	Flashlight, broken
266	Floor lamp
311	Flute, plastic
312	Folding chair

D666	ITEM
313	Football
314	Fork
315	Frying pan (blunt instrument)
316	Gaffer tape
321	Glass pearls
322	Golf club (blunt instrument)
323	Grass seeds in small bag
324	Hair dryer
325	Hair gel
326	Headphones, with microphone
331	Hedge trimmer (scrap knife)
332	Herbal salt
333	Hockey club (blunt instrument)
334	Hot dog cart
335	Hubcap, Volvo
336	IKEA chair
341	Infant formula (gives D6 rations of grub)
342	Instant coffee
343	Instant noodles (D6 rations of grub)
344	Iron pipe (blunt instrument)
345	Jack
346	Jeans, stonewashed
351	Jigsaw puzzle
352	Jumpsuit, cloth
353	Key ring, 2D6 keys
354	Keyboard, missing a few keys
355	Ladder, rusty (Gear Bonus +1 when climbing)
356	Ladies boots
361	Ladies hat
362	Laptop computer, broken
363	Lawn mower
364	Light bulbs, D6
365	Lipstick
366	Liquid soap
411	Loudspeaker (broken)
412	Love letter, yellowed
413	Magnifying glass

D666	ITEM
414	Mascara
415	Mathematics book
416	Microwave oven (broken)
421	Mirror
422	Movie DVDs, D6
423	Movie poster
424	Music CDs, D6
425	National flag, torn
426	Necktie
431	Nicotine chewing gum
432	Oriental carpet
433	Pacifier
434	Pack of tube socks
435	Paper handkerchiefs, D666
436	Pepper mill
441	Photo album
442	Photo of happy family
443	Picture of a cat
444	Piggy bank (empty)
445	Plastic bags, D66
446	Plastic bottle, empty
451	Plastic dinosaur
452	Plastic flowers, D6
453	Plastic skeleton model
454	Plastic straws, pack of 100
455	Playing cards
456	Popcorn, unopened bag
461	Princess dress, for kids
462	Prize medal
463	Quilted jacket (Gear Bonus +1 against cold)
464	Rabbit suit, adult size
465	Recliner
466	Remote control
511	Roller skates
512	Rubber boot
513	Rubber duck
514	Saxophone

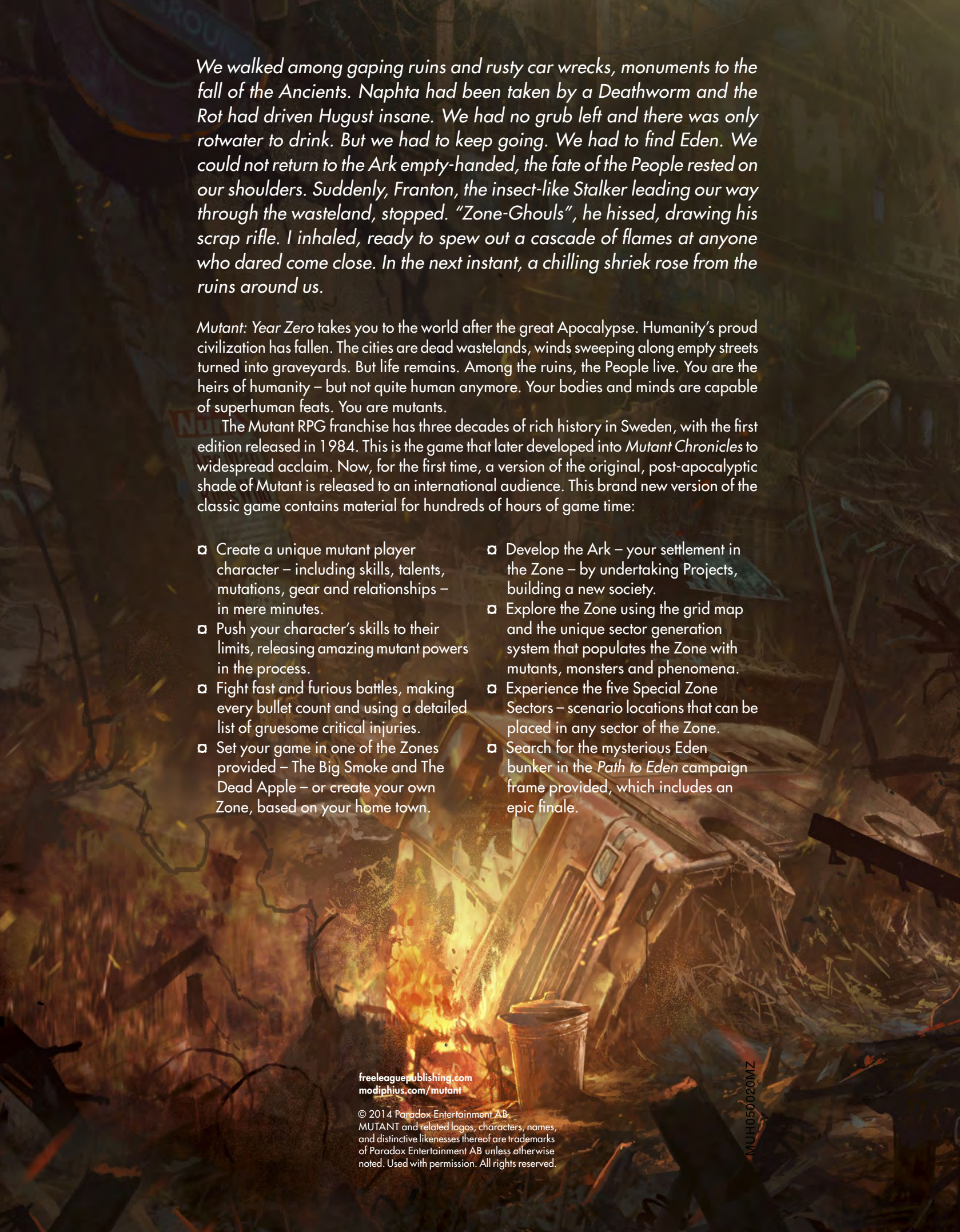
D666	ITEM
515	Scarf, colorful (Gear Bonus +1 against cold)
516	Scientific dissertation
521	Scuba mask
522	Scuba suit, worn out
523	Sex toy
524	Shopping cart
525	Skateboard
526	Sketch book, full of sketches
531	Ski boot
532	Ski hat (Gear Bonus +1 against cold)
533	Skin lotion, bottle
534	Sleeping pad
535	Snowglobe
536	Sofa, broken
541	Spider-Man suit for kids
542	Sports bottle
543	Sports jersey
544	Sports prize cup
545	Stapler
546	Starburst candy (one ration of grub)
551	Stroller
552	Surf board
553	Suspenders
554	Swimming goggles
555	Synthesizer
556	T-shirt with text "Heisenberg"
561	Tabletop globe
562	Teddy bear
563	Telephone
564	Tennis ball
565	Thermometer, broken
566	Tire iron
611	Toilet brush
612	Toothbrush
613	Towel marked "Sheraton"

D666	ITEM
614	Toy car
615	Toy pirates
616	Toy sword
621	Toy tractor
622	Toy train set
623	Traffic cones, D6
624	Trombone
625	TV set, broken
626	Twinkies, D6 (still edible, each is a ration of grub)
631	Typewriter
632	Umbrella, broken
633	Underwear
634	Vacuum cleaner
635	Vacuum flask
636	Vase
641	VHS cassette
642	Video game console
643	Vinyl record, well played
644	Walking frame
645	Walkman with headphones and cassette
646	Wall clock
651	Wallet full of moldy cash
652	Water pistol
653	Welding mask
654	Whiskey bottle (empty)
655	Whiteboard marker
656	Wig, blonde
661	Wine bottle, undrinkable (1 Rot Point)
662	Wok
663	Wrecking bar
664	Wristwatch, broken
665	Yellowed copy of the Mutant Chronicles RPG
666	Yo-yo (blunt instrument)



We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Four Quartets, T.S. Eliot



We walked among gaping ruins and rusty car wrecks, monuments to the fall of the Ancients. Naphta had been taken by a Deathworm and the Rot had driven Hugust insane. We had no grub left and there was only rotwater to drink. But we had to keep going. We had to find Eden. We could not return to the Ark empty-handed, the fate of the People rested on our shoulders. Suddenly, Franton, the insect-like Stalker leading our way through the wasteland, stopped. "Zone-Ghouls", he hissed, drawing his scrap rifle. I inhaled, ready to spew out a cascade of flames at anyone who dared come close. In the next instant, a chilling shriek rose from the ruins around us.

Mutant: Year Zero takes you to the world after the great Apocalypse. Humanity's proud civilization has fallen. The cities are dead wastelands, winds sweeping along empty streets turned into graveyards. But life remains. Among the ruins, the People live. You are the heirs of humanity – but not quite human anymore. Your bodies and minds are capable of superhuman feats. You are mutants.

The *Mutant* RPG franchise has three decades of rich history in Sweden, with the first edition released in 1984. This is the game that later developed into *Mutant Chronicles* to widespread acclaim. Now, for the first time, a version of the original, post-apocalyptic shade of *Mutant* is released to an international audience. This brand new version of the classic game contains material for hundreds of hours of game time:

- ❑ Create a unique mutant player character – including skills, talents, mutations, gear and relationships – in mere minutes.
- ❑ Push your character's skills to their limits, releasing amazing mutant powers in the process.
- ❑ Fight fast and furious battles, making every bullet count and using a detailed list of gruesome critical injuries.
- ❑ Set your game in one of the Zones provided – The Big Smoke and The Dead Apple – or create your own Zone, based on your home town.
- ❑ Develop the Ark – your settlement in the Zone – by undertaking Projects, building a new society.
- ❑ Explore the Zone using the grid map and the unique sector generation system that populates the Zone with mutants, monsters and phenomena.
- ❑ Experience the five Special Zone Sectors – scenario locations that can be placed in any sector of the Zone.
- ❑ Search for the mysterious Eden bunker in the *Path to Eden* campaign frame provided, which includes an epic finale.

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