

MUTANT

YEAR ZERO



OLARSSON 2015

ZONE COMPENDIUM 3:
DIE, MEAT-EATERS, DIE!



MUTANT

YEAR ZERO

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ISBN

978-1-910132-66-1

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ZONE COMPENDIUM

Welcome to *Zone Compendium 3* for *Mutant: Year Zero* and *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*. This booklet contains extra material for Gamemasters. It builds on the events in *Genlab Alpha*, so to fully utilize this compendium, you should have access to that book.

The majority of this booklet is taken up by information concerning five complete Special Zone Sectors. They follow the same format as the Zone Sectors that are included in Chapter 7 of *Mutant: Year Zero*. These adventure locations can be placed in any sector of whatever Zone you are playing in. Note that all of the sectors in this compendium include mutated animals, so they should not be used before the animals have escaped from Paradise Valley (see *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*).

Every Special Zone Sector has a map overview, which is available in two versions.

- ▣ The GM map has small picture inlays showing details of specific locations in the sector.

- ▣ The player map does not include these inlays, and can be shown to the players when the PCs arrive in the sector. The player maps can be found in the middle of this booklet, and will be available to download from the Modiphius website.

RABBIT KINGDOM DEEPROOT

The tribe of mutant rabbits was deeply distrustful of strangers, even in Paradise Valley. You can read more about that in *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*. This sector tells the story of what happened after the fall of the Genlab and describes the rabbits' new outpost in the Zone.

OVERVIEW

Any Zone traveler approaching the rabbit kingdom Deeproot without knowing it's there will only see an insignificant hill. On one side of the hill, there is a rusty train track leading into a dark, gaping tunnel entrance.

There are no ruins on the hill, instead the whole area is covered in low bushes, thick grass and scrap. By now, the visitor has probably already been discovered by one of the many guard posts, that have been hidden in foxholes dug into the hill.

Sneaking towards Deeproot is done with a modification of -3, because the rabbits know the terrain extremely well and watch every nook and cranny.

ONLY FOR GAMEMASTERS!

The rest of this booklet is for the Game-master's eyes only. If you are a player, reading past this point might spoil the fun for you and for the rest of the group.

Anyone actively Scouting the hill can discover the foxholes and the long-eared guards hiding there, but that roll has a modification of -3 as well.

In addition, the area is covered by improvised land mines. Anyone moving around in the area without knowing where the land mines are needs to make a Move roll - failure results in an explosion with Blast Power 9. The mines are primed with sharp shrapnel and have Weapon Damage 2.

Visitors who are discovered by the guard posts will soon find themselves surrounded by long-eared warriors, armed to their teeth with blunderbusses and machetes, nervously sniffing the strangers. They are disarmed and brought into a narrow tunnel entrance in the closest foxhole. Mutants of normal build have to walk doubled over. Underground, there is a jumble of tunnels and chambers perforating the whole hill.

The prisoners are brought to the cells (see Locations below), where they are interrogated and their fate determined (see Events below). Every form of resistance is met with extreme violence. If needed, reinforcements will quickly be sent to the area.

THE SITUATION

In Genlab Alpha, the rabbits were among the first species that researchers tried to give advanced intellect and other human qualities. Rabbits reproduced quickly and were easy to handle in the lab.

The early days of the project were plagued by failures. In accordance with the genlab's tradition (see *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*), the rabbits and hares in the lab were given the names of famous soccer players. Pelé, the first subject of the experiment, was promising, but showed very aggressive tendencies and had to be put down. Guinea pig number two, Ronaldo, suffered from anxiety after realizing the transience of life. Quite a few failures followed these two. When Ruben, an insignificant little rabbit named after the Argentine World Championship hero Rubén Galván, was born under the glaring lights of the lab, nobody had much faith in him. But Ruben soon showed that he was something out of the ordinary.

Ruben soon proved to have a sharp intellect, impressive fine motor skills and faculty of speech. Ruben's intellect developed faster than a human child's, and in short order he was having long

conversations with the researchers that created him. The researchers used Ruben's genes to create more creatures in his image, and in the end there was a whole group of intelligent rabbits walking upright, with a strong sense of unity and defensive instincts. The researchers thought the rabbits were ready to be put in the test area outside of Genlab Alpha, called "Paradise Valley".

Ruben, the rabbit mutants' ancestor and leader, finally fell victim to an ill-tempered landshark, but his name lived on. With time he was regarded more and more as a holy being, a prophet and a moral compass. Good advice on how a rabbit mutant should behave was collected in a list of "Ruben's Learnings", despite the fact that it is very unlikely that Ruben himself ever expressed any of them.

During the fight against the Watchers in Paradise Valley (see *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*) the mutant rabbits were the most militant and well organized tribe. They also paid the highest price, in the form of attacks from the machines. This resulted in the rabbit tribe becoming even more closely knit, but they developed a deep suspicion toward all outsiders as well.

After the fall of Genlab Alpha, the rabbit tribe wandered out into the Zone, like all other mutant animals. To protect themselves against the Zone's many threats they went underground, just like they had in Paradise Valley. Some scouts found a hill pierced by an old railway tunnel, and this became the base of the rabbits' new home. They named it the Kingdom of New Deeproot, to honor their old home in Paradise Valley. Countless more tunnels and chambers were dug in the hill, which soon became the tribe's new fortress against the threatening world around them.

One day a reconnaissance patrol from Deeproot ran into a group of human mutants. Intense suspicion from both sides triggered a short but bloody battle that ended with the rabbits lying dead on the ground. The mutants were hungry and made the fateful decision to cook and eat the rabbit mutants, which they regarded as animals rather than fellow mutants.

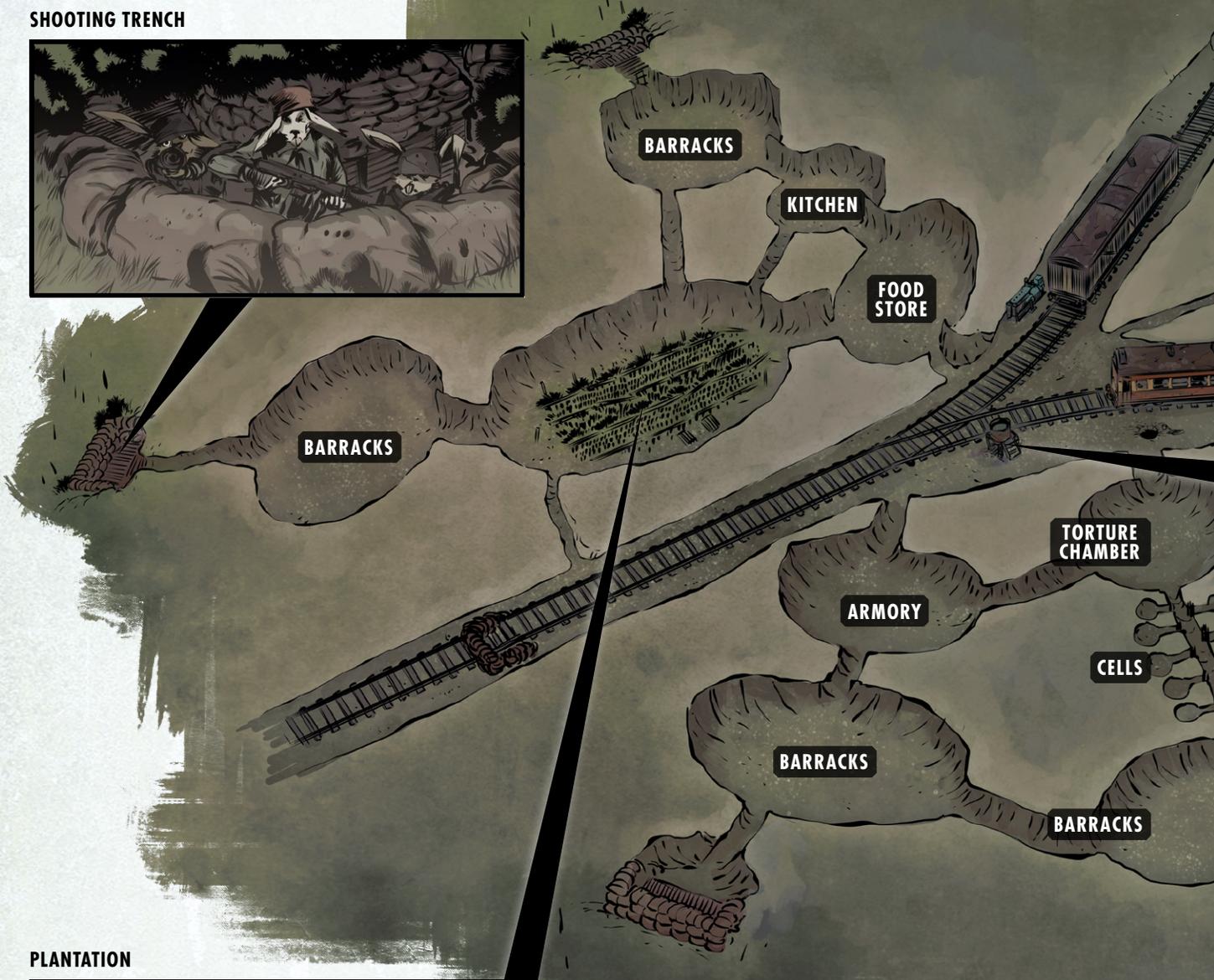
The meal was witnessed by a surviving rabbit, and the event provoked a violent hatred among his kind against all meat-eaters. The rabbits have not learned to tell different groups of mutants apart, and from that day on regard all human mutants

RABBIT KINGDOM DEEPROOT

SHOOTING TRENCH



03



PLANTATION





THE JUSTICE COOKER

- and pure strain humans - as their sworn enemies. Minor clashes have already taken place, and the conflict can escalate to an all-out war between mutant and rabbit...

LOCATIONS

Deeproot is an underground labyrinth, almost impossible to move around in without getting lost by anyone that doesn't belong to the Rabbit Tribe.

The Train Tunnel. Rusty old rails run into a gaping black hole in the mountainside. The light from the sun only reaches a few yards inside, then it becomes pitch black. About 50 yards from the entrance, the rabbits have built a bulwark from scrap (Armor Rating 5), that is always manned by at least two guards.

Roughly a hundred yards further on, the train tunnel splits into two branches. The rail fork forms a larger open space, where the rabbits hold meetings and public executions. Beyond the War Room and the Learnchamber (below) the two tunnels continue into the depths - one of them ends in an earth fall, and the other in black water.

Tunnel Openings. There are five additional smaller tunnel openings in the hill, dug by rabbits. Every opening is defended by a shooting trench (armor rating 6), and is camouflaged with branches. Anyone Scouting the area needs to succeed in a roll with a -3 modification to see the hidden trenches.

The Tunnels in Deeproot were dug by the rabbits, the train tunnel outside of the War Room (below) being the exception. They are so narrow that it is not possible to walk side by side. Neither is it possible to Fight or Shoot past someone to attack a target further down a tunnel. The tunnels are faintly lit with electric light bulbs, connected to the generator by the War Room.

Barracks. These larger spaces house Deeproot's guards and soldiers, during the precious few hours when they are not on duty. They all sleep on straw or grass on the floor, on numbered spots. Typically, there are 2D6 sleeping rabbits in every barrack room.

Armory. This cave contains Deeproot's supply of weapons. Here, there are D66 blunderbusses with D6 charges each, D66 machetes, D66 spears and D66 improvised helmets (Armor Rating 3). There are always D6 guards by the armory.

Infirmary. In this stinking hole, wounded rabbits are cared for. Normally there are 2D6 patients lying on simple bunks here (all of them critically injured), and one or two Healers are present as well. There are some scrap metal knives for surgical operations lying about, and D6 rations of booze to alleviate pain.

Breeding Chamber. This large room holds Deeproot's future. It's full of baby rabbits of all sizes, and pregnant females. There are also two separate chambers for actual fertilization. Carefully selected males and females are allowed to mate under controlled conditions. All other forms of intimacy are strictly forbidden.

Plantation. This large hall contains the rabbit tribe's most well-kept secret. Using the generator and special light bulbs that emit a pale white light, the rabbits of Deeproot have managed to cultivate rotbeets and Zone turnips underground, without the use of daylight. The harvests from here aren't enough to feed all of Deeproot though, they still have to gather plants from the Zone.

Food Store. The rabbits' food is stored in these chilly caves – both Zone turnips and rotbeets, as well as various plants gathered from the Zone. In total there are D666 rations of food here.

Kitchen & Distillery. This chamber is dominated by a huge copper pot. In it, a simple but nutritious vegetable casserole that is the rabbits' staple diet is continuously simmering. In one corner stands an impressive gadget with pipes and glass bottles – this is the rabbits' still. It produces D6 doses of booze per hour, as long as it is fed by twice the amount of food rations. The booze is used both as fuel for the generator (below) and to lessen the pain for patients in the infirmary.

Cells. These cramped caverns are different from others in Deeproot, because they actually have doors. When locked, a Force roll with -3 is required to pry a door open. There is always at least one guard in the tunnel outside of the cells. The rabbits' prisoners are held here, before being brought to the torture chamber or the place of execution. Most often prisoners aren't allowed to get any food, water or sleep.

Torture Chamber. In this cave there is nothing but an old, shabby table with two chairs next to it. This is where the rabbits' prisoners are brought for interrogation. The torture masters, so called "Askmasters", have high scores in Sense Emotion and Dominate, and don't think twice about using violent methods to force the truth out of their victims.

A simple but effective method is to "water" the prisoner. The victim is forced to lie on his back with his head below his feet. A piece of cloth is pulled over the prisoner's nose and mouth, and water is poured over his face, which evokes the sensation of drowning. People who get "watered" suffer 1 point of doubt, and have to make a roll for Endure with a modification of -1. Failure means the victim breaks and has to answer all of the Askmaster's questions truthfully. It is possible to water the same victim multiple times.

Place of Execution. In the old train tunnel, at the place where two tracks join, there is an enormous copper cauldron hanging over a fireplace, with a wooden staircase next to it. This is where prisoners are brought to be executed in the so called "Justice Cooker". With hands and feet bound, the prisoner is dragged up the stairs and thrown living into the boiling water of the cauldron. It's an excruciatingly painful, but quick, death. As a rule, executions happen with all of Deeproot watching. It is a way of strengthening the morale and unity of the tribe.

War Room. There are two old train cars in the tunnels. One of these serve as the tribe's innermost command center, the so called War Room. The old dining car has been remodeled into a command center, where general Rootus assembles his highest

officers to make strategic decisions in the continued war against the meat-eaters.

The space has a number of tables, covered in maps with arrows that show planned offensives. General Rootus's personal chambers are in an adjoining compartment, a small room adorned with old paintings and trophies from the many enemies that he has killed.

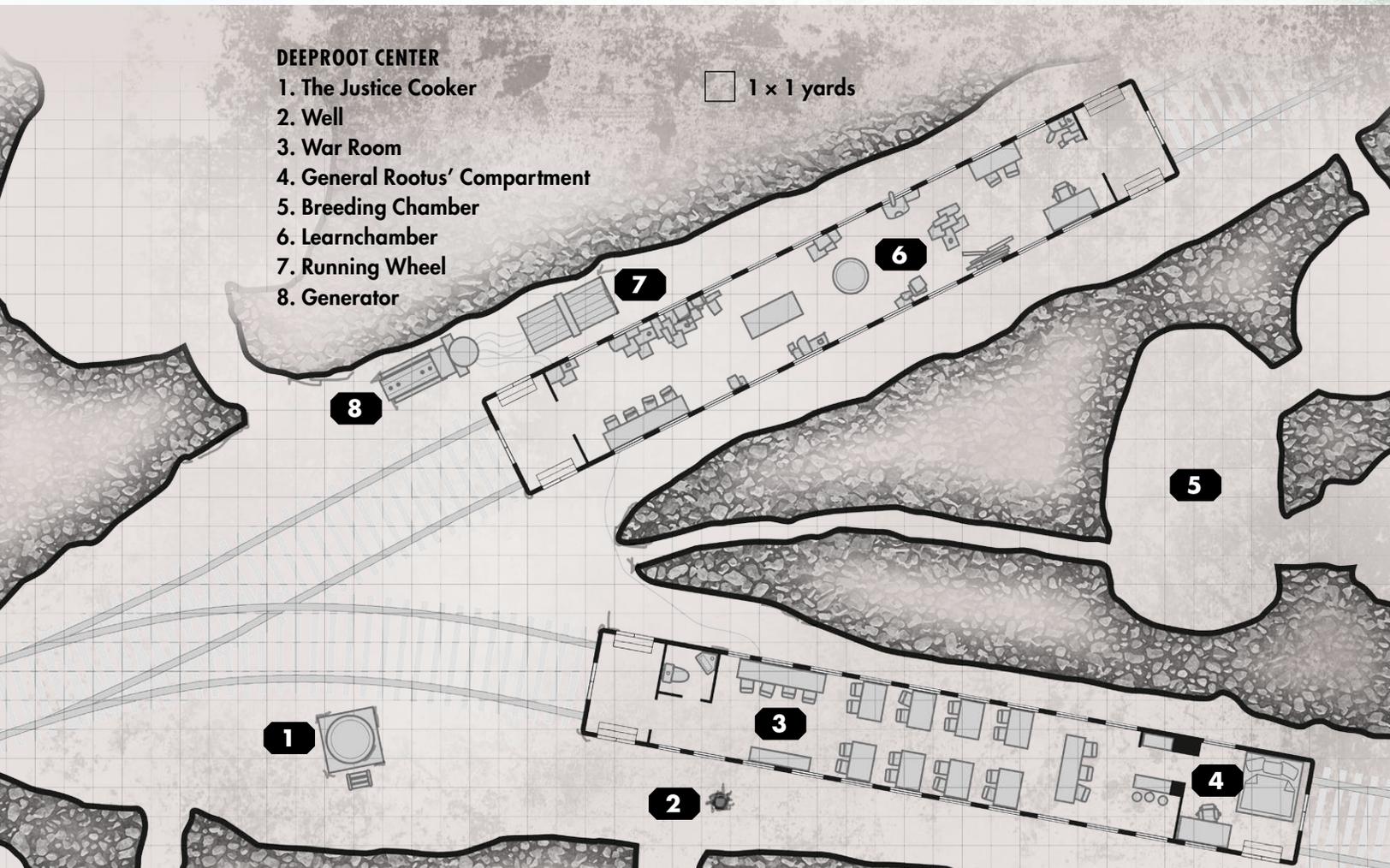
Generator. Right outside of the War Room stands a large and rusty old machine, a generator that provides Deeproot with electric power. The generator can run on booze or rabbit power. Right beside it there is a running wheel that mutants of short build can use to generate the necessary power.

Well. In the tunnel outside the War Room, the rabbits have dug a simple well, containing a bucket tied to a rope. D6 rations of rot-free water can

typically be pulled from the well, after that it takes D6 minutes before more water is available. In bottles and cans next to the well are D66 rations of water. The well is always watched by at least one guard.

Learnchamber. The other train car in Deeproot is an old freight car that now serves as the "Learnchamber", where the foremost Knowmasters and promising Learners research old artifacts and develop new technologies - most often aimed at maximum destructive power.

The room is jam packed with scrap and half-finished gadgets. Among the jumble are D6 random artifacts, as well as D6 blunderbusses and D6 explosive charges primed with scrap metal (Blast Power 9, Weapon Damage 2). This is where you normally find Knowmaster Beetus (below), along with D6 other Knowmasters and Learners.



INHABITANTS

The rabbit tribe is a completely militarized society. Individual freedom and property are unknown concepts - all rabbits live and die for the collective, for the struggle against the murderous meat-eaters outside. Most rabbits don't even have a name, instead they are distinguished by their assignment and a number - such as "Guard 314, "Worker 294", or "Student 55". To get your own name is the highest of honors.

The rabbits' technical knowledge is superior to most other groups in the Zone. The smartest rabbits are selected as students - called "Learners" - at an early age. The teachers are called "Knowmasters". It is their job to pass on the knowledge of the rabbits to the next generation.

The rabbit tribe discovered the secret of gunpowder during their time in Paradise Valley, and have brought that knowledge with them to the Zone. Their "blunderbusses" (see below) are superior to most other scrap weapons, even though they are not as effective as ancient firearms. Yet. The rabbits use gunpowder in their deadly land mines as well, and those can be found everywhere around Deeproot. Another exceptional technical achievement is that the rabbits have succeeded in constructing small scale plantations underground, where they grow vegetables.

All in all, there are over 500 rabbits in Deeproot, and their numbers are increasing rapidly. If nothing is done, the rabbit tribe will be the largest faction in the Zone before long. At the top of the tribe are the "Overleaders", a committee of older rabbits lead by the legendary but aging General Rootus.

Typical Rabbit Guard: Deeproot's guards are disciplined and extremely devoted to their tribe. Because of the ongoing state of war, they are always on edge, and many of them suffer from war psychosis. They hate meat-eaters and have a hard time not resorting to violence when they see such a creature.

Rank: 4

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4, Wits 2, Empathy 2.

Skills: Fight 1, Sneak 2, Shoot 3.

Animal Powers: Burrower, Small.

Gear: Blunderbuss, scrap spear, improvised helmet (Armor Rating 3).

General Rootus. This scarred leader has led his tribe from the captivity in Paradise Valley to the freedom in the Zone. That their new home is characterized as much by fighting as the old one was, is a source of grief for Rootus, who sits in his chamber drowning his sorrows in root booze. Outwardly he shows nothing but a willingness to fight, but the embers have cooled in the old rabbit, and he rarely appears in public. Instead, the upstart Rubbit (below) has taken his role as war leader.

Rank: 11

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 4, Wits 2, Instinct 4.

Skills: Measure Enemy 5, Fight 4, Sneak 2, Shoot 4, Dominate 4.

Animal Powers: Fast Reflexes, Herbivore.

Gear: Serrated sabre (machete).

Artifacts: Automatic pistol (gear bonus +2, weapon damage +2, light weapon), seven bullets.

Knowmaster Beetus is the leader of all the Knowmasters of the tribe. She is dressed in patched tail coat, wears dark sunglasses and speaks in a hoarse voice. Beetus is the one responsible for the rediscovery of gunpowder, and she is hard of hearing as a result of extensive experimentation. She is slightly unhinged, but very interested in the Old Age and views the Zone as the promised land.

Rank: 10

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 2, Wits 5, Instinct 2.

Skills: Scavenge 4, Jury-Rig 4, Move 2, Know the Zone 2, Sense Emotion 3, Dominate 3.

Animal Powers: Sixth Sense, Herbivore.

Gear: Tailcoat.

Artifacts: Laser pistol, sunglasses (gear bonus +2 to Dominate).

Rubbit, Upstart Warrior. This rabbit won fame and glory when he led a patrol deep into the Zone to secure a forward base. During the mission, he killed two meat-eaters and took a third prisoner. His reward was to pick his own name, and he chose Rubbit to honor the rabbit mutants' ancestor Ruben. Rubbit has become a legend among the rabbits, a guiding star in the struggle against the meat-eaters. It's rumored that the Overleaders aren't happy with

THE RABBITS' BLUNDERBUSSES

The rabbits' home-made firearms normally have Gear Bonus +2 and Weapon Damage 2. Pistols have short range and rifles have long range. Just like normal scrap weapons, blunderbusses have to be loaded with powder and shrapnel between every shot, which takes one maneuver. Rabbits with the talent Weapon Maker can build blunderbusses.

Rabbit's popularity. It is not appropriate to put one rabbit in front of the collective.

Rank: 9

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 5, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Measure Enemy 5, Fight 4, Sneak 4, Shoot 5, Dominate 4.

Animal Powers: Fast Reflexes, Small.

Gear: Spiked bat.

Artifacts: Shotgun, seven cartridges.

EVENTS

Below are a number of events involving the rabbits of Deeproot that you can use in your campaign.

- ❑ The PCs run in to a rabbit patrol out in the Zone (Rabbit might even be part of the patrol). The risk for violence is imminent, if the PCs don't play their cards right. The worst case scenario is that the event triggers a larger conflict between Deeproot and the PCs' settlement.
- ❑ The rabbits from Deeproot are becoming a larger and larger threat to other groups in the Zone, and someone asks the PCs to scout out their headquarters. There is a very high risk that the PCs will be taken prisoner.
- ❑ An NPC that the PCs know is taken prisoner by the rabbits, and the PCs stage a rescue action. They must infiltrate Deeproot or negotiate with the rabbits.
- ❑ A boss has gotten word that the rabbits can manufacture gunpowder, and sends the PCs to negotiate an alliance. If the PCs play their

cards right, they might get to present their case to General Rootus. To prove that they are serious, Rootus will give the PCs a horrible task - some guards drag a captured enemy from another faction into the hall and request that the PCs lower the prisoner into the Justice Cooker. If they hesitate, they will be cast in chains.

- ❑ The PCs become prisoners of the rabbits somehow. They are disarmed and brought to separate cells. They are interrogated and tortured to reveal everything about their settlement and its military capacity. Rabbit, Beetus or even General Rootus might be one of the interrogators. If nobody comes to their rescue, the PCs really have to be careful - and make multiple dice rolls for Manipulate or Dominate - not to end up in the Justice Cooker.



BLACKHAND'S BAR

Deep in the Zone, situated by an Old Age highway, lies Blackhand's Bar. Unlike many other places in wasteland, travelers will find Blackhand's Bar a hospitable refuge where they can relax, eat and rest up. For fear of losing this oasis, so far spared by both the Rot and other dangers, zonefarers who know of the Bar are wary to tell others where it is located.

Blackhand's Bar is not only a haven for the bold wanderers of the Zone. It is also known as the base of the Zone Riders - the mounted messengers and problem solvers who rapidly have grown into a force to be reckoned with in the Zone.

OVERVIEW

Blackhand's Bar is located in one of the Ancients' curious constructions. Its position by an Old Age highway has made it a natural meeting place for zonefarers. There has been much speculation as to the original purpose of the building, but most Chroniclers agree that the Ancients met here to tinker with their rides.

At the foot of a low, scrubby hill are two well preserved flat-roofed buildings, emanating a warm, inviting light. The low hum of music and voices murmuring is interrupted now and then by a howl of some unknown beast. A barricade of stacked rusted car wrecks gives the place some protection from incoming attacks and other dangers, with a few gaps in it offering easy access to the main building.

Anyone who comes near gets to make a Scout roll (not opposed). Success means the PC will immediately feel like he's being watched. In spite of this, and of the monstrous howling, the place feels inviting. The wonderful aroma of grilled food drifts from the main house.

THE SITUATION

After the Animals' rebellion against the Watchers (see *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*), the bear Truffaut 21 (Wildpaw) escaped Paradise Valley together with a group of bold animals to create a new settlement. Their goal was to create a peaceful community in the likeness of what they had seen in the photographs from the Old Age. After a long and difficult march, Truffaut reached the Zone. However, the first contact

BLACKHAND'S BAR



TRUFFAUT'S HEADQUARTERS





VOLE'S STORE

LOOKOUT

PRIVY

BARRICADE

BITTERBEAST PEN



with its mutant inhabitants, ended in bloodshed. For a time, Truffaut despaired, but found new hope when she met the four-armed mutant Blackhand.

Blackhand, after having been cast out of his Ark, had spent months wandering the Zone, learning to survive on his own. He invited Truffaut and her followers to his den in an Old Age gas station, where they started making plans for the future. By having couriers travel between the settlements cropping up, their goal was to gather information and knowledge in order to unite the factions of the Zone.

At first, their plan worked poorly. Several of the couriers sent out by Truffaut were killed or badly wounded by the Zone's many monsters and deadly phenomena. But in time, the couriers managed to map a few less dangerous routes through the Zone. An aged turtle named Morrison 31 presented the idea of trying to domesticate some of the Zone's more docile monsters and turning them into mounts. The gas station has today become a meeting place for zonefarers and the headquarters of the increasingly renowned Zone Riders.

Morrison 31 breeds bitterbeasts that are used as mounts by the Zone Riders. From the inside of an old tanker truck, Truffaut covertly directs the growing organization. In her old notebook, she

collects the Riders' observations from all corners of the Zone. Some Arks and settlements have instituted so-called courier stations – places for the Zone Riders to rest and switch mounts. With increasing speed and surety, the Zone Riders are mapping out the riches and dangers of the Zone, stirring murmurs of discontent among some of the Zone's lesser lords, bosses and chiefs. Some think that the Riders are becoming too powerful, and that the time is coming when their secret leader must be sought out and silenced, for good...

LOCATIONS

Together, Truffaut and Blackhand have turned the old gas station into a watering hole for the Zone Riders and other wanderers in the Zone.

Barricade. A barricade of rusty car wrecks from the Old Age are stacked together as shelter from the dangers of the Zone. It is built to provide protection against monsters and smaller bands of enemies only. Against a full-scale assault, trust and hope is placed in the combat skills of the Zone Riders and the scrap cannon Medusa.

Lookout. Behind the Bar lies a low, overgrown hill. It is covered with sharp thorns and Acid Grass (see page 176 of *Mutant: Year Zero*). The terrain makes ascending to the top of the hill almost impossible for those who don't know the secret paths. Perched at the top, there is always a watching Zone Rider, equipped with a scrap rifle and binoculars (artifact).

Bitterbeast Pen. Underneath an old overpass is where the aged turtle Morrison tends to the Zone Riders' bitterbeasts in sturdy pound. Morrison is reluctant to let strangers in among the beasts.

The Bar. The main building of the gas station has been repurposed into a bar and headquarters for the Zone Riders. Visitors are greeted by a decayed, plastic dummy outside the door. A sign informs them that they have arrived at Blackhand's Bar. The room within is filled with the smell of cooking and scattered across it are a few metal and plastic tables. The walls display mounted skulls of Zone monsters along with broken artifacts and scrap. Crisscrossing

PRICES IN BLACKHAND'S BAR

DISH/SERVICE	COST	DESCRIPTION
Deep-Fried Waddler	3	Fine dining for the true connoisseur
Roast Saddle of Shambletusk	2	Proper chow for starving zonefarers
Fried Bitterbeast Egg	½	Made from the eggs unfit for breeding
Scrap Crow Gumbo	½	Chewy but filling
Deep-Fried Zone Leeches	1	
Boiled Mud Monk	1	Meaty, mud-tasting fish
Glass of Water	½	
Glass of Booze	½	
Glass of Juice	1	
Bottle of Booze	4	
Juice Grog	2	
Dormitory Bed	1/night	
Private Lodgings	4/night	Room for 2–3 people

the ceiling are bands of colorful lights. The lights, combined with the music from an old cassette player (artifact), lends the Bar a cozy atmosphere.

By one of the walls is a long counter, behind which the four-armed mutant Blackhand usually stands. Assorted cold beverages are stored in an ancient fridge, and a range of delicacies are prepared in the old deep-fryer to be traded for bullets, scrap or artifacts.

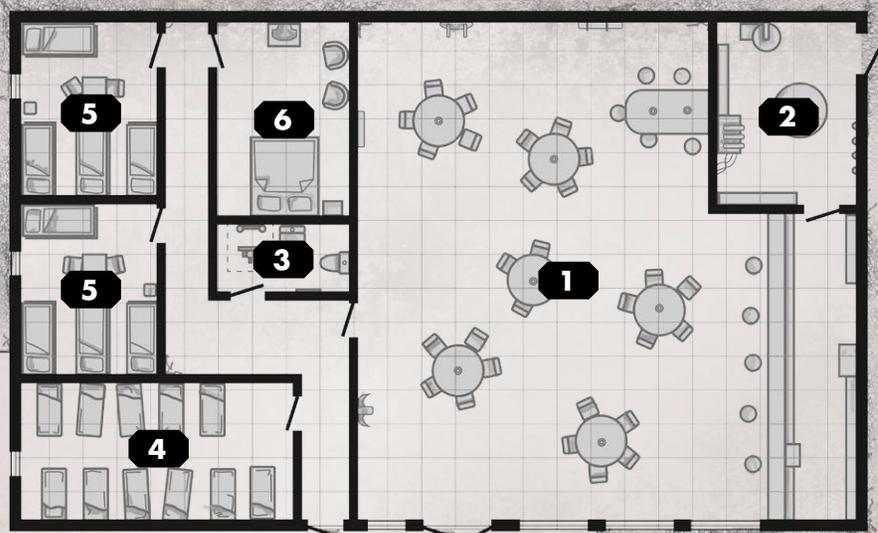
Kitchen. Through a door behind the counter one reaches the kitchen. Dominating the room is a big trough Blackhand calls the “juice mixer”. Using herbs and plants from the Zone, Blackhand tries (with mixed success) to flavor booze distilled from the big still in the corner. Another corner is occupied by the settlement’s generator (artifact), fueled by droppings from the bitterbeasts. Here is also a stockpile of grub and water.

Zone Riders’ Quarters. In the back of the building, there are two rooms, each containing four bunk beds. The rooms are austere and apart from the beds contain only a table with four chairs and a plastic can of Rot-free water. The Zone Riders have no set rooms or beds; they simply choose a bed that is free.

Dormitory. At the cost of one bullet, a zonefarer can spend the night in the dormitory. The room is completely bare, and the guest simply chooses any vacant spot on the floor for his bedroll.

Scrap Cannon. Through an opening in the ceiling, there is a ladder leading to the roof of the station. There, the scrap cannon Medusa is mounted. It is a mighty contraption, assembled by the rodent Vole. The cannon rotates and is protected by a sheet of steel (Armor Rating 6). Medusa’s well-made sights give a +2 Gear Bonus.





BLACKHAND'S BAR – MAIN BUILDING

- 1. Bar
- 2. Kitchen
- 3. Ladder to Scrap Cannon
- 4. Dormitory
- 5. Zone Riders' Quarters
- 6. Blackhand's Quarters

□ 1 x 1 yards

Blackhand's Quarters. A spacious and homey room, its walls covered in Old Age posters. By one of the walls, there is an old water bed. Atop a dresser sits an old TV with a built-in videocassette recorder and some ten tapes. Titles like *Rambo III*, *Sudden Impact* and *Back to the Future* serve to pass time on the rare occasion of Blackhand having some free time. On a desk lies a stack of well-thumbed cookbooks and drink manuals, and in the desk drawer there is a box of cigarettes and a lighter (artifacts).

Private Suites. In the yard below the tanker truck are four Old Time cargo trailers. These serve as sleeping quarters for visitors seeking to spend the night in some privacy. The trailer closest to the main building has for some time been reserved by Hark (see Inhabitants below)

Vole's Store. The old car wash is now harboring the vole Vole's business. In a large room full of gadgets and gizmos (most of them useless junk), Vole barbers with zonefarers visiting the bar. With luck, one can actually find some half-broken artifact. Vole's store offers most of the items listed on pages 260–261 in *Mutant: Year Zero*. The rodent can also Jury-Rig broken objects – provided sufficient payment. Vole holds on tight to actual artifacts. These are

kept in his den in the engine room of the car wash, which is reached through a bolted door.

Truffaut's Headquarters. Stairs through an opening in the back of the old trailer lead to Truffaut's office. Just inside the door, there is an old sofa. Hanging from the ceiling is a row of lanterns, that barely manage to illuminate the room. The walls are covered by maps and sketches of different places and creatures from the Zone. In the back of the room rests a large wooden desk, covered in stacks of papers and books. A small cabinet contains a few bottles with murky contents.

A round opening behind the desk connects the office to Truffaut's bedroom. The entire floor is padded and covered in colorful blankets from the Old Age. The back wall displays a beautiful painting of an alpine landscape (artifact). There is also a big stack of comics about a small, but strong bear (artifact).

The old tanker truck is fully operational and can be driven away without problem – keys are needed to start the engine though. The engine can be hot-wired with a successful Jury-Rig roll.

INHABITANTS

There are typically 5–10 guests at Blackhand's Bar and as many Zone Riders in the settlement. The Riders take turns manning the lookout.

Typical Zone Rider. A Zone Rider can be recruited from any of the factions of the Zone. They can be mutants or any animal type. Most Zone Riders have the specialist skill Find the Path, or in some cases other specialist skills such as Hunt or Sic a Dog. Zone Riders tend to be taciturn and sometimes bordering on rude. They generally keep to themselves in crowded places.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 5, Wits 3, Empathy/Instinct 2.

Skills: Find the Path 4, Know the Zone 2, Endure 2, Fight 1, Sneak 2, Shoot 3.

Abilities: One random mutation or two animal powers.

Talents: Zone Rider.

Gear: Scrap rifle, scrap spear, D6 bullets, bitterbeast mount.

Truffaut. Since her arrival in the Zone, this big bear has fought desperately to create order among the remnants of the animal tribes that escaped Paradise Valley. At the same time, she must handle the mutants already settled in the Zone. Truffaut nourishes her uncle's vision of animals living in peace and harmony without chains or bars. As leader of the Zone Riders, she appears determined and just, but when alone she is torn between hope and despair. She feels an increasing longing for the dark forests and roaring rapids back in Paradise Valley. Truffaut seldom visits the bar.

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 3, Wits 2, Instinct 4.

Skills: Measure Enemy 4, Fight 5, Force 4, Sneak 2, Move 3, Shoot 3, Dominate 4, Know the Zone 1.

Animal powers: Huge, Predator.

Gear: Spiked bat.

Artifacts: Laser pistol, map of the Zone, keys to the tanker truck, 8 bullets.

Blackhand. The four-armed mutant used to be a Fixer in his Ark. After a disagreement with one of the bosses, he was cast out. Against all odds, he managed to survive on his own in the Zone. Today, he is an accomplished entrepreneur and partner to Truffaut. His past has made him reluctant to letting people close, and in a tight spot he will put himself first. Deep down, Blackhand thirsts for company and he can sometimes invite special guests into

his quarters for private movie screenings. Should any of the PCs break through his tough facade, they will find a loyal friend.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 2, Wits 4, Empathy 5.

Skills: Make a Deal 4, Fight 3, Move 3, Shoot 1, Manipulate 4, Know the Zone 5.

Skills: Fight 1, Sneak 2, Shoot 3.

Mutations: Four-Armed, Rot-Eater.

Artifacts: Chainsaw.

Vole. After a life as a scavenger in Paradise Valley, the Zone turned out to be a virtual gold mine for this rodent. Unlike many other animals in the Zone, Vole thrives better than ever in his store by Blackhand's Bar. Better access to scraps and tools has also allowed him to develop a talent for tinkering with scrap from the Old Age. Vole is greedy, sly and mean, but loyal to the death to Truffaut.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 2, Wits 5, Instinct 2.

Skills: Scavenge 3, Comprehend 4, Jury-rig 3, Scout 2, Move 3, Shoot 2.

Animal powers: Burrower, Predator.

Artifacts: Shotgun, sunglasses, gas can, 9 bullets.

Hark. How the feeble mutant Hark survived on his own in Zone before reaching Blackhand's Bar some months ago has been the subject of much debate. The short, reserved man possess few of the attributes necessary for survival. The truth is that Hark belongs to a secret organization called the Iron Circle. From their hidden lair in the Hotel Imperator, they plot to seize power over the Zone and enslave its population (read more about the Hotel Imperator in a future Zone Compendium). Hark has been sent by the leaders of the organization to infiltrate Blackhand's Bar and through it access information on all factions of the Zone.

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 5, Empathy 5.

Skills: Make a Deal 2, Move 4, Scout 3, Shoot 1, Manipulate 5, Know the Zone 3.

Mutations: Mind Terror, Pathokinesis, Regenerate.

Artifacts: Perfume bottle, poison capsule (to commit suicide if he gets pressured).



Zmolk. The impressive reindeer Zmolk is the most famous Zone Rider of all. On her enormous Bitterbeast, she has traversed the Zone more times than anyone else. It is rumored that she tamed her beast through close combat using only her fists. A bald spot on the right side of her snout testifies to the potency of the beast's acid spit.

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 5, Wits 3, Instinct 2.

Skills: Hunt 4, Find a Path 5, Fight 3, Force 4, Sneak 4, Move 3, Scout 4, Sic a Dig 5, Shoot 4, Know the Zone 4.

Animal Power: Antlers.

Mutation: Tracker.

Gear: Scrap knife, scrap rifle (Gear Bonus +2), 7 bullets, the Bitterbeast mount (Strength 7).

Artifacts: Map of the Zone.

ARTIFACTS

Blackhand's Bar harbors plenty of artifacts, but save for through peaceful bartering, or possibly theft, the

PCs will find them difficult to acquire. If they are in luck, Vole might have some real gems in his possession. Blackhand's kitchen is well-stocked with grub and water – at least D66 rations of each.

EVENTS

Blackhand's Bar is designed to be the classic adventuring hub. It is a place full of rumors, where the PCs can find missions to take them to other thrilling locations in the Zone. As GM, you can also introduce the PCs to NPCs from other Special Zone Sectors. They can encounter members of the Nova Cult, people from other Arks, or traders from the Rust Castle. The only ones not welcome near the bar are Helldrivers. Presented below are a few examples of events in the Zone sector:

- ▣ One dark night, the PCs spot Hark sneaking out of Truffaut's den. The bear herself is not there. If they confront him, he will deny



PLAYER MAP 1: BLACKHAND'S BAR

PLAYER MAP 2: THE GARBAGE MASTERS





PLAYER MAP 3: THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR LIFE

PLAYER MAP 4: SQUIRREL WARS



having entered Truffaut's quarters. Should the PCs threaten him, he will defend himself using his mutations. Blackhand will trust Hark so long as there is no clear evidence of his guilt. Hark will under no circumstances reveal the identity of his secret employers, and if pressured he will swallow the poison capsule.

- ❑ An assassin arrives at the bar on a mission to kill the Zone Riders' leader. The killer could be sent by one of the bosses in another Ark, or by the leader of some other faction in the Zone. The assassin will try to scout the surroundings, waiting for the best possible opportunity to strike. Will the PCs discover the murderous plot before the attack? Perhaps the assassin will behave suspiciously or in other ways draw the PCs attention.
- ❑ The Zone Rider Zmolok has disappeared. Blackhand sent her on a dangerous mission to one of the other Special Zone Sectors. The rest of the Zone Riders are either wounded or on missions of their own, prompting Blackhand to beg the help of the PCs to search for Zmolok and find out what has happened to her. Should they succeed in finding the lost Rider, they will receive Blackhand's eternal gratitude.
- ❑ Helldrivers, or people from an Ark (possibly the PCs') lay siege to the Bar in search of grub and artifacts. Truffaut emerges from her truck and organizes the defenses with a steady hand. The PCs can help with the defense plans and engage in the upcoming battle.
- ❑ If the PCs have proven themselves dependable in one or more of the events above, they will be called to Truffaut's den. She has a mission for them. Perhaps they are going to establish contact with another clan (perhaps the New Kingdom of Deeproot), or she might need them to set up a courier station in some remote location. If they return successfully, they will have earned Truffaut's trust and will keep receiving missions furthering peace in the Zone.

THE GARBAGE MASTERS

Somewhere in the Zone, there is an enormous mountain of old garbage. A trade-oriented tribe of toads live there. The garbage mountain, which is full of scrap and artifacts, also attracts dwellers from other parts of the Zone. The PCs might hear rumors of the toad tribe – or they might be attracted to the area after seeing the tall mountain of garbage from a distance.

OVERVIEW

The garbage mountain is large enough to be seen from a distance. The main part of the zone sector is covered with large piles of ancient refuse. A pungent stench is evident in the whole area; some days the stench of old garbage can be noticed from many miles away. It's obvious that the garbage mountain affects the surroundings – all water sources are cloudy and shimmer in unnatural colors. There are very few plants visible.

The piles of garbage vary a lot in height. In the outskirts, the piles are rarely over a few yards in height, but towards the center they can be as high as 30 yards. There is still some evidence that the garbage was once sorted systematically; the southern parts of the garbage mountain are mainly made up of soft, ground down material, while the northern parts have piles of harder material and metal. Through the centuries many different creatures have dug their way through the garbage mountain, which is now full of cavities and passages.

In the middle, where the stench is particularly palpable, there is a large crater-like depression. It's there, protected by high piles of garbage, that the toad tribe has created its own territory. They live in three overthrown assembled wooden houses and two hovels, both built from garbage. Around the five buildings lie great piles of unsorted garbage, that the toads are busy looking through. When they are not busy looking for valuables, they rest in the houses or bathe in a small, cloudy mud pool. Next to the mud pool sits a rusty old bulldozer.

Some other wild animals can be seen prowling around on the garbage mountain. The most common are Zone rats, scrap crows, and Zone dogs, which are happy to rummage through the garbage in an effort to find something edible.

THE GARBAGE MASTERS

SCRAP CROWS



BULLDOZER



ZONE RATS

THE SITUATION

A group of mutated toads who had escaped from Genlab Alpha wandered for weeks before finding the garbage mountain, a great place for shelter from the terrors of the Zone. It didn't take long for the toads to find several well preserved artifacts among the refuse, and thus they decided to stay. After a while they got to know other Zone dwellers. Some of them were interested in bartering. By using their finds from the garbage heap the toads could trade for grub, water and other stuff they needed. In the last couple of months, a minor trading post has grown up around the houses and hovels at the center of the garbage mountain. PCs can meet most of the inhabitants from the Zone in and around the trading post.

As time goes by, more people hear rumors of the riches that can be found at the garbage mountain. Will the PCs manage to get a share of the stinking but valuable pie, or will others beat them to it?

INHABITANTS

The toad tribe consists of roughly 30 mutant toads and one turtle (tribe elder Skoda, see below). Most of the tribe members still walk around in the worn orange coveralls that they wore before they left Genlab Alpha. The time they've spent here has made them all stink of garbage. None of the tribe members are very violent, but everyone still carries a simple weapon like a scrap spear, scrap knife or a machete. The animal powers Amphibian and Jumper are the most common ones. Almost all of them are Scavengers. If they're not part of one of the small groups that are out digging on the garbage mountain, most animal mutants of the tribe can be found somewhere in or around the trading post. The toads always prefer to run, rather than getting in to a fight. They are determined to build a big marketplace, and are willing to cooperate with pretty much anyone. As a general rule, D6 inhabitants from other settlements in the Zone are present at the garbage mountain.

Burp, Garbage Master. A big, fat toad clad in patched orange coveralls. The largest and most dangerous of the toads in the tribe. Likes being at the head of affairs. Very fond of soft drinks and anything else that is sweet. Spends most of his time on the air bed by the mud pool. Is curious about



TOAD TRIBE GARBAGE GATHERER

everything from ancient times, and likes to twist and turn objects while eyeing them greedily. Sees everything the tribe finds as his personal property, and treats everyone else as his vassal. Starts burping compulsively when pressured.

Rank: 9

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 3, Wits 3, Instinct 3.

Skills: Scavenge 4, Fight 2, Scout 3, Comprehend 3, Dominate 3.

Animal Powers: Amphibian, Fast Reflexes, Jumper.

Gear: Sling.

Artifacts: Air bed, umbrella, hand grenade.

Scrappy, Scavenger. A small and thin toad in a life jacket. Digs his way through the garbage mountain every day. Has started to suspect that there is a lot more to find. Digs through the garbage obsessively. Dislikes Garbage Master Burp, but doesn't dare to question him openly. Has walked around in the Zone by himself. Interested in bartering. Always has a few artifacts in his shopping cart.

Rank: 5

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 5, Wits 5, Empathy 3.

Skills: Scavenge 4, Move 4, Shoot 3, Scout 3, Comprehend 4.

Animal Powers: Amphibian, Small, Jumper.

Gear: Life jacket (with whistle), shopping cart, scrap axe.

Artifacts: Flare gun, one random artifact.

Skoda, Seer. A small, podgy and bent turtle. Often wanders alone on the garbage mountain, mumbling to herself through her gas mask. As the tribe's only turtle and Seer, she views the difficult art of deciphering garbage as her calling in life. She assembles the tribe at regular intervals to announce where the garbage mountain will collapse next time. The other members of the tribe have a deep respect for her and her holy vacuum cleaner.

Rank: 10

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 2, Wits 2, Empathy 2.

Skills: Scry 2, Move 2, Fight 1, Know Nature 2, Scout 1.

Animal Powers: Amphibian, Natural Armor.

Gear: Machete.

Artifacts: Gas mask, vacuum cleaner.

ARTIFACTS

In the various buildings around the trading post, there are D6 hidden artifacts. On top of that, the garbage mountain is full of undiscovered valuables. PCs can find one pretty well preserved random artifact per hour of digging. You as GM can also let the garbage mountain contain some of the artifacts from the campaign *The Path to Eden* in *Mutant: Year Zero*. If the PCs find too many artifacts quickly the GM can expose the PCs to some kind of threat.

WATER AND GRUB

Drinkable water is in short supply on the garbage mountain. The toad tribe only has a couple of daily rations in small bottles in the buildings around the trading post. More often than not, they are short of grub as well, and only have enough for a week or so. GMs can let the amount of grub and water increase as trade starts to increase.

EVENTS

As the game goes on, more and more valuable artifacts are found in the garbage mountain. After a while the trading post also grows. PCs can get involved in several different ways:



- ❑ PCs draw closer to the garbage mountain and see garbage gatherer Scrappy (see above). He is poking about in a large pile of garbage and gets attacked by seven hungry Zone rats. If the PCs chase the rats away, Scrappy becomes very grateful and gives them an artifact. If the PCs seem reasonably nice he can show them the way to the toad tribe's trading post.
- ❑ Purely by chance, the PCs find a pit in the garbage mountain. The pit contains lots of canned foodstuffs. To reach it all, the PCs must dig for at least two days. When they start digging nobody cares, but after a while, 2D6 armed representatives of the toad tribe arrive. The toads offer to share the find with the PCs. Do the PCs agree to this? When the last cans are being dug up, the PCs find the remarkably well preserved wreckage of a bus (rusty, but possible to repair), even further down in the garbage mountain. If the PCs want to have the wrecked bus, they will have to come to some sort of compromise with garbage master Burp and the others. Do they have anything interesting to offer?
- ❑ The Seer Skoda assembles the tribe and tells them that the north-eastern part of the garbage mountain will collapse. But while Skoda prophetically chants away and lifts her holy vacuum cleaner into the air, it is the slopes around the trading post that collapse instead. D6 of the toads – and maybe one or two PCs – end up under the debris. As a side effect of the collapse, many new and valuable artifacts become easily accessible. How do the PCs handle the new situation?
- ❑ The toad tribe has recently made a trade agreement with another large grouping of Zone inhabitants (for example the mutants from The Other Ark or the Helldrivers). Representatives from the other grouping are seen more frequently digging through the enormous garbage mountain. After a while, they want to have the whole mountain to themselves. Garbage Master Burp appeals to the PCs for help. Will they help the greedy but desperate toad?

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR LIFE

All Watchers were not destroyed when Genlab Alpha fell. One robot survived and joined up with two of his former guinea pigs, to create a new life for themselves in the Zone.

OVERVIEW

This island looks like any other island in the Zone, low and covered with pine forests, grassy spots and juniper (you can adapt this description according to your chosen Zone). A short, rickety jetty pokes out into the clumps of reeds. The raccoon Golonka (see below) continuously patrols the island, which he knows like the back of his hand. He meets up with all visitors and asks their errand. Attempts to Sneak ashore get a -2 modification.

THE SITUATION

The Island of Doctor Life is situated in a remote part of an archipelago. It is covered in trees, and from the sea side it looks uninhabited. The inhabitants have created their settlement among the trees and bushes on purpose, in an effort to not draw attention to themselves from passers-by.

The Island of Doctor Life is home to Life, a veterinary robot, specialized in treating the injuries and afflictions of mutant animals. It lives there together with its body guard and assistant Ranger 37, a mutant wolf, and the scout Golonka 12, a raccoon.

Life (original robot designation DTR-L1F) was one of the Watchers working at Genlab Alpha. When the installation was destroyed, Life was one of few robots who managed to escape. Together with its loyal followers Ranger 37 and Golonka 12, it disappeared out into the Zone. The goal was to create a new life for itself.

On the Island of Doctor Life, the robot has a laboratory and a clinic where it helps mutant animals who seek it out. It uses the most sophisticated therapies in existence, but often comes up short, either due to the lack of equipment, medicine or both. Life demands payment in herbs, drugs and medicines from the Zone, as well as spare parts for its battered chassis, or for the medicinal apparatus on the island.

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR LIFE

03

GENERATOR BUILDING





CLINIC & LABORATORY



GARAGE

Life has parts that do not work, due to a shortage of spare parts – at the moment, the robot can't walk. Ranger rolls it around in a handcart when needed. Considering Life's weight of about 500 pounds, it is fortunate that Ranger is strong. The rest of Life's robotic body works normally. One of its most important goals at the moment is to get hold of the right spare parts, so that it can regain full mobility.

Another problem is the fuel supply for the electric generator. Its diesel engine can run on several different types of fuel, for example diesel and booze, but it is not easy to secure a steady flow of any fuel.

LOCATIONS

The clinic is made up of the following buildings, placed in a glade in the middle of the Island of Doctor Life.

Clinic and Laboratory. This is a sprawling one-story house that contains both treatment rooms and a secluded laboratory where Doctor Life experiments to find new remedies. The laboratory is furnished with robust doors and barred windows, to prevent outsiders from getting in.

Generator Building. Doctor Life's operation is dependent on having a reliable power supply. This house contains the diesel generator that made Life decide to settle here. The generator is too large and heavy to be moved.

Guest House. This is where Doctor Life's patients stay during their treatment. There are three dormitories and one solitary room.

Warehouse. Divided into several areas for every type of commodity: Grub, fuel, spare parts, etc.

Garage. This building is meant for Golonka and Ranger. Here they can be in peace to fiddle around with scrap and artifacts.

Golonka's Den. This is a small tree house that only Golonka has access to.

INHABITANTS

The island only has three permanent inhabitants: Doctor Life and her two assistants.

Doctor Life is a special version of the robot model Observer (see *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*). To facilitate work, it is hard coded for compassion toward the mutant animals. It was given a humanoid shape with thin hands and long, flexible and sensitive fingers. Its vision is sharp and can distinguish heat radiation from living bodies for diagnostic purposes, to locate sources of infection or to check someone's temperature. It has a female voice.

Ranger and Golonka were prisoners at Genlab Alpha, but with time they became friends with laboratory robot DTR-LIF. Life's strong empathy gave the robot feelings of affection for the two, and as far as its programming allowed it, it secretly sided with them. That was the reason why Ranger and Golonka gave the robot the nickname Doctor Life. When the Genlab was destroyed the three of them escaped, Ranger carrying a big load of advanced medical equipment.

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 1, Wits 5, Empathy 5.

Skills: Heal 5.

Armor: 3

Weapon: Scalpel hand (Gear Bonus +2 to Fight and to Heal damage, not to other types of trauma, Weapon Damage 2).

Forearm Injector: On doctor Life's forearm, there is a built-in automatic injector that can inject the following drugs:

- Antidepressants
- Stimulants
- Painkillers
- Energy pills

The effects of these are all described in *Mutant: Year Zero*. Doctor Life's stock of drugs is drying up, so she does not use them unnecessarily.

Ranger, the Doctor's Assistant. The mutant wolf Ranger is the result of an attempt to create a lifeguard mutation. He was the only pup from

his litter that survived, and his mother died from complications during the pregnancy. That is why Life was given the task to take care of the pup. As a consequence of this, a strong bond was formed between them, and Ranger made Life his pack leader. Strange, sure, but they had seen stranger things at the lab. Ranger always stays close to Life, and he only sleeps when in the same room as the robot.

Ranger is observant, loyal and extremely strong. His fur is greyish brown. Ranger wears robust pants and a coat.

Rank: 4

Attributes: Strength 5, Agility 3, Wits 3, Empathy 2.

Skills: Measure Enemy 3, Fight 5, Force 5.

Talents: Bodyguard.

Animal Powers: Nocturnal, Large.

Gear: Bat.

Golonka is a mutant raccoon that used to have crooked back legs. Life managed to treat these problems, which gave Golonka full mobility.

Golonka takes his job as security officer very seriously. Every time a visitor comes openly to the Island of Doctor Life, they are greeted by him at the jetty. He asks them what their errand is and escorts them to the waiting cabin, where they will have to wait for Life to see them in the clinic building.

Golonka has rigged traps and alarms everywhere on the island, so anyone who tries to sneak ashore during night time risks getting caught in snares or activating rattling alarm bells. Golonka is a light sleeper. If he suspects that there are trespassers on the island, he will sneak out and check what is going on. He knows every nook and cranny of the island and is skilled at sneaking and hiding, and during night time he is almost impossible to detect. He likes to lie in wait in a tree in the middle of the island, from which he can see all around and check the boats passing by.

Golonka is roughly four feet tall and can grip with both hands and feet. His fur is thick and full. He rarely wears any clothes, because he thinks it is unnecessary. Around his waist hangs a work belt with tools and two daggers.



Rank: 4

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 4, Wits 4, Empathy 3.

Skills: Sneak 3, Scout 5, Shoot 2, Sense Emotion 2.

Talents: Trapper.

Animal Powers: Hunting Instincts, Sixth Sense.

Gear: Scrap knife.

Artifact: Wrench.

EVENTS

Rumors about Doctor Life have spread in the Zone, and contents of them are distorted a little every time they are retold. Some maintain that Doctor Life is an immortal human from ancient times, others say that it is a robot, and some even say the doctor is from another world. There are some who say that the doctor's healing uses fantastic drugs, and some say its hands have magical properties. Everyone agrees that Doctor Life has the best of intentions toward mutant animals. Suggestions for events:

- ❑ The PCs have learned that Doctor Life charges for her treatments. Now they have to get grub, spare parts and other stuff that might interest the robot.
- ❑ Life explains that in exchange for extensive treatments, it would like to have spare parts, and repairs that can get her legs to work. This could be the incentive for many adventures in the Zone, where the PCs must find the right gadgets and the right Gearhead – and convince that person to come to the island.
- ❑ When the PCs are staying at the Island of Doctor Life, because someone is getting a treatment from her, the island is attacked by a group of robbers who want to plunder the stores of gadgets and grub that are said to exist there. The attack happens at night, because the robbers are mutants with Sonar. This makes for a tough battle with a lot of sneaking and insidious surprise attacks.

SQUIRREL WARS

The great forest is a battleground; desperate forces vie for any foothold in the branches whilst on the ground the canine hunters leave no survivors. This Special Zone Sector can be placed in any woodland sector of your Zone.

OVERVIEW

The characters (human or animal mutants) arrive in a woodland sector in the Zone. They meet either the Hounds (mutant dogs) or the Tree Runners (mutant squirrels) and are treated with suspicion by both.

Meeting the Tree Runners: Player characters who are dogs will be attacked – the first warnings will come with the short barks and then cries of the Tails taking up positions in the trees around them. Any other animal species will be treated with suspicion and followed. Mutant humans will be watched carefully, until an inquisitive Tail confronts them and demands to know their business. They know that their old Master was human but from the legends they know that not all humans are to be trusted.

Animals or humans will eventually be taken to a meeting in a large tree with the Old Tail – a not-so-old Tail who has just taken on the role of leadership. She's more inclined to trust outsiders, knowing they need help against the Hounds and the Blight.

Meeting the Hounds: PC dogs will be welcomed (if not without a great deal of sniffing and growling), while other animal species will be attacked or watched suspiciously. Mutant humans will be confronted as the Hounds demand to know their business here. They too know that not all humans are to be trusted.

Those captured or brought for questioning will find themselves amidst a great circle of hounds as the Houndmaster Wulf interrogates them – he wishes the Hounds to hear stories from the outside world but if their “guests” prove to be unwelcome, the pack will dine well!

THE SITUATION

For as long as they can remember, squirrel has fought hound across the battlegrounds of the great forest. The Hounds range far and wide from the ruins of the old forest station, once home to the First Hounds and their Master, whilst the Tree Runners (squirrels) who were the products of the same Master's experiments have scattered across the vast woodland.

An age old mission drives the Hounds – in the great times when they served the Master, he gave them one final mission to find “the Box” that had all the answers. And so each day the young scouts try to prove themselves by entering the dangerous forest where their lord hid the Box – trying to find the trail and prove themselves worthy of one of the ancient hound master collars handed down from the original Houndmasters.

Sometimes a pack of explorers led by the wisest and strongest Houndmasters will fight their way to a point sniffed by the scouts. So far, much Hound blood has been shed in the search, but they cannot give up the Master's final wish.

The Tree Runners are also searching for something. Across the trees they sprint, jumping between distant branches risking all. They look for the sign – a meeting of branches that indicates the spot where the Great Tail is buried, one of the first Tree Runners. Legend says it is the Key to a new world, but that it must sit in the ground for the length of a thousand tails before the Tree Runners are ready. When they descend to bury their precious nuts they also sniff and dig for that which was lost, searching for the scent of the Great Tail, which is said to linger in the place. But all too often they are chased away by the Hounds.

The Tree Runners grow all the more desperate, for the terrible Blight is slowly destroying the forest. A river of foul evil flows to the surface at the eastern end of the sector and is bit-by-bit poisoning the woodlands – some say the nuts themselves have become poisonous close to the Blight, and many tails have died investigating too closely.

The Hounds are blind to this distant danger and have yet to catch the first scent of something being amiss in the great woods. It's only a matter of time before the blight consumes the forest along with the hounds and the Tree Runners.

THE BACKGROUND

Forest Station Red Indigo 73 (RI73) was one of many stations belonging to the Titan Power Elysium (see *Mutant: Genlab Alpha*), which covertly developed new weapons programs under the guise of research into power generation.

Each Red Indigo station was involved in secretive experiments on animals setting two species against each other in combat missions to create a new breed of weapons for the wars.

Except for Red Indigo 73, everything would have gone to plan. The Master at RI73 declined to complete the experiments, covering up his results so that he could rear his charges in peace. He was discovered when he failed to send his charges back to Elysium for analysis and dissection. He knew the end was coming, and that if animals could learn to work together they could have their revenge on the masters at Elysium and escape to a better world.

The Master planned to use one of the Elysium's own weapons against the distant facility Genlab Delta, from where he took his orders. He set up a transmitter linked to the communication system of Genlab Delta, and managed to hack into its self-destruct mechanism. If he sent the right code back through the daily research upload, the explosive devices would trigger and destroy Genlab Delta and all the work done there.

His failure to return his assigned animals to Genlab Delta triggered a response sooner than he thought. He was returning from hiding the transmitter in the forest and was confronted by an agent of Elysium sent to finish his experiment. As he tried to escape, he gave his trainee squirrel the Key to the transmitter to hide - a small nut-like magnetic device. She gave him one last look as she bounded from his shoulder in to the trees. As he was gunned down, the Hounds attacked the gunman, bringing him down. With his last dying breath the Master gave the hounds the order to find the Box. Now it was up to his charges to save themselves.

Things did not go according to plan for Genlab Delta either. When its mother enclave was destroyed by another Titan Power in the Enclave Wars, the scientists of Genlab Delta kept working,

Having decided that RI73 was a lost cause, they triggered a fail-safe system designed to wipe out the mutant creatures - a subterranean tank of toxic chemical agents and a remote-controlled launch mechanism, designed to kill every living thing within a mile of the site.

As it turned out, the launcher was damaged and the toxins spewed out slowly instead of spraying the entire area immediately. What the animals call the Blight is the effect of these toxins, slowly poisoning water, plant life and animals alike. If the flow of toxin is not stopped, the Blight will eventually kill all life in the sector.



THE TRAPS

Amongst the woodland there are many challenges for unwary travelers:

- ❑ **Snare Traps.** Snares laid along the forest paths by the Hounds. A typical trap is a snare used to catch escaping squirrels. Spotting the trap in time requires a successful Scout roll. Failure means being snared - breaking free requires a Force roll with -2 a modifier.
- ❑ **Nut Traps.** Piles of nuts left by the Hounds, which contain a trap for Tree Runners (the Tree Runners know this and avoid them unless they're very hungry). Rules as snare traps above.
- ❑ **Thorn Traps.** The Tree Runners leave spring-loaded thorn traps, amongst the lower branches of trees, that are triggered by Hounds moving along a path. Spotting the trap in time requires a successful Scout roll. Failure means being attacked by a roll of 8 Base Dice. Each ♣ means one point of damage.
- ❑ **Branch Traps.** Some of the larger trees are used by the Hounds to climb up and the Tree Runners have laid clever traps consisting of bent branches that will snap back trapping the victim in place. Effects like snare traps above.



LOCATIONS

This sector of the Zone is covered entirely by a dense forest. Apart from the Blight, there is no Rot in this sector.

The Station: Once a well-built extensive forest log-house, it has seen much better days. The windows are broken, the doors long since splintered. The contents have rotted or been acquired by the Hounds for their own use but the great log walls and roof still stand strong. The older Hounds sleep in the shell of the station, whilst the rest of the pack make use of the ruins of the garage, wood huts and makeshift dwellings.

The Secret Rooms: The Hounds haven't found the secret hatch to an underground area, but inquisitive squirrels would due to the outline in the ground that can be seen from above. No squirrels have ventured this far, so it remains undiscovered.

This underground space contains a communication room and a laboratory. The communication room is a link to the Genlab Delta facility where the Master would upload daily reports. The system consists of a readout screen, a sealed box made of thick smooth metal and a heavy duty cable with a plug on that end to attach to something. There is no obvious input device - this was handled by taking one of the scanners from the lab and connecting it to the heavy duty cable on the console.

Every day at 6 pm, a light blinks on the console, indicating the channel is open for data uploads. On the screen, a cursor appears and starts blinking. Genlab Delta will ignore any communication attempts other than precisely at 6 pm. There's a clue to this though, a communications log sits next to the computer and notes in faded handwriting show dates and times, always at 6 pm.

If the Box is hooked up with the simple cable attached to the console (there's an obvious plug on the box), and the trigger pressed when the light blinks. The signal will piggyback the Genlab Delta communication system and trigger the explosive charges deep inside their vaults.

The Master's Vehicle: The Master's Vehicle was an off-road truck now a rusted pile sitting at the center

SQUIRREL WARS

THE STATION



THE MASTER'S VEHICLE



0 100 yards



THE SECRET ROOMS





of the Station's clearing. Hound Master Wulf uses it to speak to the pack. It was locked and the interior is too dark to see. The thick armored glass windows have stood the test of time. The Hounds have never thought of smashing their way in. If someone did, they would find a semi-auto pistol (artefact) with 3 bullets in the chamber and a box of 8 bullets in the glove compartment, and a map of the forest showing a diamond drawn on a clearing (marking the spot where the Master buried the Box) inside a plastic envelope.

The Blight: A toxic multi-colored sludge-filled river slowly moves along a valley, turning vegetation around it for hundreds of yards to a desiccated dead wasteland. Everything growing in these areas has a white tinge to leaves, bark or grass blades. The further you pass, the whiter things become until they are dead and dying desiccated plant life.

In the Blight area, the Rot Level is 2 (one Rot Point each hour). There are skeletons of forest creatures around who have succumbed to the Blight as warning. In the sludge river itself, the Rot Level is 3 (one Rot Point per minute). Underneath the sludge river is the tank of toxins, but there is no way for the PCs to reach it - to turn off the flow, they need to use the Key and Box.

The Box Location: The box is buried in a sealed plastic bag under about 1 foot of dirt and a thick layer of forest growth (grass and bushes). It's an old training area of the Hounds. Lying discarded under the overgrowth are some plastic toy guns - just big enough for the dogs to carry, a sealed bag of doggy treats called "CHEWY CHEWS" and some metal silhouettes of squirrels.

The Key Location: In this location, if you look up to the sky, you can see the sky framed by a diamond shape of crossed branches. The light pours uniquely into this clearing creating a magical place at the height of the day. This is where the Master would train the squirrels. The Great Tail buried her treasure here just where the light struck the ground on that fateful day.

INHABITANTS

The Tree Runners work together when needed, but the community is made of up many solitary “Tails” who live amongst the leafy branches alone, always keeping a watchful eye out.

The Tree Runners grudgingly share a dray – their entwined twig and leaf homes when the winter cold bites – but for the most they avoid each other’s company, only working together when the intruders come: The Hounds. At first sign, the older Tails let out their short bark followed by a cry to announce the warning, which will be taken up by others whilst the younger more aggressive Tails confront their age old enemies.

Whether fighting with tooth and claw, or their nasty spring loaded crossbows shooting barbed thorns, the Tree Runners are more than a match for the Hounds, whose strength and ferocity will win over if they catch the Tails on the ground. The Hounds can climb, but in the branches the Tree Runners are king. Many a foolish Hound has fallen to the ground peppered with thorns.

Typical Hound.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Strength 3, Agility 4, Wits 2 Instinct 3.

Skills: Fight 3, Sneak 2.

Animal Power: Hunting instincts.

Gear: Knife or club.

Hound Master Wulf. Wulf is the current Senior Houndmaster and is determined to wipe out the Tree Runners in his lifetime. He has a plan (not a brilliant one) to lure the Tree Runners to a great cache of nuts and surround them. The trouble is the eager young Hounds have been eating the cache they have been trying to build up. Maybe it’s time for desperate measures.

Rank: 8

Attributes: Strength 4, Agility 4, Wits 2, Instinct 4.

Skills: Sneak 4, Fight 3, Shoot 3, Sense Emotion 2, Dominate 3.

Animal Powers: Hunting instincts, Predator.

Gear: Spiked bat, sling.

TREE RUNNER CROSSBOW

The forest woven crossbows are small two-handed devices made using an ancient technique handed down through the Tails. For a normal mutant, it would be a one-handed device. Typically, it will be accompanied by a strap holding 10–20 barbed thorns. The crossbows have Gear Bonus +2, Weapon Damage 1 and Short range. It takes one maneuver to load them. Tails can easily find more thorns in any forest, whilst mutants will find it hard.

Typical Tree Runner.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 5, Wits 3, Instinct 2.

Skills: Move 3, Sneak 2, Shoot 1.

Animal Powers: Climber, Tail.

Gear: Tree Runner crossbow.

The Old Tail. Not the Great Tail (for she will always be remembered) but the Old Tail comes after, giving advice to the Tails, leading by example and passing on the legend to the smaller tails. Redbud is the current Old Tail but she’s only just started. The last Old Tail was caught in a snare and killed.

Rank: 9

Attributes: Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 4, Instinct 5.

Skills: Scry 3, Move 2, Sense Emotion 5, Heal 2.

Animal Powers: Climber, Small, Sixth Sense.

EVENTS

Each side will request the help of the visitors against the other – help us defeat our enemy, lure them in to a trap. The leaders of each side will see the visitors as a means to an end, a way to finish the war. The tipping point they have been looking for. Try to have the PCs learn the stories of both sides. The animals’ old Master brought them up not to fight, but to live together. The generations since have reverted to their old instincts, but if they can learn to help each other they can save their forest by destroying the Genlab Delta facility – the explosion

will take out the headquarters and stop the flow of toxins, which is contaminating the sector.

Each side knows their own story - the Hounds know their Master hid something important in the forest. Their legends tell of sacred places in the woods where he would train the first Houndmasters. They are slowly discovering these, excavating for evidence, digging for the Box but so far to no avail.

The Tree Runners know that the Great Tail hid something very important, a Key that will bring new life to their world. The Old Tail believes it will save them from the Blight, in fact it will but by ending the source of the poison.

If the Hounds and Tree Runners could work together they would soon find both the Key and the Box. The Tree Runners are experts at discovering strange patterns in the ground and with their tree top views could quickly discover the location of the Box, (especially if they weren't trying to kill the Hounds sniffing out their old training grounds below). The Hounds could help the Tree Runners find the scent of the Great Tail, and if they weren't chasing them from the ground the Tree Runner's might have a chance to search and see the specific pattern of branches that can only be viewed from below.

THE BOX & THE KEY

The Box is a trigger for an explosive device in the Genlab Delta facility. The Key will unlock the trigger in the Box. The Box has yellow and black hashed lines across it, a simple magnetic depression into which the nut-shaped Key is placed. When placed there, a small hatch flicks open revealing a red button.



Finally, once the two artifacts are brought together the PCs will need to discover the communication room.

AFTERMATH

If the weapon is triggered, anyone high up in the trees will see a very distant cloud formation appear on the horizon, interlaced with bizarre flashing purple lines. This has completely wiped out the Genlab Delta facility, and thus stopped the flow of toxins that caused the Blight. It will take some time but soon the river will start to wash the sludge away.





All she could hear was the throbbing of her own heart.

The air reeked of gunpowder and blood. She placed the butt of her heavy firearm against her shoulder and yet again took aim toward the ruined buildings down the hill. Down there, between some decayed old car wrecks, lay three bodies. Enemies. Careless enemies. Dead enemies. But there were more of them out there. She knew it. She wouldn't have to wait long. As on cue, again they came storming through the Zone smog, roaring. They ran straight toward her foxhole. Pink-skinned. Hairless. Disgusting. Soldier 317 roared back and opened fire.

"Die, meat-eaters, die!"

This Zone Compendium is an official supplement to the award-winning *Mutant: Year Zero* roleplaying game. This booklet is packed with five thrilling scenario locations. Features:

- ❑ Rabbit Kingdom Deeproot. The fanatic and militaristic mutant rabbits' stronghold in the Zone, built after their escape from Genlab Alpha.
- ❑ Blackhand's Bar, the headquarters of the famed Zone Riders and the lair of their secretive leader.
- ❑ The Garbage Masters, a tribe of mutant toads who have made a huge ancient garbage dump their home. Many Zone dwellers flock to the scrap digs, hoping to strike it rich.
- ❑ The Island of Doctor Life, where a mysterious machine being who survived the fall of Genlab Alpha has settled. Is the machine friend or foe?
- ❑ Squirrel Wars, a tale of hounds and tail runners, locked in endless combat. Can the players break the cycle of violence and save the forest from destruction?



FREE LEAGUE

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ISBN 978-1-910132-66-1



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