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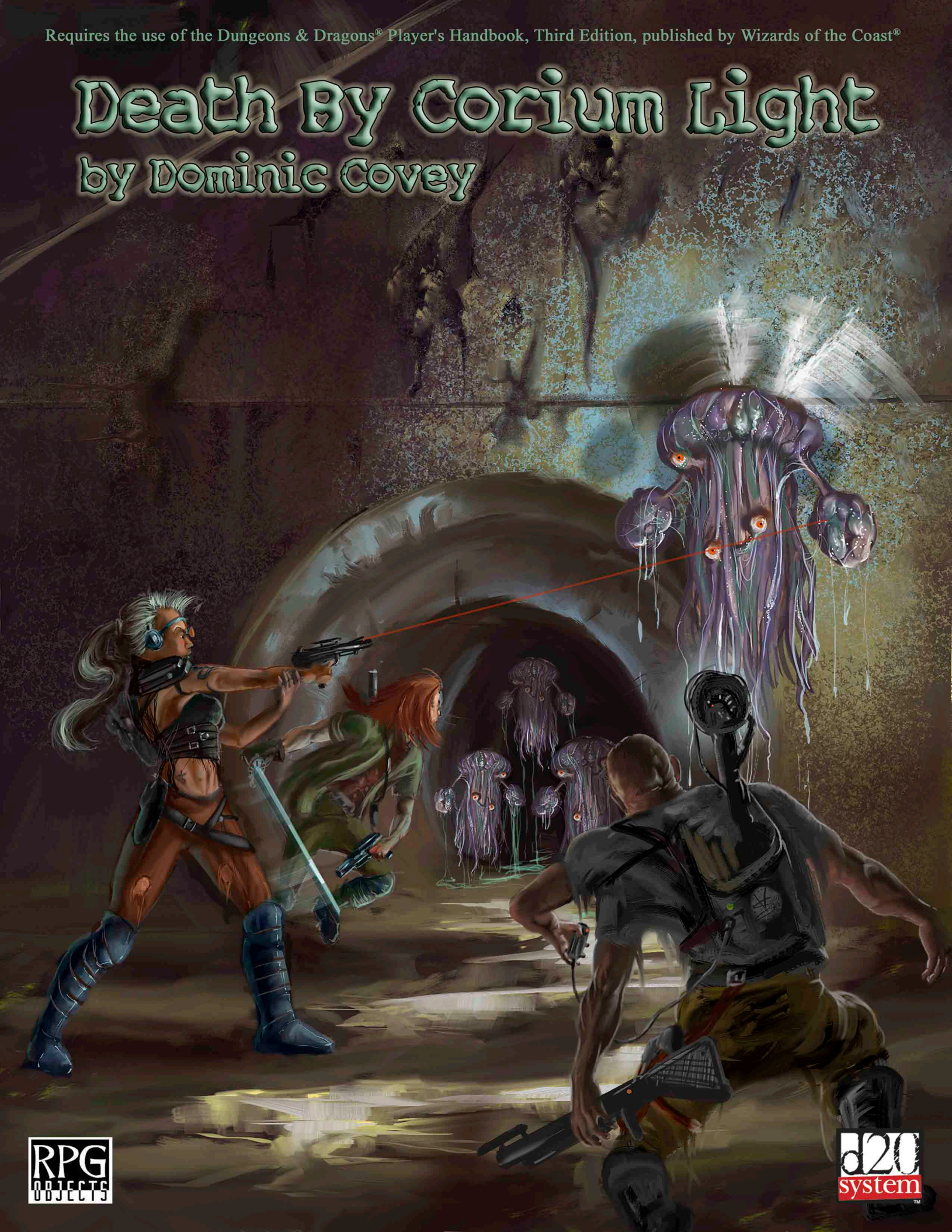
Death By Corium Light

by Dominic Covey



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DEATH BY CORIUM LIGHT

A Darwin's World Adventure v1.0

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

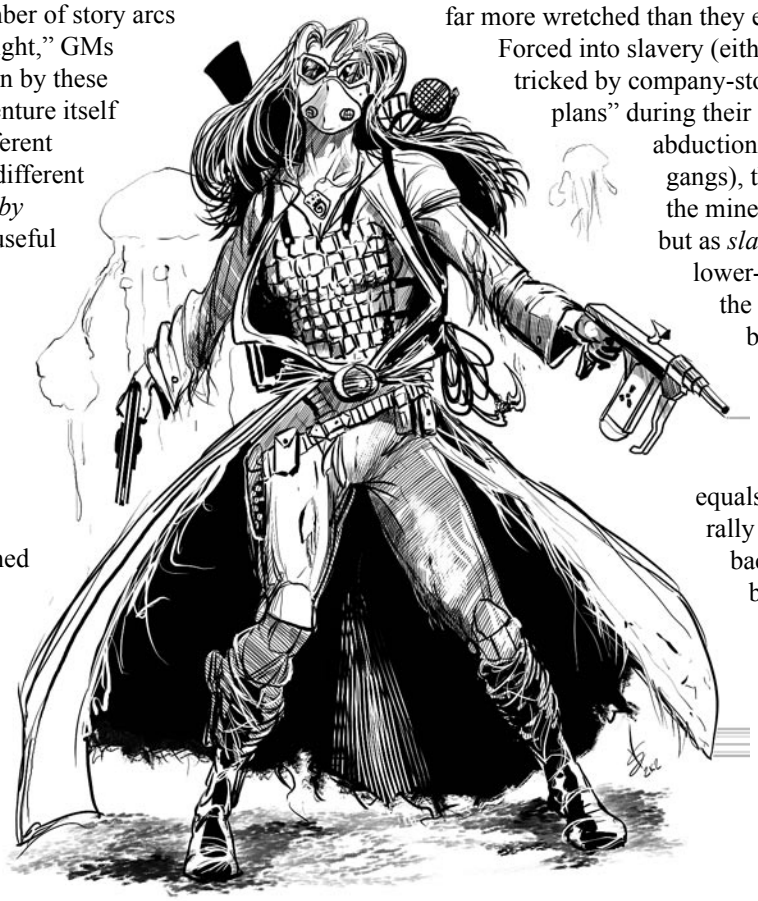
Death by Corium Light is a Darwin's World adventure suitable for characters of levels 8-10. The Corium Mines of Lil' Vegas are one of the most infamous locations of the Twisted Earth. Word is spreading across the wasteland about this near-legendary source of corium, a vast pit in the earth from which the priceless glowing stuff seems to flow in endless quantities – and people are coming, from near and far, to earn their share working the mines. But there is a secret that few people know, and even fewer live to tell about – people aren't leaving town, and what few visitors manage to escape are telling tales of slavery, suffering, and thousands being worked to death. Not that this bothers most people, but then there are those stories of strange creatures living in the tunnels of the mines, stories that are threatening to topple it all…

USING THIS ADVENTURE

Death by Corium Light is a site-based adventure. It is a non-linear scenario in that it has no specific storyline the PCs need to adhere too. The adventure hooks presented within this module are just suggested ways to get player characters involved in Lil' Vegas and it's vast complex of corium mines.

While there are a number of story arcs in "Death By Corium Light," GMs should not feel tied down by these threads alone. The adventure itself is designed to allow different styles of play and even different types of groups. *Death by Corium Light* is just as useful as a city sourcebook, capable of being a permanent fixture in any Darwin's World campaigns.

GMs should have a copy of the Player's Handbook, Dungeons Master's Guide, and Monster Manual published by Wizards of the Coast®. In addition, *Death by Corium Light* requires the Darwin's World, Terrors of the Twisted Earth, and Metal Gods sourcebooks.



CHARACTER HOOKS

There are three main ways for characters to get involved in *Death By Corium Light*. Keep in mind that these are only the most obvious means of employing this adventure in an ongoing campaign, and with a little tinkering and adjustment, the setting of Lil' Vegas (and the infamous mines) could be tailored to fit in any region (and at any point in the campaign) the GM desires.

Captives! If you are running a lower-level game, Lil' Vegas can prove to be an extremely difficult pit from which characters will inevitably try to escape. Low-level wanderers, travelers, and character-types come to Lil' Vegas all the time, investigating rumors of the great corium mines and the widely acclaimed "beauties" that are there for all hands to enjoy. Profiteers, scavengers, and opportunists alike come from near and far to Lil' Vegas with each new rumor of corium veins and abundant women…but few ever escape once the harsh and twisted truth is revealed.

Player characters could be among the poor souls who come to Lil' Vegas and find that the promise of untold wealth is, for the most part, a cunning lie to draw in outside labor, and that Lil' Vegas is far more wretched than they ever dreamed. Forced into slavery (either by being tricked by company-store "payment plans" during their stay, or outright abduction by mine press gangs), they will enter the mines not as visitors but as *slaves*. For these lower-level parties the going will be extremely tough, but the potential to move among the miners as equals (and possibly rally them to fight back) could be the beginnings of an epic-style rebellion in the City of Corium.

Hired Guns. Unless you plan on altering the nature of this adventure somewhat, PCs of higher levels should not generally face the threat of becoming slaves to Big Ben and his establishment, since it is obvious (by their equipment, ability to protect themselves, and sheer appearance and grit) that the local guards and soldiers wouldn't stand a chance against them. PCs of higher levels (10+) are likely to find the constabulary of Lil' Vegas to be nothing more than suspicious onlookers, and the threats and devices used to snare lower level outsiders won't be used on them. Big Ben and his men know whom they can tangle with and whom they can't. Competent PCs who look tough, or make a point to show they have considerable skill, just aren't worth the trouble, and after a few days most leave anyway once they realize the truth behind Lil' Vegas.

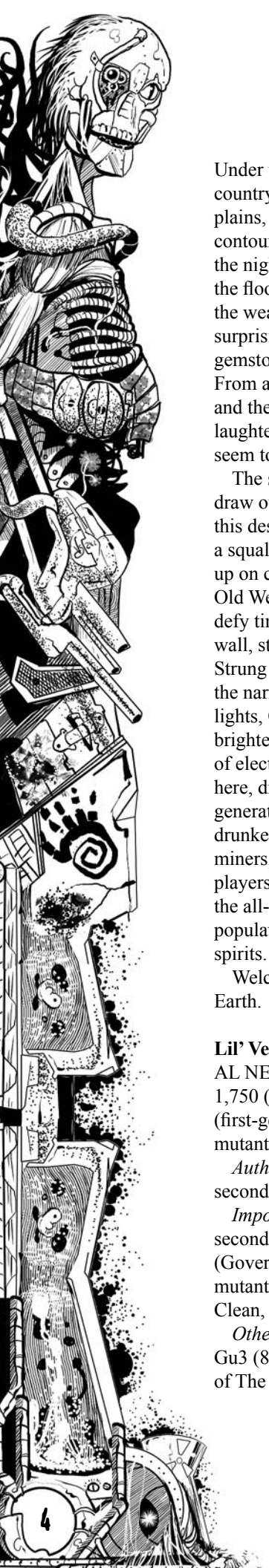
Of the few powerful characters (and NPCs) that come and go through Lil' Vegas, Big Ben often invites the most promising-looking to be his "guests" at his saloon/mansion. Tough guardians and raiders get offers of employment as hired guns or "troubleshooters" in the mines (breaking up discontent miners, killing those miners who rise to charismatic prominence, etc). Scavs may sometimes be offered regular pay for keeping an eye out on the trade routes and, if possible, to raid independent merchants to help line the coffers of Ben's treasury. Skilled, high-level thinkers who can't be outright enslaved will be given offers of employment (no strings attached, believe it or not), either in the capacity of doctors, mining engineers, or town planners. Likewise, traders who appear tough may also be courted to act as emissaries for Ben or to go to nearby settlements and convince them to pledge their youths to service in the mines.

Thus it is clear that though weaker individuals are often swallowed up by Lil' Vegas, more powerful and difficult wayfarers and travelers are not. Big Ben doesn't want trouble, especially with those visitors who are either too tough to tangle with, or have an allegiance to one of the wasteland's major groups. For these he puts on his best airs, courts them with clean water and gorgeous harem girls, and tries to win them over with promises of long or short-term employment.

Reclaimers. An alternative to running *Death By Corium Light* is possible for characters that belong to one of the major factions of the Twisted Earth (see *Darwin's World Complete* for more on these pseudo-societies and post-Fall brotherhoods). Those who serve a "higher purpose", such as the Foundation or Brethren, might be attracted to Lil' Vegas in pursuit of the technology that no doubt exists beneath the surface in its ancient mines (it was once, after all, a gigantic nuclear power complex). The Foundation for one seeks all kinds of technologies, and the secrets of nuclear power generation that could be potentially discovered among the mines would be priceless to them. Similarly the Brethren might have thought of this as well, and sent agents to infiltrate the mines and destroy them (through sabotage) so that the lost secrets within remain buried for eternity.

Another group that might send its followers (PCs) as envoys or agents would be the Brotherhood of Radiation, who in their twisted vision see all things radioactive as "holy". Guided by the stories of limitless corium, and the knowledge that there was once a great power plant below the town (and virtually tons of nuclear fuel), they might send trusted members there to also infiltrate the town and scout out the mines.

There are already at least two "cells" of major factions operating in Lil' Vegas, and these might serve as inside contacts for a more powerful group (e.g. the characters).



CHAPTER 2: LIL' VEGAS

Under the distant glimmering stars the dry scrub country seems to go on forever in uneven rolling plains, ringed in the distance by the dark black contours of ancient mountains that grow darker as the night's cold color deepens. Splashed across the floor of this canyon country, up ahead between the weaving flats and blasted hills, is an oasis of surprising color that gleams like a handful of dropped gemstones clustered together on the earth's floor. From afar they seem like pinpoints of alluring light, and the sounds of motors, clanging metal, ghostly laughter, and eerily disjointed player piano music seem to emanate from this center for miles around.

The sounds attract, the lights bring attention and draw outsiders in. But as one nears, the image of this desert city becomes much clearer. The city is a squalid one, a town that was once a village, built up on crumbling skeletons of ancient buildings, an Old West ghost town refurbished through the ages to defy time and the hard plains elements. A pathetic wall, stacks of tires and rusted old cars surround it. Strung from nearly every stretch of wall and along the narrow avenues of town is a belt of colored lights, Christmas lights that flicker, fade, and throb brighter like a pulsing, erratic heartbeat. The sound of electricity hums in the background of everything here, drowned out only by the choking motors of generators among the poorly-lit neighborhoods, the drunken laughter spilling out from the barracks of miners, the run-down sound of Wild West piano players from the many drinking establishments, and the all-too familiar weeping and sobbing of the slave population of women and girls that keep the town in spirits.

Welcome to Lil' Vegas, boomtown of the Twisted Earth.

Lil' Vegas: (Resurrectors; ruled by local dictator); AL NE; 800 cp limit; Assets 70,000 cp; Population 1,750 (twice that in transients and slaves); Isolated (first-generation mutant 150, second-generation mutant 1,600).

Authority Figure: Governor Big Ben, male second-generation mutant Guardian4/Thinker8.

Important Characters: Governor Big Ben, male second-generation mutant Guardian4/Thinker8; Sloan (Governor's bodyguard), male second-generation mutant Guardian 9; Mandarin Joab H'an of The Clean, male second-generation mutant Trader12.

Others: Typical guards, Gu3 (200); mine guards, Gu3 (85); mine patrol leaders, Gu5 (15); Janissaries of The Clean, Gu5 (30).

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN LIL' VEGAS

d12	Event
1-2	Guard Patrol
3	Obscure Message
4-5	Whore
6	Warning
7-8	"Desertion"
9-11	Gossip
12	Press Gang

Guard Patrol: Walking the streets the PCs pass a guard patrol of 1d3+1 surly watchmen that eye them suspiciously, muttering in a taunting tone how they'll "get them" in the end. The guards will not cause any real trouble, but will shadow the group to make them uneasy, or stand idly by while troublemakers annoy or interfere with the group's progress.

Obscure Message: The party passes through an alley and spots, scrawled on the wall, a message in paint, tar, or even human blood (in Unislang). The message, whose author is nowhere to be seen, reads: "FLEE NOW. THEY'RE WATCHING YOU." If this is rolled a second time, the message elsewhere reads: "ONCE THEY HAVE YOU YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE."

Whore: The PCs are approached by sickly-looking young furniture that offers to share herself for the evening. If they seem interested, the woman refers them to a bordello (up the street) where they can meet in a few minutes. The offer can be genuine, it could be a means to distract the group from something else going on (like robbing their abandoned mounts), or the woman could have been paid to lead the group into an ambush by a press gang (see below).

Warning: The PCs are witness to an old man, bearded and mangy, being dragged off from his shack-like home towards the distant glow of the mines up the hill. As he is being forcefully dragged away, the sickly man spies the PCs, and with eyes wild with anguish he screams to them: "Go now! Run as fast as you can! The mines! They'll never let you leave!" The man, a local miner whose spirit has yet to be fully broken, is badly beaten by the guards before being dragged off unconscious to the mines. If the PCs intervene, they will confront a typical guard patrol that is in no mood for the sentiments of outsiders…

"Desertion": Laughter, commotion, and a series of shots ring through the air, somewhere near the edge of town. The PCs happen to be in the area, and spot a group of guards and horrified locals watching as a

distant figure attempts to make a run for it. Already having scaled the walls of town, he has made it almost one hundred yards into the desert – and the guards are taking pot shots after him, placing bets on who will drop him. The PCs, confined to ground level (the guards are on a nearby tower or building top), can only stand helplessly by as the fleeing figure is eventually shot dead. If the PCs stay after the guards leave and inquire about the situation, the frightened locals will not speak to them other than to say the poor escapee truly believed "death is better than *this*."

Gossip: The PCs overhear a miner, visiting scav, or town matron gossiping (in a bar, bordello, or fetching water). The GM can use this as a means of introducing important – or misleading – information to the group, with appropriate Gather Information checks for each item. Example rumors are given in the sidebar.

Press Gang: *Lower-level groups only*. Sometime during the night hours, as the party walks the streets (or beds down in some lice-infested hovel), they see a large group of figures coming their way (or, in the latter case, come barging through their door), armed with clubs, rope, and staffs. The group will be roughly double the number of PCs, of varying levels (50% of them will be typical guards), intent on sacking the PCs for recruitment into the mines. The gang will immediately attack, sadistically and without mercy, until either driven off (losing ¼ their number) or the PCs are subdued, stripped, and robbed. They will then be moved on to become part of the faceless work force of the corium mines…

Encounters that might tip the group off too early as to the nature of Lil' Vegas (or that might lead to a sudden and violent turn of events) should be reserved for when the adventure is soon to begin – and should depend on what course the GM wishes to take the scenario along.

RUMORS

1. Stories have been circulating for months of "winged beasts" haunting the mountains by night. Scavs from the hills report finding fellow vagrants and old hermits dead, torn to pieces and eaten, their remains just left among the slopes and ravines outside of town for the buzzards to pick clean.

2. Recently there was a rash of terrifying reports from the mines that Big Ben was quick to hush-up, since the miners were beginning to get too scared to go back into the depths. The stories began when a few miners came out of the tunnels a while back screaming of "horrible floating aberrations" infesting the lower mines. A few miners have gone missing since then, while some even whisper their bodies have been found, eaten up by a strange acid and their innards "sucked away". Anyone speaking of these stories had best be warned – Big Ben has ordered such "provocateurs" and "panic-peddlers" to be shot on sight.

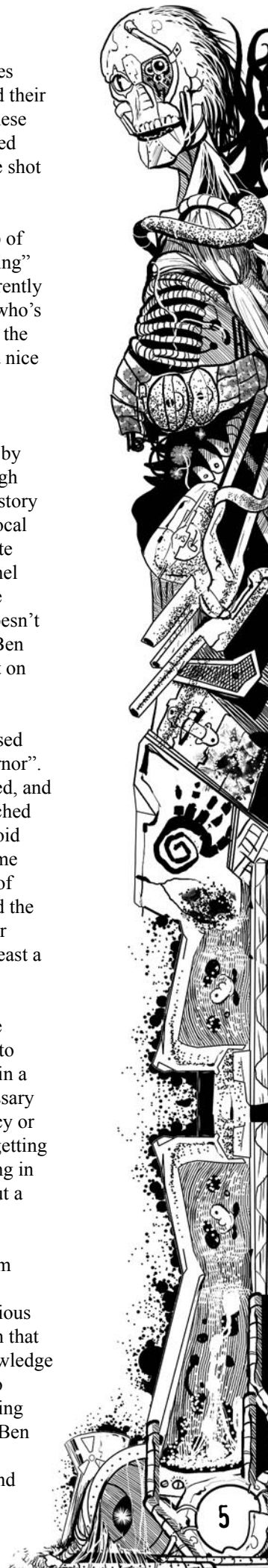
3. Late at night, just about a week ago, a group of Big Ben's guards were seen dragging some "thing" into Doc Hacksaw's for an examination. Apparently they brought it up from deep in the mines, but who's to say what it really was; Doc isn't talking, and the soldiers burned the thing up that very night in a nice little bonfire behind the clinic.

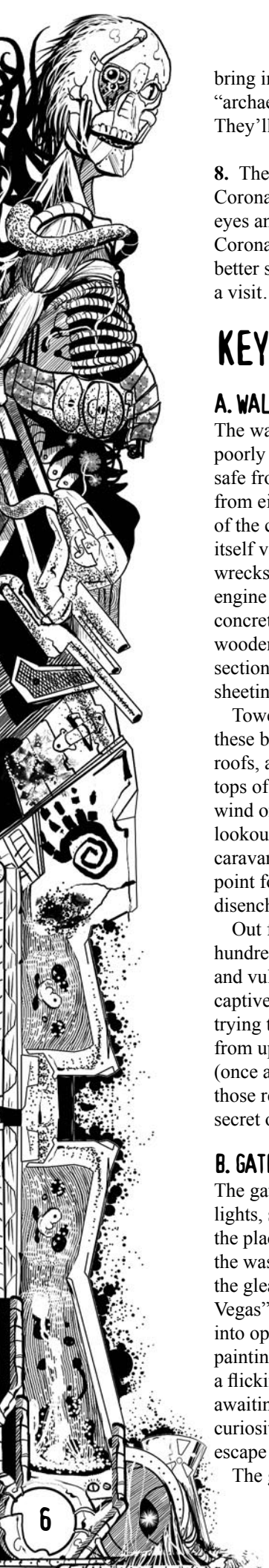
4. A rumor has been circulating that one of Big Ben's most valued slaves, a demolitions expert by the name of Arlon, recently disappeared. Though no one is allowed to talk about it in public, the story goes that after they forced his daughter into a local brothel, Arlon slipped into the mines with a crate of explosives (meant for opening up a new tunnel system). He is now planning to bring the entire operation to a halt (through sabotage) if Ben doesn't let the population go free. It's no wonder Big Ben has ordered anyone spreading these stories shot on sight…

5. Big Ben was once a miner himself, but he used guile to trick the gangs into making him "governor". Now he's no better than the scum he once served, and has sold us all out to play "prince" of this wretched place. He keeps a particularly sadistic mongoloid brute at his side at all times, a fellow by the name of "Sloan", who's probably the best shot in all of the Forbidden Lands. His reputation alone (and the power of Lil' Vegas) has kept raiders, the bigger factions of the Outside, and rivals away for at least a generation.

6. Despite the fact that no other Outsiders have made a claim on Lil' Vegas, the Clean are here to stay. Big Ben invited those high-and-mighties in a few years back, and now he and the Clean emissary are practically best buddies. Don't expect mercy or sanctuary from the Clean – they're so bent on getting the corium out of Big Ben's pockets (and staying in his good graces) that they'll sell you out without a second thought.

7. Some people are saying there are agents from the Outside in Lil' Vegas. A rumor has been spreading that the Foundation, in all their "glorious revelations", have discovered some information that the mines hold a vast repository of ancient knowledge somewhere in their deepest depths. They've no doubt sent spies and agents to infiltrate the mining camps, and will probably try to overthrow Big Ben when he's weak. No doubt once they've taken over the Foundation will expel all local labor and





bring in their own goons for what they consider an "archaeological expedition" into the mines. Humph. They'll still need knowledgeable miners as guides!

8. There's a nice new piece of furniture at the Coronado, a girl by the name of Xea. Big blue eyes and a lot of spirit still in her. A night at the Coronado's going to set you back, though, so you'd better save up your corium if you plan on paying her a visit…

KEY TO LIL' VEGAS

A. WALLS

The walls that surround the town of Lil' Vegas are a poorly thought-out attempt at keeping the populace safe from predators in the wild. The wall ranges from eight to twelve feet in height, running the length of the city in an uneven and chaotic stretch. The wall itself varies in composition, including the hollow wrecks of old cars (doors welded shut, cabin and engine block filled with rocks to weigh them down), concrete highway dividers, piles of rubber tires, old wooden roadblocks, overturned mining carts, gigantic sections of concrete pipe, boulders, corrugated iron sheeting, etc.

Towers rise every now and again from the walls, these being little more than scaffolds with ladders, roofs, and railings (or are themselves just the flat tops of buildings). Barely able to stand a strong wind or sandstorm, these are not shelters but rather lookout posts to watch the distant horizon for coming caravans (and raiders) – and to provide a vantage point for marksmen to shoot escaping slaves and disenchanted miners.

Out from the walls, anywhere from twenty to one hundred yards distant, can be found sun-bleached and vulture-picked bones of all kinds. All were once captives or "residents" of Lil' Vegas, having died trying to flee. This "belt" of corpses is only visible from up close, and attempts are sometimes made (once a month or so) by the establishment to bury those remains that are most prominent to keep the secret of the city intact.

B. GATES

The gates of Lil' Vegas are lit by coils of Christmas lights, shiny hubcaps, and other trinkets that give the place a glamorous appeal to the primitives of the wasteland. It simply *looks* inviting, and over the gleaming neon that proclaims "Welcome to Las Vegas" (pre-war creations, salvaged and put back into operation), dim lights pour down over a crude painting of a nude woman enticing the onlooker with a flicking tongue, naked body, and legs spread wide awaiting his…"companionship". Few can resist the curiosity that draws them in. Even fewer manage to escape when the awful truth becomes all too clear.

The gates are guarded night and day by anywhere from five to ten musket-armed guards and watchmen. The gates are usually open at all times, and anyone is permitted entrance into the city by the overly hospitable and friendly watchmen. They are quick to explain how one finds work in Lil' Vegas, quick to direct the newcomer to the nearest brothel or drinking hole, and quick to secretly report that new blood has come, arranging an ambush for those who look like they have the "right stuff" (for mining).

Some do manage to elude the curse of Lil' Vegas; a handful seem too useless, too diseased, or too badly mutated to be effective workers and miners. The soldiers drive such worthless scum out on sight, either jeering them off or simply shooting after them. More powerful groups (those that look exceptionally tough) are regarded carefully and cautiously, and never interfered with. Only these few are allowed to come in and leave with any image of what life is *really* like in this Hell on earth.

Typical Vegas Watchman/Guard, Guardian3 (200): CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 3d10+3; hp 19; Init +6 (Dex; Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather; +4 protective dermal development); Atk Whip +5 ranged 1d2S; or black powder rifle +5 ranged 1d12; SQ Defender; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Knowledge (technology) +2*, Listen +4, Spot +8. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Possessions: Whip, black powder rifle (20 shots), *communicator* (walkie-talkie; 1 in 5 guards will be so-equipped), studded leather armor.

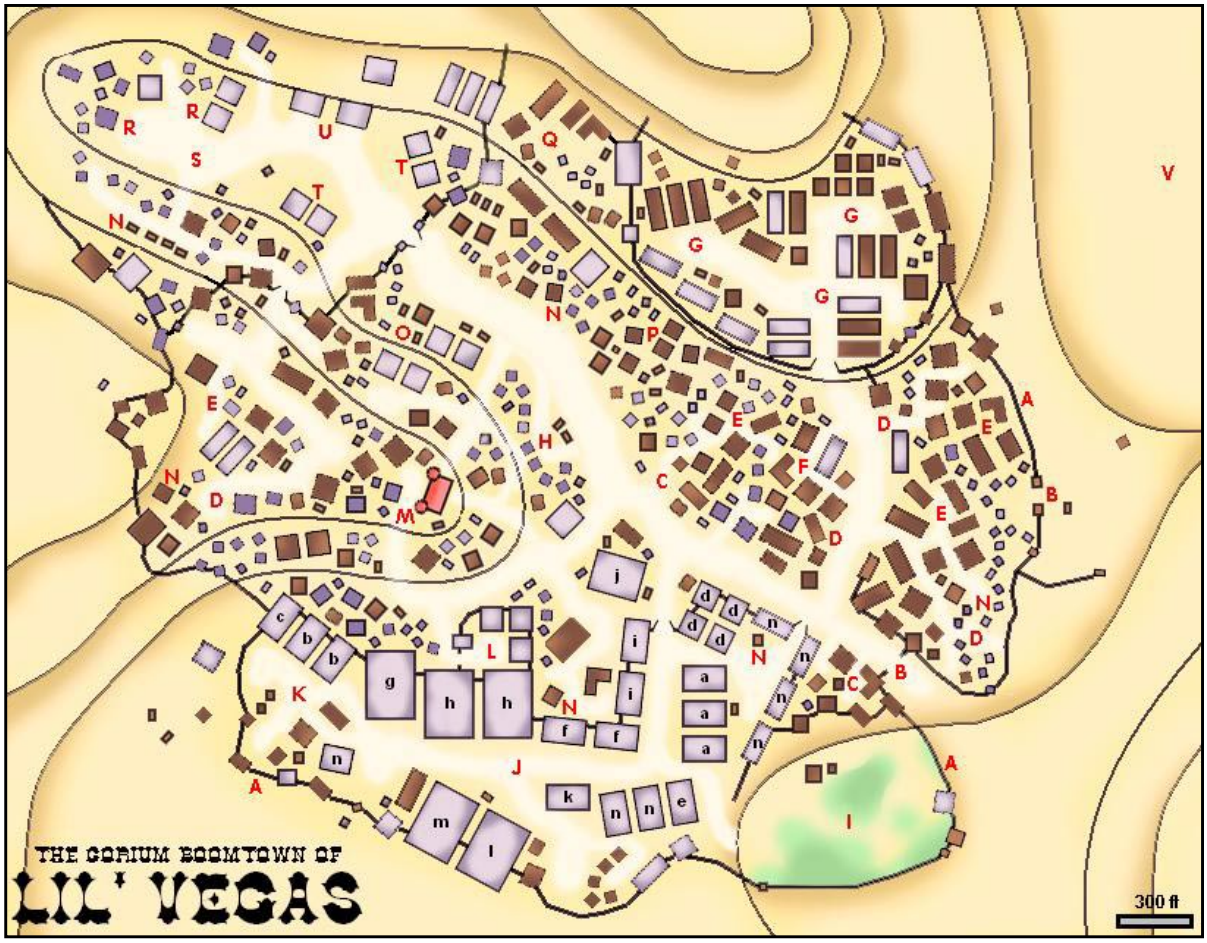
Mutations and Defects: Multi-Faceted Eyes, Protective Dermal Development, Sensitive Sight, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Bizarre Pigmentation (sickly pink to mottled freckling), Mongoloid.

C. SHOPS

The streets and alleyways of Lil' Vegas pulse with multi-colored light bulbs and the sound of misery mixed with absolute ecstasy. To newcomers this can be a dizzying maze of sights and sounds, decorated with all the flashing colors of a carnival at night, and populated by degenerate mining folk and the sadistic guards who keep them in line.

What outsiders might consider a "shop" can be seen in a handful of stores intermingled throughout the Bordello District of Lil' Vegas. Most have been converted from old stores or the abandoned buildings from before the Fall, the owner's scavenging neon signs, posters, and patchwork lettering like pack rats from the older ruins of town. At night many of these signs are hooked up to the same power lines that supply the Christmas lights with energy, lighting them up like the billboards of old Broadway to lure customers in from neighboring streets and alleyways.

The stores in Lil' Vegas are 100% owned and



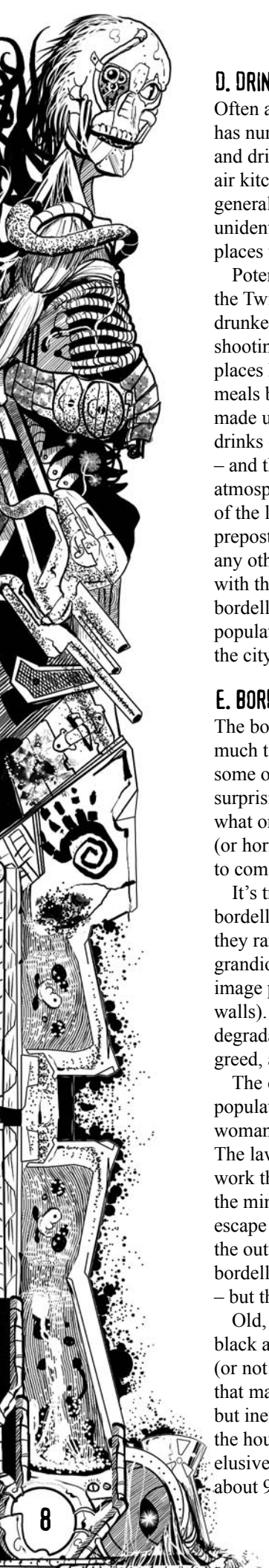
operated by the establishment of Big Ben, and as such all prices are steeply set and ruthlessly regulated. Store "owners" are really just old men or disheveled women who have found favor in the governor's eyes and earned the "privilege" of working as a proprietor (it's a lot easier work than mining).

These stores run the gambit from groceries (selling jerked beef, water rations, milk, fermented goat's milk, and even bottles of cheap corn liquor) to outlets of basic living supplies (blankets, soap, shears and razors for shaving, anti-lice powders and salves, etc). Some other stores are more specific, and even cater to outsiders; these buy and sell junk items and cheap "luxuries" as well as things like canteens, boots, sunhats and sunglasses, compasses, etc. None of these items are manufactured here, only traded. Though a world-wise scav may recognize some of these were the prized belongings of fellow scavs, and would never have been *willingly* traded away. In essence, anything the establishment confiscates or takes from those who fall prey to the town's press gangs, end up on display here.

The businesses offer fresh drinkable water to sandwalkers and scavs, and other cheap thrills like real alcohol, some drugs, and "tourist-tickets" good for four free women in the bordellos – all marked anywhere from 110% to 200% normal cost. Those that don't look worth the trouble are allowed to buy a few things before being shooed on, but those marked for abduction (to be forced into the mines; the guards and shopkeepers have a kind of secret set of hand signs and body movements that let them know who is selected and who is just trash to be kicked out of town after a night or two) are offered the better goods and informed of the "payment plan"…

The "payment plan" is an option made available to those who have the potential for working the mines. Whether they came here to mine or not, the community wants them to *stay*. The shops, stores, drinking pits, and bordellos will all honor a man's word when he says he'll pay, giving him a month to come up with the money for all of his expenditures. Therefore, a newcomer to town will find he can womanize, get drunk, etc. and have a month to cover his debts. It sounds like a great deal – but of course it's not. When it comes time to pay, the shopkeepers (with a few guards) come to collect, having a running tally of the customer's outstanding debts. Then they inform the poor fool of something called interest – *50%* interest, accumulated monthly.

Obviously no one ever manages to pay, and they soon find that the law in Lil' Vegas states that if you can't settle your part of a bargain, it's off to the mines with you then and there.



D. DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS

Often an extension of the town's bordellos, Lil' Vegas has numerous places where miners can come to eat and drink. These establishments range from open-air kitchens where the miners get their daily meals, generally consisting of nameless gruel, hunks of unidentifiable meat, and flatbread, to more expensive places that seem more like real "bars" than the rest.

Potent fermented milk (a popular drink throughout the Twisted Earth) usually being sold by the jug, and drunkenness is commonplace. Brawls, stabbings, and shootings are equally frequent in these places. Some places have row upon row of miners grabbing quick meals before vanishing into the mines; others are made up to resemble "saloons", offering fermented drinks or even real alcohol (invariably watered down) – and the chance to gamble in a semi-luxurious atmosphere with whores to fawn over the luckiest of the lot. Prices vary accordingly, ranging from preposterous to insane; but considering the lack of any other form of entertainment (besides consorting with the local womenfolk in the established bordellos), much money is bled from the mining population back into the hands of the men who run the city.

E. BORDELLOS

The bordellos of Lil' Vegas are renowned and much touted throughout the Twisted Earth as being some of the best and most degenerate known. Not surprisingly, the truth of these "legends" is not quite what one would imagine, much to the disappointment (or horror) of those who've given up everything just to come and experience their dark delights.

It's true enough that Lil' Vegas has at least one bordello for every other building in town, but they range from the common swill pits to the rare, grandiose "palaces" of pleasure (more suited to the image promoted by the town's leaders outside its walls). All are stinking, filthy places of slavery and degradation, each a monument to human cruelty, greed, and savagery.

The occupants of Lil' Vegas' bordellos are a mixed population of adults, children, and elderly, man and woman alike. That's right, both genders, all ages. The law of Lil' Vegas is simple – if you cannot work the mines, you work the bordellos to serve the miners. There is no exception, and if you try to escape you are shot. Like in the stories that bring the outlanders in with dreams of erotic reward, the bordellos are crammed to the rafters with furniture – but the furniture is not always what it seems.

Old, disease-rife women, younger girls beaten black and blue by drunken patrons, and men cleverly (or not so cleverly) dressed as women crowd the bars that make up the bordello district. Their prices vary, but inevitably the furniture turns over every dime to the house, getting only food, shelter, and the ever-elusive promise of freedom in return. Disease afflicts about 90% of the workers (though only about 10% show visible signs of contamination); malnutrition, nervous collapse, and drug-use are rampant.

Prostitute prices vary between 20 to 200 cp a night, depending on the quality of the "furniture" and the given establishment.

F. CORONADO

The brothel known as "the Coronado" happens to be one of the largest and most decrepit in Lil' Vegas. It's also the most popular. Miners, soldiers, and even Big Ben make appearances here to mingle among the rundown Old West-style bordello rooms and bar, where girls perform perverse versions of stage shows for spectators every night of the week. Outside the place looks like a Wild West whorehouse (in much need of paint), but a bright blue neon light crafted in the shape of a pair of feminine legs in high heels – and kept buzzing on all night - can be seen at least a half dozen alleys away. Beneath this, visible only by the light of the neon sign, are painted the words "The Coronado" in fanciful lettering. Piano music playing automatic tunes from bent and chipped rollers continue to pour out notes that are eerily distorted and strange, their historical significance to a long-gone era all but lost on the brain dead inhabitants of the town.

The Coronado has roughly thirty to forty girls at any given time, usually the better looking daughters and wives of miners or outsiders who manage to get sucked into the quagmire that is Lil' Vegas. To pay increasing bills (if not outright stolen and enslaved) they end up selling themselves here. Whenever a particularly attractive girl rises to prominence, Big Ben usually seizes her (who is often among the crowds on rowdy nights) for his harem. Otherwise they serve the highest-paying soldiers and miners (in that order).

The Coronado is not a good place to make trouble; guards and soldiers are everywhere, and the atmosphere is always one of tense excitement. Women being a rare commodity, paying men are often willing to get violent to stake a claim for the night. The girls too are often afraid of trouble as well, since they know it will mean their lives if blame is traced their way.

GM's Note: One exception to this rule is a girl by the name of Xea, who has been working at the Coronado for only a month. Xea came here with her father, Arlon, both naively believing the tales spread about the mines and seeking a better life through honest labor. Her father was an expert in mine demolitions, having worked in other mines for the Cartel, and carried with him a kind of knowledge that had always guaranteed them safety and security. Here, however, they were quickly enslaved when Arlon made his disgust for the condition of the operation too public; he was dragged off to work for Big Ben as a much-needed specialist against his will, and she to the Coronado to work as just another piece of furniture.

Though she has suffered tremendously here, she has so far refused to give up. She knows her father is still alive, and has hung all her hopes on the rumors that one of Ben's workers has stolen a crate of explosives and slipped deep into the mines. She knows that the runaway was her father, and that he is probably at the end of his rope. She is desperate to find him and together possibly hatch a plan to escape.

To this end Xea will try to make contact with any group or individual that looks even remotely compassionate – they stand out, after all, among the crowds of leering molesters at the Coronado. She is not above using all of her charms to secure some kind of loyalty from the chosen PC. She may even try to learn something about him or his companions, and use that information to blackmail them into working for her (for example, if they are spies for an outside group and carelessly mention it, she will threaten to expose them if they don't agree to save her father).

Xea only knows that her father is in the corium mines, and little else. She knows there is likely to be at least one exit out of the mines besides the main entrance – possibly other elevator shafts or even ventilation ducts that might have gone unnoticed by Big Ben. Growing up the daughter of a traveling miner, she knows a little about the layout and features of old reactor complexes. Some may even lead miles underground to emerge at places far from town, allowing them to go in, find her father, and escape without having to come back and face the consequences.

As for her, Xea has resigned herself to staying, since it is almost impossible for a good-looking piece of furniture like herself to escape without detection (she'd certainly be seen on the streets). She just wants to know her father got out alive, and maybe some day, when things change (when Big Ben is overthrown), they can come back and get her as well.

Xea, Thinker3 (1): CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Visionary Reinventor); HD 3d4-3+3; hp 12; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Unarmed +1 melee 1d3-1; SQ Knowledge; AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Concentration +5, Craft (tinker) +11, Heal +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (technology) +7, Listen +4, Profession (entertainer) +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4. Fertile/Potent, Skill Focus (craft, tinker), Toughness.

Possessions: None.

Mutations and Defects: Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Neural Empathy, Negative Chemical Reaction, Unstable Neural Activity.

Xea does not have a perfect, foolproof plan for saving her father, but she knows one or two relatively loyal miners (who either adore her so much that they'd do her a favor if she asked, or have strong sympathies against Big Ben and the establishment) who can smuggle the PCs into the mine under the guise of laborers. Beyond that she cannot help any further other than to relate the rumors of "strange creatures", and the probable presence of radiation dangers.

G. BARRACKS

The miner barracks are a separate part of town, isolated by walls and old crumbling buildings. Here the community is a practical place, run almost like a military camp. Miners are crammed into ancient buildings of stone or wood (or even corrugated metal), sleeping in rows of bunks, in hammocks, or in the shadow of ruins like refugees of some great war. Men do their own laundry in open sewers, sometimes cook their own meals in communal fire pits where they congregate bemoaning their fortunes, and look forward to weekends when they are released like a horde of jackals into the Bordello District to spend their pay.

The barrack houses are not uniform, their occupancy ranging from 5 to 50 miners. Some are open hovels occupied by a different group of miners from one night to the next. Some have been "claimed" by a certain group and outsiders are not welcome. Most miners who come to Lil' Vegas soon realize the necessity of "friends" and form into tight, violent clans, and bickering and bloodshed is not uncommon when resources are scarce - or when the workers get bored.

By day this district is barren, since the miners descend into the mines to work. Even at night, a large number of the miners are still in the mines, so it is obvious that there isn't even enough room for the current population, let alone for newcomers. That is why death among newly arrived miners is always great.

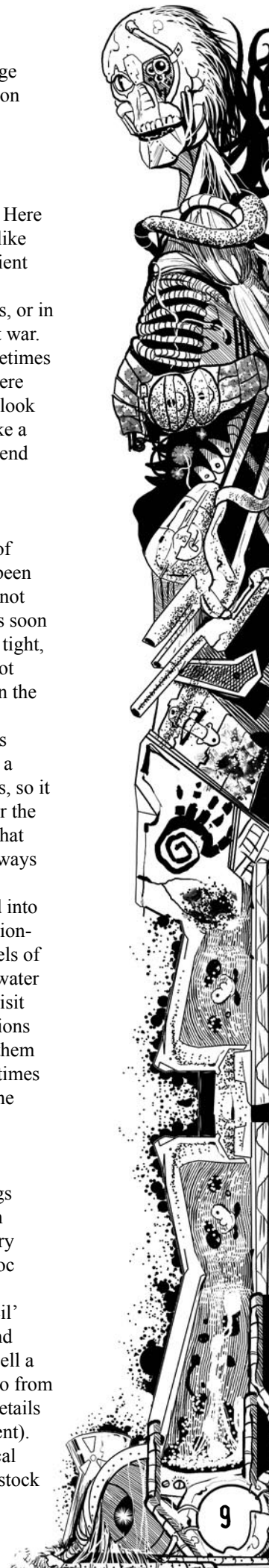
Every fifth barrack house has been converted into a sick house for miners who are dying of radiation-related illnesses. These places are like the hovels of lepers, for they are given no medicine or even water by the establishment (though old friends may visit to care for their dying comrades, sneaking portions of their own rations in a futile attempt to keep them alive). Slaves cart dead bodies out daily, sometimes a dozen or more each morning, to be taken to the Graveyard and disposed of.

H. DOC HACKSAW'S

This store looks to be one of the oldest buildings in town, an old run-down barber's shop done in the ancient style. A hand-painted sign in flowery Old West lettering proclaims this simply as "Doc Hacksaw's".

Doc Hacksaw is the resident "juju man" of Lil' Vegas, ostensibly an "employee" of Big Ben and his gang, but also allowed, to some degree, to sell a portion of his stock to the few who come and go from town – for tremendous prices (see Area C for details on these pricing policies; Hacksaw is no different).

Treasure: Hacksaw's stock consists of typical wasteland juju, including a virtually unlimited stock



of *juju salve*, *infusion of valor*, *oil of remedy*, and *purgative*. He also has a reserve stock of advanced, scavenged medicines, but these are kept under lock and key for the treatment of the establishment's soldiers. This supply includes 120 *ready syringes*, three doses of *hemochem*, one dose of *hercurin*, eighteen doses of *K-O shot*, 55 doses of *rad-purge shot*, 23 doses of *stimshot A*, eight doses of *stimshot B*, and three doses of *truth serum*.

A character offering at least 200% the listed price (in corium pieces; he'll accept 100% the value in rare or unique trade goods like advanced weapons, gizmos, and especially arcanum) may be able to convince Doc Hacksaw to part with these latter supplies, but the final decision is up to the GM.

GM's Note: Some of Big Ben's men showed up at Doc Hacksaw's a week or so ago, hauling the stinking carcass of some strange creature with them – apparently from the mines. Though they wanted the Doc to examine the thing and figure out what it was (a heliogryph), Hacksaw was at a loss to identify it. If the PCs come asking about the rumors of creatures in the mines, a Gather Information roll (DC 18) will get the doctor to admit the stories are true, and even go so far as to vaguely describe the thing that "the authorities brought in for dissection".

I. LIVESTOCK

This area has been set aside for the raising and grazing of livestock, a small population of cattle jealously hoarded by the ruler of Lil' Vegas. Favored servants and slaves tend to this herd (having proven themselves in some manner to be loyal and, more importantly, having had their will to escape broken), equipped only with long sticks for herding and directing the animals. Slaves in the pens are 100% likely to alert guards of intruders, escaped miners, and even their own kind in an effort to improve their lots even further, and thus no sanctuary is to be had among the herd or herders.

J. WAREHOUSES

The warehouse district is a simple affair kept lighted by orange globes from the tallest of pine poles. In the shadow of the Clean and brothel quarters, only local guards and soldiers walk these streets with any regularity.

The warehouses of the district are uniformly large cinder-block constructions from well before the Fall. They were used for a similar purpose then, as storage bunkers to house heavy machinery and equipment on the surface while the great underground reactor was being constructed. Over time the old equipment was lost, scrapped, or stolen, but the buildings remained in relatively good shape. As the town grew with a population of miners, the warehouses originally served as bunkhouses before being converted back into large-scale storage spaces.

Now the warehouses contain the resources of the entire community, including heavy machinery for mining: large-scale drills, drill bits, gas-powered electrical generators, spare parts, thousands of yards of timber for shoring up mine shafts, tar and grease to provide flexibility for the same, tens of thousands of yards of copper wiring and insulation, and countless other supplies. Other warehouses in the quarter contain foodstuffs and water supplies (brutally regulated by the governor's cadre), and other goods.

A few of the old warehouses at one end of the compound are open during the day to permit the slave population in. These warehouses have been converted into small-scale "factories", producing goods needed for the operation of the mines. One factory produces an abundance of rope (hand-woven by what few women and children escape the brothels, made "undesirable" by physical deformity or disease) for shoring, carts, lamps, etc. while another manufactures musket balls for the local guard. One warehouse is used to process meat from the livestock pens (a very nasty business, even more primitive than the ghastly conditions that were so abhorred during the Industrial Revolution), while yet another sends its girls out by day to collect manure and human waste to bring back and form into flammable fuel "cakes" that are a growing part of the Twisted Earth economy.

a Warehouse - Drill Machinery
b Warehouse - Gasoline/Oil
c Warehouse - Vehicle Parts
d Warehouse - Lumber
e Warehouse - Animal Feed
f Warehouse - Pump Equipment
g Warehouse - Foodstuffs
h Warehouse - Water
i Warehouse - Raw Metals
j Rope Factory
k Slaughterhouse
l Manure Processing Plant
m Leadworks
n Miscellaneous Storage

● **Warehouse Doors:** 2 in. Thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Open Lock DC 20.

K. VEHICLE YARD

This protected yard contains most of the town's operable vehicles, used in the rare war actions to defend the community against outside attack. Most of these vehicles are rusted, covered in dust and dried mud, but kept in working order by a handful of skilled slave 'mechs (these folk are not even allowed to leave the Warehouse District, for whatever reason, and eat, live, and die here exclusively).

The impressive fleet of Lil' Vegas includes seven *motorcycles* (hp 35 each), ten *racers* (hp 40 each; all have *light frames*), two *small cars* (hp 45 each; both have *hoverfans* and *kicker* modifications), five *medium cars* (hp 65 each; all are *armored*), three *large cars* (hp 75 each; all are *armored*), and three *pickups* (hp 95 each; all are *armored*, with *mounted*

weaponry (heavy crossbow)).

The yard is generally guarded by anywhere from four to ten guards at a time. The fleet, due to increasing fuel supplies (thanks to a bustling economy in Lil' Vegas), is often gassed-up and sent out to kick up dust around the valley for the benefit of raiders (including the Ravagers at Area W) to see for miles. A show of force seems to work better than anything else to keep them at bay. Only half of the fleet is ever sent out at once, however, unless the town is actually threatened.

L. CLEAN QUARTER

The Clean dwell in a whitewashed compound of their own among the squalid streets of Lil' Vegas, but separated by walls from the mass of miners, slaves, and captives. White banners snap and whisper in the wind as they roll off of towering flagpoles, marking this part of the city as belonging to the great Water Clans. Ironically, though many who try to escape flee to the familiar banner of the Clean for sanctuary or protection, the Clean close their gates and look down from an unmoved perch as they are caught, slaughtered, or beaten back into the mines.

The Clean were the first major outside group to come to Lil' Vegas, though the outpost is still little more than that – an outpost. Only about thirty warriors from the ranks of the Clean patrol the walls and water warehouses, and within there is but a minor staff to see to the needs of the local *mandarin*, Joab of the powerful H'an.

Nonetheless the Clean have dedicated themselves to maintaining good relations here in Lil' Vegas, relations which do not seem to be likely to change for a good long time. The Clean have provided a great service to Lil' Vegas in the form of a steady source of water (otherwise non-existent in the dry hills), and in exchange have been given a huge share of the corium being extracted from the earth. This has been beneficial to both parties; the Clean receive an obscene (and unbalanced) share of the corium in exchange for water (upwards of twenty times the price charged elsewhere), and the establishment of Lil' Vegas receives water – which means they can support a larger and larger population of slaves, miners, and hired guns.

The Clean remain distant to the actual mining operations and the cold brutality that surrounds them, paying polite (yet deliberately superior) lip service to the local ruler. In fact, though he attempts to portray himself as too dignified and noble to be involved in the affairs of the mine, the mandarin has on occasion been the guest of the governor of Lil' Vegas at his "saloon", and it is rumored the men have become close friends. If need be, the mandarin of the Clean operation would certainly employ his personal guard and the local Clean resources if the governor asked for it, even in tracking down runaways or defending the city against raider attack should the need arise. The Clean soldiers are much more practiced and elite than the local constabulary (who are almost all hired thugs and ex-raiders themselves), and thus their presence on a hunt might mean the difference between success and failure.

Though Joab H'an is officially neutral, his orders are to preserve relations with the governor at all costs, for the good of the Clan, and to keep the corium flowing into Clean coffers. This has not been a problem, since he himself is something of a sadist in any event, and the suffering of the miners has not interfered with his conscience. Furthermore, by becoming fast friends with the leadership of Lil' Vegas, he has managed to ensure that no other Water Clan dare come near the city for fear of being utterly destroyed in the takeover attempt. The governor, for his part, is fully agreeable to the outrageous prices the Clean offer him, knowing that not only can he afford their price, but also by being an agreeable customer the Clean will stay, bring water, and offer protection. No one loses.

The Clean receive a great amount of corium each week, piled up and shipped out on Clean caravans every two months to distant Trade City. The corium slated for the Clean is stockpiled in the Clean compound (the mandarin and governor may be friends, but they still don't *trust* each other), and only moved when a heavily-armed Clean caravan arrives, like clockwork, at month's end.

Typical Janissary of The Clean, Guardian5 (30): CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 5d10+10; hp 37; Init +7 (Dex; Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk Scimitar +6 melee 1d6+1; or sport rifle +8 ranged 1d12; SQ Defender, called shot (+1d6); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

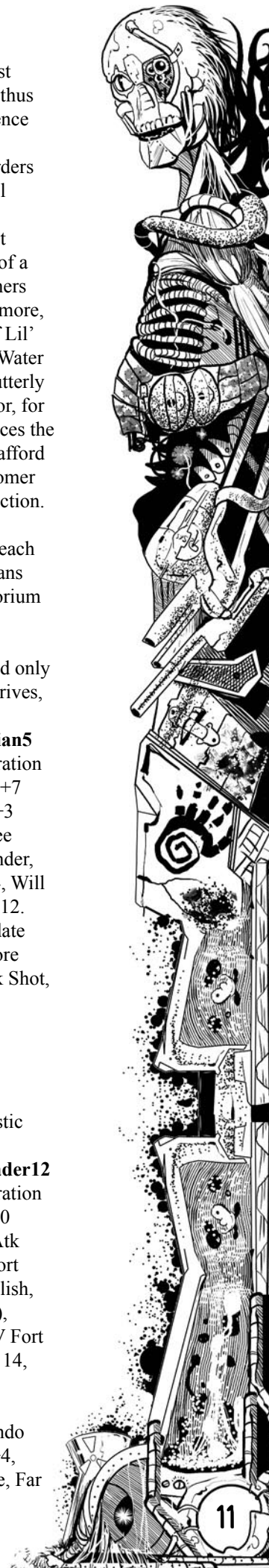
Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +3, Listen +3, Ride +4, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +1. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot.

Possessions: Scimitar, sport rifle (20 shots), studded leather armor, four doses of *juju salve*.

Mutations and Defects: Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight, Bilirubin Imbalance, Critical Vulnerability, Cystic Fibrosis.

Mandarin Joab H'an of The Clean, Trader12 (1): CR 14; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant); HD 12d6; hp 42; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 *ballistic nylon armor*); Atk *Masterwork* scimitar +9/+4 melee 1d6-1; or sport rifle +10/+5 ranged 1d12; SQ Protector, spit polish, ear to the ground, money talks, going once (x2), sucker every minute, read the signs; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +8, Innuendo +6, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (mutant lore) +4, Ride +5, Sense Motive +11, Spot +5. Expertise, Far



Shot, Home School'd, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Silver Tongue.

Possessions: Masterwork Scimitar, sport rifle (20 shots), *ballistic nylon armor, electronic notepad, power cell*, four doses of *juju salve*, one dose of *sleeping potion*.

Mutations and Defects: Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight, Bilirubin Imbalance, Critical Vulnerability, Cystic Fibrosis.

M. PALACE HOTEL

The so-called "palace" is, in fact, the converted remnants of an Old West saloon and hotel that once stood on a hill overlooking the town nestled in the Vegas valley. This historic building was refurbished a long time past because, even though decrepit, it just looked the most fanciful of all the wrecked ruins in the old town and was thus most suited to house the town's most prominent figure.

The Palace Hotel has passed into the hands of the local leadership since wasteland gangs first settled here and wrested control of the mines from the corium prospectors of the hills. Though leadership has often shifted by brutal coups and revolts, power has pretty much remained in the hands of the most brutal and crafty personality in Lil' Vegas. Today's situation is no different, and the current governor, an obese overlord appropriately named Big Ben, is perhaps the most cunning and cruel the city has ever seen – polite and genteel when it suits him, and downright evil when the need arises. The shocking fact is that Big Ben was once one of the many miserable miners, a knowledgeable foreman, but through bribery and treachery he managed to turn his back on the suffering of his fellows and instead come to *run* the operation in Lil' Vegas. Considered by some to be a turncoat and traitor, he is nonetheless rabid to maintain his position of superiority over the entire town.

An air of turn-of-the-century piano music shrouds the Palace Hotel and the glow of Christmas lights at all times. The best-looking "furniture" (all genuine women), the best scavenged alcohol, and anything resembling real artifacts from the past are to be found here, and only here. The place is preserved very much like an Old West saloon, and the leader of Lil' Vegas attires himself like a wealthy Old West tycoon. Big Ben is an enormously-fat man of no small intellect, who prefers to wear suits reminiscent of a riverboat gambler of the Old West – none of which fit him well, revealing huge portions of blubbery pink skin where the garments fall short of modesty. Still, the leader of Lil' Vegas completes the image with huge cigars, fancy pocket watch, and a fancy white hat. Here, at the Palace Hotel, he is protected by the most loyal hired hands and local thugs, and it is here that the governor meets with emissaries or prospective new "hires" (that is, hired guns or others who are too threatening to simply press into slavery, and thus must by necessity be given an offer of money to ensure their loyalty).

Big Ben is famous throughout the wasteland (remarkable, since he is otherwise quite similar to so many other petty dictators) for one thing in particular – one of the largest harems of well-trained concubines this side of the Big Rocks. About two dozen of the more attractive specimens dwell in his parlor, poker room, or piano lounge, either drunk or only vaguely conscious thanks to the heavy opiates he sedates them with. Ben is quite well known for being a generous master to those who are deserving of his thanks, receiving one or more of his harem girls as an added reward for certain services rendered. This could range from uncovering a plot to overthrow him, revealing the identities of malcontents among the miners, or thwarting sabotage attempts in the

mines.

Besides the sheer numbers of watchful guards and hired guns walking the halls, the Hotel is not much of a fortress. The governor would most likely flee back into town, to the stockade of the allied Clean, if his life was actually somehow threatened here. The hotel itself, though rich with luxuries, has no real resources or stockpiles of supplies worth ransacking. It is merely the residence of a very despotic leader. However, the governor does have semi-complete maps of the entire network of known tunnels that comprise the Upper and Lower Mines, which may be of great value to infiltrators and saboteurs (or future dictators of Lil' Vegas).

Big Ben, Governor of Lil' Vegas, Guardian4/ Thinker8 (1): CR 14; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 4d10+8d4+12; hp 71; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 protective dermal development); Atk *Stun baton* +10/+5 melee 2d6; or *high-powered revolver* +12 ranged 1d10+4; SQ Defender, knowledge, dirty fighter, inspire skill; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Craft (mine technician) +14, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +6, Innuendo +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (technology) +8, Listen +1, Profession (miner) +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +1. Exotic Weapon Proficiency (stun baton), "Feel" For Weapon (revolver), "Feel" For Weapon (stun baton), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Room-Broom, Skill Focus (knowledge, technology), Skill Focus (craft, mine technician), Super-Charismatic.

Possessions: Hi-powered revolver +2 (20 rounds of *glazer* ammunition), *stun baton, magnetic shield A*, two *power beltpacks, communicator* (walkie-talkie), four doses of *stimshot A* in *ready syringes*, two doses of *rad-purge shot* in *ready syringes*, *Stage IIC access card*, valuable maps.

Mutations and Defects: Protective Dermal Development, Sensitive Sight, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Bizarre Pigmentation (sickly pink).

Sloan, Governor's Bodyguard, Guardian9 (1): CR 11; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 9d10+18; hp 105; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 21 (+3 Dex, +4 chain shirt, +4 protective dermal development); Atk *Stun baton* +11/+6 melee 2d6+2; or *high-powered automatic rifle* +17/+17/+12 ranged 1d12+2; SQ Defender, called shot (+2d6); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +1, Intimidate +9, Listen +6, Sense Motive +3, Spot +6. Exotic Weapon Proficiency (stun baton), "Feel" For Weapon (auto rifle), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Rip A Clip, Room Broom, Weapon Focus (auto rifle).

Possessions: Hi-powered automatic rifle +2 (90 shots), *targeting scope*, *stun baton,* chain shirt, *power beltpack, communicator* (walkie-talkie), two doses of *stimshot B* in *ready syringes*.

Mutations and Defects: Protective Dermal Development, Shriek, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Bizarre Pigmentation (melanin blotches), Mongoloid.

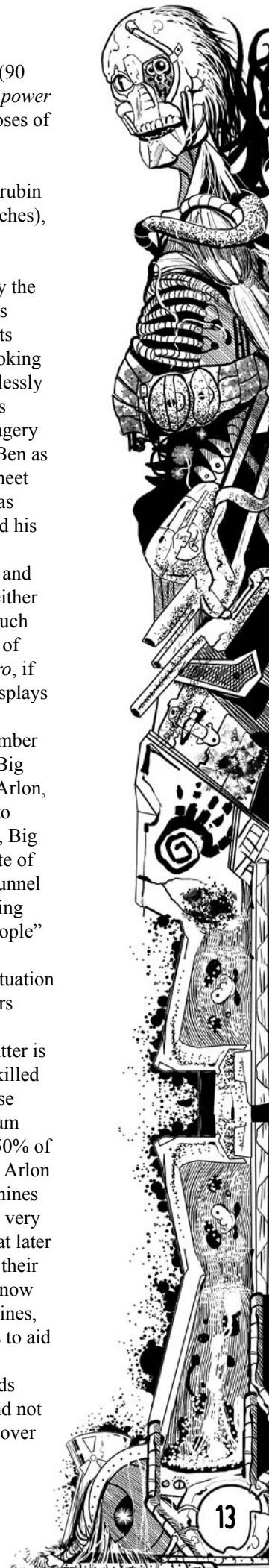
Sloan is Big Ben's personal bodyguard, and probably the town's most crack shot. Feared by the miners, whores, and fellow soldiers alike for his cruelty and sadism. For fun he sometimes shoots random people from high on the hilltop-overlooking town; when drunk, which is frequently, he ruthlessly beats his whores and engages in brawls with his men, sometimes to the death. His skill and savagery have only made him all the more appealing to Ben as an enforcer and guard. Characters will likely meet Sloan whenever visiting Big Ben (as guests or as captives), and he will certainly be there to guard his boss if things hit the fan.

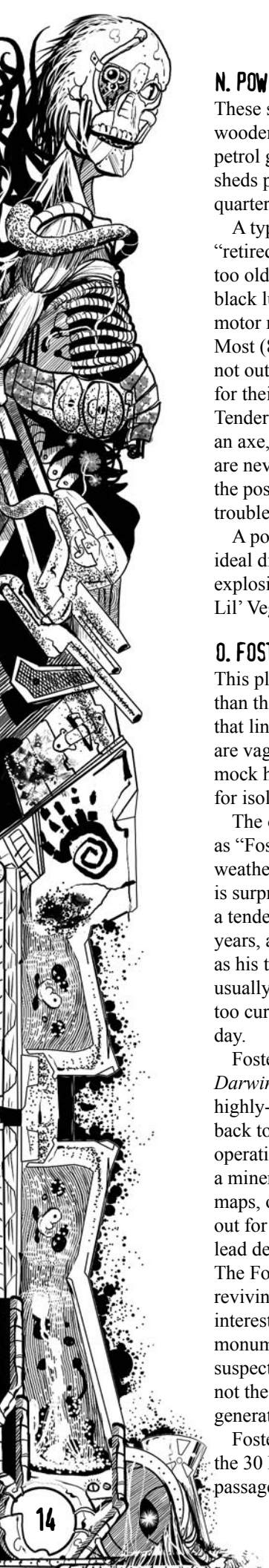
GM's Note: Characters of appropriate level and reputation may end up here looking for work, either on their own or after being cordially invited. Such meetings are usually quite relaxed, with games of cards (Big Ben knows how to play old-style *faro*, if anyone cares to join him), drinks, and subtle displays of power. Big Ben likes to impress.

Though you are free to come up with any number of short or long-term employment offers from Big Ben, the most obvious is the tracking down of Arlon, his prized thinker-slave who deserted and fled to the bottom of the corium mines. What's worse, Big Ben will explain, is that he took with him a crate of high explosives meant for constructing a new tunnel system. Rumors are spreading that Arlon is going to blow up the mine if Ben doesn't "free the people" and step down.

Big Ben is intent on not only resolving the situation before the rumors get out of hand and the miners start to rise up in solidarity, but also getting the explosives and Arlon back in one piece. The latter is not necessary, but would be preferable, since skilled demolitions men are extremely hard to find these days. Big Ben is prepared to offer 50,000 corium pieces for the safe return of Arlon and at least 50% of the explosives. Half this if the PCs have to kill Arlon to stop the threat. He won't pay a dime if the mines are destroyed in the effort. Big Ben makes this very clear up front so that no one can call him a cheat later on. He gives the PCs free reign of the mines in their effort to pursue Arlon, but will pretend not to know anything about the "strange creatures" in the mines, and will not provide maps or offer any supplies to aid them.

Big Ben sends word ahead so that mine guards will know the PCs by their faces and names, and not attack them if they pop up in strange places all over the mine complex.





N. POWER HOUSES

These so-called "power houses" are simply small wooden or corrugated iron sheds that house a single petrol generator. Situated throughout the city, these sheds produce just enough juice to keep a certain quarter, or stretch of wall lighting, lit.

A typical shed is operated by a single slave or "retired" miner (one who somehow managed to get too old to work without dying from radiation or black lung), called a "tender". His job is to keep the motor running, feed it gasoline, and repair if need be. Most (80%) tenders are loyal to the establishment, if not out of fear and tradition then for sheer concern for their future, and will report trouble accordingly. Tenders are permitted to carry weaponry, usually an axe, club, or even a sawed-off shotgun. Guards are never far from a powerhouse, so there's always the possibility of back-up if a tender gets into any trouble.

A powerhouse, if sabotaged, could provide an ideal distraction for would-be escapees, since a gas explosion (and fire) is not a common occurrence in Lil' Vegas.

O. FOSTER'S SHACK

This place looks for all the world no more special than the dozens of metal-and-wood shacks and sheds that line the alleys of this part of Lil' Vegas. Locals are vaguely aware of the old man who lives here, and mock him as little more than a tender with a liking for isolation and privacy.

The owner of this shack is a man known only as "Foster", an old man with a wrinkled and weathered face who, despite his advanced age (50), is surprisingly fit and healthy. Foster claims to be a tender, having served the Lil' Vegas mines for 30 years, and given a nearby powerhouse (see Area N) as his to upkeep. Foster is not keen on visitors, and usually either ignores of shoos off those who grow too curious as to what he does in his shed during the day.

Foster is, in fact, an agent for the Foundation (see *Darwin's World Complete* for information on this highly-technological organization), sent a few years back to infiltrate the city and keep an eye on the operation going on in the mines. Foster began first as a miner, using his time in the tunnels to make mental maps, observe conditions there, and keep an eye out for any entrances or unseen passages that might lead deep into the suspected reactor complex below. The Foundation, obsessed with technology and reviving the "way of the Ancients", were particularly interested in finding out all they could about the monumental reactor beneath Lil' Vegas, which they suspected might still contain numerous artifacts – if not the secret to reviving large-scale nuclear power generation techniques.

Foster worked as a miner for nearly 5 years (not the 30 he suggests), but only ever found one "secret" passage – the Abandoned Passage that led to the bat-infested elevator shaft. He also recognized that many of the vertical shafts being used by the miners might, in fact, lead directly to the complex below, but he never had the chance to explore them himself.

Foster still keeps an eye on the mines, and always has his ear to the local rumor mill hoping to pick up on stories of strange discoveries, objects recovered from the depths, etc – at which time he will probably head up to the mines himself and try to infiltrate them to find out the truth behind the stories. Until then, he is content making maps from memory of the mines, bribing guards and miners to smuggle out items of particular interest to the Foundation, and sending messages via hidden radio to a distant Foundation contact in far-away Trade City.

Foster, Foundation spy, Thinker6: CR 9; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Guardian); HD 6d6+6; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Atk Submachine gun +3 ranged 1d10; SQ Knowledge, dirty fighter; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Bluff +9, Concentration +4, Decipher Script +9, Gather Information +9, Heal +5, Innuendo +1, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (technology) +8, Listen +5, Profession (miner) +5, Search +7, Sense Motive +7, Wilderness Lore +5. Exotic Weapon Proficiency (laser pistol), Improved Hit Dice, Run, Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (gather information), Track.

Possessions: None (see below).

Mutations and Defects: Inherent Immunity (radiation), Neural Shield, Bilirubin Imbalance, Underdeveloped Organ (liver).

To those who earn his trust, Foster can be a great friend, providing shelter in his shed (no one would suspect old Foster of hiding wanted men), food and water, and some medical care if needed (see below). If PCs happen to be members of the Foundation, and come to Lil' Vegas on some kind of mission, Foster will likely be their contact (and his shed their safe house) during their "visit".

Treasure: Foster keeps a few precious objects in his shed, in a strongbox beneath some cleverly placed floorboards. This stash contains a submachine gun, 90 rounds of *hollow point ammo*, four doses of *stimshot B* and two doses of *rad-purge shot* in *ready syringes*, a wound-healing *medi-spray*, three sticks of *dynamite*, two *satchel charge Bs* (for sabotage), rope and spelunking equipment, a pair of *binoculars*, a *communicator* (two-way radio set), and an *electronic notepad* (with maps). These latter two items have full *power cells* to keep them operational. He has also been given a *Stage IIC technician-level access card* to permit him to explore the reactor complex (though he has never used it). Finally, the strongbox also holds a sack containing 450 corium pieces to cover expenses and bribes.

P. TORAK'S HOLE

On the outside this building looks like many of the run-down and ramshackle Old West facades that line the dirty alleys of Lil' Vegas, but it just so happens to also be one of the favorite bars in town among the roughest and most degenerate mining folk (and a few visiting outsiders as well).

"Torak's Hole" is usually crammed with miners and a few other patrons (mostly voiceless scavs who've been forced to visit Lil' Vegas out of a shortness of supplies) between mine shifts getting drunk, enjoying various games of oft-violent chance, or mingling with the dusky-skinned and unhealthy whores that frequent the place. The interior is deliberately dim with heavy smoke from exotic pipe weeds, the only glow being that from the vivid green and fluorescent orange drinks served at the bar.

Torak is a well-known personality in Lil' Vegas, easily recognizable from the crowds. He is tall, lean, and roughly middle-aged, his head completely bald - but his eyes glimmer with interest and quiet appraisal of all he meets. Torak claims to be a bartender and nothing more, but he shows a particular interest in the stories of miners and, in specific, the things they have seen in the deepest mines. But Torak is no storyteller himself. He is enigmatically quiet most times, merely serving weird drinks from behind his bar while listening in on the conversations of patrons.

It is unusual that no one has yet noticed the small group of like-minded fellows that often gather in his bar at night, between mining shifts, to share drinks. What's also unusual is the fact that, to date, no one seems to have paid any mind to the fact that they, too, are all bald…

Torak, Brotherhood of Radiation spy, Thinker4/Trader3: CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Ritual Preservationist); HD 4d4+3d6+7; hp 40; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Atk Short sword +3 melee 1d6-1, or *pulse laser rifle* +4/+4 ranged 2d10; SQ Knowledge, protector, spit polish, ear to the ground; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (technology) +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +4. Brew Potion, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (pulse laser rifle), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Silver Tongue, Skill Focus (gather information).

Possessions: Short sword, *pulse laser rifle*, two full *power clips, magnetic shield A*, full *power beltpack,* three doses of *sleeping potion*.

Mutations and Defects: Inherent Immunity (radiation), Neural Empathy, Neural Telepathy, Alopecia, Anaphylaxis (fur), Bilirubin Imbalance, Photosensitivity.

Brotherhood of Radiation agents, Guardian3 (4): CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Ritual Preservationist); HD 3d10+3; hp 28 each; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (Dex, chain shirt); Atk Short sword +5 melee 1d6+2, or *pulse laser rifle* +5/+5 ranged 2d10; SQ Defender; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +3, Knowledge (technology) +6, Listen +3, Spot +3. Exotic Weapon Proficiency (pulse laser rifle), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rip A Clip, Room-Broom.

Possessions: Short sword, chain shirt, *pulse laser rifle*, one *power clip*, one dose of *juju salve* (weapons and armor kept at Torak's).

Mutations and Defects: Inherent Immunity (radiation), Neural Empathy, Neural Telepathy, Alopecia, Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Under-Developed Organ (voice box).

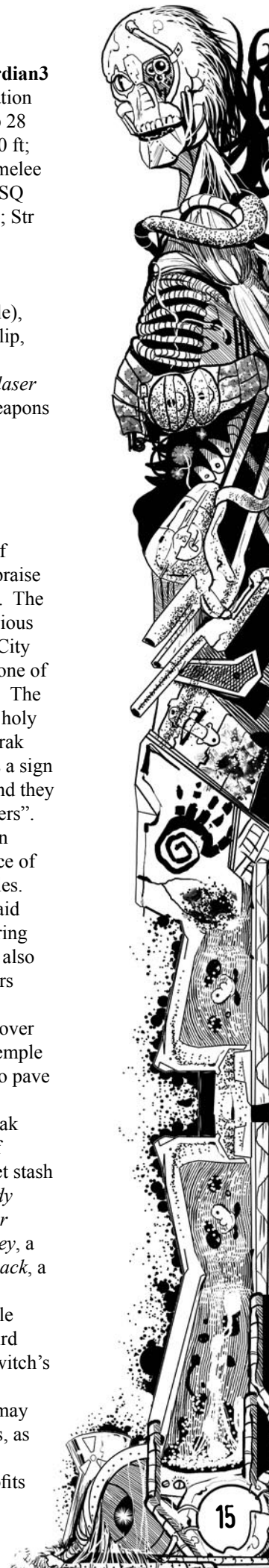
Torak is actually a spy for the Brotherhood of Radiation, sent here years ago to attempt to appraise the mines and the corium rumored to be within. The Brotherhood sees Lil' Vegas as a potential religious site of great significance, possibly rivaling the City of Lights itself, for beneath the mountains lies one of the largest nuclear power complexes ever built. The stories of radioactive corium (often considered holy by the Brotherhood), and the sheer amounts Torak has witnessed being brought out weekly, seems a sign to the Brotherhood that Lil' Vegas is holy ground they cannot leave in the hands of careless "unbelievers".

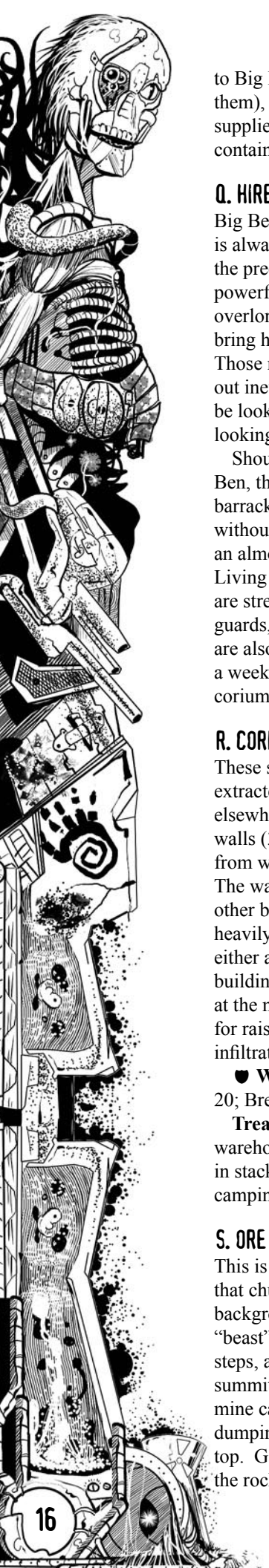
Torak's mission is currently to keep an eye on the progression of things; in specific, the balance of power and the force through which Big Ben rules. The Brotherhood has sent him a few agents to aid him, and these men not only have begun exploring the upper mines (masquerading as miners), but also have gotten a fair estimate of Big Ben's numbers (soldiers, stockpiles, etc). The Brotherhood is planning sometime in the future a forceful takeover of Lil' Vegas, a "crusade" to liberate the holy temple that it represents. Torak and his men are there to pave the way, but for now they are biding their time.

Treasure: In the cellar of the old saloon Torak keeps a secret supply (Search check, DC 25) of weapons and equipment for his cell. This secret stash contains twelve doses of *rad-purge shot* in *ready syringes*, four *pulse laser rifles*, eight full *power clips*, four chain shirts, an *electronic skeleton key*, a *Geiger counter*, two *power cells*, a *power beltpack*, a box of eighteen *light rods*, and an *autograpnel*.

This cellar also contains a still and ramshackle brewery (for brewing corn liquor and other weird drinks), as well as a "laboratory" (more like a witch's condemned workshop) where Torak can brew primitive potions, like the *sleeping potions* he may slip into a drink to incapacitate would-be moles, as well as *thunderstones* and *smokesticks*.

Though Torak must turn over most of his profits





to Big Ben (he is, after all, masquerading as one of them), he skims off just enough to keep his agents supplied with the things they need. The premises contain no less than 500 cp at any given time.

Q. HIRELING BARRACKS

Big Ben, the cruel and despotic ruler of Lil' Vegas, is always looking for men to guard his town and the precious corium mines that keep him rich and powerful. Word in the wasteland is that the obese overlord has a standing offer for any man who can bring his own gun and can prove he's a crack shot. Those men that come to Lil' Vegas to hire themselves out inevitably end up in the company of Big Ben, to be looked over and their values appraised (Big Ben's looking for a particular "breed" of mercenary scum).

Should characters manage to find work under Big Ben, they will be quartered here among rows of barrack houses (similar to those of the miners, but without any restriction on movement in and out, and an almost total lack of disease among the barracks). Living in these wood, brick, and concrete structures are street watchmen. Mine patrollers, and wall guards, as well as members of Ben's personal guard are also housed here. Typical pay is 25-50 corium a week, payable in liquor, water, whores, or raw corium.

R. CORIUM WAREHOUSES

These stone buildings are used to store corium extracted from the mines, before shipment and sale elsewhere. Fogged up, dirty windows high up on the walls (30 ft. above ground level) reveal a bluish glow from within – making it obvious what is kept inside. The warehouses are all rather sturdy (compared to other buildings in town), kept under lock and key, and heavily guarded (two to three guards per building; either at the front door or patrolling the top of the building for a better vantage point). Like the guards at the mine entrance, a few will have *communicators* for raising the alarm should there be an attack or infiltration.

● **Warehouse Doors:** 2 in. Thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Open Lock DC 25.

Treasure: At any given time, a particular warehouse will contain 2,000 to 7,000 corium pieces in stacks, sacks, and chests (actual wooden chests, camping coolers, wicker baskets, etc).

S. ORE EXTRACTOR

This is simply a huge, rusted, monstrous machine that chugs and roars day in and day out, filling the background of Lil' Vegas with a perpetual moan. The "beast" stands almost a full story high, with ladders, steps, and ramps leading from ground level to its summit. Workers from the mine continuously ferry mine carts (or "trams") from the tunnels to this point, dumping corium-laced rock into the opening at the top. Gasoline-powered, the extractor grinds down the rock and ejects it at the bottom, where young or infirm family members of the mining population sort out the corium from the gangue (useless rock).

The work here is crowded, noisy, and at least once a month one of the miners falls or is drawn into the extractor and crushed to death. But the process goes on. The masses of workers forced to work the extractor are almost completely deaf, and a large concentration of guards move among them now and then to make sure they're not stealing corium for themselves. Those that do are shot on sight.

T. DRILL SHEDS

These are similar to the warehouses in the Warehouse District, and are used to assemble many of the machine parts kept in the more distant part of town before being moved underground for final assembly and installation. These warehouses are filled with extension drilling machines, "donkeys" (large static engines), water-fed drills, and other forms of heavy mining machinery.

U. CORIUM MINES

Two gigantic concrete tunnels, each thirty feet high, head right into the mountainside at this point. Banks of long-dead fluorescent lights run the length of these tunnels as they go horizontally underground, leaving enough room beneath for trucks, bulldozers, and other heavy earth-moving equipment to pass into the complex.

A faded sign above each tunnel reads (in Ancient) "WELCOME TO FOUR-STATE NUCLEAR POWER FACILITY, LAS VEGAS, NEW MEXICO".

Outside of the tunnels a virtual tent encampment has been set up, with rail tracks leading from the tunnels out into the bright sunlight. Here, scores of laborers sort through gangue brought up from the mines, extracting in rusted old rock-crushers minute amounts of corium ore for the establishment. Mining carts, and hand-drawn wheelbarrows, continuously come in and out of these huge passages in a steady stream, bringing the priceless stuff out at a regular, hourly rate.

The camp is not just overflowing with workers night and day – it is also patrolled by a large number of guards, soldiers who have orders to shoot on sight any miner or miscreant even *looking* suspicious. Thieves are executed immediately in Lil' Vegas. Workers from the mines are also searched here, near the gates leading back to the city, every day to make sure they aren't holding onto any corium (this is, of course, a quite thorough and nasty full body cavity examination).

At any given time there will be from 35 to 60 guards moving through the crowds of workers, among the grinding machinery, along the rail tracks, or standing atop nearby shacks and buildings for a better vantage point on the goings on in the yard.

V. GRAVEYARD

Evidence that the glittering allure of Lil' Vegas hides a very dark secret, the graveyard is larger than the town itself, sprawling out of town and into a nearby valley. Here the dry sand and loose soil contains a virtual city of the dead, composed solely of the thousands of miners that have died in the mines (either from cave-ins and gas explosions, or through long-term exposure to radiation), and a small population of other slaves such as servants and furniture worn-out over time or killed trying to escape. All told there are nearly eight thousand graves in the "yard", few if any bearing a headstone or monument to their passing. Vultures, rats, and pathetic mutant coyote scavenge this charnel valley night and day.

W. RAVAGERS' CAMP

Not shown on the town map is a location several miles distant among the mountains, a hidden encampment of raiders from the infamous super-gang known as the "Ravagers". This camp was ordered set up by the unknown figure who rules this savage army of road-warriors, to keep an eye on the city of Lil' Vegas and report on the traffic coming in and out of town.

There are around eighteen Ravagers at the camp. There will usually be anywhere from four to six members of the gang on patrol in the immediate vicinity, with another four at various secret lookout posts along the nearby ridges and canyon walls, watching Lil' Vegas and the approach of merchant caravans through the flat country beyond. The remainder stay in camp, among camouflaged tents that conceal various stolen supplies, arms and munitions, and the Ravagers' vehicles.

Characters may stumble upon the Ravager camp if they wander the hills before going to Lil' Vegas, or may even fall prey to the raiders once they flee the city at the adventure's conclusion. The Ravagers here or no better than the rest of their organization, and will likely torture and rape any and all who fall into their hands – after extracting any useful information about Lil' Vegas, Big Ben's forces, etc.

Typical Ravagers, Raider5 (18): CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Radicals); HD 5d10+10; hp 37; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 chains & chaps); Atk Spiked chain +8 melee 2d4+4; or submachine gun (or auto rifle) +8 ranged 1d10 (1d12); SQ Chains & chaps +1, boarding party; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 12.

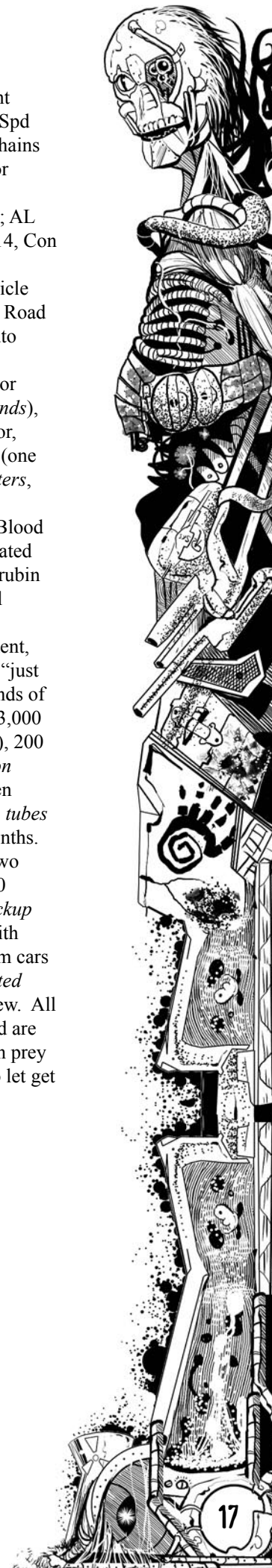
Skills and Feats: Jump +5, Knowledge (vehicle operation) +3, Spot +1. Marauder, Rip A Clip, Road Warrior, Weapon Focus (submachine gun or auto rifle).

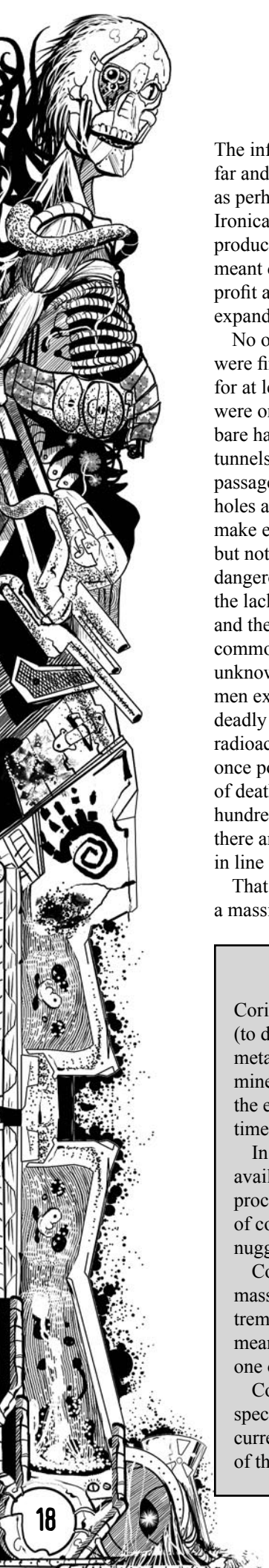
Possessions: Spiked chain, submachine gun or automatic rifle (60 shots; 50% are *jacketed rounds*), two *irritant gas grenades*, studded leather armor, two doses of *juju salve*, binoculars or spyglass (one out of every three), *gas mask*, two *gas mask filters*, *communicator* (walkie-talkie), *power cell*.

Mutations and Defects: Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Serrated Dental Development, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Negative Chemical Reaction.

Treasure: This is a rather modest encampment, but they keep a good supply of munitions here "just in case". These stores include some 3,000 rounds of submachine gun ammo (about 50% *jacketed*), 3,000 rounds of automatic rifle ammo (50% *jacketed*), 200 rounds of machinegun ammo, ten *fragmentation grenades*, twelve *irritant gas grenades*, eighteen sticks of *dynamite*, and enough foodstuffs (*goo tubes* and preserved snoffle hog meat) to last two months.

The vehicles used by the Ravagers include two *motorcycles* (hp 42 and 35), three *racers* (hp 40 each), two *medium cars* (hp 70 each), and a *pickup* (hp 114). All of these vehicles are equipped with *armor spikes*, while the pickup and two medium cars are also *armored*. The pickup also has a *mounted weapon (machinegun)*, usable by one of the crew. All three racers are equipped with a *light frame* and are used as scout and pursuit vehicles to hunt down prey (or those who've seen too much of the camp to let get away).





CHAPTER 3: THE CORIUM MINES

The infamous corium mines of Lil' Vegas are known far and wide across the deserts of the Twisted Earth as perhaps the deadliest mines currently in operation. Ironically, they are also by the far the single-most productive of corium mother lodes, a fact that has meant death and misery as much as it has meant profit and wealth for those who work it's ever-expanding labyrinth of abyssal tunnels and caverns.

No one is quite sure when the great corium mines were first started, but they have been in operation for at least a number of generations. Now what were once primitive tunnels carved by desperate bare hands have become a virtual maze of horizontal tunnels, vertical chutes, descending ramps and passages, all of it shot through with haphazard air holes and narrow ventilation shafts that just barely make existence in the mines tolerable. Tolerable, but not healthy, for the deep earth of the mines is dangerous in many ways: cave-ins due primarily to the lack of engineering knowledge by the miners and their corium-hungry overseers are extremely common, explosive or lethal gas pockets are not unknown, and the corium itself – so prized that men expend their lives trying to find it – can be a deadly substance. The soil and rock, laced with radioactive elements from the powerful reactor that once powered the region, is itself the leading cause of death among the local population. But for every hundred miners that die young, ill, and cancerous, there are a thousand more willing to take their place in line deep in the corium mines.

That is the nature of the Lil' Vegas corium mines; a massive operation fueled by a combination of local labor, volunteers from across the wasteland, and slaves condemned to the mines from nearly every corner of the Twisted Earth. The local pool is considerably smaller than the rest of the work force, but they are by far the most skilled in mining, having descended from mining lineage. Outsiders, such as desperate scavs and other would-be adventurers, come to try a hand and are, by and large, swallowed up by the mines or drowned in the quicksand of company-store policies that rule Lil' Vegas. Slaves, sold by the Clean or Cartel to the city leadership by the score, are thrown in and pushed into the deepest depths, worked to death or simply forgotten, destined to die in unlighted narrows almost a mile beneath the earth.

No one who comes to Lil' Vegas, with thoughts of making it big, ever leaves. The town itself is a death trap, a vice, that draws in the dreamers and either breaks them into miserable conformity or spits them out as radiated and cancerous corpses.

THE DEPTHS

During the time of the Ancients, the area around Lil' Vegas was hand-picked after years of painstaking research to be the site of a massive nuclear reactor complex that would provide enough electricity to meet much of the power needs of a four-state area (New Mexico, northern Texas, Colorado, and western Kansas). Geological conditions were right for the construction of a gigantic underground complex that would, with planning, be ideal for this colossal

MINING CORIUM

Corium is mined regularly from the Lil' Vegas mines, itself being the single most productive source (to date) of corium in the American Southwest. Corium, as described in the Darwin's World rules, is a metallic amalgam of graphite, spent but not necessarily non-radioactive uranium, and other metals and minerals that once comprised the reactor core, casing, pipe work, etc. When the entire core melts down, the extreme temperature literally molds all of these elements together into drippy, fluid-like ooze that, over time, cools in a manner not unlike lava.

In most cases corium simply cools into solid rock and is almost impossible to "mine" with the tools available after the apocalypse; however, when water vapor or certain atmospheric elements enter the process, the cooled corium is flaky, forming into "bubbles" of rock or scale-like formations. It is this form of corium that is most easily mined, since it breaks easily from the mass in manageable portions. These nuggets, shaped like scales, are used exactly as is by merchants and traders across the wasteland.

Corium is itself radioactive, but on the scale of a few "coins" this radiation is negligible. A large mass, however, presents a possible threat to long-term living, and exceptionally large flows can generate tremendous Rad levels - and heat - that can be fatal. In the mines, the heat aspect of corium (with no means of escaping) can cause spontaneous fires and disastrous conflagrations depending on the conditions, one of the major hazards of the "trade".

Corium is also slightly luminous, giving off a white, blue-white, or green color (depending on the specific minerals that compose the given strain of corium). This is one of the reasons it is so admired as a currency, since it cannot be replicated (or at least no one has figured out how to do it yet). In some corners of the wasteland corium is used as a light source, but usually only among more mutated communities.

project. Located deep underground, this reactor complex would not mar the landscape, would be immune to attack or overland disasters (such as flash floods, tornados, etc), and once it had outlived its lifespan would be deep enough to simply bury whole without worry that future generations would stumble upon it and plumb its depths.

No one knows what happened or how it fared, but when the Fall came the great facility was buried as a mass. Its machinery collapsed, was shaken apart, and erupted. Steam created by the nuclear reactions of its numerous "light water" reactors (ironically, the cheapest, and oldest technology available) violently exploded, causing a massive collapse of almost 75% of its tunnels and vault-like chambers. Since the upper reactors failed first, these caved-in and buried the relatively intact complexes below – sealing the engineers and plant workers in under an unimaginable weight or stone and fiery debris well in excess of 3000˚C. Deadly radiation spilled throughout the complex, seeping into every stretch of it and killing anything that might have remained. Vibrations caused by the inevitable meltdown of the core further brought about its destruction, until at last the entire atomic project was silenced under a million or more tons of earth.

Many generations later, rag-clothed wanderers, corium prospectors, came to the region following ancient tales of a mighty reactor complex buried beneath the hills. Over time these intrepid prospectors found the remnants of ventilation chutes that connected the lost reactor complex to the surface, and began the first mines to delve deep into its radiated depths.

The amount of corium in the Vegas "mine" was beyond all imagining. The total collapse and eruption of the unstable cores during the last earthquakes of a century past had allowed molten corium from six of its eight reactors to literally fill entire tunnels and passages with the precious stuff. Like lava tubes, these concrete tunnels and maintenance passages became channels for the glowing, radiated graphite alloy, expanding and moving towards the surface. These first veins of corium blew away the expectations of the prospectors, who, in their haste and excitement, foolishly made the outside world aware of the great wealth to be had beneath the hills.

Their luck and fortune did not last. Raiders, and outsiders, came and destroyed the camps that dotted the hills. Prospectors were either slain for what corium they had on hand, or were eventually enslaved to work the mines by the more far-sighted of raider gangs.

There is untold amounts of corium still to be had beneath Lil' Vegas in the mines – and everyone knows it. So far they have only scratched the surface.

This adventure only details one specific portion of the vast complex (one of the eight original reactors) that comprises the mines of Lil' Vegas. The portions shown here are only a fraction of the true depth and extent to which the miners have been driven to extract the corium ore from the earth. Should the PCs return to Lil' Vegas at a future date, or pursue adventures in other parts of the mines; the GM should use this section as a base from which to create new tunnels and encounter locations.

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS OF THE MINES

No one seems to have put any thought into the long-term effect the corium boom in Lil' Vegas might do to the fragile economy of the Twisted Earth. Currently corium is used as a fledgling currency in many places across the wasteland, but one of the few things special about it is that it is rare and impossible to produce in any quantity. It has no other real value, other than creating a modest luminosity. With the size and amount of corium pouring out of the Lil' Vegas mines, there is a very real danger of destabilizing corium's value in the next few years. Since more and more of it is being bled into the wastes with each passing month, it is entirely conceivable that with the collapse of corium as a currency Lil' Vegas (like any other boomtown of the Old West era) will dry up and turn into an abandoned ghost town, albeit one with a rich – if miserable - history.

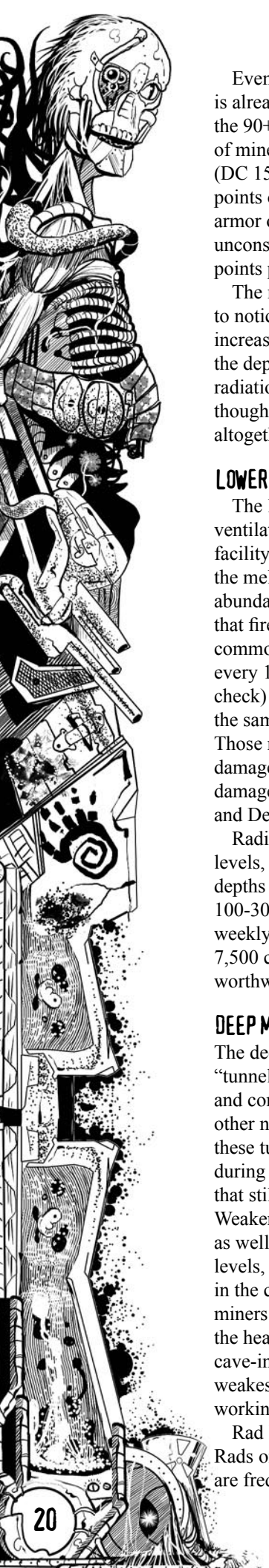
HEAT AND RADIATION IN THE MINES

Heat and radiation are two constant dangers in the corium mines of Lil' Vegas. The GM should be aware that while the specific adventure locations detailed below will specify the various dangers from heat and/or radiation, the vast complex of tunnels will have varying levels of hazard as well. This section is meant to give general guidelines on how to handle heat and radiation in your game.

As one descends into the depths, heat levels increase not only due to the number of human bodies working in the mines but also the growing abundance of corium in the rock – which, being radioactive, also imparts an innate heat to the tunnels that builds steadily over time.

UPPER MINES

The upper mines consist of what was once one of the reactors of the Four State Nuclear Facility. During the collapse and melt down, the entire upper complex caved in, sealing off the reactor complex below it (i.e. the reactor detailed in *Death By Corium Light*) from the surface almost entirely. It has taken generations of mining through the collapsed bedrock, uncovering the fragments of lost tunnels and passageways, to locate the levels and shafts connecting this buried upper reactor to the one sealed – relatively intact – far below.



Even at its shallowest, the heat in the upper mines is already enough to affect workers. A character in the 90+ degree conditions of the first 100 ft. or so of mines must make a Fortitude save every hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage; -4 to the save if wearing armor or heavy clothes. Characters reduced to unconsciousness start taking normal damage (1d4 points per hour).

The radiation in the mines begins to increase to noticeable levels around 75 to 125 feet, getting increasingly more dangerous as one descends into the depths of the corium mines. At this level the radiation is roughly 50-75 Rads in many places, though some areas are completely free of radiation altogether.

LOWER MINES

The lowest level of the mines consists mainly of ventilation shafts and upper corridors of the ancient facility that flooded with molten corium during the melt down. While here the corium is far more abundant, the temperature is of such a critical level that fires and death by asphyxiation are treacherously common. In this heat, a character must save one every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage (with the same minus for wearing heavy clothes or armor Those reduced to unconsciousness start taking normal damage at a rate of 1d4 per 10-minute period. Any damage suffered also brings on fatigue (-2 to Strength and Dexterity until able to cool off).

Radiation levels here are much higher than upper levels, and deaths among workers who brave these depths are significant. Rad levels range from 100-300 Rads in various "hot spots". The typical weekly take, however, ranges from around 5,000 to 7,500 corium pieces, making the risk to human life worthwhile.

DEEP MINES/REACTOR COMPLEX

The deepest part of the mines are just called the "tunnels" – the remnants of ancient cooling vents and concrete tunnel work used to transport water and other necessities for the plant's operation. Many of these tunnels were completely flooded with corium during the meltdown or simply collapsed. Those that still stand are in danger of caving in all the time. Weakened structuring from the original catastrophe, as well as decades of mining and blasting on upper levels, have left these the most treacherous tunnels in the complex. On average, a substantial number of miners are killed every month by flash-fire (due to the heat), unexpected pockets of radiation, or massive cave-ins. Needless to say, only the worst workers, weakest slaves, or most hated prisoners end up working these mines.

Rad levels in these depths range from 50-100 Rads on average, but pockets from 750-1500 Rads are frequently uncovered (much to the dismay of the work-gangs that stumble onto them). The average take, however, is phenomenal, usually being around 8,000 to 15,000 corium pieces each week.

For more information on heat, see "Heat Dangers" in *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

KEY TO THE CORIUM MINES

1. MINE TUNNELS

The two huge tunnels that lead from the surface horizontally into the mines of Lil' Vegas soon converge into one gigantic *stope* (see below), but quickly branch off into countless tunnels and shafts that linger in random directions throughout the next 100 feet or so of mine depth. Metal tracks, laid into the ground where there used to be paved roadway (for heavy vehicle passage during the time of the Ancients), allow ore from deep in the mines to be transported up along these arteries to the surface.

Miners and guards are often entering and exiting the mines, making stealthy intrusion a must (GMs may require Move Silently or Hide checks to avoid being discovered).

2. STOPES (EL 6-8)

These large chambers were once work pits, but whatever traces of corium ore led the miners here has long been mined out. These caverns are now used to house machinery moved from outside warehouses and sheds into the mines. Most of these machines are dormant, waiting to be assembled, or consist of gas generators to help provide lighting further on down the line.

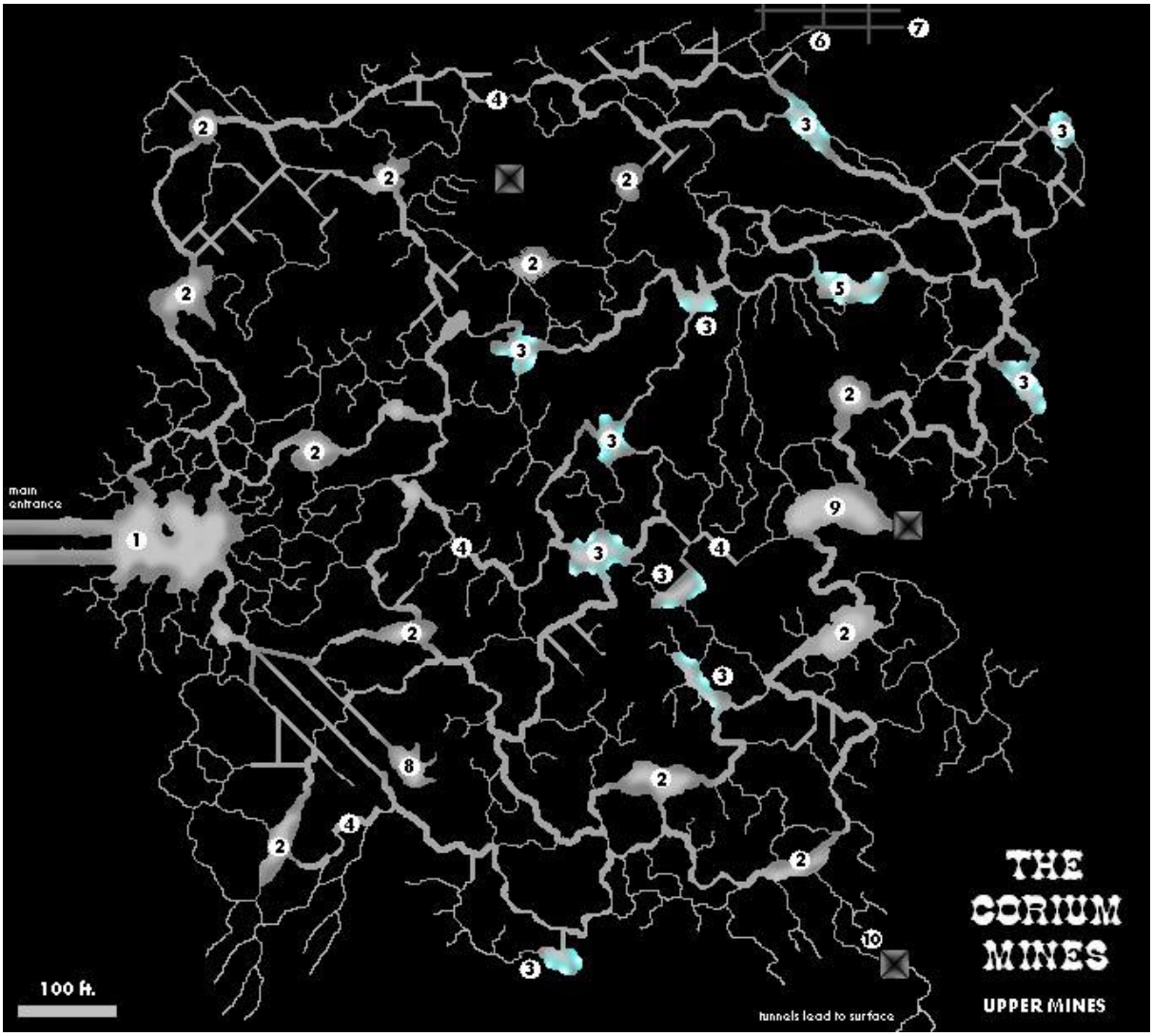
There will generally be 1d3 guards on guard here to protect the machinery from the tampering of slaves or would-be troublemakers. In the event of a hostile encounter, the guards will call for help.

Mine Guards, Guardian3 (varies): CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 3d10+3; hp 33 each; Init +6 (Dex; Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather; +4 protective dermal development); Atk Whip +5 ranged 1d2S; or shotgun +5 ranged *special*; SQ Defender; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Knowledge (technology) +2*, Listen +4, Spot +8. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Possessions: Whip, shotgun (20 shotgun shells), studded leather armor, *light rod*.

Mutations and Defects: Multi-Faceted Eyes, Protective Dermal Development, Sensitive Sight, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Bizarre Pigmentation (sickly pink to mottled freckling), Mongoloid.



3. MINING PITS

The PCs are likely to pass several of these, whether they are infiltrating the mines in secret or enslaved with the rest of the tormented souls of Lil' Vegas. Each of these is a chamber of varying length, width, and height, carved out of solid rock by hand to extract minute flecks of corium ore for the benefit of Big Ben's ruthless authority.

At any given time, one of these areas will have anywhere from 20 to 30 miners/slaves toiling at the rock, either chipping away directly or lugging off large rocks to load carts for transport to the outside. In addition to these miserable souls, there will be the equivalent of three patrols (a dozen guards) overseeing what is going on.

The PCs are unlikely to need to attack these congregations, since the miners are already subdued into submission, and the guards are quite numerous. Each of these areas is also in close proximity to another, meaning that any combat will likely draw more. If they do attack, the statistics for mine guards can be found below (Area 5).

GM's Note: PCs that have been captured, either in the mines or in Lil' Vegas, will invariably end up working in areas such as this, stripped down and chained to one another in loose "gangs".

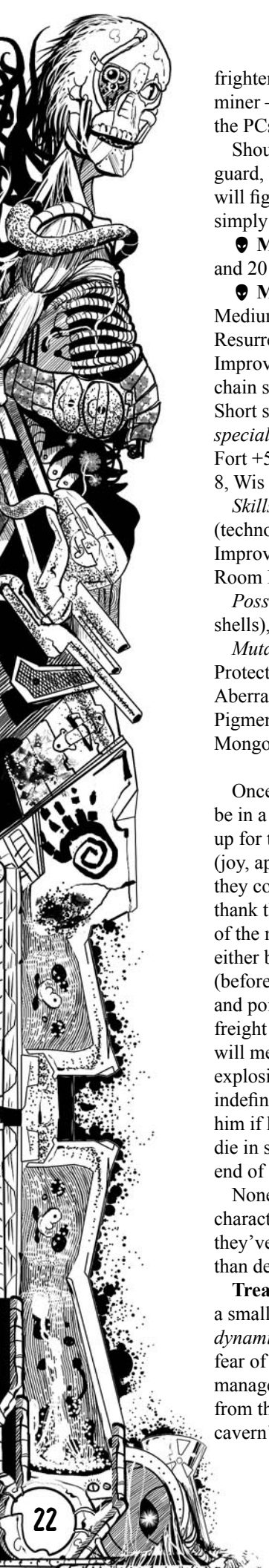
4. WEAKENED TUNNELS

Though seemingly ordinary to the untrained eye, to any character with 4 or more ranks of Profession (mining), or Craft (mining engineer), these tunnels show obvious evidence of being extremely weak. A modest-sized explosive charge (one stick of *dynamite* or more) would certainly be enough to cause a localized cave-in (perhaps involving 20 to 30 feet of tunnel) to seal the passage.

5. BRUTALITY (EL 9)

Up ahead the PCs hear the sound of miners chipping away at stone, followed by the railing of whips and the sadistic shouting of mine guards. Suddenly there is a crack of musket shot, a row of laughter, and miserable sounds of weeping – before the whipping and chipping of stone begins once more.

Entering onto the scene, the PCs see a broad tunnel where a large group of a dozen miners works, on their skinned and bloodied knees, at the command of a smaller group of musket-armed guards. Two



frightened miners are carrying the dead body of a miner –shot through the back of the head – away as the PCs emerge from the darkness.

Should the PCs attack, the miners will be taken off-guard, but once they realize they are not miners, they will fight back. If the PCs work for Big Ben, the men simply sneer and go about their work.

Mine Guards, Guardian3 (4): hp 33, 33, 28, and 20 (see Area 2 for statistics).

Mine Patrol Leader, Guardian5 (1): CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 5d10+5; hp 51; Init +6 (Dex; Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 20 (+2 Dex, +4 chain shirt; +4 protective dermal development); Atk Short sword +8 melee 1d6+3; or shotgun +7 ranged *special*; SQ Defender, called shot (+1d6); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (technology) +2*, Listen +4, Spot +8. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Room Broom.

Possessions: Short sword, shotgun (20 shotgun shells), chain shirt, two *light rods*.

Mutations and Defects: Multi-Faceted Eyes, Protective Dermal Development, Sensitive Sight, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Bizarre Pigmentation (sickly pink to mottled freckling), Mongoloid.

Once the mine guards are killed, the miners will be in a state of shock and surprise – no one has stood up for them before. Overcome by a rush of emotions (joy, appeased vengeance, and then the realization they could be in big trouble for what happened), they thank them briefly before taking off to other parts of the mines. If any of the PCs mentions Arlon, either by name or by description, a few of the miners (before fleeing) will acknowledge they knew him, and point the PCs in the direction of Area 9, the old freight elevator leading to the deeper mines. They will mention that Arlon escaped with a crate of explosives and is probably planning to seal the mines indefinitely. Although they stand to be buried with him if he succeeds, the miners seem almost proud to die in such a fashion, especially since it will mean the end of Big Ben's hold over the town.

None of the men is willing to accompany the characters on their escape, since the mines are all they've ever known. They believe any escape, other than death, is ultimately impossible.

Treasure: The guards have in their possession a small wooden crate containing five sticks of *dynamite,* but they will not use the explosive for fear of collapsing the place. The miners have also managed to loosen no less than 460 corium pieces from this deposit, lying in loose piles along the cavern's length.

6. RAT ATTACK! (EL 8)

Up ahead the tunnel is lit by a chaotic flash of white light and filled with sudden screams of panic. As the PCs round the bend they come across a startling scene – a pack of mangy, limp-bodied miners under attack by a virtual swarm of humongous rats. But these are not just large rats, the kind seen scavenging everywhere on the Twisted Earth – these are naked, pink and writhing, with deformed yellow fangs and claws and pasty white eyes that almost seem to glimmer with a blind thirst for murder.

The four miners have accidentally broken through one of the walls into the remnants of an ancient ventilation shaft, stirring up the irradiated occupants within – a large festering mass of mutated dire rats. As the characters arrive, half the pack will concentrate on the miners (killing them in two rounds), the rest moving to swarm over the new "prey".

Dire Rats (26): CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft, climb 20 ft; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk Bite +4 melee 1d4; SA Disease; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6. Weapon Finesse (bite).

If any of the miners manages to survive the attack, they will thank the PCs for saving their lives before fleeing back towards the surface. If the PCs ask, the men will explain the general locale, even giving direction to the Old Freight Elevator (see below), and giving a warning about some figure known only as the "Torturer" who resides there.

7. RAT PASSAGES

The broken section of wall the miners punched through leads to what immediately appears to be an unnatural series of tunnels; these are no more than 4 ft wide, but perfectly square in shape and smooth, with a metallic "skin" (aluminum-sided ductwork). The tunnels stretch off in each direction from the entry point, but thereafter seem to turn in weird directions and into endless darkness.

This marks the beginning of a maze of air ducts and atmosphere-control tunnels that riddle this entire level, connecting to the levels below. There are virtually miles upon miles of tight, lightless passages, leading horizontally, diagonally (steep or shallow), and vertically throughout. Some ducts have caved-in, blocking passage entirely, and others lead down to the first few levels of the ancient reactor complex that is the source of the corium in the mines.

If the characters choose to follow these tunnels, they will soon find that they are tight, hot, and not easily navigated. In addition, huge mutated rats live in vast numbers among the tunnels and pipes, making nests throughout and scrambling to the attack when the smell of fresh prey reaches them. Encounters with rats should be in numbers ranging from 20 to 30

at a time, but all told there are at least a thousand or more living in the darkness.

Due to the restricted space, medium size creatures suffer a –2 to attack rolls and cannot use large weapons.

Dire Rats (1,000): hp 5 each (see Area 6 for statistics).

8. SUPPLY STORES

This roughly hewn alcove lies off one of the mining tunnels, and is filled with a pile of hastily stashed mining equipment. This equipment consists of two-dozen shovels, picks, and hammers, coils of rope (roughly 300 ft in all), three small casks of tar, various 10 ft lengths of lumber (for shoring), a box of iron nails, and some half dozen lanterns (no oil, or corium, within).

9. OLD FREIGHT ELEVATOR (EL 10)

This huge vaulted cavern appears to have once been a part of the original mine complex, being large enough at least for the passage of heavy dump trucks and the like. The far wall contains the beginnings of a humongous shaft that leads down into a vaporous darkness from which an eerie bluish light is only vaguely noticeable. Here, too, the heat is much more significant than elsewhere, and it is obvious that the shaft (and the depths beyond) is the originator of these high temperatures.

This place is dominated by working men, moving carts from the shaft and breaking the ore within down into smaller chunks to be hauled out. A huge cage of roughly worked iron fills one side of the room, where a band of malnourished and naked slaves languishes in sweat, blood, and misery.

Every now and again workers will be ordered to pull at a huge sturdy rope and pulley system over the shaft, and minutes later a large metal and wood platform ("elevator") will rise from the darkness with anywhere from four to a dozen miners on board with more rock and ore from the depths. The cycle then begins anew.

Overseeing this part of the mines is a particularly huge member of the Vegas governor's mining operation, a man known throughout the mines solely as the "Torturer". This huge mutant shouts in a rolling, thunderous voice whatever commands need be heard, shocking the workers to get a point across or simply to inflict suffering upon them. He keeps nearly a dozen of them caged for his personal amusement, drawing them out to shock, rack, or torture in other ways. The screams, cries, and hoarse-voiced wails of dying men often issue from this place into nearby tunnels and down the main elevator shaft.

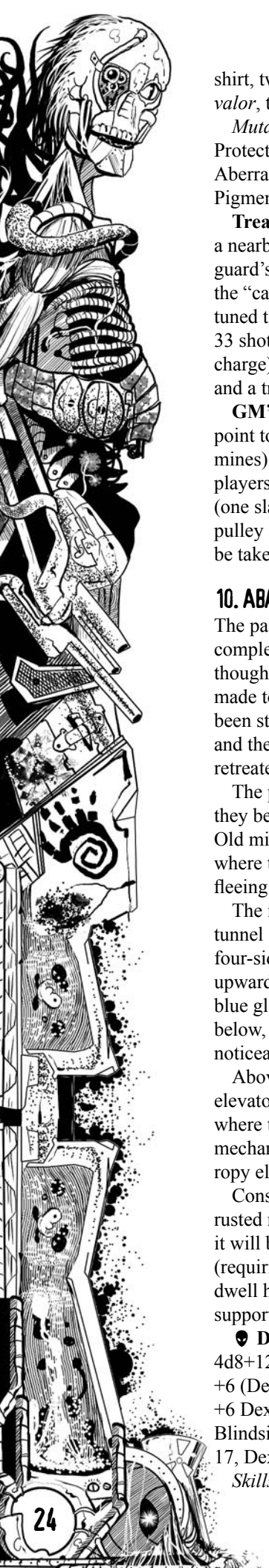
Unless they are recognized as working for Big Ben, when the PCs enter the Torturer and his four bold-natured guards will immediately attack. Slaves and miners will scamper in terror, afraid of stray fire as much as the wrath of their brutally sadistic "foreman".

Mine Guards, Guardian3 (4): hp 33, 33, 32, and 32 (see Area 2 for statistics).

"Torturer", Guardian7 (1): CR 9; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 7d12+7; hp 82; Init +6 (Dex; Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 20 (+2 Dex, +4 chain shirt; +4 protective dermal development); Atk *Stun baton* +11/+6 melee 2d6+5; SQ Defender, called shot (+1d6); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (technology) +2*, Listen +3, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3. Alertness, Improved Hit Dice, Improved Initiative, Marauder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (stun baton), Weapon Specialization (stun baton).

Possessions: Stun baton, power beltpack, chain



shirt, two doses of *juju salve*, one dose of *infusion of valor*, two *light rods*.

Mutations and Defects: Multi-Faceted Eyes, Protective Dermal Development, Sensitive Sight, Aberrant Deformity, Bilirubin Imbalance, Bizarre Pigmentation (dusky violet freckles), Mongoloid.

Treasure: The "Torturer" keeps a few articles on a nearby wooden table and among the scraps of the guard's corner of this place. These include keys to the "cage", a *communicator* (walkie talkie style; it is tuned to the frequency of the guards at the surface), 33 shotgun shells, an extra *power beltpack* (full charge), a cardboard box containing three *light rods*, and a trio of *corium lanterns*.

GM's Note: This elevator shaft is the major access point to the lower levels (at least in this corner of the mines). To have them lowered into the mines, the players will have to have a sizeable number of slaves (one slave for every two PCs on the lift) operate the pulley and ropes. The workforce needed could easily be taken from the slaves in the Torturer's cage.

10. ABANDONED SHAFT (EL 8)

The passages leading to this distant part of the tunnel complex appear to have been abandoned long ago, though it seems such a waste considering the efforts made to blast them. But invariably the walls have been stripped of corium, mining equipment cleared, and the way left lonely in the wake of whoever retreated from this place.

The passages continue on for a good while before they become much more cluttered and oppressive. Old mining equipment is found lying abandoned where the workers inexplicably dropped it, as if fleeing some terrible thing deeper along the route.

The maze of passages comes to an end where the tunnel suddenly breaks through the wall of a huge four-sided shaft (perfectly square) that extends upwards and downwards. A decidedly abnormal blue glow can be seen leaking upwards from far below, and the heat in the shaft is considerably more noticeable than the mines behind them.

Above can be seen the support-laced roof of the elevator shaft (which this obviously was once), where the huge rusted machinery of the elevator lift mechanism can be seen hanging, along with coils, ropy electric wiring, and insulation tubing.

Considering the poor lighting, mess of wires, and rusted machinery dangling from the top of the shaft, it will be difficult for the PCs to notice the creatures (requiring the PCs to Spot them at DC 16) that also dwell here, hanging upside down from the same supports that hold the lift mechanism in place.

Dire Bats (8): CR 2; Large Animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 44, 43, 42, 41, 40, 40, 39, and 25; Init +6 (Dex); Spd 20 ft, fly 40 ft (good); AC 20 (-1 size, +6 Dex, +5 natural); Atk Bite +5 melee 1d8+4; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Spot +11.

The eight mighty bats look almost like draconian things of ancient myth, draped in their long leathery wings and peering through half-closed eyes of the darkest gleaming color. Faces look like the warped vestiges of the most horrific mutants – or worse, demons – filled with fangs and uplifted nose, with ears that suddenly unfurl like a second set of wings as they detect the approach of intruders.

The gigantic shaft certainly is large enough for the creatures to fly about unimpeded, and they can also navigate the tunnels through which the PCs came.

This shaft could be conceivably be used by the PCs to access the reactor complex, below, but the elevators (and the main elevator cable) fell away long ago. It would require a difficult vertical climb (DC 25) of almost 400 ft to reach the Vehicle Garage.

GM's Note: Should the characters slay these creatures, one and all, they will have done the community of Lil' Vegas a favor. These gigantic creatures have taken to fluttering through the mines and out one of several lost ventilation shafts to the surface, flying free at night and preying on lone corium prospectors, hermits, and wandering livestock for the past few months. There death will put an end to a rash of bizarre reports of night-flying creatures bringing death to the mountains near town that have gotten the locals (and even the establishment) worried for their lives and sanity.

LOWER MINES

11. MINE SHAFT

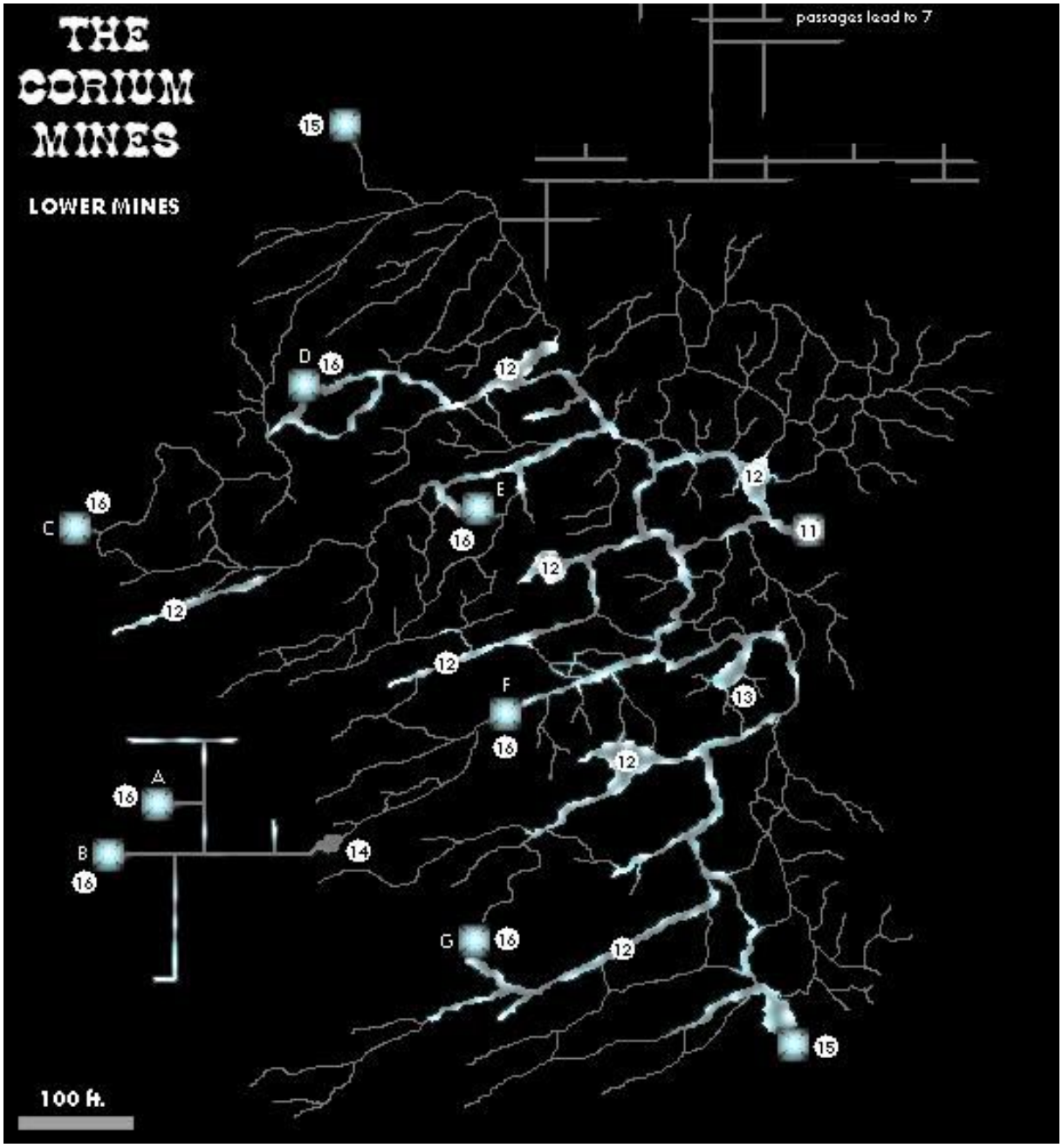
This is the primary means of reaching the deepest levels of the mines; a previously existing elevator shaft, 20' x 20' wide, that provided access to the reactor complexes numerous levels. This shaft, in particular, was discovered long ago and was naturally utilized as a means of exploring deeper levels.

A winch-powered elevator platform (thrown together out of metal and wood) provides access up and down the mighty shaft. The elevator can hold up to a dozen Medium-sized creatures in relatively safety, but it must be pulled up and down from above, slowly and cautiously (see Area 9).

The elevator is mainly used to ferry miners down to the deepest mine level, and bring ore and dead workers back up to the upper levels.

Characters looking over the edge of the elevator, as they descend (assuming they have some means of going down), will notice a deep blue glow coming from far down the shaft. The heat, too, seems to be channeled upwards along the contours of the mineshaft, adding heat to the upper levels of the entire mining complex.

GM's Note: Any confrontation on the lift, as it is being raised or lowered, is a potential hazard since the platform is only about twelve or fifteen feet across – leaving room for passengers to slip or fall off



and down the shaft. If there is a lot of commotion on board (such as melee combat, or a dramatic shifting of weight), GMs might force passengers to make a Balance skill check (DC 15) to stay on. Those that fall will likely be killed from the drop (20d6 damage).

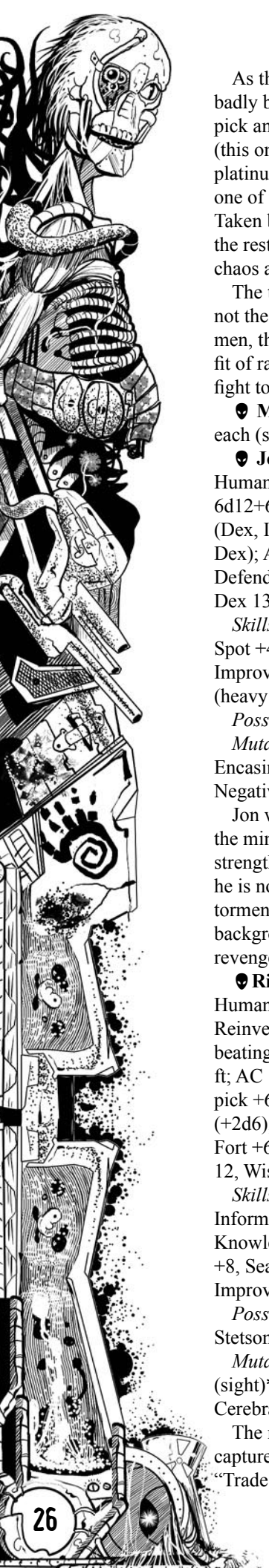
12. DEEP MINES

Solely corium lamps, emitting a dim light that barely frosts the curved and unnatural surfaces of the tunnels and caverns with their weak luminescence, light the tunnels here. The weak, almost rat-like bodies of dying miners and slaves from the wasteland crowd in these tunnels, knees and feet broken on the jagged rocks and shards of chipped concrete, living out their last days.

PCs may move relatively unseen in these tunnels, since guards are few and far between - none like being so deep in the mines and the miners can't escape without getting past the "Torturer" on the level above. The miners and slaves are so weak from the heat and radiation sickness, not to mention malnutrition and delirium that they will not react to the passage of the PCs.

13. PRISONERS (EL 9)

This small cavern is heavy with the stench of death and echoes with the quick beating of hammers and picks on stone. Lit only by feeble blue corium light, the only thing visible is the sight of crouched, naked figures in chains, working the solid rock like a writhing mass of worms. A pair of huge guards watch with sadistic smiles, every now and again stepping forward to lash the bleeding backs of these men for apparently no other purpose than entertainment.



As the PCs enter, one of the miners – a gigantic, badly beaten individual - breaks his chain with his pick and turns to kill the guards. A second slave (this one smaller, and marked with the pale skin and platinum hair of an albino) joins him by bulldozing one of the guards and jumping on him as he stumbles. Taken by surprise, the slavers are unable to prevent the rest of the miners from taking advantage of the chaos and running for their lives.

The two miners will attack the guards whether or not the PCs help. If they are on the side of Big Ben's men, the former ("Jon") will then turn on them in a fit of rage; the latter will simply flee. Jon will always fight to the death.

Mine Patrol Leaders, Guardian5 (2): hp 50 each (see Area 5 for statistics).

Jon, Guardian6 (1): CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Primitive); HD 6d12+6; hp 65 (down to 37 from beatings); Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Heavy pick +11/+6 melee 1d6+6; SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Listen +4, Ride +5, Spot +4. Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Hit Dice, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Specialization (heavy pick).

Possessions: Heavy pick, rags.

Mutations and Defects: Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Increased Body Density, Cystic Fibrosis, Negative Chemical Reaction.

Jon was captured among the wastes and sold to the mines as a slave, fetching a high price for his strength, stamina, and skill with a pick. Though big he is not dumb, and though the mine guards have tormented him and derided him for his primitive background and broken speech, he has been plotting revenge – and escape – for weeks.

Rider, Scav8 (1): CR 10; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Visionary Reinventor); HD 8d8+8; hp 70 (down to 30 from beatings); Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 Canny Defense); Atk Heavy pick +6/+1 melee 1d6; SQ Nature sense, sneak attack (+2d6), radiation sense, canny defense; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +10, Knowledge (mutant lore) +2, Move Silently +7, Ride +8, Search +3, Spot +10*, Wilderness Lore +14. Improved Initiative, Marauder, Mounted Combat.

Possessions: Heavy pick, tattered wide-brimmed Stetson, rags.

Mutations and Defects: Advanced Sensory Control (sight)*, Inherent Immunity (radiation), Albinism, Cerebral Susceptibility.

The man they call "Rider" was a wandering scav captured by the Clean in Tucumcari, the fabled "Trade City", ostensibly after a business deal went sour. Though he won't admit it, the Clean actually accused him of being involved in the murder of a Clean emissary to the raider gangs of the Forbidden Lands. Sold into slavery as punishment, Rider was brought here where he was thrown into the corium mines to be worked to death. The only thing that has kept the stubborn, albino-skinned scav alive is a burning hatred for the Clean, and he has sworn to escape this hell and return to avenge the past three years of bondage and brutal torture.

If the PCs assist Jon and Rider in their escape attempt, both will be grateful and want to repay the PCs in their own particular way. In a simple gesture Jon will pledge to join the PCs in whatever task they are undertaking in the mines (short of working for Big Ben). If they decline his offer, Jon will take his pick and run off towards the surface, attempting to find a way out on his own.

Rider, for his part, will admit that he is a tracker of some skill, and may be able to lead the PCs across the wasteland once they've escaped the mines. This will be an especially attractive offer if the PCs are escaped slaves or runaways, since without adequate supplies on their own they will need a skilled forager to find food and water as well as keep an eye out for other dangers such as radiation and raiders. Rider will honor any deal if it involves his freedom, but will leave the group to fulfill his own destiny once they reach any kind of community outside of Lil' Vegas.

Treasure: The miners here have managed to extract some 855 corium pieces from this particular deposit, lying in a single mining car on the north side of the cave.

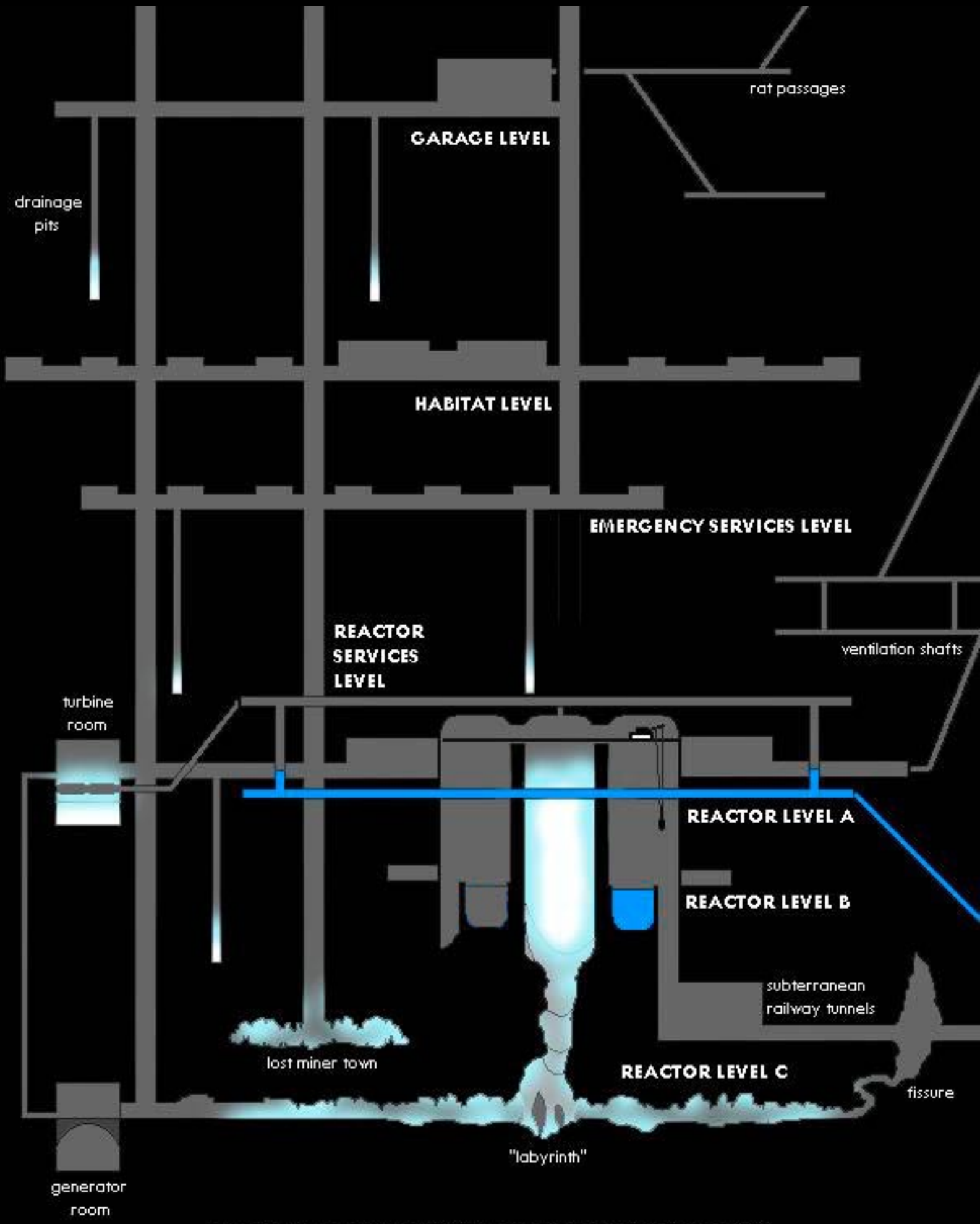
14. GUARD POST (EL 10)

At the end of the mines is a small cave, apparently hollowed out by miners and not quite natural. Here a pair of corium lamps illuminates a small group of nervous-looking guards, clenching firearms tight, watching the opposite side of the room. The break in the rock reveals an entrance to the upper reaches of the buried reactor complex. Upon hearing of the discovery of a heretofore-unknown part of the complex (deeper than the caved-in upper levels, which took years to excavate), Big Ben ordered a number of scouting parties to go in and explore… none returned. For the time being a number of guards have been posted here to make sure no one slips out and into the new areas, and to kill anything that might rise from the dark depths and into the mines.

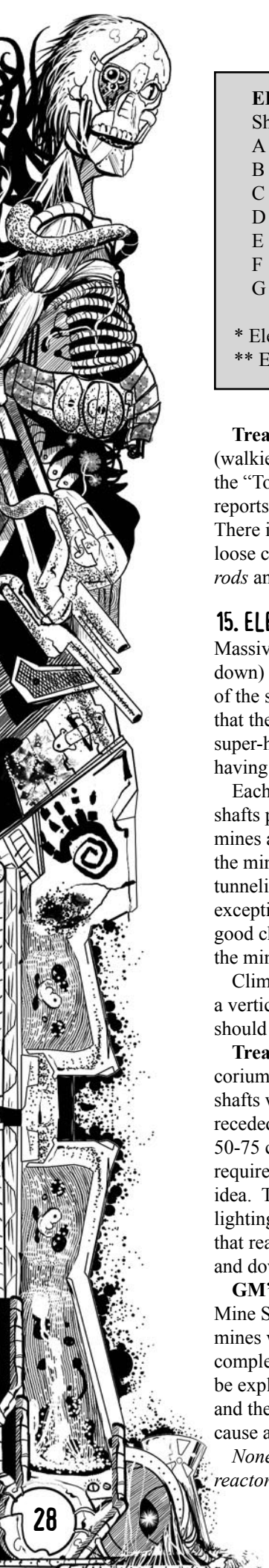
The mine guards are filled with fears as to what might have killed their comrades and the slave parties sent to explore. Rumors speak of strange "floating things" that drool acid and slime. They are not taking any chances, and will fire at anything coming through.

When the PCs enter, the guards will be facing the opposite direction.

Mine Guards, Guardian3 (6): hp 29 each (see Area 2 for statistics).



REACTOR COMPLEX (ABSTRACT CUTAWAY VIEW)



ELEVATOR SHAFTS

Shaft	Garages	Habitat	Emergency Serv	Reactor Serv	Reactor A	Reactor B	Reactor C
A	Y*	Y	-	-	Y*	-	Y
B	Y*	Y (ends)	-	-	-	-	-
C	-	Y	Y	-	Y*	-	Y
D	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	Y**
E	-	Y	Y*	-	Y	-	Y
F	-	Y	Y* (ends)	-	-	-	-
G	-	Y (ends)	-	-	-	-	-

* Elevator doors on this level are intact, requiring a *Stage IIC access card* to open.
** Elevator bottoms out at the Lost Miner's Town (Area 50).

Treasure: One of the guards has a *communicator* (walkie-talkie) with a full *power cell*, for contacting the "Torturer", above, with any sightings and regular reports. A single *corium lantern* lights the place. There is also a small box in the cavern containing a loose collection of supplies, comprised of seven *light rods* and 87 loose shotgun shells.

15. ELEVATOR SHAFTS A

Massive stone shafts extend at these points up (and down) for as far as the eye can see. From below one of the shafts, emanates an eerie bluish glow, evidence that the levels below are flooded with solidified, super-hot corium. The elevators no longer exist, having plummeted long ago.

Each shaft is 20' x 20' wide. The nature of the shafts permits heat from below to carry up into the mines above, adding to the temperatures that afflict the miners. Most of these shafts connect with the tunneling of the Lil' Vegas miners, and as such any exceptionally loud noise (GMs discretion here) has a good chance of attracting some kind of attention from the mines above.

Climbing from this level to any spot above requires a vertical ascent of at least 200 feet. Climb checks should be made at DC 25.

Treasure: Every 30-50 ft, there will be a small corium deposit left over from when many of these shafts were flooded (before the cooling corium receded to deeper depths). Such deposits will contain 50-75 corium pieces worth of the ore, but would require chipping away at in mid-air - not a likely idea. These patches do, however, provide irregular lighting (hemispherical globes of faint illumination that reach out 5 to 10 feet from the shaft walls) up and down the shafts.

GM's Note: These shafts are the same as the Mine Shaft (Area 11), having existed long before the mines were first created as part of the massive reactor complex. Many of these are still intact but remain to be explored or fully utilized. Some are very weak, and the use of an elevator (as in Area 9) might in fact cause a catastrophic structural collapse…

None of these shafts connect to the levels of the reactor complex, instead connecting to long lost parts of the facility that are not detailed in Death By Corium Light. *The actual depth of these shafts is left to the GM's discretion.*

16. ELEVATOR SHAFTS B

As *Elevator Shafts A*, except these shafts do not go up, but rather descend from this level into deeper depths. There are enough pieces of elevator lift machinery affixed to the roof of each shaft to make the attachment of ropes and grappling hooks a relatively easy task. They are still strong enough to support a great deal of weight, short of an intact elevator.

The dimensions of each shaft are otherwise the same, as are Climb DCs. Each shaft provides access to different levels of the mines and reactor complex; for ease of reference, each elevator shaft has been given a letter to clarify which levels it grants access to:

- **Steel Elevator Doors:** 2 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 90; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 30.

GARAGE LEVEL

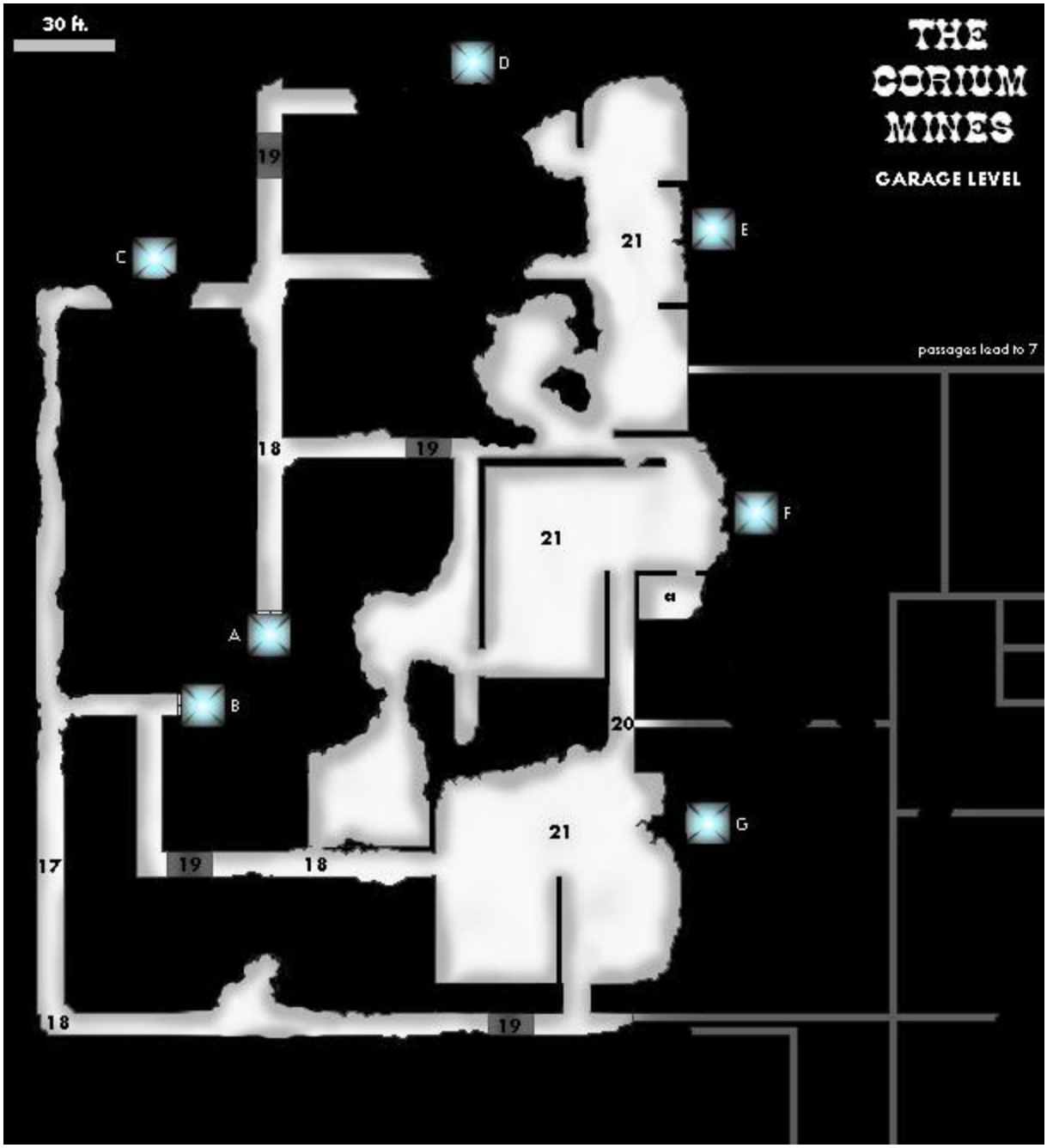
17. ACCESS PASSAGEWAYS

The majority of tunnels and passages were designed to permit the passage not only of engineers and technicians throughout the complex, but also industrial-sized robots and golf cart-sized mini-rovers. As such they are generally broad, sturdily constructed, and easily navigable.

In some places the walls, floor, and ceiling of the passageways may have suffered considerable damage. In these cases, movement is reduced to ¾ speed for vehicles and ground-based robots (no modifier to other forms of movement, however).

18. BOOBY TRAPS

The passageway here has been booby-trapped by Arlon in his "madness" (i.e. desperation). Hidden out of sight, in a pocket of shadows, he has placed a small amount of the explosives he stole from Big Ben, hooked up to a nearly invisible tripwire.



⦸ **Explosive Trap (Satchel Charge B):** CR 3; no attack roll necessary (6d6); Reflex save (DC 22) to take half damage; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22). There is a 35% chance that the explosion will cause a 10 ft. long section of the passage to collapse at this point, permanently sealing it off.

19. DRAINAGE PITS

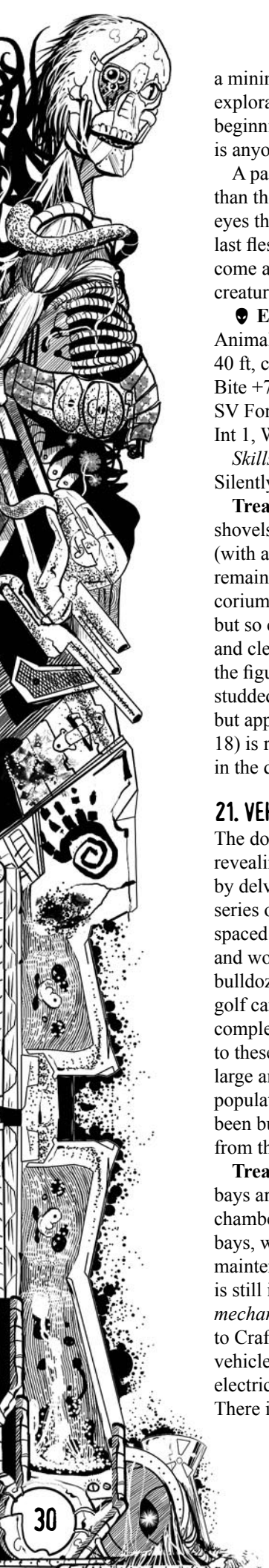
A number of these pits were created with the original complex, designed to channel runoff waters that are a natural occurrence in any underground construction. They are found throughout the complex, on almost all levels.

Each pit is 10' x 10', and eighty feet deep, with sheer slick walls. The bottom is either completely dry or filled anywhere up to one-fourth the way with water A metal grating covers pits, but there is a 50% chance that any grating, when crossed, is weak enough to break (thus dropping the passerby down the pit below). Any water accumulated in the drainage ditch is tainted with impurities, and therefore not a suitable source of drinking water.

⦸ **Runoff Pit (80 ft. deep):** CR 4; no attack roll necessary (8d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 25).

20. BODIES (EL 8)

Up ahead the stench of death is easily recognized, as are the squeaks of numerous rats. The tunnel, once illuminated, proves to be a saddening scene, with the badly rotten remains of nearly a half-dozen humanoid figures scattered all around. It appears the men were



a mining party from the mines above, sent on an exploratory foray into the strange, smooth halls (the beginnings of the complex), but whatever killed them is anyone's guess.

A pack of truly *enormous* mutated rats (even larger than those seen in the mines), bald as moles and with eyes the color of runny egg yolk, are feasting on the last fleshy vestiges of these lost miners. As the PCs come across the scene, these abnormally aggressive creatures scuttle forth to attack.

Enormous Dire Rats (9): CR 2; Medium-size Animal; HD 5d8+10; hp 41 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft, climb 20 ft; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 natural); Atk Bite +7 melee 1d8+4; SA Disease; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +15, Hide +9, Move Silently +4. Weapon Finesse (bite).

Treasure: There are three heavy picks and three shovels among the corpses, a 30 ft. coil of rope (with a grappling hook on one end), as well as the remains of three *corium lanterns* (one is missing the corium chunk used to light it; the others are intact but so covered in debris that they must be fished out and cleaned off to once more shine again). One of the figures wears the tattered remnants of a suit of studded leather armor (still usable), with a shotgun but apparently no ammunition. A Search check (DC 18) is required to find a handful of 2-8 shotgun shells in the darkness nearby.

21. VEHICLE GARAGES (BURIED)

The doorways to these places are all wide open, revealing a cold dark abyss beyond. Lights brought by delvers reveal what must have once been a series of giant storage areas, and between widely spaced pillars of towering concrete stand the rusted and worthless remains of huge transport trucks, bulldozers, and open-topped *mini-rovers* (glorified golf carts for transporting personnel throughout the complex). The elevators that brought these vehicles to these depths (for excavation, or transporting large amounts of goods to supply the plant's 5,000+ population of engineers from distant places) have been buried under literally hundreds of tons of rubble from the shafts above.

Treasure: None of the vehicles in any of these bays are operable. There is a small connecting chamber (marked a) that leads to the vehicle bays, where mechanics kept supplies to do minor maintenance on the vehicles. This side chamber is still intact and contains a full set of *masterwork mechanics tools* (offering a +10 competence bonus to Craft, Mechanics checks) and a rack holding eight vehicle *power packs* (these powered the exclusively electric vehicles used in the reactor complex tunnels). There is also a *fire extinguisher* on one wall.

HABITAT LEVEL

22. HABITAT AREAS (VARIES)

This comprises a vast complex of halls, corridors, rooms, and recreation areas set aside for the engineers and technicians of the plant during off-duty hours. Even now the lighting is still subdued, suggesting that this complex was used for relaxation and off-duty pursuits. Sliding doors, see-through plastiglass wall sections, and automatic lights (that come on when a life form passes by) add to the eerily automated nature of the maze.

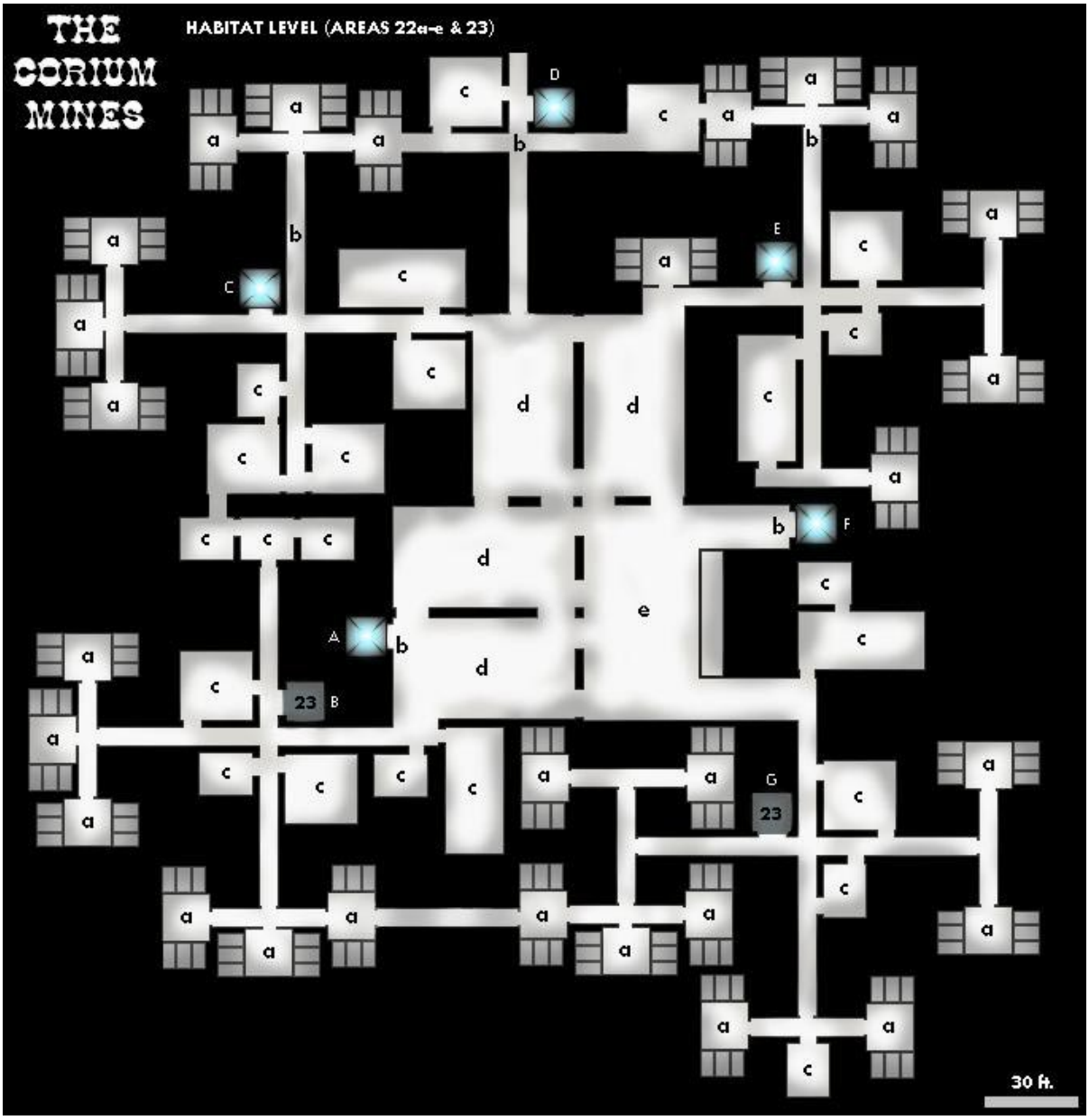
Characters wandering this area will find long-abandoned recreation areas, break rooms, mess areas, lavatories, rest bays - even a cafeteria. Doors automatically slide open as if by an invisible hand, and automatic lighting sputters and blinks on as they move down halls or into new chambers. Still, the heavy smell of rot hangs oppressively throughout the place, and the seeming void of skeletal remains suggests something other than the original inhabitants recently perished here…

Areas marked a are rest bays; these uniformly consist of four separate beds in small individual alcoves (with room for a small TV and personal belongings) connected to a small relaxation chamber – table, magazine/newspaper rack, and automatic coffee machine. None of these areas is likely to have anything of interest, though the GM may assign a 10% chance per room of a single minor or moderate find from the *Artifacts* table (generally manuals with topics related to plant operations, electronics, or computers).

Areas marked b indicate intersections where the corridor is filled with a grotesque, stinking refuse – badly decayed, almost completely unidentifiable. The remains appear to be those of a strange creature, jellyfish like in composition, with no distinct organs now that they have deteriorated so badly. These are, in fact, the remains of heliogryphs that wandered from below into the habitat areas at various times, destroyed by the hover sentries (see below) that stumbled onto them during their patrols. A character can make a Knowledge (Mutant Lore) check, DC 22, to identify these creatures.

Areas with a c indicate meeting rooms, conference rooms, or generic areas, all of which are empty except for old furnishings. Mess areas are marked with a d and sit off the main cafeteria e. The mess areas are simply large cafeteria-style eating areas with dinner tables, fold-up metal chairs, etc. Long-decayed foodstuffs and scattered utensils litter these places without purpose.

Area e, the cafeteria serving the technicians barracked in this part of the complex, still has a minimum of power due to certain backup systems and the efforts of a single, determined robot that



still "dwells" here. The irregular strobe lighting of malfunctioning salad bars and covered buffets poorly lights it. The robot caretaker in question is a large metal oval on wobbling legs, complete with two manipulative arms and a head made to vaguely resemble a human – though over time the plastic faceplate has peeled off to reveal a cold metal beneath.

Robo-Chef (Automaton) (1): CR 1; Medium-size Construct; HD 1d10; hp 10; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 21 (+1 Dex, +10 natural); Atk Slam +5 melee 1d6+3; SQ Berserk, command level (IC), damage reduction -/5, elemental immunity, fearful presence, repair vs. healing, sputtering death; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: None.

The "chef" is programmed to keep the cafeteria running and to keep foodstuffs fresh. The robot is, however, *wild*, and will attempt to force platters of non-digestible swill (looking not unlike soiled black oil in overflowing soup bowls) on any life form entering the cafeteria - where it waits diligently behind the *a la carte* line. If the characters refuse their "required nutrients" the chef will go on a veritable rampage.

Treasure: Behind the cafeteria, in the cold, dark kitchens are to be found vast supplies of what were once foodstuffs to feed the engineers and technicians of this branch of the plant. Most of these foods have spoiled or succumbed to age, but there are 24 *ready meals* of various flavors and 50 *goo tubes* (not-so-yummy green flavor) in one semi-functional commercial refrigeration unit.

Among the halls, and in a number of rest bays, a large number of *hover sentries* continue to patrol in search of survivors, roughly in groups of 3-4. These appear as small spherical hovering craft, perhaps one

foot in diameter, with a single glowing red light in the front and a small antenna apparatus. They float anywhere from three to six feet off the floor as they rove about. The sentries are still looking for organic life to "rescue." They direct, in Ancient, to the nearest elevator – all of which have long collapsed. They are of no other help.

GM's Note: Since they are frightful to behold, there is a good chance a character might, in a panic, fire on the hover sentries. If such is the case the hover sentries will take the entire group of characters for terrorists (probably the culprits behind the facility's catastrophic melt down) and will use lethal force from there on out to hunt the entire group down throughout the whole complex! All the sentries are linked through remote computers and will thus bring all of their numbers to bear in the search for the "enemy".

Hover Sentries (24): CR 2; Tiny Construct; HD 2d10; hp 20 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd Fly 40 ft (perfect); AC 24 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural); Atk *Laser pistol mk2* +6 ranged 2d10; SQ Berserk, command level (IIIC), damage reduction -/5, elemental immunity, fearful presence, repair vs. healing, sputtering death, *magnetic shield A*; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Built-In Weapon (*laser pistol mk2*), Computer Link, Infra-Red Photoreceptors, Internal Power Source, Remote Computer Link, Robot Armor (Light).

23. ELEVATOR BOTTOM

These areas mark the bottoms of the vast elevator shafts of the Lil' Vegas corium mines. Though each shaft continues upwards to a dizzying level, at this point all that can be found is the wreckage of fallen debris, stone, the remnants of elevator cages, and *dozens* of shattered skeletons (miners who fell working the shafts for corium residue).

Treasure: Most of these shafts are filled with corium deposits. A given elevator bottom will have 200 – 800 corium pieces worth of rough corium. Bits of broken equipment fill the area too; a search check, DC 25, will find something of value (a pick, shovel, rope, or working *corium lantern*; GM's discretion).

GM's Note: On Reactor Level C, where the last of the elevator shafts come to an end, the shaft floors are filled with corium to a height of anywhere from 5 to 10 ft. No broken equipment will be found at these depths, and the corium itself is still hot enough to keep the corium semi-liquid (like hot, thick mud). The extreme heat at this level deals 1d6 points of damage per minute (no save), and a Fortitude save must be made every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage; this save is made at –4 if the character is in heavy clothing or any sort of armor. Those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with the corium itself are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell. Radiation at the bottom of Reactor Level C shafts is 800 Rads. The value of the corium deposits at these depths ranges from 2,000 to 8,000 cp.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVEL

24. TECHNICIAN BREAKROOMS

There are a number of these alcoves situated throughout the complex; each is barely a 10'x10' room, connected to the passageway by a sliding door (no access card required); the wall that separates the chamber from the hallway is set with a long plasti-glass window that allows passerby to look in (and occupants to look out).

The room itself contains a table, chairs, cupboards, and shelves. One side of the room is a miniature kitchenette (for preparing meals), the other has a television set (though they no longer receive any reception, of course) and magazine rack.

The actual contents of these rooms will vary. In most cases the magazines, newspapers, and foodstuffs will have long deteriorated to nothing, but with luck searchers may find one or two things of interest (Search check, DC 15):

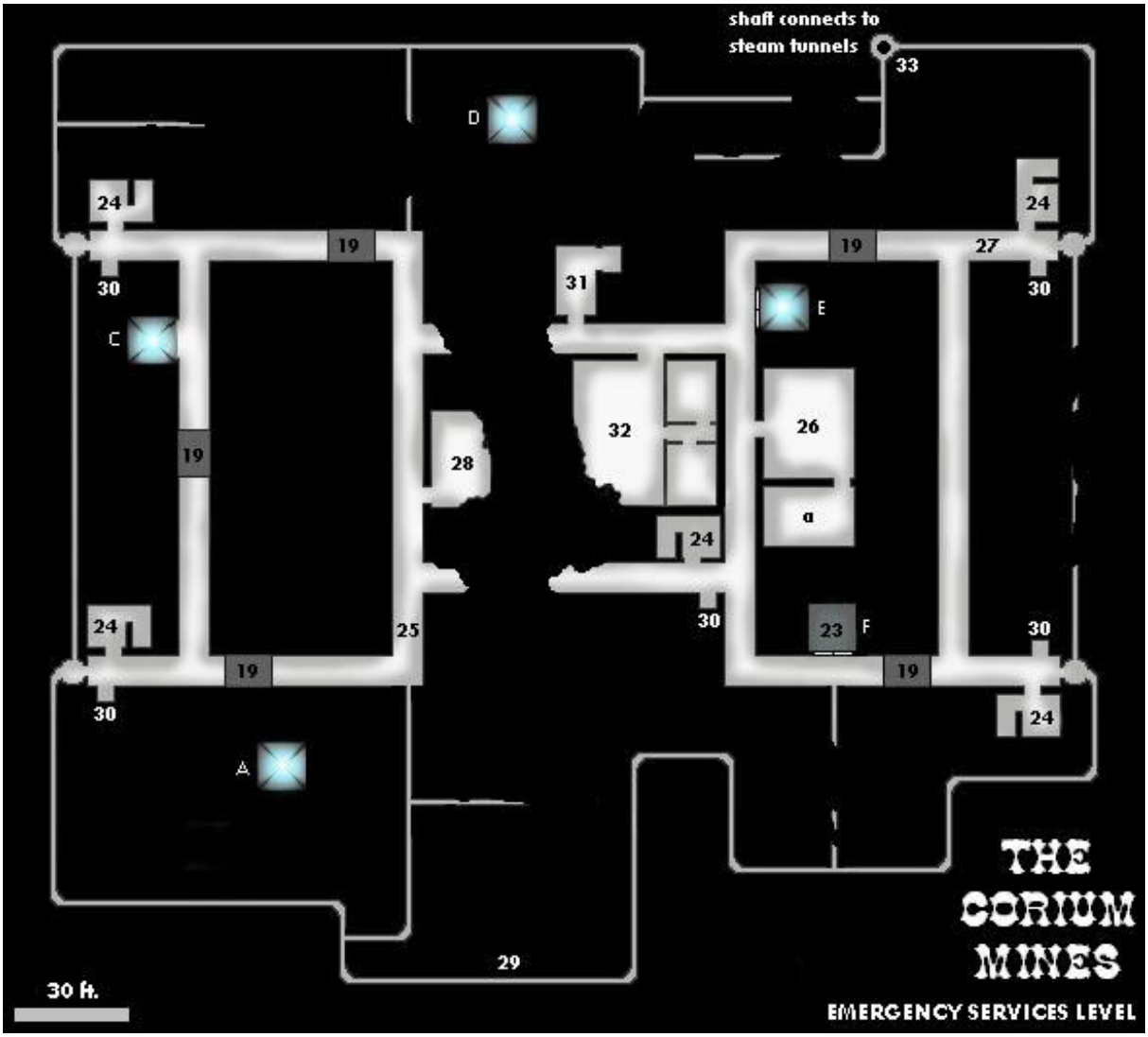
Roll	Finds
1-4	Nothing
5	1d2 *rad tabs*
6	1d2 *light rods*
7	2d3 *readi-meals* (assorted flavors)
8	*Communicator* (walkie talkie; random charge remaining in power cell)
9	*Stage IIC access card*
10	Roll twice (ignoring results of 1-4)

25. BODY

A badly-rotten body lies against one wall here, the light of its dimming corium lamp still illuminating its withered flesh, full of oversized maggots and unnatural-looking worms as thin as spaghetti noodles.

This is the body of a miner who either attempted to escape the hell of Lil' Vegas on his own, or got separated from his work party, got lost, and found his way down here by pure accident. Whatever the case the man perished alone, leaving only his body and a few telling items.

Treasure: In addition to a *corium lamp*, the corpse has in its possession a heavy pick, an empty waterskin, two *light rods* (one used, one unused), a sack filled with 800 corium pieces, a charcoal pencil, and a hand-written note. The note (in Unislang, and written with the rough charcoal pencil) reads: *"Strange hovering metal things in the tunnels above; even stranger fleshy things floating below. And the telltale glow, I think it is the source of the red fever. So thirsty. Don't think I'll make it."*



26. INFIRMARY (EL 10)

This place lies open. Inside, what were once stainless steel walls are now streaked with strange black lichen and russet brown molds (all harmless), their patterns on the wall conforming to where old water pipes burst behind the masonry long ago. Occupying the center of this chamber is a bank of four man-sized beds (covered in stainless steel and the shreds of bedclothes), an array of overhead lighting and computer displays, and large stainless steel shelves with plastiglass doors. The remains of disintegrating skeletons lie on all four of the beds, as well as lie crumpled all over the floors in neat rows (overflow patients from the final hours of the complex-wide collapse).

A pack of humongous mutated rats, of various sizes, congregate here and will move to feed if the party enters.

Dire Rats (10): hp 5 each (see Area 6 for statistics).

Enormous Dire Rats (6): hp 50, 49, 47, 43, 42, and 40 (see Area 20 for statistics).

Treasure: There is a 20% chance that one of the skeletons (technicians) has a *Stage IIC access card* in the pocket of his overalls, but otherwise the bodies prove to be long dead - and stripped to comfort them in their dying hour. There are a number of expended *ready-syringes* scattered about, but these are bent and useless. The plastiglass doors to the shelves require a Stage IIC card to open, but inside are to be found the remains of what was once a well-stocked supply of medications – these consist of ten doses of *hemochem*, one dose of *K-O shot*, three canisters of wound healing *medi-spray*, eighteen doses of *rad-purge shot*, and a single dose of *sustainer shot*, the latter in its own *ready syringe*. The remaining medicines are in small glass bottles (except for the medi-spray, of course). There are no ready syringes left in the place, however, just the medicines. There is also a *diagnostic scanner* here, but the beltpack that powered it is missing.

The area marked **a** is an *emergency morgue*. The doorway to this room requires a Stage IIC access card to open. Inside the smell of rot has not completely diminished from the sterile stainless steel interior of this chamber. Wide metal shelves along the walls are

full of heavy black plastic bags (body bags), almost two dozen in all, all of them filled with skeletal remains of Ancients who died in the hours after the melt down. None of these body bags has anything of use in them.

Steel Door: 2 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 90; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 30.

27. MINI-ROVER

A small vehicle sits abandoned in the middle of this stretch of passageway. The vehicle is a *mini-rover*, a kind of open-topped "golf cart" powered by an electric motor, carrying four to six passengers (two in the front, the rest in the open back; it provides no cover to driver or passengers) throughout the complex.

Mini-rovers were used commonly to ferry engineers and technicians about. This mini-rover appears to have been abandoned for no apparent reason. The electric motor is in working condition, the entire vehicle being operable.

Characters may use the mini-rover to transport themselves (and possibly treasure or supplies) throughout this level of the complex. A single *communicator* (walkie talkie) sits on the front passenger seat, but its *power cell* has been drained. The mini-rover is otherwise empty.

28. EQUIPMENT STORAGE CHAMBER (EL 5)

A heavy lead-colored door closes this room off from the passageways outside. A metal slot, mounted at shoulder-level, lies beside the portal. A message, painted in Ancient in bold letters, reads "EQUIPMENT STORAGE 54J".

Before entering, any character making a Listen check (DC 21) will hear a strange stumbling from beyond the access door. In addition, there is a barely-audible hum in the air, almost like a high-pitched siren.

Access to this chamber is restricted to the holder of a *Stage IIC access card*. The door, however, is malfunctioning, and will open only on a 2 in 6 each time the proper card is presented to it. Other attempts to open the door (including slamming against it) have a 1 in 20 chance of causing it to slide open automatically, before quickly closing again just minutes later.

Inside it appears very much like a locker room, complete with steam showers (no longer in operation), dressing room, and locker bay.

Once inside, there proves to be a single screamer here, trapped within. The creature will attack immediately as soon as the door slides open.

Screamer (1): CR 5; Medium-size Undead; HD 4d12; hp 45; Init -2 (Dex); Spd 15 ft; AC 8 (-2 Dex); Atk Claw +4 melee 1d3+1; SA Burns, radiation; SQ Glow, no vitals, undead; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 6, Con -, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +2. Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Treasure: A number of old rusted lockers contain no less than four *environment suits* (one of these, however, has lost its interior lining due to age and thus will protect for only ½ the Rads it's supposed to), a crate of twelve *light rods*, three powerful *flashlights* (each with a full *power cell*), a dozen *rad tabs* (50% of which are likely to be used up), a pair of hand-held *Geiger counters*, and a single *power beltpack* (anywhere from 50% to 100% charge remaining). In a separate section are kept three *acid resistant shields* (treat as *large metal shields of acid resistance*) and half a dozen long-handled prongs, used in handling radioactive fuel rods and waste. Furthermore, the storage room also has a single *medical kit* on one wall (with the addition of six doses of *rad-purge shot* in *ready syringes*).

Another locker contains a pair of *boron solution sprays*, but being backpack-sized these each contain twice the normal number of uses for such an item.

Steel Door: 2 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 90 (down to 70); Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 30.

29. BLOCKED SHAFT (EL 7)

The maintenance shaft here is blocked off by the body of a large oval-shaped robot, which appears to be repairing a minute portion of a mile-long mess of cables and underground piping. The hulking robot is immovable (it weighs far too much to budge), and will not apparently acknowledge the presence of anyone addressing it (its sensors have deteriorated to such a point that it can no longer recognize sounds or movement – only repairs that need to be completed).

The maintenance robot moves at a rate of 5 ft. every 10 minutes up and down the passage. At any given time it will, on a roll of 1-3 on d6, move down the passage five feet; otherwise it moves back up the passage. Roll every round to see what direction it moves.

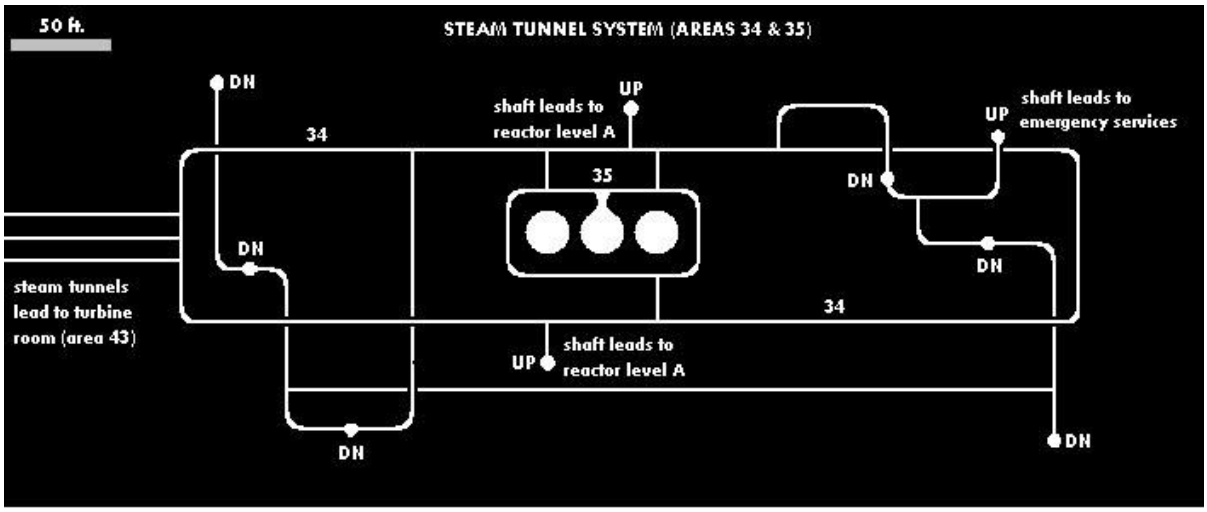
Characters will find the robot blocks the passage wherever it is, and cannot be moved short of destroying it completely. The robot will fight back if attacked, or strike out with its flailing arms if tampered with.

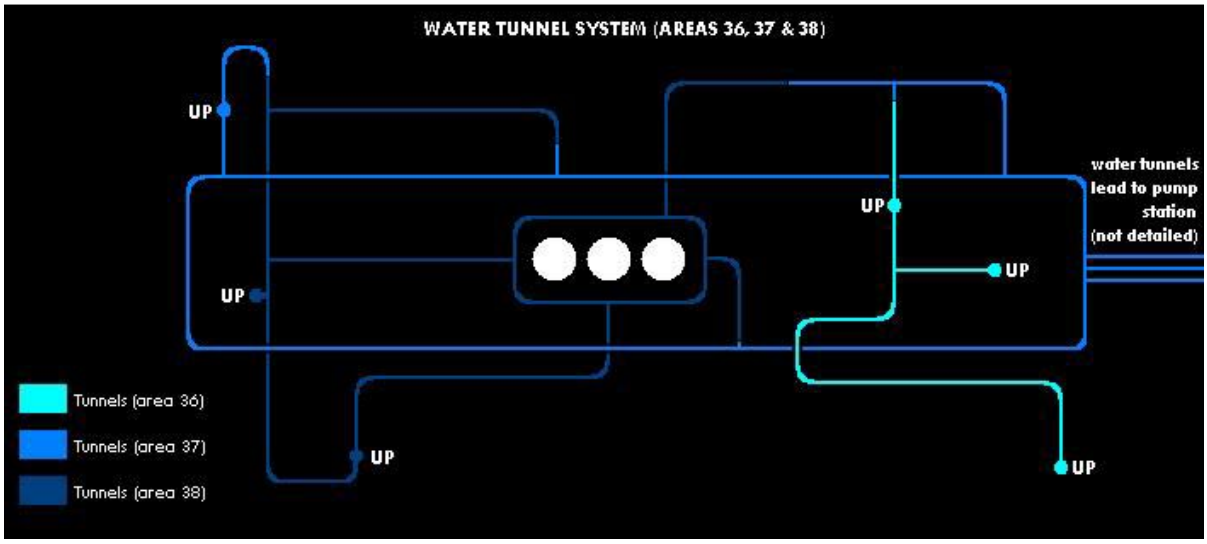
Maintenance Robot (Industrial Robot) (1): CR 7; Large Construct; HD 6d10; hp 60 (down to 57 due to damage); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 20 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural); Atk 4 slams +16 melee 1d8+10; SQ Berserk, command level (IIC), damage reduction -/5, elemental immunity, facing, fearful presence, repair vs. healing, sputtering death; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 30, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Computer Link, Crushing Strength, Internal Power Source, Multiattack, Remote Computer Link, Robot Armor (Light).

30. MONITORING STATION

Set into the wall at various points throughout the complex are small 5 ft x 5 ft alcoves. These alcoves are generally identical in format - just a cubical





niche with a single computer console and interface. These stations were set up to allow technicians and maintenance personnel to monitor current conditions on a given level.

There is a 50% chance that these computers are still operating on emergency power (roll for each station when and if the PCs try to access the console). A Knowledge (computers) check at DC 25 is required to wade through the various menus and submenus to call up the few bits of information that might be of use. In particular, a successful roll will call up a map of that particular level (the GM should use the maps provided, either making a copy or hand-sketching one to give the players), with a trefoil-shaped icon in any room, tunnel, or passageway marking hazardous radiation leaks and hotspots on that level (75 Rads or more).

31. SECURITY STATION A

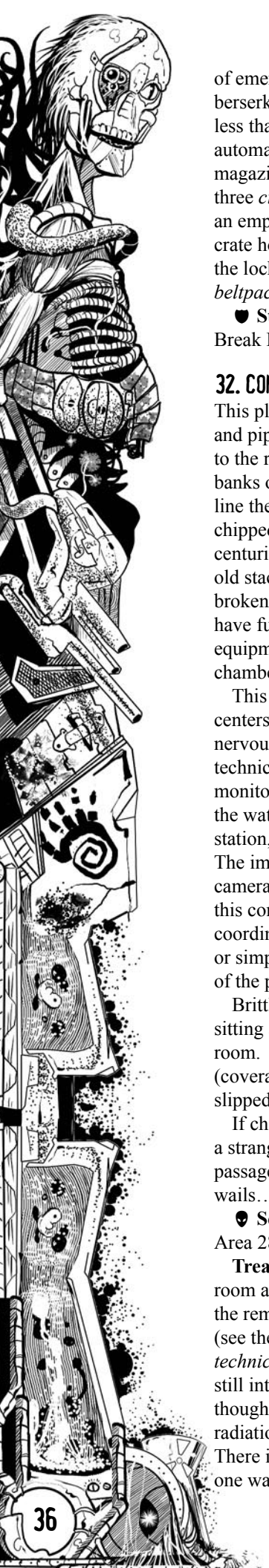
A faded trim of blue paint on this door reads "SECURITY STATION A6", leading in a broad blue band towards a blinking black console at roughly shoulder-level just beside the door on the corridor wall. This is an identity card slot, which requires a Stage IIIC access card to open.

This identity card lock is special in that if it does not receive a card of the proper level on the first attempt, it locks itself out indefinitely (even to electronic skeleton keys and other cards), and also delivers a jolt of electricity for 2d6 points of damage to the would-be intruder.

Once inside, it becomes obvious that this was some kind of security post, for there is a small area beyond with a swivel chair sitting before a bank of television monitors, and a switchboard covered in a sea of lights and switches. Off to the side is a small ten-foot niche, filled with shelves and racks for weapons and body armor.

The control panel no longer works, and the lights have all dimmed to darkness long ago. The panel once linked to the many cameras of the complex, allowing 24-hour monitoring. The lights monitored security, fire, and automatic radiation-detection alarms that are placed throughout the complex; this bank completely shorted out during the melt down and could not be revived even with extensive repair work.

Treasure: The armory section of the security station contains a repository of weapons and devices kept in this part of the vast underground plant in case



of emergencies – terrorist attack, disgruntled worker, berserk android laborer, etc. The racks contain no less than three *hand stunners*, a *stun baton*, three automatic pistols (with 270 rounds in nine full magazines), a shotgun (100 rounds in two boxes), three *civ sec suits*, a hand-held *Geiger counter* (with an empty *power cell*), three *rad tabs*, and a cardboard crate holding six unused *light rods*. Also among the lockers are four *power clips* and a single *power beltpack*.

Steel Doors: 2 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 90; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 30.

32. CONTROL CENTER A (EL 10)

This place is a shambles. Large aluminum ductwork and pipe have collapsed from the sagging ceiling to the room below, smashing the nearly two-dozen banks of computers and computer screens that line the walls of the place. Bright white tiling has chipped, cracked, crumbled, and turned ugly over the centuries, giving the place the appearance of an age-old stack of bones. Chunks of fallen stone, having broken through the roof from the complex's collapse, have further crushed and scattered electronic equipment and control computers all over the huge chamber.

This place was once one of many localized control centers, a part of the complex's enormous "central nervous system". Here, a staff of highly-qualified technicians and specialized scientist androids monitored conditions in the reactor, the steam ducts, the water tunnels, the deep-earth water pumping station, the turbines, and the transformer stations. The images of nearly fifty closed-circuit television cameras all over the complex could be viewed from this control center, allowing the accurate and efficient coordination of efforts in a disaster, or to fight fires, or simply to supervise the daily operations of this part of the plant.

Brittle skeletons lie scattered about the place, sitting at old consoles or simply scattered across the room. The shreds of old white technician's uniforms (coveralls and lab coats) lie at their feet, having slipped off their disintegrated bodies generations ago.

If characters linger for more than a single round, a strange glow begins to emerge from various side passages, followed by an ear-piercing chorus of wails…

Screamers (5): hp 48, 48, 47, 47, and 40 (see Area 28 for statistics).

Treasure: Each of the two dozen skeletons in this room and the connecting computer stations wears the remnants of a lab coat or *technician's overalls* (see the end of this module for the properties of *technician's overalls*). Roughly 20% of these are still intact. All of the skeletons wear a *rad tab*, though 25% are unusable due to previous exposure to radiation during the collapse (before they fled here). There is a single *fire extinguisher* in a glass case on one wall. There was a medi-kit here as well, in a plastic case on one wall (marked with a red cross), but it was looted long ago.

A Search roll, DC 21, will also uncover a single computer console that remains intact despite the damage to the room; a Knowledge (computers) check, DC 25, can be used to sift through the computer network and call up a digital *map* of the complex (see nearby map). Unfortunately none of the printers in the control room work, so the map cannot be produced in hard copy (therefore, show the map for only as long as the PCs remain in this chamber).

33. MAINTENANCE SHAFTS

Each of these small chambers is little more than a pillar-shaped alcove that leads up (or down), by ladder, to another shaft, tunnel, or duct. An identity card computer universally controls the entranceway to whatever connects these two passages, each with its own localized power source (in the event there was a power failure, the inherent weak point, the access ways, would remain locked in place). There is a 90% chance that the power source of a given maintenance entryway will be in operation, requiring a *Stage IIC identity card* to open (otherwise it is jammed tight). The door itself is a powered steel door that runs on narrow tracks, making it extremely difficult to damage or blow loose.

Steel Door: 3 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 120; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 30.

REACTOR SERVICE LEVELS

34. STEAM DUCTS

These heavily reinforced ducts were designed to channel the high-speed, high-pressure flow of steam from the reactors to the turbine chambers above. The tunnels invariably connect to the old flooded tunnels (Flooded Tunnels are shown on the map), but since the reactor has been offline for centuries, the steam ducts are almost completely bare and empty passageways.

Characters can pass along these ducts for what seems like miles without encountering anything of interest. Since these tunnels were meant only to carry high volumes of pressurized water vapor, anything left in the tunnels could potentially be torn loose and foul up the turbines. Thus the tunnels are utterly bare (except, in a few cases, for the presence of shallow pools of cooled water).

35. HOLE TO REACTOR (EL 12)

Sinewy rivulets of molten metal flow from the gigantic maw of this tunnel, but after decades of cooling it looks more like a stony river and mud cascade frozen in mid-stream. A very noticeable glow of deep cobalt blue emanates from the warped columns and streams of the cooled stuff, and the temperature in the tunnel is beyond imagining.

This tunnel was created by high-pressure steam from the melting down of the Reactor Core. When the reactor went through its violent final minutes, a column of molten corium melted through the bedrock and forced its way (under the pressure of expansion) through the ruptured wall, filling the entire corridor like a lava tube. From this point back the entire tunnel is flooded with solidified corium.

This site would be ideal for mining corium (there is a solid, easily-traced vein back to the core), but the temperatures brought on by the radiated material are almost completely intolerable.

The extreme heat in the tunnels deals normal damage (unlike regular subdual damage from lower levels of heat). Simply breathing the air in these tunnels deals 1d6 points of damage per minute (no save), and a Fortitude save must be made every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage; this save is made at –4 if the character is in heavy clothing or any sort of armor. Those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with the corium itself are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell.

In addition to the heat hazard, there is another danger present, that of radiation. This vein connects directly to the great molten reactor core, and thus the radiation is intense at this point (and beyond). The rad level in the room is a potent 2,000 Rads, enough to kill virtually anything that remains for long.

A number of exceptionally large heliogryphs, attracted by the radiation, are often found flitting about this glowing, abysmal shaft.

Giant Heliogryphs (4): CR 8; Huge Aberration; HD 10d8+50; hp 95 each; Init +0; Spd Fly 30 ft (good); AC 11 (-2 size, +3 natural); Atk 2 acid darts +5/+0 ranged 2d8; SA Acid; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Rip A Clip.

Treasure: The vein itself must contain a virtually limitless supply of corium, enough at least for ten men to live in luxury for a lifetime (1,000,000 or more cp). Extraction of the ore, survival from the heat and radiation, and the fact that the establishment of Lil' Vegas would kill anyone with so much corium – are all difficulties that would have to be addressed before this vast amount could be broken down and drawn out for the profit of the adventurers.

36. FLOODED TUNNELS A (EL 8)

A series of ancient waterways used to transport water from a deep-earth pumping station up and to the reactor core, cooling the core and creating the steam that generated the plant's colossal power. Now many of these tunnels have collapsed or simply been cut-off. Though the water recycling has stopped, the water remains in the tunnels, filling them roughly halfway, leaving only four to five feet above for air.

Moving through these tunnels should not present much of a hazard, since the water is relatively cool (though still warm) and isolated from any life forms inhabiting the radiated complex. Since the tunnels did not actually enter the core (the water here passed *near* to the core to create steam; the water used in the core proper was channeled elsewhere since it was highly radiated), they are not in themselves radiated to any serious degree.

Living in these tunnels is a group of screamers, the animated remnants of the ancient dead who died long ago in the complex. The coming of these creatures can generally be anticipated, for wherever they go along the tunnels there is a telltale glow and the twisted, high-pitched "wail" of their radiant, ionized bodies echoes weirdly through the shafts.

Screamers (3): hp 48, 45, and 40 (see Area 28 for statistics).

37. FLOODED TUNNELS B

These tunnels have a steadily increasing temperature the deeper they go down. In addition, these tunnels quickly become so full of water that there is no longer space to remain above the surface, necessitating fully submerged movement along its course.

In addition, the water itself is of a high temperature due to the waterway's proximity to the corium lodes of the deep. Anyone swimming through this water suffers 1d6 points of scalding damage per round of exposure.

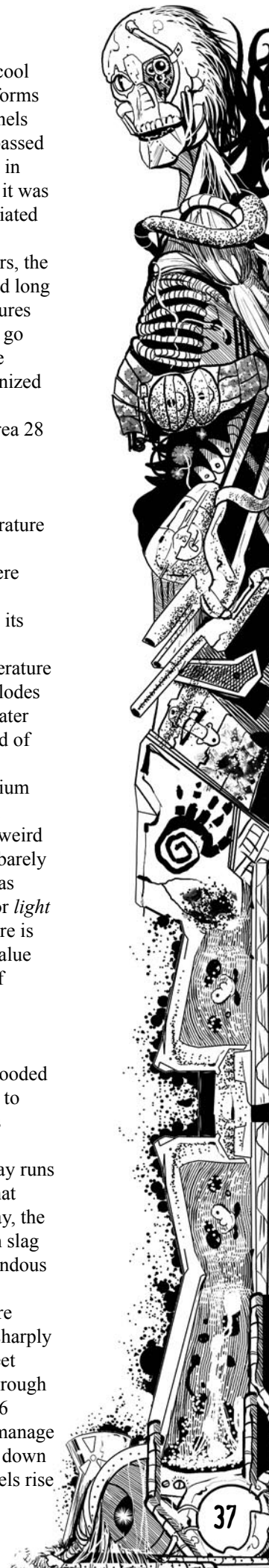
Treasure: Tiny nuggets of quick-cooled corium dot the waterway bottom, where corium leaked through and, hitting the water, cooled fast into weird and disturbing shapes. These nuggets provide barely enough illumination to allow swimmers to see as they go (thus no need for a flashlight, lantern, or *light rods*). These nuggets can also be collected; there is a 1 in 6 chance that a nugget or clump of any value (50-80 cp apiece) will be found for every 20' of tunnel traversed.

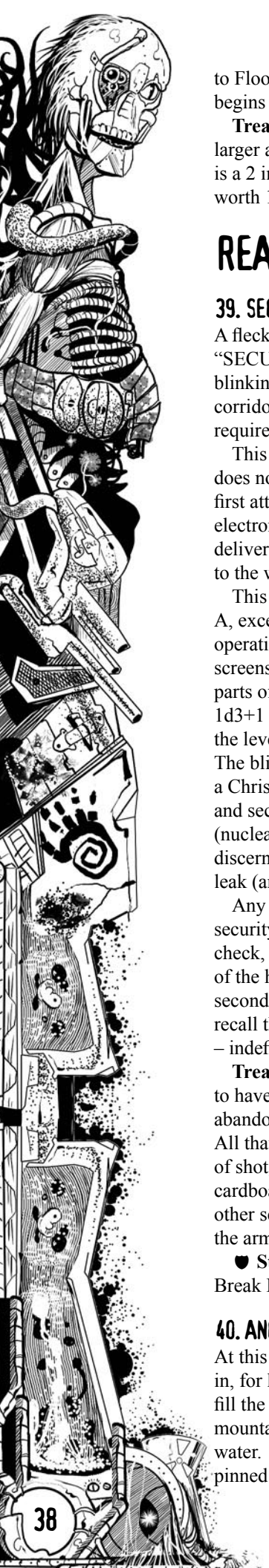
38. FLOODED TUNNELS C

These tunnels are completely submerged (as Flooded Tunnels B). Characters must swim underwater to navigate these waterways to any point along its length.

At this point the submerged, flooded waterway runs in close proximity to the ancient reactor core that once powered four entire states. Needless to say, the closeness of this tunnel to the white-hot corium slag of the core causes the water to heat up to tremendous temperatures.

Characters will notice, with a Wilderness Lore check (DC 15), that the temperature begins to sharply increase as they continue more than 10 or 15 feet down this waterway. If they persist, passage through the near-boiling waters causes no less than 10d6 points of damage *per round*. If the characters manage to survive, they find the temperatures slip back down to relatively normal levels wherever these tunnels rise





to Flooded Tunnels B - where the tunnel once more begins to head away from the core area.

Treasure: Chunks of corium along the bottom are larger and more frequent along this waterway; there is a 2 in 6 chance of finding a lump of corium slag worth 100-400 cp for every 20' of tunnel.

REACTOR LEVEL A

39. SECURITY STATION B

A flecked trim of dark paint on this portal reads "SECURITY STATION B7", beside which sits a blinking console at roughly shoulder-level on the corridor wall. This is an identity card slot, which requires a Stage IIIC access card to open.

This identity card lock is special in that if it does not receive a card of the proper level on the first attempt, it locks itself out completely (even to electronic skeleton keys and other cards), and also delivers a jolt of electricity for 2d6 points of damage to the would-be intruder.

This chamber is identical to Security Station A, except that the consoles here appear to still be operating on emergency power; about 90% of the TV screens are filled with static, but a few still monitor parts of the complex (including the Vehicle Garages, 1d3+1 random Technician Breakrooms on any of the levels, Infirmary, and Control Centers A & C). The blinking panel of lights and switches looks like a Christmas tree, all lit up with hazard, warning, and security threat alarms. Characters using Craft (nuclear technician), DC 18, can use this panel to discern which parts of the complex have a radiation leak (any locale with more than 75 Rads).

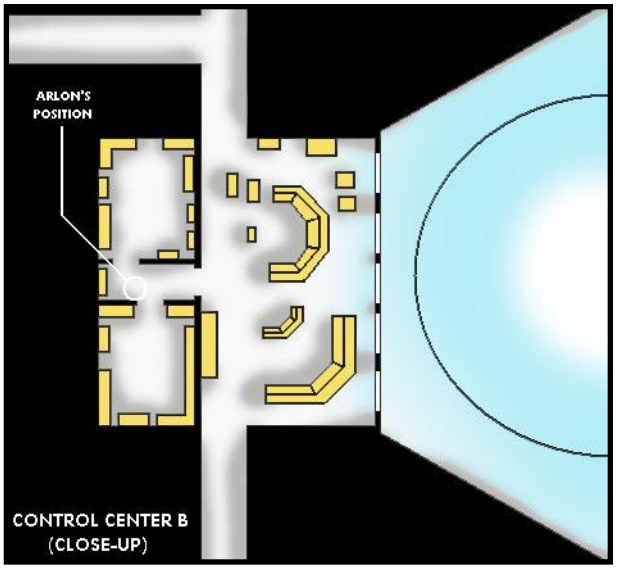
Any character attempting to manipulate the security console may make a Knowledge (computers) check, at DC 25, to tap into the security network of the hover sentries in the Habitat Areas. With a second successful check (DC 30), the character can recall the hover sentries back to their recovery bay – indefinitely if they so desire.

Treasure: The armory in this station appears to have been largely looted during the attempted abandonment (and sudden destruction) of the facility. All that remains is a single *hand stunner*, 25 rounds of shotgun ammo in a single box, two *rad tabs*, and a cardboard crate holding a single *light rod*. Unlike the other security station, there are no power sources in the armory.

● **Steel Doors:** 2 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 90; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 30.

40. ANCIENT RESCUE PARTY

At this point there seems to have been a major cave-in, for huge blocks of broken stone and concrete fill the cratered passageway here; flow-off from the mountain has filled shallow pools with murky brown water. Figures in faded yellow rubber can be seen pinned and crushed under a number of these huge



slabs of stone, and badly rusted equipment lies strewn about.

Treasure: These bodies have nothing of real interest. There is a *Geiger counter* (smashed beyond repair), a rusted and leaking *power beltpack* (5 charges left; picking up the item proves to be dangerous due to leaking acids, which cause 1d6 points of damage to the handler), three used *light rods*, one unused *light rod*, and a smashed *electronic notepad* (this had maps of the entire complex on it, but it is now completely useless) with a drained cell inside.

41. SKELETONS

Up ahead, in the meager light of whatever sources they are carrying, the PCs see the remains of several ancient skeletons lying against one wall of the passageway, preserved through the centuries in a position of fear and terror – each lying almost in a ball, legs brought up tight to the chest, arms crossed together, in a side-by-side huddle (fetal position); a few are still holding hands. The figures are each cloaked in a fine veil of spider webs and dust, but the shreds of once-white overalls prove they must have been Ancients who died, isolated until the air and food ran out, among the sealed tunnels of the complex.

These are indeed the remains of a party of fleeing technicians who had to detour on their way to the elevators when various sections of tunnel collapsed and the elevators fell to a violent end at the bottom of the elevator shafts.

How they ended up in this part of the tunnels is unknown, but they obviously died here after first their light source ran out, then they perished either by heat, radiation, or lack of food.

Treasure: Two of the four skeletons still wear clothing that is salvageable. These clothes consist of a pair of white coveralls with light-reflective plastic strips up the legs and arms, zippered up the front with an insulated collar (*technician's coveralls*; see *New Items*).

In addition to these technician's suits, each has a *rad tab* (used), and an expended *light rod*. One of the skeletal figures has, in one pocket, a *cigarette lighter* (44 charges remaining).

42. CONTROL CENTER B (EL 13)

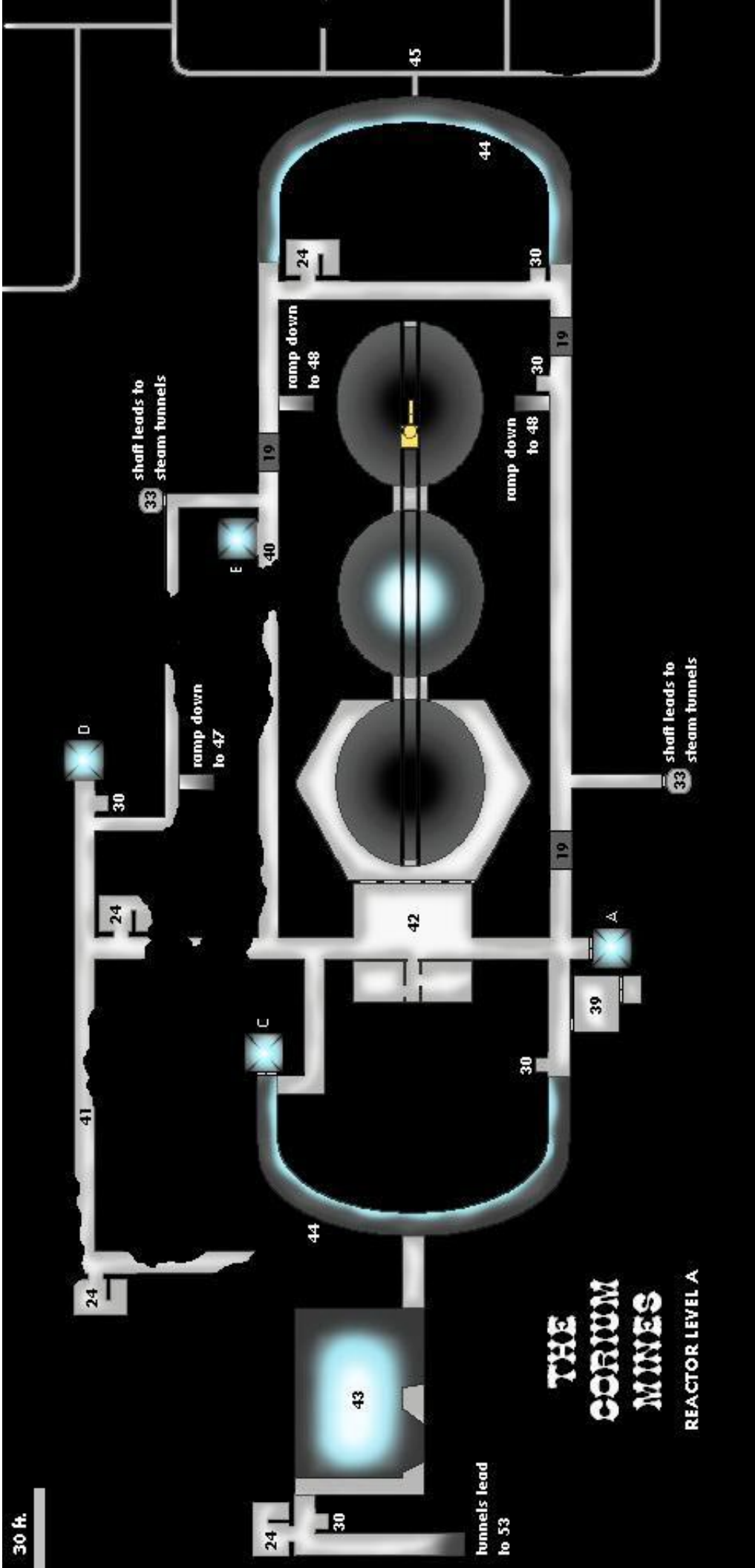
The white tile of this chamber seems to be in relatively good shape, as do the banks of computers that face out (through a gigantic window) over Area 47, below. Someone has apparently left a number of light rods and corium lanterns burning in this place, adding considerable light to the sepulchral chamber. What's more, emergency power (either left on or re-activated by some recent visitor) seems to be running through a few of the computers, as their screens flash various strings of code, maps, and digital diagrams of this part of the complex. A walkie-talkie sits upright on one of the console, crackling with the muffled sound of static and the conversation of the mine guards on the upper levels of the complex.

Whoever made this mess seems to have stepped out just moments ago…

What happens next depends on whether the PCs are here as hirelings of Big Ben, or whether they come for other reasons. Since Arlon was able to see them coming (monitoring the TV screens on one of the control panels), he will hide in the shadows in a neighboring room, watching the group from a concealed position. He will then attempt to use *Neural Empathy* to sense their motives. If they've come serving Ben, Arlon will detect it, and will immediately start throwing grenades at them (even into the control center, his abode, because by now he's desperate to thwart Big Ben).

If he does not sense hostile intentions, Arlon will emerge (*stun baton* at the ready) and demand the PCs explain who they are. The man himself is quite a sight – clad in a beat-up old environment suit scavenged from the complex, unshaven and badly bruised, a harness strapped to him dangling with scratch-built grenades. A certain look of desperation glimmers in his eyes, making it obvious he is a man not to be trifled with!

Arlon is expecting a party sent by Big Ben; if the PCs explain they are escaped slaves, he will welcome them as "brothers", share his modest supplies, and explain his plan (see below). If they have news of his daughter Xea (see the



Coronado in Lil' Vegas), he is overjoyed that she is at least still alive (albeit even more filled with hatred due to her fate), and will even go so far as to befriend the group.

If the PCs came here serving a major faction, Arlon will be eager to make new allies and tell all he knows about the complex. He knows about the robots on the Habitat Level, the heliogryphs in the Cooling Pool area and below (he suspects there must be a "colony" even deeper in the complex, but he's never seen it), and of screamers in the water tunnels. He will not share any of his supplies, and will further state his intention to destroy the entire complex, warning outsiders to flee or be killed in the collapse. If they attempt to stop Arlon from completing his plans he will fight them to the death.

Arlon, Thinker8/Demolitions Expert7 (1): CR 17; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Visionary Reinventor); HD 8d4+7d8; hp 80; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 environment suit); Atk Stun baton +8 melee 2d6-1; or fragmentation grenade +12/+12 ranged 6d6; SQ Knowledge, dirty fighter, inspire skill, eye for safety, keen eye, trap making (DC 22), grenadier +2, make explosives; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +14, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +13, Climb +3, Concentration +7, Craft (tinker) +21, Disable Device +21, Heal +4, Hide +18, Knowledge (computers) +11, Knowledge (technology) +11, Listen +13, Move Silently +18, Open Lock +11, Search +11, Sense Motive +6. Exotic Weapon Proficiency (stun baton), Fertile/Potent, Improved Hit Dice, Improved Initiative, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (craft, tinker), Skill Focus (knowledge, technology), Vulture.

Possessions: Stun baton, eight fragmentation grenades, environment suit, web belt, light rod, stage IIC access card, power beltpack.

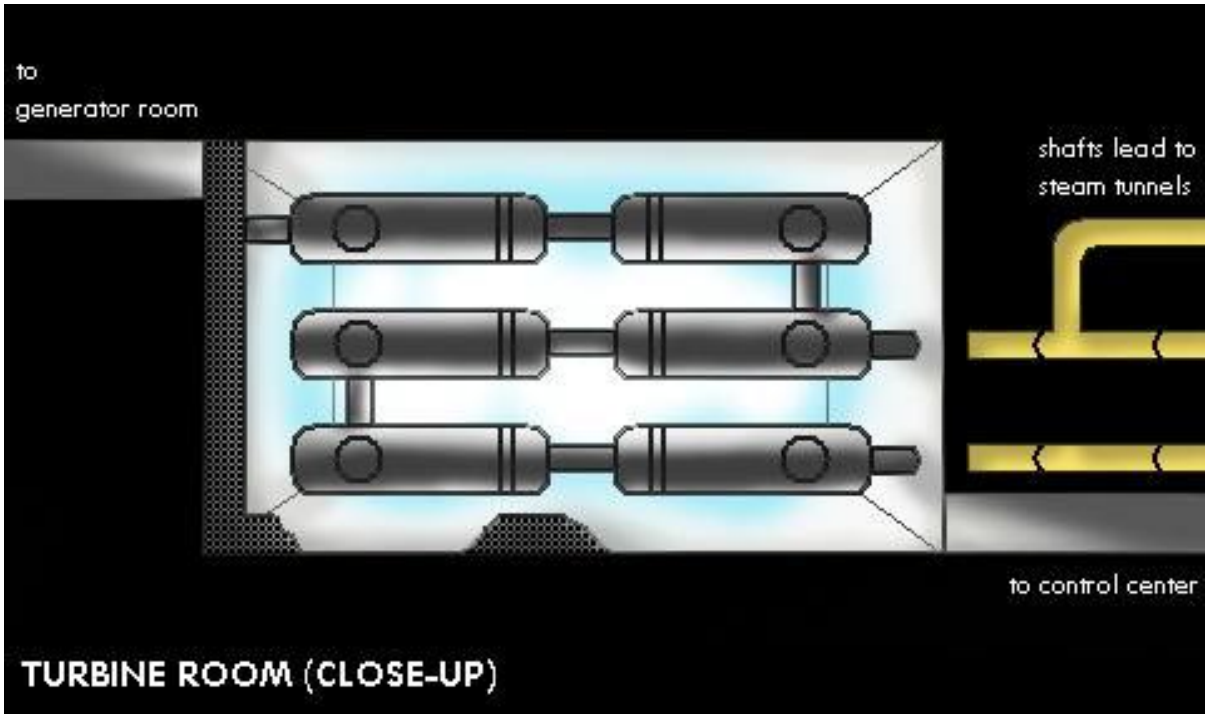
Mutations and Defects: Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Neural Empathy, Negative Chemical Reaction, Unstable Neural Activity.

Treasure: Arlon stole quite a few goods from the mine guards before he fled. These items are to be found scattered about the room in haphazard order; 33 light rods, six light sticks, a communicator (walkie talkie), four power cells (one is two-thirds drained), and a can of boron solution spray (8 charges left). There is also a small cardboard box containing some stolen medical supplies – eight ready syringes, 10 doses of rad-purge shot, and 10 doses of stimshot A (these latter being in two separate glass bottles, in liquid form).

In addition to these supplies are the explosives Arlon stole away to the mines, including thirty sticks of dynamite, three fragmentation grenades (in addition to those he carries), and enough plastic explosives to make four more satchel charge Bs (which he is currently constructing in hopes of bringing down the complex).

Finally, a few of these computers are still in operation. The screens currently show random images from a handful of security cameras still operating on this level (these cover Security Station B, the Turbine Room, and the hallways of Reactor Level A). The working consoles also allow someone in this room to access any maintenance station on any level (thus call up overhead maps of all levels from the Emergency Services Level to Reactor Level B), though this requires a Knowledge (computers) check, at DC 25.

To those who will listen, Arlon will explain his plan. He managed to sneak off with enough explosives that he can permanently bring down this part of the reactor complex – keeping the corium out of Big Ben's hands. It is a desperate, spiteful act, one that will simply put Ben back a few years – but it will



be a sign to the miners that something can be done to fight back.

Arlon needs help with the final stage of his plan – placing the four satchel charges throughout the complex in areas he has guessed are structural weak-points. The charges must also be timed exactly so they go off all at once. Though he could do this by himself with the risk of possible error, now that the PCs are here (assuming they're willing to help), the plan has an even better chance of working.

The four locations that Arlon needs the charges placed are: Anywhere on the **Habitat Level**, **Control Center A**, **Generator Room**, and in the **Reactor Core**. The last he is willing to do himself, for he believes it will probably be a one-way trip due to the impossibly-high levels of radiation there – a last act of revenge that, though it will claim his life, will avenge all the miners that have died in Lil' Vegas.

GM's Note: From here the PCs may have to split up. Unless they've already cleared the stated areas of potential foes, they could be in for some interesting one-against-many encounters; or they could simply go and place the charges one by one as a group. If the charges are placed individually, each PC must make a Disable Device check (DC 15) to properly set the timer. If they go as a group they will have to make calculations to account for their progress so that all charges go off at exactly the same time; the DC then rises to 25 each time a charge is to be set.

If the characters have enough communicators (possibly taken from the guards throughout the mines), they can increase their chances by taking advantage of Arlon's Inspire Skill ability. By listening to his directions, they will receive a +10 competence bonus to their Disable Device checks.

Any failure in setting the charges will result in either a premature detonation, a failure to detonate, or an inability to bring down the complex as planned due to the lack of coordinating blasts (GM's decision).

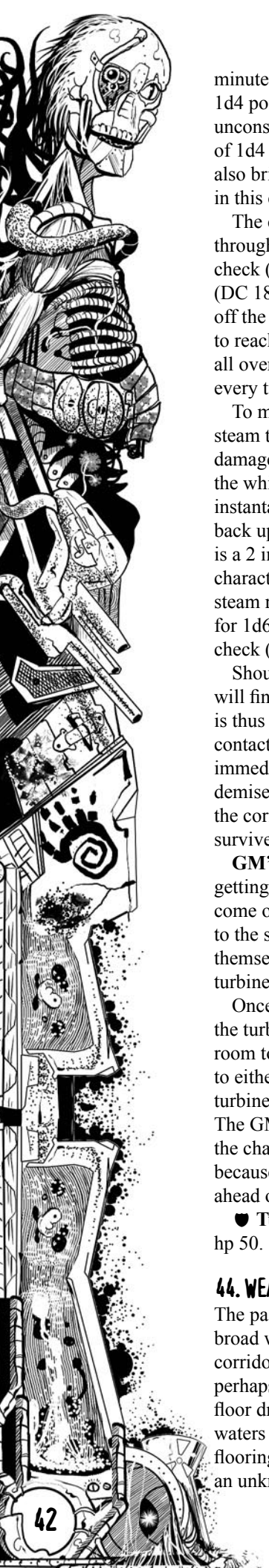
43. TURBINE CHAMBERS

This place is lit by a deep bluish glow from below. As characters enter (at a point thirty feet above the ground level), they see that the metal catwalks that once connected this side of the room with the far end have all fallen away and appear to have been sucked down in the miasma of brightly glowing corium below. From this height, looking down, it is obvious that the corium overflow from the reactor melt down made it at least this far, for the entirety of the bottom level appears to have been flooded ages ago – melting away the machinery, power conduits, and metal supports of the upper catwalks and drowning them in the molten metal goo.

The corium flow seems to have seeped into this place through a number of ducts and tunnels, filling the lower half of the place up to perhaps 15 ft. Hovering on dangling support structures above this irradiated and brightly luminous flood level are a series of gigantic cylinders of rusted blue steel (the huge plant turbines, which channeled steam created at the core through their fans to generate electricity), with a maze of tubes and pipes heading off in various directions.

It is apparent that to cross this chamber, characters will have to take their chances at jumping onto the huge cylindrical turbine casings, crawling to the opposite end, and attempting the same to get to the other side of the room. All while suspended 20 ft. above the glowing corium below.

The room itself poses several problems to this course of action, however. First of all, the temperature here is *intense* (save once every 10



minutes, DC 15 +1 per previous check, or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage; those reduced to unconsciousness start taking normal damage at a rate of 1d4 per 10 minute period; any damage suffered also brings on *fatigue*). Secondly, the radiation level in this chamber is a steady 500 Rads.

The closest turbine stands 10 feet from the edge through which the PCs entered, requiring a Jump check (DC 15) to reach; even then, a Balance check (DC 18) must be made to avoid slipping and falling off the curved metal surface. Each time they attempt to reach a new turbine they must do the same thing all over again (requiring Jump and Balance checks every time).

To make matters worse, water cooled in distant steam tunnels manages to find its way through the damaged roof, trickling every now and again to the white-hot corium below – an occurrence that instantaneously creates a burst of steam that blows back upwards to the level of the turbines. There is a 2 in 6 chance of this occurring for every 5' a character moves across the chamber; a gusher of steam rises up instantly when this happens, scalding for 1d6 points of damage and forcing a Balance check (DC 15) to avoid slipping and falling.

Should a character fall to the corium below, he will find the corium is in fact solid (falling damage is thus normal – 2d6), but it is also so hot that mere contact acts as a *heat metal* spell. Since there is no immediate way to escape, this could prove a hideous demise! To cap it off, the radiation on the surface of the corium flow is an elevated 750 Rads – difficult to survive.

GM's Note: It is entirely possible that characters getting lost in the steam tunnels (Area 34) might come out here. However, the three ducts that connect to the steam tunnels lead *into* the turbine housings themselves, so that the PCs will be *inside* the turbines.

Once the PCs realize they can go no further down the turbine ducts (they get too narrow west of this room to navigate, even by crawling), they will have to either back track or try to break out of the metal turbine housing (requiring raw physical damage). The GM should make a note of which direction the characters hack their way out of the housings, because if it is downwards, they have a painful fall ahead of them…

⛊ **Turbine Housings:** 1 in. Thick; Hardness 25; hp 50.

44. WEAKENED WALKWAYS

The passages here turn from concrete to a simple broad walkway of mesh iron. The dimensions of the corridor also change; the ceiling rises to a height of perhaps twenty feet, while below the walkway the floor drops to a depth of fifty or more. Below, runoff waters from throughout the tunnels drip through the flooring into this deep channel, to be swept off to an unknown destination. Apparently a good degree of corium found its way down to the bottom of the chasm as well, for a strong blue glow emanates from below, illuminating the creaking catwalk with its ominous blue radiance.

Various sections of each walkway have been weakened by at least a century of acidic runoff water and tremors. After the equivalent of two Medium-size creatures pass along a given walkway, there is a 50% (+10% every time another person passes over after that) chance the metal grating will exhale a final, deafening groan before bending at the northern end, pitching downward, and falling fifty feet to the chasm bottom, below.

Approximately 20 feet of walkway will collapse (with the third Medium-size transgressor situated in the middle of the expanse; thus, 10 feet in each direction will fall with him). Any character on the falling section may make a Reflex save (DC 20) to jump at the last moment to an intact side (either forward or back), but if he fails he will fall the full fifty feet to the hard, radiated corium slag below (in addition to incurring 5d6 points of damage, the character also finds that the bottom emits a steady 1,500 Rads). There does not appear to be any means of climbing back up.

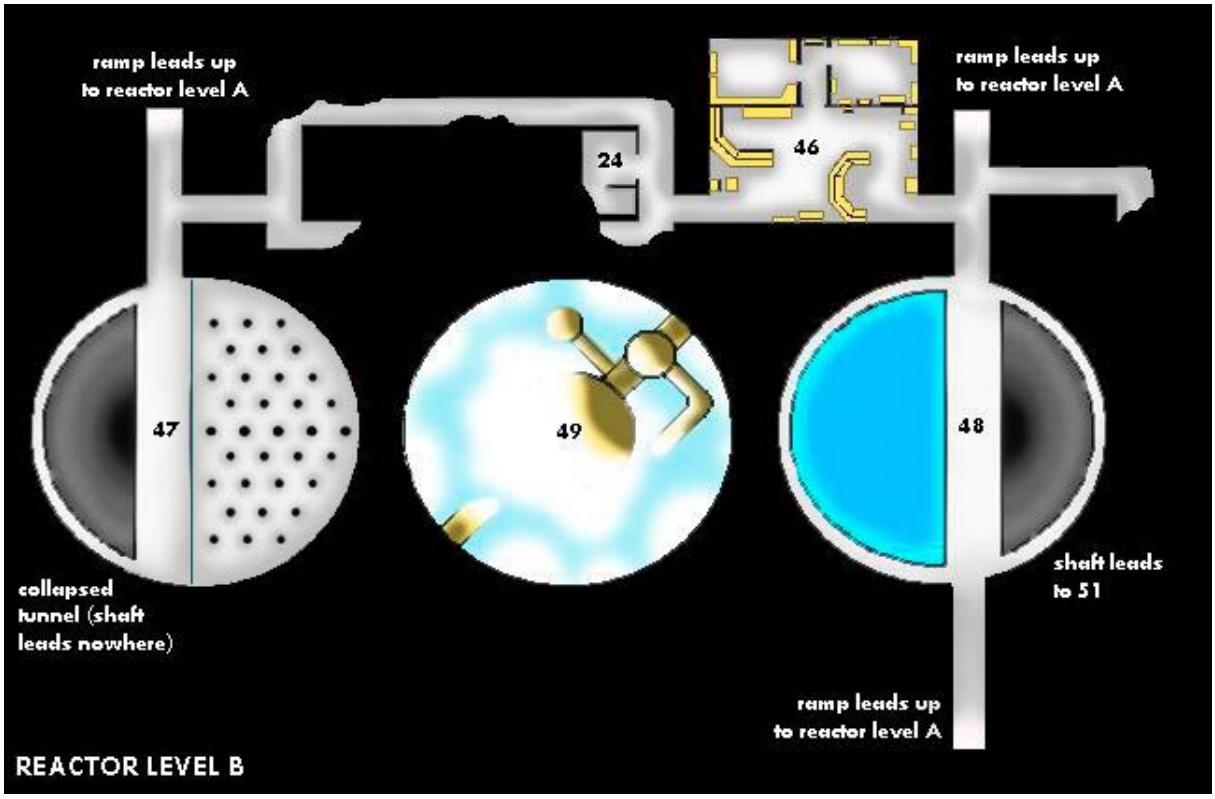
⃠ **Falling Walkway:** CR 4; no attack roll necessary (5d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 25);

45. VENTILATION SHAFTS

This rather unassuming grate leads to a 4'x4' hollow shaft that starts at a slant directly upwards towards the surface. The shaft intersects with nearly a dozen other shafts (vertical, horizontal, etc) that at one time helped circulate air through the complex via huge powerful motors at various points. This shaft, rather remarkably, remains clear of debris, though the passage upwards requires a Climb skill check every 50 ft (DC 18) to avoid slipping and sliding back down. The total distance between the subterranean entrance to the shaft, and where it reaches the surface, is exactly 2,000 ft.

Slipping at any point along this dramatic climb would be a disastrous mistake. The aluminum-sheet walls are relatively smooth despite their age, meaning that anyone slipping will slide, picking up speed, until he either reaches a bisecting shaft (falling down the intersecting duct instead of carrying on) or goes shooting out the entrance at the shaft's bottom – at high velocity.

For every twenty feet of passage a character falls, he suffers 1d6 points of damage when he finally comes to a stop. There is a 2 in 6 chance, per 20 ft. fallen, that the character passes over an intersecting, fully vertical shaft ("pit"), ending his diagonal course and dropping him down that passage instead. This invariably means death, since these passages sink to even deeper levels of the buried reactor complex (runoff shafts, deep subterranean storage areas, maintenance passages connecting the eight



individual reactors, etc), either to hard stone floors several hundred feet below or into places where the temperature is so hot (from corium spillage) that the poor fool burns up before he ever even hits the bottom.

REACTOR LEVEL B

46. CONTROL CENTER C (EL 10)

Like previous Control Centers, this place seems to have suffered a great deal of damage from the melt down. However, the extent of collapse is even greater here, with entire blocks of stone crushing many of the computers and blocking most of the room off from passage. Water trickles down through dark openings in the roof, creating murky gray pools of water on the cratered floor where strips of tile have cracked or been shaken loose.

This place controlled the intricate operations and monitoring of the reactor itself, but was almost shaken apart during the first fires when explosions sent tremors through the place. However, a series of glows emanate from the center of the deep chamber, and the strange fluttering of ephemeral wings rises in the air as intruders stumble inside.

A clutch of heliogryphs has settled here.

Mature Heliogryphs (5): CR 5; Large Aberration; HD 7d8+21; hp 70, 69, 69, 58, and 57; Init +1 (Dex); Spd Fly 30 ft (good); AC 10 (-1 size, +1 Dex); Atk 2 acid darts +5 ranged 2d6; SA Acid; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Treasure: There is a *fire extinguisher* in a fractured glass case on one wall of the control center. A plastic box on one wall, marked with a red cross, is actually a fully stocked military-style *medical kit*.

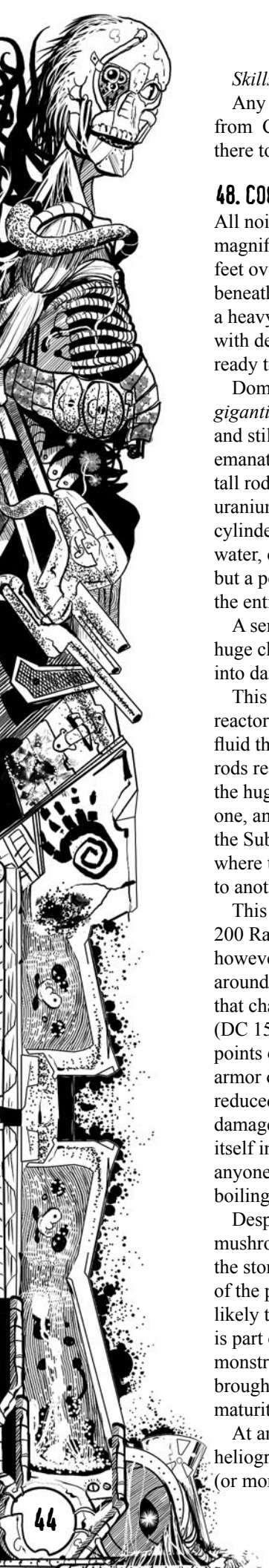
47. FUEL HOLDING CHAMBER (EL 6)

This gigantic chamber has the feel of an enormous but empty indoor pool, its concrete surfaces covered in stark white tile that shows traces of thin black algae in the corners and the slow signs of decay everywhere else. High overhead, the glass panels of a bank of windows overlook the place (from Area 42), and eerie glowing "things" dance about the central place among the crumbled ruins.

This place was once used to temporarily store unused uranium fuel rods before the robotic arm on the above track (see map) transported them to the Reactor Core for use. From there, used rods were moved further down the track and deposited in the Cooling Pool (Area 48).

The lower part of this place collapsed and filled with rubble during the melt down, sealing off the transport pit through which rods were drawn up from a subterranean railway (similar to the railway at Area 51). Living among the barren rubble at the bottom of the pit are a number of heliogryphs.

Typical Heliogryphs (3): CR 3; Large Aberration; HD 4d8+12; hp 40, 39, and 39; Init +1 (Dex); Spd Fly 30 ft (good); AC 10 (-1 size, +1 Dex); Atk 2 acid darts +3 ranged 2d6; SA Acid; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 5.



Skills and Feats: Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Any activity that goes on in this place can be seen from Control Center B (Area 42), alerting anyone there to the presence of intruders.

48. COOLING POOL (EL 7)

All noise made here echoes until the sound is magnified five times over. The roof is a full forty feet overhead, lined with banks of long-dead lights, beneath which a huge mechanical "crane" (fixed with a heavy robotic arm) lingers, motionless, clogged with detritus and coils of loose wiring – and looking ready to collapse at any minute.

Dominating this vast, echoing chamber is a simply *gigantic* pool of deep, crystal-clear water, motionless and still, from which a deadly cobalt blue glow emanates - with a poisonous fire. Thirty or more 14' tall rods of what seems to be solid metal (actually uranium pellets stacked on end inside a thin graphite cylinder) stand vertically under the surface of the water, completely submerged in its cooling depths, but a powerful heat nonetheless radiates throughout the entire place.

A semi-circular opening in the floor leads from this huge chamber to a dark, hollow shaft that leads down into darkness below.

This place is where spent fuel rods (from the reactor core) are submerged to cool in a mineral-rich fluid that attempts to dampen radioactivity until the rods reach a manageable temperature. From here, the huge robotic arm on the crane lifts them, one by one, and lowers them into the connecting shaft to the Subterranean Railway Tunnels (forty feet below) where they are loaded on special railcars for transport to another part of the complex.

This place is highly radioactive, generating around 200 Rads at all times (anyone falling into the water, however, will find the radiation spikes suddenly to around 3,000 purely lethal Rads). The heat is such that characters must make a Fortitude save every hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage; -4 to the save if wearing armor or heavy clothes. As always, characters reduced to unconsciousness start taking normal damage (1d4 points per hour). In addition, the water itself incurs 1d6 points of heat damage per round to anyone submerged in it because it, too, is close to boiling.

Despite the tremendous hazards, the strange mushroom-like heliogryphs find this place ideal for the storage of their unhatched eggs, using the heat of the ponds like a super-incubator. It is highly likely that the very radioactive nature of the ponds is part of the development process of these mutated monstrosities, since eggs laid by the queen are brought here directly and placed in the water for maturity.

At any given time there will be a large number of heliogryphs in this chamber, tending to the two score (or more) eggs floating in the pond and among the radiated fuel rods.

- **Typical Heliogryphs (5):** hp 30 each (see Area 47 for statistics).
- **Mature Heliogryphs (2):** hp 52 and 51 (see Area 46 for statistics).

49. REACTOR CORE (EL 10)

Access to this central part of the complex is actually quite difficult to attain. The reactor is an isolated chamber that, during the collapse, suffered a catastrophic melt down that either caused the connecting passageways to collapse (from seismic shock), or flooded them with white-hot corium from the core – making it impossible to access except through the labyrinth of steam and water tunnels.

The reactor is itself more than 80 feet wide and almost 250 feet deep; most of this is filled with pure melted corium, a sea of semi-solidified white-hot sludge intermixed with columns of stone, concrete, and flash-burned steel metalwork (pipes and hanging ducts) that rises to within ten or twelve feet of the uppermost entrances (either from the robot crane causeway from Area 47, or the molten tunnel leading to Area 35). A tremendous glow rises from this mess, as does a very real heat that burns the flesh of those who so much as peer into the core chamber - a character must save one every 10 minutes (same DC) or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage (again, with the same minus for wearing heavy clothes or armor). Those reduced to unconsciousness start taking normal damage at a rate of 1d4 per 10-minute period. Any damage suffered also brings on fatigue (-2 to Strength and Dexterity until able to cool off).

Furthermore, the chamber emanates a radiation level of no less than 2,000 Rads at all times – lethal enough to kill nearly anyone and anything entering. Except that is, for the gigantic life form that has, somehow, come to make the shell of the reactor its home for the past century or so.

This creature is a *blob*, an enormous, plastic creation of radiation. Almost like an amoeba of pure slime, the blob floats atop the surface of the quasi-liquid corium of the reactor, within reach of the uppermost tunnels (its protoplasmic "limbs" have an extraordinary reach). The creature has long fed on the odd heliogryph or gigantic mutant rat that has lost its way, but it will be more than ready to complement its diet with human or mutant…

- **Blob (1):** CR 9; Gargantuan Ooze; HD 4d10+54+40*; hp 121; Init -2 (Dex); Spd 5 ft, swim 10 ft; AC 6 (-2 size, -2 Dex); Atk Slam +14 melee 2d6+14 and acid 2d6; SA Acid, improved grab, radiation, swallow hole; SQ Blindsight, camouflage, protoplasmic growth, regeneration 5, resistant, semi-dormancy; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref -1, Will -4; Str 33, Dex 6, Con 23, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: None.

The blob will consume anything and everything it can before the party can flee from the place. If it manages to grab any prey, in addition to its own

radiation and acids it will plunge the poor victim into the semi-liquid pool that fills the core – a fate that inflicts 10d6 points of heat damage per round and douses the prey in a radioactive liquid metal of 5,000 Rads or more. The GM may also wish to make all items carried or worn save or be destroyed in the white-hot liquid metal.

GM's Note: The pool of corium is extremely deep, but the further down it gets the cooler it gets, until it reaches the Labyrinth below. Here the original melt down caused a structural failure, melting right through the solid rock and into the passages down there, but since then the corium has cooled preventing the entire flow from draining into those deeper passages.

REACTOR LEVEL C

50. LOST MINERS' TOWN

Unbelievably, the bottom of this deep elevator shaft is lit not by the sole blue light of corium, but also by orange torchlight. Those who manage to descend this deep into the mines find what must have once been the bottom of a broad elevator shaft, but one that has been hollowed out by natural process and, in some places, by the hands of skilled men.

The tunnels and caverns that comprise this deep level of the mines are home to some forty or fifty hollow, malnourished miners, living in almost lightless conditions like a separate breed of troglodytes. These men comprise a small isolated community of their own, survivors of the Lil' Vegas mines who fled as soon as they had a chance – finding their way, past great obstacles and dangers, to the deepest, most treacherous depths of the mines.

The first group of miners who came here decided that the bottom of this extremely deep shaft was isolated enough from the mines that the guards would never find them here – or take the risks involved in pursuing them this deep. They carved out a few shelters from the rock itself, and over time came to accept any lost miners or escapees that found their way here – no questions asked – as part of their new community.

What began as a dozen men has grown into something considerably larger, and the tunneling has also expanded as well. "Natural" corium, imbedded in the rock, provides much of the illumination for daily life here, but torches and lamps are also kept lit to light the deeper tunnels, as well as a few tiny campfires for the cooking of meals (rats).

When PCs reach this level, they will likely be surprised to find a small community dwelling so deep beneath the earth – and startled as dozens of albino figures, armed with primitive spears, emerge from the darkness and into the light, ready to attack. Though the PCs may not realize it at first, the men come not to kill them (yet), but intent on finding out whom exactly these intruders are.

Once they are convinced the PCs do not work for Big Ben's sadistic servants (if the PCs *are* working for Ben, then the miners simply attack), the miners welcome them humbly and beg for news of the surface world. Requests for news about wives (now serving in brothels), children (grown and enslaved), or fellow miners (wasted away or dead) probably cannot be answered, but it is obvious the men have been here for many, many years. In time, the miners will come to explain who they are, how they got here, and attempt to trade. Though the miners likely have nothing that will interest the group, since they eat only rats and weave clothing out of old rope and burlap.

What the miners do possess, however, is a relatively abundant supply of corium (having found its way here long ago during the melt down, settling in the deepest parts of the mine) – which they use as light sources, but which they might also be willing to trade for basic essentials (food, water, etc). The miners have been so far-removed from the surface that by now they would trade virtually any amount for the most commonplace goods; PCs could conceivably get 200% to 300% the value (in corium pieces) of any basic item they trade to the community (up to a total of 2,500 cp in trades).

Lost Miners, Commoner1 (45): CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Primitives); HD 1d4+2; hp 4 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 hide armor); Atk Short spear +3 melee 1d8+3; or sling +1 ranged 1d4; AL N (or NE); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 10.

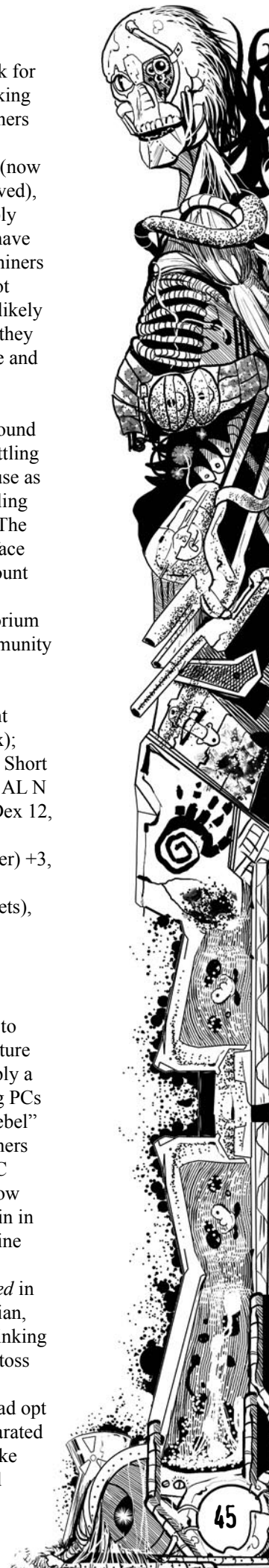
Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Profession (miner) +3, Use Rope +2. Troglodyte.

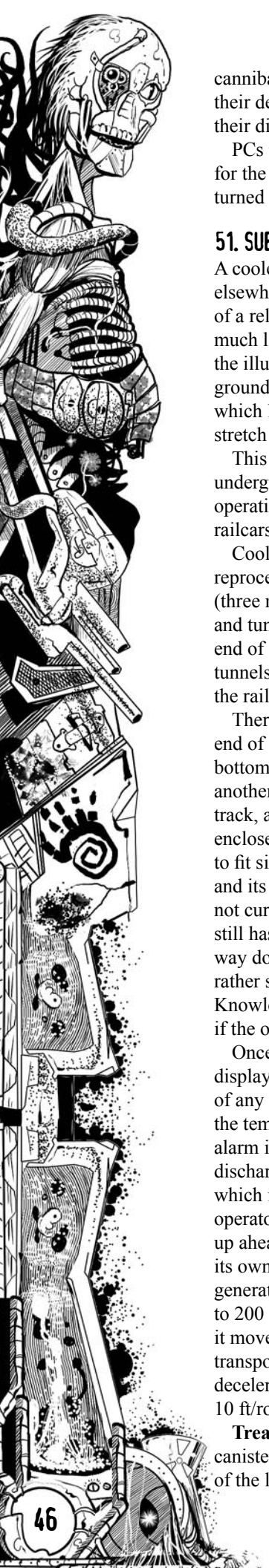
Possessions: Short spear, sling (20 sling bullets), hide armor.

Mutations and Defects: Density Alteration, Gamma-Ray Visual Sensitivity, Neural Fear, Albinism, Cystic Fibrosis, Photosensitivity.

GM's Note: This bizarre enclave can prove to be a device for a number of plot leads or adventure endings. While as it stands the miners are simply a pitiful colony of escapees, creative and cunning PCs might try to rouse them to become a kind of "rebel" or "partisan" force. It is possible that these miners could be rallied by an unusually-charismatic PC (or group of PCs) to rise up and finally overthrow the establishment of the surface-dwellers, or join in attempting to at least strike back at pursuing mine guards hot on the PCs' trail.

However, the miners have, over time, *changed* in subtle ways. In addition to becoming troglodilian, they have also become savages, primitive in thinking and motivations. The GM could, conceivably, toss out the above notion of a possible "friendship" between the PCs and these survivors, and instead opt for a more macabre situation. The miners, separated for so long from sane pursuits, are now more like a band of escaped asylum patients, lunatics and





cannibals one and all, and the arrival of the PCs into their deep dark den becomes a welcome respite from their diet of rats…

PCs *working* for Big Ben will be given a bounty for the heads of these miners (especially if they've turned into cannibals), roughly 20 cp apiece.

51. SUBTERRANEAN RAILWAY TUNNELS

A cooler air runs through this deep place than elsewhere in the mines, which comes as something of a relief. It is abysmally dark here, the cavern much larger, echoing with sound and swallowing up the illumination of most meager light sources. The ground here consists of heavy industrial-grade rails, which lead off into a pair of huge gaping tunnels that stretch on into infinite darkness.

This is just the local stopping point for the vast underground transit system used to keep the plant in operation. The tracks were designed to permit heavy railcars to carry spent fuel rods from this reactor's

Cooling Pool (above) to a massive fuel-reprocessing center at the other end of the complex (three miles distant; now long buried). The tracks and tunnels are still in excellent condition at this end of the track, but about a mile and a half into the tunnels there has been some damage and the state of the rails is questionable at best…

There are a number of cars laying lifeless at this end of the track; an open-topped transport car at the bottom of the shaft (as if waiting to be loaded up), another transport car off to the side on a reserve track, and a single locomotive. This latter car is an enclosed structure, with a control cabin large enough to fit six or eight people (usually nuclear technicians) and its own electrical engine. The locomotive is not currently hooked up to either transport car, and still has enough power in its battery to travel all the way down the track and back. However, getting the rather sophisticated locomotive to operate requires a Knowledge, Vehicle Operations check at DC 22 (16 if the operator has previous locomotive experience).

Once in operation, the locomotive has an electronic display panel that monitors the current temperature of any rods in its connecting transport car, as well as the temperature in the railway tunnels (setting off an alarm if it gets dangerously hot in either). The car discharges a current of electricity through the rails which is reflected back (almost like radar), letting the operator know if the rails are damaged or weakened up ahead (but only out to 1000 ft). The cabin has its own bright interior lighting, and the locomotive generates two solid beams of light ahead of it out to 200 ft down the track in front of it. At full speed it moves 200 ft. per round (100 ft/round with one transport car, 75 ft/round with two transport cars). It decelerates at 50 ft/round (25 ft/round with one car, 10 ft/round with two).

Treasure: There is a *fire extinguisher* and full canister of *boron solution spray* mounted in the cabin of the locomotive, as well as two *environment suits* in a cabin locker.

GM's Note: Though it may appear to be a way out, this is not the most ideal exit from the complex, since the destination of the railway is unknown. The GM can deal with this any way he likes, either by having the tunnels collapsed roughly halfway (or more), preventing further passage, or having the temperatures increase dramatically as the party goes deeper – until it becomes impossible to continue on. Or, if he's feeling creative, the GM can design a secondary complex of his own, based on features of the main complex, and continue the adventure there…

52. FISSURE

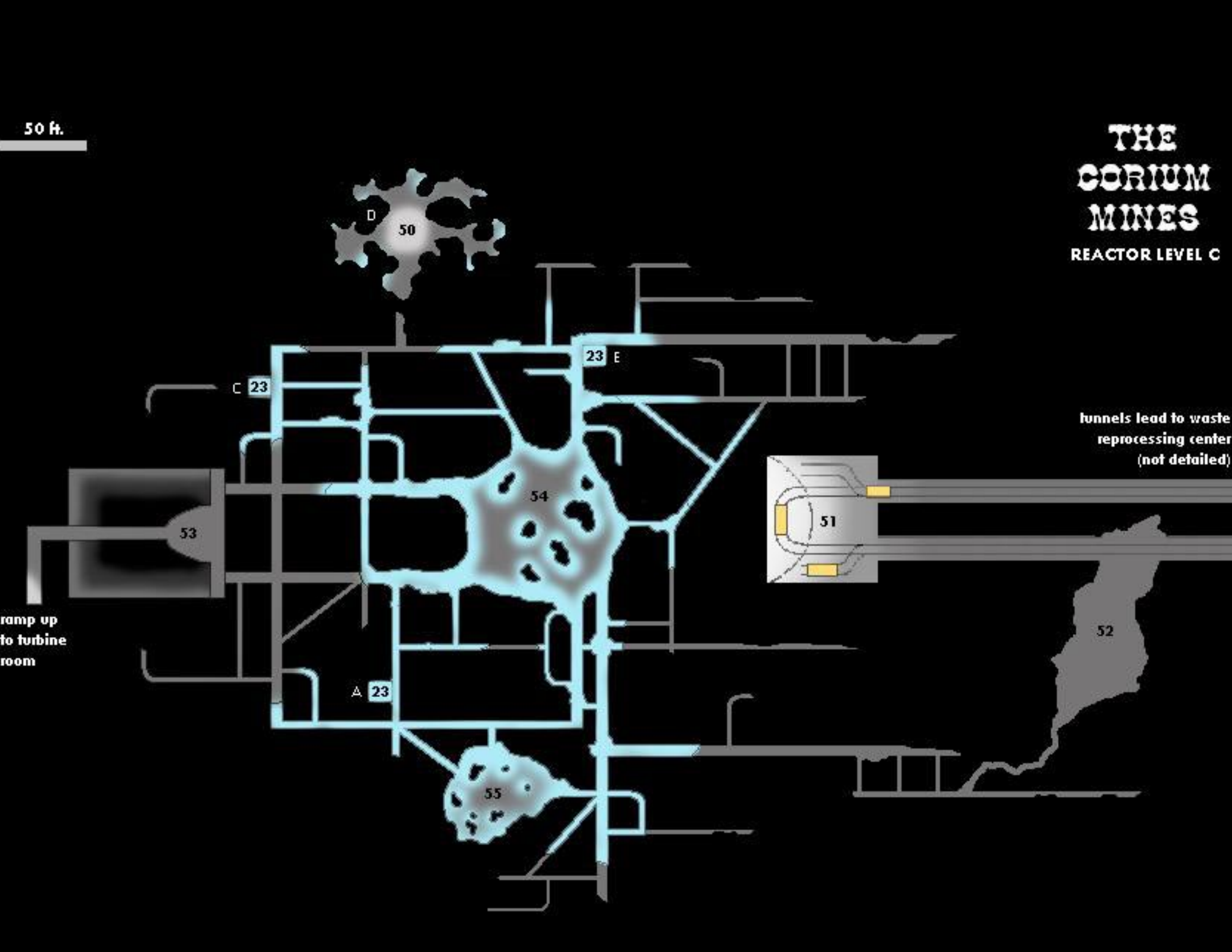
This place was obviously not a part of the original complex – or at least it appears to have been created without the explicit knowledge of the plant's original designers. The place appears to be a rough-walled natural fissure, but close examination of the walls shows that the cavern was created through blasting and heavy drilling machinery. Metal lights, staked into the walls roughly twenty feet above, once provided a minimum of illumination for the engineers who built it.

Row upon row of heavy metal, ceramic, and plastic-encased waste drums fill one side of this gigantic cavern, placed on a baseboard of nickel plating (mounted on tremor-resistant spring coils). Makeshift placards show the trefoil symbol (recognizable to any post-apocalyptic character as the symbol of the "red fever") on each of these drums and at various points on the "natural" stone walls.

Even more attention grabbing than the illegal repository of nuclear waste (for, after all, who cares now so far in the future what crimes the Ancients committed beneath Lil' Vegas?) are the strange lights that flicker, flit, and dance through the still air of this deep black cavern. At first glance these lights appear almost like enlarged butterflies, but as one nears (or as the individual "lights" come to investigate those who enter their abode), they prove to be diminutive examples of the heliogryph breed – no doubt spawnlings!

There are some two or three hundred immature heliogryphs flitting and buzzing through the air of this broad fissure; apparently something about this cavern draws them from other places. The minute heliogryphs (none more than a foot long) do not attack the characters, but merely flit about them and through their midst, as if curiously examining them, before filling their air sacks and "puffing" majestically upwards to illuminate the darkness above.

Should the PCs begin swatting or harming the baby heliogryphs, the creatures will float away, keeping a safe distance but maintaining their curious bent. They will only really disperse if the PCs begin killing droves of them, flying off into random cracks, holes, or exit tunnels to parts unknown. In any event, the


50 ft.
THE CORIUM MINES
REACTOR LEVEL C
D
50
23 E
C 23
tunnels lead to waste reprocessing center (not detailed)
54
53
51
ramp up to turbine room
52
A 23
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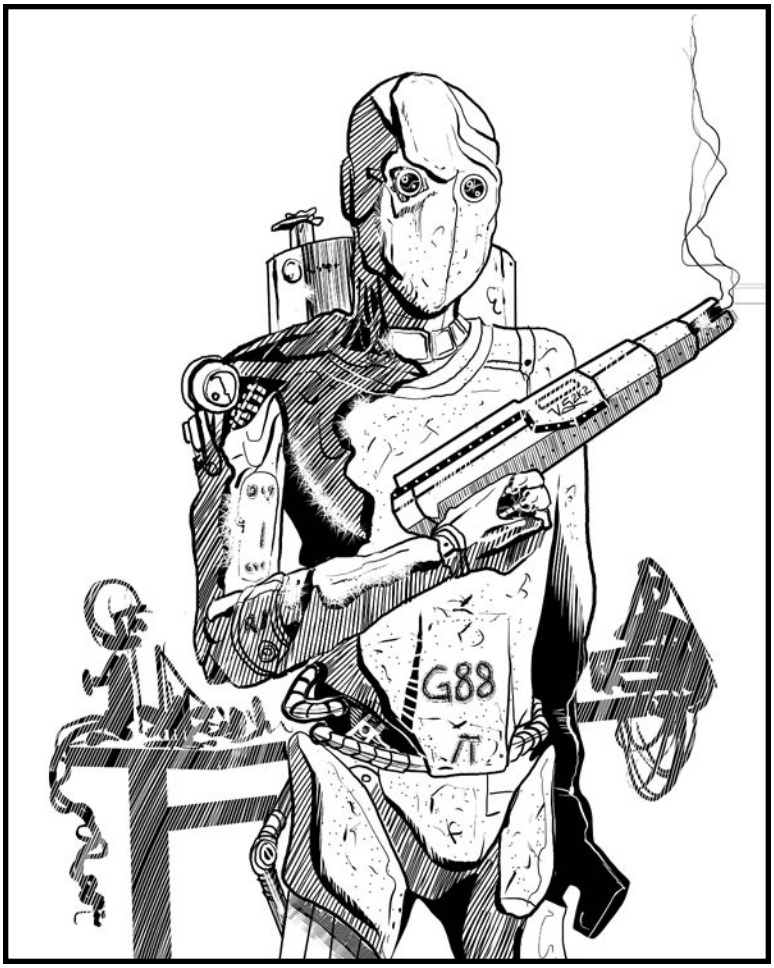


death of these spawnlings will *not* attract heliogryphs from any other part of the complex, since their survival (once born) is not the concern of the 'gryph colony.

The radiation level in this cavern is a steady 200 Rads.

Treasure: There are nearly 60 individual waste drums here that contain high grade pollutants (in specific, water and sludge from the reactor itself); each drum, if cracked open, would emit a continuous 2,000 Rads for countless generations. Getting these potentially deadly "bombs" out of the mines, however, is next to impossible, since each weighs roughly one half of a ton apiece.

53. GENERATOR ROOMS (EL 11)

This huge vault appears to have once been central to the plant's purpose, for colossal machinery hangs from the ceiling, stands imbedded in the ground (like huge statuary of steel), and lies strewn about. Oddly, as one enters, the sound of trickling water is only slightly distracting, for more interesting is the sight of bright lights set up in a rough semi-circle at the far end of the place, across a narrow steel bridge. Here, under the light of portable emergency lights (on extendable stands) have been set up a pair of operating tables, behind which stands a twisted metal and plastic figure so gruesome to behold it is frightening. As the PCs approach the lights, the "creature" looks up as if preparing for confrontation.

The "creature" is, in fact, an ancient *laborer android* that was sealed down here centuries ago, and has survived through a strange "evolution" (see below). The android is willing to talk if given the chance; it is actually quite surprised to hear voices again after such a long time, though it will be *unable* to speak in languages other than Ancient and Guttertalk (the latter is at least understandable to it).

If asked, the android will relate a strange story of how it was once one of at least five hundred labor android assigned to the Four-State Nuclear Power Facility, serving directly under a compartmentalized command structure of scientist droids and humans. This specific reactor complex ("Delta Reactor") had 100 laborer androids, 10 scientist androids, and at least 500 humans ranging from technicians to engineers.

The android will go on to explain that there was a tremendous earthquake just prior to the entire facility shutting down, an event that eventually led to a catastrophic melt down. The androids were given the order to remain where they were and fight the fires and radiation leaks while the humans attempted to escape to the surface. From here the android is unsure what exactly happened, but it seems there were a series of cave-ins and many of the humans were lost or trapped on various levels, separated from each other.

The android, which identifies itself simply as "G88", goes on to say that the androids on this level got together under the one surviving scientist android (whom it almost reverently refers to as "Faust 19"). At first they began efforts to dig out the buried humans, but their scientist leader suddenly stopped them. It argued that the humans were a lost cause, that they would soon be dead anyway, and that they should turn their efforts instead to preventing the flow of melted core materials from getting out of hand and destroying them as well.

Thus the androids abandoned their human masters at the order of Faust, and saved themselves. Over time, however, the androids grew old – G88 guesses it has been at least two centuries since the collapse – and many of the laborers had to be scrapped to repair others. Throughout time Faust's concocted plans to revive a minimum of power to attempt to extricate themselves but to no avail. Many androids were

lost in the process, and though a few passages were eventually cleared (revealing, among other things, the bodies of many humans who had suffocated to death), little headway was made.

That was when strange creatures began to filter down into the android parts of the complex. Faust immediately ordered specimens brought in for dissection and examination. Faust tentatively named them "heliogryphs" (though G88 admits a preference to his own name, "avian cnidarian") and theorized that they must have been a product of the extensive radiation still lingering in the complex.

Sadly (as G88 puts it), Faust, like many of the older androids, did himself begin to "wind down". Since by then G88 was the only laborer left (he motions to the rubble of metal parts around him, explaining these are the remains of the other laborers), Faust turned to him and said goodbye, almost emotionally, before ordering G88 to download his memory into his own. Thereafter Faust "expired".

Without allowing a moment to ponder the almost human-like behavior of his late superior, G88 picks up again, explaining that due to the fact that he has "subsumed" a portion of Faust's mind he is compelled by his superior's curiosity on mutant subjects, and must thus follow his last instruction - and that is to bring in any mutated specimens for examination and *dissection…*

With that he raises the only available weapon (a high-power jet welder), and advances on the PCs, calling from the shadows a small group of badly damaged industrial robots to join him (these are unintelligent robots, not androids, but they follow his commands nonetheless). The laborer android cannot be prevented from doing what he considers his "duty", short of commanding him to halt (he is still allowed a save, since this is contrary to his last program). He will attempt to kill every one of the PCs, drag their bodies back to the makeshift lab, and surgically peel them apart to examine the effects of mutation on their bodies.

G88, Laborer Android (1): CR 6; Medium-size Construct; HD 6d8+30; hp 78; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 20 (+4 Dex, +6 natural); Atk Slam +10 melee 1d3+6, or jet welder (treat as *flamethrower*) +7 ranged 3d6; SQ Electrical resistance 10, berserk, command level (IIC), damage reduction -/5, construct, elemental immunity, repair vs. healing, sputtering death; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 20, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Ambidexterity, Crushing Strength, Heavy-Duty Resistant Coating, Improved Hit Dice, Robot Armor (Light).

The laborer android looks nothing less than a monster. The intense heat that blasted the android during the melt down left its white plastic casing a total mess, causing it to blister and boil before melting into a featureless plate that has blanched out all of its facial features. Hair, if it had any, fell out long ago, and the artificial synthiskin turned dusky gray from the heat (translucently revealing a network of thin wires just beneath the surface, almost like "veins"). This same heat, which certainly deformed the creature, also caused the cosmetic covering of its optical sensors ("eyes") to burn away, revealing burnished silver metal orbs beneath. Its remaining body parts are a patchwork of replacements torn from other androids, leaving it to look like a shambling Frankenstein of metal and plastic parts!

Industrial Robots (4): CR 6; Large Construct; HD 6d10; hp 50, 49, 47, and 36; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 20 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural); Atk 2 slams +16 melee 1d8+10; SQ Berserk, command level (IIC), damage reduction -/5, elemental immunity, facing, fearful presence, repair vs. healing, sputtering death; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 30, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Computer Link, Crushing Strength, Internal Power Source, Multiattack, Remote Computer Link, Robot Armor (Light).

Treasure: In addition to the jet welder (*flamethrower*), the laborer android has a *Stage IIC access card*, an extra pack of *napalm fuel* (for the flamethrower), a *Geiger counter* (empty *beltpack* still attached), and the equivalent of a *grade B android memory chip* (in Craft, Nuclear Plant Operation).

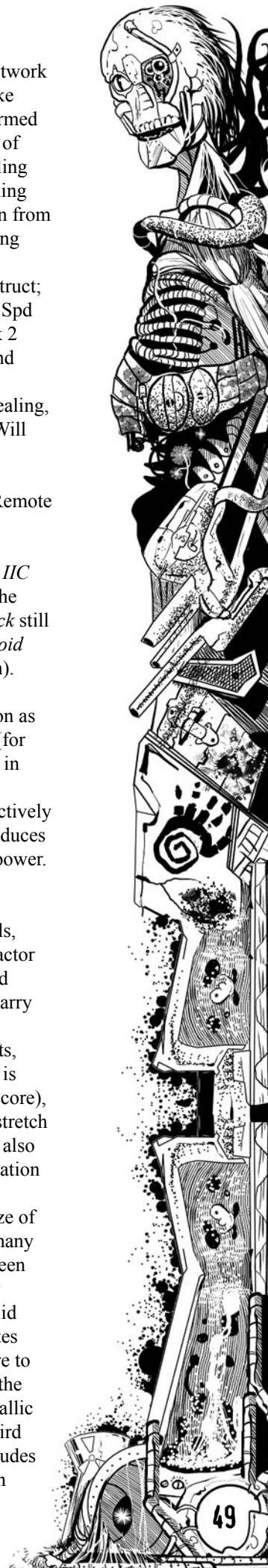
Lying about this place are enough scavenged metal pipes, bars, and sections of corrugated iron as to create a roughly 25 foot "bridge" if need be (for instance, to cross the section of fallen walkway in Area 44).

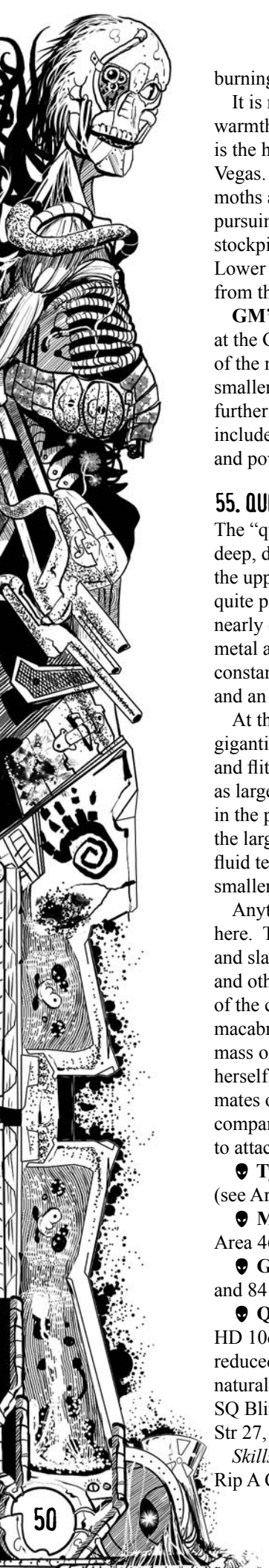
GM's Note: The rest of this chamber is effectively dead and empty, since the reactor no longer produces steam and the turbines no longer generate any power.

54. LABYRINTH (EL VARIES)

The "labyrinth" once comprised miles of tunnels, ductwork, and ventilation shafts beneath the reactor itself. Many of these tunnels were flooded, filled with high-pressure steam, or simply served to carry electricity to various parts of the complex. The entire area is a virtual maze of tunnels and shafts, all interconnecting like a great spider's web. It is extremely hot here (due to the proximity to the core), humid, and the tell-tale glow licking off every stretch of wall and from every exposed pipe or grating also gives evidence to a strong blanket of lethal radiation throughout.

In addition to the confusing nature of the maze of tunnels, corium from the reactor above has in many places melted right through the solid rock (or been channeled through various ventilation shafts by gravity), dripping down from above to form solid pillars, columns, cushions, stalactites, stalagmites (indeed, a corium mimic of every natural feature to be found in a real cavern complex) throughout the place. These solid pillars of the invaluable metallic material give off the strongest glow, casting weird shadows through miles of pipe work and multitudes of weird louvers, and add to the potent radiation





burning the air of this murky gulf.

It is no wonder that, with all this radiation, warmth, and strange glowing, that the labyrinth is the heart of the heliogryph colony beneath Lil' Vegas. Here the 'gryphs flutter about like white-hot moths against a background of darkness, carefree in pursuing whatever it is they do – searching for food, stockpiling the remains of prey snatched from the Lower Mines for later use, or moving eggs to and from the Cooling Ponds.

GM's Note: The numbers of heliogryphs varies at the GM's whim, since this is effectively the heart of the nest. The first few encounters will be with smaller groups, but successive encounters (or the further the PCs go into the confused labyrinth) will include more and more heliogryphs of increasing size and power.

55. QUEEN'S CHAMBER (EL 13)

The "queen" of the heliogryph colony dwells in a deep, distant part of the labyrinth below most of the upper pipe work and shafts. The glow here is quite prevalent, gleaming from every pillar and nearly every exposed surface, offset only where real metal and stone peeks through. Here there is a near-constant buzzing, a shifting of the suffocating-hot air, and an overwhelmingly nauseous stench.

At the center of this place lives the queen, a gigantic specimen of heliogryph surrounded by mates and flitting spawnlings (which are sometimes crushed as larger 'gryphs pass by). The queen is constantly in the painful process of producing eggs, emitting the large leathery globules from her dangling set of fluid tentacles, to be sucked up and carried away by smaller heliogryphs to the Cooling Pond.

Anything other than a heliogryph is not welcome here. The carcasses of giant rats, humanoids (miners and slaves dragged from distant parts of the mines), and other unidentifiable remains are almost a *part* of the charnel decoration that gives this chamber a macabre and sickening personality of its own. The mass of heliogryphs, which consist of the queen herself, her "bodyguard" of equals, a dozen or more mates of proper maturity, and a small number of comparatively diminutive "servitors", will scramble to attack any and all intruders.

- **Typical Heliogryphs (4):** hp 40, 40, 40, and 36 (see Area 47 for statistics).
- **Mature Heliogryphs (13):** hp 52 each (see Area 46 for statistics).
- **Giant Heliogryphs (5):** hp 110, 100, 95, 95, and 84 (see Area 35 for statistics).
- **Queen Heliogryph (1):** CR 8; Huge Aberration; HD 10d8+50; hp 122; Init +0; Spd Fly 30 ft (good; reduced to 10 ft due to obesity); AC 11 (-2 size, +3 natural); Atk 2 acid darts +5/+0 ranged 2d8; SA Acid; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Rip A Clip.

This should prove to be an extremely difficult encounter, and the players should be well aware of the danger they are in if they advance on the mass of heliogryphs. Furthermore, the PCs should be aware that there is no real need to violate this deep corner of the mine (short of doing the miners a favor, though considering the fact that survival alone is usually a more important motivation, this shouldn't be a problem) and stir the queen to action – the consequences of which could be quite fatal.

Treasure: Though seeming unlikely, the heliogryphs have managed to amass a sizeable treasure in this awful chamber, mainly composed of goods tethered to corpses brought here for the queen and her mates to feed on. These treasures include two *Stage IIC access cards* (a third is melted beyond use), two unused *light rods* (a full eleven more, but these are expended), eight doses of *rad-purge shot* in *ready syringes*, four doses of *stimshot A* in *ready syringes*, a dose of *stimshot B* in a *ready syringe*, a *pocket nurse*, a *manual (speak language, computer)*, a canister of *boron solution spray* (2 charges left), a pair of *communicators* (walkie-talkies; no power cells), nearly three dozen *rad tabs* (all used), a pair of *Geiger counters*, a single *power beltpack* (half charge remaining), two *environment suits* (two others have melted and are useless), a *civ sec suit*, and a hand-portable welding tool (treat as a *flame pistol* with three full charges left).

The unfortunate part is that everything here is covered in rotten flesh, crystallized acid saliva (which is now brittle and breaks like glass), and may even have been corroded due to the natural excretions of these bizarre life-forms, causing malfunction. There is a 10% chance that each item, though appearing outwardly normal, has deteriorated from its condition and will malfunction the first time it is used (GMs discretion as to the effect of the malfunction, and whether or not the damage is repairable).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The actual outcome to *Death By Corium Light* largely depends on the reasons the PCs ventured into the mines in the first place; if they managed to find employment under the ruthless overlord Big Ben, then their task is simply to find the escaped miner, Arlon, and either capture or kill him (and return the remaining explosives) for their reward.

As slaves, the PCs will simply need to escape (probably through the Ventilation Shafts, which eventually lead to the surface), though there is an opportunity (should they stumble upon it) to link up with the vengeful revolutionary Arlon and become part of his plan to bring the mines crashing down. Though possibly more difficult than just escaping from the mines, this alternative has the potential to be a lot more dramatic and, in the long run, fulfilling for

those who have suffered in the mines of Lil' Vegas.

If they came at the behest of Arlon's daughter, Xea, they will have further motivation to see this plan through – especially if they have become attached to the girl and her father, and seek to avenge the miserable lot Big Ben forced upon their family. Though convincing Arlon not to sacrifice his life won't be easy, it could lead to a heartfelt reunion at a later date when both father and daughter are freed.

For those who came here on errands for any of the major factions of the Twisted Earth, there are numerous possibilities. The information gleaned from the various Monitoring Stations and Control Centers, as well as their own hand-made maps and diagrams of the complex, would prove invaluable at least for research - and possibly reconstruction efforts – by the Foundation. Likewise, capture of the android, G88 (Area 53), and its vast data bank of nuclear physics and technical expertise would be an incredible boon to the organization. Agents and paladins coming back with such information would certainly be in line for a promotion (or at least a commendation).

Brotherhood of Radiation forces are probably here for the long haul; agents infiltrating the mines will soon find the vast streak of corium deep below the earth (Area 35), as well as the vast repository of nuclear waste (in the Fissure), and with this knowledge the Brotherhood will likely refuse to let Lil' Vegas stay in the hands of Big Ben forever. Before long, possibly while they are still there, the Brotherhood will make a move to take Lil' Vegas by force – an action that would likely lead to an epic battle among the city streets, in the mines, and possibly even drawing in other opportunistic groups (such as the Ravagers, who are waiting for the town to show weakness for their cue to strike) for a grand finale of large-scale warfare.

APPENDIX I: NEW ITEMS

Death By Corium Light introduces three new artifacts, the game information for which is presented below.

Corium Lantern: These items come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes, depending on where and how they were made. Mostly these are made from discarded kerosene lanterns, the core of which has been replaced by a solid chunk of corium. The corium in the lamp provides a dim silvery-white light out to 20', just like a regular lantern; however, a corium lantern cannot be extinguished (though it can be shuttered or covered to block the light). Though the corium in the lantern is radioactive, the level is so weak that it is harmless (but is still detectable by mutations or devices that detect gamma radiation).

CP Value: 90 cp.

Technician's Coveralls: These clothes consist of a pair of white coveralls with light-reflective plastic strips up the legs and arms, zippered up the front with an insulated collar. These suits are not only comfortable, but they do nothing to impede movement whatsoever. In addition, the material of the suits (the fabrication of which is no longer possible using the technology of the wasteland) has a special property that blocks out up to 75 Rads.

CP Value: 500 cp.

Environment Suit: The environment suit is a heavy-duty version of the more common radiation suit (i.e. *NBC suit*), built to protect against industrial-grade radioactive contaminants and long-term radiation exposure. Environment suits are made heavy with lead body panels, utilizing an aluminum support frame to evenly distribute weight and a self-powered internal pressurization unit to keep out minute radioactive particles (such as dust). An environment suit protects against up to 2000 Rads, and also has a built-in head-mounted flashlight for work in powerless areas. A suit has a limited version of an advanced breathing apparatus that operates for 12 hours at a time (recharging itself after 12 hours takes another 30 minutes). As armor an environment suit protects just like an *NBC suit*, but the Max Dex Bonus drops to +0, the check penalty is –7, and speed is reduced to 15 ft. Weight of the item is 100 lbs. *Power Source:* Beltpack or backpack.

CP Value: 35,000 cp.

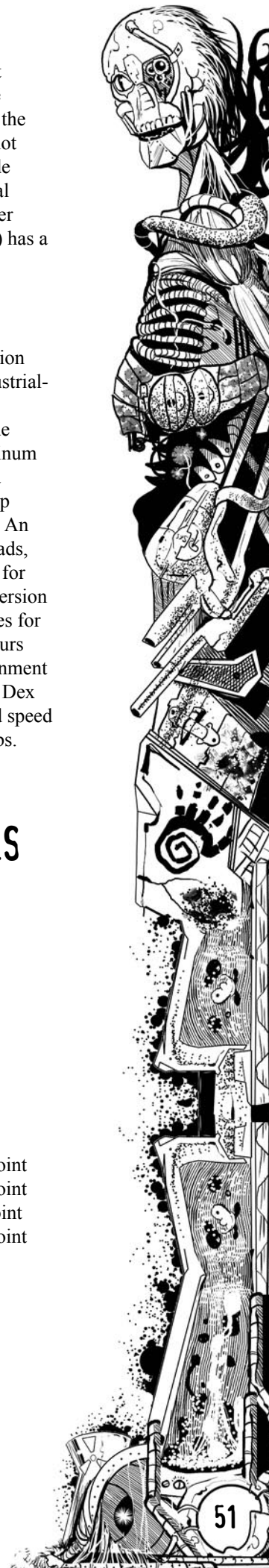
APPENDIX II: SLAVE PRICES

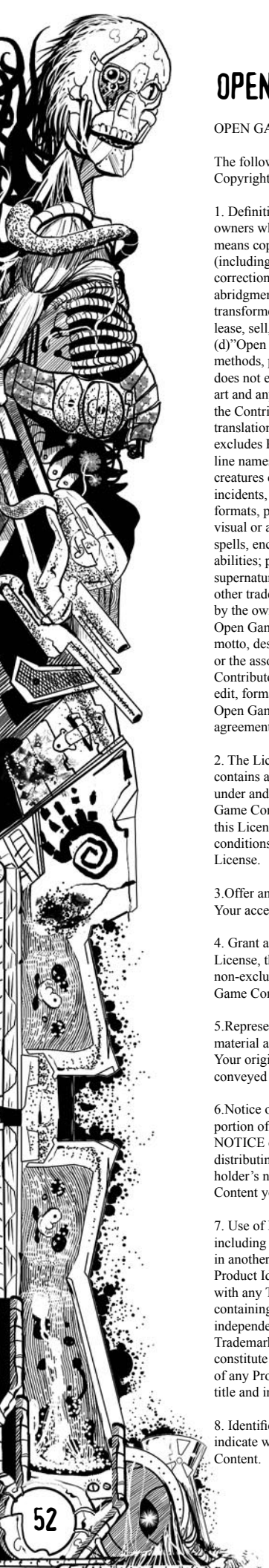
Should PCs engage in the slave trade, use the following guide to determine slave prices.

Base	
Typical slave	100 cp
Woman or child slave	150 cp
Normal Human	300 cp

Modifiers (to base)	
Fertile/Potent mutant	+100 base price
Concubine	+100% base price
High Str/Con	+20% per modifier point
High Int	+30% per modifier point
High Wis	-20% per modifier point
High Cha (male)	+50% per modifier point
Skilled	+20% per skill point
Skilled, Technical	+40% per skill point

Multipliers (after modifiers)	
High Cha (female)	x2 per modifier point
High Level	x2 base price or multiply by level





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