**Metamorphosis Alpha Articles from Dragon**

**Notes on the Androids on the Starship Warden**

**by James M. Ward**

In the far future, there exists a colonization starship called Warden. The ship now roams the universe, uncontrolled by human hands, only its main ships computer stops it from running into any large planetary bodies. The ship is randomly infested with radiation, which has caused the life within to mutate in many ways. The medical section of the ship was given over in part to the formulation of synthetic life, in the form of humanoid androids. When the radiation cloud that affected the ship killed the crew, it also destroyed the controlling link the main ships computer had with the formulation vats.

A set of androids was produced with programmed medical knowledge, but no programmed instructions. The radiation in the medical area affected the fibrous brain cells of the androids and provided the creatures with a sort of animal cunning. These androids with medical knowledge made others, and soon a colony of them existed in the medical section of the ship. They were able to make themselves resistant to all forms of radiation, and plans were soon launched to consolidate the whole ship section they were on. Two factors stopped this scheme. The androids had a built-in obsolescence factor that killed them off in two years, and nothing they could do changed this. The other factor was the existence of mutations that continually invaded the area and were fearless, even when slaughtered to the last being.

These variables led the chemical creations to change their entire setup on the ship. The medical area that dealt with the creation of androids was blocked off from the rest of the level and all the efforts of these creatures went into the exploration and classification of all life on the ship and the study of increasing the life span of the race of androids as a whole. The exploration studies spanned many human lifetimes and cost untold numbers of androids but developed a rather complete picture of the ship. The study revealed many pockets of human habitation, and these pockets were infiltrated by human-appearing androids. While it was necessary to replace them every two years, exact doubles were easily formed because they were simply grown from vats. Quite soon, androids, with their superior knowledge and inhuman physical powers, started assuming positions of command, in the form of tribal leaders or more often as shamans.

These androids usually sought to place their human tribes in conflict with the many mutated species on the ship. This constant war stopped all beings from becoming too powerful and left the androids alone to continue their efforts in increasing their life span — a study that has gotten them nothing but if completed would allow them to take over the ship, their world!

Their plans did not always go smoothly, however. Mutations of several different types were able to sense the inhuman nature of the android. Sometimes an android died and revealed to other human tribesmen that their leader was alien. Animals that were domesticated by many human tribes often refused to be near androids, forcing the chemical men to be very careful around them. Lastly, the androids all feared that sometime, somewhere a mutation would be created that had powers unstoppable by human and android alike. Then, when an android was in every human tribe and most were in positions of power, their worst fears were realized in the form of a little pink ball-like creature called the "fuzzy."

This small, almost helpless, mutation required only affection to thrive and multiply. It was quickly adopted and used by a race of lizard men, who discovered the fuzzies weren’t so helpless after all. It seemed the little mutation could transmit any emotion the holder of the creature wished. It also attacked androids on sight and in many cases was able to hasten the chemical obsolescence process. Attacks were made on this race by the human group on that level, but were negated by the strange power of the fuzzy and the android leaders of that group were killed. The lizard men, while terrible in battle, were essentially pacifistic in nature. This factor and their fuzzies allowed them to make peace with the human tribe, which in turn made the whole level dangerous for the androids. The search by the chemical men then went on for a mutation to combat the fuzzy menace. None was found during the course of the first long year thereafter — half an android lifetime.

*The above is from the journal of Emaj the fat mutant philosopher, as translated by Yra, the Wise.*

## Some Ideas Missed in Metamorphosis Alpha

### by James M. Ward

In the course of writing anything about anything, when everything is done and sent to the printers, there is something that should have been added to it or changed in it. Such is the case, in looking over the TSR booklet Metamorphosis Alpha that I designed. Before going further, I want to say that everyone at TSR did a great job on the production of this booklet; it is just that some things (more my fault than theirs) were left out.

In working on the technological treasure items list, there are four items that should have been completely explained that were not.

**Chemical Radiation Neutralizers:** are small two foot tall cylinders that contain a blue gel having the power to absorb radiated material and completely neutralize it. The gel from one cylinder can cover a 100-square yard area. The effects are permanent and the cylinders can commonly be found in any radiated area that was dangerous before the starship passed through the radiated gas cloud.

**Chemical Flammable Retardants:** are simply CO2 fire extinguishers that are 1 foot tall cylinders, with a nozzle on top. These little tanks shoot out blasts of cold air. The tank can last for 30 minutes of constant action. There are many plants and creatures that cannot stand the intense cold given off by the extinguisher, making it a very good weapon.

**Radioactive Material in Containment:** is some type of material (liquid, sand, ball bearings, or solid metal wedges) that is radiated to a variable intensity. This containment is always in the form of a duralloy cube with a screw top. A loud buzzing occurs whenever these containers are opened. When out of this container, the material has an effective damaging range of 90 yards.

**Sensory Intensifiers:** are pendants that hang from the neck and run for thousands of years on a tiny atomic battery. These devices increase the natural bodily senses many times over. A being with this device on their person can see, hear, smell, and move at one and one half times the normal human rate. They can, therefore, not be surprised, because they can hear beings approaching or laying in wait for them. They can follow a scent like the best bloodhound. In battle the being gets two turns every other melee turn-example; attacked and not surprised, the being strikes normally the first time with his weapon and on the next melee turn gets two attacks with his weapon while the attacker gets only one.

Along the same lines as the above is the poison chart that is closely tied to the constitution roll. This chart is tough and the point was not brought out clearly enough that there are lots of ways the affects of this chart can be countered. Any shaman from any tribe should have poison antidotes that he or she passes out freely for information or goodies or even the promise of future goodies. The number three humanoids, knowing all about poison, naturally have antidotes that are obtainable for things that these small humanoids could normally never get hold of. Plants of many different types can provide partial or total negation to the affects of any given poison. There are mutations that can also negate the affects of poison; the new body parts mutation can be a gland that negates/filters toxic liquids entering the body. The increased body parts mutation could include the expanding of the appendix, which, if one may stretch a point, could cleanse the system of poisons entering the body, (if given sufficient time and rest).

It should be obvious that the abilities given everyone, including Strength, Dexterity, and Leadership Potential, are all closely tied to the D&D abilities. The Mental Resistance factor is roughly analogous to the Intelligence factor in D&D and because of this; it instead of the Character Leadership Potential should be used when the judge uses the Item Complexity Level chart.

The above information came through playing the game, and I imagine that as time goes by there will be lots of reports from others that have noticed things that need clarification in Metamorphosis Alpha. I hope those wolfoids stay off your tail.

## Tribal Society and Hierarchy On Board the Starship Warden

### by James M. Ward

In viewing the many tribes of the starship Warden, several common traits are evidenced. All of the tribes have a shaman and a tribal leader. All of the tribes are aware of other intelligent groups on the ship and tribes usually treat strangers as enemies. All of the tribes explore the ship, with differing degrees of success. All of the tribes are influenced in some manner by androids and wolfoids.

The shaman of any given tribe is the most knowledgeable member of the group in dealing with the ship and its devices. The shaman is a indirect tool for the referee, in that this non-player serves as a catalyst in the shaping of the players’ goals or directions, when they adventure. The shaman also heals poisons, translates written material, and often shows players how to use the devices they bring in, (for a price, of course).

The leader of any given group (tribe) is characterized by very high ability rolls, especially in the strength category. The being usually has weapons or devices far beyond those normally found in the tribe; devices like laser guns, slug projectors, or paralysis rods. If a leader lacks these things, he or she invariably has support from sub-leaders or mutations that have been enlisted into the leader’s service. Disputes over tribal leadership are rare. These battles entail an anything-goes confrontation, in which power weapons and mutated attacks are common.

Tribes frequently battle other groups on single levels or through out many levels of the ship. These battles often weaken both sides so much that third groups will move in and destroy the first two. Such battles are often methods of knowledge transfer: in the form of new weapons or fighting styles employed.

Exploring tribesmen are usually what players of the game represent. These explorations bring the tribe knowledge of the level and other parts of the ship. There are many knowledge giving devices and creatures on the ship that can be of great service to the would-be-traveler! Things like singing vines, computer screens, and peaceful intelligent creatures all aid the player in an environment that is not conducive to long life.

In the Starship Warden, the two dominant life forms are the Androids and the Wolfoids. The androids have infiltrated into every human society as shamans and have made themselves indispensable. This process gives them great power and allows them to use the human tribe to fight the mutated intelligences of the starship. The wolfoids, on the other hand, seek out other species and trade their considerable skill in metal working (mainly in the form of weapons) for knowledge and devices they otherwise do not possess. Both groups are aware of each other and seek the destruction of each other. The androids understand and use much of the vast technological power of the ship, but are hampered by lack of numbers and inbred handicaps. The wolfoids are numerous throughout the ship, but lack the knowledge of the androids. This lack in technology is partially negated by a deep understanding of the mutated life on the ship.

Many times during the battles between the wolfoids and the androids, player characters have aided one side or the other. This help has resulted in great rewards for those few that lived. One group of players recently killed four very important android scouts and naturally robbed the bodies of their duralloy shields and their color bands. This same group is aware that their shaman is not a human and have taken steps to invade the shaman’s hut and gain some of his (its) power. Only time will reveal their success.

**How Green was My Mutant (The Appearance of Humanoids in Metamorphosis Alpha)**

**by Gary Gygax**

Mutated humans, or simply humanoids, are a commonplace sight in the "worlds" of METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA. It is no great matter to describe the obvious when telling a player about his own appearance, or relating to a party of adventurers what they see when they encounter some humanoids. Thus, a mutant is very large or quite small, has quills, or is winged. Large ears go with heightened hearing. A long, broad nose indicates a humanoid with heightened smelling ability. It is easy to go on, but what about general differences? Of course, you may have humanoids appearing as humans in most respects, but if you would enjoy adding a bit of "color" to your campaign, I suggest the following tables for obtaining the general appearance of mutated humans, players or not. To determine the appearance just roll dice for as many of the categories as you desire, and, or course, you may delete, add, or change as you see fit!

[](http://www.metamorphosisalpha.com/ias/images/mutants1.jpg)[](http://www.metamorphosisalpha.com/ias/images/mutants2.jpg)[](http://www.metamorphosisalpha.com/ias/images/blendoid.jpg)

**Die Roll Skin/Hair Coloration Skin Characteristic Color Pattern**

1 white hairy solid (or solid patches)

2 pink hair patches striped

3 tan bald spotted

4 brown wrinkled belted

5 orange warty banded

6 black knobby whorls

7 red pocked splotches

8 yellow leathery normal

9 blue normal normal

10 green normal

11 purple

12 gray

13-15 2 colors

16-17 3 colors

18-19 4 colors

20 5 colors

**Die Roll Head Neck Body**

1 crested long round

2 long, pointed long, thin thin

3 flattened, oval short barrel like

4 bulbous very thick hunched

5 bullet shaped wattles long

6 quite small normal small

7 normal normal

8 normal normal

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| --- | --- | --- |
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**Die Roll Facial Features Hands and Feet Fingers and Toes**

1 very small long three

2 round eyes short four

3 drooping ears narrow four

4 no ears wide five

5 huge mouth hard five

6 big nose soft five

7 no nose thick fingered/toed six

8 very large thin fingered/toed six

9 normal very large seven

10 normal very small webbed

11 normal double-jointed/prehensile

12 normal nailless

**Die Roll Arms Legs**

1 long long

2 short short

3 thin thin

4 thick thick

5 double-jointed bowed

6 normal normal

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**Further Rules, Modifications, and Clarifications for Metamorphosis Alpha**

**by James M. Ward**

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There are several mutations and concepts that need more detailing, including things like physical and mental mutations, the poison factor, the use of the alternate missile chart, and the need for a new weapon class concerning the vibro devices.

Dealing with the physical chart the following additions should clear up some of the less logical parts of the rules:

**TALLER:** In deciding how tall to make any given mutation simply roll a die for a 1-20 score and translate the number in terms of feet, adding five feet to the total. For every four feet or over its normal height, a mutant adds one die of striking damage, and for every eight feet subtract one point of striking potential.

**SHORTER:** In deciding how short to make any given mutation simply roll a die for a 1-20 score and translate the number in terms of inches and subtract from the normal height of the player or animal.

**NEW BODY PARTS:** These parts might also include a human head for a plant, a poison resistance gland (giving the mutation a resistance of 18), or suction pads on the arms of any given creature.

**WINGS:** This mutation will not work for any being weighing over 125 lbs. Concerning the mental chart the following should help those long suffering judges.

**MENTAL PARALYSIS:** This mutation has a range of 100 feet and the being affected gets a saving throw every melee turn until death.

**PRECOGNITION:** When mutants foresee their death, the shock to their nervous system is so great that the mutant instantly takes six hit points of damage. If only injury is seen, the mutant takes 1 hit point of damage.

**TELEKINESIS:** There is a range limitation of 50 feet for this power.

**REPULSION FIELD GENERATION:** When creating the sphere, mutants can mentally lift objects within; up to and including any weight they could normally lift by hand. These spheres of force can also be placed around the creator or be used to block openings.

**MENTAL BLAST:** These blasts have a maximum range of 100 feet.

**LIFE LEECH:** When points are leeched away and the leeching mutant takes damage, the hit points are first subtracted from those leeched first. While the mutant only gets to keep leeched points for 24 hours, these points never return to their owners. \*\*\* (*Note this Brian and stop trying to kill my poor gorilla?*)

**DENSITY CONTROL (others):** This power has a range of 100 feet.

**MOLECULAR DISRUPTION:** This mutation has a range of 100 feet.

**DE-EVOLUTION:** This mutation has a range of 100 feet.

**DUAL BRAIN:** This mutation allows two mental saving throws to be used for every mental attack, but triple the number of attacks is needed to raise a mutant’s mental resistance by a factor of one.

**PLANT MOBILITY:** For deciding how fast any given plant creature moves, roll a die for a score of 1-12 and translate the number into yards per melee turn.

**PLANT SYMBIOTIC ATTACHMENT:** As animal mutation number 44; not like it is written.

For any given poison it is only logical to assume that large concentrations in the body will disturb the system, no matter what the intensity, and/or the poison resistance. For the purposes of the game, assume that the second and further applications of any poison within one hour will reduce the being’s poison resistance by a factor of two for eight hours or until neutralized.

In using the alternate missile chart, the numbers represent targets having an armor class of seven and referees should add one number for every armored target above seven in each range.

The Vibro weapons should have a weapon class of their own and it reads as follows:

**ARMOR CLASS WEAPON CLASS 9**

1 10

2 9

3 8

4 7

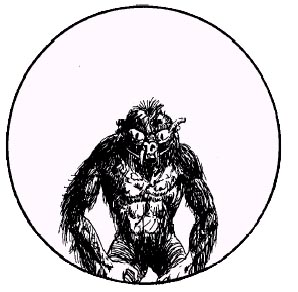
5 6

6 6

7 4

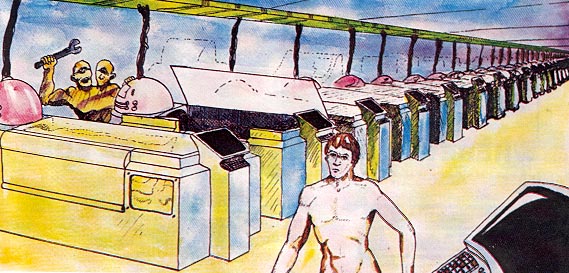
8 3

More information will certainly come from me and many others that play "MA" in the nature of rules clarifications and additions to increase the judging and playing pleasure of everyone.



**An Alternate Beginning Sequence for Metamorphosis Alpha**

**by Guy W. McLimore, Jr.**

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In a special hidden section of the lost starship *Warden*, an engineering robot discovers a minor cable break. Drawing a small torch from its built-in tool kit, the necessary repair is soon made. This circuitry interruption which has remained undiscovered and untended for many, many years is now closed, and a special computer signal sent long ago finally reaches its destination. Relays close, and a special computer unit is activated, setting into motion a special genetic laboratory.

Immediately, micro-miniature manipulators withdraw samples of human tissue from a freezer storage compartment. Unnoticed by the electronic controlling device is a cracked and damaged radioactive power capsule nearby which contaminates some of the withdrawn tissue cultures. The quick-frozen cells are moved to tanks of a special growth medium and are electrically stimulated. The cells begin to multiply, rapidly ...

Weeks later, the tanks hold full-grown adult human bodies. Some appear normal; others have strange deformities and mutations induced by the unexpected dose of radiation. All are limp, unmoving, and devoid of intelligence and identity.

Once again, micromanipulators move in, this time to attach wires and sensor strips to the foreheads of the newly-grown clones. In a matter of days, computer tapes full of general human knowledge and specific ship-related skills are played directly into the clones’ brain synapses. But again old computer malfunctions and worn-out circuitry combine to leave large gaps in the intended programming of the new potential crew members. There will be unfortunate -- perhaps eventually tragic -- lapses in their "memories" of the ship and its functions.

Thankfully, the all important final tape does play into the heads of the clones, explaining their mission. That mission is of the utmost importance to the hundreds of thousands of people in the ship.

"Program codenamed *Clone Bank Alpha* is activated only in case of extreme danger or damage to the ship, causing breakdown of chain of command. Upon activation, tissue samples are processed into clones of ship’s personnel, who are then programmed with the technical and general data necessary for operation of the ship. The clone bank computer terminals are to provide equipment and authorization to the clones, allowing them to reestablish chain of command and prevent disaster."

YOU are one of these clones charged with the task of rescuing the starship from disaster. But computer malfunctions have left you without the special equipment and weapons you need to master the situation. What equipment you carry you must manufacture yourself from materials available in the clone bank complex. Some of your team are not even totally human, possessing strange mutant abilities and defects. Worst of all, there are large holes in your memories. The ship’s equipment seems strange to you, and you are not sure how to operate. You remember almost nothing of the structure of the ship itself not even where the clone bank you are in is located or how to find the important areas of the ship. The aged and broken-down computers in the clone bank complex yield no information of value.

Still, you and your party have a job to do. You must leave the clone bank, and wander the ship, gathering information, and putting what skills you have to work. But it may already be too late. The disaster that caused the loss of command in the ship was long ago, and what remains is strange, and savage, and often deadly. You are entering an unknown land ...

This alternate scenario for beginning a game of Metamorphosis: Alpha has certain advantages over the idea of beginning as a barbarian from a shipboard tribe. Most notably, it eliminates the problem of so-called barbarians who own a copy of the rule book and know decidedly too much to be mere tribesmen.

**CLONE BANK: DETERMINATION OF MUTATION STATUS**

**Die Roll Mutation Status**

01-15 Mutant (1 mutation)

16-25 Mutant (2 mutations & 1 defect)

26-30 Mutant (3 mutations & 1 defect)

31-35 Mutant (4 mutations & 2 defects)

36-50 Latent Mutant Stock

51-00 Human

Physical mutations are numbered 1 through 30. Renumber mental mutations 31 through 67. Roll percentile dice for each indicated mutation on the table above. A roll of 68 through 00 is ignored. Physical defects are renumbered 1 through 12, and mental defects are renumbered 13 through 20. Roll a 20-sided die for determination of defects.

**LATENT MUTANT STOCK**

These are humans who have latent mutant abilities that may be brought out by radiation. Keep track of how many levels of radiation CUMULATIVE have been absorbed by any one latent mutant. This is the percentage chance that the accumulated radiation effect will bring out the latent mutations. Roll each time the character is affected by radiation and lives. If the latent mutations are brought out, roll on the following table:

**Die Roll Effects**

01-50 1 mutation

51-75 2 mutations & 1 defect

76-90 3 mutations & 2 defects

91-00 DEATH (lethal mutation)

**PROGRAMMED SHIP SKILLS**

**Die Roll Number of skills**

01-50 1 minor skill

51-60 1 major & 1 minor skill

61-75 1 major & 2 minor skills

76-85 2 major skills

86-90 2 major & 1 minor skill

91-95 2 major & 2 minor skills

96-99 2 major & 3 minor skills

00 ROLL SPECIAL SKILL (humans only)

**MAJOR SKILLS (player’s choice)**

Ecology Maintenance Technician

Astrogator

Computer Technician

Weapons Officer

Roboticist

Medical Officer

Power Room Technician

Engine Maintenance Technician

Radiation Technician

Band Unit Maintenance

Technician

**MINOR SKILLS (player’s choice)**

Food Service Technician

Shuttlecraft Pilot

Transport Technician

Geneticist/Chemlife Technician

Small Unit Repair Technician

Recreation & Athletics Officer

Survival Training Specialist

Ship Superstructure Technician

**SPECIAL SKILLS**

**Die Roll Skill**

01-15 Psionic Healer

16-30 Machine Talent

31-45 Immortal

46-60 Probability Shifter

61-75 Resurrection Talent

76-90 Mental Battery

91-00 Ability Duplicator

**EXPLANATIONS OF SKILLS**

**Weapons Officer:** + 1 on rolls to hit with ship’s weaponry

**Medical Officer:** Can heal 1 point of damage per man per day with minimum equipment

**Radiation Technician:** Can identify radiation areas from condition of local plants, effects on animals and players, etc.

**Band Unit Maintenance Technician:** Expert with color band circuitry. Has possibility of bypassing band locks (at referee’s option)

**Food Service Technician:** 25 per cent change to identify harmful substances

**Shuttlecraft Pilot:** Able to fly ship’s shuttle vehicles

**Transport Technician:** Familiar with road systems, sub shuttle tubes, anti-grav sled repair, etc.

**Geneticist/Chemlife Technician:** Conversant with both human genetics and android construction

**Small Unit Repair Technician:** Able to repair minor damage to ship’s equipment depending on complexity (referee’s option)

**Survival Training Specialist:** + 1 to hit with all weapons. 1-6 pts. damage hand-to-hand combat with humans and humanoids (Only one per party)

**Ship Superstructure Technician:** Familiar with hull construction, including methods of working with duralloy

**Psionic Healer:** Can heal 1-6 points of damage per person per day, or twice that (taking 1-6 pts. himself in the latter case)

**Machine Talent:** Possesses instinctive affinity with all machines.

**Immortal:** Totally immune to poison, radiation, and disease. Regenerates 5 hit points per day. Transfusion of blood into a non-immortal cures 2-40 hit points, and can be done once a month.

**Probability Shifter:** Can influence a die roll by investing hit points (1 hit point = 1 percentage point; 5 hit points = 1 20-sided die point; 10 hit points= 1 6-sided die point). Use of this power, and direction and magnitude of influence, must be declared before rolling. This power can be used whenever the character affected by the roll is within 25 ft. of the person with the power.

**Resurrection Talent:** Can restore life by pouring own hit points into another’s body. The amount of points invested becomes the maximum hit points for the resurrected person. This can be no more than the original number of hit points the dead character had. Each full day dead adds 10 percent to the number of points that must be invested. (Example: A man three days dead must have 39 points invested to gain 30.) Persons with bodies not intact or not recoverable cannot be resurrected, nor can persons already once resurrected by this method.

**Mental Battery:** Can power any item within 20 feet with mental energy, with 5 percent chance (cumulative) of "burnout" each melee round. Powering an item takes no real concentration, but power ends if person with battery power is knocked unconscious or moved out of range.

**Burnout Chart**

**Die Roll Result**

01-50 Unable to use power for one day

51-75 Unconscious 1-20 min. plus 1 -day wait to use power again

76-85 Unconscious 1-6 hours plus 2-day wait to use power again

86-90 As 76-85 plus take 1-20 pts. damage

91-99 As 86-90 plus take additional 1-20 pts. damage

00 Death from energy burnout

**Ability Duplicator:** May duplicate any one single mutant ability (mental or physical) or one single human attribute (strength, constitution, dexterity, etc.) of any being within 100 yards. Roll for burnout as above each melee round but with 10 percent non-cumulative chance of burnout.

**Still More Additions to MA**

**by James Ward**

**MUTANTS - PLANTS & ANIMAL**

**Type # Armor Class Movement Hit Dice**

Jawed Lilly Pad 1 4 0 10

Fungus Dome 5 3 1 5

Red Puff Ball 1-10 8 0 1

Stalkers 1 3 9 9

Radiation Vine 1 6 0

Island Plant 1 2 0 20

Jawed Creeping Vine 1-2 3 8 10

Reflector Brambles 1 2 0 8

Spear Tree 1-6 8 0 9

Poison Thorn Grass 9,000 7 0 4 collectively

Tigeroid 1-6 2 24 12

Gorillaoid 1-10 6 16

Bulleroid 1-4 2 18 12

Rabner 1 8 4 5

Blumer 1 2 12 19

Carrin 1 7 9/12 15

Kerask 1 4 7 7

Gygarant 1 1 10 10

Sotherlan 1-4 4 12 5

Wardent 1 6 8 13

**MUTATED PLANTS**

**1. JAWED LILY PAD:** This mutated plant stands nine feet out of the water, with a jawed flower cup at the top able to swallow a human whole, crushing the life out of them. Hidden under the water, the plant has 5-50 grabber vines with a reach of fifty feet. The plant is fully intelligent, is telepathic, and has the De-evolution mutation. The plant has 1-12 special throw able spear tendrils, also under the water. They have the power to symbiotically attach themselves to beings and the plant can then make a mental attack on the stricken creature. The controlled beings will then drown themselves in the water. When the spear casts miss, they snake their way back to the water and the lily.

**2. FUNGUS DOME:** This mass of fungus material forms a dome, usually about ten feet tall, with a radius of seven feet. Brown in color, the dome has six 20 feet tall columns of what appear to be sand. These columns are controlled by the dome and will strike, with crushing force, those that approach the dome. A 200 yard radius of sterile earth surrounds the dome and under this earth are 50-1,000 sacs of water, used to fight fires. The dome has the following mental mutations: Mental Paralysis of all within a 200 yard radius, Force Field Generation, Absorption of radiation, and Telekinesis of weights up to 750 pounds. The mutation feeds on all types of protein and enjoys destroying any type of plant life.

**3. RED PUFFBALL FUNGUS:** These one foot wide balls of fungus release all their spores at a touch when fully adult. The spores react on any iron based substance where they completely rust the metal in seconds. If picked just before the adult stage, they will only break open when struck sharply.

**4. STALKERS:** Nine feet tall, these mobile plants think of nothing but food. They have one large central maw that emits a constant acid that easily breaks down all protein matter. The mutation has three tendril stingers that have an effective range of six feet from the plant with an intensity 12 poison. Two other powerful tendrils can grasp & hold the beings that the plant stings.

**5. RADIATION VINE:** This plant is able to imitate exactly any radiation near it and thus be unaffected by radiation damage. Shamans have sometimes used this plant in place of color bands, as the leaves will activate as the band. This mutation is only found within radiation areas and is usually orange in color.

**6. ISLAND PLANT:** This single creature (plant) covers a 300 yard area having the appearance of a jungle. The outer parts of the creature are tangle vines and poison berries (intensity 8). Within 150 yards of the center are 1-20 squeeze vines every 30 yards, with contact poison sap on them, (intensity 12). Poison throwing thorns and sword bushes guard the last 50 yards to the center of the island, the sword bushes all being stationary. At the center of the plant sits a huge beak that eats all the meat the rest of the plant kills. This is the main mental control area with the following powers: Force Field Generation, Cryogenics, and Telekinesis of weights up to 1,000 pounds.

**7. MANY JAWED CREEPING VINE:** This mutation has hundreds of thorned jaws along its surface. The adult creeper has a circumference of ten feet and a length of up to ninety yards. The plant is usually found in heavy tropical regions and often burrows into the ground. It will then completely uncoil itself (in a spring action) from the ground to attack its prey. The mutation has eye stalks in the shape of flowers that perceive up to 50 yards away. In judging this creature, treat the coils as ten weapon class three strikes. Each strike does two dice of damage. The creature can be found in several stages of development with the smaller creature having the smaller the number of strikes.

**8. REFLECTOR BRAMBLES:** This mutated plant has 1-10 squeeze vines, stands 20 feet tall, is 40 feet long when adult, has flowered sensors all through the bush, with a range of 50 yards, and an attraction odor. It has only one mental power magnified many times, the ability to reflect almost anything. It can negate the following energy states: heat, cold, radiation, electricity, protein disruptor blasts, paralysis charges, laser blasts, mental blasts & sonic blasts. Mental attacks have no effect on the thing. When attacking on its own treat the vines as clubs for hitting. When any single vine hits, the being is pinned and other vines will begin crushing the trapped creature.

**9. SPEAR TREE:** This mutated plant has 2-20 limbs that can shoot from its trunk like spears for distances of up to 60 yards. At the tip of each spear limb is a needle sharp seed pod that always breaks off when the limb penetrates protein material, (treat each hit as doing 3 dice of damage). The plant’s sensing organs are found at the top of the tree. The seeds will sprout in 1-4 days if the body remains undisturbed. The tree seems to be a large pine with no needles on the missile limbs.

**10. POISON THORN GRASS:** Bright blue grass with barbed tips, these barbs are all poisoned (intensity 9). The grass grows in large ten feet by ten feet patches among normal grass areas.

**MUTATED ANIMALS**

**1. TIGEROID:** This cat has a unique muscle system that allows it to strike for 8 dice of damage with either paw, run for hours at speeds of up to 100 miles an hour, and leap hundreds of yards in the air. Its fur is resistant to sonics, lasers, protein disruptors and radiation. The tigeroid can also use the sonic mutation. The beast has Heightened Intelligence, the Life Leech mutation and a Telekinetic Arm with the tigeroid’s strength mutation.

**2. MOUNTAIN GORILLAOID:** This beast already has heightened strength, it has a poison resistance gland that gives it an 18 for chart use, and its skin reflects radiation. The mutant can Life Leech, has Heightened Intelligence, has the De-evolution power, and the Repulsion Field. Unfortunately for it, the creature’s metabolism has been speeded up forcing it to eat constantly, and it is mentally defenseless.

**3. BULLEROID:** This mutation already has the partial carapace and it also has huge outsized legs allowing it to run 150 miles an hour for hours at a time. It has 8 huge horns, forming a crown on its head, and its fur is resistant to poisons and acids. Illusions of any type have no effect on the animal, its first attack is always a Death Field, and it has a Dual Brain.

**4. RABNER:** This mutation was a rabbit, until it lost its legs and head to mutational change. It now appears as a ball of fur from which three tentacles appear when it attacks. The creature has the following other mutations: double Heightened Strength (so that now it hits with this mutation for 4 dice of damage), Heightened Dexterity, and Heightened Precision. The Rabner, while not intelligent, has the following very effective mental abilities: Mental Defense Shield, Will Force, and a Military Genius mutation. The mutation is omnivorous now, moves along the ground with a rolling motion, and will fight any size creature for food.

**5. BLUMER:** This mutated animal appears to be a plot of tulips in thick grass. When beings come within 30 yards of it, the fake tulips cast themselves at the victim at the rate of 1-6 cups per melee round. These cups are razor sharp shells of bone, (treat as swords for damage). The creature levitates (modified into flying) towards any fleeing prey shooting its cups all the while. When the prey is dead the Blumer lands over it and many jaws devour the dead victim, in seconds. The grass is extremely hard, making excellent armor for the mutation. It is not intelligent, but has the flying Levitation mutation.

**6. CARRIN:** This animal stands erect and is about eight feet tall. The mutation is fully intelligent and has the following mental powers: Heightened Intelligence, Telepathy, a Mental Defense Shield, and it is an Economic Genius. It has effective wings and usually weighs about 100 pounds. It can Regenerate itself, and has quills (poison intensity 12) that it casts from its body (at a range of 30 yards while the creature is on the ground). The creature is usually found with a large number of mutated flying followers helping it.

**7. KERASK (WOLVERINE):** The mutation looks like its non-mutated cousin, but is greatly changed. Its claws are poisoned from a gland in the paws (intensity 9) and it has fangs that are also poisoned (intensity 11). The creature is fully intelligent, and is able to fight with the Mental Blast and the Life Leech mutation at the same time. It always fights to the death in any given battle and likes eating things much larger than itself.

**8. GYGARANT:** This huge (40 feet tall) reptile is known on all levels for its triple strength Sonic Yell. Its jaws can completely engulf any six feet tall or less creature. Its bite does six dice of damage. The beast also has the following mental powers: Intuition, Will Force, Molecular Disruption (it uses only when near death), Absorption of all heat forms, Reflection of all energy blasts, a Mental Defense Shield, and it can Teleport. Any illusion of any type always works on it.

**9. SOTHERLAN:** This creature is four feet tall and builds elaborate nests in very small trees. It attacks only beings with colorful fur pelts or plumage, with devastating success. Its beaked mouth does five dice of damage and its taloned arms rip for one die each. The creature Regenerates and uses Precognition before eating anything.

**10. WARDENT:** This former human has regressed to a small (3 feet tall) furry bear-like creature with the following mental powers: Heightened Intelligence, Telepathy, Telekinesis, Mental Defense Shield, Will Force, and Mental Control over Physical States, Heightened Brain Talent, and it is a Scientific Genius. The creature has no special physical abilities except constant hunger, not only for food but valuable objects others may have.

## The Bionic Supplement

#### (Why Is It So Small, Mommy? Shhh. ‘Cause it’s transistorized.)

### by Brian Blume

Bionics seems to have cluttered up everything nowadays, especially television. If you would like bionics to clutter up your games, try adding the following to your METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA campaign.

Players discovering medical laboratories may request that the robots there replace one or more of their organs with bionic replacements. The player may not choose what is to be replaced, however, the robots will randomly determine what is to be replaced. For each replacement a player desires, the referee will roll once (1-20) on the following table. Obviously, a player cannot receive two bionic hearts, etc.

**Die Roll Replacement Hit Points Effect**

1-3 One Arm 10 Increases Strength. +1 die of damage

4-6 One Leg 10 Increases strength. -1 for opponent to hit. Double speed if both legs

7-8 One Eye 5 Infrared and Ultraviolet vision. As Heightened Vision if both eyes

9-10 One Ear 5 May hear above and below normal ranges. As Heightened Hearing if both ears

11 Nose 5 As Heightened Smell

12 Heart 5 Reduces fatigue

13 Lungs 5 May extract oxygen from water

14 Digestion 5 May live on rocks, sand, etc.

15-17 Brain 10 50% chance to forget any given fact or items operation each occasion (defect)

18-20 Torso 30 -2 to hit for both player and his opponents

Any bionic area has no sensory nerve endings. Bionic areas sustaining damage may only be repaired by maintenance robots. For each bionic area deduct 5 Hit Points, and add the Hit Points listed for the bionic parts.

## Robots as Players in Metamorphosis Alpha

### by Barton Stano & Jim Ward

On the lost star ship, "Warden", there is a small compound located near a ruined city. The inhabitants of the compound are descendants of the radiation disaster that struck the ship. Their distant ancestors had tried to restore sanity to the nearby city, but soon realized that the task was too great for them. They were forced into this decision because of the increasing frequency of mutant attacks upon the compound. The ever-decreasing group was forced into building a small "safe" area from which they could venture out only at need. For years, in their self-imposed isolation, the group tried to learn about the much changed ship and its devices, for huge gaps existed in their knowledge. These gaps were created when their highly trained ancestors were killed before they could pass along their knowledge. Their lack of know-how worried them, for if they had advanced weapons, they could foil any mutant attack. Their need to find out more about the ship was demonstrated when a strange mutated humanoid got through their defense system, So, in an effort to find out what there was to discover about the mutations of the ship and the ship’s lost knowledge, they sent out scouts. They did not want to risk themselves for their fear of mutants was overwhelming. They were instead able to create self controlled robotic devices to do the job.

The robots are equipped with the best equipment they have, but this is not very formidable compared to what they think their ancestors were capable of. They never want to be able to communicate with the device lest some unknown mutant was able to track the robot back to its source. To insure that this never happens the final program was very complete. It states that the robotic unit is to explore the mutant filled ship studying mutants and any discovered devices of the ancients. This information is to be sent back on a one-way radio circuit. The unit was programmed with the combined knowledge of the compound on technical devices and a program block was given it so that it could never approach the place of its creation. These units were sent off and while many of the units were quickly destroyed, some of them gave their creators much valuable information.

Because of the nature of this possible player character, it is recommended that only one player of any group play a robot. One big advantage to the Star Ship Master is that if a robot player is killed the SM can start another robot off in the same general direction with all the knowledge of the old unit. The SM should give every robot player a small amount of technical knowledge, given in such a way that it forces the player to still experiment with many of the possible devices of the ship. These robots are not controlled by bands or other robots.

To set up a player as a robot, you roll no dice. The player is given 115 points for structural creation and 100 power points. The player creates the kind of unit he or she wants with strengths and weakness that only they know about. The structural points are used for the movement factor, computer factor, physical devices, armor, sensory equipment, and weapons. The power points serve to beef up special sections.

### MOVEMENT UNITS

These units propel the robot and only one movement device is allowed per robot. The units lose speed when weight is added or damage is taken. The SM should determine what the effects are on movement.

**Type of Unit Speed Cost Operational Weight**

"Forest" Propulsion Unit 96 KPH (60 mph) 30 Structure Points 500 lb.

Standard Propulsion Unit 48 KPH (30 mph) 25 Structure Points 400 lb.

"Garden" Propulsion Unit 40 KPH (25 mph) 20 Structure Points 350 lb.

Low Propulsion Unit 20 KPH (12 mph) 15 Structure Points 500 lb.

Anti-gravity Unit Height Only 30 Structure Points 900 lb.

Treads (Tracks) 15 KPH (9 mph) 45 Structure Points 1,500 lb.

For every five power points added to a propulsion unit there is an increase of five KPH and twenty pounds of operational weight. In the case of the Anti-Gravity unit, it can raise the robot up to 500 yards; with the addition of five power points it can raise it up to 1,500 yards.

### COMPUTER UNITS

There are basically four different types of electronic brains. Each one is responsible for the controlling of the power relays needed when using broadcast power, the use of the devices the robot is equipped with, and the logic systems needed for travel. The following is a detailing of what each unit does:

**Single Logic System:** The system will work all the devices with a dexterity of ten. It is able to use only two systems at the same time.

**Dual Dependent Logic System:** These are two separated computers that must work together to control the entire system. In case of malfunction or damage, one computer can control any one system of the robot. This system is able to use any three systems on the robot at the same time. It gives the unit a dexterity of twelve at all times.

**Dual Independent Logic System:** This is just two separate systems that are able to use any four systems of the robot at the same time (dependant on the power accumulation capacity). In case of damage it is able to control the robot as the single logic system. It gives the unit a dexterity of fifteen at all times.

**Triple Semi-independent Logic System:** This is the most complex of all the robotic systems and allows the unit to use any six systems at the same time. If power is available it is usually able to repair itself and it gives the robot a dexterity of eighteen. This system greatly increases the ability of the robot to figure out ancient devices (judges’ option as to the total ability).

For every fifteen power points added to the computer unit, it is able to use one extra built-in robotic system (over and above the norm for the unit). For every ten power points added to the computer unit, it is able to add one to the robot’s dexterity (up to eighteen).

**Type of Unit Cost**

Single LS 10 Structure Points

Dual Dependent LS 15 Structure Points

Dual Independent LS 20 Structure Points

Triple Semi-independent LS 25 Structure Points

### Physical Devices

All of these parts are located in the trunk of the robot.

**Lead Shielding:** Robots have a base ten mental resistance and a base ten radiation resistance. One of these shields raises both scores by four points. Each shield weighs fifty pounds.

**Lights:** These are two moveable lamps that can be used to dazzle enemies.

**Quills:** These are six inch steel quills that can be located anywhere on the unit. There are fifty quills per set and five of them can be launched if ten extra structure points are spent. These spikes have a range of fifty yards and a weapon class of three.

**Boxes:** A robot may have up to four of these eight cubic foot exterior boxes. Each comes filled with 100 computer power points and 100 structure repair points. This is the only way a robot may get spare parts in its beginnings. Always keep track of how many points are left in each box.

**Radiation Detector:** This device is effective up to loo meters and can determine intensity levels.

**Water Proofing:** A robot is normally water-proofed to twenty feet of water; with ten extra structure points it is good for ten extra feet of water.

**Resistance to Heat & Cold:** A robot is normally resistant to temperatures of -40 degrees F to plus 120 degrees F. Every five points of structure increases that resistance on either side up/down five degrees.

**Single Grasping Claw:** Twelve meter (39 feet) extension, with a lifting capability of 100 kilograms (220 pounds).

Light Tractor and Repulsion Beams: They are able to hold or repel masses of up to 90 kilograms (200 pounds) with a range of 3 meters.

**Insecticide and Herbicide Sprayers:** These have a range of twenty meters and the effectiveness is up to the referee. For every ten added structure points given this item, there are twenty shots above the normal thirty.

**Type Cost**

Lead Shielding 20 Structure Points

Lights 5 Structure Points

Quills 10 Structure Points

Box 15 Structure Points

Radiation Detector 5 Structure Points

Water Proofing 5 Structure Points

Single Grasping Claw 20 Structure Points

Tractor & Repulsion Beams 30 Structure Points

Sprayers 30 Structure Points

### Armor

An armor type must be chosen; only one may be used.

**Class Cost**

Armor Class One 50 Structure Points

Armor Class Two 45 Structure Points

Armor Class Three 40 Structure Points

Armor Class Four 35 Structure Points

Armor Class Five 30 Structure Points

Armor Class Six 25 Structure Points

Armor Class Seven (Lots of bare wire) 20 Structure Points

Armor Class Eight 15 Structure Points

Note: The duralloy shield will not aid in a robots armor class or the use of other types of armor.

### Sensory Equipment

The use of these is the only way a robot can sense the world around it. The repairing of any of these units costs two structure points. The taking of any of these units not only costs the stated structure points; they also take ten power points per system.

**Sense Cost**

Vision as a human 5

Heightened Vision as the mutation 10

Hearing as a human 5

Heightened Hearing as the mutation 10

Smell as a human 5

Heightened Smell as the mutation 10

Touch as a human 10

Heightened Touch as the mutation 15

Analyzer: if given a small sample of soil, living matter, or the product of living things, it can tell the effect it has on that matter with its systems. Detecting radioactive ground or poison material are its best functions 15

Voice: This is the only way a robot can communicate with others 10

Infra-red & Ultra-violet spectrum receivers 15

X-ray unit with a range of three yards 10

### Weapons Systems

There are two types of weapon systems: one that uses structure points and one that uses power points. The wave type weapons need power points and are treated like mental attacks with a mental resistance of thirteen normally.

#### Structure Weapons Systems

**Slug Ejector:** Fires ten slugs per melee round with each doing two dice of subduing damage. It comes with 200 slugs that are reuseable. 100 extra slugs may be acquired for ten extra structure points.

**Radiation Beam:** This is a base ten radiation emitter. It is useable every three melee rounds unless it is the only structure weapon. In this case it can be used every other melee round. The intensity can be raised one level for every five structure points added.

**Capture Nets:** These nets have a weapon class of 5 for hitting and do no damage when striking but do entangle anything they hit. There is a 1-40% chance that there will be no movement for the next three melee turns after being struck. It takes a torch a melee turn or a human three melee turns to get rid of the net.

**Sonic Blast:** This is the same as the mutation and useable every three melee turns.

**Selective Sonic Blast:** Using a parabolic reflector this system can focus the sound in a three feet area.

**Heat Generator:** As the mutation

**Physical Weapons:** Swords, maces, axes and the like are built into a tentacle of tentacle or claw. These weapons have a base strength of twelve. The addition of ten power points raises the base strength by two. Power Bolts: These bolts are treated as a heavy crossbow. There are ten with the system and they are reusable. The firing rate is two per melee round.

#### Power Weapon Systems

**Paralyzation Wave:** This wave is as the mutation mental paralyzation with a range of twenty yards.

**Force Field:** This system is the same as the mutation in effect, but it takes five dice of damage. When overloaded it is forever useless. For every additional five power points a die is given to the shield.

**Repulsion Beam:** As the mutation with the force field dice.

**Magnetic Control:** As the mutation

**Weapon Type Cost**

Slug Ejector 10 Structure Points

Radiation Beam 10 Structure Points

Capture Net (1) 10 Structure Points

Sonic Blast 10 Structure Points

Selective Sonic Blast 15 Structure Points

Heat Generator 10 Structure Points

Physical Weapon 5 Structure Points

Power Bolts 15 Structure Points

Paralyzation Wave 15 Power Points

Force Field 15 Power Points

Repulsion Beam 20 Power Points

Magnetic Control 15 Power Points

### Damaging of Robots

Every robot should start out with eighty hit points. It takes damage just like any other mutant. For every drop of one-fourth in the number of hit points there is a loss of one-fourth of the robots body functions. The player makes a list of the order of the functions that will be lost before the total destruction of the unit. For every piece of lead Shield added on add ten hit points.

Along with the concept of damage to robots is the need to figure in the effect of fatigue on the machine parts. After four weeks away from the compound, a robot must start expending five structure or power points a week to maintain its trim. If this is not done then the referee rolls every day with a 5% chance that the unit will suffer a system that breaks down.

#### Computer Malfunction Table

**% Malfunction**

1-15 Movement System Damaged

16-23 Tentacles or Claws

24-34 Weapon System

35-65 Trunk

66-95 Power System\*

96-100 Unit Logic System

\*Roll again to determine where the system is located.

#### Repair Table

**Percent Damaged Time Needed for Repair Cost in Structure or Power Points**

1- 10% 1 Hour 5

11-20% 2 Hours 10

21-35% 2.5 Hours 15

36-49% 3 Hours 20

50 - 79% 3.5 Hours 25

80 - 96% 4.5 hours 30

97 - 99% 10 hours 30

100% 5 days 50

A player might wish to not spend points on fixing a unit, but merely jerry-rig the system. In this case the ship master rolls a percent secretly to determine how long the jerry-rigging works. A system may only be jerry-rigged twice.

#### Repair Duration

1 Day 1-10%

1 Week 11-35%

30 Days 36-89%

Permanently 90-100%

NOTE: Illusion generation, mental control, life leech, mental transparency, death field generation, and de-evolution do not work on robots.

There are several robotic features that are built in. They are: water proofing, three, four foot long tentacles having claw-like fingers at the ends, broadcast power pick-ups, one-way radio transmitter, and an innate resistance to electrical shock.

NOTE: In the case of Anti-gravity system, it is necessary for the unit to push itself in leaps. This causes it to travel at about the same speed as a human.

#### Example

“Forest” PU 30 (SP) 80 (PP) Speed 176 KPH

Triple (S-I LS) 25 (SP)

1 Box 15 (SP)

Vision 5 (SP) 10 (PP)

Hearing 5 (SP) 10 (PP)

Power Bolts 15 (SP)

Armor Class (7) 20 (SP)

“Garden” PU 20 (SP) 60 (PP) Speed 100 KPH

Dual ILS 20 (SP) 30 (PP)

1 Box 15 (SP)

Heightened Vision 10 (SP) 10 (PP)

Armor Class 6 25 (SP)

3 Physical Weapons 15 (SP)

Capture Net 10 (SP)

## The Total Person in Metamorphosis Alpha

### by James M. Ward

The concept of role playing revolves around the idea that you become a “being” from a world that can only be imagined. This being reacts to the problems of every day life, along with those unusual ones that often come up, in a way that guarantees that beings survival. The enjoyment that is to be realized from this type of gaming is from the pleasure of overcoming problems. These created beings are usually started full blown out of the minds of the players with hit points, a mental resistance, and the like. To make the game more enjoyable and allow any given player a slight edge in Metamorphosis Alpha (something that is often needed as the players can attest to) I have created a few charts that give the player a past to work with. There are also charts that help those in a village discover what can be had there. In using these, if problems come up that are caused by the illogic of the die roll just start over in that chart or on the whole thing.

#### Environment from the Earliest Times to the Pre-adult Years

1 Simple Village Area

2 Ancient Town Area

3 Engineering Section

4 Forest Area

5 Mountain Village Area

6 Fully Operational City

7 Island

8 Simple Village Area

9 Single Powered Villa

10 Powered Horticultural Area

11 Inter-ship Corridor

12 Large River Village Area

#### Actions in the Pre-adult Years

1 Time Was Spent Hunting

2 Time Was Spent Plant Gathering

3 Time Was Spent Fighting Mutated Creatures

4 Time Was Spent In General Weapons Practice (non-powered)

5 Time Was Spent In Working with Simple Technological Devices

6 Time Was Spent In Learning about Advanced Technological Devices

7 Time Was Spent In Healing and Helping Others

8-9 Time Was Spent In Hunting

10 Time Was Spent In Studying Mutants of All Types

11 Time Was Spent Around Radiation Areas

12 Time Was Spent In Learning to Read the Ancient Language

#### Basic Interests and/or Talents

1 Knowledge of Powered Weapons

2 Knowledge of Poisons & Antidotes

3-4 Hunting

5 Combat of Any Type

6 Collecting Domars

7 Mapping the World

8 Knowledge of Technological Items in General

9 Knowledge of Transportation Devices of All Types

10 The Use Of Non-powered Weapons

11 Knowledge of Medicines of All Types

12 Knowledge of the Powers of Mutants Of All Types

13-20 No Special Interests or Talents

#### Special Abilities

1-12 None

13 Archery Accuracy

14 Attacking With a Sword

15 Working with Simple Technological Devices

16 Working with Poisons And Their Antidotes

17 Knowing the Effects Of Plants And Herbs

18 Understanding the Types And Abilities Of Robots

19 Working with Computers

20 Communicating With and Beguiling Creatures of All Types

#### Materials Supplied from and/or Available in a Tribal Situation

1. Some Type of Weapon: Stone Dagger, Sword Frond, Spear, Bow & Arrow
2. Carrying Items: Sack, Bandoleer, Back Pack, Belt & Pouch
3. Living Area: Large Hut, Small Hut, Lean-to, Under A Tree, A Hole in the Ground, An Ancient Building, In the Open
4. Stories Told Around The Campfire:
   1. Dealing with Mutant Attacks
   2. Dealing with Hunting and Fishing
   3. Dealing with Robots
   4. Dealing with an Imagined Technological City
   5. Dealing with the Use of Magical Color Bands
   6. Dealing with Flying Devices of Any Type
5. Trained Beings of the Village (guards): Jegets, Cring Plant, Cougaroid, Singing Vine, Dogs, Cats, Changers, Winged Biters
6. Available For Trade at Very High Prices, Are These Items:
   1. Several Different Types of Color Bands
   2. Poison Antidote
   3. Heavy Crossbows & Bolts
   4. Poison (variable intensity)
   5. Domars
   6. Energy Cells
7. Advice and Knowledge from The Experienced Travelers Of The Village
8. Other People Willing To Travel With Out From the Village
9. Things to Raise Your Armor Class: Shields, Cured Hide Armor, etc.
10. Foods Designed For Traveling

### Mutants

In thinking about the background of the mutant (which should be different from that of any given human, their background and more importantly who their parents were can be a very important factor. The fact that a mutant parent had nine mutations and the other one had seven should also be reflected in the children of the two. Taking this into consideration, the following chart should be used in creating a mutant. First a player should roll a die to find what side they favor (mothers or fathers) and this will be the side that will give them all but one of the possible mutations. The other side will give the remaining one of their mutations. In the case of having a human parent the mutant will gain the benefits of the human constitution (by rolling eight siders for hit points and having a plus two on the constitution versus poison chart) and will have no physical defect (even if the chart indicates that the mutant should have one).

#### Mutation Generation Chart

Roll **Mother's Side Father's Side**

1 Third Generation Mutant Fifth Generation Mutant

2 Human First Generation Mutant

3 Sixth Generation Mutant Third Generation Mutant

4 First Generation Mutant Second Generation Mutant

5 Fourth Generation Mutant Human

6 Tenth Generation Mutant Tenth Generation Mutant

7 Seventh Generation Mutant Second Generation Mutant

8 Fifth Generation Mutant Tenth Generation Mutant

9 First Generation Mutant Third Generation Mutant

10 Eighth Generation Mutant Human

11 Human Ninth Generation Mutant

12 Tenth Generation Mutant First Generation Mutant

13 Human Human

14 Second Generation Mutant Ninth Generation Mutant

15 Ninth Generation Mutant Fourth Generation Mutant

16 Third Generation Mutant Third Generation Mutant

17 Ninth Generation Mutant Ninth Generation Mutant

18 First Generation Mutant Fourth Generation Mutant

19 Second Generation Mutant Sixth Generation Mutant

20 Human Human

First through Third Generation Mutants always have a Physical Defect, Fourth through Seventh Mutants always have a Mental Defect; Eighth through Tenth Generation Mutants have both a Physical and a Mental Defect.

If a player wanted to use all of the charts, he or she would have to be a mutant that was living in a mixed village of mutants and humans. A die roll of an eight tells the player that they have a total of eleven mutations (assuming that the player favored his father) and this included the two necessary defects. The player in my game would be allowed to pick the other nine mutations on either the mental or physical charts. Another die roll tells the player that he grew up in an engineering section (thus allowing him a certain knowledge of metals and the opening and closing of doors). His time was spent in working with simple technological devices and he has a talent for combat of any type (giving him a plus to hit and on damage). He is especially good with a sword (another plus for him).

He has a stone dagger, a sword frond, a bandoleer, and lives in a small hut. His village talks of robots when they are around the campfire. The shaman of the village will trade poison antidotes and energy cells for new technology devices he hasn’t seen before.

What you end up with after a number of die rolls is not just a character with a sort of personality, but a being with some very helpful traits. Traits that will allow that person to survive in a very hostile environment.

## Metamorphosis Alpha Modifications

### by A. Mark Ratner

While Metamorphosis Alpha (MA) is an excellent game certain problems arise for players choosing to play mutants (and for their ref’s!) One common problem is how to evaluate a mutant’s attempt to figure out how to use (or what is the use of) a device, weapon, etc. Humans use the rules on pp 21-22, cross indexing their leadership potential and the item’s complexity level, but mutants have no leadership potential, so a new ability for mutants is needed, their mechanical (or technical) aptitude. This ability is a regular three dice roll, and is used wherever humans would use leadership potential on the device learning table on page 22.

A more serious problem arises with mutations of animals other than human. Since in the unmutated form they have intelligence less than the human norm, and do not have hands or other manipulative members (with a few exceptions) the ref’ should require that they use Mental Mutation (MM) 1, and Physical Mutation (PM) 4, to gain human level intelligence and manipulative paws or whatever. This ruling means that a mutated animal has two less useful mutations than a mutated human, so why should anyone pick an animal mutation?

The answer here is that animals have certain advantages over men, and the ref’ must allow his mutants to use them. Animals’ senses are generally better than men’s, they are often stronger then men, they have natural weapons, and many have special abilities that in a human would be a mutation, for example wings, natural camouflage (equal) to PM11 in their natural surroundings), tough hides and outstanding dexterity and balance.

The table given here is not intended to be an all encompassing list, but rather a guideline for ref’s to use. Referees should expand the chart as needed in their games. Indeed, since MA is a free-form game system the ref’ should not hesitate to modify the chart as he feels appropriate.

It is assumed that all player characters playing mutated animals use MM 1 to increase their intelligence to human level. To increase it beyond human norm use MM34 as well.

Players do not have to use manipulative members. If their creature does not have them (either naturally or mutated) they cannot use tools, devices, etc. Anything you can use with your hand in a mitten with the thumb taped down an animal could use, but few items fall into this category.

Players with animals are incapable of human speech without PM4, but would still be able to understand human speech and work out a system of communication. Alternately they can use MM 5, telepathy. If PM 4 is used once it can alter both the paws and vocal cords to allow both manual dexterity and human speech.

#### Chart Notes

\*This is not the number of hit dice, rather it is the number of dice rolled to obtain the number of hit dice, i.e. if a 3 appears in this column the animal has from 3 to 18 hit dice. Note that players and important non-player characters (NPC) have twice the hit dice of normal animals or men. Therefore a herd of horses will have only half the number of hit dice shown on this table, since the table is designed for player characters. Similarly the table on page 17 of MA is designed for normal NPCs, if a player becomes a creature from that table he (or she) would have twice the hit dice shown.

\*\*Strength is not used with damage from natural weapons (unless PM25 is used) because the strength of the animal is designed into the table. The strength is used when the mutant uses a club, sword or other weapon.

1. PM 4 giving hands or manipulative paws decreases speed by 33%.
2. Cold blooded animal will die of heat or cold quickly if not protected.
3. Good swimmer.
4. Natural camouflage.
5. Can go for long time without eating (several weeks).
6. Has fair manipulative organs without mutation.
7. Good climber.
8. Constriction damage varies with size, approx. 1 dice per 6’ of snake.
9. Has tongue that can extend to catch insects, etc.
10. Dexterity halved if not coiled.
11. Has heat sensing organ, detects warm blooded animals at 10’
12. Keen eyesight, equal to PM 22 except cannot see infrared or ultraviolet.
13. Can see infrared.
14. Can Fly.
15. Balance equal to PM 27.
16. Light bones and body structure, effect of PM 42 when struck with sword, axe, club, etc. Arrows, darts, spears, poison, and energy attacks do only normal damage.
17. Nocturnal, good night vision, vision may not be as good in bright light.
18. Has horns or antlers.
19. Can jump high obstacles and broad ditches.
20. Needs PM 4 to become an amphibian.
21. Smell equal to PM 19 upwind, 1/3 as good without wind, 1/10 as good downwind.
22. Hearing equivalent to PM 20 with 1/2 range. Can be surprised by something that is very quiet, base chance 1/12.
23. If PM 4 is used to gain manipulative members the animal becomes 6 limbed, with its hands above the forelegs (similar to a centaur.)
24. Poor vision.
25. Can hold breath for a long time (15 min. or more.)
26. Color blind.

W = water speed  
F = Flying speed

### Mutated Animal Chart

### Dice for Abilities

### Animal Type Size RR MR DX ST C Hit Dice\* Armor Cl Move Damage\*\* Notes

Mammals

 Horse 1500# 3 3 3 5 3 5 7 18 1-8 Hoof 19, 21, 22, 23

 Deer 200# 3 3 3 3 3 3 7 18 1-4 Hoof,1-8 Antlers 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 4

 Moose 1500# 3 3 3 5 3 6 7 15 1-8 Hoof,1-12 Antlers 18, 21, 22, 23, 3, 4

 Mountain Goat 200# 3 3 3 3 3 3 7 16 1-4 Hoof,1-8 Antlers 4, 15, 18, 19, 21,

22,23

 Black/Brown Bear 300# 3 3 3 4 3 4 5 8 1-8 Bite,1-8 Claws 4, 21, 22

 Grizzly Bear 800# 3 3 3 5 2 6 5 8 1-12 Bite,1-10 Claws 4, 21, 22

 Armadillo 15# 3 3 3 1+1 4 2 7 4 1-3 Claws 4, 21, 22, Has PM 17

 Boar 350# 3 3 3 4 4 5 5 12 1-10 Tusk 4, 21, 22, 1

 Elephant 1200# 3 3 2+1 10 4 12 4 12 2-24 Tusk,1-8 Trunk/Crush 6, 21, 22, 24

 Pigmy Elephant 350# 3 3 3 4 3 4 5 12 1-10 Tusk,1-4 Trunk 6, 4, 21, 22, 24

 Raccoon 25# 3 3 3+1 1+1 3 2 8 6 1-4 Bite,1-4 Claws 3, 4, 7, 21, 22

 Skunk 20# 3 3 3 1 3 2 8 6 1-4 Bite 4, 22, Has PM 8

 Gorilla 500# 3 3 2+1 5 4 5 7 4 1-6 Bite 6, 21, 22

 Sea lion 100# 3 3 3 2 3 3 8 4 (12 W) 1-6 Bite 3, 15, 25

Canines

 Coyote 50# 3 3 4 2 3 3 7 12 1-6 Bite 1, 3, 4, 21, 22, 26

 Wolf 80# 3 3 4 2 3 3 7 12 1-8 Bite 1, 3, 4, 21, 22, 26

 Fox 25# 3 3 4 1+1 3 2 8 12 1-4 Bite 1, 3, 4, 21, 22, 26

 Mastiff 160# 3 3 3 3 3 4 7 12 1-8 Bite 1, 3, 4, 21, 22, 26

Felines

Domestic Cat 20# 3 3 4 1 3 2 8 8 1-4 Bite,1-2 Claws 1, 4, 7, 15, 17, 21, 22,

26

 Cougar 150# 3 3 3+1 2+1 3 4 7 12 1-6 Bite,1-4 Claws 1, 4, 7, 15, 17, 21, 22,

26

 Lynx 45# 3 3 4 2 3 3 8 12 1-4 Bite,1-3 Claws 1, 4, 7, 15, 17, 21, 22,

26

 Lion 500# 3 3 3 4 4 6 6 12 1-10 Bite,1-8 Claws 1, 4, 7, 15, 17, 21, 22,

26

REPTILES

 Alligator 400# 4 3 2+1 4 4 6 3 4 (8 W) 2-24 Bite,1-12 Tail 1, 2, 3, 5

 Chameleon 2 Ft. 4 3 2+1 2 3 2 5 2 1-4 Bite 2, 6, 7, 9, has PM 11

 Gila monster 2 Ft. 4 3 3 2 3 2 4 2 1-4 Bite,1-3 Claws 1, 2, 4, 5, Poison (12)

 Komodo dragon 200# 4 3 3 5 4 5 4 6 1-12 Bite,1-8 Claws 1, 2, 4, 5

 Swift Lizard 3 Ft. 4 3 4 2 3 2 5 9 1-4 Bite,1-3 Claws 1, 2, 4

Snakes

 Constrictors 6-30 Ft. 4 3 4 1/6 3- 4 2-6 6 1 1-6 Bite,Constriction 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10

 Pit Viper 4-6 Ft. 4 3 4 1 3 2 6 1 1-6 Bite,Poison (12) 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11

Viper 4-12 Ft. 4 3 4 1 3 2 to 3 6 1 1-6 Bite,Poison (15) 2, 3, 4, 5, 10

BIRDS

 Eagle 42 In. 3 3 4 2+1 3 2+1 8 1 (18 F) 1-6 Beak,1-4 Talons 4, 12, 14, 15, 16

 Falcon 18 In. 3 3 4 1 3 1+1 8 1 (24 F) 1-4 Beak,1-3 Talons 4, 12, 14, 15, 16

 Owl 30 In. 3 3 4 2 3 2 8 1 (18 F) 1-4 Beak,1-4 Talons 4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,

17

 Duck 24 In. 3 3 4 1 3 1+1 8 1 (2W,18F) 1-3 Beak 3, 4, 12, 14, 15, 16

 Swan 60 In. 3 3 4 2+1 3 2+1 8 1 (2W,18F) 1-4 Beak 3, 4, 12, 14, 15, 16

MISC.

 Turtle 125# 4 3 2 2 3 3+1 6 2 1-12 Bite 2, 3, Has PM 17

 Octopus 100#9’ Tentacles

4 3 3 3 3 3 7 2 (8 W) 1-3 Tentacles 2, 3, 6, 7, 20



**A Dungeon & Dragon Adventure Aboard the Starship Warden**

**by Gary Gygax**

When last winters tedium was broken by the fun and games at WINTER FANTASY, I was scheduled for DMing continual adventures in Greyhawk Castle, and that is exactly what they turned out to be continual. Not having the heart to cut them short, I ended up eating meals while play went on, and the games lasted from morning into the late hours of Saturday night, from early Sunday morning straight through until evening, and fatigue made me a bit silly. When the last party, which included several regulars in the campaign (Mark Ratner and Jim Ward each playing one of their player character henchmen, and Ernie Gygax playing the character another participant had abandoned when he or she had to leave for home), beat up a body of gnolls and slew their master, there was a scroll amidst the heap of booty. It was, of course, a curse scroll, and it was a curse which whisked all creatures off to another world. Jokingly, I said that there was a I in 10 chance that the curse would teleport them all to Jims starship, and when the die was tossed out what should come up but the stark single line of a 1! Imagine the surprise which struck my weary countenance with a look of wonder. . . imagine the groans from the regulars! They didn’t want to be stuck aboard Warden, not with precious henchmen aboard that deathtrap. But all six characters, along with three gnoll prisoners, were, in fact, exactly that. The whole party was gone from the ken of D&D-kind and off amongst the horrors of METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA.

That took place in January, and the affair was not resolved until Jim Wards next visit to Lake Geneva in late March. Frantic letters and telephone calls from Mark Ratner were to no avail; determination of the fate of the nine intrepid creatures from Greyhawk could be resolved no sooner. Mark, being headquartered in New Jersey, was unavailable for play, so we had Brian Blume fill in for him. And instead of refereeing, yours truly was now a player, a pawn of the remorseless ShipMaster, James M. Ward. The cast of characters for the game that followed was:

9th level assassin (human) SCRAG FLATCHET (party)  
9th level cleric (human) THURIBLE of ROAKY (G Gygax)  
9th level fighter (human) DORAG (L. Gygax)  
8th level fighter (human) NIVELL (party)  
8th level magic-user (human) NEB RENTAR (B. Blume)  
6th/5th levels fighter/magic-user (half-elf)  
HODKIN AP-A WRD (E. Gygax)  
3 hapless gnolls (party)

The names given for the characters have been changed in order to protect the innocent . . .

There was a moment of darkness and vertigo, shot with flashes of purple, and then the group felt the ground come up to jar their soles. All had the sinking feeling which normally accompanies the realization of real trouble. That was a curse scroll which had been read, and a cursory examination of their surroundings confirmed their worst fears. To the left - where the sun burned in the sky - was an unrelieved landscape of flat grasslands, seeming to go on endlessly; but to the right was a wall of incredibly hard metal, running ahead and behind and stretching upwards as far as the eye could see. It was unbroken by door or window, unpierced by arrow slit, unrelieved by battlement or bartizan. Immediately upon arrival the warlock Neb Rentar had attempted to use a wish to escape, while the wily Ap-Awrd the half-elf called upon his enchanted blade to teleport him from the place. Neither was to any avail, so the group held council, the two would-be escapees a bit chagrined and most willing to make amends now that they were unable to make off. It was decided that hereafter it would be a “one-for-all, all-for-one” affair. The material possessions of the party were pooled. In addition to a good selection of the usual gear typical of members of a dungeon expedition, there were the following noteworthy items:

* 1 gem of seeing
* 1 fireball wand (97 charges)
* 1 strange gem with 2 wishes contained within
* 1 snake staff
* 3 magic swords (+3, +2 teleporting - with some other minor abilities, +1)
* a +2 hammer
* a +2 dagger
* 2 suits of magic plate mail (+2, +l)
* 2 magic shields (+2, +1)
* a scroll of 6 sixth level magic-user spells (none too useful!)
* a scroll of 4 fourth level cleric spells
* 3 potions of healing

There was also an assortment of normal armor and arms, including 2 bows - one carried by a fighter, one being amongst the arms taken from the gnoll prisoners. Fortunately, there were also packages of iron rations and skins of water, for the group spent much time in areas where there was no game, but I am getting ahead of the story.

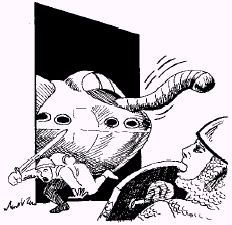
The sun was growing dim - not setting, simply growing dim, so the consensus of opinion was to call its position west, proceed north, and keep near to the unrelieved expanse of stark metal bounding the “world” they had been thrown into. The evening and night passed uneventfully, and next day the party continued trekking northwards over seemingly unalterable terrain until finally, late in the afternoon they came upon a colossal cube of metal, in titan sized fortress from the look of it, and none liked its look.

Scrutiny revealed numbers of small things - mostly insects - strewn about the perimeter of the place, all quite dead. All members were pleased they had looked before laying hands upon those metal sides. Concluding that some very powerful magic protected the place, Scrag Flatchet and Hodkin led the group in a wide flanking movement which allowed observation without coming too close to possible danger. A door of proportion equal to the rest of the place was observed when the north face of the place came into view. The party came close, found no way they could easily open the huge valves, and fearing to actually lay hands upon the gate, left. Water was already running short, so it was decided that a westward track might prove more fruitful, for near the wall they had seen neither game nor water of any sort. When the sun darkened into another night lit only by strangely bright stars, sans moon, there were several leagues between them and the tremendous metal fortress, occupants (if any) unknown.

A swamp turned their path to the north again around midday. Just before they had shot a smallish deer with pink horns and legs. An incautious touch of the pinkish flakes which fell from those parts of the deer quickly taught the adventurers that death in this place came in at least as many forms as were to be found in the dungeons of Greyhawk Castle. The animal’s flesh was tasty nonetheless . . . That night a huge walking plant attempted to creep up to the camp and devour the party while it slept. Infravision of half-elf and gnoll noted the monster’s intent, and a fireball sent it to a fiery death without further ado.

Afternoon of the following day found the party in a better frame of mind. Rain had fallen, so swamp water was replaced by freshly caught rain. Game was fairly plentiful and easily brought down, as none of the creatures seemed to have any fear of man. Then they saw the pillars and the box of shifting colors which they fenced. The cube of colors attracted attention first, as its scintillating, running hues blended and reformed into all the colors of the spectrum - and some that were not. It seemed to crouch against the metal wall stretching to the sky, seeking shelter there with its fence of pillars. And what pillars! The assassin crept near them to observe the cube, but beat a hasty retreat when they moved towards him when he attempted to pass between them! After consultation, the cleric, Thurible, strode foreword, slowing as he drew near the columns. They were seemingly of layered wet sand, massive, and quite motionless. When Thurible touched one some of the sand came off on his gauntlet, and when this was rubbed off on the nearby grass the vegetation blackened and died. Not easily daunted, the cleric stepped between the towering piles of sand; he rued it immediately, as one snaked down with lightning speed and smote him for 34 hit points of damage at one blow. He reeled back and away with alacrity. Neb Rentar agreed, for he had seen a mage in Greyhawk with one. The egg-thing was possibly some sort of poison, flame, or acid missile - similar to the oil-, holy water-, and like bombs hurled by adventurers in the known world from whence they had come. It was stowed away for later inspection. The cleric was given the bracelet to use for whatever purpose could be determined. The dark pink gel stunk, and it was left where it was smeared. Time to go on to the door, armed now with the hoped-for extra powers of the pistol-want, the adventurers agreed.



The warlock inspected the area of the metal gate with the aid of the gem of seeing, and much of interest was noted thereby. The man-sized door was not provided with any sort of handle or visible, or invisible, means of manipulation, but neither was it trapped. A small area of white material, a rectangle about the same size as the colored area of the bracelet held by Thurible, was ignored in favor of a most intriguing discovery. The walls were milky on either side of the portal, as hard as the metal surrounding them, but the gem of seeing showed what was behind these translucent panels. There was a large room there, one whose size was indeterminable, but whose occupants could - in part - be seen. Standing rigidly beside strange bed-like things were faceless men with pistol wands strapped about their waists! No fewer than 10 could be seen, and there were certainly more. An augury spell cast by the cleric boded death and destruction if the party could manage to cause the mysterious door to open.   
  
Neb Rentar was under geas not to engage in magical combat for a sennight and a day. He had cast a legend lore divination to learn what could be learned of the place they had been cursed to, and for a full eleven days the warlock needed to refrain from such activity if he were to gain the benefit of the magic. When the group determined to open the door of metal at any cost, the magic-user was ordered well away. After various and sundry ploys failed to affect the portal, Dorag suggested that the red rectangle of the bracelet be placed against the white one by the door, for possibly it was some magical key. It worked.   
  
As the door slid aside, the faceless creatures inside drew their weapons and leaped for the door. Thurible was prepared, and a spell to hold persons froze four of the things as they stepped forth. Black rays shot from the entrance as their fellow things attempted to slay the party outside. In desperation, the warlock uttered a wish with the enchanted gem, stating that the faceless things must slay each other instead of his comrades. The noises from the chamber indicated success, and no further rays darted forth. A dull gonging sound was issuing from inside, possibly an alarm, so the group sprang into action. The gnolls and Rentar watched the rear. The cleric stripped weapons and bracelets from the motionless creatures before the doorway, and then dispatched the things to whatever hell spawned them. Scrag, Dorag, Nivell, and Hodkin leaped into the chamber to gather up weapons and any other available items of likely use. They had managed to gain six of the pistols when an unnoticed door at the far end of the place slid open and a metal monster with a long and menacing snout of iron ground into the room. When the gate had begun opening the looters had beaten a hasty retreat, but two were too slow. Scrag, the assassin, and the superhero, Nivell, were hit by a sparkling ray of coruscating blue light and flung into the air to land motionless a score or more feet outside. The clockwork monster trundled up to the door to the outside, but its build was too great to pass through the frame, so only its questing metal snout thrust forth, poking this way and that seeking a victim, but all were outside its arc and safe. Thurible cast a continual darkness spell squarely upon this great proboscis, and the magic-user ordered one of the gnolls to run over and recover the two still forms before the door. As the creature dashed out to accomplish this task a strange pinging came from the blackness surrounding the portal; yet another blue ray flicked forth, and the gnoll was sent rolling - shaken but unhurt. Luckily for him, the weapon evidently had full effect only upon humankind, but what to do? More noise from the darkened doorway settled the question quickly.   
  
The area of black was retreating from sight, which indicated that the automaton was either dispelling the magic or retreating from the gate to allow something smaller to issue out. Sounds indicated the latter, and the wily Hodkin wasted no time in launching a fireball from the wand he held. A flash, thuds of falling bodies, and the slam of a heavy metal door closing told the adventurers that they had won at least a temporary victory. Recognizing that it was probable that the full force of the opposition had not yet been arrayed for battle, the party took the opportunity to themselves withdraw, going a short distance due westwards and then hurrying south and east to the familiar endless wall once more. The bodies of the assassin and fighter were carried only part of the way, for it was discovered that they were abraded, bruised, and unconscious, but not dead. Cure light wounds spells placed upon each in turn, plus a bit of water and a helping hand, served to enable them to move under their own volition, if a bit slowly. The delay turned out to be most fortuitous, for when the group arrived at the wall, they found that a wide swath of the tall grass had been crushed flat by the passage of nobody knew - or wanted to learn - what! The path ran from the north where the faceless men had been fought to the south where the titan fortress was. The six men and three gnolls followed the flattened track through the gathering dusk.   
  
When they came to the huge place it was brightly illuminated by some magical lights; faceless men and more of the strangely fashioned clockwork machines were active round it. The adventurers stayed well out of the light and decided to turn west and travel through the night and decided to turn west and travel through the night as long as their strength permitted, for they were now in great fear for their lives. Before long another great swath was revealed, running westwards along the same route they had traveled just a day or two before. Now they were certain that some device could sniff out their trail, a horrid metal golem bloodhound. To confuse it they stayed in its path until the night was old, then rested. They were just settling down when one of the gnolls gave a cry. A huge flying thing was coming at them from behind! It too seemed to be able to follow their tracks, and there was no alternative now but to take quick offensive action. Hodkin Ap-Awrd aimed the fireball wand with care, and his missile burst just above the on-rushing creature. It stopped still in its progress and floated gently downward. Three things separated from the bulk as it touched the ground, and the tzinging sounds which accompanied this action indicated that they were probably faceless men armed with the pistol wands which shot black, killing rays. Thurible held one with a spell, but the other two rushed in and slew Flatchet and Nivell (both already weakened from their previous encounter with the ray from the metal monster). Blows were struck, with most of the party sustained wounds before the two faceless men - and then their frozen companion - were dispatched. From them were taken yet three more of the pistol wands and three more of the metal wrist bands with rectangles of an unidentifiable brown substance. When this was done the survivors went to examine the device which had flown so swiftly and carried the creatures to battle so unerringly. A thick disc of metal, many feet across and topped by a railing, was revealed. A metal flying carpet!   
  
Upon mounting upon its surface and attempting command words, a strange voice-like sound came forth from a grill set into the device’s deck. The cleric then cast a tongues spell, and conversed with the creature - if indeed it could be called that, for it also was a clockwork monster, albeit benign and most useful as it proved shortly. The spell revealed that it could take all members, alive and dead, upon its back, and carry them at many leagues an hour away from all pursuit, although the damage caused to the device by the well-aimed fireball prevented it from flying in the air like a normal magic carpet. The group boarded, the machine lifted itself a few hands off the ground, and then it rapidly gained speed and carried them across the black waters of the marsh to a place of relative safety on the opposite side.   
  
Hidden amidst the tall grass, the adventurers rested and recuperated for two days. Nivell’s constitution could not stand the shock of being raised, but Scrag Flatchet was made of hardier stock. Wounds were also cured by the ministrations of the cleric. The party was beginning to feel confident by the third night when they were attacked by surprise. Three more of the face creatures, this time armed with triangular metal shields and swords of incredible sharpness, leaped from hiding in the tall grass and fell upon the unsuspecting members of the group. A frenzied melee ensued in which the assassin was run through and slain again, and one of the now trusted gnolls died too. All of the monstrous opponents were dispatched, and like their better-armed fellows, they immediately turned into quaking mounds of noisome red jelly. But the adventurers welcomed the addition of their shields and swords, and the next day a raise dead casting managed to revive poor Scrag once again. There was general agreement that still more leagues must be put between the party and the relentless foes without faces if they were to survive to escape this world and return to the safety of the devils they knew ...

At last the geas was lifted from the warlock, and Neb related what had come to him in a dream. They were in a vessel of unbelievable size. A vessel which was floating in nothing. Could that be possible? All had grave doubts; especially when the magic-user went on to relate that the spell had also informed him there was no magic on the vessel - other than that they possessed. This was scoffed at, for all had magic wand pistols and had seen the various enchanted monsters, and there was their own metal carpet. How could they escape the place and return to their own place? Only by leaving the vessel and enter nothing? Still more doubtful, but this at least gave some small hope. Lastly it was related that somewhere in the vast ship of metal there were humans. The party was encouraged, for if they could find men they would surely aid their fellows - even at a price. They had a small store of gold pieces, some choice gems, and a few pieces of rich jewelry with which to bribe the hesitant. Should only a bit of the information learned prove useful, let it be the bit on how to escape, and then allow them to find other men.

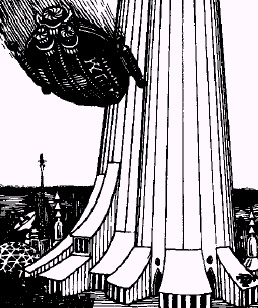
Exploring to the westwards, the party eventually came to another metal wall, and the bounds of the “world” were known. Time had been taken from adventuring to rest and hunt, otherwise they could have traveled on their flying carpet from one side of the place to the other in less than a day. When the small size of the place was commented on, Rentar mentioned that his vision had shown that there were layers of land within the vessel, many layers like the one they were on. They would have to find a way to get to these other plateaus in all likelihood, for on one would be a doorway to the outside. By means of another tongues spell Thurible of Roaky put questions to the metal circle, but it was stupid and could answer very little. Finally it did relate something useful to the group. It was running out of energy and needed to be fed. When the cleric asked if it ate meat or vegetation, the automaton related that it needed to be fed a special substance which was available at a place nearby. Assured that survival was next to impossible without the benefits of the machine, it was agreed that the food for the flying metal carpet must be found before anything else was attempted.

The disc traveled quickly to another of the tremendous- sized houses built into the wall of the vessel. Before the vast doors of this metal box rested two strange idols of metal - or were they statues? Golems? Too late! One being came to animated motion before anything further could be done to prepare. The clockwork monster lashed forth its tentacles and grabbed the half-elf. At first it seemed as if it would tear Hodkin to pieces on the spot, but something made it hesitate and examine the struggling figure more closely. Other snakey metal arms shot forth and began to strip off the half-elf’s armor. Thurible, unable to use another tongues spell, cast a hasty augury to learn what this examination boded for the prisoner, and it was ill indeed. Unless stopped, the automaton would surely slay Ap-Awrd when stripped of armor. In desperation, and hating greatly to do so, Neb Rentar voiced the last wish allowed by the magic gem, asking that the mighty machine be prevented from harming his associates and himself because of its love and loyalty to them - it being an obedient servant.

Now this world was filled with strange and powerful things which were unknown to the adventurers, but magic was most potent, for nothing in the place seemed to be able to resist it. The party had been most grateful for the cleric’s spells which were renewed divinely each day. How much happier they were at the potency of wishes is hard to tell. That the clockwork creature immediately ceased its fell actions respecting Hodkins and obeyed the party heartened them beyond measure, for such a servant would certainly mean that their chances of escape were greater now than any had thought possible. Better still; the creature was useful in many ways. First a means of communication had to be established, for the device seemed to understand the tongue spoken to it but could make no intelligible reply. It was ordered to raise one of its metal tentacles whenever a “yes” answer was indicated, and the whole group then set to questioning their new servant.

It was quickly discovered that the device was a mechanical physician, churigeon, and barber in one. It could heal the still infirm members of the party. It could go inside the metal building; it could take the members of the party with it, for there were no other creatures or machines inside. It could converse with the flying carpet and instruct it what to do. This was the first order, for the party did not desire to lose the services of this transport, and it must be fed. When the two devices held conversation, the new servant went into its huge house immediately and came forth as quickly with a blue brick. This is placed into a heretofore unseen compartment in the disc, withdrawing first a pale brick of the same color but no longer bright. Eventually direct intercourse with the device by tongues spell revealed that it normally was fed a liquid (invisible?) form of food, but not being able to fly to heights, it was unable to go to the places where the tubes for this food were placed. Therefore, the blue bricks must be fed to it every time it had operated for 24 hours. The other machine was meanwhile ordered to bring forth as many of the blue bricks as it had, for the party wished to have a supply of food for the metal carpet.

The new automaton continued to serve its masters as well. It healed them, and the group then proceeded into the building where all sorts of arcane apparatus were observed. Little was of value to them however, although there was a supply of small strips of blue which recharged their wand pistols, and these were happily gained. Dorag inquired about gems and money. The machine went to a flat crystal area, manipulated several knobs, spoke it its gibberish, and a container of gems and another of strange coins were produced. While the jewels turned out to be nothing but imitation gemstones (which the gnolls were most happy to receive) the party learned that the “domar” pieces were the medium of exchange in this cosmos. When more questions were put to the automaton, it trundled again to the wall which bore the strange scrying device - the flat crystal ball - and after several minutes finding various information for the party, a series of operations by the machine brought an image of a faceless man to the screen. Snarling, the adventurers ordered the clockwork servant to shut the device off immediately, and the party then left the place in considerable haste, for they all felt that the thing which appeared could see without eyes, could sense their presence even through a scrying device. With the automaton riding aboard their metal carpet of flying, the adventurers set forth once more determined to find a place where the magic forces of the strange world they were marooned upon were weak, a place where teleportation and plane shift would enable them to return home.

Traveling along the metal wall which confined the boundary of this world on the west, the party saw nothing more of threat or interest to them and by the end of the day had put many leagues between the automaton’s building and themselves. Early the next morning, the wall turned northeast, and following this turn soon brought them to a place where there were many large and small metal doors. Beside each was a strip of colored material - while not the same color as the brown and red of the bracelets taken, still of the same unknown composition. As the adventurers were well acquainted with the mysterious method of door-opening which prevailed in the metal vessel, it was no problem to cause a set of the great valves to part. A very large metal room was thus revealed. In the place was another strip of the colored material which showed rectangles of blue and red stripes, brown, green, gray, and brilliant red which exactly matched the color of the first wrist band the group had discovered in the remains of the faceless thing which lurked within the cube of colors. Also scribed on the walls were strange glyphs and symbols. Warily these marks were first perused, then deciphered. They told of a people who allied themselves with men of any kind - evidently halfling, elf, dwarf, whatever were attacked by the weird monsters of the place and banded together to seek protection and revenge upon giant plants which ate men and werewolves which slew with weapons. The device of this league was an open eye. This information was carefully noted for future reference, as the group thought that these people would be likely to aid them.   
  
Thereafter, when all of the strips of pure red color were touched with the matching part of the bracelet, there would be a delay, and then the huge portal would slide open to reveal first one weird place, then another. None suited the party, and when the last disclosed egg-shaped automatons which spewed forth streams of leather-like missiles, the red layers of the world were written off as not suitable places for the adventurers to seek escape - especially since the missiles of the automatons had knocked the hapless Flatchet and the warlock Rentar unconscious. Fortunately, the machine which served the party could quickly revive the pair, and the search for a place to escape continued. The group decided that they would try brown and green areas, and after six different layers of the ship had been revealed by application of the red wrist band to different rectangles, an inviting vista of low mountains and trees in the far distance drew them from the metal room into the reaches of the layered world again.   
  
That night they made camp near the edge of a large forest. Alert as ever they must be in this place, a formation of werewolves brought the whole party to wakefulness not long after they had laid themselves down to sleep. These creatures were marching like men-at-arms and carried weapons too. The watch had spotted them at some distance, so it was not difficult to blast them at long range with a carefully aimed fireball from the wand. The creatures died easily, and examination of the corpses for loot disclosed a metal cone. The automaton was instructed to demonstrate the use of the device - at a fair distance - to the party, so it flew (or levitated perhaps) into the air. A bright beam of light sprang from the cone, swept through the sky, and then glared down upon the adventurers. Angry shouts brought the machine back to earth, and the group moved hurriedly to a location several miles distant, for they were certain that unwelcome visitors would be attracted to the spot where the beacon had shone. It proved true, for later that night still another company of the werewolves was sighted marching towards the locale of the first camp. These too were taken by surprise at a distance and wiped out in a single stroke by a fireball. These beasts had nothing of value save a contraption of thin metal rods which the leader wore to brace its legs. Rentar put them on. his own limbs, fastened the device’s belt about his waist, and attempted to set them in motion. There were numerous dials, switches, and levers to operate, however, and even with the aid of an augury spell the attempt came to a bad end. After several operations of various knobs and switches, the thing gave off an odd humming and tiny lights began to wink madly along the belt. Without much urging from the others, the warlock hurriedly divested himself of the contraption, and it was tossed onto the deck of the disc for possible use at a later time.   
  
The next day the party traveled through a countryside which consisted of forests occasionally broken by meadowland. Moving southwards still, they eventually came to a wall which prevented any further travel in that direction, so the course was turned to the west for a few leagues, and as dusk approached the carpet was steered back northwards in order to insure a relatively safe campsite amongst the shelter of woodland there. But night time is dangerous anywhere, particularly so on the world of layers, and the party spent an active rather than restful night.   
  
When full darkness fell the guards noted a strange glowing a few furlongs distant. As the metal carpet could see as well in darkness as in daylight, it was no trouble for it to transport the group to the source of the eerie light. Caution was used, but all that threatened was a primitive hut, covered over with skulls of animals and humans, but shedding a glowing light nonetheless. Thurible immediately identified it as the place of some evil cleric. The party did not approach too closely, but camped nearby and watched both the hut and for unwelcome intruders until the sun of the world glowed softly in its strange “dawn”.   
  
The gem of seeing was employed after the cleric’s spell for detecting traps revealed that there were many on the hut. Nothing moved about the place, but a watchful eye was kept on the path which snaked northwards from the hut to some unknown distance in the surrounding woods. Meanwhile the magical gem showed that the supposedly crude hut was a metal building masked by branch and thatch. The place glowed because of deadly lightning coursing through it, and any unwary creature touching the place would be done to death. When no means of dispelling this magic could be located near the entrance to the place, a wider search was begun, and this soon discovered a lever hidden in a nearby bush. A simply movement of this switch caused the magic, to desert the hut, and the doorway to change from the dead black of a force wall of some sort to normality. Luckily, Neb Rentar did look further for some other small trap, for what looked like a red blanket was noted to be rolled up above the door. When this blanket was poked with a stick, the limb was torn from Dorag’s grasp and disappeared into the creature - for there could be no doubt that some monster which appeared to be a blanket lurked above. Poisoned sticks and flaming branches were subsequently poked at and consumed without noticeable harm by the creature. Black rays from the pistol wands did not harm it. Rentar paced back carefully and aimed a fireball so as to just lap into the hut’s doorway. The thing had dropped down tentacles, evidently feeding and growing upon the material we had thrust at it, and if they were to gain entrance to the hut and loot it, the party would have to destroy the guardian - or at worst keep it from getting large enough to be able to reach tentacles into any place within the hut, if some other means of ingress to the place should somehow be discovered.   
  
The blast of the missile caused the creature to drop several of its scarlet appendages and to curl up and a bit away from the opening. Success! Seeing this; the warlock decided to use one of his few precious spells remaining to him, so a wall of fire was conjured up. Just as it began to roar into full effect, a buzzing occurred, and down from the heavens shot a broad beam of deep blue. When this ray met the wall of fire a flickering aura sprung up, and a moment later the magical flames were completely extinguished. Additional fireballs could be cast, but each such attack ran the risk of being miscast and destroying part or all of the contents of the hut. There was another solution, risky or otherwise, teleporting into the place by means of Hodkin Ap-Awrd’s sword. The half-elf was urged to do this, for it seemed unlikely that the guardian’s tentacles commanded more than the doorway. With a somewhat desperate air, Hodkin winked out of existence where he had stood before the metal hut and simultaneously appeared on the section of the hut’s floor which had been carefully scanned under the bright light of one of the magical cones.   
  
The half-elf discovered a wealth of interesting objects in the interior of the building. He quickly scooped up numbers of the large and small cubes upon which automatons and wands alike fed. A metal club topped off the pile, and he was out and in again, leaving those outside to sort through the haul. Back inside Hodkin examined several suits meant to disguise the wearer as some plant monster, a four armed human, and so on. Being cautious, he noted that a number of green smears discolored these skins. Taking a small orange disc from a pile on a nearby shelf, the half-elf scraped some of the greenish sap onto the disc. The stuff sizzled as it contacted the disc, and Hodkin quickly dropped it, for the potent goo completely destroyed the disc with corrosive action. There was also one of the odd flat scrying devices on the wall, with a bench full of strange openings standing before it. Ap-Awrd ignored both, fearing to call attention of the faceless men upon his activity. All that remained within the hut was an unusual back pack and a rod. Hodkin grabbed these and left the hut for the last time.   
  
Being rather satisfied with the results of their activity, the party decided to follow the path which led northwards from the hut, as they felt confident they could overcome any additional opposition from the hut’s owner and perhaps gain yet more. If, by chance, the owner of the place was one of the people of the eye, they could make amends if their reception called for it. With the new loot piled aboard their flying disc, the adventurers went on to find where the path led. After a short time they came to a small village, and it was populated with the strangest conglomeration of creatures the bold adventurers had yet seen.   
  
A number of crude huts of various sizes surrounded an open area in which the party brought their craft to rest. They were immediately surrounded by a throng of humans, distorted humans with multiple appendages or similar freak nature, animals, and mobile vine-like plants which gave out a pleasant humming sound. An imposing figure in garb which indicated his position as a shaman strode forth. As the obvious questions he was uttering were unintelligible to the party, Thurible cast a tongues spell, and attempted to engage in a cleric-to-cleric discussion; something about this shaman immediately rang false. Thurible inquired about the god of the shaman, if they were people of the eye symbol, and what they called themselves. The shaman replied that their god was a metal being which rested inside the largest (his own, of course) building, that they were most certainly-not people who had anything to do with the eye, and the trespassers were amidst the people of the “Tribe of Thirdlev”. He then spoke of the tribe as being hostile to all humans who did not welcome god-changed (he used the term “mutated”) animals and plants. After a few additional remarks, the shaman then ordered the party to disarm themselves and submit to examination and questioning by himself and the tribal leaders. As he spoke the throng of creatures and freaks about the metal flying carpet upon which the group stood ready increased dramatically. Armed and threatening men and monsters pressed closer. Some of the humans and human- things glowed or created mirror images of themselves. As Thurible refused, and suggested that the sham and his charges might better acknowledge the adventurers as their new leaders, the vine creatures began to hum and sing a most soothing and pleasant song. “Beguiling!” shouted some of the adventurers; “beware of charming!” said the cleric, as he began the incantation and passes which moments later brought down a curtain of silence around them all.   
  
The shaman was obviously very angry and intent upon calling down the wrath of the entire tribe upon the party. A fireball from Hodkin and black rays from the weapons of Flatchet, Thurible, Dorag, and Rentar slew the pseudo-cleric on the spot, and as his corpse toppled it turned into reddish jelly. Horror spread over the visages of all of those onlookers who had recognizable faces. The shock was in part at the death of their shaman, but primarily it was caused from what his death proved him to have been - a faceless thing masquerading as a human! Most of the Third-levers turned and fled in shame and shock. Several of the small huts were aflame, and fearing that the fire would spread to the large central structure which was the most likely repository for treasure, Thurible urgently motioned Neb towards the dark entrance of the place. The warlock complied hurriedly, unfortunately for him. A flash of released energy greeted his attempt to pass through the portal, and Rentar fell stone dead before the trapped doorway. While Scrag the assassin and Dorag kept their wand pistols trained on the few remaining tribesmen, Hodkin went to the magic-user’s body and removed the still intact gem of seeing. Meanwhile, the cleric cast a successful raise dead upon the body of Neb Rentar, and the mechanical churigeon proceeded to restore him to full vigor. Gazing through this device revealed the shaman’s dwelling to be crisscrossed with a mesh of fine wire. Thurible took forth a coil of strange silvery wire that had been acquired during the course of their sojourn on the vessel of layers. He thrust one end into the ground, and tossed the other onto the mesh which guarded the hut. Power flowed through the thick strand, but the gem of seeing still showed an aura around the building. If anyone entering the place would be killed, it was obvious that not even the shaman would be able to go into it in its current trapped state. Therefore the shaman must have a way to shut down the field. While the others searched for a lever, the cleric examined the remains of the pseudo-shaman. A small black box with a switch protruding from it was found.   
  
Fearing further traps, everyone in the party got aboard the disc and drew well-off while Thurible screwed up his courage and stood before the building’s entrance and moved the switch. A faint click sounded. The doorway of the place grew light, and the interior of the building could be seen. Hodkin and the cleric went in, but they found nothing of any possible value save a ring of blue and red upon a square of cloth which rested before one of the clockwork automatons common to this world. They picked it up and came forth with obvious disappointment. Three of the tribesmen were awaiting them, and these three glowed.   
  
“You have brought ruin upon our tribe. You have defiled our God’s sanctuary and taken out the sacred artifact. You must replace it and make amends!” So speaking the three creatures threatened the adventurers. They did not seem fearful, but confident. “We can slay you all if you do not comply now,” one said, “for we have great powers.” This seemed possible, as the words came to each member of the group by telepathy.   
  
“Surrender yourselves, or die!” shouted Thurible. Then the battle was on.   
  
One of the glowing figures gazed at the warlock, and Rentar gasped and clutched his head. All of his spells - all knowledge of magic - were gone! The other party members felt a tug as if their strength was flowing away. The cleric cast a hold person spell to stop these fell magics, and one of the creatures stopped glowing and stood immobile and helpless. The two remaining ones drew more strength from the adventurers, but a criss-crossing pattern of black rays struck them as all of the individuals of the party used their deadly pistols to effect. In but a few seconds the combat was finished and the tribesmen dead; the rays coupled with a fireball slew them most easily. “Let us leave this miserable place far behind,” urged Hodkin. Picking up the stunned Rentar, gathering their silvery wire, the party boarded the traveling device and went away, not certain if they had won or lost, for the magic-user had become quite unable to comprehend anything connected with dweomer and knew not a spell from a spigot.   
  
Returning from whence they had come upon this tier of their exile world, the adventurers were prepared to go into the gates of the room of levels again when Dorag spotted an arrow pointing to the southeast. Closer inspection also showed the glyphs of the eye. All agreed that they might as well follow this pointer as go elsewhere. They needed friends and allies badly, and perhaps the people who showed friendship for all humans with their signs would actually practice what they scribed. Only Neb Rentar was not a bit cheered by the prospect, having grown morose and gloomy after the magical loss of his powers. The carpet moved them speedily in the direction desired, but almost immediately they met trouble.   
  
A cloud of miniature men came out upon the party, tiny men mounted upon giant dragonflies. These atomies were armed with bows, and looked threatening despite their size although they did not attack. Before the other members of the group could do anything, the vituperative Rentar ordered the automaton to slay the sprite-like creatures. The automaton complied, but as the little men died, they showered forth a cloud of arrows which struck down the ex-warlock and one of the two remaining gnolls. The group went on with regrets, for they suspected that the tiny creatures had been sentinels for the people of the eye, and slaying them would not favorably impress their hoped-for allies. Again, the former magic-user had to be raised and then revived by the cleric and the automaton’s ministrations. A short time later, still proceeding to the southeast along the track marked by the eye symbols, the party was attacked by a flying automaton. This thing was upon them immediately, and it would have done great execution had not the alert Thurible pressed the two-colored ring upon it, presenting the device boldly as if it were a holy symbol. At this the device stopped short, and the party’s own automaton was instructed to speak to the machine and ask if it obeyed the ring. The thing related that indeed it did and would continue to do so. It was ordered to follow and guard the adventurers, and that it did most docilely. Yet another automaton sallied forth to attack the party within a league, but now that the adventurers were warded by two of their own machines, it was quickly subdued and enlisted, and now a large train of clockwork monsters and adventurers followed the road to the people of the eye. They were to meet them in but a few minutes.   
  
When this meeting occurred the adventurers were greeted in a friendly, if not warm, manner. Two very muscular men, bristling with weapons, strode forth. Both were amazed to see the machines obeying the party - even more surprised to note the blue and red ring which the cleric displayed upon his hand. The leaders of the people called for a telepath, and soon the two groups were deep in conversation. Yes. The people of the eye were friendly towards all humans of good will. Yes. They would happily welcome the adventurers to the sanctuary of their village, and they would help them to leave this world, for they knew how to get outside its magical fields. Yes. There would be a price for such services, for the Vigilists (as they named their conglomerate tribe) were locked in a struggle of life and death against faceless men, wolfoids (the werewolves), and even a group of evilly disposed human merchants bent on revenge against them for acts which the Vigilists committed in order to improve the lot of all humans in this world. The price required of the party was the two- hued ring and the pistol wands, called protein disruptors, by the Vigilist leaders.   
  
The parlay grew into a detailed conversation. When the adventurers related the whole of their tale, how they had destroyed well over a score of faceless men and nearly a score of the werewolves (and had numbers of charred pelts to prove it!) their hosts were visibly pleased, and a great feast was ordered. The Vigilists told more of their adventures and activities, their plans and purposes, and the adventurers were in turn impressed. “Here,” exclaimed Hodkin is a place a bold adventurer could stay for a time and do great deeds!” Flatchet, Dorag, and Thurible agreed heartily - although the cleric reserved agreement pending his appointment as the chief priest of the Vigilists. After a few days stay, an amicable agreement was reached: The Vigilists would escort the adventurers to a place where Thurible could employ his plane shift magic to send both Neb Rentar and the Gnoll back to their own world. The other four adventurers would stay in this world of weird layers, to seek wealth and aid the Vigilists. The Vigilists would receive the special ring and all the excess goods which the party had taken as spoils, and they would give the adventurers positions of importance in the organization, as well as whatever protective devices and weaponry they needed. Thurible would be shaman, Flatchet would teach his skills to promising young tribesmen, Dorag would train warriors, and Hodkin would set to work to scribe a new (albeit very slim and sketchy) book of spells. The half-elf could thereafter see if any of the Vigilists could learn magic-use as apprentices. The Vigilist lords, Xorax and Al-Neen were most agreeable to this arrangement, welcoming the fellowship of the adventurers as trusted lieutenants and councilors. All could see the benefits of a forceful cleric urging on all the members to be more zealous in the slaying of an droids (faceless men), wolfoids, and those in opposition to the manifest destiny of the Vigilists.   
  
Within a few days Neb Rentar and the Gnoll were sent upon their journey home, all of the gold and jewels going with them. The adventurers now had two more red bracelets, healing devices, weapons which paralyzed and burned a machine to restore the magic to the cubes which powered their weapons, and other good items in addition to their own magical arms, armor, and devices. They talked of the in taking of the place where the aged werewolves were housed, or retribution upon the metal fortress of the faceless men, of humbling the puffed-up merchants who dared to place a price on the lives of Vigilists, and of serving “Angels” by destroying monsters of pure energy (could these be cousins of will-o-wisps?) in order to gain divine aid. They were now Vigilists, heart and soul. Their names were scribed at the bottom of a broadside which was to be spread far and wide on the layers of the world, a tract which touted the Vigilist cause and offered a rich reward for each merchant brought before the Council of Vigil, each captive to be bound in thongs of wolfoid skin or smeared with red gel. After all, faceless men and clockwork monsters were nothing more than creatures to be met and slain in the course of adventuring, and did not the vista of wonderful adventures lie just ahead?!

- The Beginning -

**Guidelines for Mixing Campaigns**

**Androids, Wizards, Several Mutants, and Liberal Doses of Imagination, Well Blended**

**by James M. Ward**

I think it is safe to say (as the designer of the game) that I have played Metamorphosis Alpha longer than any other person. From this semi-vast experience my initial concept of the game has undergone a semi-vast change. Being a devoted reader of every bit of Science Fiction I could and/or can get a hold of and a D&D addict of the first magnitude, I saw a real need for a Science Fiction based D&D game; hence the creation (with a lot of help from TSR) of MA. Now, with a major rewrite in the works (for you people that have kindly “demanded” more information on every facet of the game) I see the game every bit as complex as D&D with systems that are unique to anything yet known.

The game has been well received by the role playing public. I just wanted to take a few moments to detail some highly enjoyable experiences with the game that others can try. The use of the D&D player character has worked very well on the Star Ship Warden. The abilities of Strength, Dexterity, and Intelligence directly translate into Strength, Dexterity, and Mental Resistance in ship terms. Constitution in the D&D character is used for the Poison Chart. The hit points of the D&D level attained by the character used decides the hit points for the MA game. Charisma is the MA equivalent of Leadership Potential and is naturally only useable by 100% humans. The wisdom score is the big plus for D&D players on the MA world. It affects the Mental Resistance score for mental attacks.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Wisdom** | **Mental Resisrtance** |
| 3-7 | -2 |
| 8-10 | -1 |
| 11-13 | 0 |
| 14-15 | +1 |
| 16-17 | +2 |
| 18 | +3 |

It should be noted that no addition can take the Mental Resistance roll over the 18 mark.

That covers all the character abilities for both sides except for Radiation Resistance. The D&D player has had no former generations to give them immunity so they have a resistance of 3.

Magic and its effects are immense on the starship. Those MA creatures have no resistance to magic so they take full effect without a saving throw. A hold person spell will get 1-4 people (not mutants) automatically. A ten die fireball does ten dice of damage with no saving throw. Along the same lines is the use of magical items straight from D&D. Magical Armor is probably the best of all the things available. The plusses on the armor are directly applicable to a beings armor class. Plus two armor is as armor class zero, plus three is as minus one armor class. This type of armor completely resists the action of protein and disruptor blasts. Swords do their normal damage plus whatever plus they have. Potions work fine until they are exposed to any amount of radiation and then they are whatever the Starship Master wants to make them. Rings, Wands, Staves, and Rods usually function normally on the ship. Miscellaneous magic items are a slightly different matter. Because of the shielding, metal, and energy fields of the starship Crystal Balls & Helms of Teleportation don’t work through the levels. Medallions of ESP and Helms of Telepathy add two points to the mental Resistance score. Elementals of all types, Efreeti, and Djinni don’t seem to be summonable with any device or spell. Horns of Valhalla, Figurines of Wonderous Power, and Arrows of Direction don’t seem to work.

There are many ways to handle the different D&D character classes. For every two levels over the tenth a fighter has, allow a plus one to hit with any weapon. Magic users over the tenth level should have a plus per level to figure out any type of technical item. Since clerics get their spells renewed everyday (and I never liked them anyway) they don’t need any special powers or plusses. Bards over the tenth level act like Singing Vines. Monks on the other hand are at one-half their normal level because of the extreme quickness of the MA species. Thieves don’t have their special attack bonus when attacking the backs of mutants (everyone is always trying to zap them from behind).

As with almost everything there is the other side of the role-playing coin. The use of MA characters in D&D land might be highly enjoyable. Humans are of the least significant mainly because they don’t fit in any of the classes. On the other hand, they do have a potential for a large amount of hit points. The mutants are the beings that have the greatest potential for damage and fun. Mutation attacks should work over any magic resistance and protection. Imagine a mutant with four mental and four physical mutations. Let us give her defects of no sensory nerve endings and a complete mental block for robots. We will also assume she has Regeneration (could be treated as the Troll), Radiated Eyes, Physical Reflection (could be spell energy), and Poison Claws (intensity 12) for her physical abilities. She could have Mental Paralysis, Mental Control, Life Leech, and De-evolution for her mental powers. If any of you are wondering what possible harm De- evolution could do to a non-mutant let me list a few things. In magic users it could take away all the ability to use spells of any type. Fighters could lose a level or two of experience for every attack. Clerics could lose one level of spells forever starting from their lowest level. Normal humans could be transformed into Cro-Magnon man or even apes (but a few have argued that this skips several generations of evolution).

The weapons of the starship could have many strange effects on D&D creatures. The protein disruptor would work 100% of the time on non-enchanted creatures and forces a saving throw (as a death ray attack) on all creatures regardless of their magic resistance. The sonic metal disruptor ruins Iron Golems and does damage to metal covered beings to the tune of 15 dice for a short range hit, 10 dice for a medium range hit, and 5 dice of damage for a long range hit. In using the paralysis rod or the paralysis dart it works 100% of the time on creatures with the standard magical resistance. Creatures with any type of extra normal magical resistance have a 50-50 chance of being paralyzed. The laser pistol is a short energy burst that bathes any fire creature in healing energy, melts Iron Golems, and does triple damage on cold creatures. The third stage slug ejector does no damage to metal armored beings or creatures with an armor class of better than four. The third stage gas ejector forces a D&D being to make their poison saving throw with each hit.

All in all the switching of creatures, players, and items from campaign to campaign can make for novel situations.



**author anonymous**

All he could do was walk on the air as normals could walk on land and his four older brothers repeatedly told him that it was the most useless of all mental mutations. After Reveral’s long training sessions for manhood, he was finally beginning to believe his brothers’ taunts. His oldest brother Fer-in and his next oldest, Serpt, both could teleport themselves vast distances and had easily passed their tests of manhood. Karn, the brother closest to him in age, could read minds and, with great effort, control them, given time. He was even now on his test of manhood, but no one doubted that soft spoken Karn would do anything but succeed. Reveral was starting to be concerned with his own chances at surviving the test.

His tribe, led by his father Meveral, required all adolescents to venture into the mutant-filled regions north of the tribe. This test served to cull out the weak members and gained valuable information on the weak points of the many fierce mutated creatures that continually came out of the forest to attack the tribe. The youths were highly trained in the use of shield, spear, and ax by the weapon masters. Then too, was the birth-gift of the Gods.

The Gods often gave young children powers of the mind ranging from lifting small objects to hurling fire or lightning from the finger tips. Meveral, his father had this last gift, and with long experience and courage ruled his people wisely. His youngest son often thought he noticed a look of sadness in his father’s eyes when viewing him, undoubtedly because all he could do was walk the air.

Reveral worked constantly at his weapon lessons to seek favor in his father’s eyes in this manner, but even in this he was inept. At spear and ax his efforts were mediocre and while his shield defense was very good, defensive skills were not as favored as offensive ones. Knowing his limitations, he had taken to making secret trips into the fringes of the mutated forest, in hopes of gaining knowledge that would help him in his test soon to come. The danger from the creatures of the forest never came to his mind. All his effort was directed towards passing the manhood test and finding favor in his father’s eyes. It was on one of these trips that he met the whispering vine. While his teachers had given him vast amounts of knowledge on all kinds of mutated creatures, no one had told him to expect one of these. He was deep in the northwest of the forest, in territory not well known by his tribe. While he was traveling down a cleared path, he heard and then saw a small vine walking towards him! Fearing the worst, the boy raised his spear and shield and ran towards the vine. Suddenly all thoughts of attacking the mutant were gone in waves of peace that the creature was sending towards the boy with sonics.

Soon the boy discovered that the plant, calling itself Fek, could talk and knew much more than he did about his world and the creatures within it. Fek and Reveral had long discussions in the following weeks about the world far to the North. The plant creature knew about tribes of walking dogs, areas of ground that were instant death to walk on, and God machines that melted flesh and shattered metal.

The thrill and comfort of his new-found friend was soon diminished by his brother Karn not returning in the normal time. His whole family became very worried and was considering the unprecedented step of all going out on a rescue mission, when his father put a stop to that thought.

“This tribe does not send good after bad,” his father said in the tone of a ruler, not the tone of a father. While it was very true that his older brothers could not travel again into the northern regions he could and told his father so. While his time was not for many passings of the sun, no one in the village could fault him his desire and he went off with the ceremonial ax, spear, shield, and dried fruits. Into the forest he went with the kindly advice of his brothers still ringing in his ears. He quickly came to the resting place of his plant friend Fek and told it of his plans. Reveral was all for storming the North until his brother was found. Fek quickly showed him the error of his ways and surprised them both by stating that he would travel with the boy until death or the finding of his brother.

The two set out through the forest with the boy sometimes carrying his small plant friend high into the air, much to the delight of Fek and the irritation of Reveral, who thought that there must be some other use for his ability other than plant portage. The two traveled for many days, until they came to an area with which Fek was very familiar. The plant guided the boy to an area of dense underbrush that opened into a large clearing filled with many of Fek’s kind. The boy’s ears were then filled with many pleasant relaxing tones as the small plant communicated with its much larger cousins. The plants talked long into the night and Reveral fell asleep easily. The next morning the clearing was empty and Fek was carrying many fruits and nuts for the boy to eat.

“We must go on now, Reveral. My kind is going out to gather information for us and will send it along as they get it. Our job must be to also gather information and power.”

The two went from the forest into grasslands that stretched as far as the eye could see. They also began to meet mutations they could not run or hide from. The first of these was a large erect cat-creature. Three of these surprised them from the grass and ignored the boy and bit at the plant creature. Reveral threw his spear in one, an ax in another and smashed the third with his shield. As he did this he felt power much like his father’s rip through his body and cause great pain. Fek laid on the ground almost bitten in two, and this made the Boy take another swipe at the cat creature with his shield, forcing it to flee and driving Reveral into unconsciousness. He woke up in dim twilight and the sight of two Feks standing straight and tall near him.

“Fek, what has happened to you, my friend? I had thought you near death by the actions of those strange monsters.”

“Know Reveral, that my race needs the threat of near death to stimulate our reproductive abilities,” both plants said. “We two have all the knowledge-of the parent plant and are much stronger.”

Only one of the new plants came with the boy. Then news of his brother came to Reveral in the form of a huge bird that came to them in the night. The creature, standing almost five feet tall, and calling itself a Hawkoid, woke the boy as it came to rest by their fire. In its hands was a strange weapon of strings and sticks and sharp stones that the boy could not figure out.

“Travelers, the one you seek is in the mountains far to the north and west. It is held by a race of man lizards that delight in the pain of their captives. On your path to these fierce creatures is many areas of death-earth, many mutant-filled regions, and more dangerous than all the rest, there are a few villages of the old Gods in your path. Walk carefully and may the luck of the High Ones be with you.”

With this the bird creature flew off and left the two preparing for the next day’s journey.

In the morning it rained, as it always did every third day. The rain was welcomed by the pair, on Reveral’s part because it washed the grime of travel off of him and on Fek’s part because it provided needed moisture to his plant tissues. As the pair traveled on that day, the once plentiful game became scarce. The rolling grasslands gave way to shorter, sparser forms of grass. This type also gave way to no vegetation at all. When Reveral approached this area he intuitively knew that this was some of the ground that was death to walk on. So again they traveled through the air and the boy began to appreciate his little talent. When they were high in the air a new section of green grass became visible far to the east. Travel towards this grassland also revealed a large black strip of stone, heading as far as the eye could see to the north. While Fek wanted to call this new wonder a highway, Reveral knew that it could only be a God-Road, famed in campfire tales as the path to wonders and great power! The God-Road had no grass growing on it and was not worn on any part of its surface. The boy knew that to travel on this thing was to be lucky forever and that’s what they did!

A new lift came to the boy’s feet as they went along and he often found himself traveling just off the road in the air, without even trying to use his power. It went to such an extreme that the poor plant Fek couldn’t keep up with the pace his friend set. As the two rested and enjoyed the last of the fruits from Reveral’s village, they both noticed a strange flashing light to the east and a little north of the road they traveled on. Later investigation showed them both a huge tower with no visible entrances and waves of cold emanating from its sides.

“It is too cold for plant kind, I will not be able to approach this hut. Do not let this stop you from seeking the entrance. I have learned through others of my type that such structures always contain much in the way of ancient God-Tools.”

The flashing came from the top of the tower and circled it at the same rate every few heart beats. The boy walked through the air to the top and was greeted with an open cavity just below the bright light. While the chamber he entered was at first dark, it began to glow with a weird light, much like that of some insects and creatures of the forest. The numbing cold of the outside was lacking in this area, and much to Reveral’s amazement the chamber was made of metal. This substance was so rare in his village that only his father and the village shaman had bits of it! A tunnel showed itself, under further inspection, and he traveled down its length to a set of ledges that led down. The ledges were remarkable in that they were all exactly spaced and of the same metal material. As the boy traveled down this new God-Path he became aware of a curious thrumming sound that grew in intensity the deeper he went. The strange God-Path curved in a circle around itself and then suddenly ended in a large open area with some bits of rectangular gray patches about man height on three distinct walls of metal. These three patches were very much different from the wall metal in that not only were they a different color, they were patterned to look like waves of water. He tried pushing, shoving, and pulling on these strange areas to no avail. He had to give up in disgust and as he sat on the floor he noticed behind the stairs on the floor a curious pile of white powder. He moved it with his spear tip and found a strange bracelet buried in the pile. It was a simple band of metal obviously made to encircle the wrist. At the top of this piece of jewelry was a patch of gray just like the patches on the God-Doors.

The thought came to Reveral in a flash of insight and seemed so natural that he knew it was the correct one. He pressed the bit of gray band to the same gray band of the God-Door and he was rewarded with the portal opening with a sigh of air. He was then smashed to the ground by two hurtling creatures of metal! These things ignored him and flew up the stairs faster than his eyes could travel. He was so astounded to just be alive that he sat on the floor where he had been thrown and looked into the opening he had just created. The chamber within was very small and smelled of some strange liquid that oozed from a small opening on the other side of the wall. Reveral knew enough not to touch unknown substances. The campfire stories were full of tales of burning water or poisoning things that killed simply by touching the skin. He again touched the gray bracelet to the portal rectangle and it sealed itself. Not wanting to leave the God-House without something more tangible, he readied himself and moved the middle portal. He was greeted with two more metal creatures, but this time he was ready for them! His spear came up and hit the first monster square in what Reveral thought was its chest. The boy thought to himself that his masters would be proud at his skill with that hit.

He saw his spear break in three different places and his shield was broken by the claw-like arm of the second monster as it passed by. This time he was smashed unconscious and woke up with his eyes showing stars and his brain all fogged up. When he glanced into the opening he saw another small chamber and another puddle of ooze on the floor. He got up, closed this God-Door and with grim determination opened the last one.

He was greeted with the source of the thrumming, in the form of three more metal monsters putting together other metal monsters. These creatures ignored Reveral and moved bits of metal and thin rope-like strands together into creatures just like themselves. He ran up to the closest one and smashed it over the head, breaking his stone ax in the process.

“Metal thing,” shouted Reveral, “if stone and skill can’t smash into your hide then I will use like against like to ruin you!”

He grabbed a claw arm from a pile of them and began hitting the monster with it. A huge metal rope came out of the machine and took the metal arm away from his as a parent would take a harmful thing from a child. It then proceeded to again build new monsters with the others. Reveral felt so helpless when facing the power of these metal monsters that he cast around for something, anything to use against these creatures. The room was very large, in fact he couldn’t see the end of it on two sides. It was full of metal in all shapes and sizes. Again he had an idea and this time he knew it would hurt these creatures much more than he had been hurt. In the building process Reveral had noticed that a great deal of long thin metal rope was being used. He took a long thin, sharp piece of metal and cut all the rope in sight. When the monster came to get more of the rope it stopped still and shortly began searching through the mess that Reveral had made. It stood up and made a humming sound different from the general thrum of the room and the other metal monsters came over. While this was happening, Reveral had been searching and found two more piles of thin rope, which he made a mess of. The monsters came to these piles and passed their metal arms through the small pieces of rope. With this they stopped dead in their steps and the room became silent. In that second the boy knew something deadly was going to happen. He picked up the nearest metal things to hand and ran straight up the Path of the Gods ignoring the ledges for the quickness his power gave him.

As he came out into the open air he saw immediately that the light that would blind was no longer flashing. The air was warm where it had been cold and he knew that death was in that building. He shouted to Fek, who was waiting at the edge of the former cold area to run or die, and Reveral headed straight into the air as fast as he could. In a few heart beats he felt intense heat to his back and a blast of blinding light blurred his vision for many more. When he could again see he looked back and discovered the tower had turned into a giant puddle of lava. He also saw Fek lying on the ground near the glow in a shriveled condition. Reveral ran out of the sky to the body of his friend and poured all his water on the plant. He was greeted with Fek’s pleasant hum and he knew then everything would be all right.

After resting till late in the day, the two set out for the God-Road and Fek told Reveral what had happened while he was in the tower. It seems that the four metal creatures had flown out of the tower, circled the area once and flew straight north at an amazing speed. Fek was equally amazed at the story the boy told. He could impart no extra knowledge of the strange monsters or the purpose of the tower. He did know that the gray bracelet was something other tribes called “God-Activators” and it was a thing of Power. With this news, Reveral knew the road had given him luck, and any thoughts of leaving it went from his mind. They traveled on till dusk and the boy was able to bring down a large bird with the metal spear he had picked up in the tower. This led him to investigate the other metal pieces he had completely forgotten about in the day’s excitement. The largest thing was a metal cylinder with a clear end, much like hard water would be, if a person could make it hard. The other two bits were small rectangular things, with one colored blue and one colored yellow. The only thing he wanted to keep was the spear, but Fek made him carry the other stuff saying that things like that could prove valuable. As they rested for the night, Reveral could see Fek splitting again, but he was just too tired to watch the interesting process.

The next morning again there were two Feks and again one stayed behind and the other followed along with Reveral. They marched along the road for many days and while Fek was surprised that they had not come across any of the many fearful mutations of these areas, Reveral just passed it off as more luck given to him by the God-Road. He was getting concerned with the length of time it was taking to get to the mountains. Every day he would travel high into the sky looking for some sight of them ahead and always he would be disappointed, until one day he saw in the far distance his mountains, and much closer, what must have been a City of the Gods. Fek was all for going around the city but the boy knew the luck of the God-Road would help them in any dangerous situation. Game in the form of large four legged beasts was plentiful and they never ran away until Reveral attacked one of the herd. Just before dusk they came upon the City of the Gods and the pair decided to wait until daylight before entering. When the sun disappeared a miraculous transformation occurred in the city. The whole thing began to glow with the light of day and the sun was now out of sight!

Reveral, unable to rest with this sight in view, made a reluctant Fek accompany him into The City, as he had begun to subconsciously, refer to it. They traveled down the broad main path and on either side of them were evenly spaced huge huts of some unfamiliar material. Each hut had hard water patches and an entrance that was always closed. The huts were also decorated in many colors and many magical symbols, much like the writings the shaman of the tribe used for her most powerful magic. They traveled down to an intersection where two God-Roads crossed each other. Here they found four structures very different from all the rest. These new huts were not much taller than a man from his village and each was in the shape of a giant shell. At chest height on the right side of each was a rainbow pattern with his gray rectangle represented. He went up to the pattern and pressed his bracelet to the proper color and the door opened with a sigh of air. The well lit small chamber revealed another set of ledges and they both went down them, with the small plant complaining about the insanity of such strange God-Devices. The bottom of the ledges exposed a huge platform with another God-Hut at its edge. This hut had many hard water openings and an open doorway. It, unlike the huts above the ground, was made of metal and was much smaller. They entered and saw row upon row of soft benches. Resting on them was like resting on the softest straw-filled beds of the village. They heard the door shut and then felt the hut moving. They both rushed to the now closed opening, trying to force it open. Their efforts got them nothing, and Reveral sat realizing that the power of the Gods must be great indeed if they could make huts fly like the wind. Then they heard the God-Voice. It sounded like gibberish at first, but words like north, city, and traveling, were quite understandable. The hard water patch to the front of the hut was now colored with many designs and pictures of food, clothes of odd form, and people dressed in these odd clothes. These people were like none the pair had ever seen. The pictures also moved, which Reveral did not find surprising since the Gods had obviously made them. The pictures moved in and out of God-Cities in God-Devices never seen before by the two. During these pictures the God-Voice spoke in a pleasant tone with music behind the voice. Suddenly the small cylinder that Reveral had gotten from the tower was pictured in the hands of a human. This picture showed the human moving one of the small metal things on the cylinder and light shining forth from the small hard water patch. The boy got out his cylinder and copied the picture’s actions. A light beam came out of the end and all thought of their movement problem was cast aside in the pleasure of trying out the light-beam-thing. It was impossible to judge the passing of time in this strange hut under the ground, but the two knew they had been traveling for what seemed like a very long time. The thing stopped without warning and opened its door. The two leapt for the opening, fearing that the moving God-Hut would change its mind; and again they saw the platform, just as they had left it. They rushed up the stairs and opened the doorway at the top. The door opened easily and they were stunned to see they were no longer in the city.

Mountains surrounded their position and the shell hut was covered with vines and brush. Reveral climbed into the sky and saw far to the south what could only be the city they had just been in. It was still the middle of the night and the city stood out quite clearly in its own glow. The luck of the God-Road had again helped them and brought them to the mountains in a night. The boy went to sleep with Fek standing guard.

Just before sunrise they were attacked by the furred ones. These creatures were common to the forests near the boy’s village and Reveral knew all about them. They must have once been human, because they still retained the same form. The resemblance ended there; they always ran on all fours, were covered in patches of fur, and their hands were now clawed paws with poison sacs at the tips. They usually hunted in large packs that would attack anything moving. This time there were thirty of them and their baying cries filled the night. Reveral leapt up into the air and ordered Fek to remain motionless. He then turned on his light cylinder and flashed it in the eyes of the mutants. The affect was immediate and took the form of fear in any beast the light touched. Soon the whole pack was running in all directions, much to the delight of both travelers. The dawn came and with it the rain that both welcomed.

The problem facing them now that they were in the mountains was which direction they should head. Going the wrong way would loose them precious time and there was no God-Road to help them in this area. The problem was unsolvable at the moment, so they marched towards a large area of vegetation Reveral had seen from the sky. Shortly they were in a forest of small bushy trees and much game. The boy killed several large birds that proved delicious and he ate as they walked. Then from a side trail came the feared jawed plant. This creature was known by his tribe as a thing that was not only to be feared for its tearing jaws, but also its ability to attack mentally and paralyze its victims. The carnivorous plant attacked and Fek was unable to move, caught in its mental attack. Reveral resisted the mental attack and pierced the thing with his spear, while ducking a venom dripping jaw. He resisted another assault on his mind and again stabbed successfully at the plant. One of the two jaws fell lifeless to the ground, but the other grabbed the boy around the waist. Reveral desperately stabbed for the third time into the center of the plant. As his spear sunk home awareness of everything but the venom burned through his veins; then there was only blackness.

He woke up feeling dizzy and disorientated with Fek applying shaman powder to his wounds. This white substance was given every hunter of his tribe to be used when poison entered, or was thought to enter the body. Fek had used it all up in an effort to save his friend and it had obviously worked. They rested all of that day and Reveral coated his metal spear with the juices of the monster plant. Poison of this type was seldom used by his tribe because accidents could easily occur. The boy knew it was necessary in his weakened condition to give himself a fighting edge of some type.

Travel the next day was slow and his wounds kept opening up, causing more delays. That night they glimpsed a glow, much like that of the city, in the woods to the west of them. They approached slowly and Reveral activated his light- cylinder to help them through the brush. Another God-Hut lay in the middle of a clearing and this one was different from all the others they had seen so far.

This hut was made of normal wood, but this wood glowed as the God-Huts of the city. It was much longer than a tribal hut and had a wood roof instead of thatch. There were also two metal monsters resting on the ground in front of the large door.

These were different from the creatures of the tower in size and shape, but they were obviously monsters because they had the same eyes and metal arms. Reveral also noticed rectangles of white on what must be the heads of the creatures and a matching white one at the side of the door. Further inspection showed him that these rectangles were about the same size and form as the gray ones of the tower. He touched his bracelet to the door patch and jumped back, knowing what usually happened when God-Doors opened. The portal remained shut and Reveral tried again, this time holding his bracelet for a longer time, again with no results. With nothing to loose he tried the patch on the metal monster which started humming and moving its eyes towards the two. Then it spoke in much the same manner as the God-Voice in the moveable hut. This voice had many more understandable words from the tribe in its speech. The monster called itself a “servo-meca something”, and Reveral from then on addressed it as Servo. The creature (Reveral no longer could think of it as a monster) came over to him and passed several of its appendages over his body stopping several times over his wounds.

“Toxins have entered you system and these abrasions have become infected. This unit is equipped with apparatus to heal you, with your permission.”

The boy could only understand one word in every three, but he could tell the creature wanted to help him. Reveral said it was a good idea and the creature opened the side of its body, out came strange thorns that bit into his skin. The feeling left his side and other blades cut away the skin closest to the wounds while light beams came from another part of the creature’s arm. With two final thorn stabs the boy felt new energy flow into his body and he thanked the creature for its help.

“Your wounds should heal completely within two days,” said the creature, “This unit suggests you proceed to the city for a complete physical, at your convenience.” It then turned back to the side of the doorway and again rested on the ground with no hum or flash to its eyes.

The two walked over to it and Reveral asked Fek “Do you think it has killed itself?”

“No, this must be a God-Device and you can never tell about devices of the Gods. First we are walking peacefully along and the road forces us on that moving hut ride. Before that one of their towers tried to burn me to a crisp! I tell you, Reveral; we plants do not favor anything made of metal, just because you can never tell which way the things will jump!”

Reveral was unaffected by his friend’s statements. He had heard them many times during the trip and while some of the God-Machines weren’t too safe to be around, most of them were quite beneficial. Sleep was the farthest thing from his mind and so they traveled through the forest using the light cylinder to easily go through the brush. The two walked all night and most of the morning when Fek stopped on the path and turned as if hearing something.

“There is an intelligent creature near us, but the thing is not an animal or a normal plant. I can’t even tell where it is, except that it is near and aware of us.”

The two saw nothing unusual in the forest except for a large patch of green moss on one of the trees. With this thought in both of their minds they felt the thoughts of the intelligent creature.

“Yes, beings, we have intelligence. Long have we grown and developed our power. Thus we sense all in the forest near us and have young in other parts of the forest that relay to us all that happens within its depths.”

“Can you tell me if a race of man-lizards lives near hear or if my brother Karn has gone through in the last twelve passings of the sun?"

“We know of this tribe and of the being you seek, but the price you must pay is the light of the beamer you call the light cylinder. We can use the energy it gives off to grow stronger.”

Reveral considered it a fair trade, even though he hated to part with the God-Device. The knowledge of the monster tribe and his brother came into his mind also an unusual request.

“We would like you to take a small part of us with you, in order that we may grow in knowledge from your experience. For this favor you can expect help from us when you are in danger.”

Reveral placed a portion of the moss in a spare pouch and they started off through the forest, directly towards the village. Neither one knew how they were going to get Karn out; both thought that problem would have to solve itself when they got there. The village was only three day’s travel through the mountain forest and Reveral decided to approach the camp at night hoping that these lizards were like smaller ones around his village that became weaker when the sun went down, taking the heat with it.

The village was dark and smelled of decaying flesh. The huts were made out of large logs stacked together. There were no guards to be seen and Fek and Reveral entered, not quite sure how to find Karn amongst all the huts. The two were looking for a hut different from all the rest, one where these creatures might keep slaves.

“The entity you are seeking is in the hut to the right of this path.” came the thought from the moss patch.

That thought also started the sentries howling. Mind Beasts!, thought Reveral. These creatures were sensitive to the slightest use of the God-Power. When in the presence of that Power, the creature would howl with all those near suffering damage in the form of skin burns. These Mind Beasts were all stationed on the perimeter of the village and couldn’t harm them yet, but their masters would.

They both hurled themselves into the hut but the moss patch had told them of and were attacked by a lizard man just getting up from the ground. It swung and hit Fek with its club and found that the plant had entangled its vines around the weapon, not allowing the lizard to draw it back. Reveral pierced its throat to its brain and the thing fell dead. A hurried search of the hut found his brother unconscious and tied up on the floor in the corner. By this time there was loud hissing coming from all over the village as the monsters roused themselves and poured out of their huts. Unable to get his brother conscious Reveral lifted him and Fek on his shoulders, ran out the door and up into the sky. Never again would his brother laugh at his power after this story was told. The lizard men noticed him too late to stop his flight, and while a few tried to hit him with thrown clubs, he easily avoided their casts. He was forced to leave his metal spear there, but the dead lizard holding it for his was welcome to it! He walked through the sky, far into the night both to hinder any possible pursuit and to travel as quickly as possible to the God-Devices that cured the sick. He knew that his brother needed help. His skin was covered with cuts and bruises and he still wouldn’t wake up, no matter what Reveral tried. When sunrise came he was just too tired to go on any further. The three came to rest in a clearing and Reveral went to sleep while Fek stood guard. In the afternoon he woke and tried again to rouse his brother, but every attempt failed. Reveral knew if something wasn’t done soon Karn would die from his wounds. Then the moss patch thought to him.

“If you wish this entity to recover, we can help by taking your strength and giving some of it to the damaged one. The process will weaken you, but will save this other entity’s existence."

Reveral gave his permission and the moss patch moved out of the pouch, touched both Karn and Reveral, and strength drained from Reveral’s body. He became weak and bruises and cuts formed on his body. His brother, on the other hand, became less pale and started breathing faster and stronger. Then Karn opened his eyes and sat up! The two brothers hugged each other in affection and started speaking at once, each wanting to know what had happened to the other.

The trip back to the village was long and arduous but without mishap. The people of the village of the fifth level greeted two men with open arms. Reveral would have many tales to tell around the fire in the months to come, and somehow he felt he would do more brave things before he settled down to raise many strong sons for the tribe.

**Water Adventure on the Starship Warden**

**by Carl Hursh**

In my experiences as a Metamorphosis Alpha referee I have always run into the same problems when trying to get some wandering monsters when characters are out on their raft or trying out their new gills, and so after much frustration I have come up with these monsters. I would also like to point out the possibilities of flooding an entire level. When this happens the door to the elevator will be under water, so that characters may drown or get wet when they try to step into the elevator when it has been to that level. I would also like to say that these creatures may be used in salt or fresh water because when the Ship went through the radiation the water could have turned from salt to fresh or from fresh to salt causing the fish to adapt. Or the creature could have mutated once, gotten lungs and then moved to a different type of water and then lost its lungs and been forced to adapt. In any case remember the effects water may have on the characters items.

**Move**

**Creature AC # App. Hit Dice (YPM)\ # Att. Description/Damage**

Sea Griffon 3 1-2 5 23 3 2 Claws (1-4) Bite (1-6)

Orcas 1 1 18 20 2 Tail (12-24) Bite (2-12)

Sea Centipede 1 1-4 2 20 1 Bite (1-6)

Sea dragon 6 1 15 20 3 Radiated eyes (3-18\*), Gas Generation

(DEATH), Bite (2-12)

Bed of Spikes 6 1-4 2 20 1 Tentacles (1-10)

Green Death 3 1 Cluster - - 1 Dissolves flesh in 3 melee turns

Mine 2 1 Patch - - 1 Explodes when hit (10-60)

Water Dagger 4 1 Patch 5 - - Sharp edges do 1-4 when touched

Water Grabber - 1-6 Fronds 3 - 1 Dissolves flesh in 3 melee turns

Craboid 7 2-20 1 Fy36Wlk3 Sw10 2 2 Claws (1-4)

Kraken 1 1 10 20 9 8 Tentacles (1-6), Beak (4-40)

Oysteroid 6 1-10 1 18 1 Throws Explosive Projectiles (1-12)

Peeper 2 1-5 2 18 1 Radiated Eyes (4-24\*)

Brain Fish 4 3-30 3 20 2 Mental Blast Strength 13 (3-18), Molecular

Disruption

Gupoids - 300-1k - 15 1 En Masse Attacking (1-6)

Siren 6 1-2 3 20 1 Bite (1-8)

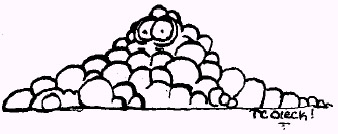
Sea Flyer 3 2-20 1 20 1 Symbiotic Attachment

Sharkoid 5 1 12 17 2 Mental Blast Strength 15 (3-18) Bite (1-

12\*\*)

Troutoid 4 4-24 3 23 1 Electricity Generation (3-18)

Merman 5 1-100 5 Mntd25 Sw5 1 By Weapon Type



**Sea Griffon:** This former lion has traded his lungs for gills, and is now limited to water in much the same manner that his cousin is limited to land. He also has wings, from which he gets his speed in water. His wings are leathery and similar to a bats’. He cannot use most technological materials because he does not have manipulative claws.

**Orcas:** This former blue whale is very rare; it was very impractical to put many on the ship in the beginning and many died from radiation. In addition to having teeth and being carnivorous, it also has a directional spout which can stun for 1-6 turns.

**Sea Centipede:** This former eel now sports ten new legs, and can lift 1000 pounds with its telekinesis. It also can make sorties onto land because it also has lungs.

**Sea Dragon:** This one time sea turtle now is quite formidable. It is about 40 feet long, has an additional 20 feet of neck, and radiated eyes. It breathes poison gas, but has no resistance to poison (other than its own).

**Bed of Spikes:** Formerly an anemone mushroom coral, this mutation is now mobile (jet propulsion much like a squid’s) and has spikes on the tips of its “tentacles.” It has approximately 50 tentacles.

**Green Death:** This mutation still grows in large patches like its non-mutated cousin, algae. It has a sort of empathy with its fellows which enables them to attack. When attacking they first go for the feet, then legs, then body and finally arms and head. They dissolve and eat flesh in 4 melee turns. They can only be killed by a protein disrupter or by exposing them to oxygen.

**Mine:** Formerly leather coral, it is now free floating coral that explodes when touched causing 10 dice damage.

**Water Dagger:** This was originally stag horn coral but now is covered with aluminum which causes it to do damage like a dagger when it is touched. There is also a chance (20%) that it will be poisonous.

**Water Grabber:** Originally seaweed, this is now a dangerous plant. its fronds act independently so as to capture more food. Its fronds can eat flesh in 3 melee turns.

**Craboid:** This tiny relation to the crab is now incredibly intelligent. With illusion generation and telepathy they can form enough illusions to scare off most other creatures. They also have lungs and wings and will, occasionally, be found away from water.

**Kraken:** Like its namesake this octopus is very large (up to 100 feet). In addition to its size it also has a total carapace which enables it to better withstand attacks.

**Oysteroid:** These mutants differ very little from their non-mutated cousins, the oyster. The only difference is that these are able to throw explosive projectiles.

**Peeper:** These mutated clams are not only intelligent but also are highly mobile. They also have radiated eyes which deliver 3 dice worth of damage.

**Brain Fish:** This former parrot fish now has a mental attack worth noticing. First, it has a mental attack strength of 13; it has a repulsion field and a mental defense shield; it has a mental disruption which kills but it reduces the mutant to 1 pip so it is only used when the mutant is reduced to 5 or less pips. It also has teeth suitable for biting, but rarely does.

**Gupoids:** These fish are, like their non-mutated cousins, fast breeders so they usually travel in large packs. When they attack they all batter their victim simultaneously doing 1-6 points damage and staying for 1-6 turns. Because they are so small and there are so many of them they are impossible to hit except with a protein disrupter.

**Siren:** This mutant has very little in common with it’s namesake except it does have the ability to put creatures into a sort of trance, even though it does use more of a charismatic effect than a sonic power (gills negate sonics). This hypnotic effect causes creatures not making their saving throw (treat as a poison) to be unable to do anything for 1-12 melee rounds, and being very open to attacks during that time.

**Sea Flyer:** These mutated manta rays are much smaller than their non-mutated cousins ( usually averaging around 2 inches in wingspan) but in spite of their size they are still formidable fighters because they are able to control other creatures for short periods of time so as to make them fight their battles. There is a 20% chance that they be in control of a creature when they are encountered.

**Sharkoid:** This mutated shark is much larger than it was originally; it also is stronger in its mental state. It has a mental repulsion field and a mental blast. It also has poison teeth, but in spite of all this it is epileptic and can be rendered fairly harmless by showing it a flashing light.

**Troutoid:** These mutated trout are now a lot harder to catch for food and always on the look out for predators. In addition to having electricity generation they also have a sort of wings to enable them to move even faster through the water. Another thing that makes it harder to catch is that they have density control and can, therefore, make themselves drop like a rock or float on the surface to avoid creatures which cannot leave the bottom.

**Merman:** Hardly resembling a human anymore these creatures have only a head for a body and for legs and hands they have 6 crablike limbs; 2 are manipulative claws enabling it to use technological items. They also have a greater mind than normal humans and are more advanced than normal humans. Their main travel mode is a little stick with two propellers and two gyroscopes that are mentally controlled by the merman riding it. When they capture player characters they usually (50%) take their lungs and replace them with gills. They also have a partial carapace and gills but no lungs.