

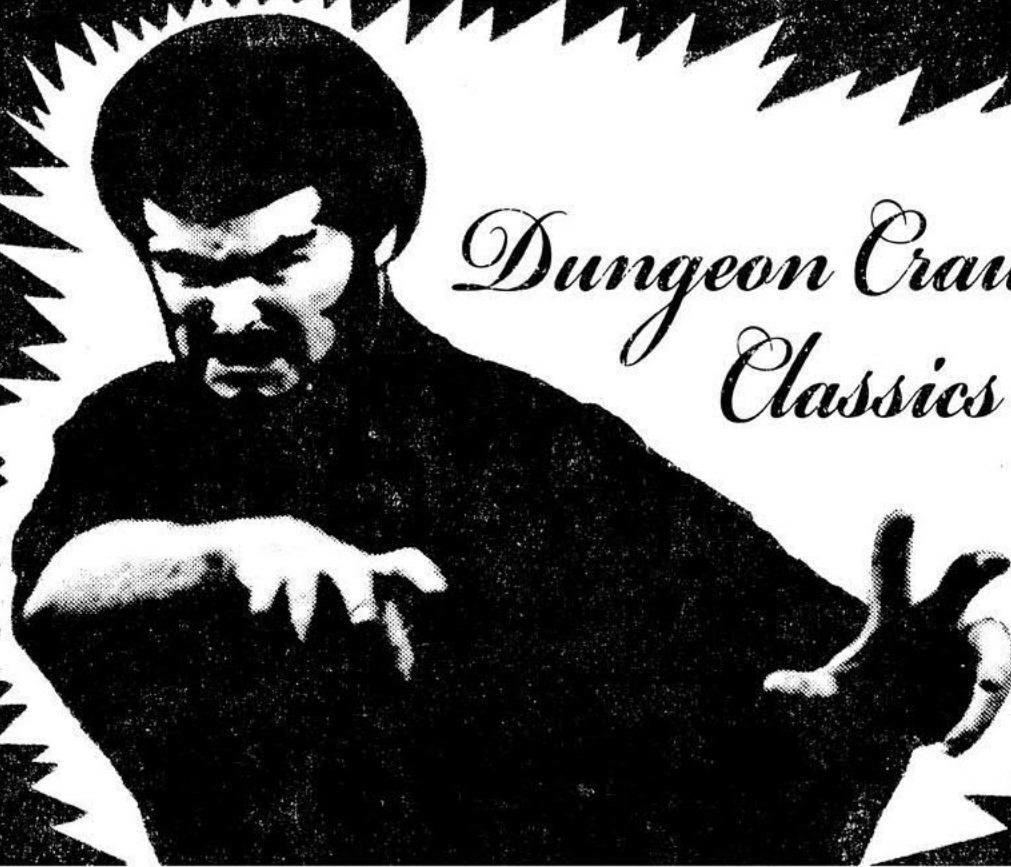
MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

HOME FOR THE HOLIDEATH

MCC 2018 HOLIDAY MODULE
BY JULIAN BERNICK



SBP



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MCC 2018 HOLIDAY MODULE

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HOME FOR THE HOLIDEATH



INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when post-apocalyptic adventures were full of super-science, robots that were there to be mastered, and the finale of every underground adventure was setting the fusion power plant to overload? Those days are back. Mutant Crawl Classics adventures take place in an ambiguous time period after a great disaster has ravaged the world, and it's up to your neolithic mutant tribesmen to go out into the hot house jungles and radioactive deserts of Terra A.D. (After Disaster) and collect the artifacts of the Ancient Ones in order to attain great personal power and savage glory.

Long ago, the Mud-Walker tribe and the Violet Serpent tribe waged war upon each other, leading to grief and poverty for both peoples. Then in the era of Chief Yellowfoot, a peace was made between the tribes, celebrated with a feast and exchange of gifts. The treaty stated that the peace would last for as long as gifts were exchanged between the peoples at the appointed time each year. The result was many generations of peace and prosperity for both tribes.

But when the Violet Serpent tribe came for the time of Winter Giving this year, a disaster occurred. Someone stole all the gifts of both tribes before the ceremony could be completed! As both tribes eye each other suspiciously, there are rumors of treachery, double-dealing and even war. Now Chief Ko-Balt of the Mud-Walkers (the PCs' tribe) has given the seekers the task of retrieving both sets of gifts and returning them intact to the tribal encampment so that the yearly ceremony can be completed. If they fail, all those years of peace and prosperity may come to an end as long-dormant tensions escalate into all-out war!

Home for the Holideath is an adventure for 6-8 1st-level characters. Single-minded and cautious seekers will have a fair chance of accomplishing their goal of returning to their camp with the missing presents; those easily distracted or enticed by the XMAS temple's artifacts may have a much tougher time. But who can resist all these presents?

BACKGROUND

Strange are the ways of the Ancient Ones! Sometime in the distant past, the Ancient Ones built entire temples to their own rituals of gift-giving. These temples were large buildings filled with miraculous items that could be purchased and then wrapped in shiny, colorful coverings before being presented to a loved one. Not only did their temples house all sorts of splendors for gift-giving but they even had entertainments to commemorate their myths and customs.

Amazingly, one such temple has survived almost intact since the time of the Great Disaster!

This place of the Ancients was administered by the AI known as XMAS, the **eXtended Mercantile Artificial Salesperson**. XMAS's prime directives were to ensure that the toys were displayed to good effect and that no gifts were opened before their proper time. (Apparently, the Ancients either eschewed cash or calculated matters so discreetly that no monetary contrivances exist in this complex.)

For years XMAS has approvingly observed the gift-giving rituals of the nearby tribes. But the atmospheric disturbances caused by the Great Disaster have shifted the XMAS's calendar algorithms ever-so-slightly and it has now sensed that the gift-giving ritual of the PCs' Tribes is taking place before its own internally assigned time.

Accordingly, XMAS sent Miss Marjorie, its in-store security robot, to take the gifts and store them safely until the proper time has come. The security bot's tracks are easily followed, leading back to XMAS's hidden temple, deep in the unexplored jungle.

The presents will eventually all be returned after the date rolls over, but the tribes have no way of knowing this. And most importantly, the peace treaty states that the gifts must be exchanged by midnight tonight, or generations of peace and security may be lost as the treaty is voided! As the overland journey back to their camp will take a several hours, the PCs must act fast to retrieve their gifts and prevent a return to war.

MISS MARJORIE - IN-STORE SECURITY

Miss Marjorie is an 8' tall robot parody of a kindly grandmother, complete with white frilly apron. Though vaguely humanoid in shape, Miss Marjorie has a featureless metallic body and only one small red sight sensor and activation light on its "forehead."

Miss Marjorie is persistent in enforcing its directives but is also generally non-violent. Miss Marjorie will make an AI Recognition check when encountering PCs. If successful, it will treat a PC like errant children. If failed, it will ignore a PC. If recognized PCs engage in violence against its "employees" such as the Stingbear or the Elves (regardless of who was the initial aggressor), it will at first merely upbraid them verbally. For the second offense, it gives the PC a spanking, easily hauling up any character it can grab and paddling them with a flat metallic hand. For a third offense, it



takes and places a PC in the nearest Transporter Tube, and turns it on, sending the “naughty” PC home (unless in Level 1, due to the malfunction.) If the gifts on Level 3 have been taken, the remaining Miss Marjorie bot(s) will be marshaled by XMAS to prevent the PCs from leaving and will use their slam attack.

Miss Marjorie Security Bot (2): Init +2; Atk Grab +2 Melee (N/A) or spank +2 melee (1) or slam +2 melee (1d5+2); AC 16; HD 3d8+2; hp 20; MV 30; Act 1d20; SP Spank, immune to mental powers; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will N/A; AI recog 8.

Miss Marjorie can grip a character, raise him up by one or two arms and begin delivering a humiliating spanking as one action. The victim takes one point of damage each round thereafter, until they pass out (or unless they make a DC 15 Strength check to wriggle free.)

Area 0-1 – Miss Marjorie’s Lair: The two Miss Marjorie bots will be here if not already destroyed. If one is destroyed, a second will be deployed in its place within 1d4 rounds. Both bots are equipped with a black plastic security key on their left “hand” which will allow access to all levels, including Level 3. The visible chip can be pried out with a DC 5 Agility check.

Besides the large charging unit in the corner, there is nothing of value in Miss Marjorie’s chamber except for thousands of brittle old paper catalogs. Anyone using the catalogs to examine the various artifacts receives a +1d on their artifact checks, but it takes 1 turn of looking and a Luck check to find a picture relevant to the remaining artifacts above.

Cast aside in one corner of the room is a skeleton with a blinking chip embedded in its temple. This unfortunate was an eco-terrorist sent to sabotage the consumerist follies of the Ancients at the behest of an environmentally aware AI; but ultimately the agent ran afoul of the security bots and was executed. A shaman inspecting this chip will realize that this is a transceiver for one of the sky-gods above Terra AD. Using the proper ritual, a shaman may thus connect with the patron AI GAEA (see p. 212 of the MCC RPG rulebook for more information.) Tucked in the skeleton’s belt pouch is a photon grenade (see p. 174 of the MCC RPG rulebook.)

PLAYER START

You have journeyed several hours from your village following the flat, vaguely foot-like tracks of the creature that absconded with the precious gifts. The humid air is thick with the buzz of mutant insects, the cries of glowing tropical birds and the hiss and whisper of branches – some with actual mouths. Through the fronds, foliage and creepers, you glimpse flashes of a pale white shape until the tracks lead you to an enormous vine-clad structure. Readying your weapons, you take in this bizarre sight, hidden from your tribe for so long.

This ancient building is made of impenetrable white ceramic, with no windows. The top domed portion looks identical to the rest of the building but is actually a holo-structure that will absorb 200 hp of heat damage before breaching. The exterior is thickly overgrown with vines and other foliage. On the East side, even a cursory inspection will spot the two Pneuminator tubes jutting out of the structure (see area 2-4).

Area 1-1 – XMAS Temple: *This strange building rises at least 100 feet above you at its domed top. The building is covered with vines and creepers but its white surface still has a cheery glow where it peeks out beneath. A clear double door can be seen in front of you, covered by only a few vines. Through the door you see a big open space wondrously lit and filled with odd furnishings and brightly colored boxes.*

The only obvious entrance into the building will be the two permaglass doors that are shut against intruders. Wary seekers might observe that these doors are far less vine-covered than the rest of the building's exterior. (Miss Marjorie had to remove the vines to exit, and now the Squeezers are the only "vines" on the doors.)

These doors open only at the automatic electronic signal of Miss Marjorie. Otherwise, a DC 15 Strength check is required to force the doors to slide open sideways without any AI command. A rover can open these doors on a DC 12 Doors check.

If the PCs approach within five feet of the door, the squeezers attack.

Squeezers (3): Init +3; Atk constriction +2 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 1d8; hp 6, 5, 4; MV 40; Act 1d20; SP sever limb on a 19 or 20 (DC 12 Fort save or lose a limb); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2.

These highly evolved predators are basically indistin-

guishable from common jungle vines until they strike (DC 20 to recognize them as animals instead of plants, DC 16 for shamans, trained as they are in the lore of the tribe.)

Normally adhering to trees or sheer surfaces, squeezers are capable of launching themselves through the air up to five feet and then attack with violent painful constriction. Once an attack is successful, the powerful constriction continues to do 1d3 damage per round with no further attack roll needed. PCs making a DC 15 Strength check can rip a squeezer off, doing 1d4 points of damage to the squeezer in the process.

If the squeezer's attack rolls a natural 19 or 20, the victim must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or lose a limb as it squeezes the appendage so tightly that the extremity gorily pops off. Roll 1d6 modified by Luck bonus to determine the extremity: 1) head; 2) leg; 3-6) arm.

If an extremity is severed, any and all squeezers will abscond with it and seek a peaceful place to consume it. Squeezers ignore plantients as they crave only flesh.

Squeezers are highly intelligent, but unable to understand any sort of written or spoken language. In fact, squeezers have a species-wide psychic communion in which they spend their quiet hours perfecting stanzas of olfactory poetry and astral architectures that can never be built in earthly worlds.

LEVEL 1: GENERAL FEATURES

The first level is brightly lit from above by permanent holo-spheres, which will only dim or darken at the command of the XMAS AI. The ceilings are 20' high. The floor is a smooth indestructible white tile.

Garishly decorated 10' tall cardboard partitions separate most of the floor into tidy aisles. They served to focus attention on the goods displayed nearby, but are surprisingly flimsy and can be moved easily by any PC with a Strength of 9 or higher.

The wreaths, tinsel and decorations are quite brittle, decomposing at the touch, but still shiny and wondrous to seekers.

When the characters enter the building, a terrible racket starts—the pre-programmed holiday music of the Ancients, horribly distorted, speeding and slowing as the PCs wander through Levels 1 and 2.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Within the store, roll 1d6 after every combat and once per turn otherwise. On a 1, the PCs have a random encounter. If the PCs split up, remember to roll for both groups!

If a random encounter is generated, roll 1d5 to determine.

d5	Encounter
1	Feral Elf Patrol - 1d4 Low-Dwellers (see area 1-12)
2	Feral Elf Patrol - 1d4 Wood-Gods (see area 1-14)
3	Sting-Bear - (Unique; if generated, it will not appear in area 1-11)
4-5	Miss Marjorie (Only appears twice; See area 0-1)

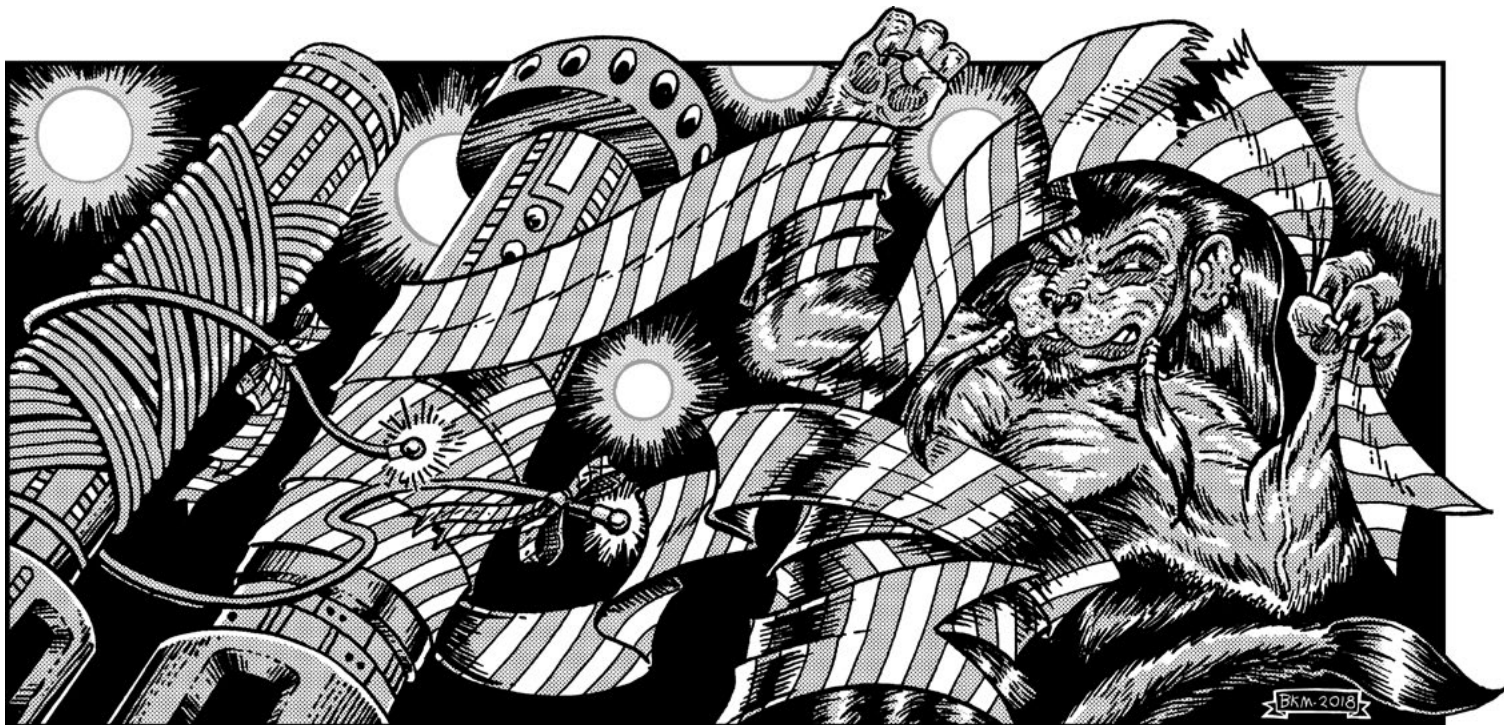
Area 1-2 – Wrapping Paper Station: *Stepping into the building beyond, you are amazed by the bright lights hanging from ceiling like heavy fruits composed of sunlight. Directly in front of you is a wooden table, on which is a bizarre cylinder covered with brightly colored shiny leaves of some kind. Next to it is a smaller cylinder tightly wrapped with thin crimson vines. This wide room has more tables to the right and left and a big 10' tall brightly colored wall hides the rest of the room from your sight. Everything around you seems to be colored in red, green, silver and gold.*

HOME FOR THE HOLIDEATH



Level 0
(basement)

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The Ancients developed smartpaper to instantly wrap their gifts before exiting with their purchases. Now however, XMAS has converted the smartpaper to a security function and it will unroll to attack any intruders entering the store. The cylinder can unroll 1 square of smartpaper per round; if the cylinder is attacked or immobilized the smartpaper will be trapped and can be destroyed.

The smartpaper will attack any organism for which it makes a successful AI Recognition check. Once the first sheet is activated, they will launch themselves through the air at any recognized bio-organisms within 100'.

Smartpaper (4): Init +1; Atk Smothering wrap +2 melee (1); AC 14; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 40 (flight); Act 1d20; SP smothering wrap, immune to mental powers; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AI recog 12.

On a successful attack, the red, white and green smartpaper completely covers the victim, who must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be knocked prone and begin smothering. Victims can be cut out by others with a sharp object; 4 hp of damage will render one square of paper inert. Once successfully hit and wrapped by a piece of smartpaper, the PC will continue to take 1 hp of damage a round until freed or dead.

Note that cutting out a struggling victim with any implement larger than a small knife has a chance of injuring said victim. (Victim takes ½ normal weapon damage if the cutter fails a DC 12 Agility check.) Additionally, a PC may try to fight out of the smartpaper cocoon with a DC 14 Strength check.

To add insult to injury, three shiny red smartribbons will neatly tie off any target killed by smartpaper.

THE MERCHANDISE STATIONS

You now see that this entire huge area is filled with row upon row of wooden tables on which are sitting brightly colored boxes! Although many boxes and the strange leaves have been destroyed, a few appear to remain intact. The boxes are tied off with shiny red vines. 10' tall walls separate the rows from each other. Is there no end to these wonders?

The following artifacts are resting on the counters of the various merchandise stations throughout the first level. Each station was dedicated to displaying a new item for the Ancient Ones. Every table has been ransacked and is surrounded by empty boxes, torn (inert) wrapping paper and so on, but a few intact presents remain. The number of functioning artifacts at each station is indicated in parentheses.

Area 1-3 - Tickle Gun (2): TL 2, CM 2; Damage: None; Range: 30'; SP DC 8 Will save or be -1d to all action dice for 1d4 rounds; Power: Currently C-Cell (21, 50 uses), F-cell (Full 100), Q-cell (Unlimited); Ammo: None.

This deadly looking replica of an auto-rifle shoots invisible nerve-impulses that afflict any target with mammalian skin with an annoying tickling sensation. An unboxed one on the counter has been used for demonstrations and has fewer charges.

Area 1-4 - Sun Glasses (1): TL 2, CM 2; Power: Recharged by sunlight, every hour of recharging powers 1 turn of functioning. Max charge is 2 hours. Current charge is 2 turns.

Placed on the eyes of a human or humanoid creature, these dark plastic eyeshades enable the wearer to see his immediate environs (up to 60') as if lit by bright

sunlight. The brightness is adjustable and can be quite intense. Failed artifact checks temporarily blind the user for 1d3 rounds on a 2-8 result. On a 1, the user is permanently blinded.

Area 1-5 – Glider Skates (2 pairs): TL 3, CM 3; Power: One c-cell for each skate; C-Cell (2 hours), F-cell (4 hours), Q-cell (Unlimited).

The faux leather glider skates meld to fit most pure strain or humanoid feet. When activated with the command word “Skate”, the neon-bright shoes grow energy-wheels that allow wearers to double their movement on smooth finished surfaces and move at +50% for less regular but mostly intact surfaces. Skating on more uneven surfaces is not recommended. (2 fully charged c-cells included with each pair of skates.)

Area 1-6 – Drone (1): TL 3, CM 3; Power: C-Cell (1 hour), F-cell (2 hours), Q-cell (Unlimited), Current charge (C-cell) 2 turns.

A small holo-card showing animated instructions is included. Studying the card gives a +1d to the artifact check.

This ultra-light metallic robot looks like a 1’ long silver housefly. It can be commanded by putting a green neural patch anywhere on the face or head. (Patch and 1 c-cell included.) Once bonded, this patch allows the user to telepathically command the drone and even see through its optical sensors. The drone must stay within 500’ of the user. A failed artifact check (8 or less) does no damage but requires the user to make a DC 12 Willpower save or have his consciousness switched permanently into that of the drone.

Drone (1): Init +2; Atk +1 Bite melee (1); AC 14; HD 1d4; hp 2; MV 60 (flight); Act 1d20; SP None; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will N/A; AI recog N/A.

Area 1-7 – Worm-o-Vision (2): TL 5, CM 1; Power: Bio-organic (requires 1 hour immersion in 4 ounces of water and finely ground cereals). Max charge is 12 hours. Current charge is 12 hours.

A small holo-card showing animated instructions is included. Studying the card gives a +1d to the artifact check.

These small faintly luminescent blue worms are about an inch long and come in a small clear plastic box.

Worm-o-vision was a failed fad of the Ancients that allowed users to experience virtual reality by admitting a small bio-engineered parasite to lodge within one’s brain via sinus or aural passage. The worms are intensely telepathic; users would be transported to an immense sun-drenched palace of never-ending delights.

Now, with no other users in Terra AD and no AI to support it, the pleasure palace is a gray wasteland, haunted by a few un-dead minds and unlucky seekers. Once a turn, PCs may make a DC 15 Willpower save to disengage from the gray waste and force the worm out.

After 12 hours, the worms are supposed to leave the brain and be recharged in a solution as noted. However, one of the two extant worms is defective; after 12 hours or upon the failure of an attempted expulsion, it will instead feast upon the unlucky user’s brain, causing 1d8 points of damage per round and causing extensive hemorrhaging through mouth, ears and eyes.

Area 1-8 – Holiday Sweaters (2): TL 2, CM 0; Damage: None; Range: self; SP environmental protection, +1 AC, brightly colored; Power: C-Cell (1 hour), F-cell (2 hours), Q-cell (Unlimited).

When a switch on the tag at the back of the sweater’s collar is toggled, the garishly colored sweaters blaze with animal and snow-flake patterns; no stealth or hiding is possible. The durability of the sweaters provides +1 to AC. They are very warm and also provide protection against environmental extremes, causing any heat or cold damage to be at -1d vs. the wearer.

Area 1-9 – Empty Gift Stations: These stations are heaped with boxes, wrapping paper and other detritus but there are no unopened gifts left behind. Judges are free to create their own artifacts to fill these areas!

Area 1-10 – Chocolate Coins: In amongst the strange coverings and broken boxes, a diligent PC will find a small bag of 1d4+1 chocolate coins, perfectly preserved and sealed in silver foil. The coins are emblazoned with the picture of a toy top on one side. Note that the dreidel swarm at area 2-3 will respond to these coins as described, but only if the coin is fully intact (unopened.) Any PC consuming the chocolate will forever be haunted by the heavenly taste of the Ancients’ special ambrosia.

Area 1-11 – Mythical Gift-Giving Spirit:

As you make your way between the strange short walls once again, your blood curdles as you see a hideous hybrid bear atop a large wooden chair, surrounded by small gnawed bones. The beast has multifaceted eyes, a drooling mouth, two large pincers for arms and four hairy legs beneath. Worst of all is a huge stinger rising from its rear and curling over its shoulder. It is attired in a garish red coat trimmed with white fur and an absurd pointed hat of the same color.

Some time ago, a dreaded sting-bear found this place of the Ancients and has lived here ever since, making frequent meals out of the feral elves and other unfortunate that find their way into the complex.



In an odd twist of fate, the sting-bear vaguely resembles the portly personage of a mythical figure associated with holiday gift-giving, and its labored breathing resembles a loud “HO-HO.” Always on the lookout for stand-ins for the mythical figures the Ancients once worshiped, the Miss Marjorie robot garbed the sting-bear in its strange attire.

Sting-bear: Init +2; Atk crushing grip +3 melee (1d5+2), tail sting +2 melee (1d7); AC 15; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 25; Act 2d20; SP tail sting venom (2d4, DC 12 Fort save for half); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0.

8 feet tall, the sting-bear is a cross between scorpion and bear, its upper fore-legs being huge pedipalps that immobilize and crush prey. Beneath its red garment, it has four more bear-legs and its posterior terminates in a long segmented tail with a wicked stinger. The sting-bear will attack with both pedipalps to grip and crush opponents; once gripped, a DC 15 Strength check is needed to break loose of the pedipalps. If gripped twice, the DC is 20. The sting-bear attacks a gripped victim at +2d. The sting-bear only uses the stinger after one round (giving up one crushing attack to strike with the stinger.) The venom does 2d4 points of damage (DC 12 Fortitude save for half.)

Unless further provoked, the sting-bear is likely to be satisfied with one victim and it will retreat to its throne to consume the unfortunate.

Area 1-12 – Feral Elves (The Low-Dwellers):

In this area, the brightly colored walls are cobbled together into a strange set of tents. The small 3' tall inhabitants are dressed in strange clothes you've never seen before, all of a bright green hue. These small humanoids start bounding toward you on all fours, their pale lips pulling back over sharp canine teeth!

In the days that the merchandise temple was active, cute “helper elves” were bio-engineered to perform antics, play with the innocent children and joyfully perform many menial tasks far beneath the dignity of their masters. Untold generations later, the elves have sunk into cannibalistic degeneracy. The Low-Dwellers on Level 1 are locked in eternal combat with the Wood-Gods of Level 2. Despite their violent nature, the feral elves assuage Miss Marjorie by wearing the cute green garments (bowler hat, buttoned vest, green slacks, pointy-toe velvet shoes) that their forebears wore.

The Low-Dwellers have fashioned a large tent from old display tables and other cheap store furniture. It can hold up to 15 feral elves though the accommodations will be cramped for human-sized creatures. It's sturdy enough to fend off the Sting-bear, whom they assuage with whatever offerings they can.

Feral Elves (8): Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3+1); AC 13; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 20; Act 1d20; SP overbear; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0.

If more than one elf successfully hits the same target in the same round, the victim must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be knocked prone.

Within the tent of the feral elves are countless bones and broken artifacts. Any character searching for 1 full round and making a Luck check can find a working force baton (p. 174 of the MCC RPG rulebook.)

Area 1-13 – Transport Tube: *Next to the wall is a clear cylinder about 8' tall with a roughly person-sized oval opening on the side facing you. The top of the cylinder connects to a narrow metal vine that leads up and then goes into the wall. A metal square with brightly colored gems rests on one side of the cylinder.*

This transport tube was once the primary means of transport to the temple facility. Still powered up, the tube always malfunctions in exactly the same way. Any character placed therein when the simple console is activated must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or collapse into a rainbow-colored protoplasmic heap of slime, ululating out its last words through weeping holes in what remains of its gooey body. Any attempt to use the transport tube always produces the same result; a successful TL 5 CM 5 artifact check will also determine it is hopelessly broken.

Area 1-14 – Escalator Death Trap: *Before you are two 30' long metal stairways separated by a metal divider. They seem identical except for the barricade of wood and detritus that blocks the left-hand stairway at its top.*

Neither escalator is in use when the PCs arrive, but they are controlled by the Wood-Gods above. The Up escalator (right) still functions; the Down escalator does not. The barricade of old furniture and other debris at the top of the Down escalator requires a DC 15 Strength check to break through. If the PCs ascend the Up escalator, the Wood-Gods ambush the PCs from above. They also activate the escalator to shake and wrench PCs fitfully upward. (PCs on the Down escalator are not affected.) Characters on the Up escalator are -1d for all action dice as long as it is activated. There is a simple activation switch near the top that can be deactivated by moving toggle to down position.

Wood-God (wood-grafted feral elves, 6): Init +2; Atk javelins +1 ranged (1d5) or grafted weapons +1 melee (1d4+1); AC 13; HD 1d4+1; hp 4 each; MV 20; Act 1d20; SP overbear; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0.

The Wood-Gods are identical to the Low-Dwellers except that they have been grafted with wooden toy soldier parts (wooden pincers for hands, sharpened stakes on knees or wrists) for several generations now. These graftings are done by the Toymaker in area 2-1. Wooden grafts are very painful and the Wood-Gods



are more aggressive and hateful than their brethren. The Wood-Gods wear garments identical to those of the Low-Dwellers, but red instead of green.

Area 1-15 – Elevator: *Two big metal doors are set into the wall. There is one round gem on the wall at waist-level next to the doors.*

The brightly lit elevator is in good repair and is used by Miss Marjorie as needed. The elevator is 10' by 10' and has a button for levels 0, 1, 2 and 3, as well as one keyslot by the Level 3 button. The XMAS AI is aware of the elevator's movements and will not let PCs go to Level 3 unless a rover can override this with a DC 20 Doors check. The PCs will be allowed to go to the basement level (Area 0-1), Level 2 or back to Level 1 at will.

Miss Marjorie is able to ascend to Level 3 via a small black key device in the center of its left "hand". See area 0-1 for more detail.

LEVEL 2: GENERAL FEATURES

In most respects, the second level is similar to Level 1. The height of the ceiling is 30', the illumination is by the same type of holo-discs and the floor is plain beige tile. The eerie stuttering holiday music continues here.

Area 2-1 – The Toymaker's Shed: *Peering into this room, you see a space cluttered with many wooden statues. Behind a wooden table in the back you see another wooden figure holding a mallet and a big metal spike. Despite being sure that he's completely composed of wood, you have the oddest feeling that he is watching you.*

This odd little workshop is filled with ancient nutcracker-style wooden soldiers in faded paint as well as other wooden statuettes and tchotchkes. Concealed amongst the bric-a-brac are four more Wood-God elves, protecting their revered Toymaker robot.

This robot used to give entertaining woodworking demonstrations but now savagely converts the elves into wooden cyborgs. Its base is attached on a wooden accordion-style extender and it can attack PCs within 15' of any part of the workbench. On its first attack, the Toymaker will yank a PC back to its worktable and pound nails into a victim's arm. On its second attack it starts to saw off hands and forearms to prepare for grafting. The victim is allowed a DC 15 Strength check to break free after the first attack, and then again after the second round. If unsuccessful (and still alive), the PC will pass out and will wake up with a 1) wooden pincer, 2) spiked club or 3) sharpened stake (assuming the Toymaker can complete the grafting in d3+1 rounds). These grafted weapons allow a PC a "natural" weapon that does 1d4+1 damage.

Wood-God (wood-grafted feral elves, 4): Init +2; Atk weapons +2 melee (1d4+1); AC 15; HD 1d4+1; hp 4 each; MV 20; Act 1d20; SP overbear; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0.

The Toymaker: Init +4; Atk hammer and nails +2 melee (1d5) or saw +4 melee (1d7+1); AC 15; HD 3d6+1; hp 12; MV None; Act 1d20; SP wooden grafting, immune to mental powers; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will N/A; AI recog 6.

Area 2-2 – The Abominable Snow-Dome: *Rising 20' in front of you is a big clear dome of some mysterious clear material, in which a frantic whirling mass of white particles storms around. You can't make out any sort of shapes or contents of the dome, which must have a diameter of at least 20'. A small red-clad corpse lays on the floor 10' away from the dome. Tied around its waist is a rope that disappears through a doorway into the whirling storm within.*

This 20' diameter dome is filled with dense flying white particles and is visible from almost all of the second level. The impenetrable dome was built apparently with an open circular entrance on one side. Inside is a whirling storm of sheer white "snow" particles that makes vision impossible. Outside the doorway is a dead Wood God Elf corpse, with a rope tied about its waist.

Inside the Dome is a mutant who entered the merchandise temple long ago and took up residence here, preying on feral elves when they became available. He uses the corpse as a lure to gather more victims. As he is also surrounded by a storm of white particles at all times, the mutant (Khadro), is effectively invisible within the dome and obscured without. The particle storm travels with Khadro in a 10' radius if he leaves the dome, which he is loath to do unless the party is down to two or three members. Though the particles will blind most victims, Khadro's mutant senses perceive his surroundings perfectly both within and without the dome.

Khadro the Snow-man: Init +4 (in the dome or his radius), +0 (outside); Atk claw +2 melee (1d6+1); AC 15; HD 3d6+1; hp 12; MV none; Act 2d20; SP mobile particle storm; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will -2.

Inside the dome is a tangled pile of bones, wires and metal limbs heaped together from prey and destroyed maintenance bots. Anyone searching the pile can make a Luck check at +5 to find a sensor pad (p. 181 of the MCC RPG rulebook) that he had gathered but could not figure out how to use.

Area 2-3 – Dreidel Dreidel: *Unlike most of the other tables you've seen, this one isn't heaped with garishly covered boxes. There's only one blue and white box less than a foot long and only four inches wide. The box appears to be made out of wood and has a solid metal clasp. Is it your imagination or does it seem to be rattling as you approach it?*

If unlatched, a mass of flying dreidels (small wooden tops) flies out and immediately attacks the nearest PC!

The tiny nano-tops, each less than one inch long, are able to drill through anything within seconds. Previously, startled children would watch the AI-led dreidels weave gracefully through the air and perform a little show when presented with the chocolate coins from area 1-10, then magically resume their places within the velvet lined box. With the main XMAS AI now corrupted, the dreidels will attack any intruders deemed to be a threat unless presented with such a



coin, in which case they will harmlessly pinwheel and caper around the coin for 1d4 rounds and then resume their place in the box.

Dreidel Swarm: Init +4; Atk swarming drill +2 melee (2d3); AC 15; HD 2d6; hp 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP takes only 1 hp from physical non-area-of-effect attacks, immune to mental powers; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will N/A; AI recog 8.

Area 2-4 - Pneuminator: *Two closed tubes, at least three feet in diameter are set horizontally right into the wall here. Each one has a sliding door on the top of the tube, about the size for a pure strain human to fit in. Next to the tubes, fixed to the floor is a five foot metal pole topped with a strange board of glowing gems and blinking colors.*

Pneuminator: TL 3, CM 3; Damage: None; Range: self; SP Compressed air force; Power: Connected to the main power source.

This pneumatic tube machine was once an amusing diversion for thrill-seeking youngsters (and some adults). The Pneuminator passed a rider from its entry tube through its thrilling sensory-laden confines at high speed, slowing gently at the end and depositing the passenger safely back into the temple via its exit tube. At some point after the Great Disaster, almost all of its outer structure was destroyed but the entry and exit tubes still exist within the temple. The entry tube extends outward 10' (through the wall) and then upward at a 45 degree angle about 15' before its structure is interrupted.

The entry tube still has a working compressed air field generator, allowing a passenger to be loaded into its compartment and then accelerated out of the tube at great speeds. However, instead of sliding along a carefully designed and AI controlled passage, the tube simply lifts and ejects the passenger many miles into the air far out above the jungles of Terra AD! Hapless PCs so ejected should make a Luck check. Failure means the PC crashes to his or her death far below in the jungles.

If the Luck check succeeds, the PC is fortunate enough to be picked up in midair by an eager denizen of Terra AD! The PC's savior is a Hawkodile, a large airborne predator (both scaled and feathered) resembling a bird of prey, but equipped with the long toothy maw of a crocodile. Having snared the PC, the Hawkodile will bring the PC back to its swamp aerie to devour.

Hawkodile: Init +4 (airborne) +0 (on land); Atk bite +4 melee (1d5+3), talons +3 melee (1d7+3); AC 16; HD 4d6+4; hp 22; MV 20', 60' fly; Act 2d20 (airborne), 1d20 (on land); SP in air, attacks with bite and talons, on a successful talon strike, may carry a victim of 300



pounds or less into the air (DC 18 Strength check to break free); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +0.

If a character tries to enter the complex via the first tube, they find the metal chamber shut. Forcing the chamber open requires a Luck check. Failing the Luck check activates the compressed air as above. A Rover making a successful DC 10 Doors check on this impediment avoids this misfortune with no need of a Luck check.

The exit tube (which once led back in from the tubular structure that now no longer exists) extends 20' straight out. Its roughly 5' diameter outer aperture is covered by the nearly invisible body of a gelatinous surface. A careful examination of the opening in bright light might (DC 18 Intelligence check, DC 12 for shamans, wise in the lore of the jungle) detect some light shimmering and trembling on the creature's mass.

Gelatinous Surface: Init -2; Atk enveloping +2 melee (1d7); AC 14; HD 3d6+1; hp 12; MV 40; Act 1d20; SP 1 hp from non energy attacks, non-metal weapons destroyed in 2 rounds by contact, immune to mental powers; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will N/A.

This transparent jelly is only an inch thin but can cover up to 10 square feet. It attacks when any victim (or part of a victim) breaches its surface, sending its mass up the offending appendage and enveloping the victim, burning with acidic damage as it does so.

The gelatinous surface may be removed by scraping it off with a blade or tool in 1d3 rounds, during which the victim will take full damage. The victim's non-metallic gear in the meantime will be destroyed unless the victim makes a Luck check.

The melted mass of anyone slain by a gelatinous surface becomes one of those creatures in 1 turn, but is still discolored for 1d3 days until its cells digest the remains of their original body.

Area 2-5 – Transport Tube: *Next to the wall is a clear cylinder about 8' tall with a roughly person-sized oval opening on the side facing you. The top of the cylinder connects to a narrow metal vine that leads up and then goes into the wall. A metal square with brightly colored gems rests on one side of the cylinder.*

This artifact is identical to the one on the first level, but this one remains in working order of a sort. Make an artifact check as normal but ignore the standard results table and consult the table below.

Transport Tube: TL 5, CM 5; Range: Can accommodate one human sized creature at a time; Power: N/A, connected to main source.

Area 2-6 – Air Vent Exit: *About eight feet up on this wall is an open square, about three feet wide. Below this opening on the floor, you see a square piece of metal with many small holes. Beyond is a narrow tunnel into the wall, leading upward. The tunnel seems to be formed of the same white clay that makes up the rest of the building.*

This air vent gives access to the vent on Level 3 (see area 3-5). The tunnel is 4' high and 4' wide. The grating has come off as the lint-beast here prowls Level 2 occasionally.

PCs will see that a shaft leads upward to Level 3. Various other vent tunnels lead elsewhere in the complex, but the gratings are solidly fixed will not allow exit, unless the judge wishes to improvise.

Using melee weapons while in the shaft is nearly impossible; only thrusting weapons may be used and are at -1d to attack rolls.

Lint-beast: Init +3 ; Atk face-swarm +2 melee (1d2); AC 13; HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 40; Act 1d20; SP face swarm, doing 1d3 points of Stamina damage per hit until PC has time to clear airways; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; AL N.

The amorphous, hairy lint-beast started as a megabacteria that attracted more and more small pieces of detritus (hair, nail droppings, dust, skin flakes) growing larger over time. It only seeks to eat organisms by smothering them and adding to its mass. If it kills a

Artifact Check	Transport Tube Result
1 or less	Bad coordinates! The victim is merged with solid matter and explodes within the transport tube, but it may be cleaned out and re-used.
2-8	Momentarily manifested in a subterranean lava field. Retrieved by safety sensors but takes 1d6 damage.
9-11	The transport tube moves the PC back through time rather than space, causing them to manifest in the era of the Ancient Ones, in this very spot. The PC will probably end up as an honored, guest in their curious and overly intellectual culture. Or in a pain-zoo.
12-13	The PC emerges into area 5-2 (Time-Pad) of DCC #79 <i>Frozen In Time</i> . Other PCs may follow if they wish!
14-16	The PC emerges onto a transport platform station in a red cratered desert. There is ample food and water in the store rooms, and no other sign of life besides vaguely puzzled androids. Every hour spent here requires a DC 12 Fort save or take 1d6 radiation damage. The PC can attempt to return using an identical transporter.
17-19	The PC is not moved anywhere but the radiation bath triggered changes the PC's genotype unless succeeding vs. a DC 15 Fort save. Determine which new genotype randomly.
20-22	The PC is switched to a parallel universe where all his party members have different genotypes. Adjust the companion PCs and resume play.
23-26	Random assembly! The PC randomly gains a mutation (A PSH will become a Mutant if applicable.)
27+	Treat as normal artifact result (in normal operation, can send anywhere on the planet.)



PC, it absorbs the PC's mass and adds the PC's full hit point total to its own.

The lint-beast attacks by trying to enter a PC's nose and mouth. Each time it hits, its detritus invades and blocks the airways of his opponent, causing the victim to lose 1d3 Stamina. To avert this condition, the PC must spend a full round clearing their airways by making a DC 15 Fortitude save. Stamina continues to be lost until a PC succeeds at a save, or until at 0 Stamina, at which point

the PC is dead. A successful save at any time indicates that the PC has cleared their airways and can breathe normally, but the lint-beast will attack again.

Area 2-7 – Immortalizer: *This small room holds another upright clear cylinder, with metal vines feeding into it from the nearby wall. Set on the surface of the cylinder is a flat rock with lots of blinking gems and pink stones. Beside it are three big boxes roughly the size of coffins and covered with the strange brightly colored material you've seen covering other boxes. As you enter the room, a hollow voice out of nowhere says, "Missing your loved ones already? Give the gift of Immortality!"*

If the Immortalizer's console is successfully manipulated (TL 4, CM 4) while a corpse is loaded in the tube, this device bathes a subject in a thick pink goop and will restore life to a deceased subject within 2 turns. (A subject's body must be mostly intact.) Note that the Immortalizer is built for pure strain humans and will "cleans" any mutations out of a mutant or manimal, devolving them to a PSH or an animal (respectively.) The Immortalizer has no effect on plantients. A living subject will be fully healed, but also "cleansed" as noted.

Each of the coffin-sized boxes holds a possible replacement character packed in pink goo. These members of a distant tribe were stored here after being apprehended by Miss Marjorie on an earlier mission to explore the complex.

Area 2-8 – Empty Station: This station is heaped with boxes, wrapping paper and other detritus but there are no unopened gifts left behind. Judges are free to create their own artifacts to fill this area.

LEVEL 3: GENERAL FEATURES

This upper level is pervaded by an almost sacred silence. The night sky is spread out high above you. Disconcertingly though, there is no sky-arc – instead there is a large bulbous pale orb above you, gleaming merrily with a silver light. Not too far away is a strangely decorated tree, standing at least 30' tall. You also see a large red wagon or cart which is missing any wheels.

The third level of the mercantile temple was once an open air viewing deck where large crowds gathered to enjoy the holiday spectacles. The hard light dome was used to protect the crowds from inclement weather, but now the shell permanently covers every inch of the deck, allowing no light, flora or fauna to penetrate from outside. As a holographic construct it is only vulnerable to heat-based attacks, absorbing 200 hp of damage before being destroyed.

Area 3-1 – The XMAS Tree: *The branches of this towering evergreen tree are hung with brightly colored pulsing fruit. A silver five-pointed star sits at its top. Beneath the tree's lowest branches is a heap of brightly wrapped boxes, similar to those on the lower level. Strewn amongst them you also see the embroidered leather bags that house the gifts of the Violet Serpent and Mud-walker tribes. These are the presents you have been seeking! As you step toward them, a booming voice addresses you. "Halt! It is not yet time! Leave now or wait a day before you take these gifts – or be destroyed!"*

The XMAS AI was programmed to deeply revere symbols and has thus bio-engineered this massive mutant tree, which it controls from its remote housing in the console at area 3-2. If they immediately agree to leave, XMAS will allow them free passage with no further harm from it or the Miss Marjorie robots.

The XMAS Tree: Init +3 ; Atk ornament-fruit rays +3 missile fire (see below); AC 15; HD 3d12; hp 20; MV none; Act 3d20; SP ornament rays (see below); SV Fort +5, Ref -4, Will +5.

If they try to take the gifts and run, the tree will go into attack mode, attacking with its ornaments. Except for the star, there are three ornaments of each type; each time one is used, the ornament shrivels and falls lifeless at the tree's base. (In 2-5 weeks, these will re-grow if the tree is alive.) The various rays of the ornaments can strike any target within its line of sight. The tree is stationary; the ornaments are located on the south-facing and East-facing branches of the tree.

1. **Red (3)** - Intense radiation; 1d8 damage, DC 10 Fort save for half.
2. **White (3)** - Blinding lights target the victim. DC 12 Fort save or be blinded for 1 turn.
3. **Gold (3)** - Target is covered in hardened gold plating. DC 10 Fort save or effectively paralyzed as well as blinded and muted. Will suffocate in number of rounds equal to stamina, unless helped.
4. **Silver (3)** - Target is covered with greasy silver substance from head to toe, making it almost impossible to move. Every 10' of movement requires a DC 10 Reflex save or fall prone. Requires 1d3 rounds to remove.
5. **Pastel Blue (3)** - Dehydration beam- 1d7 damage and intense pain. DC 10 Will save or be -1d on all actions until 1d3 rounds of consuming water.
6. **Neon Yellow (3)** - Heat beam which does 1d4 damage and lights all flammable gear on fire.
7. **The Star (unique)** - The star flies off like a missile and explodes for 3d4 points of damage to everyone in a 10' radius. DC 12 Reflex save for half damage.

Clever PCs may capture and try to use these ornaments as weapons. Treat them as TL 3, CM 3 one-use artifacts for this purpose.

The gifts beneath the tree include all of both tribes' goods. The Mud-Walkers were presenting 10 gifts: A mazer pistol (p. 172 of the MCC RPG rulebook), a c-cell battery (p. 182), four bolts of dyed turquoise cloth, 1 set of lizard hide armor (AC 15), and three amber bead necklaces.

The Violet Serpent tribe was presenting 10 gifts as well: An ancient metal-hafted spear (+1 to attack and damage,) 3 medishots (p. 178), a basket of giant fire beetle grubs (alive), a metal helmet (+1 AC), a decorative feather headdress, three pairs of pale violet snake-skin boots.

Area 3-2 - Master Console: *Along the Eastern wall, you can see another flat surface encrusted with blinking gems and lines of light fixed to a 4' high post.*

A master console sits on a post near the wall. This interface to the XMAS AI may be used to shut it down, treating it as an artifact with TL 5, CM 6.

On a successful artifact check, the user may make the tree and the Miss Marjorie bots stand down or even self-destruct.

This console also controls the holo-dome itself, which can be deactivated, leaving the PCs atop an open air rooftop with a 4' railing on all sides.

Area 3-3 - The Sleigh: *Before you is a red cart that would comfortably hold at least 10-12 people. The cart sits lengthwise on two narrow metal rods, but otherwise is formed entirely of wood. In the front is a glass surface with more gems and lights as well as odd stones and stick-like tools fastened to the cart itself.*

This is a sleigh that used to give rides to the temple's patrons.

Air-Sled (1): TL 4, CM 4; Power: 1 F-cell. Max charge is 12 hours. Current charge is 12 hours. Flies at speeds up to 150 mph. When flying, a force-field is activated that will protect inhabitants of the sleigh against minor impacts and other nuisances of high-speed airborne travel.

If activated properly, 12 holo-reindeer appear to "pull" the sleigh into the sky. However, unless the PCs have already de-activated the dome, any result lower than 26 will have the sleigh launch at high speed right into the hard-light dome, instantly destroying the sleigh and killing everyone on board.

Area 3-4 - Transport Tube: *Next to the wall is a clear cylinder about 8' tall with a roughly person-sized oval opening on the side facing you. The top of the cylinder connects to a narrow metal vine that leads down and then goes into the floor. A metal square with brightly colored gems rests on one side of the cylinder.*

This artifact appears identical to the one on the first and second levels. Make an artifact check as normal to use. Or, if the Master Console at area 3-2 can has already been successfully mastered, the tube should be considered TL 4 and CM 4. This properly functioning tube can send a PC and up to 200 pounds of carried objects anywhere on Terra AD!

Transport Tube: TL 5, CM 5; Range: Can accommodate one human sized creature at a time; Power: N/A, connected to main source.

Area 3-5 – Air Vent Entrance: This is the other end of the air vent from area 2-6. The grill is still in place here and requires a DC 18 Strength check to open. If PCs explore this air vent from Level 3 and have not yet encountered the lint-beast, they will encounter it. (See area 2-6 for more details.)

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Depending on the time taken to retrieve the gifts, the journey home could be a harrowing one, building tension and perhaps allowing a real chance of failure and a dramatic entrance to the camp of the Mud-Walkers.

It is of course entirely possible that the seekers will seek to abscond with the gifts and make their way in the merciless hothouse world of Terra AD, becoming seekers without a tribe. Such a selfish act would probably consign both tribes to war and chaos as they blame each other for the ritual's failure and devolve into mistrust and recrimination.

Of course the PCs may wish to return to this location. If the gifts have been retrieved but the XMAS AI is not destroyed, it will eventually re-arm the entire complex. Perhaps for the next holiday!



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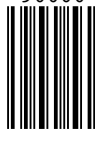


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