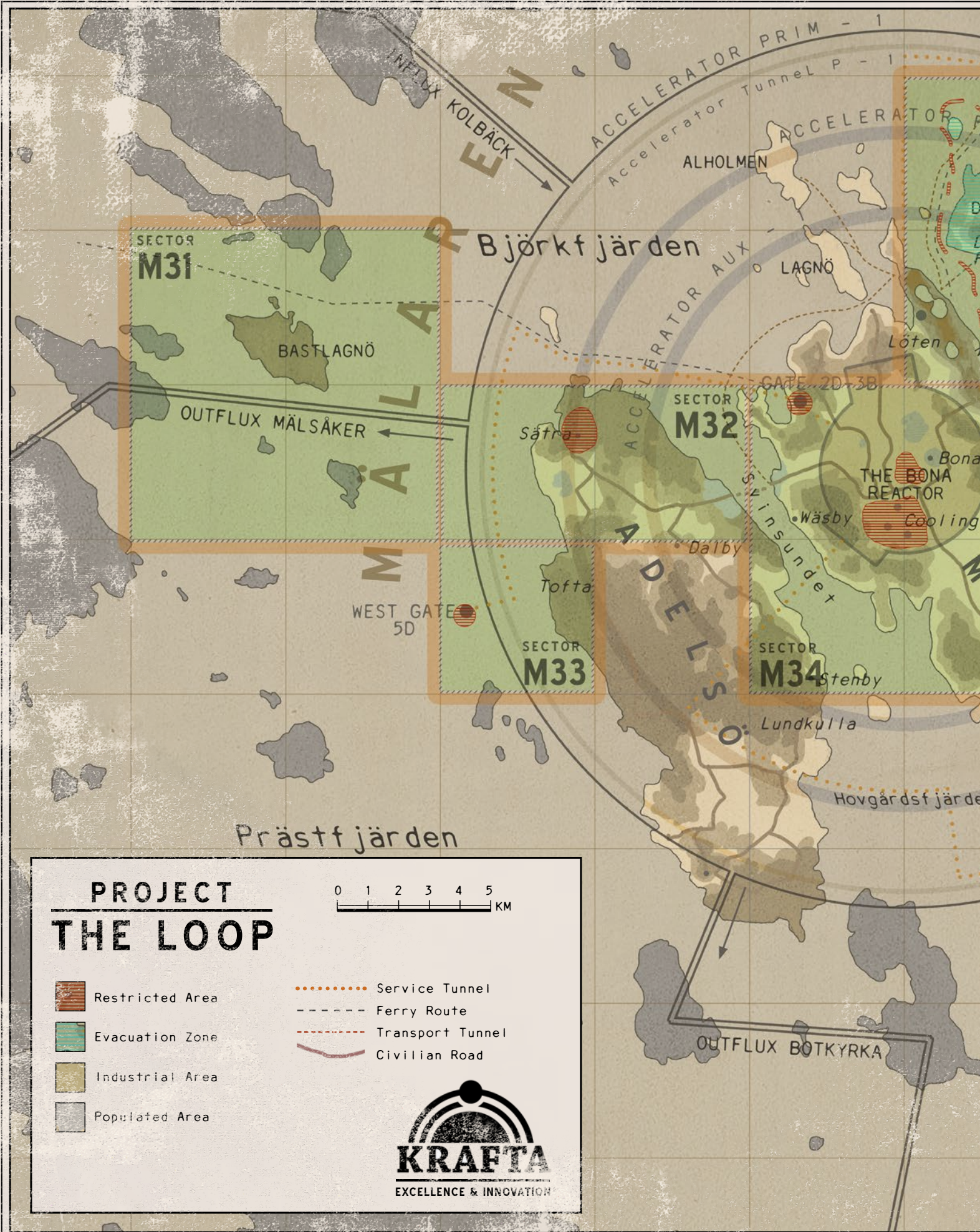


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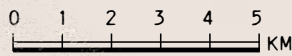
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TALES FROM THE LOOP



PROJECT THE LOOP



-  Restricted Area
-  Evacuation Zone
-  Industrial Area
-  Populated Area

-  Service Tunnel
-  Ferry Route
-  Transport Tunnel
-  Civilian Road







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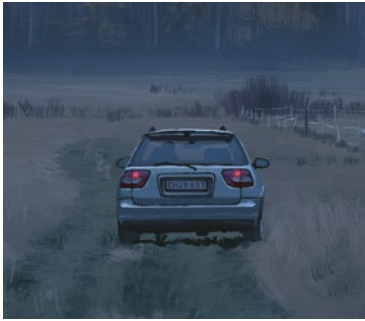
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LIFE AFTER THE FLOOD

The morning after the worst thunderstorm we'd had in years, they found my big sister Linda's classmate dead in a field on the edge of the Evacuation Zone. The police said he'd died from "blunt force trauma to the upper body." He'd been bludgeoned to death. The Mälaren Islands were overcome by grief. People spoke softer and avoided each other's eyes. The autumn winds subsided and left the leaves undisturbed on people's front lawns, a somber blanket covering the last of the summer's defiant green.



But me, my sister, and our friends didn't allow ourselves to grieve. We decided to find the killer, and make sure it never happened again. Linda suggested that we try to activate the old agribot rusting in the field near where the body was found to see if it had registered anything. Naturally, it became my job to wake up the bot.

• **GM:** *The field is muddy and your feet sink to the ankles through wet leaves and brown, rank water. You see the police line on the other side of the field, the DO NOT CROSS tape swaying slowly in the breeze. Just as you remembered, a rusting agribot sits right next to the tape. It is a quadrupod model, with two*

• *thin arms and an oblong head. A thick iron bar is attached to one of its arms. It's slumped in an awkward position, like a puppet with its strings cut.*

• **Player 1 (Linda):** *I motion to the others to stay back while I scout across the field to see if anyone's there.*

• **GM:** *Test SNEAK.*

• **Player 1:** *Three dice. I get one six – I pass!*

• **GM:** *You are the only ones here, but you see recent tracks going across the field and disappearing in between the nearby houses that were abandoned after the flood.*

• **Player 1:** *"Let's be quick, someone could show*

up at any minute.” I sigh and plunge my brand new sneakers into the mud to cross the field.

Player 2 (Linda’s brother Gustaf): When we reach the robot, I try to find a way to access its controls. I have brought my tools in my backpack.

GM: The service hatch is on the front, just below the head. After taking out the screws, you notice that the hatch has rusted, and you have to pry it open with your screwdriver. Inside, you find the service ports for the software.

Player 2: I drop my backpack on the ground, way too excited to think about the mud. I crouch down beside the pack to make sure Linda sees all my cool tools and gadgets when I open it. I really want to impress her. I pull out my homemade hacking system, plug it in, and try to boot up the unit with me controlling it.

GM: Test **TINKER**.

Player 2: I roll seven dice – but fail!

GM: You hack the system and type in the activation command but nothing happens.

Player 1: I pace around Gustaf impatiently. “Come on bro, hurry up”.

Player 2: “Damn thing’s broken or something...” I put my stuff back in the pack and rejoin the others, blushing with shame.

GM: You hear a loud creaking sound, metal against metal. You see the lights turning on in the robot’s head. It raises the arm with the iron bar high in the air and begins walking toward you.

Player 1: Damn!

GM: What do you do?

The above is an example of what might happen in the *Things from the Flood* roleplaying game. The game is a standalone sequel to *Tales from the Loop*, continuing to build on Simon Stålenhag’s wondrous world described in his books.

A roleplaying game is a conversation where you and your friends build a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. A typical story takes between three to six hours to play. Most often, you sit at a table and you need paper, pens, and at least ten six-sided dice.

CUSTOM DICE

There is a set of custom dice available for *Things from the Flood*, sold separately. These dice are not needed to play, but they support the game mechanics and are a nice addition.



STORIES FROM THE FLOOD

The stories in the game are called Mysteries. They revolve around teenagers trying to expose and stop conspiracies and threats against society, their friends and families, or themselves. The Teens are a group of friends, lovers, or siblings living on the Mälaren Islands just outside of Stockholm during the mid ‘90s. Their everyday lives are filled with endless, boring school-days and nagging parents. They are torn between still being kids and taking their first teetering steps into adolescent independence.

The Teens grew up near the Loop, an enormous underground particle accelerator constructed in the ‘60s. Their childhood was safe but full of strange and wonderful inventions such as robots and flying magnetron ships. Today, that world is fading fast. The Loop has been sold into private ownership, an economic crisis has hit Sweden, and the north parts of the Black Lake Lands have been cordoned off after mysterious brown water started rising from the ground. Masterless robots roam the woods, rumors are spreading about monsters multiplying in the Evacuation Zone, and the brown

water is said to distort both humans and machines. The safety of the Mälaren Islands is torn apart by murder, violence, and strange diseases. The Teens band together to fight against the dangers threatening their world.

ROLEPLAYING - HOW DOES IT WORK?

All players, except one, create a Teen who they will play in the story. In-game, you choose what your Teen does and says, and you tell the others what she looks like and what she thinks and feels. You should pretend to be the Teen, like an actor in a movie or a play. It is usually easier to play the Teen if you refer to the character as “me” or “I,” instead of “she” or “her.”

One of the players will be the Gamemaster (the GM). She plays all people except the Teens, and controls all creatures and machines. These are called Non-Player Characters, or NPCs. The GM also describes what everything looks like in the game, the smells and the sounds. She is responsible for making the story move forward and cutting between scenes, just like a director in a movie. The GM shouldn't decide what will happen in the story. She presents situations and puts the Teens in Trouble. The players decide how the Teens try to overcome that Trouble, and that creates the story. To support the story, the GM has a Mystery, a script that describes locations and NPCs that the Teens can encounter, and what Trouble they may need to overcome. The Mystery is only a guide, as the GM may choose to improvise and make up her own events, but she can always fall back on the Mystery when she is unsure of what to say or do.

The GM's task is clearly a bit more difficult than that of the others, but is also even more rewarding. She gets to invent NPCs twisted by the Loop Disorder, robots who believe they are humans, and scientists trying to use the contagious water for their own gain. With the help of the players, the GM describes the decaying, fantastical world of *Things from the Flood*.

The GM should cheer the Teens on, just like you do with the heroes of a movie, but at the same time put them in Trouble so that she can enjoy how they overcome it and stop the Mystery. The dangers of the Flood are very real – sometimes even fatal – but the Teens will probably be able to stop most of them.

The players and the GM take turns describing what the characters do, what the scenery looks like, and what happens. It is important that everyone gets space and time to participate. The group should listen to, and take in, each other's ideas. The story should be created together, and it's important to help one another, not compete for attention. Sometimes, situations arise where the Teens try to do something difficult. In those situations, you roll dice and let chance determine if you succeed or fail.

ROLLING DICE

The Teens have numeric ratings for what they are good at: understanding machines, fast talking, climbing trees, and running fast. The rating indicates how many six-sided dice you get to roll when trying to overcome Trouble. A six means a success. You rarely need more than one success. If you fail, you may try again, but then you risk getting hurt, upset, or scared. This is explained further in Chapter 5.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GAME

The *Things from the Flood* roleplaying game is permeated by six principles that the players and the GM will use to create stories with the right kind of feeling and plot. They are also tools to finding a way to get along, if players have different opinions about what should happen in the story or how it should be described. The principles are both guidelines and sources of inspira-

FLOODING YOUR HOMETOWN

Chapter 3 contains tips for relocating the game to your own hometown.



THE MYSTERY LANDSCAPE

An alternative way to play the game is for the GM to use the Mystery Landscape. The Mystery Landscape consists of weird or dangerous Locations spread out over the game setting. The Teens are expected to seek out the Locations and stop the dangers they encounter there. The two methods can be combined by using the pre-written Mysteriess as a part of the Mystery Landscape. Read more about the Mystery Landscape in Chapter 7.



tion for you to return to whenever you feel like it. The principles are:

1. Everything changes, everything falls apart
2. Everyday Life is full of demands, boredom, and conflict
3. The Mysteriess are exciting but dangerous, and only you can stop them
4. You are neither kids nor adults
5. The game is played scene by scene
6. The world is described collaboratively

1. EVERYTHING CHANGES, EVERYTHING FALLS APART

Everything you used to depend on is changing, tearing at the seams. The crisis has put your parents out of work and the Loop has been sold by the state-owned Riksenergi to Krafta Corp, a private corporation. The technological revolution lost its focus, and the fields are littered with rusting robots. The machine cancer causes technology to act up and break down. No one believes in a brighter tomorrow anymore.

The inhabitants of the northern Black Lake Lands have been evacuated from their homes after the Mälärö Leak, and persistent rumors blame intergalactic portal experiments, saying that the source of the water rising

from the underground tunnels of the Loop is extra-terrestrial. The water is thought to contain alien bacteria, infecting both humans and machinery. The walls between this world and others are coming down. People say that those who used to work in the Loop tunnels are plagued by feelings of hopelessness and other strange thoughts.

Regardless of the cause – alien bacteria, Loop Disorder, or financial hardship – it is a cold fact that the inhabitants of the Mälaren Islands are beginning to act in weird and unpredictable ways. Your neighbor's wife has filled the living room with TV sets to gaze into other dimensions, your math teacher claims to be able to communicate with rocks, and one of your friends says that singing butterflies with sharp stingers visit her in her dreams at night.

The dangers and threats of the outside world have finally reached the Islands. People talk about strange deaths and disappearances, and no one can keep track of the number of stolen or escaped robots in the area. Riding your bike home after dark doesn't feel safe anymore.

Nothing is permanent in the Teens' world. Relationships end, unlikely friendships blossom, and teachers fail to show up to class. Unemployed parents sink into depression and stop getting up in the mornings. The Teens are forced to look after the household and their younger siblings.

2. EVERYDAY LIFE IS FULL OF DEMANDS, BOREDOM, AND CONFLICT

Your parents' expectations are impossible to live up to. The teen magazines are full of beauty ideals that make you ashamed of your body. Your boyfriend has begun implying that he can't wait much longer for you to go all the way. Your classmates think you're someone you're not. The news is full of images of war, starvation, and natural disasters. The adults say you can be anything, do anything, and you try your best to hide the fact that this has you paralyzed with fear. On top of this, you are your own worst enemy, expecting the impossible from yourself in all situations.

You have run out of things to talk about on the bus ride home from school. Math homework is an endless empty highway of meaningless repetition. If your dad serves cauliflower one more time, you will literally



throw up on the table. You long for something, anything, to happen.

Your parents are the only couple you know that hasn't gotten a divorce, but they fight all the time – with each other or with you and your siblings. At school, old friends fall out, relationships end, and cheating leads to fist-fights behind the gym. You boil with rage without direction, and your lashing out has landed you in detention and your best friend is no longer speaking to you.

Every now and then, life is pretty good, though – like when there's a party for example, and everyone from the Islands is there. These glimpses of joy are of-

ten cut short, however, by the cops showing up to shut the party down, resulting in long conversations with your parents the morning after, and endless curfews.

3. THE MYSTERIES ARE EXCITING BUT DANGEROUS, AND ONLY YOU CAN STOP THEM

Out there beyond your everyday lives, the world is changing, and new people and creatures are coming to the Islands. You yearn for freedom and new experiences, but it won't come without a price. In the bike tunnel near the brook, someone has sprayed a long line of skulls on the wall, one for every person that has disappeared, and



your friends say that the bodies of missing cats and dogs have been nailed to trees in the Evacuation Zone. Shady figures are hiding in the abandoned house by the church, and you are all haunted by nightmares. The adults are too focused on their own problems and conflicts to see that everything they thought was solid and safe is falling apart around them. It's up to you and your friends to expose and stop the forces that threaten you, even if it changes, scars, or even kills you.

4. YOU ARE NEITHER KIDS NOR ADULTS

You sometimes wish you could go back to being a kid, snuggled up in your mother's arms, and hearing her whisper that it'll all be okay. At the same time, you hate being treated like a baby, not old enough to make your own decisions. Your body is changing and you don't know who you are anymore. You've had your first period and there is new hair growing all over you. Your voice is changing and you are full of

hormones and emotions. You're angry, horny, tired, happy, and ashamed of everything all the time – of yourself, your dumb parents, and your stupid siblings. More than anything, you just wanna be someone else, someplace else.

5. THE GAME IS PLAYED SCENE BY SCENE

The Mysteryss are played out scene by scene, just like in a movie. After the Teens are done hanging out at the schoolyard, you cut right to them meeting up with their friends at the kiosk, instead of playing through everything that happens between leaving the school and arriving at the kiosk. Skip the boring or less important parts.

In this game, the GM "sets" the scenes, usually with help from the players. Setting a scene means starting it and determining when it ends. As the GM, you can always ask the players for guidance when you feel unsure about how to proceed. When setting a scene yourself, it could look something like this:



• *It is still dark out when you're woken up by a loud clanging from the kitchen, like someone dropping a pan on the floor. After that, everything becomes very quiet. What do you do?*

You could also let the players suggest scenes of their own, for example taking turns setting every other scene. It might look something like this:

• **GM:** *Does anyone have a scene?*
Player 1 (Linda): *I want to talk to my mom to see what she knows about the androids that have been seen around town.*
GM: *Your mother sits in her usual spot on the bench outside the grocery store. She hides a bottle between her feet and looks at the birds bringing food to their nests in the birch tree by the fountain. She waves and smiles when she spots you.*

6. THE WORLD IS DESCRIBED COLLABORATIVELY

As the GM, you are responsible for setting scenes and telling the story, but you don't necessarily have to do it all on your own. Ask your players for help: what does their school look like? What's the weather like? Why are the neighbors fighting all the time?

Alternatively, you could direct your questions straight at the Teens: what exactly is it that you find odd about the woman in the next house? How do you feel about your mom? What are you thinking about, how do you feel? What did you do to make her hate you? By querying the players and their Teens, you bring the game world alive together. If the players come up with a levitating school and ghostbuster parents, however, remind them about the mundane nature of their lives, and make them come up with new answers. As the GM, you have the final say.

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THE LOOP IN A NEW TIME

Sweden was leaving the era of big government projects. The decaying facilities and machines had been taken over by new developers who welded doors shut and wrapped machines in plastic, and who wanted to exploit the land for new uses. Radio towers rose above the woods behind the houses and, in the glades, humming new data centers melted ice and snow. Somewhere out there beyond the cordons, beyond the fields and marshes, abandoned machines roamed like stray dogs. They wandered about impatiently, restless in the new wind sweeping through the country. They smelled something in the air, something unfamiliar.



Things from the Flood is set in a time of great upheaval. An era of progress and optimism is coming to its end. East and West are merging. The Berlin Wall is torn down, and the Soviet Union collapses. The news speaks of a financial crisis in Sweden, concentration camps in the Balkans, and school shootings in the U.S.

On MTV, Nirvana sing about antipsychotic medication, Kenny is murdered over and over again on *South Park*, and *Twin Peaks* shows the world a twisted version of itself, where innocence meets brutality. The great external enemy is dead, and new threats are emerging from within society itself.

The '90s are the decade when youth finally triumphs over adulthood. The teenager becomes the focal

point of the consumer markets. Posters of young superstars cover the walls of teen rooms across the world. The adult world can no longer provide a relevant moral compass. MTV's *Real World* steps up to the plate.

The new freedom leads to insecurity and anxiety. The struggle to create an identity that others will accept intensifies. Many turn to their musical heroes for guidance, and dividing people into us and them creates a sense of community. Some listen to britpop, some to grunge. Many join the environmental movement, others explore New Age spiritualism. Far-right extremist and neo-Nazi groups grow, and many of the new members are teens or young adults. The Internet's first chat rooms gather young people from around the globe.

The technological revolution grinds to a halt during the '90s in *Tales from the Flood*. Magnettrine ships, robots, and particle accelerators turn out to be less reliable than advertised - sometimes even dangerous. New technologies take over. Home computer sales and the birth of the Internet usher in a new age. Globalization becomes an irrevocable fact.

Governmental functions are privatized, as is much scientific research. The nation state's job of improving the lives of its citizens is deprioritized in favor of competing for profits in the global markets. The '90s in *Tales from the Flood* are the painful crossroads between what used to be and what is coming.

AN ALTERNATE '90S

The '90s in this game is not quite the decade you remember. Forty years of steady technological advancement has created a world that's quite different from ours. Robots have taken over many areas of society previously handled by humans: heavy industry, warfare, mining, and handling of dangerous chemicals. Enormous gauss freighters traverse the globe, thanks to the wonders of the magnettrine effect. If the rumors are to be believed, human ingenuity has already developed technologies that bend and dissolve spacetime.

Much is the way you remember it, however. A Discman with a belt clip lets you spin the Spice Girls' first CD wherever you go. High waist jeans are all the rage, and wearing a short sleeve shirt over a long sleeve shirt is the way to go. Dial-up modems squeal in every home. The school library computers are used primarily for online dating.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TECH-AGE

The '90s mark the end of a great leap forward for the technologies of mankind. The future the people were promised - interstellar colonization, butler-bots in every home, and teleportation - never came.

The machines break down. Robots, particle accelerators, and magnettrine ships are dismantled and decommissioned. At the turn of the millennium, not much remains of the old technology. Increasingly

powerful computers and networks connect the world. Tomorrow's technology is no longer in the hands of the grown-up world - it's controlled by you and other Teens.

THE BEGINNING

Toward the end of the Second World War, Russian scientists discovered the magnettrine effect. The breakthrough allowed enormously heavy ships to fly through the sky, utilizing the Earth's natural magnetic field. Slow but reliable magnettrine ships became an increasingly common sight over the coming decades, primarily carrying heavy cargo across the northern hemisphere, where the effect is stronger than in the south.

In the '50s, the world's first particle accelerator was constructed in Boulder City, Nevada. The machine - said to be the result of a failed military research program - changed the world. "High energy physics" research leads to a series of ground-breaking inventions, of which only a few ever make it outside the laboratory doors, however. The scientific community woke up to a world where nothing seemed impossible.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency - or DARPA, for short - oversaw the Boulder City accelerator. The facility's underground tunnels were connected to the nearby Hoover Dam power plant, providing an almost limitless supply of electricity.

In the '60s in Sweden, the government launched Riksenergi, an agency responsible for the construction and operation of what was to become the world's largest particle accelerator. The complex, nicknamed "the Loop", was located on the Mälaren Islands west of Stockholm, and opened in 1969. The Loop quickly turned Adelsö into northern Europe's scientific capital in many areas of research, and scientists from across the world moved to Stockholm to live a mere bus ride away from the cutting edge of modernity.

Also in the '60s, the Japanese Iwasaka corporation developed the first self-balancing machines - those which you and I call robots. Predictions had robots replacing human labor in a matter of years. Most nations investigate the possibility of developing robots for warfare. No one wishes to fall behind, as the greatest economic and scientific race in modern times begins. The Soviet Union are the first to develop robots with artificial intelligence, AI.

MAGNETRINE SHIPS

The principles behind magnetrine propulsion are fairly simple. Loaded magnetrine discs on the bottom of the hull counteract the Earth's natural magnetic field, suspending the ship in the air. By changing the direction of the discs, the pilot gains maneuverability. Most magnetrine ships are large freighters. The largest models are powered by nuclear reactors.

Large enough ships - called gauss freighters - disrupt the magnetic fields around them, which affects nearby electronics. They therefore stay clear of populated areas.



THE GOLDEN AGE

The fruits of the new technologies were reaped during the '70s and '80s. The lives of ordinary people aren't affected to any great extent, but revolutionary changes happen within many industries - transportation, warfare, mining, and science, primarily.

The self-balancing machines became capable of performing increasingly complex tasks. Several important breakthroughs in the AI field were achieved in the late '80s. The critics said that science is moving too fast. Robots were allegedly running away from their masters and security companies specializing in runaway retrieval blossomed. They tracked down and brought the runaways home, where they were mind-wiped and put back to work, often with mutilated neurological centers.

The slow but cheap and reliable magnetrine fleets grew in the northern hemisphere. They enabled extensive mining in Greenland, in northern Siberia, and in northern Canada. The ships were too clumsy for personal transportation, however, which was still dominated by cars, trains, and airplanes.

Bold innovations in architecture and construction change the skylines of many cities around the world, the biggest change being the vertical city concept that exploded in the '60s. These gigantic constructions rise hundreds of meters above the ground, and have room for between one and fifteen thousand residents. The oil crises of the '70s put an end to the trend, however. Apart from being vastly expensive to build, the vertical cities are now thought to segregate the population and lead to rising crime.

Many of the breakthroughs realized by the governmental agencies running the particle accelerators never reach the public. Rumors speak about successful teleportation experiments and contact with intelligent extraterrestrial life. Some claim to have seen prehistoric animals brought back to life, and the scientists have apparently mastered the knowledge of mankind's genes. To most people, the research installations where the world of tomorrow is being forged are no more than strange towers and fenced-off airfields on the periphery of everyday life.

THE FLOOD

The dreams of a brighter future are crushed at the beginning of the '90s. A crippling economic crisis ravages the West at the same time as one technological marvel after another begins to falter. It all begins on the Mälaren Islands, just before the Christmas of 1994. The inhabitants of the northern part of Färingsö - commonly known as the Black Lake Lands - watch in shock as hot, brown water rises from the ground, flooding basements and garages. In a matter of hours, fields and forests are turned into marshland.

A catastrophic leak has occurred somewhere in Loop tunnels below the island. The Swedish emergency readiness agency evacuates the residents of the northern part of the island. Over a few chaotic days, magnetrine ships transport the evacuees and their personal effects to temporary quarters on the south side of the island.

The temporary relocation after the leak eventually lasts for over three years. The flooded, northern part of the island is dubbed the Evacuation Zone, and ALTA Quadraped warbots are stationed there to guard the perimeter.

The leak, although localized to the northern part of Färingsö, affects the entire Loop. The tunnels are

gradually flooded, and thirty years of data are at stake.

The incident, referred to as the “Mälärö Leak” or the “Loop Scandal” in the media, causes the government to disband Riksenergi. A private corporation, Krafta, buys the Loop for a pittance and negotiates a government contract for sanitizing the area and saving as much data as possible. Despite much inquiry into the matter, the cause behind the leak is never determined.

THE HOOVER DAM DISASTER

Two major disasters dominate the news in the mid-'90s: the Loop Scandal, and the so-called Hoover Dam Disaster. On a dark February night in 1995, a deafening rumble echoes across the desert from the mouth of the Colorado River - the dam has collapsed. The U.S. particle accelerator is connected to the power plant at the dam, and therefore flooded in a matter of hours. Over thirty scientists at the Loop drown.

Most Americans believe that the disaster was caused by terrorists. Skeptics point out the fact that no explosive residue was found at the dam, however, and no terrorist group credibly claims to have carried out the attack.

A complicating circumstance is the fact that the water filling the American Loop has the same temperature and brownish gray color as the water rising from the ground in Sweden. Some say that the two Loops are connected via some form of portal, teleporting the water from one Loop to the other. This theory blames

the dam breaking on water coming from the Loop, rather than the other way around.

The fallout after the Hoover Dam Disaster is devastating. The area around southern Lake Mead is turned into a huge swamp. Houses in northern Boulder City are flooded. Heavy buildings start to sink into the mud. The local economy crashes, after many employees at the Loop or the dam lose their jobs.

From an international perspective, the two disasters lead to a decline in people's trust in particle accelerators and the stability of society as a whole

THE MACHINE CANCER

A couple of months after the Mälärö Leak, the so-called machine cancer starts to spread. Robots near the Swedish Loop become unreliable, getting stuck in repetitive series of actions or deviating from their core programming. Meaty lumps and tentacles form on their bodies. Some stop working altogether. The cancer soon spreads to the area surrounding Boulder City, and eventually to the rest of the world. Robots are rounded up and scrapped by the thousands.

The scientists studying the cancer are able to determine that the growths develop inside the units' artificial nervous system. Krafta Corp have recently begun using an experimental, synthetic wax to enhance conductivity in robotic nerve fibers, which may be behind the disease. The discovery of the potential source of the problem comes too late, however - production of self-balancing machines plummets worldwide, and

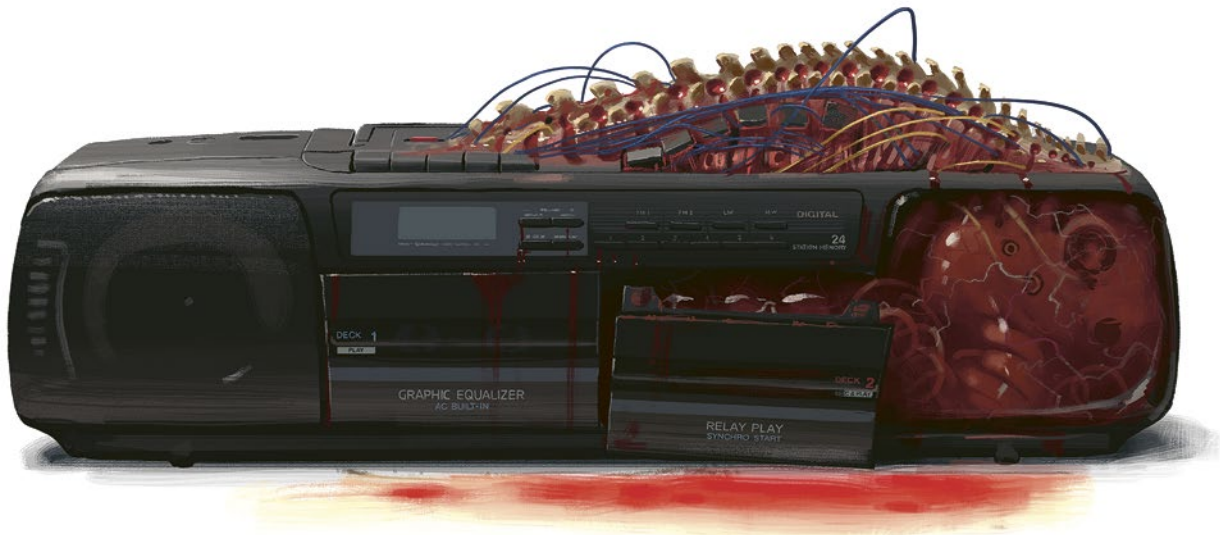
THE TRUTH BEHIND THE MACHINE CANCER

Internet forums and obscure magazines are awash with alternate explanations for the machine cancer and two Loop floodings. The speculations never reach the mainstream media, however, which leads many to believe that a cover-up has been orchestrated. The heads of the largest news networks and newspapers say that urban myths and campfire stories have no place in serious news coverage, however.

The alternate explanation with the most traction claims that the machine cancer comes from the distant planet 51 Pegasi B, and that it's connected to the Mälärö Leak. Scientists at the Swedish Loop

are blamed for having opened a portal to another planet. 51 Pegasi B is an ocean planet where life exists as single molecules forming larger organisms via telepathic communication. A portal allows the water from Pegasi to enter the Loop, bringing with it the parasitic molecules. Machines and robots become their perfect host bodies.

Many believers in the alternative explanations hoard purified water, waterproof diving suits, and - for some reason - harpoons. In the city of Guigang, China, about a hundred people barricade themselves inside an enormous aquarium. The authorities say



many manufacturers file for bankruptcy. Many industries return to entirely mechanical machines controlled by humans and computers. People stop believing in a future where mankind and robots live side by side. In hindsight, the whole affair becomes known as the Krafta Debacle, and the ensuing barrage of lawsuits leads to Krafta Corp's dissolution.

THE RUSSIAN AI POGROMS

In the USSR, the legacy of having birthed many notable science fiction writers fuels the population's belief in experimental technology. Discoveries made by the Soviet space program lead to huge leaps forward in the field of artificial intelligence. At the end of the '80s,

there are more sentient self-balancing machines in the USSR than in any other country. Many of them are heavily armed warbots.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly independent states grapple for control over as much of the army's weapons and resources as possible. Several nations get their hands on nuclear weapons. Many warbots go missing.

In the fall of 1993, a group of robots announce their independence as a sovereign nation, and claim an area northeast of the Urals as their own. They call themselves Polnaya Solidarnost or Polnaya Nation, and demand to have their rights affirmed by the UN. The president of Russia warns other nations not to in-

that they have been brainwashed by their leader, the charismatic Zhang Li. After 102 days of isolation, the group blasts a hole in the aquarium wall. The force of the escaping water pulls the divers toward the sharp edges of the hole, resulting in twelve casualties. Zhang Li is imprisoned, but continues to preach.

Many former employees at the Loop claim that the flooding was intentionally orchestrated to displace the population of the Black Lake Lands. After draining the labs again, Krafta Corp's scientists secretly went back to work on extreme genetics exper-

iments. The machine cancer is a field test of a recent breakthrough.

The March 1996 issue of the Swedish comic book Cold Steel contains The Piguin Threat, a story about secret agents using underground portals in the Loop to repel an alien invasion. The machine cancer is a biological weapon developed by mankind to wipe out a more advanced species threatening to conquer Earth. The story spreads like wildfire and people soon forget that it originated in a comic book. Toward the end of the decade, many teens go out into the night to look for the Piguins' luminescent gas balloons.



terfere with domestic Russian politics. Polnaya Nation is wiped out in a tactical nuke strike soon after.

A few scattered robots survive and form the Ypok terrorist group, fighting for the rights of the android population. In November of 1993, a group of warbots attempt to storm the Bolshoi theatre to take hostages but are defeated. About ten humans are injured in the crossfire, however, and the incident sparks a national wave of hatred toward self-balancing machines. The Russian government institutes a complete ban on AI, and deploys the army to round up and destroy all sentient machines.

The AI pogroms lead to the capture and destruction of thousands of robots. Very few manage to escape, some of those who do wander west and end up in Scandinavia. Yet others receive help from human sympathizers, and are hidden on boats that take them to other parts of the world.

LOOP DISORDER

The term is first coined by freelance journalist Elisabeth “Loopy” Rammerdahl when she was only 21 years old. She comes into contact with a group of doctors studying the epidemic of suicides that plagues the

Mälaren Islands and Stockholm. The team have found that many former employees at the Loop go through personality changes when they leave. Some become introverted and depressed, while others gamble away all of their money, get divorced, or quit their new jobs. Many claim to see or hear things others can't.

Loopy presents her findings in a series of articles in Dagens Nyheter, a major Swedish newspaper. Her articles spread quickly across the world, and she comes into contact with a group of activists in Boulder City via the Internet. The activists say that the same thing is happening in Nevada, and invite Loopy to the U.S. to speak about her findings. Renowned lawyers draft lawsuits against the Swedish and American governments.

Shortly after Loopy's arrival in the U.S., she disappears. Some say that she has been murdered, others that her computer has been stolen. It purportedly contains proof that she has falsified evidence, and upon realizing that she will be found out, she went into hiding.

Regardless of what really happened to Elisabeth Rammerdahl, the public debate quickly turns around after her disappearance. The doctors from the original research group can no longer find any connections between the Loop and the changes in former employees. Loop Disorder is dismissed as psychosomatic, and compared to electromagnetic hypersensitivity.

The term lives on, however. People worrying about radiation from microwave ovens or cellphones keep Loop Disorder alive in the national vocabulary, and weird behavior in general becomes known as "going loopy".

THE CLEAN-UP OF '98

Toward the end of the '90s, the Swedish authorities have had it with stray robots, abandoned experimental tech, chemical spills, and telescopes listening to outer space. The Mälaren Islands are to be cleaned up.

In October of 1998, after over a year of massive spending, the last trace of the Loop is gone. The last robots are hunted down, the buildings are demolished, and the underground tunnels are filled with steel fiber concrete. The enormous radio telescopes are dismantled and sold off, the marshlands are drained, and new front lawns are rolled out. Financial aid from the state allows the evacuees to move back to northern Färingsö and repair their homes. The age of the Loop has come to an end.

THE POLE SHIFT

Cheaper airplane and boat transportation put pressure on the magnetron fleets all through the '90s, but it's a natural phenomenon that delivers the fatal blow.

In February 2001, a pole shift occurs overnight. The magnetic fields of the northern and southern hemispheres switch places. Like so many other events from the 20th century, the pole shift is never really understood. The scientific community speculate about the Earth having passed into an alternate reality, or that aliens have attempted to invade the planet. The people of the new millennium aren't interested in explanations from the thinkers of yesterday, however. The cold fact of the matter is that the magnetron ships are gone for good.

Like a majestic reminder of the days of old, thousands of rusting vessels cluster together and float slowly over the northern hemisphere. The ships become known as the Death Belt.

THE NEW WORLD

In the final years of the 20th century, old technologies die and give way to new ones. The Internet is born. Computers increase in strength many hundreds of times, and can soon be found in almost every home. The experimental and fantastical leave the world of robotics and move into circuit boards and networks. The first AI networks inside computer programs see the light of day at the end of the '90s. When connected to larger clusters of computers, multi-locational forms of artificial life are born.

Young, self-taught scientists hide subliminal messages in computer games. The first virtual worlds are created. Many of the things dreamed of in the '80s are said to have been realized thanks to the microchip revolution. People say that secret chat rooms on the Internet let you contact people from other times, or speak with alien lifeforms, but this kind of talk is obviously dismissed by the grown-up world. You and your friends know that a new day is dawning, however.

TEENS AND TECHNOLOGY

The dynamics between the young and the old come to mirror the polar shift at the turn of the millennium. The Internet ushers in a new world - your world. The adults can't see what is happening, or aren't able to



TEN TV SHOWS

1. The X-Files
2. Twin Peaks
3. Beverly Hills 90210
4. Baywatch
5. Dawson's Creek
6. Ricki Lake
7. The Real World
8. Beavis and Butt-head
9. Seinfeld
10. The Simpsons



comprehend it. You have to show them how to use a mouse or click an icon, if they even bother to try. Most of them are too busy with their own crises, however - divorces, lost savings, or lay-offs frame the final setting of the sun of the old world.

SWEDEN IN THE '90S

Despite the fantastical inventions found throughout the world of *Tales from the Loop*, the '90s in the game are almost identical to ours. The same world-defining events occur, people dress the same, and chew the same gum.



The '90s in Sweden are a time of great change. The attempts of the social democratic party to build a society on the fence between communism and capitalism break down. The politics of the new age are heavily influenced by neo-liberal ideas, and societal inequality increases greatly. Sweden joins the European Union.

The economic crisis in the early '90s leads to widespread poverty, debt accumulation, and mass unemployment. New laws enable private companies to enter industries to which they have previously been denied access. Getting a loan from the bank becomes much easier, but political decisions made by the government

TEN MOVIES

1. Pulp Fiction
2. Jurassic Park
3. Titanic
4. Seven
5. Schindler's List
6. Fight Club
7. Romeo + Juliet
8. The Lion King
9. Independence Day
10. The Blair Witch Project



MAKE THE FANTASTICAL UNPREDICTABLE

Many fantastical inventions in *Tales from the Loop* are part of everyday life for the Teens - they have all seen robots and magnettrine ships on TV, and read about the Loop in school. Very few have come close to a robot in real life, however, or been aboard a magnettrine ship. Much of the tech invented at the Loop is completely unknown to the general public, and will be gobsmacking to the Teens as well.

The old tech is no longer reliable, however, although it takes a while before it becomes noticeable. A lawnmower bot chews a hole in the grass instead of cutting it. Magnettrine ships from the north pole appear over Färingsö without responding to hails. The old world is slowly but surely falling apart. As a close friend is (literally) consumed by a new video game, robots run amok at your high school. Nothing can be trusted, the grown-ups least of all. The Teens are alone in an unpredictable world.



make it very expensive to be in debt. Many people's household economies become trapped in a downward spiral. The labor unions start to lose power. New TV channels deliver more and more ads to Swedish consumers.

No decade before or after the '90s has such high crime rates. The adult world blames movies and video games for creating a violent culture among teenagers. A highly publicized murder in the south of Sweden leads to attempts to censor certain movies and comic books, which fail. Despite the high crime rates, access to firearms is scarce. Hunting rifles can be found in many homes in the countryside, but they require licenses, and must be kept locked inside special lockers.

The news is focused on the war in the Balkans. Refugees from bombed-out cities or concentration camps arrive in Sweden via Germany. NATO launches a bombing campaign against Serbian troops, and Swedish politicians travel to Bosnia to negotiate a ceasefire.

In September of 1994, the passenger ferry Estonia sinks during a storm while enroute from Tallinn to Stockholm. Almost a thousand people drown. The disaster becomes a very personal wound for most Swedes.

The neo-liberal, populist New Democracy party enters the Swedish parliament after the elections of 1991. They attract voters by playing on xenophobia and feelings of distrust toward the established political parties. The party founders, Ian and Bert, promise to "jump-start" change in society.

SCIENTIFIC DISASTERS

1993

A GROUP OF RUSSIAN AI ROBOTS DECLARE AN INDEPENDENT NATION. They are wiped out by the army. After an android terrorist attack in Moscow, AI is outlawed. Robots are persecuted throughout Russia. Most are caught and destroyed, but some make it out of the country.

1994

NORTHERN FÄRINGSÖ IN THE MÄLAREN ISLANDS IS EVACUATED AFTER WATER FROM THE UNDERGROUND LOOP TUNNELS FLOOD THE ISLAND. Thirty years of research data risk

being lost. The government Riksenergi agency, responsible for the Loop, is dissolved, and its assets sold to Krafta Corp.

1995

THE HOOVER DAM AT THE MOUTH OF THE COLORADO RIVER COLLAPSES. Water floods the desert as well as the U.S. Loop connected to the dam. Thirty scientists drown.

1995

ROBOTS IN THE MÄLAREN ISLANDS DEVELOP STRANGE GROWTHS AND PECULIAR BEHAVIORS. The so-called ma-

The predictable status quo between East and West that has been in effect since the end of the Second World War is crumbling. The USSR collapses. Many hope for peace in their time. Russia's new president, Boris Yeltsin, is showered in praise, but the nation's economy crashes. A war with the neighboring splinter republic of Chechnya breaks out, and rumors say that Yeltsin is an alcoholic. In Sweden, the brooding fear of aggression from the east turns into something less definable but equally scary. A new world is in the making.

RACISM, MURDER AND RESISTANCE

The nation witnesses an upsurge in right-wing extremism and fascism. Government housing for refugees from the Balkans is burned to the ground. "The Laser Man" – whose real name is John Ausonius – preys on immigrants with a rifle equipped with a laser sight, wounding or killing eleven people in the Stockholm area. When apprehended by the police, he says he hates immigrants. A fourteen-year-old boy dies after being kicked in the head by four neo-Nazis for seven minutes, and then thrown into a lake. When questioned by the police about the murder, the Nazis say that the boy refused to say that he loved Nazism. Labor union man Björn Söderberg is murdered after exposing a Nazi infiltrator in his organization.

Right-wing populist and neo-Nazi organizations take to the streets to "keep Sweden Swedish". Sweden becomes the leading nation for white power music. Nazis in uniforms or bomber jackets fill the concert venues. Immigrants or "suspicious-looking" Swedes are target-

ed at school or in the street late at night. Neo-Nazi "fag-bashers" are on the prowl. Posters celebrating the German concentration camps can be seen in many Swedish towns, put up with glue mixed with crushed glass to prevent people from tearing them down.

In response to the growing far-right movement, a series of large anti-fascist demonstrations gathers thousands of young people in the early '90s. Anti-fascist violence grows. Many youngsters who aren't interested in fighting stay at home. Toward the turn of the millennium, the demonstrators are counted in the hundreds rather than the thousands. The media treat the fighting between Nazis and anti-fascists as "show-downs", where no innocents get hurt.

TEENS IN SWEDEN

The '90s are the decade when the young generation finally and completely escapes the control of their parents. Teenagers become independent individuals. You live in a world which the adults neither understand nor have access to. New TV channels such as MTV and ZTV deliver teen culture into every Swedish home. The very first reality show comes to Sweden via MTV. At school, everyone talks about *Beverly Hills* and *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. Keeping up with the latest music videos is vital for social status.

The humor of the '90s is black and peculiar. The teens are referred to as the "Ironic Generation". The *Hassan* radio show and the Killinggänget ("The Lamb Gang") comedy group ridicule the adult, the moralizing, and the pretentious. Nothing is serious anymore.

chine cancer spreads across the world. It is later determined that a new type of nerve lubricant is to blame for the disease.

1990-1996

FREELANCE JOURNALIST ELISABETH "LOOPY" RAMMERDAHL COINS THE TERM "LOOP DISORDER". She compiles a list of reports from doctors indicating that former Loop employees suffer from changes in their personalities or become depressed. Her claims are disputed and she disappears or goes into hiding.

1998

A SERIES OF LAWSUITS HIT KRAFTA CORP IN THE WAKE OF THE MACHINE CANCER. The company goes bankrupt. The Swedish government cleans up the Mälaren Islands, and all traces of the Loop are gone a year later. The tunnels are filled with concrete, the robots taken away, and the evacuated residents are allowed to move back.

2001

THE MAGNETIC POLE SHIFT HERALDS THE END OF THE MAGNETRINE FLEETS.

Few teenagers are politically active. Having the right clothes, stuff, and pop culture references are much more important.

At the beginning of the decade, computer access is limited. Even though the home computer markets blow up during the '90s, information is primarily sought out in books. The infant Internet contains only a fraction of what it does today. To access the web, one must turn on one's modem, patiently wait for it to squeal and beep, and for the screen to slowly fill up with text and images. As soon as Mom or Dad carelessly picks up the phone in the next room, you're disconnected.

Cell phones are simple and not very common. Each text costs a fortune. Snake is one of the few available cell phone games. In it, you control a snake trying to eat undefinable dots on a black-and-white screen without colliding with your own tail.

CDs replace vinyl records, and the DVD is introduced toward the end of the decade. This makes bootlegged movies, albums, and computer games more common. Cameras are still analog, and require you to

have the film developed before you get your pictures.

Education is free. The first nine years are compulsory, after which follows an optional three extra years of high school.

Teens wear hooded sweatshirts and dungarees. Jeans are pulled up high. Those who listen to grunge music wear torn jeans, plaid, preferably oversized shirts and short sleeved t-shirts over long sleeved ones. In some places, the girls wear crop tops, stretch jeans, jazz pants, or Adidas sweatpants. Choker necklaces are popular, along with lip gloss and Buffalo shoes. Showing people what brand you're wearing is important.

TV AND THE MEDIA

During the '90s, more and more young people want a career "in the media". New, hip TV channels like ZTV, TV3, and MTV come to Sweden, bringing with them commercial breaks, something the Swedish state television doesn't have. A new generation of young TV hosts shape the times with ironic wit, edgy clothes, and cocky attitudes.



Swedish soap operas become immensely popular. Every Wednesday, thousands of people are glued to the screen to watch the newest episode of *Tre Kronor* (“Three Crowns”). Shows like *Rederiet* (“High Seas”), *Skilda världar* (“Worlds apart”), and *Vita lögnen* (“White Lies”) are also very popular.

Swedish reality TV is introduced toward the end of the decade. The first major show is *Expedition Robinson*, a Survivor-type show where a group of people split into two teams have to survive on a deserted island by competing for resources. Each week’s losing team has to vote one of their members out. The media scolds the show as “primetime bullying”, but the sensational headlines it creates makes it all the more popular.

FEMINISM

Feminism rises out of relative obscurity during the '90s. On national TV, leading politicians are forced to answer whether or not they are feminists. Current events are debated within the feminist movements - can “Girl Power” à la Spice Girls be feminism? The American philosopher Judith Butler questions the link between sex and gender. In cafeterias and classrooms across the nation, the topics of the day are women’s rights, rape culture, and the collective guilt of men for gender inequality.

NEW AGE

Internationally, the New Age movement had its heyday in the '80s, but it maintains a strong foothold in Sweden during the '90s. Gemstones are thought to harbor mystical powers. The believers dress in Batik clothing, and listen to spiritual music. In Stockholm, one can purchase dreamcatchers and attend guardian angel courses.

GRUNGE, BOY BANDS, AND RAVES

Teens invent themselves through their taste in music. Fans of grunge music - a rock scene primarily associated with Seattle in the USA - dress in layers of oversized clothes. They cultivate a bleak view of the world, write suicidal poetry, and look for the dark, weird, and authentic aspects of life.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, one finds the boy and girl bands with their hugely popular, easy-going chart-toppers. Posters of the Spice Girls, Destiny’s Child, New Kids on the Block, and Take That can be found in the rooms of many Swedish teens.

TEN SONGS

1. Smells Like Teen Spirit - Nirvana (1991)
2. Zombie - The Cranberries (1994)
3. Wonderwall - Oasis (1995)
4. Wannabe - Spice Girls (1996)
5. No Diggity - Blackstreet (1996)
6. Firestarter - The Prodigy (1997)
7. Waterfalls - TLC (1995)
8. The Sign - Ace of Base (1993)
9. Electric - Leila K (1995)
10. Wu-Tang Clan Ain't Nuthing ta F' Wit - Wu-Tang Clan (1993)



The hip hop scene is growing fast at the beginning of the '90s. The Latin Kings' *Welcome to the Hood* record takes the nation by storm. Swedish teens dress like rappers from New York or Los Angeles.

The adult world’s latest moral panic concerns rave culture. Suddenly, teenagers are flocking to secret parties in abandoned warehouses or in the woods to dance all night to trance music. Many believe the parties to be synonymous with LSD and other psychedelic drug use. The ravers wear phat pants and shirts that reflect the UV rays from the party’s light show.

Sweden has a publicly funded music school for kids and teenagers, making it easy and cheap to allow your kids to learn how to play a musical instrument. Many teenagers form their own bands, or join the school band. Others sit at home with their electric guitars, learning riffs to perfection from the latest music videos.

THE MÄLAREN ISLANDS - PEACEFUL ISOLATION

Despite the fact that the Loop on Munsö is the starting point for many world-altering events in the '90s, the Mälaren Islands remain a sleepy, peripheral suburb. Many Islanders commute to jobs in Stockholm.

W 621-42



PROJECT THE LOOP

0 1 2 3 4 5 KM

- Restricted Area
- Evacuation Zone
- Industrial Area
- Populated Area
- Service Tunnel
- Ferry Route
- Transport Tunnel
- Civilian Road





The houses are made of wood, and spread out in small communities separated by farmland and forests. Birch, pine, and oak line the roads. The blue waters of Lake Mälaren are always near.

The Islands are something halfway between countryside and city. Many small farms can be found throughout the Islands, as well as a handful of schools, a few malls, and an 18th century mansion. Except for the Loop employees, most Islanders are regular “Svenssons” - white-collar, middle class.

GETTING AROUND

Most Teens get around the Islands the same way they did when they were kids: the legal driving age is eighteen, and very few have access to their own car before they find steady jobs. Bikes, mopeds, and EPA tractors - farming tractors or cars converted for low speeds - are common. The legal speed limit for mopeds and EPAs is 30 km/h, but tuning your engine and avoiding the cops is more the rule than an exception.

Ferries take you between the different islands. The road network reaches most parts of the Islands, but if you leave it, the terrain forces you to do so on foot. Buses make it easy to commute back and forth to Stockholm.

THINGS TO DO IN THE '90S

The '90s are an era of awakening and change. You realize how big the world is, and that you can become whatever you want. There aren't any guides to help you except for the TV, but if you dare to take a leap of faith, you can do anything.

At the same time, your own world is tiny. Except for the money you can save from working in the summers, you have no income, and no way of getting to everything new and big beyond the Islands. Most days, you go back and forth between your room, school, the kiosk where cool kids hang out, and the TVs in your friends' bedrooms. On the weekends, people sometimes throw parties, and you're sometimes invited. There is rarely anyone there you don't already know, however, but thanks to beer and cigarette smoke, you might just get the chance you have been waiting for to talk to that special someone.

SPORTS, LOVE, AND PARTIES

Sports are a dominating hobby, with soccer at the top of the list. Sweden's bronze medal in the World Cup of 94 increases the interest even further.

Pastime number one in the '90s - just as during every other decade - is looking at, flirting with, and thinking of your current crush. Relationships begin and end, many without making it past the imagination of the involved parties. Rumors shake your school. Many have sex for the first time. Your biology teacher performs a gruesomely embarrassing demonstration of how to use a condom.

House parties are the highlight of most people's weeks. Buying alcohol at Systembolaget, the government's monopolized chain of liquor stores, requires you to be over twenty years old. Bars and restaurants with a liquor license can serve people over eighteen. Getting around this requires either a fake ID, stealing booze from your parents, or going to bars that can't afford to check your age at the door. Failing this, you have to make do with light beer from the gas station. In the countryside, moonshine is fairly common, although widespread rumors about kids going blind after accidentally drinking wood alcohol ought to be a strong deterrent.

PROGRAMMING AND COMPUTER GAMES

Computer and video games become bigger, better, and more easily available during the '90s. You and your friends huddle around tiny screens to shoot Nazis or aliens in terrifyingly realistic 3D environments. Some of your friends lose themselves completely in their computers, programming and upgrading them constantly and spending all night online, trying to get bootlegged games off of websites on the other side of the globe. Copying games to sell during recess can make you rich - comparatively speaking, of course.

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AND UFOS

The Swedish RPG *Kult* is released in 1991. It captures the disillusioned, dark air of the era, and its stories about incest, violence, and drug abuse earn it an age limit. Even the most liberal of parents find it hard to stomach what's going on around the table in their basement or at the local youth center. A countermovement spearheaded by Christians and conservatives tries

to outlaw role-playing games, claiming they lead to Satanism. The toy stores stop carrying RPGs, which leads to a huge drop in sales.

Playing RPGs becomes cool, hot, and mature. *Vampire* from the U.S. attracts a different following than most Swedish games, and many of these new gamers are women. The game focuses on anxiety, darkness, and relationships. The players take on the identities of vampires gradually losing their humanity.

UFO rumors are abundant throughout the '90s, as is talk of cults and government conspiracies. Stargazing from the roof of your garage isn't uncommon, and many teens claim to have seen strange objects whizz by in the night. "There's something out there" becomes a commonplace truth, and the government and the adults are obviously hiding something. The Ouija boards come out at many parties, to conjure up ghosts and demons.

THE BLACK LAKE LANDS - ONE ISLAND, TWO WORLDS

The Black Lake Lands - called Färingsö by some - are eighty-two square kilometers of peace and quiet in the middle of Lake Mälaren. After the Mälärö Leak, life for the island's population is turned upside down. A third of the inhabitants, those living on the northern side, are evacuated to temporary quarters in the south. The Evacuation Zone - commonly called "the Vac" - stretches from Sätuna in the south all the way to the northern shore, incorporating the smaller islands of Dävensö and Eldgarnsö.

The high school in Färentuna closes. Construction barracks are put up next Berggården High School in Stenhamra to accommodate all the new students and their teachers. The evacuated families are moved into temporary housing. The stores in Stenhamra suddenly see a lot more business. Larry's pub in Sänga-Säby experiences a golden age, and the Toroslunda Poetry Club doubles its membership. The sudden crowding leads to conflict between old and new residents, especially among teenagers. The hierarchies in the classrooms and on the soccer fields are challenged. Solid relationships end as new meat enters the stage.

In the months immediately after the Loop Scandal, research and security staff from the facility are stationed in the south of the island to monitor the health of the evacuees and intervene in conflicts with the original population. They disappear rather quickly, however. The inhabitants of the Black Lake Lands are forced to adapt to the new situation.

THE EVACUATION ZONE

The border cuts horizontally across the island just north of Sätuna. Red-and-white tape tied between the trees, guarded by ALTA Quadraped warbots, marks the beginning of no-man's land. Intruders are arrested and reported, and security patrols sometimes drive through the area or keep watch from the woods. In spite of this, sneaking into the Vac is pretty easy.

The ground in the Vac is moist and smells like mold. Flies and mosquitoes thrive here. The cleared-out houses are locked, but there's no one around to stop you from smashing a window to get inside. Rumors have it that rave parties are thrown in the old rectory.

Below the ground, the vast network of tunnels connected to the Loop spans the entire island. Here and there, hatches lead down into the dark. If you can get your hands on the right kind of disc, you can apparently unlock the hatches and explore the tunnels.

Abandoned machines and cars are rusting all over the Vac. Runaway robots are apparently hiding there, and some say that the wildlife has changed and become more aggressive and feral. Rabbits and deer roam empty gardens as they please.

FÄRENTUNA

The village famous for its stone church is now a ghost town. A couple of inches of brownish grey water and mud cover the streets. Plants have broken through the paved driveways. Forgotten boats bang against the jetties in the harbor.

A single guardpost is located on the outskirts of the village. Two guards are on duty at all times to keep an eye on the zone, but they're mostly holed up inside with beers and video games.

KUNGSBERGA

About a hundred people called Kungsberga their home before the flood. The rising water caused electrical fires



in many of the houses. The burned-out remains are believed to be landing strips for alien visitors.

STENHAMRA

Already the Islands' largest town, with several thousand inhabitants before the flood, Stenhamra has become very crowded since the evacuation order. Attics, basements, and sheds have been rented out to the evacuees, and construction barracks surround the town.

Stenhamra has two schools, a library, a police station, and several restaurants. An abandoned quarry is slowly being reclaimed by nature on the outskirts of town. The steep drop into the pit is home to foxes and deer, and the occasional gang of teenagers go there to make out, drink, or try to talk to the spirits of dead miners.

SOCKARBY QUARRY

Just south of Sänga lies the remains of an old ore quarry. The rusting carcasses of the old furnaces still protrude through the undergrowth. A couple of abandoned houses and an old rectory can be found nearby. Apparently, a group of girls from Väsby have turned all the crosses in the rectory upside down and improvised satanic rituals there.

BLACK LAKE HOUSE

An 18th century rococo-style mansion can be found in the eastern part of the Black Lake Lands. It has been empty for a long time, but was recently partly rented out to Haliotech, a Swedish/British tech company, supposedly developing virtual worlds. Many of their new employees are very young, and their recruiters are



said to visit the local high schools to scout for talented hackers.

BLACK LAKE PRISON

The Black Lake Prison can be found on the east side of the island. High barbed wire fences surround the complex, and each guarded entrance is equipped with metal detectors. There is a special block for involuntary commitment of female drug users with a capacity of about fifty.

THE CLOVERS FACILITY

The enormous observatory east of Sångå-Säby was in operation through the ‘80s, broadcasting to, and analyzing signals from, outer space. The three huge radio telescopes are clover leaf-shaped, which is what gives the facility its name. The main building

is partly underground. The Clovers were acquired by Krafta Corp, and shut down almost completely. Very little staff remain on site. It’s common among Islanders to blame bad things on “radiowaves” from the Clovers.

MUNSÖ - HOME OF THE LOOP

The heart of the particle accelerator can be found on northern Munsö, along with HQ and most of the above-ground operations. The underground tunnel network is vast, running deep underneath Lake Mälaren. Residents and tourists may move freely around Munsö, except for through the restricted area closest to the Loop.

THE BONA COOLING TOWERS

The trio of huge cooling towers in Bona is visible from miles away, the highest of the three rising 253 meters above the ground. The towers were built to vent excess heat from the Gravitron, the Loop's underground heart. Today, the towers are quiet and dark, as the scientists have long since stopped coming. Sturdy locks keep intruders out, but rumors say that you can sometimes see movement up on the higher balconies.

ARMY SCIENCE POST 14

The FOA's (Försvarets forskningsanstalt, "Defense Research Division") outpost in Sättra used to be a top secret, state-of-the-art science center, studying everything from blast radiuses to psychological warfare. The fall of the Soviet Union combined with the economic crisis in the early '90s led to funding cuts for many branches of the armed forces, and Post 14 is all but abandoned these days. Advanced surveillance, warbots, and armed security staff make sure to keep curious teens away, however. What little activity remains is rumored to focus on bioengineering, and technological augmentations for human soldiers.

FARMERS, TOURISTS, AND THUGS

The more isolated, less civilized islands attract two kinds of people - farmers who either grew up there or who long for peace and quiet, and tourists. Adelsö contains a substantial number of Viking graves and old settlement ruins, including the foundations of two stone castles. Adelsö is the island least affected by the scandal and the dissolution of Riksenergi. Life here goes on as it always has.

LILLA STENBY

Lilla Stenby is a village with about two hundred inhabitants. It has its own grocery store and docks from which the Munsö ferry departs.

HOVGÅRDEN

Hovgården contains the remains of an ancient burial site, runestones, castle ruins, and an old court. Hovgården has been named a World Heritage Site, and attracts many tourists. A small village with a church is located nearby.

SÄTRA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

Sättra juvie, on the north tip of the island, is an isolated farm where young troublemakers from all across Sweden are sent to "find their path" in a safe environment. Many of the residents are drug users and criminals. Some of the girls have escaped prostitution.

Ten adults live and work at the center, which offers a wide range of different activities. Most of the troubled teens living at the farm like it there, but there is often at least one planning an escape. On a few occasions, other thugs have shown up at the farm to bring their "people" back.

KRAFTA CORP

In the 1960s, the Swedish government decided to build the world's largest particle reactor, betting on the investment to pay off further down the line. Sadly, the expected return in the form of revolutionary inventions never came. Riksenergi - the national agency in charge of the Loop - battled one problem after another. Many of the inventions they came up with were too unreliable or too weird to be of any societal use.

When the Loop Scandal occurs, Riksenergi's chairman, Hans Albrechtsson, is called in for questioning in front of the parliament in Stockholm, and let go from his position a few days later. An interim board of directors assumes control of Riksenergi, and dissolves the agency a couple of months later. The Loop in its entirety is sold for next to nothing to the newly established Krafta Corporation.

Krafta uses the above-ground parts of the Loop complex for developing new computer parts and software. Meanwhile, they have been ordered by the parliament to salvage as much data as possible from the flooded sections of the underground labs. Their contract also states that they are responsible for cleaning up northern Färingsö, and making it habitable again within a year.

Krafta Corp is an amalgamation of roughly ten individual businesses, led by Krafta AB's board of directors, who report to the shareholders. The different companies within the corporation have their own niches - a security firm, a clean-up company, robotics specialists, and several different software companies.

The CEO of Krafta Corp is business prodigy Louise Rembranius. She is notoriously camera-shy, but was



lauded as a financial genius already in her teens. She is now about thirty, and has bought a mansion in the Black Lake Lands.

The machine cancer's spread across the world is the beginning of what is to become the Krafta Debacle, resulting in the collapse of Krafta Corp. They file for bankruptcy in 1998, after several financially draining lawsuits. The Swedish government resumes the clean-up of the Islands. All traces of the Loop are wiped away, and the underground is filled with concrete.

THE LOOP

The heart of the particle accelerator is the subterranean Gravitron, the mysterious device that propels the colliding particles through the two "loops" underneath the lake. An underground nuclear power plant, the Bona reactor, supplies the Loop with power.

After the Mälärö Leak, the Bona reactor is shut down and disconnected from the rest of the complex. The rumors say that the Gravitron itself is flooded, just like the loops. Hundreds of labs, offices, and experiments - all destroyed by the water.

The above-ground parts of the Loop are what remains, plus the research data - if it can be salvaged. The area around the buildings is fenced-off and guarded by cameras, dogs, and armed guards. Visitors must provide identification cards and pass a thumbprint scan to be let in.

Several entrances to the flooded sections can be found throughout the Islands. Many are guarded by Krafta personnel, or have been sealed, but one can still find the odd one here and there that has been left unwatched. A SÄK-5 floppy disc is apparently what you need to open the hatches, but no one knows what lies on the other side.

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THE HOOVER DAM DISASTER

I remember the night it happened. Not the actual blast, I was sound asleep on my small bed, dreaming about Brenda Walker and completely missed it. But the deep whir of the helicopters passing by overhead woke me up. Drowsily I opened the window to see what was happening. I will never forget what I saw. The flashing red and blue light of a hundred police cars, ambulances and fire trucks reflecting in the dark, thick clouds of smoke encasing Boulder. I did not realize what had happened, but I knew that something had changed forever.



The particle accelerator north of Boulder City isn't the world's largest, but it is the oldest. It was constructed in the '50s, and is run by DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Some people claim that the DARPA scientists at the Loop are trying to invent teleportation, but the facility is mostly left alone, and doesn't feature much in the media.

The Hoover Dam Disaster at the beginning of 1995 means the end for DARPA, and normalcy in Boulder City. A state of emergency is declared, and the eyes of the world suddenly turn toward the small Nevada town. Being a Teen in Boulder City in the '90s means having to deal with a world in free fall.

ON THE ROAD TO SOMETHING NEW

The '90s in the U.S. are comparatively uneventful, but in hindsight, omens of later events become alarmingly clear.

Bill Clinton is elected president and remains in office for eight years. His tough stance on crime helps get him elected, and the Three-strikes law is implemented in many states during his administration. The incarcerated percentage of the population grows.

1991 brings the end of the Soviet Union. The fight against Eastern communism has permeated the United States for decades, and the nation suddenly finds itself without any real competitors, either in terms of trade



or firepower. At first, it seems as if the world is moving toward peace. The end of the '90s brings a new wave of terrorism to U.S. soil, however, and the 9/11 attacks happen in 2001. A new enemy is rearing its head.

The '90s are a time of globalization. The Internet connects more and more people. Trade agreements are

struck. President Clinton preaches free trade and warns about climate change. Toward the turn of the millennium, many turn against globalization, but a new world is already dawning.

New TV channels and new shows see the light of day. As the Internet grows, trading and exchanging pirated computer games, movies, and software becomes easier and more widespread. This marks the beginning of the end for the traditional entertainment industry – soon, kids will be able to get whatever they want off the Internet, free of charge, and anyone in the 21st century can make their own music or movies without the go-ahead from a suit.

TEN TABLETOP RPGS

1. Kult 1991
2. Vampire: the Masquerade 1991
3. Over the Edge 1992
4. Earthdawn 1993
5. SLA Industries 1993
6. Castle Falkenstein 1994
7. Deadlands 1996
8. Feng Shui 1996
9. Trinity 1997
10. Unknown Armies 1998



OLD AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

The Hoover Dam Disaster is but one of many incidents that leads to yesterday's technologies getting the boot. Robot manufacturers go out of business in the wake of the machine cancer, but the home computer market skyrockets. The World Wide Web is created in 1991 and more and more families own their own computer. Over the course of the decade, a gradual shift occurs that enables the people of the 21st century to count the Internet, smartphones, and computers as integral and natural parts of their lives.

THE IT BUBBLE

It becomes obvious that computers are the future, but many fail to predict when the new technology will make its break. Companies and private individuals invest fortunes in Internet-related businesses throughout the '90s – businesses which often lack a market-ready product. A financial bubble is inflated, and it bursts at the beginning of the 21st century. The stock market collapses, bringing the economy of the United States down with it.

Up until the crash, the nation's economy appears unstoppable. The day trader profession is invented. Ordinary people believe that stock trading can make them millionaires. An optimistic belief in the economy characterizes the decade.

GLOBALIZATION

The Internet is an important contributing factor to the opening of the world during the '90s, as is the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. Traveling all over the globe is suddenly possible. Customs duties are lowered between many countries. The USA, Canada, and Mexico sign the NAFTA free trade agreement in 1994.

An anti-globalization movement grows toward the end of the decade. People speak up against the devastating economic programs forced on many African nations in order for them to be granted development aid. When the World Trade Organization holds a summit in Seattle in 1999, tens of thousands of people take to the streets in protest, mainly against how globalization enables multi-national corporations to ignore national laws protecting the environment and vulnerable groups in society.

A NEW ENEMY

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States finds itself without a nemesis. A new enemy emerges during the '90s, however: Islamist terrorism.

An attempt to blow up skyscrapers in New York is foiled in the early '90s. Sunni extremists bomb U.S. soldiers in Yemen. A car bomb detonates under the World Trade Center in New York. Al-Qaeda bomb the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. Osama bin-Laden is added to the United States' Most Wanted list in 1999.

No one is able to predict what is to come, however – although the media report on Sunni terrorism, it isn't portrayed as a serious threat to the nation. The 9/11 attacks in 2001 change everything. The U.S. has a new mortal enemy. In the years following the attacks, two wars on foreign soil commence.

SUCCESSFUL WARS

Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, invades neighboring Kuwait in 1990. Saddam and the U.S. had been allies during the '80s, and Iraq's previous war against Iran was sanctioned by the United States, but Kuwait is another matter. The U.S. coordinates a multi-national military intervention to stop Saddam.

One of the most intense bombing campaigns in human history is launched from airfields in Saudi Arabia, targeting military installations, roads, and cities. The Iraqi forces are pushed back with few American casualties. The attacks are described as "clinical", and without collateral damage. Some journalists claim that this is far from the truth, and write about mass graves containing thousands of unidentified civilians. The na-

**TEN HIGHLY PUBLICIZED MEDIA
EVENTS**

1. The OJ Simpson trial
2. Monika Lewinsky and Bill Clinton
3. Magic Johnson's retirement
4. Y2K and the End of the World
5. Lorena Bobbit and the severed appendage
6. The death of Princess Diana
7. Mandela's freedom
8. Dr Jack Kevorkian and the suicide machine
9. Tonya Harding and the assault
10. The Unabomber Manifesto



TEN MUST-HAVES

1. Tamagotchi
2. Bandana
3. Rollerblades
4. Piercings
5. Pager
6. Slap bracelet
7. Game Boy
8. Bike shorts
9. CD Walkman
10. Disposable cameras



tional infrastructure is obliterated. A massive trade embargo leads to clean water shortages, starvation, and numerous casualties (including many children) due to lack of the most basic medical supplies.

The First Iraq War, or the Gulf War, is relatively black and white to many Americans: evil is defeated with few U.S. casualties. In the Middle East, most prominently so in Iraq, the war leads to a general distrust toward the United States. When the U.S. army returns in the new millennium, very few welcome them. The second invasion leads to the nation collapsing almost completely. The American soldiers become stuck in a grueling guerrilla war.

During the '90s, several wars are fought in the Balkans. When Europe is unsuccessful in bringing about peace, the United States takes charge of a NATO initiative to restore order. A truce is negotiated between the new nations. The concentrations camps are torn down, and the genocides end. The U.S. shows its might as world peacemaker.

SCHOOL SHOOTINGS, RIOTS, AND HARSHER SENTENCING

At the end of the '90s, several brutal school shootings take place in the United States. A teacher and four students are gunned down by a fourteen-year-old and an eleven-year-old at a school in Arkansas. At Columbine High in Colorado, two teenagers murder fifteen people and injure

twenty-one before committing suicide. The frequency of school shootings escalates into the new millennium.

Several large demonstrations and riots take place in America in the early '90s as a response to racist violence. The most well-known events are the Los Angeles Riots in 1992, breaking out after the acquittal of four white police officers caught on camera while severely beating a black taxi driver.

High-profile acts of violence plague the '90s. The fashion designer Gianni Versace is gunned down outside his home in Miami Beach in 1997 by a serial killer.

A trend of harsher sentencing spreads throughout America in the '90s. Toward the turn of the millennium, the incarcerated percentage of the population has grown considerably. The United States becomes one of the nations with the highest ratio of inmates per citizen in the world.

TEENS IN AMERICA

A new teenage world is born during the '90s. The Internet makes it easy to find friends in other states, or other countries. New TV channels and shows speak to you and your generation. Cable TV becomes more common. Shows from HBO contain violence, nudity, and cursing. You watch *The Grind* on MTV to learn the latest dance moves. Ellen becomes one of the first nationally syndicated series to feature an openly gay main character. You and your friends are all in love with someone from *Beverly Hills*. *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* sitcom plays with stereotypes about race and class.

Conspiracy theories are a hot topic. Everyone is into UFOs, the government's secret experiments, and the FBI's kidnappings. The adult world cannot be trusted.

Most teens don't have their own cell phones yet. To call home, you need to find a payphone, or go to a friend's house, and you need to memorize everyone's phone numbers. There aren't cameras everywhere to record your every move and mistake. You spend a large portion of your time at school – kindergarten from the age of five, elementary school from grades 1 through 5 or 6, after which follows middle school or junior high. High school begins in grade 9 and ends after grade 12. The public schools are free, but private schools require you to pay tuition. Unless you get a job after high school, you go to college or technical school.

THINGS TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME

After school, you hang out at your friends' houses or outside the local 7-11. Teen mags like *Seventeen*, *YM*, *Teen*, and *Sassy* are read around the pool, weather permitting. *The Gossip* brings you the latest celebrity dirt.

Some people play board games or RPGs. The gamers are often Teens who choose not to conform, by behaving or dressing differently than others. Many also play computer games, but this is still a rather expensive hobby. Pirated computer games become more common toward the end of the decade.

Online chat rooms connect anonymous teens from all around the world. People who have never seen each other's faces fall in love. The chat rooms let you be whoever you want – you get to choose any age or gender, and behave in new ways. Some of you spend every recess glued to the screen at the school library. Others try to convince their parents to let them use the modem at home, although it ties up the phone lines for hours. A new way of expressing oneself in text develops online. Abbreviations, intentional misspelling, and a lack of apostrophes make it easy to type faster. English teachers around the country are outraged.

Music is a constant presence in your lives. What bands you like is expressed through your choice of clothes. The evenings are spent watching MTV. Some of you start your own bands. The grunge kids and the ravers keep to themselves at school, hip-hop and Britpop is also immensely popular.

Sports double as both a hobby and an identity. Your teammates become your only friends. Others join a computer club, or become active at church.

Love and heartache are common denominators for all teenagers. At school, much time is spent fawning over Him or Her, or discussing the object of your desire with your friends. On the weekends, you gather at someone's house for a party, and drink beer or punch in the living room. If you can't find a party, you can always try to get into a club or a youth center dance. Secret raves are held on the outskirts of town.

Your own car – or free reign over your parents' car – is a natural part of turning sixteen for many teens in America. Public transportation is rarely as reliable or convenient as one would wish it to be. Getting around town requires you to have a car.

BOULDER CITY

Boulder City is a small town in southern Nevada, in the middle of the Mojave desert, situated south of Lake Mead and west of the Colorado River. The enormous Hoover Dam power plant nearby was built in the '30s, together with the city.

Some 15,000 people live in Boulder City in the early '90s. Although the city is fairly large, it's far from crowded. The streets are wide and the houses – which rarely have more than one story – are big. Pine, mulberry and elm trees line the roads. It's hot, arid, and sandy. The city climbs a low hill overlooking Lake Mead. The wealthiest residents live at the top of B-Hill with stables and horse corrals close by. The lower on the slopes toward the lake one gets, the poorer the neighborhoods become. Many of the houses, even in the poor parts of town, have a pool in the backyard, however. The pounding heat makes it awful to stay outside for long without a swim to cool off.

The city is run by a mayor and four city council officials. Boulder City News reports on current local affairs. Boulder City Hospital is small, but offers a comprehensive range of health care services to the locals, including having its own psychiatric ward.

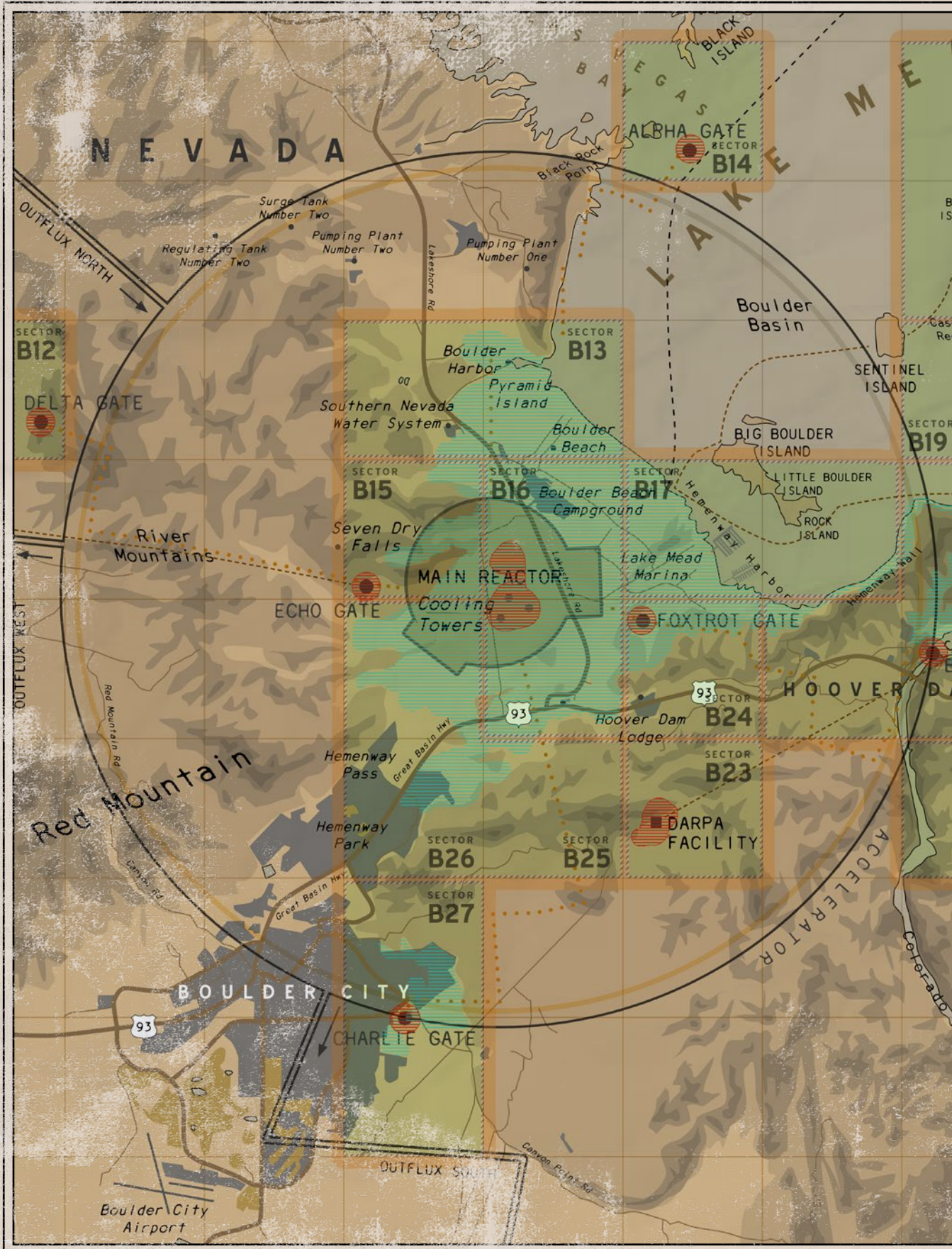
Hemenway Park north of the city is a large recreational area overlooking the lake. There are courts for many different sports here, as well as stables and sheep enclosures. The Boulder City Golf Course can be found in the southern part of the city.

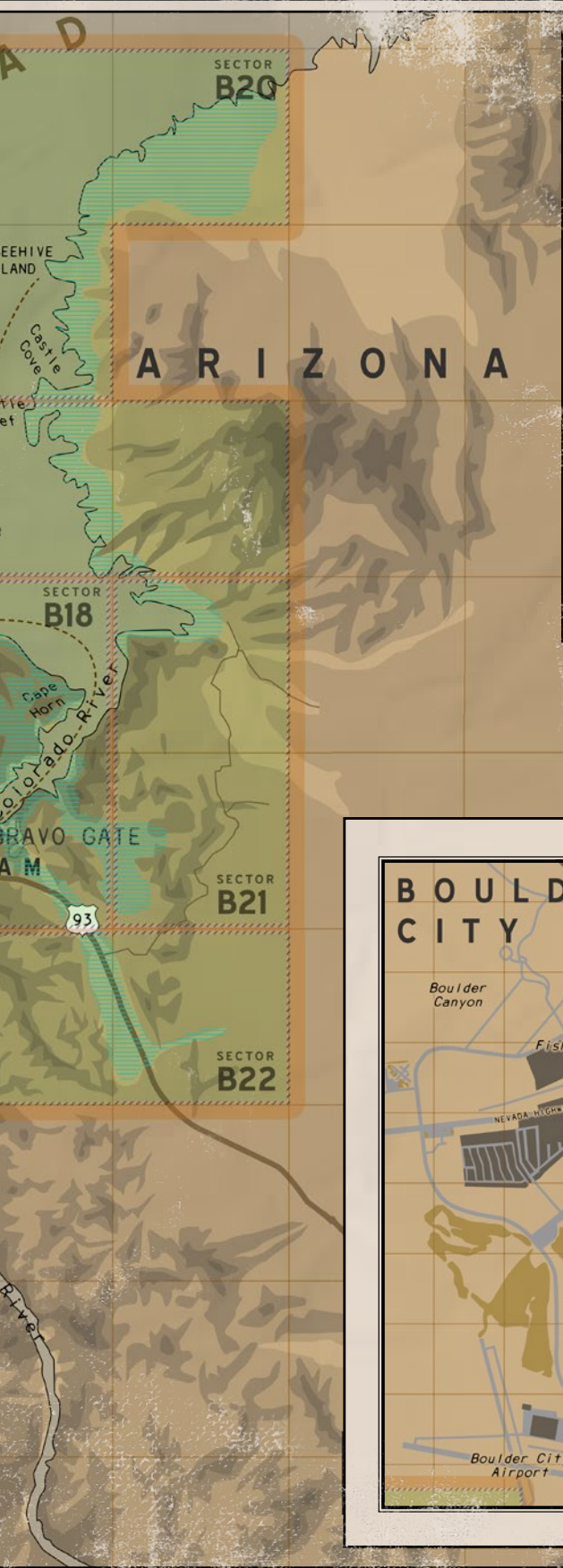
TEN COMPUTER GAMES

1. Civilization 1991
2. Doom 1993
3. Myst 1993
4. Warcraft 1994
5. Command & Conquer 1995
6. Diablo 1996
7. Duke Nukem 3D 1996
8. Fallout 1997
9. Starcraft 1998
10. Grim Fandango 1998



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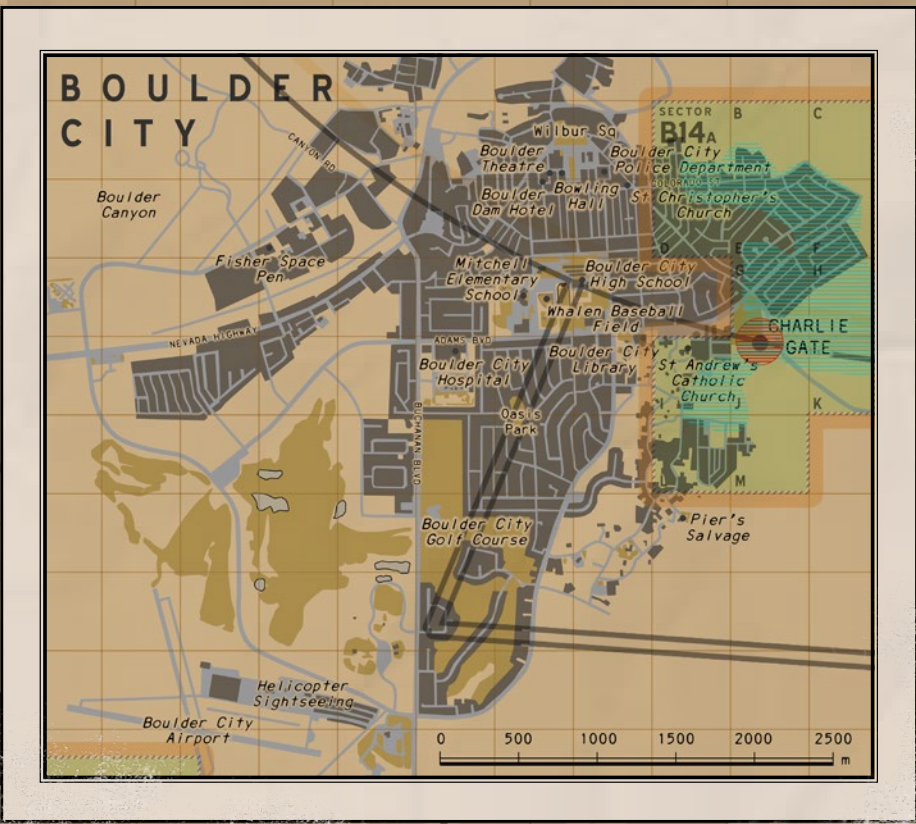




THE LOOP PROJECT

0 1 2 3 4 5 km

	Restricted Area		Service Tunnel
	Flooded Area		Ferry Route
	Populated Area		Transport Tunnel
	Buildings		Civilian Road
	Park/Forest		
	Hills/Mountains		

Boulder City High School is located downtown, teaching grades 9 through 12. The school, which has been in operation since the '40s, has some 700 students. The name of the yearbook is Aquila, which is Latin for "eagle". The school has several sports teams, including football, basketball, and wrestling. The Boulder City Eagles are among the more successful teams in the AA league.

The Department of Children and Family Services deals with kids and teens in trouble, or who are deemed to be a danger to themselves. The department has one office in the city, with a staff of two. They keep in contact with local principals, police, and other community outreach groups. Their work most often entails counselling and other forms of support. Placing someone in foster care is rare.

The College of Southern Nevada located in the city is small, with only around 1,000 students. Newly-appointed college president Arnold Greene has plans to focus all education on computers and programming, but has encountered strong opposition from the teachers. Arnold's daughter Mia is known as Brain Wizz in the local hacker community. She is rumored to program computer viruses capable of letting her hack and control robots.

Boulder Pride is a center for gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer people. They are a hub for the queer community in the region, arranging all kinds of activities and educating straight society. Their headquarters is called The Pride House, and can be found in the city.

The Boulder Theater is a downtown concert venue and movie theater. The movies are well-attended by local teenagers. On weekends, operator Angela Simmons throws secret parties for her friends at the venue after closing. She is also rumored to deal drugs there.

Visitors to Boulder City can stay the night at the Boulder Dam Hotel. It used to be a refined establishment, but time has taken its toll on the place. A porno was shot in one of the rooms of the hotel in the late '80s. "Dangling Mustache-Man" is still a popular ingredient in many teenage parties during the '90s.

Boulder City is known as being a nice place to grow old. Many of the elderly residents are veterans from wars in the 20th century, and the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery begins construction in the early '90s.

LAS VEGAS

To the west, one first passes through the small town of Henderson before reaching the largest city in Nevada – Las Vegas. The main casino street, The Strip, is brightly lit around the clock, and surrounded by pulsing neon signs and loud music. Las Vegas promises to make all of your dreams come true, and many teens run away from home in Boulder to make it on the Strip. Some get jobs washing dishes or waiting tables; others become homeless, are forced into prostitution and drug use, or run errands for the mob. Very few find what they were looking for.

LAKE MEAD

Lake Mead is a man-made lake on the Colorado River created by the construction of the Hoover Dam. The river marks the border between Nevada to the west and Arizona to the east. Lake Mead is one of the largest reservoirs in the nation during the '80s, but shrinks in size during the '90s thanks to drought, and the explosion at the Hoover Dam.

Lake Mead is a national park. Renting a boat to go out on the lake is a very popular activity. Ferries run between the city docks and several of the smaller islands. Boulder Beach offers great sunbathing, but many tourists choose to rent scuba diving gear to explore shipwrecks in the lake. A B-29 bomber crashed in the lake in 1948 and can be reached by divers. There's apparently still railroad tracks on the bottom of the lake running into the tunnels underneath the mountain, left behind after the construction of the dam.

THE HOOVER DAM

The energy needs of Las Vegas and the rest of the region are taken care of by the power plant at the Hoover Dam. The Loop is also powered by the dam. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation operates the dam, and is one of the major employers in the area up until the explosion. The Hoover Dam is a concrete colossus, rising 365 meters above the surrounding Black Canyon. The actual dam in the river is 222 meters tall.

A concrete and rock machine gun bunker sits on a ridge overlooking the dam, built in 1941 to defend against a potential Japanese attack on the dam. Near the entrance to the dam sit the Winged Figures of the Republic, two 30 foot bronze statues built over a star-

map denoting the date of its dedication. Nearby is a memorial sculpture commemorating the 112 deaths during the Hoover Dam construction, with the phrase “They Died to Make the Desert Bloom.”

THE VALLEY OF FIRE NATIONAL PARK

The Valley of Fire National Park is located west of Lake Mead. Red and yellow stone formations rise above the desert sands, and time and erosion have shaped the sandstone into strange statues. Cliffs in the form of fossilized elephants and whole trees can be found here.

The valley was once home to the Native American Anasazi culture, whose ancient rock carvings still remain in caves throughout the area.

AREA 51

The infamous Area 51 is a large, restricted patch of desert 130 kilometers northwest of Las Vegas. The authorities refuse to acknowledge the site’s existence publicly, but people generally believe that Area 51 belongs to the Air Force. No one knows what goes on behind the guarded perimeter, however.

Area 51 is located at the bottom of the now dried-up Groom Lake. In the ’60s, nuclear weapons testing was conducted in the area. Today, the site contains unusually long landing strips for aircraft, and many barracks and buildings built for unknown purposes. Most people believe that the Air Force are using Area 51 to develop and test new aircraft, but some say that it’s actually where tests are conducted on captured UFOs, or that it’s a meeting place for extra-terrestrial diplomacy.

Most civilians employed at Area 51 live in the nearby town of Rachel. Strangers asking questions around town are met with silence. If you stay a couple of nights in Rachel, you’ll see strange lights shooting across the night sky.

A couple of years ago, two employees at the site tried to sue their employers, claiming that they had been exposed to unknown chemicals being burned in open pits. Medical examinations of the two revealed high doses or strange substances in their bodies, as well as damage to their internal organs. The suit led to nothing more than the plaintiffs losing their jobs, however.

THE U.S. LOOP

President Eisenhower ordered the construction of a particle accelerator in the desert north of Boulder City in the ’50s, as the project’s insane power needs could only be handled by the nearby Hoover Dam. The recently founded Department of Advanced Research and Technology – DART – was tasked with overseeing the project. Internally, DART quickly came to stand for “Department of Advanced Research into Teleportation”, as their top secret agenda included finding a way to transport objects and people across vast distances in the blink of an eye. DART recruited the nation’s sharpest minds, many of whom moved to Boulder City.

The American Loop is enormous, with a diameter of 25 kilometers, housing hundreds of offices, corridors, and large halls. Above ground, a fenced-off field houses several large buildings. Access to the Loop is restricted, and the employees have all signed confidentiality agreements.

The Loop tunnels reach far under Boulder City. Hidden entrances to the complex can be found here and there in the desert. Electronic locks keep intruders out, and special security discs are necessary to get inside. Apart from the particle accelerator, the U.S. Loop also contains radio telescopes for space research, just like its Swedish counterpart.

THE HOOVER DAM DISASTER

At the beginning of 1995, life for the inhabitants of Boulder City is turned upside down for many years to come. An explosion rocks the city on a dark February night. There is a city-wide power outage, and those who dare to go outside with their flashlights see police cars and helicopters rushing northeast, toward the Hoover Dam. Battery-powered radios inform the public that counter-terrorism forces are en route to the Hoover Dam. The city has been the target of a terrorist attack.

As the sun rises, the residents of Boulder see water filling meadows and gardens, rising up from below through the tunnels of the Loop. Basements are flooded by brownish grey water. Toward the evening, the water subsides again, but the northern deserts are turning into marshlands. Desert flowers are sprouting, watered from below.

After five days of emergency relief from the federal government and the surrounding states, electricity is restored to Boulder City. The news shows pictures of the demolished dam and the rapidly shrinking Lake Mead. The underground parts of the Loop are flooded, and seventy-two scientists are missing. More than half of them are found and rescued by divers over the following days, but the final death toll amounts to thirty-two souls.

A statewide state of emergency is declared. Roadblocks are set up everywhere. G-men from the FBI and the CIA show up in Boulder in dark suits and sunglasses, just like on TV. People are brought in for questioning left and right. The news claims that the responsible terrorists most likely belong to an Al-Qaeda-affiliated Sunni extremist group, but no arrests are made, and no terrorist group claims responsibility for the deed. The investigation seems to be getting nowhere. The inhabitants of Nevada whisper amongst themselves that the authorities are trying to cover up the real story.

THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

The state of emergency remains in effect in and around Boulder City throughout the second half of the '90s. Most of the soldiers, cops, and agents disappear after a few months, but the anxious atmosphere lingers. Rumors of terrorist attacks run rampant. Tourists with dark eyes are stopped by the police in the street. The most minute indiscretion or suspicion is reported to the authorities. Many residents arm themselves, and line their homes with cameras and barbed wire. Paranoia and patriotism grow, as the new millennium approaches.

Lake Mead keeps shrinking. In the northern part of town, basement flooding continues to be a problem. Low places overflow from time to time. The northern deserts turn into marshlands. The Loop tunnels are still underwater.

A large part of Boulder City's residents were employed at the Loop or the Dam, and they are now left without jobs. The '90s are a tough time for the town. Many need help from the government just to keep the lights on. Foreclosures, crime, drugs, and violence spread throughout the city.

In spite of everything, however, life goes on. Teenagers still go to school, practice football, and make out behind the mall. Many pretend that nothing ever happened.

PARADISE RANCH

DART is scrapped in May of 1995. The Loop and the Hoover Dam are placed under the control of the AEP, commonly believed to stand for Armed External Protection. Everything about the organization is highly classified, and speculations among the public associate the AEP with either the FBI, the CIA, or the Air Force.

The AEP is run by Colonel Kenneth McCormack from inside Area 51. The headquarters is called Paradise Ranch. The Loop data recovery efforts are coordinated by a Colonel Rogers. The Loop tunnels are believed to contain many top secret military experiments, and those sections of the underground have apparently already been drained to allow the scientists to get back to work splicing alien DNA into human cells. Portals below the ground are said to lead to other worlds, and to the Swedish Loop at Munsö. The more far-out rumors suggest that the portals can be used to send soldiers into heaven or hell, or into someone's subconscious. Regardless of what may or may not be happening inside the Loop, everything is kept under wraps, and armed guards keep people far away from the truth.

The AEP have an office in downtown Boulder City. From behind shut blinds, they hoard massive amounts of data about the city and its residents. Secret agents apparently work in the building, and people now and then get picked up in the street and brought to Paradise Ranch for questioning. So far, no one has returned from such an interview. Anyone who objects to the AEP or its agents is met with the same answer – national security must trump everything else.

THE DESERT ZONE

Much of the desert north of the city has been cordoned off. The area is flooded by rank, stale water, and home to hordes of insects. The hidden entrances to the Loop are inside the restricted area. Warehouses previously used as storage by DART have been emptied out and abandoned.

The Desert Zone is under the AEP's control, but they don't seem particularly interested in what's going on there. A patrol rolls through every once in a while, that's all. Many teens sneak out into the Zone to party, or to investigate what happened at the Loop. The waters have flushed many strange objects up from the underground to the surface.

Escaped robots are said to live in the Zone. The machine cancer has arrived from Sweden, and the robots are apparently contagious and hostile. Persistent rumors also say that Russian robots have arrived in Nevada after having escaped the pogroms in the motherland.

CIVILIAN RESISTANCE

Not everyone accepts the prolonged state of emergency. Rallies are held in Boulder City and many other places in Nevada. Petitions circulate demanding an answer to what is going on. The Facts First movement in Boulder City manages to drum up support from the local churches. The movement's leaders receive strange phone calls late at night, and piles of empty letters.

Teens who have had it with the state of things listen to the Howling Ape radio station, where hyperactive host Jessica Phantom demands that the military surrender their alien captives to the public. She wants the "visitors" to be treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention. Howling Ape keeps a phone line open for listeners who wish to call the show and talk to Jessica. The discussions are mixed with music and jokes about teachers and administrators at Boulder City schools. The police are looking for the people behind Howling Ape after Jessica promoted a rave on the air where drugs were sold.

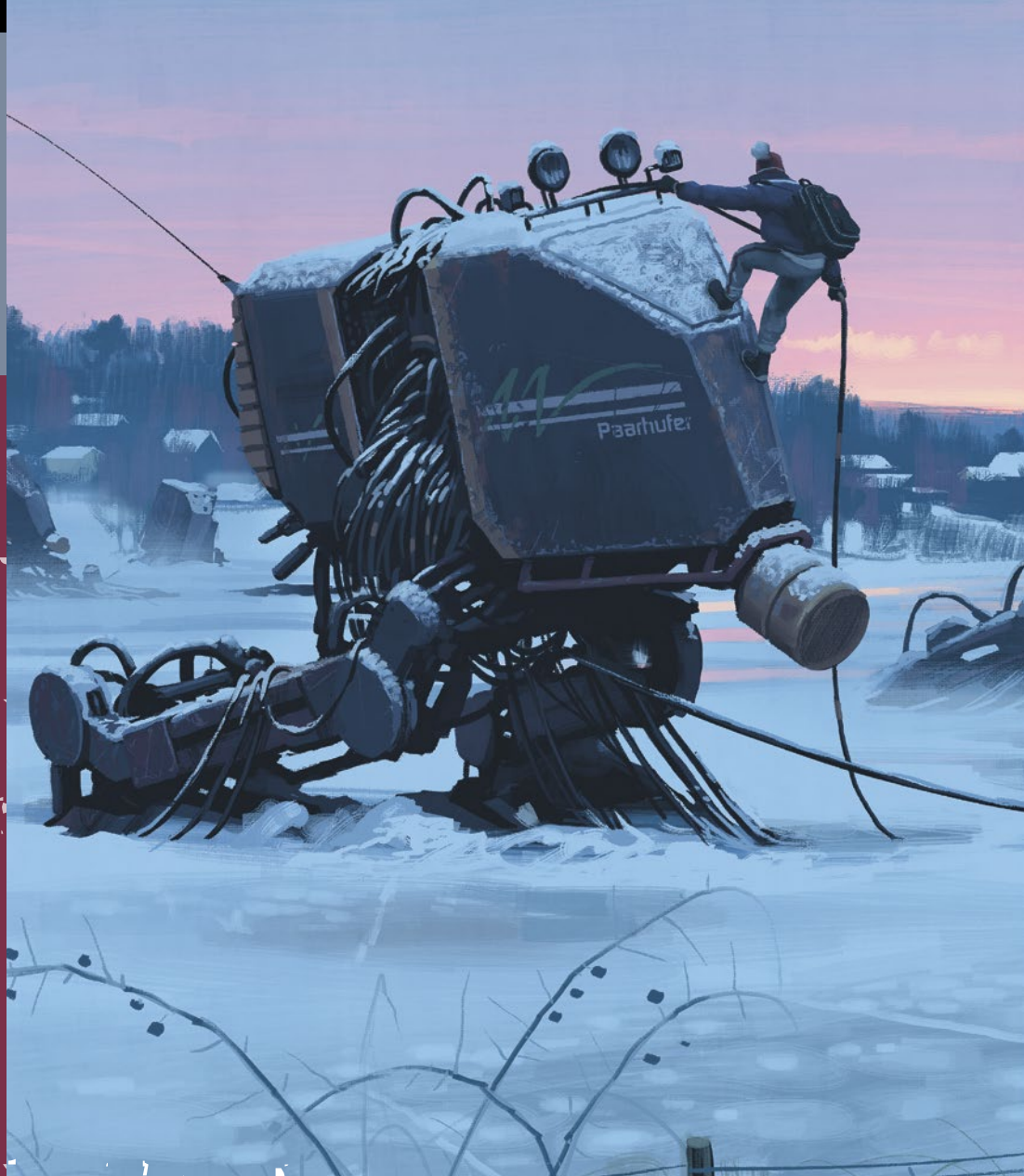
More conservative people turn to Good Old Boulder, a local TV channel, where retired Army Lieutenant Curt Flanagan insists that no terrorist attack took place. He blames the Hoover Dam Disaster on water flowing from the Loop toward the power plant, not the other way around. The water in question has been teleported to the U.S. from the Swedish Loop, and it's all part of a conspiracy orchestrated by the federal government.

Lieutenant Flanagan begins every episode of his show by singing the national anthem in full dress uniform. Several of his sons have their own shows on the channel where they promote a more violent, often racist, message.

One of the Flanagan boys has a show called *Deep Truth* which aims at presenting "proof" that the AEP is a secret government running the United States from the shadows. They're also presented as a vast network of pedophiles. In each episode, another American celebrity is outed as an "AEPedo." Boulder City locals who somehow have ended up on the Flanagan's bad side are presented as rapists and child molesters on *Deep Truth*.



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THE TEEN

Lo was gone when school started in the fall, and I thought school would be unbearable without him. But amid the excitement of starting junior high school, all the natural laws had been upset. Just imagine the miracle of Jimmy Kraftling's unexpected onset of acne, and his amazing status descent from King of Middle School to Completely Anonymous Seventh Grader. It was as if the decontamination of the Loop had removed something from inside me, and had left me washed clean and smelling of aftershave. Anyway, a few weeks later I had new friends who smoked cigarettes, and by Saint Lucy's Day I wore a leather jacket and had enjoyed my first drinking binge.



The players each create a Teen. The process is done step by step as shown below, and more thoroughly described further into the chapter.

1. Choose your Type.
2. Decide your age, from 14 to 19 years.
3. Distribute 14 points between the four attributes. 1 to 5 points in each.
4. Distribute 10 points to skills. You may take up to level 3 in the three key skills for your Type. For other skills, a starting skill level of 1 is the maximum.
5. Pick an Iconic Item.
6. Pick a Problem.
7. Pick a Drive.
8. Pick a Shame.
9. Define your relationships to the other Teens.

10. Define your relationships to one or two NPCs.
11. Choose an Anchor.
12. Choose one or two Hooks, or have the GM choose for you, if you intend to play the Adventure Landscape.
13. Name your Teen.

DO THIS TOGETHER

1. Choose the group's Friction.
2. Answer the GM's questions.

TYPES

Choose a Type for your Teen. There are ten Types to choose from, all of which are described below. There should preferably only be one Teen of each Type in the group.

HACKER

A couple of weeks ago, I lured an AMB 100 down into the Husby swamp by lighting a bunch of fir branches on fire. It was like it knew I was gonna hack it though, 'cause it got loose and threw me into the woods, and I landed with my head like an inch from a sharp rock. I'll try again tonight, and the forum will sing my praises – GodMachineX is the best bot hacker in the Islands.

KEY SKILLS: PROGRAM, CALCULATE, COMPREHEND

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Computer with a dial-up modem
- Floppy discs with illegal software
- Homemade mini robot

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- The girl/boy I like doesn't know I exist
- I'm bullied at school
- Mom/Dad's new partner is violent

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I wanna show people what I can do
- I'm a part of something

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I've never been kissed
- I haven't reached puberty yet

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group or make up your own:

- I'd rather have him/her dislike me than ignore me
- I wanna impress him/her
- My only friend

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:

- I helped Tina [Tammy] hack the school database to change her grades
- My older brother Johan [John] beats me up
- My classmate Victoria is gonna stay in our basement



HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Older hacker from the forums
- Mom/Dad
- My teacher

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Hena, Monika, Jessica [Anna, Patricia, Tara]
- Boys' names: Benjamin, Lukas, Örjan [Zachary, Steve, Paul]

JOCK

Dad says losing is for losers. My coach calls me every night to make sure I eat right and go to bed early. They say I have what it takes to make it big, and that the price of success is pain. I stopped caring about how I feel about it all a long time ago. The only times I feel free are when I push myself until I almost pass out, forcing the world to fade to black and red around me.

KEY SKILLS: FORCE, MOVE, LEAD

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Dad's car
- Varsity jacket
- Football

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My coach forces me to take shady training supplements
- I've been offered a contract by a club in another part of the country
- My boy-/girlfriend will do anything to break me down

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Anything for friendship
- I'm a winner, even if it means risking my life

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I'm unsure of my sexuality
- My parents have lost their jobs

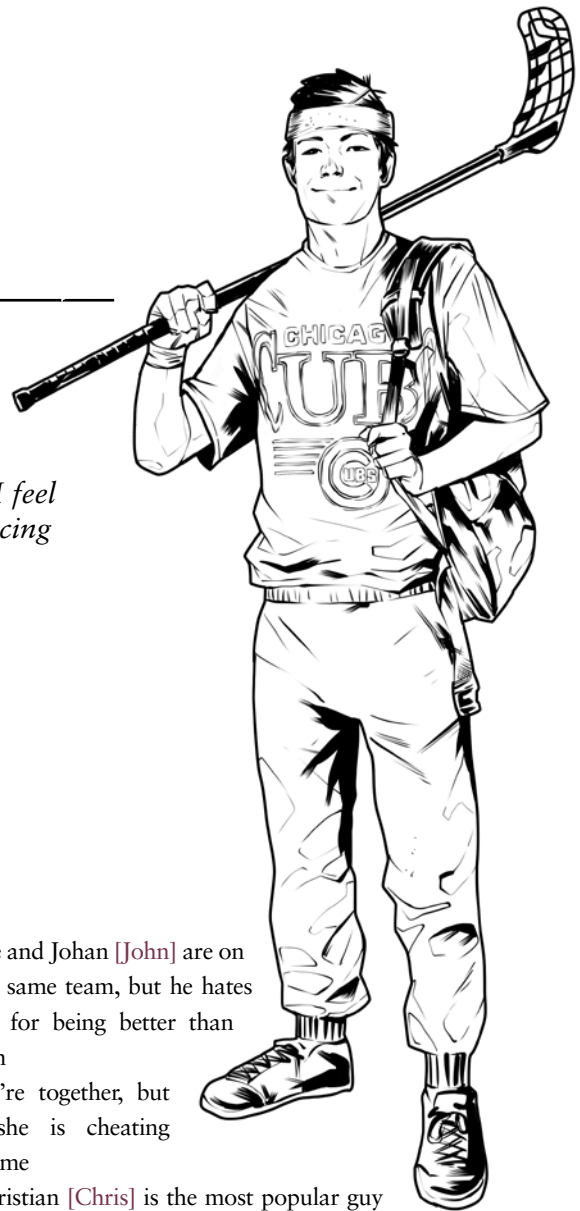
RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group or make up your own:

- We're siblings
- He/She makes me nervous
- We're childhood friends

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:



- Me and Johan [John] are on the same team, but he hates me for being better than him
- We're together, but he/she is cheating on me
- Christian [Chris] is the most popular guy in school and I'm invited to all of his parties

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My coach
- Mom/Dad
- Older sibling

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Charlotta, Sofia, Emma [Jessica, Sarah, Amy]
- Boys' names: Niklas, Kim, Anders [Michael, Jason, Robert]

LONE WOLF

Sometimes I don't get what people say when they talk to me. And when I do, I wish I didn't. People are stupid, mean and self centered. I'm by the sidelines, seeing through their insecurities and charades. I like things that actually mean something. Film, music, books. As long as no-one disturbs me – which they do all the time. My parents asking me if I have any new friends, my sister who always wanna drag me to a party and my classmates who only wanna screw and fall in love.

KEY SKILLS: SNEAK, COMPREHEND, EMPATHIZE

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Hoodie
- Huge film collection
- Drawing- or notebook with lots of pens

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I want to die
- Several people love me but I don't feel a thing
- My parents are health fanatics

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I collect ideas to my book/movie script
- I want to feel something real

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I wish that I could dress however I like
- I've had a psychologist as long as I can remember

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group, or make up your own:

- I think he/she is so smart
- Would not be liked by the group if he/she wasn't as good looking
- At least I don't hate him/her

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own

- Me and my neighbour sometimes watch old film classics in town



- My teacher reads my short stories and likes them
- I sometimes go fishing with Lisa and just sit in silence with her

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- A projectionist
- The cleaner at the library
- Mom/Dad

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Cecilia, Ronja, Lisa [Eileen, Raven, Jane]
- Boys' names: Peter, Olle, Emil [Finn, Louis, Jon]

MOTORHEAD

My sister jokes about me loving high speed 'cause I wanna get away from all the shit from when we were kids, but I've always been like this – taken my sledge up the steepest hills, thrown myself off the roof of the school, and climbed the masts at the marina to dive into the water. My biggest dream is to soar through the skies above the Islands in a Gripen fighter jet and shatter the windows below as I pass. Until I'm old enough for a driver's license, I'll have to make do with souping up my moped and borrowing Dad's car when he's asleep.

KEY SKILLS: TINKER, CALCULATE, CHARM

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Tool box
- Modified moped
- Electric scooter

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My friend's in a coma but no one knows it was me who drove the car
- People at school have found out what happened to me and my sister when we were kids
- I've borrowed some money from a really dangerous guy

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I'm an adrenaline junkie
- Together, we can do anything

SHAME

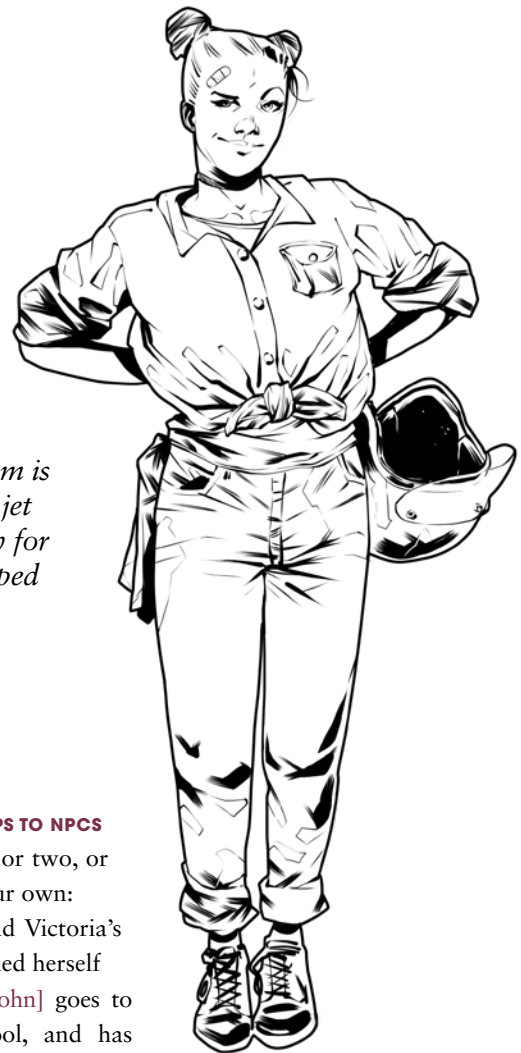
Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I'm the dumbest in my class
- He/She left me for someone else

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group, or make up your own:

- He/She also loves adrenaline
- My sibling and best friend
- He/She thinks he/she's so much better than the rest of us



RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:

- My friend Victoria's mom killed herself
- Johan [John] goes to my school, and has shown me a new way to tune mopeds
- Micke [Mike] is a couple of years older than me and has offered to sell me a car, despite me not having a license yet

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Mom/Dad
- Mechanic
- Retired race car driver

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Eva, Anna, Stina [Holly, Kathryn, Cassandra]
- Boys' names: Lenny, Magnus, Joakim [Cody, Joel, Derrick]

PARTY ANIMAL

The party is on! We're heading out to Anna's cabin for an all-nighter. Her parents are away and I've taken care of the booze. It's gonna be so rad... cause I'm there! It's a shame my friends are always bailing out. They don't get how amazing it is being the centre of attention and just let go. To take the night as it comes, as if there were no tomorrow. Sometimes I wish it was true, that there were no tomorrow filled with hangover, angst and nagging.

KEY SKILLS: MOVE, CONTACT, LEAD

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Hip-flask with vodka
- Frisbee
- Fake ID

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I can't stop drinking
- My mom/dad is homeless
- My parents do not care when I get home

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I want to be the center of attention
- I don't want to let anyone down

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I've never had a real relationship
- I vomit after eating to feel better

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group, or make up your own:

- He/she thinks I'm too loud
- The only one who knows how I really feel
- He/she dominates too much

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:

- I know an old man that buys me liquor

- Robert is a hip-hop dancer and teaches me new moves
- I've had sex with a teacher

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My big brother/sister who no longer lives at home
- A buddy's mom
- The school nurse

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Robyn, Emily, Beata [Madison, Ashley, Stephanie]
- Boys' names: Thomas, Viktor, Mattias [Tommy, Wane, Matt]



RAVER

It's the biggest squat party of the year on Saturday and the whole crew is going. Some dudes from Stockholm found an abandoned warehouse in the Evacuation Zone and hacked some bots to make them break dance. Now some stupid rumors about kids going missing in the Vac and monsters and stuff have everyone spooked, and I'm the only one who's still going. Fuck, are they gonna be jealous when I tell them about the party afterwards!

KEY SKILLS: TINKER, CONTACT, CHARM

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Spray cans
- Strobe light
- Buffalo shoes

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I can't stay off the drugs
- I'm in love with my best friend
- My older sibling accused Mom/Dad of terrible things

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I need to find the truth
- The adults can't protect us, we have to do it ourselves

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I'm ashamed of my body
- Mom/Dad's in prison

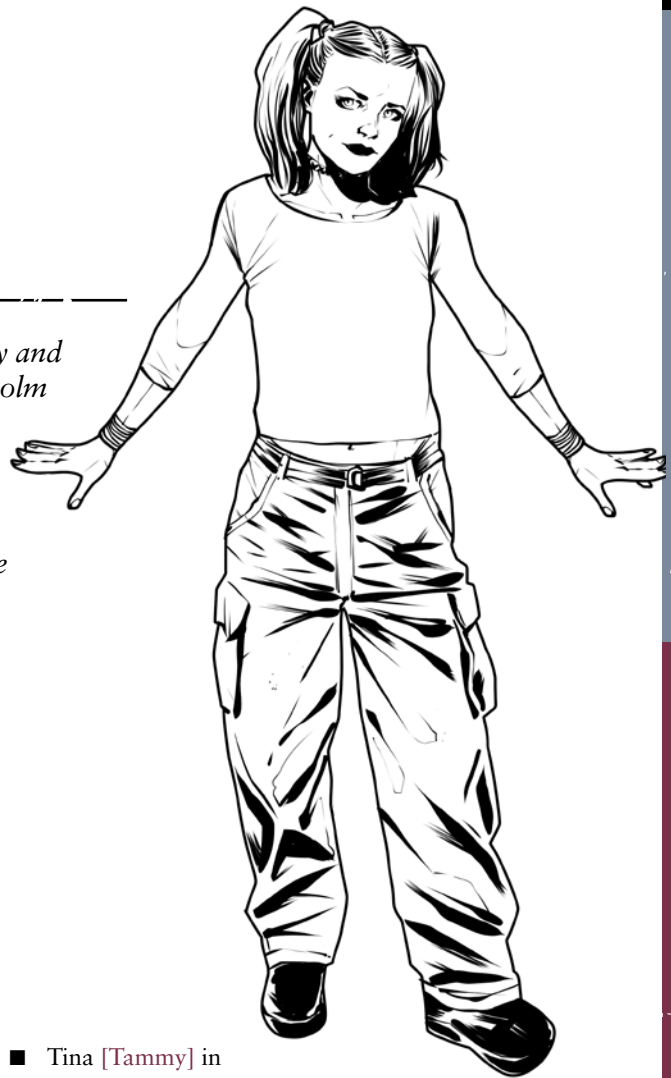
RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group or make up your own:

- He/She doesn't seem to like me, but I'm gonna change that
- We're best friends
- I adore him/her

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:



- Tina [Tammy] in my class hates me
- I'm in love with Christian [Chris], the hottest guy in school
- Our teacher Birgitta [Beverly] was at the rave last weekend. Weird!

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Older DJ
- The record store clerk
- Mom/Dad

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Nathalie, My, Sara [Michelle, Ashley, Shannon]
- Boys' names: Fredrik, Daniel, Alexander [Aaron, Dustin, Scott]

ROCKER

I lie awake at night, consumed by rage over how stupid people are that they actually think Kurt Cobain, the world's greatest poet, killed himself. It wasn't suicide, he was MURDERED, most likely out of jealousy. I wanna honor his legacy by continuing his work. My Swedish teacher says my writing is the darkest and most beautiful she's ever read. She's made me an appointment with the school shrink, but how am I supposed to explain the countless signs that the world has already ended to some moron who works for the Man, the fact that we're already standing in Hell, trying our hardest not to smell the burning flesh and the sulphur?

KEY SKILLS: MOVE, EMPATHIZE, INVESTIGATE

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Electric guitar
- Leather jacket
- Notepad and pencil

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My brother/sister wants to die
- My parents are alcoholics
- I'm in love with my teacher

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- It makes me a little less depressed
- The truth must come out

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I have a kid I never see
- I can't control my fears

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group, or make up your own:

- He/She is hot
- He/She makes me laugh
- Can I trust him/her?

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:

- Our bass player Johan [John] bought some pills off a guy and wants us to try them with him
- My younger sister Sara [Sarah] is dating an older guy
- Frida [Felicja] who owns the record store likes my lyrics

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

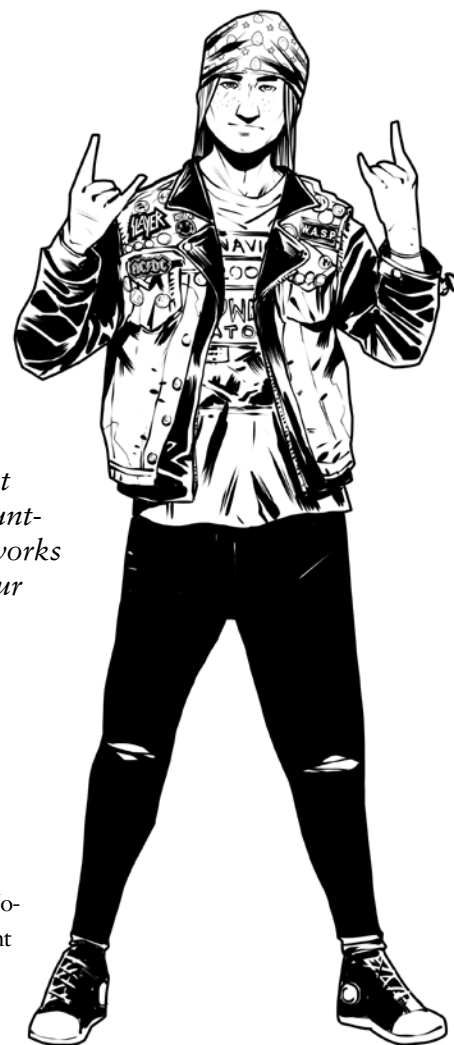
Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Our manager
- Teacher
- Mom/Dad

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Frida, Jenny, Nikolina [Courtney, Lacey, Angel]
- Boys' names: Ola, Stefan, Oskar [Jack, Ross, Logan]



SEEKER

Some people think it's spores from the Vac or Loop Disorder that makes people sick, but my friend Marie can see auras and she says that tainted energy from the spirit world has twisted peoples' chakras. We're gonna perform a cleansing ritual tonight with the rest of the gang and Tomas has promised to teach me all about healing if I come around to his afterwards. So few of us see the truth, and we have to save the others.

KEY SKILLS: INVESTIGATE, EMPATHIZE, LEAD

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Books on mystery and supernatural phenomena
- Dreamcatcher
- Religious symbol

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I have a secret relationship with my best friend's partner
- My sibling has begun hearing voices
- Mom/Dad puts everything on our credit card, but we're out of money

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- The world needs saving
- I am a truth-seeker

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- People think I'm weird
- I'm unsure of my gender identity

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group, or make up your own:

- My soulmate
- I'm tired of him/her questioning me
- They're alright

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:



- My teacher Birgitta [Beverly] wants me to come to a revival meeting
- My friend Johan [John] told me that his dad has Loop Disorder
- Sara [Sarah] wants me to come on a double date with some people she met online

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- New Age shop owner
- Mom/Dad
- Ex partner

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Anna-Christina, Isidora, Liv [Candace, Krista, Wendy]
- Boys' names: Isak, Kol-Björn, Nils [Caleb, Lee, Lawrence]

SNOB

My parents have taught me to go for what I want. Expensive watches, champagne, nice clothes, and fast cars are signs that you're winning at life. At boarding school, I learned to behave properly, got to know the right people, and came to despise people who are too lazy to work and choose to live off society. Imagine the shock – for myself most of all – when I was expelled and sent back home. Mom and Dad pretend like everything is fine, but I don't feel the same anymore. I can see the cracks in peoples' nice facades now, the petty egotism and the hatred for everything different. They don't realize how bad things actually are, but I know that there are threats out there that will destroy us all if I don't stop them.

KEY SKILLS: CHARM, CONTACT, COMPREHEND

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Cell phone
- Loaded money clip
- Expensive sunglasses

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Mom/Dad is very sick, but we're not allowed to talk about it
- My partner is cheating on me
- My friends have rejected me

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- No one else will save us
- I wanna break all rules and boundaries

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My body doesn't work when I try to have sex
- I can't help but feel that I matter more than other people

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group, or make up your own:

- He/She is crazy!
- He/She should calm down
- I wanna be his/her friend



RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up your own:

- I've made out with Frida [Felicia] who owns the record store
- Christian [Chris] wants to hang out with me as long as I have parties at my parents' house
- A shady dude called Micke [Mike] is helping my dad with something illegal

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Uncle
- Teacher
- Someone from the hunting club

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Kristina, Eva-Charlotte, Viktoria [Jessica, Ashley, Amber]
- Boys' names: Gustaf, Franz, Olof [Christopher, Matthew, Justin]

STREET KID

When my friends go home, I hang around by myself, smoking under the streetlights in the parking lot, waiting for my folks to fall asleep. Mom drinks too much, my little brother is in special ed so Social Services won't take him away, and since my older brother got out of prison, he's become much worse than my old man ever was. It's up to me to make sure we're all fed and clothed. The streets are the only place I can let it all out – the rage, the hate – and feel the rush as my fists put someone in their place.

KEY SKILLS: FORCE, SNEAK, INVESTIGATE

ICONIC ITEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Butterfly knife
- Set of lockpicks
- Cigarettes and a lighter

PROBLEM

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My older brother/sister is a criminal
- We're about to get evicted
- Someone ratted us out to the cops

DRIVE

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- I wanna show them all that I can accomplish something good
- Only I am tough enough to stop the impending disaster

SHAME

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Mom/Dad is a junkie
- I've always been told I'm no good

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER TEENS

Choose one for each other Teen in the group or make up your own:

- He/She thinks he/she's better than me
- I secretly love him/her
- His/Her family took care of me when we were little

RELATIONSHIPS TO NPCs

Choose one or two, or make up one on your own:

- Christian [Chris], the most popular guy at school, wants me to deal drugs for him
- Micke [Mike] has threatened to kill me
- My teacher Birgitta calls me late at night

HOOKS

If you intend to play the Adventure Landscape:

- Choose one or two hooks from the general list (page 110), or ask the GM for appropriate hooks.

ANCHOR

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- My shrink
- Grandpa
- My friend's parents

TYPICAL NAMES

Choose one or make up one of your own:

- Girls' names: Mette, Helmi, Sanna [Melissa, Tiffany, Erin]
- Boys' names: Dennis, Lenny, Ola [Jeremy, Kyle, Seth]



AGE

Your Teen is between fourteen and nineteen years old. Choose your age.

BIRTHDAY: Choose your Teen's birthday.

ATTRIBUTES

Your Teen is defined by four attributes that tell you what you are good at and how you can cope with Trouble. The attributes are: **BODY**, **TECH**, **HEART**, and **MIND**. The attribute scores range from 1 to 5, and correspond to the number of dice that you roll when you try to overcome Trouble.

- **BODY** is the ability to jump high, run fast, fight, sneak, and climb.
- **TECH** is the ability to understand machines and robots, program technological things, open locked doors, and build things.
- **HEART** is the ability to make friends, lie, know the right people, create a good atmosphere, and persuade others.

PLAYING A KID FROM TALES FROM THE LOOP AS A TEEN

It's perfectly possible to play your old Kid from *Tales from the Loop* as a Teen in this game. You get the same number of attribute and skill points to distribute as a new Teen, however. Your Teen will not retain any increases purchased with experience points in your previous game. Use the events from your previous game as a guideline when your Kid transitions into adolescence. Keep in mind that *Tales from the Loop* is set in the late 80's, and that *Things from the Flood* begins in the spring of 95 at the earliest, as the Mälärö Leak happened during christmas of 1994. If you don't want this much time to have passed, you are of course free to decide that the Leak happened earlier in your game.

- **MIND** is the ability to find weak points, understand people, situations, and creatures, solve riddles, understand Clues, and have the right knowledge at the right time.

STARTING SCORES

Distribute 14 points between your attributes, no less than 1 and no more than 5 per attribute.

SKILLS

Each attribute has three connected skills. These are areas where your Teen can be extra trained or knowledgeable. The level of a skill varies between 0 and 5, which corresponds to how many dice you add to the roll when you try to overcome Trouble, in addition to the dice from your attribute. At the start of the game, distribute 10 points among your skills. You may take up to level 3 in the three key skills for your Type. For other skills, a starting skill level of 1 is the maximum.

BODY

- **SNEAK** is the ability to hide and sneak.
- **FORCE** is the ability to lift heavy things, fight, and endure in physically stressful situations.
- **MOVE** is the ability to climb high, balance, and run fast.

TECH

- **TINKER** is the ability to build and manipulate machines and other mechanical items.
- **PROGRAM** is the ability to create and manipulate computer programs and electronic devices.
- **CALCULATE** is the ability to understand machines and other technical systems.

HEART

- **CONTACT** is the ability to know the right person.
- **CHARM** is the ability to charm, lie, befriend, and manipulate.
- **LEAD** is the ability to make others work well together, and to help them when they are scared, sad or confused.

MIND

- **INVESTIGATE** is the ability to find hidden objects and understand Clues.

- **COMPREHEND** is the ability to have the right piece of information or to be able to find it at the library.
- **EMPATHIZE** is the ability to understand what makes a person, an animal, or any kind of conscious thing tick, and how to find its weak spot.

ITEMS

Some Items can be useful to overcome Trouble. Items can give a bonus to the dice roll, between 1 and 3 extra dice. To get a bonus from an Item, it must be obvious how it is of use to you. A moped gives a bonus to **MOVE** when you're fleeing from an aggressive android, but not when climbing a tree. The GM should disallow unreasonable attempts to use Items.

Most objects that you encounter during the Mysteries are props, everyday things that are described to give atmosphere, but that don't affect dice rolls. They can be a pair of sunglasses, a car, or a pack of gum. The GM decides which objects are Items that give a bonus, and which are just props.

ICONIC ITEM

You start the game with one Iconic Item; it works just like other Items, but it also says something about who you are. Your Iconic Item gives two bonus dice in a situation where it can be used to help you to overcome Trouble. Your Iconic Item will not disappear or break whatever happens, unless you want it to. If it's stolen or lost, you'll find it again before the end of the Mystery. Your Iconic Item cannot be used by the other Teens.

EXAMPLE

Player 2 (Gustaf): *I casually let my jacket slide open so the others in the chess club can see my brand new pager, as I know they're all very impressed by it. I gaze out the window, looking cool, and say: "I don't think we should go to the party, none of us. There's something weird about that new guy."*

GM: Test **CHARM** with two extra dice as the pager is your Iconic Item.

GAINING NEW ITEMS

You may find or build things, or train Creatures, to get new Items during a Mystery. The GM gives the Item a bonus of +1 to +3, depending on how powerful it is deemed to be. Suggestions for Items that can be encountered will be described in the Mysteries.

LOSING ITEMS

Between Mysteries, all Items except your Iconic Item are lost. Inventions break, domesticated animals run away or die, the police collect a runaway robot, etc. If you want to keep an Item, you may choose to replace your Iconic Item with the new Item. The new Iconic Item gets a bonus value of +2 no matter what value it had previously. If you play the Mystery Landscape (page 108), the GM decides if your Items are lost at the end of every session, or on special occasions when the story transitions from one part to another.

PROBLEM

All Teens have a Problem, which you may have kept to yourself or told the others. The Problem is a part of Everyday Life, something that worries you. During the game, the GM will use your Problem to put you in Trouble. If you solve the Problem, you must pick a new one before the next session. You should choose a Problem that you want to explore during play, as a signal to the GM: put my Teen in this kind of Trouble!

DRIVE

Your Drive is your reason for exposing yourself to dangerous and difficult situations in the course of trying to deal with the Mysteries together with your friends. It helps you to understand your Teen, and makes it easier to take on a new Mystery; no matter what, the Teens' Drives force them to investigate and stop the dangers around them. You may change your Drive between Mysteries.

SHAME

Every Teen has a Shame, something that makes you feel weak, weird, and worthless. Your Shame may be well known to the group, or a tightly guarded secret. The GM should use your Shame to put you in Trouble, by



setting up scenes that highlight or activate it. You'll be teased in the locker room if you're overweight. Your friend will challenge you to dive from the highest cliff even though she knows you're scared of heights. Your teacher reads your essay – poorly worded and full of spelling mistakes – aloud in front of the whole class. Your Shame is a tool to use when getting to know your Teen. Shames and Problems can be intertwined, and your Shame may very well turn into a Problem, but they can also have nothing to do with each other. You may change your Shame between Mysteries. Once per Mystery, you may use your Shame to add an automatic

success (a six) to a dice roll, even if you already rolled the dice and scored no sixes, or if you rolled at least one six but want to improve your result further (page 72). You must be able to explain how your Shame helps you in the situation. If you play a multi-session Mystery or the Adventure Landscape, you may use your Shame for an automatic success once per session.

• **EXAMPLE**

• **GM:** *As you enter the third floor of the dark school, you see your teacher standing before*

you with her eyes closed. She appears to be sleepwalking.

Player 2 (Gustaf): *“Miss Andersson! Miss Andersson, are you asleep?”*

GM: *She walks quickly over to the window and climbs up onto the sill. A cold wind sweeps through the room as she opens the window.*

Player 2: *I clap my hands loudly to wake her up. “Miss Andersson, you’re sleeping!”*

GM: *She doesn’t react, and you realize that she’s about to throw herself out of the window. What do you do?*

Player 2: *I grab her and try to pull her down.*

GM: Test **FORCE**.

Player 2: *I fail, but I activate my Shame to pass the test. My Shame is “My dad’s in prison”.*

Everyone expects me to fuck up just like him, but if I save Miss Andersson, I’ll show them I’m different!

RELATIONSHIPS

You should define your Relationships to the other Teens in the group. This is preferably done together with the other players – if one Teen has the Relationship “Older sister” to another Teen, the players need to agree that their Teens are, in fact, siblings. None of the Teens should be enemies, but it’s fun to have some tension in the group; love, envy, or mistrust. The Relationships can be changed between Mysteries as the Teens are affected by what happens. You should also choose Relationships to one or two NPCs. These characters will feature in scenes from Everyday Life, and could be connected to your Problem. If more than one Teen has some kind of Relationship with the same NPC, it’ll be easier for the GM to set interesting scenes.

HOOKS

Choose one or two hooks for your Teen if you intend to play the Mystery Landscape (page 108). Hooks are events or NPCs that connect your Teen to a dangerous Location somewhere on the Islands, acting as incentives for the group to seek out and investigate these Locations. The GM decides if you get to pick Hooks on your own,

or if she will do it for you. Each Hook should spawn at least one important question about its nature, and connect to an NPC. Answer the questions together with the GM and figure out which NPC is involved, and how that affects your Teen. You get new Hooks when you have resolved your current ones during play.

ANCHORS

All Teens have an Anchor, a person that you can go to for support, comfort, and care. It can be a friend, a parent, a teacher, or a neighbor. It cannot be another Teen. If you suffer from one or more Conditions (below), you can spend a scene with your Anchor, and heal all Conditions. You must allow the Anchor to take care of you, and there must be a physical or mental closeness between you. The GM is not allowed to put you in Trouble in this scene. If you put yourself in Trouble while spending time with your Anchor, you don’t heal any Conditions.

EXAMPLE

Player 1 (Linda): *I need to heal my Conditions. I go to my foster mom Eva’s office.*

GM: *Where does she work?*

Player 1: *She works with drug users as a family therapist at the social office.*

GM: *You’re let in past the receptionist as usual, and several of Eva’s co-workers smile at you and say hi. Eva is in her office, typing violently at her typewriter. The wall behind her is covered with drawings you and Gustaf made when you were kids.*

Player 1: *I enter and close the door carefully behind me. “Do you have a moment?”*

GM: *She turns around and looks at you. “Always”. What Conditions do you need to heal, and how does Eva usually help you?*

Player 1: *We hug. We usually don’t speak. I’m Scared and Upset.*

GM: *She gets up and walks over to you. You can smell coffee on her breath as she puts her big arms around you and lets you press your face deep into her soft shoulder pad.*

CONDITIONS

When you try to overcome Trouble but fail, or if you push a dice roll (Chapter 5), you may be forced to take a Condition. There are five Conditions, of which the first four are mild: Upset, Scared, Exhausted, and Injured. You decide what Condition to take in a given situation, and you get a -1 on all dice rolls until it is healed (down to a minimum of 1 die). Additional Conditions are cumulative; two Conditions give -2 on all dice rolls, and so on. If all four mild Conditions are marked and you take another Condition, you become Broken. If you are Broken, something really bad has happened. You are mentally or physically hurt, and you will automatically fail all dice rolls until healed.

Conditions	Modification
Upset	-1
Scared	-1
Exhausted	-1
Injured	-1
Broken	Automatic failure

The Conditions can also be guides to how to play your Teen, but you decide how much you want your active Conditions to affect the scene. The GM can help you by asking questions – How do you feel? In what way are you Upset? – but you are never forced to play your Conditions if you don't want to.

SCARS

Every time you become Broken, you are physically or mentally scarred by the ordeal. Describe your Scar with one sentence. It can be a description of the event itself, for example “Shot by burglar”; a description of the Scar, such as “Big scar on my right thigh after a gunshot wound”; a description of how it affects you, like “Bad limp in my right leg after having been shot”; or a description of how the event has changed you, such as “I'm terrified of guns and can't stand sleeping alone”. The Scar will help you add depth to your Teen as it reminds you of a life-changing event.

ACCEPTING A SCAR

Just like your Shame, Scars can be activated to grant

EXAMPLES OF SCARS

- Mom told me she wishes I'd never been born
- I almost drowned
- I've lost three fingers on my left hand
- Life feels empty and meaningless
- I hear voices at night
- People I trust end up betraying me
- Long scar across my left cheek from a knife



you an automatic success (a six) on a dice roll, if you can explain how the Scar helps you in the situation. Unlike your Shame, however, a Scar can only be activated like this once and then never again. You can heal your Scars by performing heroic and self-sacrificing actions (see Chapter 6).

DEATH

Scars represents traumas that need to be processed and overcome, otherwise they can destroy you. After every Scar you receive after the first one you roll one die, if the result is lower than the number of Scars you have, your Teen is removed from play. If you have two Scars you need to roll 2 or more on your roll to make it, if you have three Scars you need to roll 3 or more to remain in play. However, when you receive your sixth Scar nothing can save you. Your Teen is removed from play. Depending on the situation you decide what happens together with the group:

- The Teen dies instantly
- The Teen becomes so gravely injured she dies at a hospital
- The Teen vanishes without a trace
- The Teen lives but is so affected by trauma that her parents elect to move out of town
- The Teen is taken into custody by authorities and placed in a foster home

If the deciding Scar is received from regular Trouble or

by a pushed roll, you can always elect to let the farewell take place in the final scene in Phase 5 – Aftermath (page 95). If the Scar was received during extended Trouble the Teen will die or disappear instantly (page 75) as part of the result.

You will need to create a new Teen for the next session.

EXAMPLE

GM: *You climb down into the sewers and sink to your waist in brown, foul-smelling water. The curved walls are illuminated by weak lights in a sickly greenish yellow color. Maria's killer hasn't seen you follow them down. They're about thirty meters ahead of you in the tunnel, their long leather coat floating behind them through the muck.*

Player 2 (Gustaf): *I follow them. I test **SNEAK**, but fail.*

GM: *The killer turns a corner and disappears. As you reach the corner, the killer surprises you and pushes up against you in the darkness. You see his face and recognize him – it's your own dad, but he doesn't seem to understand who you are. His face is frozen in a grotesque smile, pus runs down his cheeks and the whites of his eyes have turned purple.*

Player 2: *"Dad, what are you doing here?"*

GM: *He's pointing a gun at you and pulls the trigger.*

Player 2: *I try to push the gun away and wrestle him to the ground.*

GM: *Test **FORCE**, but if you fail you'll become Broken.*

Player 2: *I fail again!*

GM: *You already have a Scar from before, now you have two. You need to roll 2 or more on a die to survive.*

Player 2: *One! I won't make it. The gun fires and hits Gustaf in the chest. He falls down into the dirty water. If the others makes it there in time, Gustaf will perish in the hospital, otherwise the body will be swept away into the sewers never to be found.*

DANGER LEVEL

If you play *Things from the Flood* as a one-shot you can choose to scale the difficulty to better fit:

- To create a more dangerous game suitable for oneshots the Teen can be taken out of play once she gets a second Scar. When she gets the first Scar she needs to roll a 4 or more on a die to make it.
- For longer campaigns you can allow another Teen to help by using one of the following skills:
 - * **LEAD:** To help or rally someone.
 - * **MOVE:** Help someone to flee.
 - * **CONTACT:** Call the police or an ambulance.

The roll must take place in the same scene as the Broken Teen takes her decisive Scar. If the roll is successful the Teen will make it, but the Scar remains. Nothing can help a Teen that takes a sixth Scar however.



EXPERIENCE

At the end of the session, the GM will distribute Experience Points (XP) to the Teens. These can be used to raise skills. It costs five XP to raise a skill by one level, and 5 is the maximum level in any skill. Read more about XP in Chapter 6.

NAME

Give your Teen a name, choosing from the lists in the Types section, or coming up with your own.

DESCRIPTION

Write down something about what your Teen looks like, and what she is like as a person. You should also write down things that will help you play the Teen in the game, such as how she talks and moves, what clothes she wears, and so forth.

EXAMPLES OF FRICTION

- There is unrequited love within the group
- Two people in the group have been a couple for ages, but one of you cheated on the other and has confessed this to a third person.
- Two of you have had sex when you were drunk, but pretend like nothing has happened.
- One of you stole something from another group member's parents.
- Two of you are competing for leadership in the group.
- Two of you are competing for the attention of the same person.
- One of you was attacked by bullies, and the rest of you didn't help.



FRICTION

The Teens are friends and stick together to resolve the Mysteries, but there will always be Friction within the group, creating conflict, drama, and secrets. Decide together what causes Friction in the group at the moment. You can change Friction between sessions. All Teens in the group have the same Friction, but it affects you all differently – one of you may be its focal point, while someone else tries to resolve the issue. Choose from the list below or make up a new one, and then proceed to work out the details: who is in love with whom, and why is that causing tension? Who has stolen from whom, and what was stolen? Connect the Friction to the Relationships you have within the group. When you create your group, you should start with a relatively mild Friction, as more serious issues risk tearing the group apart. The basis for your Friction might be positive, but still lead to conflict: two of the Teens are in love but keep it a secret from the others, who notice the lies and feel left out, for example.

EXAMPLE

GM: Okay, decide on a Friction, something causing tension within the group. You're still friends, however, and you'll help each other to figure out the Mysteries. There is a list of themes here if you want some pointers.

Player 3 (Eva): What do think about sexuality and love?

Player 2 (Gustaf): Could work. Between which characters?

Player 3: I imagine that my character, Eva, is secretly in love with your sister Linda. She doesn't know but you have figured it out. Sound good?

Player 1 (Linda): Absolutely! But I'm actually just pretending not to notice.

Player 2: And I'm pissed at Eva for stealing Linda away from me. Plus, I don't really get the whole sexuality thing yet, it's gross and weird.

RESOLVING FRICTION

You can heal Conditions in the same way as you do when you spend time with your Anchor by meeting up with one or more of the other Teens in the group somewhere deemed safe and secure enough by the GM. You are furthermore required to be physically or mentally close and intimate – talking, hugging, sharing secrets, comforting each other, or having sex. This allows you to

FRICTION THEMES

- Love
- Sexuality
- Rivalry
- Unfair Behavior
- Malice
- Misunderstandings
- Theft
- Cowardice/Fear
- Weakness
- Crime





resolve Friction within the group, but you are not necessarily forced to talk about what is causing the Friction. The GM cannot put you in Trouble while you are resolving Friction, but a Teen in the group is free to do so, for example by starting an argument within the group. If this leads to Trouble in the same scene as you intend to resolve Friction, none of you heal any Conditions.

QUESTIONS

After having created your Teens, but before the game starts, the GM will ask you a number of questions. You should answer them as honestly as you can, from the perspectives of your Teens.

The GM chooses 4–6 questions from the first list below for you to answer individually, and 2–3 from the second list of questions for you to answer as a group. It is the responsibility of the GM to ensure that all players get to answer questions and are given roughly the same amount of focus.

QUESTIONS FOR THE TEENS

- In what way has your Problem gone from bad to worse lately?
- What do your parents do for work?
- How do you like school?
- Are you a virgin?
- How did you lose your virginity?

- Do you have siblings, and if so, what do you think of them?
- What does your room look like?
- What do you dream of at night?
- What is your relationship to the Evacuation Zone?
- Who are you attracted to?
- In what ways is your Everyday Life changing?
- What is your relationship like with your Anchor?
- What do you want to do when you move out of your parents' house?
- What is your experience with robots?
- What is the farthest you have ever traveled outside of your hometown?
- How are you affected by your Shame?
- How is the group's Friction affecting you?

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

- Who takes charge in the group?
- What keeps you together?
- What do you fight about?
- How is your Friction affecting you?
- How long have you all known each other?
- What makes you laugh?
- What secrets do you share?
- Who dislikes your group?
- Who is in love with who?
- What topics do you avoid talking about?
- What do you enjoy doing together?

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CHARM (HEART)	79
LEAD (HEART)	79
INVESTIGATE (MIND)	79
COMPREHEND (MIND)	80
EMPATHIZE (MIND)	80



TROUBLE

Sometime in January of 1996, Jimmy Kraftling and his gang of miscreants had a fight with a vagabond down in the gravel pit, and Knuckles returned with three fingers missing from his right hand. It remained unclear whether the fingers had been removed by the vagabond or by one of the many homemade New Year's bombs they had been seen carrying down into the pit, and the inhabitants of Mälaröarna didn't care to find out. After the incident, the police were called and riot units gathered up any vagabonds they could find, after which the machines were sent to the recycling center in Nacka to be demolished.



Trouble is something difficult or dangerous standing between the Teens and what they want to accomplish. It is the GM's job to create Trouble, but the Teens can also get themselves into Trouble. Trouble is woven into the conversation, and described by the GM as actions performed by NPCs or other events in the game world. The GM asks you how you react, and you may either try to overcome it somehow, or ignore it and let it happen.

• **EXAMPLE**

• **GM:** *It's midnight and you have managed to break into Dr Hawini's place, the psychiatrist who treated Tommy up until he went missing.*

• *It is a large house with hardly any furniture, but the walls are covered with surrealist paintings in black, red, and grey. A sweet, nauseating smell permeates the entire house.*

• **Player 1 (Linda):** *We try to find her office, or wherever she keeps her files.*

• **GM:** *You walk through a corridor to a dark room in the back of the house. There is a couch for the clients to lie on, an armchair, a desk, and loads of filing cabinets. There might be information here, but it is too dark to tell.*

• **Player 2 (Gustaf):** *I feel across the wall for the light switch and flick it.*

• **GM:** *The light comes on, and hidden speakers begin playing some kind of whale singing.*

You see Dr Hawini asleep on the couch. A strange pipe on the floor next to her seems to be what's causing the foul smell. As the light is turned on, she turns in her sleep and mutters: "...emotional anomalies..."

GM 1: I whisper to Gustaf: "You idiot!"

Player 3 (Eva): We try to sneak through the room and search the cabinets for Tommy's file without waking her.

EXAMPLES OF TROUBLE

- The guards block your way as you try to enter.
- The moped keeps coming at you at full speed.
- You hide inside the abandoned magnetrine ship but hear the androids looking for you outside.
- Your dad says you can't go out tonight.
- Your girlfriend starts wrestling your pants off of you while trying to kiss you, but you smell liquor on her breath.
- On the other side of the door, you see a black and purple creature that looks altogether alien. It slithers across the floor toward you while making a ringing sound that gives you a pounding headache.
- The detective is obviously lying to you.
- Your sister stops laughing. For the first time in ages, she appears ready to listen to you.
- You are deep in the Loop tunnels when you realize you won't be able to find your way back out.
- The robot head sleeps on the workbench. It might hold the answers you need - if you can bring it back to life.



SUFFERING CONDITIONS

Sometimes, the GM will tell you that you will suffer a Condition (see Chapter 4), if you don't overcome the Trouble you're up against. This should happen only when it's obvious that you will take a beating if you fail, however. If you suffer a Condition that is already checked, you must choose another one to check.

Most situations will only lead to a mild Condition - Upset, Scared, Exhausted, or Injured. Only when you are subjected to deadly force or something equally grave or horrible do you run the risk of becoming Broken if you fail the dice roll.

THE DICE ROLL

You describe how you try to overcome the Trouble, and what you're trying to accomplish. The GM may ask for more details if she thinks the situation is unclear, or may ask you to change your mind if you are trying to do something impossible.

When you have decided on your action, grab a number of dice equal to your score in the attribute you use. Then, add dice equal to your level in the appropriate skill. If there isn't a suitable skill, roll only the attribute dice. If you are not Broken, but have a total of zero dice due to Conditions, you still use one die for the roll. Every six rolled is a success. In most cases, only one success is needed to overcome Trouble.

EXAMPLE

GM: One of the security guards at the mansion leads you through an garden full of mechanical statues. You are taken to the kitchen entrance to see the chef, a large man with unkempt hair and the swollen, red nose of an alcoholic. He looks at you, sceptically. "What do YOU want?"

Player 3 (Eva): "I need a job. I can be a waitress at the party tonight".

GM: "Who told you there's a party tonight?"
Test **CHARM**.

Player 3: I have **HEART** 3 and **CHARM** 3 so I get 6 dice. I roll a six, I pass! "I heard it from a friend, but nobody likes a snitch, right?"

GM: "We need people who can keep their mouths shut. Can you start right away?"

TROUBLE EXAMPLES WHERE YOU RISK SUFFERING CONDITIONS

- Your mom tries to evade your questions when you ask her for the truth. You risk becoming Upset.
- The freezer room door closes behind you. If you fail to get it open, you become Scared.
- The boat sinks and you have to swim back to shore. You risk becoming Exhausted.
- The creature explodes and corrosive acid splashes all around it. If you're hit, you become Injured.
- The genetically altered pit bull attacks you ferociously. You risk becoming Broken.
- You are strapped to the professor's slab and she fastens electrodes on your forehead in order to brainwash you. If you fail to break free, you become Broken.



ITEMS, SHAME AND SCARS

You may use Items to add 1–3 extra dice to a dice roll (page 61), as long as you can explain how the Item in question helps you (the GM has final say).

You can also use your Shame once per Mystery to score an automatic success. You can activate your Shame after a failed roll – or even after a successful one – to add a success, as long as it fits the situation. Scars can also be used in this way, but only once. When done so the Scar counts as accepted which makes it possible to remove it by the end of the Mystery (page 97).

DOING THE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE

In rare cases, more than one success is needed to overcome Trouble. You might be trying to do something almost impossible, such as escaping from the cops on your motocross bike, or persuading your dad to stay

home from poker night. This may require two or even three successes. The GM should only demand more than one success in the most extreme cases.

Trouble	Successes Required
Difficult (Normal)	1
Extremely Difficult	2
Almost Impossible	3

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Some successful skill checks let you ask questions of the GM. The GM must answer them truthfully, and with as much detail as seems reasonable in the situation. You have overcome Trouble, and should not be given vague or half-truth answers.

EXAMPLE

Player 3 (Eva): *"Why are you looking at me like that?"*

GM: *Your dad looks away. "I don't know what you're talking about".*

Player 3: *I try to figure out what he is feeling and test EMPATHIZE. I pass! I wanna know how I can make him tell me why he's acting weird.*

NO TURNS OR INITIATIVE SCORES

Many roleplaying games divide conflict into small segments of time called turns, played one after another, but not *Things from the Flood*. Here, each action or attempt at something corresponds to one dice roll only, which means you only get to try to overcome Trouble once. Prioritize the dialog and the narrative to try to arrive at the most satisfying outcome, even if you failed the dice roll. Describe the situation, the scene, and your actions before you roll any dice. The GM has final say, as always.



GM: *He's confused and worried. You realize that it must have been him that found and read your diary where you wrote that you think you might be gay. The only way to make him open up and talk about it is to confront him with the diary.*

BUYING EFFECTS

If you roll more successes than you need, leftover successes can sometimes be used to “buy” beneficial Bonus Effects. Such Effects are described individually for each skill. The same Effect can be bought several times. The GM decides which Effects, if any, are available in any given situation. You shouldn't need to buy Effects to achieve what you set out to do. They are a means of getting more than you asked for.

EXAMPLE

GM: *The girl looks at you with frightened eyes. The ground around her is singed and blackened in a wide radius, and she's holding a burning rock in her hand, but apparently without it hurting her.*

Player 2 (Gustaf): *“Me and my friends are here to help”. I hold up my hands to show her I'm unarmed.*

GM: *Test CHARM.*

Player 2: *I pass, and score three sixes, which means I can buy two Bonus Effects. She takes a liking to me, and we've established a lasting relationship.*

GM: *She tilts her head and smiles. “You wanna help?”*

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The GM never rolls dice for the NPCs. When they try to overcome Trouble, the GM decides if they succeed or fail. If NPC actions would cause Trouble, the Teens may try to prevent or stop them.

When an NPC helps you, the GM may decide to

give you 1, 2, or 3 bonus dice. This only happens in rare cases. The Teens are usually left to fend for themselves.

SPECIAL NPCs

Some NPCs are significantly harder to beat. They will have one or more special abilities, with a score of 2 or 3, associated with an attribute or a skill. To beat a special NPC, you need to test the attribute or skill associated with the NPC's special ability and roll as many successes as the NPC's ability score.

EXAMPLE

A robot with the Top-Secret Tech (TECH) 2 ability can only be beaten by scoring two successes on either a COMPREHEND test (if the Teens attempt to understand how it works) or a PROGRAM test (if they try to hack its AI). A subterranean Death Larva with the Monster From Below (FORCE) 3 ability can only be defeated by scoring three successes on a FORCE test, but can be outrun (MOVE) or outsmarted (SNEAK) by scoring only one success.

FAILED ROLLS

If you roll no or too few successes, your action fails. An unsuccessful attempt to overcome Trouble should never mean that nothing happens. Somehow, the situation changes – probably for the worse. The GM decides what happens. You might need to check a Condition, you might end up in new Trouble, or you might suffer a Complication (see the boxed on page 74). Below are some examples:

- You are caught or become delayed.
- The robot you have built becomes hostile or your tools break.
- Your parents are angry with you and ground you for a week.
- The wormhole to the other galaxy grows and swallows you instead of closing.

THE LAST SCAR

As a consequence of taking Conditions you can become Broken and gain a new Scar. If you fail the Death



roll (page 64) you need to decide how your Teen will leave the group. You can choose if this takes place immediately or if you want to use your End scene (page 96) to say goodbye.

PUSHING THE ROLL

When you fail a roll, you may choose to immediately retry the task, by mentally or physically pushing yourself to the limit of your abilities. This is called pushing the roll, and can only be done once per roll, immediately after performing it. You may push a successful roll to be able to buy more Effects.

When you push a roll, you must first check a Condition. Then you reroll all dice not showing sixes. If the reroll is successful, the GM describes what happens. If the reroll also fails, you may not push again. If the Trouble came with the threat of a Condition, you may have to check two Conditions – one for pushing and one for failing.

EXAMPLE

Player 3 (Eva): *I try to sneak out despite being grounded.*

GM: *When you descend the stairs, you see your dad and his new girlfriend making out on the couch in the livingroom. Test **SNEAK**.*

Player 3: (Rolls dice) No, I fail!

GM: Do you want to push it? You must check a Condition, but you get to reroll all the dice.

Player 3: Of course! I check Upset. (Rolls dice) I fail again!

GM: Just as you reach the door, your dad looks up and spots you.

COMPLICATIONS

A failed roll should never be a dead end. To keep the story going despite a failed roll, the GM can introduce Complications to the Mystery. A Complication means that you somehow accomplished your task, but that something went wrong during the process. The GM decides what happens. Describing a Complication as “You succeed, but” is often a good way to do it. Complications can lead to more Trouble (now or later), provide the group with an ambiguous lead, or force them to change their plans. For example:

- You force the door open, but the guard on the other side hears you.
- You find the blueprint, but it is written in code.
- You escape the killer’s grasp and run home (...but the GM doesn’t tell you that the killer is on your tail).
- You hack the computer and stop the elevator’s free fall, but now you’re stuck, and you’ll become Scared if you don’t find a way out.
- You manage to throw yourself out of the car, but your wallet with your ID slips out into the backseat.



CHANCE TO SUCCEED

Number of Dice	Chance to Succeed	Pushed Roll
1	17 %	29 %
2	31 %	50 %
3	42 %	64 %
4	52 %	74 %
5	60 %	81 %
6	67 %	87 %
7	72 %	90 %
8	77 %	93 %
9	81 %	95 %
10	84 %	96 %

HELPING EACH OTHER

One Teen may help another overcome Trouble if it seems plausible in the situation. To help, you describe what you do, and then your friend gets one extra die to roll. A Teen may never get help from more than one of her friends for a single dice roll. The GM has final say on when helping each other is possible. When you help someone, the outcome of the roll will affect you too. If it fails, you suffer the same effects as the Teen who rolled. In some situations, all of the Teens need to overcome the same Trouble at the same time – when trying to sneak into the cinema without tickets, or swimming to shore from a sinking boat, for example. In these cases, you cannot help each other as described above. You can, however, give each other successes from buying Bonus Effects (below).

TEEN VERSUS TEEN

When two or more Kids fight each other, wrestle, haggle, hide from each other, or hit on the same guy, you all say what you want to do and roll the dice at the same time. The one with the most successes wins, and gets to decide what happens.

You can all push your rolls. If you get equal numbers of successes after the push, you may buy extra successes by checking Conditions, one success for each checked Condition. You can make yourself Broken to win if you want to. If there still isn’t a winner, something happens that interrupts the situation – a parent walks in, rain starts falling, or the lunch break is over.

EXTENDED TROUBLE

Sometimes, at a crucial moment during a Mystery, Trouble can be so climactic that the Teens have to come up with a plan and work together – a single dice roll is not enough to portray the Trouble they are in. Each Teen will have their part to play in the plan's final success or failure. This is called Extended Trouble.

1. DECLARE THE STAKES

The GM declares what is at stake and what will happen if the Teens fail.

2. THREAT LEVEL

The GM declares the total number of successes that the Teens need to beat the Trouble – this is called a Threat Level.

- **Normal:** Three times the number of Teens.
- **Extremely Difficult:** Four times the number of Teens.
- **Almost Impossible:** Five times the number of Teens.

Don't use special NPC abilities (previous page) in Extended Trouble – they should be included in the Threat Level.

3. MAKE A PLAN

The Teens decide what they want to do, agree on which skill each person will use, and in what order they will make their rolls. The Teens choose which skills to use, but the GM may disallow unreasonable skill uses.

4. PLAY THE SCENES

Each Teen gets a short scene to act and test their chosen skill. All successes rolled go toward reaching the Threat Level, but can also be used for bonus effects. If there is time, a Teen may test **LEAD** to create a dice pool (below) instead of counting her successes toward the Threat Level.

5. OUTCOME

Each Teen rolls once, pushing rolls if they want to, and when all scenes are over, the total number of sixes is compared to the Threat level of the Extended Trouble.

DESCRIBE HOW YOU DO IT

It isn't enough for you to say that you use a skill. You need to describe what you do in order to get to roll the dice. You can do it by having an in-game conversation, or by describing your actions: how you crawl through the swamp on all fours to avoid detection, or how you build a flying moped by attaching a magnetron disc to your girlfriend's Puch Dakota.



- If the number of sixes rolled is less than half the Threat Level, the Teens have failed completely. They all become broken and must each take a Scar. There is a clear risk of losing a friend.
- If the number of successes rolled is more than half the Threat Level, the Teens may check additional Conditions to get more sixes, in order to reach a compromise.
- Each checked condition counts as an extra success. The Teens can make themselves Broken to succeed if they want to. The Teen who rolled the least amount of sixes (if there is more than one, roll a die to randomly select one of them) checks her Conditions first until she is Broken, and she takes a Scar. After this the rest of the Teens get to check Conditions, in any order they want – which means that they for example can check one Condition each. If the Teens reach the Threat Level this way, they will have achieved a part of their goal. Details are up to the DM.
- If the Teens reach the Threat level without having checked extra Conditions, they achieve their goal and overcome the Trouble.
- If a Teen fail her Scar roll she will either die or disappear as a result of this (see page 64).

THE SKILLS

SNEAK (BODY)

The ability to hide, sneak, or steal.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- Give one success to another Teen acting at the same time, or a +1 bonus die to a later roll relating to this one.
- You find something unexpected, or more of what you were looking for.

FORCE (BODY)

The ability to lift heavy things, fight, and endure physically demanding situations.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- Give one success to another Teen acting at the same time, or a +1 bonus die to a later roll relating to this one.
- Impress, frighten, or humiliate.
- Pin your opponent.
- Take something from your opponent.
- Your opponent is knocked unconscious.
- You don't need to roll to overcome the exact same Trouble in the future.

MOVE (BODY)

The ability to climb high, balance, run fast, chase someone, or get away.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- Give one success to another Teen acting at the same time, or a +1 bonus die to a later roll relating to this one.
- Impress someone.
- Remain undetected.

TINKER (TECH)

The ability to build and manipulate machines and other mechanical items.

BUILD

The GM will tell you what you need in order to build something. Some examples of requirements are:

- You need a certain Item.
- You need to successfully **CALCULATE**.
- You need to successfully **COMPREHEND**.
- You need to successfully **PROGRAM** something.
- You need a lot of time.
- You need new tools.

When you have what you need, you roll to overcome the Trouble of actually making the thing. If the roll is successful, you write down the object as an Item with a bonus of +1.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- The thing is more durable than expected. Add +1 to the bonus (up to +3).
- The thing can do more than expected. Add +1 to the bonus (up to +3).
- The thing is more discreet than expected. Add +1 to the bonus (up to +3).



MANIPULATE

The **TINKER** skill can also be used to break, use, or jury-rig mechanical things, to pick locks, and drive motor vehicles. Sometimes you have to use **CALCULATE** first to figure out how to do it.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- Give one success to another Teen acting at the same time, or a +1 bonus die to a later roll relating to this one.
- You don't need to roll to overcome the exact same Trouble in the future.
- You do it quickly.
- You do it quietly.
- You show off.

PROGRAM (TECH)

The ability to create and manipulate computer programs and electronic devices. This is a sister skill to **TINKER**, but used for electronic things rather than mechanical.

CREATE

The GM will tell you what you need in order to create something. Some examples of requirements are:

AVOIDING TROUBLE

Sometimes, an NPC tries to hurt or manipulate you. In such a situation, describe how you try to avoid the Trouble, and roll for the appropriate skill. If it's a physical attack, like a punch to the face, **MOVE** or **FORCE** are used most often. If the NPC is doing something relational like seducing you or telling you lies, use **CHARM**. In situations where you need to rely on wits to understand something in time to avoid it, test **COMPREHEND**, and in situations where a sharp eye is required, like when you are about to walk into an ambush, test **INVESTIGATE**. If you aren't aware of what is about to happen, like when someone gives you a poisoned cigarette, the GM can decide that you don't get to roll to avoid it, or that it is Extremely Difficult or even Almost Impossible.



- You need a certain Item.
- You need to successfully **CALCULATE**.
- You need to successfully **COMPREHEND**.
- You need to successfully **TINKER** first.
- You need a lot of time.
- You need new tools.

When you have what you need, you roll to overcome the Trouble of actually creating the thing. If the roll is successful, write down the object as an Item with a bonus of +1.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- The thing is more effective than expected. Add +1 to the bonus (up to +3).
- The thing can do more than expected. Add +1 to the bonus (up to +3).

WHEN TO KNOW WHAT

There are four skills you can use to get information: **COMPREHEND**, **INVESTIGATE**, **CALCULATE**, and **EMPATHIZE**. In some cases, they will overlap. The GM and the players should decide together which skill is appropriate in any given situation, and in some cases, you may choose the better of two skills. The GM has final say. **COMPREHEND** is the broadest skill. It is used to remember things from school and to find information in libraries. **INVESTIGATE** is only used when looking for things, searching for hidden doors, or when examining a corpse or a crime scene. **CALCULATE** is used when you examine, study, or try to understand an object. Maybe you want to know how to destroy an alarm, or you want to know what the strange device on the roof is. **EMPATHIZE** is used to figure out things about conscious creatures, what they are feeling, planning to do, how to make them do something, or what they like or dislike. The skill can be used on humans, animals, or robots, as long as they are conscious.

MANIPULATE

The program skill can also be used to manipulate electronic items. Examples include infecting a computer with a virus, disabling an alarm or an electronic lock, confusing or controlling robots, and operating strange objects like time machines and transformation globes. Sometimes you have to use **CALCULATE** first to figure out how to do it.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- Give one success to another Teen acting at the same time, or a +1 bonus die to a later roll relating to this one.
- You don't need to roll to overcome the exact same Trouble in the future.
- You do it quickly.
- You get new or unexpected information.
- You show off.

CALCULATE (TECH)

The ability to know how technical objects work and how to use them. It could be robots, machines, magnetron ships, androids, or an alarm clock. If you succeed, you get to ask two questions:

- What is its purpose?
- How does it work?
- How can I use it?
- Who built it?
- What problems could it cause?
- Is it illegal?

BONUS EFFECT:

- Ask one additional question and take +1 die on one roll when you use the information (up to +3).

CONTACT (HEART)

The ability to know the right person and get in touch with her. You tell the GM who the person is, and roll to overcome the Trouble of finding her. If you succeed, you find her, or she finds you, ready and able to help. If you fail, the person doesn't want to help you or maybe she even wants to hurt, humiliate, or make life difficult for you, and will come looking for you.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- The contact has all the right tools with her.
- The contact may heal one of your Conditions.
- The contact brings more people, also ready to help.
- You don't have to roll to get in touch with the contact again during this Mystery.
- The contact knows something important.
- You may use the contact once as an Item with a +1 bonus (up to +3).

EXAMPLE

Player 1 (Linda): *I would like to get a hold of someone who knows how to stop strange diseases. Is there a doctor on the Islands that knows about weird shit?*

GM: *I don't know, is there?*

Player 1: *Ehm... Absolutely! There's a hermit living on Alholmen who used to work for the UN but who was fired for her controversial theories and methods. Her name is Christine Bachmann.*

GM: *Alright, test CONTACT.*

Player 1: *I fail...*

GM: *Just as you're talking about Christine, you see her getting out of a car in the parking lot. You know it's her only from recognizing the car 'cause she's wearing a hazmat suit and has what looks like a flamethrower on her back!*

CHARM (HEART)

The ability to charm, lie, befriend, and make people do what you want. As always, the GM decides what is plausible to achieve.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- She will keep believing you.
- You have formed a lasting relationship.
- She will take risks to help you.
- She will try to persuade others into believing you.
- She's frightened, confused, or impressed.
- She's infatuated with you.

LEAD (HEART)

The ability to make your friends work together, to help them focus on the task at hand in difficult situations, and to soothe them when they are scared or confused. If you spend time with the other Teens, you may inspire and prepare them for a difficult situation. You roll to overcome Trouble, and your successes become a dice pool (see the table below). In the upcoming scenes, you may distribute bonus dice to the other Teens when they roll to overcome Troubles – but only if they do as you say. You cannot give these dice to yourself. If you fail to **LEAD**, you must check a Condition, and ask the other Teens how your relationship has been hurt by your failure. There may only be one dice pool active at a time – the group cannot have more than one leader.

LEADING OTHER TEENS

Successes	Dice Pool
1 Success	2 Dice
2 Successes	4 Dice
3 Successes	6 Dice

If you spend time privately with another Teen, giving her advice and comfort, you may heal one of her Conditions. You roll to overcome Trouble, and if you succeed, the Condition is healed. If you fail, you suffer the same Condition. You cannot heal Broken Teens using this skill.

BONUS EFFECTS:

- Heal an additional Condition.
- Heal one of your own Conditions.

INVESTIGATE (MIND)

The ability to find hidden objects, understand Clues, solve puzzles, or survey a place or a situation. If you pass the test, you get to ask two of the following questions:

- What is hidden here and where is it?
- What does it mean?
- What has happened here?
- How can I get into/out of/past something?
- What threats can I perceive here?
- Where is it?



If the roll fails, you have misunderstood something, someone has found out something about you, or you suffer a Condition. The GM decides.

BONUS EFFECT:

- Ask one additional question and get +1 bonus on one roll when you use the information later (up to +3).

COMPREHEND (MIND)

The ability to have the right piece of information or to be able to find it at the school library or some similar location. The GM will give you the information, or ask you to come up with something on your own. If you fail the roll, the GM gives you bad news or the wrong information (the GM doesn't say which it is).

BONUS EFFECT:

- You get additional information and +1 bonus die to one roll when you use the information later (up to +3).

EMPATHIZE (MIND)

The ability to study what makes a person, an animal, or a conscious robot or android tick, and how to find its weakness. You need time to study or talk to the creature or person to be able to test the skill. If you succeed, you get to ask two questions, such as:

- What is her weak spot?
- How can I make her do something?
- What does she feel?
- What does she want?
- What will she do?
- Is she lying to me?



If the roll fails, the GM either gives you bad news or the wrong information (the GM doesn't tell which it is) or makes something bad happen.

BONUS EFFECT:

- Ask one additional question and take +1 die on one roll when you use the information later (up to +3).

EXAMPLE

GM: *The count sits at the head of the table together with the wealthiest of the guests. He digs into a huge tray of caviar.*

Player 3 (Eva): *I want to know what he feels about the recent events in the mansion. I test **EMPATHIZE**, 5 dice.*

GM: *Nope! You have to start a conversation with him, or observe him for some time before you can roll.*

Player 3: *Okay, I grab a bottle of champagne and make my way to the head of the table and lean in close. "More champagne, sir?"*

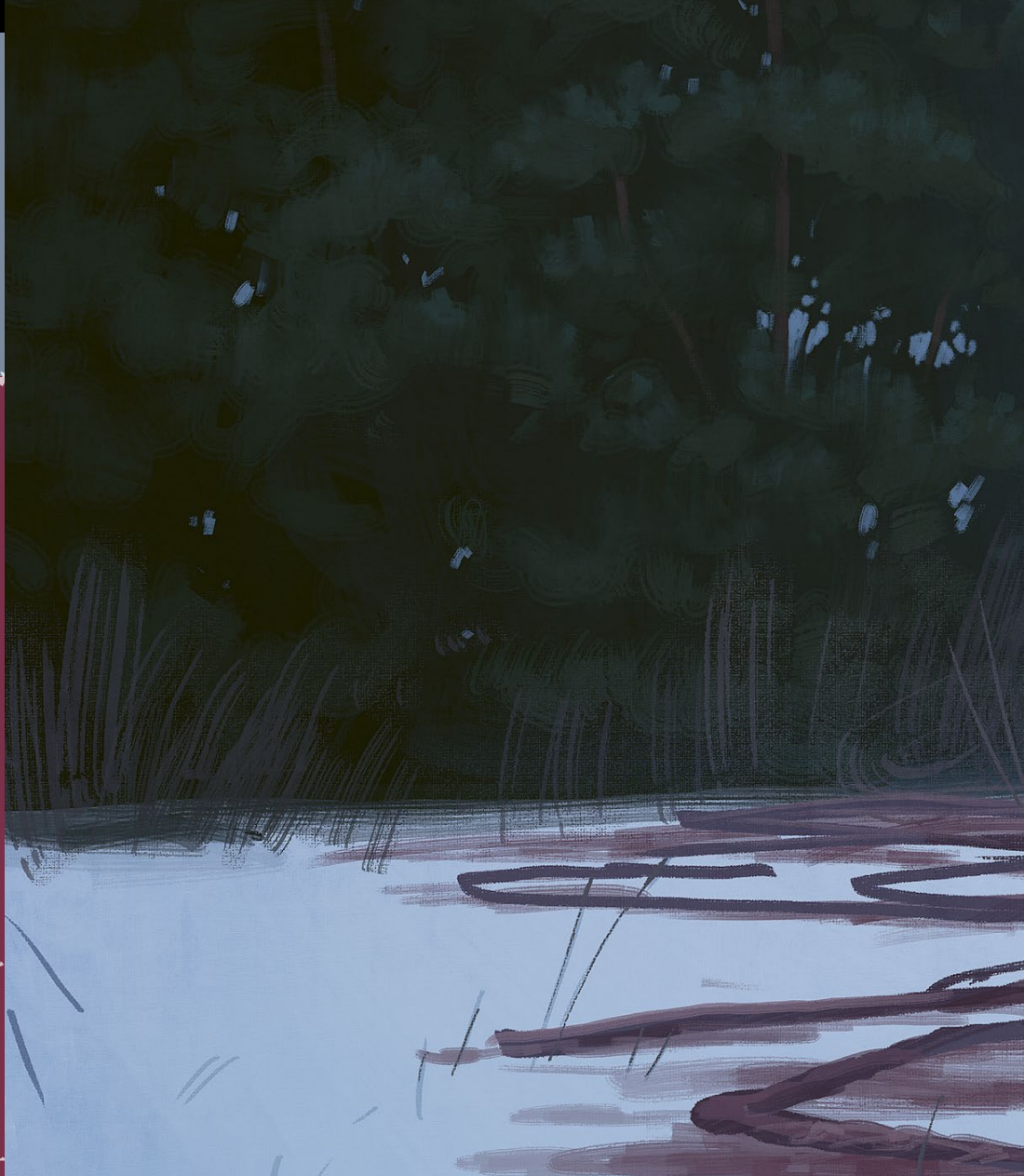
GM: *He looks up at you, opens his caviar-black mouth and says: "My glass should never be empty, do you hear?"*

Player 3: *I whisper in his ear as I pour: "Are you a real count? I've always wanted to meet a real count!"*

GM: *Okay, now you may test **EMPATHIZE**. If you pass, you may ask questions as you talk.*

06

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THE MYSTERY

In the spring of 1995 we sat waiting to get a copy of Doom. When the last disk was being copied, he asked us if we wanted to see something even cooler. (Cooler than sawing demons apart with chainsaws? Impossible!) We followed him down into the basement, where he heaved open a large, round hatch in the concrete floor.

“This hatch leads straight down into the tunnels in the Loop. Look!”

He shone a flashlight down into the darkness. We leaned forward. A ladder disappeared down the concrete wall, straight down to where it plunged into dark water. Stefan’s voice almost broke with delight.

“Extraterrestrial water from 51 Pegasi B!”



A Mystery is a scenario for the Teens to play. Just like a movie, a novel, or a TV show episode, a Mystery contains characters and a plot, and often a disastrous event of some sort for the players to stop. A Mystery has no set chain of events, however – which turns the story takes and how it ends will depend on the choices of the Teens, and, to some extent, on chance. There are four complete Mysteries ready for play in Chapters 9–12 of this book. Most Mysteries take a couple of hours to play. Each Mystery is structured in six phases to help the GM to set scenes and put the Teens in Trouble. Mysteries are the primary way to play this game, preferably for one-shots or shorter campaigns, but an alternative method of play uses something called the Adventure Landscape instead – read more

about that in Chapter 7. This chapter will explain the structure of a Mystery, and guide GMs who wish to write their own.

FOR THE GM'S EYES ONLY

From this point onward, the book is for the GM's eyes only. Players should not read past this point, as it will spoil the fun for everyone to know the hidden truths of the game beforehand.



INSPIRATION FOR MYSTERIES

Books, films, and TV can give you lots of inspiration for the game. X-Files-style conspiracies and kooky, Twin Peaks-inspired locals can help you fill the Islands with danger and drama for the players to explore. The murder of Laura Palmer is an excellent first scene for a Mystery, for example. When setting Everyday Life scenes, you could draw from the darker, more serious episodes of Buffy the Vampire Slayer or Veronica Mars. The writing of Stephen King is an almost endless source of Mystery material: the Pet Sematary could be a place deep in the Vac where the Teens' younger siblings go to bury their deceased pets; Under The Dome could take place around the Loop after Krafta attempts to isolate a contagion by sealing the Islands inside an enormous force field, and both The Tommyknockers and Dreamcatchers could work well with a different setting. Sci-fi movies contain lots of interesting ideas and concepts, if the violence is toned down a bit. Twelve Monkeys can inspire great Mysteries about time travel, and the Matrix trilogy could be turned into a scenario suite where the inhabitants of the Islands are trapped in a dreamworld they believe to be reality. The witch from the Blair Witch Project could perhaps be a mad scientist using strange new inventions to enslave unsuspecting youngsters. The Teens might enter and get lost in an advanced video game, like in the Existenz movie. Nordic noir novels like those about Kurt Wallander can give you many good murder stories for a classic whodunit-session. The degradation of the safety of the welfare state as described in the Lasermannen book will give you an on-point picture of Sweden in the gos.



THE TRUTH OF THE MYSTERY

The first thing you need to do when you write a Mystery is to create the Truth at the heart of it. What is the story about? You can draw inspiration from any of the many conflicts stirring across the Islands.

THE AUTHORITIES VERSUS THE PEOPLE: Agents from the intelligence services or from private corporations such as Krafta are putting their experiments or profit above the safety of the Islands' residents.

- Krafta scientists have invented a chemical that radically heightens the human brain's computation speed. They use the unsuspecting residents of the Islands as lab rats, until something goes wrong.
- Government agents try to silence people who speak up about the Loop Disorder.

CRIME VERSUS LAW AND ORDER: People outside of society attempt to use or harm others.

- A criminal gang uses stolen surveillance tech to assume control of the Islands.
- Someone buys a stolen warbot on the black market to get back at society.
- A group of criminals kidnap a high-ranking Krafta employee. To buy themselves time to hide their victim before demanding a ransom, the kidnappers replace her with an android copy, but no one notices the difference.

TECHNOLOGY VERSUS HUMANITY: Robots or other machines become sentient, and decide to break free or exact revenge on their human masters.

- A supercomputer tires of its users' mediocre intellectual gifts and decides to start programming them instead of the other way around.
- A computer game becomes sentient and starts hacking the brains of the players.
- The flooding of the old Loop tunnels pushes water into an abandoned robot factory, where the rusting machinery begins producing warbots with confused and erratic behavior.

TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL VERSUS THE FOLLY OF MAN: Humanity's inability to fathom the implications of the

new technologies, due to negligence, stupidity, or malice, turns them against their masters.

- A scientist inadvertently gives her child a watch with the power to hurl the Islands backward or forward in time.
- A scientist accidentally kills a research subject, and goes on a murder spree to cover up the first death.

TEENS VERSUS ADULTS: Teens will always find a way to break the stupid rules dictated by adults.

- Some teens are using stolen Loop objects to create perfectly forged videos and images, and use them to embarrass people they don't like.
- A teenager uses a hypnosis ray to rule his school, forcing the other students to do what he was never allowed to as a kid, and enslaving the teachers.

TEENS VERSUS TEENS: The teen years are full of hierarchies, love drama, and power plays.

- Some teens dare each other to go deep into the Evacuation Zone, where they are taken hostage by a lunatic who claims ownership of the area.
- A teenager gets back at his former best friend by using secret technology to swap her mind with a pig's.
- Some bullies throw their victim into the water-filled tunnels of the Loop. The victim is pulled away into the darkness by the strong currents.

ADULTS VERSUS TEENS: Some adults have become so deranged that they attack kids and Teens.

- A woman hypnotizes kids into thinking they are her kids in an attempt to rebuild her family after they died in a car crash.
- A sadistic chemist begins circulating candy that causes people who eat it to stop registering sensory input from other people. The victims think they are the last person on Earth.
- A scientist offers to put the brains of wealthy clients into the bodies of teenagers for money.

WAR AND DISASTER: Terrible events in the Outside World eventually affect the Islands as well.

- Soldiers from the war in the Balkans fight over a Krafta Corp invention.
- A bereaved parent tries to resurrect family members who perished in the Estonia disaster.

OUR WORLD VERSUS OTHERS: The Loop has made it possible to build machines that open portals to other ages and dimensions. At the intersections, the different realities wrestle for dominance.

- People are changing after drinking water containing alien bacteria.
- An extraterrestrial being uses subliminal messages to force Island residents to open a portal to another world, possibly allowing something horrible to slip through.
- Someone from the future uses a time machine to make money from betting, but the time trips have unexpected side effects.
- A dying world sends agents to the Islands to steal human babies.
- Some adults form a cult worshipping the strange creatures believed to be living in the Evacuation Zone, and prepare a human sacrifice.

THE MYSTERY AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The narrative of the game consists of two, often interwoven, parts: the Mystery and Everyday Life. In one scene, the Teens will attempt to contain a runaway, tech-enhanced bear, and in the next, they console their sister after their parents forgot her birthday again. Some scenes could be about both the Mystery and Everyday Life, and it is your job as the GM to mix Mystery scenes with Everyday Life. The Mystery is the main story, and usually more scenes are related to the Mystery than to Everyday Life. The Mysteries in this book contain a beginning, suggested endings, and a range of characters and locations for the Teens to interact with as you play. To set scenes related to Everyday Life, you need to get to know the Teens – see below.

PLAYING EVERYDAY LIFE

To come up with scenes related to Everyday Life, you should consult the players' character sheets, and talk to the players to get a picture of their Teens' Problems, Shames, and Relationships. You should also keep in mind their answers to your questions during the final step of the character creation process. Write down ideas for Everyday Life scenes when you come

TROUBLE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

When setting an Everyday Life scene that contains Trouble, there are a few different tools you can use:

- **Give the Teen something precious that you can take away later:** Her love interest seems to share her sentiment. Mom promises her a new moped. She gets perfect marks on her essay.
- **Attack or threaten the Teen:** The bullies are waiting after school to kick her ass. Her sister accuses her of taking drugs. Her parents ground her.
- **Shame the Teen:** Embarrassing rumors are spread at school. Someone teases her in front of the whole class.
- **Introduce a mystery:** Something is out place. Mom is acting weird.
- **Take something from the Teen:** The boy she's into was just feigning interest. Mom has gambled away the moped money. Her cheating on her essay is exposed by a classmate.
- **Present an opportunity:** A rival NPC displays weakness. Her older sister asks for help. Mom and Dad want to have a nice family dinner.
- **Let slip something important:** The teacher's enthusiastic lesson about butterflies is a clue to him being responsible for the poisonous chrysalises found across the Islands. Dad's breakdown at the dinner table is a sign that he's nearing his limits.



up with them, and save them for later. Scenes related to Everyday Life can be mundane scenes with no obvious Trouble. Such scenes illustrate normal suburban life, to provide a contrast to the dramatic events of the Mystery, and give the players a chance to get to know their Teens better. Alternatively, you can set Everyday Life scenes with more apparent Trouble. If so, try to link the Everyday Life scenes to the Mystery scenes: the kidnapping victim they are trying to rescue is actually one of the Teens' aunts; someone's mom is dating the killer, etc.

SCENES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

Below is a list of tips to consult when setting Everyday Life scenes.

- **FOCUS ON ONE EVENT.** If the scene is about the Teens being yelled at by a teacher with unreasonable expectations, it should end when the yelling is over or when the Teens leave the room.
- **DON'T DECIDE THE ENDING BEFOREHAND.** Be curious and attentive, and share some of the narrative control with the players. Have them tell you about their Teens and their world. Listen to what they say, and use it later to support the story.
- **QUIZ THEM FOR DETAILS.** What does the vomit taste like? What do you see when you look in the mirror? What detail gave away that your mom didn't go to work today?
- **CREATE EMOTIONAL NPCs AND DON'T RUSH THE SCENES.** Everyday Life can be a break from the drama and danger of the Mystery, and a much needed respite for the Teens and the NPCs. They can let their guard down and show emotion – love, weakness, grief.
- **SHOW, DON'T TELL.** Don't just tell the players that you're about to play a scene where one of their moms has figured out they snuck out last night. Have her wait for them in the kitchen as they come home, angrily tapping her fingers against the table, asking if they have anything they want to tell her.
- **CREATE TO DESTROY.** If breaking up a couple is going to feel real, you first need to play a few scenes where the relationship is stable and loving. If you want to introduce a mom's new boyfriend, first have her go on a couple of dates, receive flowers from an unknown admirer, and stay up late whispering into the phone.



- **NOTHING IS STATIC.** Relationships, financial security, friendships, and family stability – everything evolves and falls apart. Don't let things happen too fast, though. Use details and seemingly insignificant events to hint at disaster further down the line before you wreak havoc in the Teens' lives.
- **USE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PLAYERS.** Some players will appreciate their Teens facing the same kinds of Trouble as they themselves are struggling with in real life. Some will want darkness and despair, others only humor and hope. Some players don't want anything bad to happen at all.
- **LINK YOUR NPCs.** The boyfriend of one of the Teens is the brother of another. A weird aunt is teaching math at school. The families of two Teens are

feuding. This way of connecting NPCs to more than one Teen will make Everyday Life scenes more interesting regardless of whose character plays the leading role.

- **GIVE IT TIME.** As the GM, you're responsible for the passing of time in the game. Don't be afraid to set scenes several hours or days apart.

INDIVIDUAL VERSUS GROUP SCENES

Scenes of Everyday Life tend to focus on individual Teens, rather than the whole group. For this reason, keep Everyday Life scenes short and succinct, and

EVERYDAY LIFE SCENES WITHOUT APPARENT TROUBLE

- A Teen's younger sister wants him to read a story to her before she goes to sleep.
- The gang throws a party to blow off some steam.
- A Teen gets a compliment from her soccer coach.
- The sexy teacher's assistant become nervous during class and makes a fool of himself.
- A Teen and her girlfriend cuddle and watch TV.



don't draw them out. Otherwise, the other players have to wait and listen a lot, which could be fun for a scene or two, but not for much longer. Alternatively, you could try to find ways to have several Teens present in the same Everyday Life scene instead: two of the Teens hang out after school; the group is collectively punished by their teacher for something only one of them did; parents invite all of them over for dinner, etc. Playing siblings or housemates makes for easy inclusion of multiple Teens in the same Everyday Life scene. If it isn't possible to feature more than one Teen in a scene, you can let the other players play NPCs for this scene instead.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MYSTERY

A Mystery is played in six phases: Introducing the Teens, Introducing the Mystery, Investigation, Confrontation, Aftermath, and Change. The GM decides if she wants to keep strictly to these phases or improvise. Some players will want the GM to indicate when the story moves from one phase to the next, while others will want the GM to keep the structure to her-



EVERYDAY LIFE SCENES WITH TROUBLE

- A Teen finds a love letter to his girlfriend from someone else.
- Dad has a meltdown and refuses to go to work.
- A gang from another part of the Islands show up looking for a fight.
- Some girls at the party begins trashing the apartment.
- A Teen finds drugs in her sister's room.
- Mom comes home late one night together with an annoying teacher from school, whom everyone knows is married.





self to get a sense of being part of a narrative where anything can happen.

PHASE 1 - INTRODUCING THE TEENS

The Mystery always starts with each of the Teens playing a scene from Everyday Life, with or without Trouble. This scene helps the players to get to know the Teens, as each of the characters is introduced to the rest of the group. The GM may set the scenes on her own, or ask the players for a suggestion. The GM can get inspiration from the Teens' Problems, Shames, and Relationships. A general piece of advice is to choose the most obvious scene. Don't overthink it. The GM should cut the scene when it feels done, and move on to the next. These scenes should be kept rather short. After Phase 1, most scenes will be played with all the Teens present, acting as a group.

THE PHASES OF THE MYSTERY

1. **Introducing the Teens** - Each Teen gets an Everyday Life scene, with or without Trouble.
2. **Introducing the Mystery** - The Teens discover or hear about something strange or dangerous that must be investigated and stopped.
3. **Investigation** - The Teens visit Locations, discover Clues, and overcome Trouble, while at the same time having to manage Everyday Life. The Mystery intensifies and Disaster looms. This is the core of the Mystery, where most of the scenes take place.
4. **Confrontation** - The Teens attempt to resolve the Mystery and avert the ensuing Disaster. This is usually played as one or two dramatic scenes where the fate of the Islands hangs in the balance.
5. **Aftermath** - The Mystery has either been solved, or some sort of Disaster has struck the Islands. Each Teen gets an Everyday Life scene.
6. **Change** - Players who want to may now change their Teen's Problem, Iconic Item, Shame, or Relationships. The group may collectively decide to change their Friction. The Teens are awarded Experience Points and may use them to purchase Skills. If they performed noble or heroic deeds during the Mystery, they may heal Scars.



GM: *Let's go! It's a hot summer day and there are flies and mosquitos everywhere. Everything appears to be happening in slow motion, and the heat blurs the fields in the distance. Who wants the first scene?*

Player 1 (Linda): *I'd like it to be a scene where Linda fights with her foster mom.*

GM: *What have you done to upset her?*

MYSTERY INTRODUCTIONS

- Strange lights have been spotted over the last few nights, and a girl suddenly vanishes one morning. The glass in her bedroom window has melted and trickled down the wall.
- Small and very localized earthquakes hit a part of Adelsö, causing several houses to sink into the subterranean network of Loop tunnels below.
- The Teens receive a note telling them to follow a hooded person standing across the street. The person starts walking mechanically toward the outskirts of town.
- A naked man, screaming in terror, appears out of thin air in front of the Teens, levitating, but disappears again after exactly 3.72 seconds.
- A party becomes weird when the guests, one by one, sit down on the floor and begin chanting in a foreign language, as if in a trance.
- Mom claims the TV is talking to her. At night, she paints beautiful landscapes of purple, alien shores, and magnesium-colored waves.
- The Teens experience recurring nightmares about the Islands sinkings to the bottom of Lake Mälaren.
- Someone's kid brother says there are tiny, pink men living in his closet.
- One of the Teens receives a floppy disk and a note with coordinates to an entry point into the water-filled tunnels of the Loop deep in the Evacuation Zone.
- Great-grandma passes during the night. She has covered the walls of her bedroom with post-its warning about "the gray eyes".
- A bleeding woman asks the Teens for help but before they can do anything, G-men in black suits and sunglasses show up and force the woman into a dark van with tinted windows.

Player 1: *Skipped my holiday job and taken money from her purse instead.*

GM: *Okay. You're in the car outside Konsum and have just loaded all the groceries in the backseat but your mom doesn't start the car. She smokes in silence and looks away into the distance.*

Player 1: *"Are we going or what? I promised Gustaf I'd meet up with him before practice".*

GM: *She extinguishes her cigarette in the dashboard ashtray. "I was up at the plant nursery to see you earlier today, but Bertil said you'd quit. He said you only showed up the first two days.*

PHASE 2 - INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

Phase 2 introduces the Mystery. Have the Teens encounter or hear about something that worries or interests them. This usually happens in a single scene where all the Teenagers are present, but it can be stretched out across several scenes. If the Mystery was introduced without all the Teens being present, you should set up a scene where everyone is present and able to talk to each other, before moving on to Phase 3. You can use the Truth of the Mystery to figure out how to introduce it. Let the Teens get a little glimpse of what's wrong, and what it could lead to. Someone or something has been injured, killed, or changed, or has disappeared. Something new and out of place appears to have arrived under strange circumstances. If the Teens don't seem interested in investigating the Mystery, you should remind them of their Drives.

PHASE 3 - INVESTIGATION

The Investigation is the largest part of the Mystery, and where a majority of the scenes will take place. The Teens visit Locations and interact with NPCs to gather Clues, confront Trouble, and learn more about the Mystery. Alternate between Everyday Life scenes and scenes related to the Mystery, and try to set scenes featuring all of the Teens if possible. You can let the players take part in setting the scenes by simply ask-

ing: “Where do you meet and what do you do?” New Trouble can be added along the way – alarms going off when they open a door for example, or a robot suddenly coming to life to chase them away.

THE MAP

A core feature of Phase 3 is usually a map of the part of the game world where the Mystery takes place. Place the map on the table for everyone to see. Most Mysteries will come with two maps – one for the players, and a secret one for the GM, with all the Locations already marked. In most Mysteries, there will be three Locations to visit during this phase, which is a good number of Locations for a Mystery spanning one or two sessions. When you write your own Mysteries, you may plan for more or fewer Locations.

LOCATIONS

Each Location will usually contain some sort of Clue, and/or a suggestion for possible Trouble. Locations can be mundane or fantastic – it can be anything from a classroom to a secret magnetron airstrip equipped with alien tech. It doesn’t matter if the Teens don’t visit all the Locations, as they can be saved for later Mysteries. In some Mysteries, which Locations to visit and how to get to them will be fairly obvious. In others, merely finding out where to go and how to get there is Trouble all on its own. **CONTACT** and **COMPREHEND** can be used to get help and information.

CLUES

A Clue may be a piece of information or gossip, a thing, a diary, a drawing, tracks in the dirt, or an event that reveals something. Clues reveal something important about the Mystery. Clues can be connected to each other, so that the first Clue leads to the second, leading to the third, and so on, until eventually the Teens are able to resolve the Mystery. Alternatively, the three Clues could individually point in the same direction, or be intertwined so that the Teens need all three to understand the big picture, but may find them in any order.

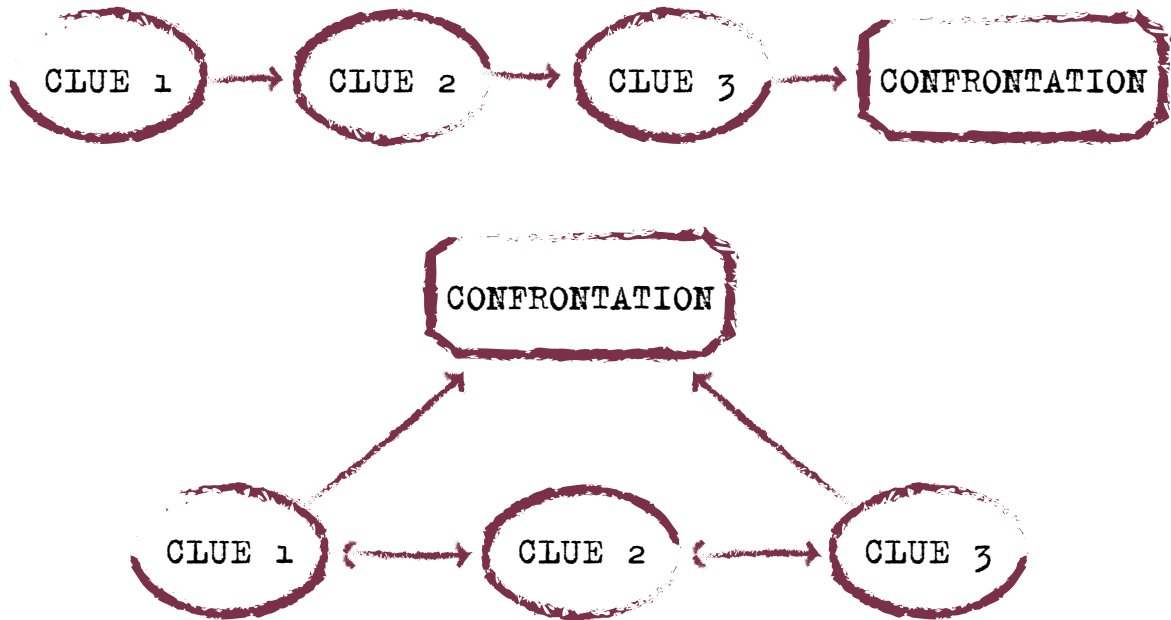
CLUES MAY REVEAL:

- Where to go next
- What will happen

- Who is involved
- What has happened
- How to solve a problem or solve the Mystery
- How to use a strange machine or communicate with a creature
- What is threatening the Teens
- How to get to a certain place or time
- What will happen if the Mystery isn’t solved
- Something else

EXAMPLES OF LOCATIONS WITH CLUES AND TROUBLE:

- The sewage treatment plant is a huge complex, and all the employees wear white coveralls. If the Teens manage to get past the guards, they can speak to engineer Jenny Lauritsson, who informs them that two G-men have been on multiple visits to the plant, and that they have been acting strangely. Jenny has also seen the agents coming and going from the Hotel Lunden outside of town.
- The school library computers have modems that enable the Teens to contact the people trapped in the computer game. However, the library is the domain of “Goateye” Andersson, an overzealous librarian who is very strict about the computers being used for school work only.
- Olga Romanova is an elderly woman of Russian descent living in a decrepit house near the school. If the Teens manage to convince her that they are trying to stop her son, she will show them to Michael’s old room, where she still keeps the particle disintegrator he built and used on himself ten years ago. There are blueprints lying around that can be used to build a device to reverse the process and bring Michael back to his body. Olga doesn’t know that the sounds from inside the walls are Michael moving through the plumbing, listening to everything they are saying.
- Teen Daniella Roos lives in her parents’ basement and has an entrance of her own. The room is filled with green spores, and Daniella is lying in her bed covered in the stuff. The spores are drawn to movement, and will try to infect the Teens when they enter the room. If they manage to speak to Daniella, she’ll tell them that her older brother found a strange plant in a swamp in the Vac and brought it home. They can also find this out by reading her diary.



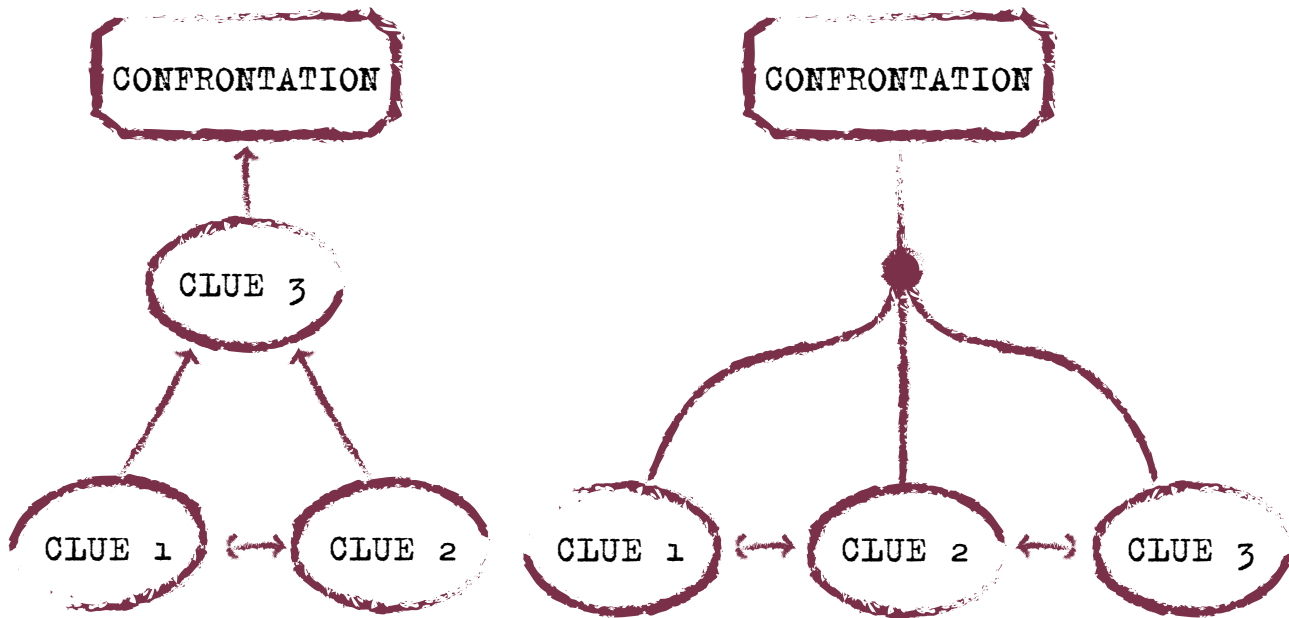
- The children that have run away from the lab are hiding in the water tower. They have a couple of blankets, some crackers, and a few bottles of water. They are terrified, and know absolutely nothing about the outside world. They will use their neurological implants to confuse, scare, or even attack intruders. If the Teens manage to talk to them, the kids can show them the lab entrance on a map.

COUNTDOWN

A Countdown will increase in severity step by step, and end in Disaster unless the Teens stop it. As you play, advance the Countdown step by step at regular intervals without telling the players. Instead, set scenes where they either experience the consequences of the Countdown advancing, or are told about them by an NPC. If, for example, the next step in the Countdown is a Machine Cult abduction, set a scene where the Teens go over to a friend's house only to find her gone, with her room turned over from fighting. Alternatively, the Teens are rung by the parents of their friend who hasn't seen their daughter since last night and are getting worried. Some steps in the Countdown won't have immediate effects, and are instead only noticeable later in the scenario. If the fake teacher has rigged the school with explosives, it is unlikely that anyone will notice until the Teens figure out that he is the killer and he retreats

COUNTDOWN EXAMPLES

1. The spores from the Evacuation Zone take over the Roos' house, turning it into a greenhouse to cultivate more spores and eventually dominate the whole area.
2. The neighbors down the road are infected. The spores have the ability to control peoples' minds and command their puppets to carry on their normal lives so no one will suspect anything.
3. The spores now control about thirty households and are spreading to nearby farms and villages. A "hive mother" now lives in the Roos house, and has learned strategic and logical thinking. The spores can now float long distances through the air and attack people with electric discharges.



to the teachers' lounge to kill himself by blowing up the school.

DISASTER

If the Teens are unsuccessful in solving the Mystery, it will lead to some form of Disaster, for themselves or someone else. The Disaster is usually immediately noticeable, but could also not be recognized for what it is until later Mysteries. A Disaster could also be something not happening, a catastrophic chain of events outside of the Mystery simply running its course. Disaster should only strike if the Teens fail to resolve the Mystery, not if the story is progressing slowly and you're nearing the end of the session. If you're pressed for time, skip a few locations, give the players the Clues they need, and let them have a crack at solving the Mystery! When designing Disasters, keep in mind that they shouldn't make the game world unplayable.

TOOLS FOR PHASE 3

Phase 3 is the main part of the story, and below are some useful story tools for you as the GM.

PUZZLES AND RIDDLES

Some Mysteries contain puzzles and riddles for the players to solve, rather than their Teens. Examples of this are texts written in code, or pieces of a map that

DISASTER EXAMPLES

- The spores suddenly appear to die, but have in reality only retreated back into their host bodies and are still in control. Over the coming years, the hive mother quietly expands her control across the country.
- Krafta Corp's experiments continue, and the journalists writing about them are taken care of.
- The robber uses the robot to attack an armored car in Stenhamra, disappearing with a king's ransom in cash, and leaving ten people gravely injured in his wake. One of the victims is a person close to one of the Teens.
- The random, perfectly natural deaths continue, one every five years, but no one pieces the pattern together or suspects foul play.





TYPICAL RETRIBUTION COUNTDOWN

1. Michael infiltrates and assumes control over a computer belonging to one of the Teens, where he leaves threatening messages telling them to stop investigating the wiring in the village.
2. Michael attempts to sabotage the Teens' efforts, for example, by making their computers print offensive images when their parents are near.
3. Michael enters the wiring in a house where one of the Teens is living when the whole group is present. He electrifies all doors and windows to shock anyone trying to get out, and then starts an electrical fire to try to kill them all.



must be assembled correctly. You tell the players that this Mystery cannot be solved by using skills. Often, these puzzles are presented as a handout, a document, or an object that is given to the players.

MORE MAPS

Draw new maps (quick sketches will do) during the Mystery, depicting houses and other locations where scenes take place, to give the players an overview of what's happening.

RETRIBUTION

NPCs connected to a Mystery can have their own Countdowns showing how they try to counteract the Teens' successes or attack them. These so-called Retribution Countdowns generally move a step whenever the Teens find a new Clue, or when they fail to hide their actions from antagonistic NPCs.

THE TILT

The Tilt is when something unexpected happens that changes the situation in a fundamental way. This usually happens toward the end of Phase 3, and is often what leads to the Confrontation. The Tilt can be linked to a Location or a Countdown. It could place the Teens in a moral dilemma – will they stop the comatose woman from entering other people's minds, even though that is her only way of interacting with the world? Will they report the robbers to the cops, even though they use the stolen money to help refugees from the Balkans?

PHASE 4 – CONFRONTATION

The Confrontation is the finale of the Mystery. It could be a Location or an event, or both. The Teens have figured out the nature of the Mystery, and may now try to resolve it – by dismantling the time machine, freeing the hostages, or turning the killer in to the cops, for example. Make sure that all the Teens are present during the Confrontation, so that no player misses out on the most important scenes of the Mystery. If the Teens fail during the Confrontation, the Countdown continues. Only sometimes will they have enough time

to try again. Even if they succeed, elements of the Mystery may remain unresolved or uncracked. They can be used to create follow-up Mysteries.

PHASE 5 – AFTERMATH

Life moves on. After the Confrontation, set one scene from Everyday Life for each of the Teens. The scenes can take place minutes, hours, or even days after the Confrontation. Despite their heroism, things remain the same – those German verbs ain't gonna learn themselves, and Mom and Dad are still fighting. Nobody believes the Teens when they talk about the strange things they have seen. All the evidence is destroyed, or can be explained away. These scenes usually don't contain Trouble. If you are pressed for time, let the players describe a short series of snapshots from their Everyday Lives instead.

DEATH

The Teen is no Kid anymore. She is aware of her mortality and how fragile life can be. Nothing will ever be the same as it once was. Everything that is now is doomed to be buried, eaten by maggots and forgotten.

Death is always close at hand in *Things from the Flood*. It is an excellent device for creating suspense and horror. A Teen can find her mother killed at the breakfast table, or the family dog rotting in a ditch. In Biology the class investigate the way worms grow in dead meat.

Remind the Teens of their own, and others, mortality. The once so powerful robot is now gathering rust in the quarry. The lumberjack who has been transformed by a virus from outer space is searching for the hidden Teens, his chainsaw full of bits of flesh and blood.

The only way a Teen can die in the game is by becoming broken and then failing her Scar roll. Read more about this on page 64.

The little death, la petite mort, is also close at hand. The teenage years is full of longing after sex and orgasm, and the fear of losing oneself in feelings for someone else. The horror of, and the longing for, intimacy is the flip side of death. What we achieve in life will be lost. Let relations die. Challenge the Teens friendships. Shatter their fundamentals.

FAREWELL

If anyone of the Teens took a Scar during the game

EXAMPLES OF TILTS

- The sentient computer game wasn't really destroyed – it has uploaded itself into the mind of a friend of the group!
- The boy the Teens have been sheltering turns out to be a runaway robot responsible for the murders of everyone that has tried to hunt it down.
- The teacher who first came down with the growth virus turns out to be the scientist who created it, in a futile attempt to develop super powers to be able to stand the students.
- The killer turns out to have been only targeting people who subjected her to cruelty as a child.

CONFRONTATION EXAMPLES

- The Teens have tracked the androids to a rusty magnetron ship in the woods on the south side of Adelsö. The androids are just about to execute the kidnapped politician.
- The Teens and one of their uncles sit in his living room and have both just figured out that it is he who has been terrorizing the community in his sleep. He pulls out a gun and puts it on the table in front of him.
- An enormous warbot from the future is about to make it through the portal. The Teens must make it past the professor to close the portal.
- The cult members have gathered on the field and are looking up toward the strange flying object descending from above. Unless the Teens prevent it, the cultists will be abducted.

TEENS ON THE WRONG TRACK

If the players misinterpret the information they find, or fail crucial rolls and end up in the wrong Locations, there are a number of ways in which you can handle this:

- **Play the game.** Keep setting scenes along the wrong track and let the group investigate Locations that give them nothing. Advance the Disaster Countdown as usual. This will give the players the feeling that the world is for real, that their failures will carry actual consequences. You run the risk of the players losing heart, however.
- **Add new Locations.** Invent new dramatic and interesting Locations that are unrelated to the Mystery (you can use Hooks from the Adventure Landscape, for example) to remove the feeling of playing a dead end. This might give the players too much confusing information, however, as they will have a hard time telling what's connected to the Mystery from what isn't.
- **Talk to the players.** Tell them that they are on the wrong track and remind them of Clues they might have missed. This is the easiest way to get on with the Mystery, but it might feel like cheating as it makes the players' own choices less important.
- **Move Clues.** Move the Clues to whatever Location the players are investigating. This turns the wrong track into the right one, but take care not to give the players a sense that their failures are meaningless.



session and failed her death roll, that player can now use her scene to say goodbye to friends and family. For instance, by playing out a scene where the Teen dies at hospital or where the family moves away from the area.

IN MEMORIAM

If one or more Teens dies or disappear during the session, either by extended Trouble or if the player herself choose a more brutal ending, the individual scenes during the aftermath is exchanged for a group scene where all Teens participate. This scene is a memorial to the victim (or victims) where the survivors are confronted by the loss of the their friend either by changes in local society or through school friends, teachers, the victim's family and friends:

- Funeral or memorial
- Telling the victim's parents
- A minute of silence in school
- A last beer with the gang

During this scene each surviving Teen gets to say something memorable about the victim. Something that have affected them, or the group during play. This could be a memory of thankfulness, sadness or even anger.

PHASE 6 - CHANGE

After the Mystery, discuss with the players whether or not the Teens have changed or learned something new from the experience. Each player reads her Teen's Problem, Shame, Iconic Item, and Relationships out loud, and may change any of them if she'd like to. Most often, these aspects stay the same, but if the player is bored with some aspect of her Teen, or if something happened during the Mystery that demands change, it should be changed. If the Teen solved her Problem, choose a new one – use what happened in the Mystery as inspiration. All Conditions are healed between Mysteries. If enough time has passed, a Teen have have become a year older. A Teen who turns 20 moves on in life, leaving adolescence behind. Her player then creates a new Teen. The players may stop playing their current characters and create new ones between Mysteries. There should preferably not be more than one Teen of the same Type in the group at any one time.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

After the Mystery, or the session if the Mystery continues, the Teens get Experience Points (XP) that the players can use to increase skill levels. Read the five questions below out loud to the group, and let the players answer them. Each “yes” answer translates to 1 XP. Increasing a skill level by 1 costs 5 XP. No skill may be raised above 5, and the Teens may only save up to 10 XP. XP may be spent before or after a session, never during play.

QUESTIONS FOR EXPERIENCE POINTS

1. Did you participate in the session? (Each Teen present always gets at least 1 XP)
2. Did your Problem or Relationships get you in Trouble?
3. Were you Broken and forced to take a Scar?
4. Did you put yourself in harm’s way to resolve the Mystery?
5. Did you learn something new? (What?)

HEALING SCARS

If a Teen has performed a heroic or self-sacrificing action, and in doing so put herself in harm’s way, during a game session, or if she has experienced a dramatic everyday scene that has changed the way she sees herself and the world, the Teen gets to heal one or more Scars after the session. The players get to decide together if the act was enough to warrant this or not.

The Teen can only heal Scars that have been accepted (page 64), that is Scars that have already been checked and used for an automatic success.

SETTING THE MOOD

An important part of this game is the atmosphere, regardless of whether you set scary, happy, or weird scenes. Use Simon Stålenhag’s images as inspiration. You collaboratively set the mood by describing details, events, and characters – the creaking of the floorboards as someone sneaks through the haunted house, your kid brother’s freckles brightening as he smiles at you, the torrential rains that blacken the sky. One Mystery can be centered around a particular mood (panic, rot, the despair of autumn), while the next is infused with something completely different – madness, joy, a warm summer breeze.

TEN TIPS FOR SETTING THE MOOD

1. Do it straight away. If you establish the atmosphere at the very beginning, everyone will remember it, and you won’t have to repeat yourself later.
2. Use all of your senses. Describe what the Teens see, hear, smell, taste, and feel against their skin.
3. Focus on (some of) the details. You don’t have to describe everything in a scene, focus on a few important details – the slant of the table from having a crooked leg, the smell of coffee on the teacher’s breath, Mom’s laughter, or the chipped red paint on the claws of the warbot.
4. Use the weather, the seasons, and events in the community. Rain and darkness will make a scene mysterious and dangerous. Scorching sun and pounding heat can create claustrophobia if the Teens are trapped on a small island together with a hidden killer. The talk of the town is the recent layoffs at Krafta, or the fact that a major TV series is coming to shoot some episodes on the Islands.
5. Tell the story together. Ask the players questions, let them describe how things look and feel. Make sure everyone gets space to participate.
6. Use similes. The trucker looks like a bloated toad. The sky opens like a wound and blood red rain darkens the evening.
7. People are weird. It could be because of a contagion in the water, Loop Disorder, or the dismantling of the welfare state, but it’s a fact that the people of the Islands have taken up some strange habits. Someone has filled her house with birds, a neighbor talks to spirits, out in the woods an old friend suddenly dresses in very bright colors.
8. Contrast the weird with the normal. A Mystery where everything is scary or depressing all of the time will become boring, and the same goes for all NPCs acting crazy all year round.
9. The grown-ups are tired, lost, and focused on their own problems. They don’t have the time or the energy to connect with or help the Teens.
10. Use the adolescent experiences of yourself and your group as inspiration.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VAC?

The Islands are teeming with rumors about what is going on in the Evacuation Zone. People talk about water containing alien bacteria leaking through a dimensional portal, terrible monsters, and a machine cancer that twists and corrupts mankind's technology. As the GM, you get to decide how much of this is true. Here are a couple of options:

- It's all true. Scientists have actually opened a dimensional rift to the distant planet 51 Pegasi B, and flooded the Loop tunnels with extraterrestrial water filling the Vac with monsters. Alien bacteria infects machines, and strange creatures nest and multiply, spawning altogether new forms of hybrid life – part flesh, part steel, part plastic. Do the aliens have an agenda? Have they tainted the water supply? Is there something keeping them from leaving the Vac?
- Krafta Corp flooded the tunnels to displace the population of the northern Black Lake Lands in order to hide their illegal biological experiments involving both humans and animals. Some of the test subjects have escaped, and are what's behind the monster rumors.
- The tunnels were flooded to keep the Gravitron from exploding. Only Krafta staff are aware of the state of the facility. It could explode at any moment.
- Multiple dimensional portals have opened in the tunnels underneath the northern Black Lake Lands, allowing creatures from across time and space to pass freely to and from our world. Government agents flooded the tunnels to avoid a full-scale invasion, and are now trying to find a way to control the portals, or close them. The machine cancer is a side effect from a biological weapon used by the government to fight the alien invaders.
- None of it's true. The flooding is just an accident. The machine cancer and the runaway robots are caused by a side effect of a new type of wax used by Krafta Corp to grease the robots' nervous system.

NPCS – HUMANS, CREATURES, AND MACHINES

All Mysteries contain a couple of NPCs that will either attempt to thwart the Teens, ask them for help, or help them. Populate your Mysteries with a mix of ordinary people and creatures, like a shop teacher, a soccer coach, an android, and a monster from the Vac. Mystery NPCs in this book are described briefly with their name, what they look like, how they behave, what they want, what Trouble they can cause, and if they have a Clue. Try to give each NPC a detail that stands out so that the players can keep track of them – an unusual eye color, a strange way of speaking, or a torn jacket. Some NPCs have special attributes – this is described further in Chapter 5. Most often, there will be an active antagonist behind the Mystery, someone who deliberately causes the problems and certainly doesn't want to be stopped. Try to make these people nuanced. There are very few purely evil people – most have a reason for doing what they do. They might feel offended, rejected, or misunderstood.

ITEMS

Sometimes, the Teens find Items that are so special that they give bonus dice (Chapter 4) in certain situations. The bonus tells the players that the Item is an important part of the Mystery, perhaps even necessary for the success of the group. To utilize an Item bonus, the player must describe how the Item is of use in the given situation. All Items disappear or break between Mysteries unless they are made into Iconic Items.

EXAMPLES OF ITEMS

Item	Bonus
Hacking Software	+2
Hunting Rifle	+3
Invisibility Serum	+1
Dog	+2
Hover Skateboard	+1

Be careful when arming NPCs with firearms that may be used against the Teens. The players might in turn

feel forced to also get guns, and all of a sudden the Mystery has turned into a bloodbath. The Teens aren't cops or super heroes, even if they're up against tough odds. Deadly force and murder should be extreme events in the game.

LONGER MYSTERIES AND CAMPAIGNS

You can create longer Mysteries that take several sessions to play by expanding Phase 3 with more Locations and NPCs, or by adding more Locations to Phase 4. It may be helpful to draw an overview (see the example to the left) of all Locations, NPCs, and Clues, and allow the Teens to move around the story freely. Several Mysteries can be linked together by an underlying Truth to form a campaign, a longer story arc played out over many sessions. The first Mystery may serve as an introduction where the Teens only get to know a small part of what is going on. The following Mysteries gradually reveal more about the Truth, while the overall situation gets increasingly dramatic and serious. More is at stake than they first thought. The final Mystery should be extra grandiose, dangerous, and contain spectacular Locations and NPCs. In a campaign, a couple of NPCs and Locations should be recurring to create a sense of the stories being connected. It is important that the actions of the Teens in one Mystery have repercussions in the next one. A campaign will often have a clear antagonist, someone that the Teens must find and stop, and who will likely try to stop them in return. A campaign can have Disaster or Retribution Countdowns stretching over several Mysteries.

ADVANCED GM TECHNIQUES

Several different techniques can help you vary and add depth to the Mysteries.

PLANTING

Planting means letting something happen that directly or indirectly hints at an event further down the

SHAME IN LONGER MYSTERIES

During Mysteries that take more than one session to play, you can allow the players to activate their Teens' Shames once per session instead of once per Mystery.



line. This will hold the narrative together, and make plot twists and surprises fit with the rest of the story. The planting technique is often used twice before the actual event one is hinting at. If someone's mom has been taken over by the hive mind, have her say something strange in one scene, act strangely in the next, and only then make it obvious that her mind has been hijacked. If someone's girlfriend has decided to break up with one of the Teens, first have her stop answering her phone, then refuse to kiss the Teen in public, and finally say that they need to talk about their relationship.

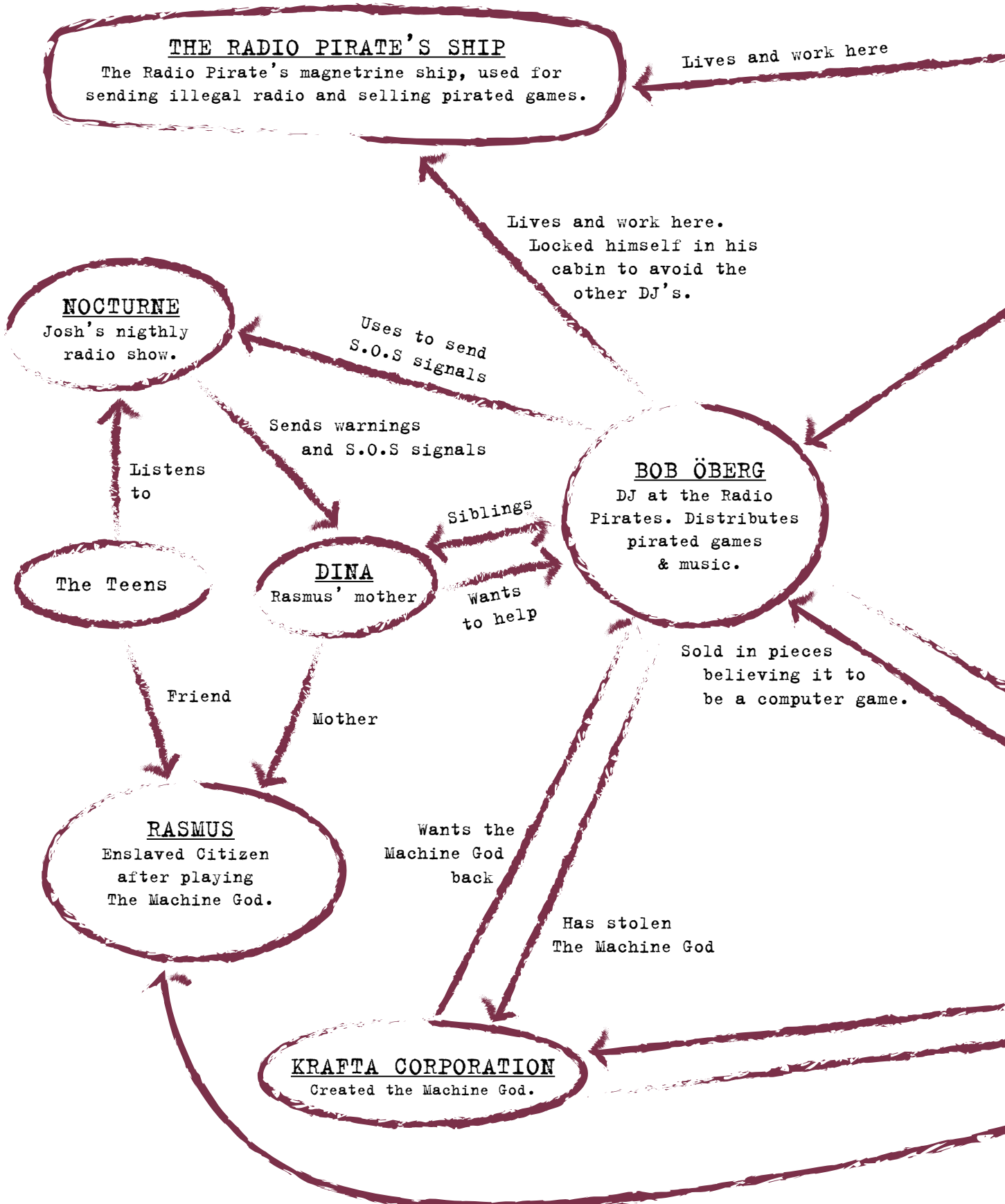
BACKGROUND NOISE

This term is used for background events that may or may not be connected to the Mystery. The annual school musical is holding auditions, a storm ravages the Islands, some high-ranking Krafta employees are busted for taking bribes. These events become small talk around town or articles in the local newspaper. A Mystery about greed can have background noise about a banker embezzling money, or about a rich eccentric giving away his fortune to help the poor.

THEME BLEEDING

The Mystery can "bleed" into Everyday Life scenes, focusing them on the themes at the heart of the Mystery. If the Mystery revolves around longing, for example, Everyday Life may contain a scene where someone's younger sibling runs away from

Flowchart of The Machine God



DJs AT THE RADIO PIRATES
People that live and work on Josh's shop.
Are now Citizens.

Wants to force him play
the Machine God so he also
becomes a Citizen. Tries
to break into the cabin.

PARADISE
Artificial world on
the Internet. Created
and controlled by
the Machine God.
Hangout for
Citizens.

Enslaved

Wants to get the
last parts of its
software that Josh has.

Created

Meeting
place

THE MACHINE GOD
Power hungry artificial
intelligence. Wants
to enslave humanity.

Enslaved and
brainwashed
while
"playing" The
Machine God.

CITIZENS
Teenagers and adults
enslaved by The Machine
God by "playing" it as
a computer game.

Searching for

Has enslaved and wants
to use to get to Bob.



home to get away from school, or someone's parent wanting a divorce and to leave the Islands with his new lover.

DREAM SEQUENCES

A dream sequence could be a nightmare transmitted by an NPC with a dream machine, or just a story tool

for the GM to use to establish a certain mood for the coming scenes. A Teen dreams about being chased by an enormous rooster, which hints at the Confrontation containing a bird-like robot. Keep dream sequences short and let the players control their Teens inside the dream, even if you have clear picture of what is going to happen.

GM: *You close your eyes and when you open them again, you're sitting on a chair in a dirty, dark room. The wind is howling outside, and the whole room seems to rock back and forth, as if you're at the top of a tower.*

Player 2 (Gustaf): *I look around a try to get up.*

GM: *The floorboards creak below your feet as you get up and a figure suddenly approaches from a dark corner.*

Player 2: *I walk toward the figure. "Who are you?"*

GM: *No answer. A beam of light shines through the window, possibly from a car passing by outside. You know in your heart that the person before you is your dad, even though it doesn't look like him. His clothes are torn and he has a mask on, depicting a wrinkled, smiling old man. He is holding a knife.*

Player 2: *"What are doing with that knife, Dad?"*

GM: *He raises the knife and begins stabbing himself in the throat, over and over.*

FROM AN NPC'S POINT OF VIEW

Give the players a scene where they play NPCs – pensioners who happen to witness the G-men kidnapping the teacher, for example. Later in the Mystery, the Teens run into the pensioners. If the Teens' parents have been called in to a crisis meeting with the principal, have the players play the parents for the scene. It is important that you make it clear to the players their level of freedom during these scenes. Sometimes, they get absolute control and may roll dice and affect the Mystery, but other times they will be passive spectators in a fixed scene.

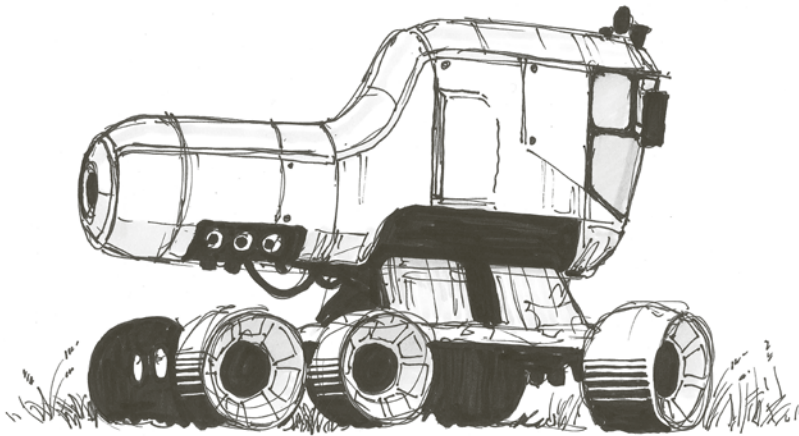
HORROR

If you want to emphasise horror in your game you can use the tips below:

- **MOOD AT THE TABLE.** Light candles and play moody music.
- **LET GO.** Make sure that the players know that you

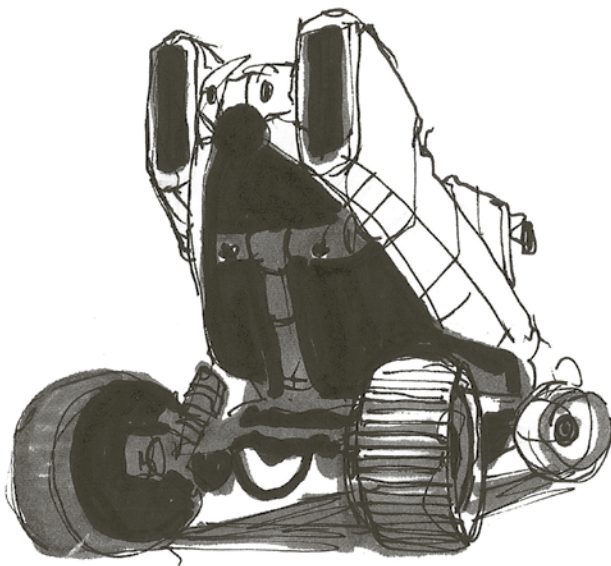
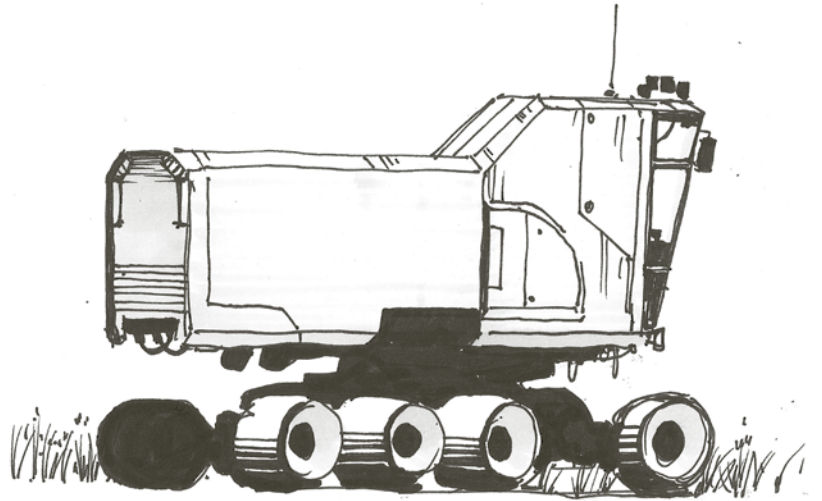
will be focusing on horror. They need to let their Teens become afraid, to give in to their feelings.

- **A MONSTER AT THE END.** In the same moment that the Teens actually see the monster, the Mystery stops being scary. Let them wait and use anticipation and imagination to build dread.
- **PLANT.** Build atmosphere and anticipation for the confrontation. If the Teens will get to meet a giant insectoid creature grown in a lab you say it is a summer with unusual amount of bugs in the air. The Teens might have to wave off flies and mosquitos in almost every scene. The pathway in front of the house where the creature is hiding is covered by crawling cockroaches that are crushed under the Teens sneakers. Try to create the feeling of something big is approaching, step by step.
- **CATS.** Horror movies often use the trope of jumping cats to fool the audience with a false scare. When the Teens are relieved that its only a cat they will probably let their guard down. Now is the time to strike.
- **WEIRD PEOPLE AND PLACES.** Let people and places be strange and odd. Someone is talking in a weird way. The dimensions of a house is all wrong. Something is clearly wrong.
- **ALONE WITH NO WAY OUT.** Put the Teens in situations they cant escape from. Make help impossible to reach. If they arrange a party on an island their boat will disappear. If they try to call the police all they will hear is a strange rumble from the speaker.
- **DREAMS AND VISIONS.** Let the Teens get premonitions of what is about to happen. Maybe someone sees the same number again and again. Maybe they see white shadows walking the streets at night.
- **SMELLS AND DETAILS.** Reinforce details when you describe a scene. The smell of cinnamon is strong at the murder scene. When meeting some incomprehensible monster you can leave out words or describe it in a incoherent way. Maybe a human mind cannot comprehend what stands before her?
- **ROT AND DECAY.** Horror movies love to use rats, maggots or disgusting wounds.



VECTRA SV4 M.2000 The Vectra 2000 is the latest all-terrain service vehicle to be used by Krafta Corp on the Mälaren Islands. Considered by many to be a failed design, the vehicle is not very popular with its operators due to the rigidity of the chassis and bad heat management causing it to break down at regular intervals.

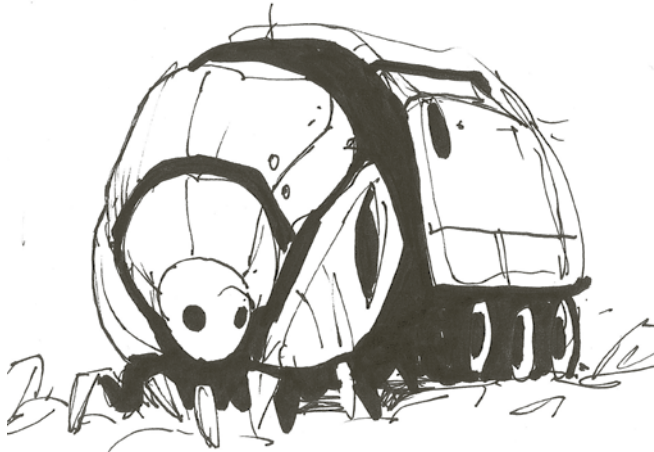
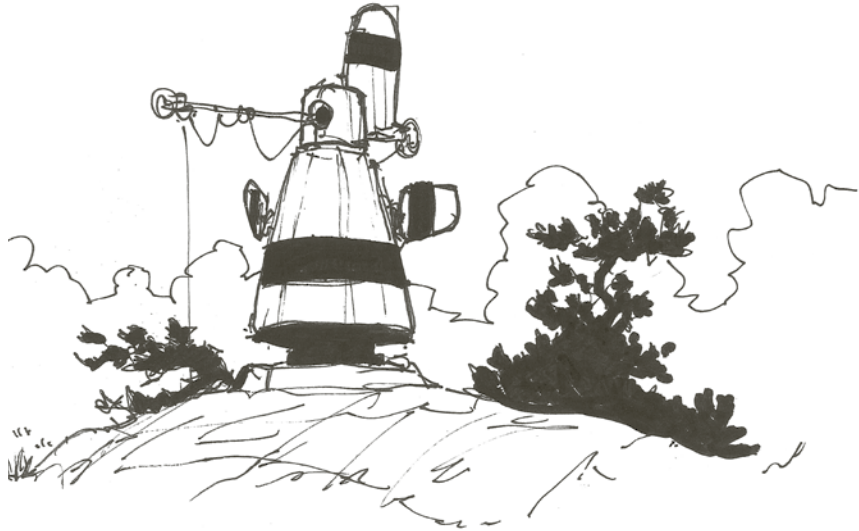
VECTRA CLIFFHOPPER M.80 Old and outdated, this all-terrain vehicle was designed in the '70s and retired from official use in the late '80s. The Cliffhopper has seen an unexpected renaissance due to the unpopularity of the M.2000, and Krafta has acquired and refitted a number of mothballed units to serve as work horses in the Loop Project.



CORSAIR LIGHTNING A strange beast, and Corsair's only ground vehicle design to date. The Lightning is a light, nimble, and very fast transport vehicle with a very pronounced raised back, making it a favourite among speed crazed teens in the area.

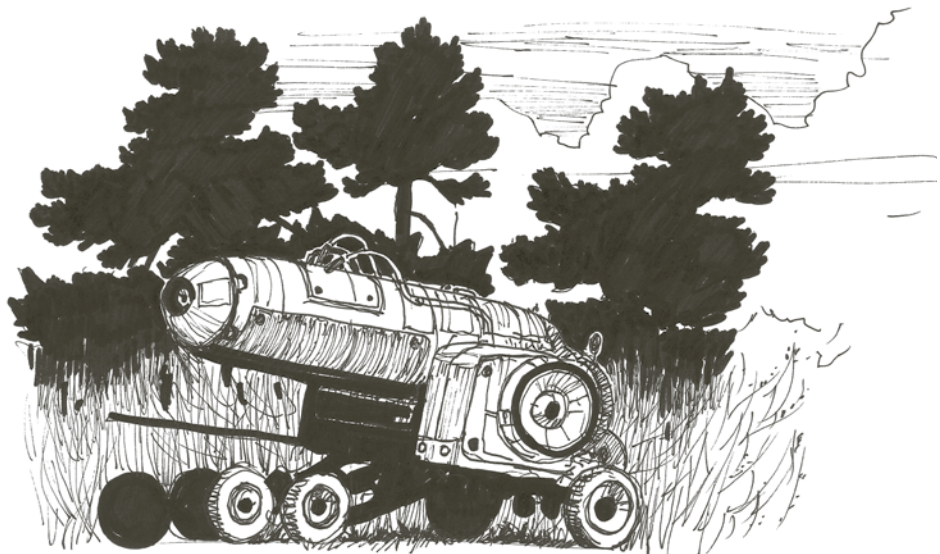
MALTEMANN SOIL RESEARCH UNIT 14

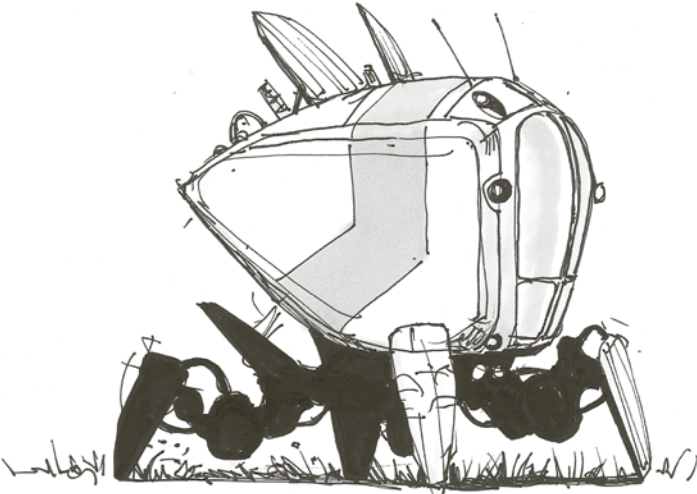
The SRU-14 is a common sight around, and in, the Evacuation Zone on the Mälaren Islands, measuring water levels and levels of toxic waste in the ground.



PAARRHUFNER MX17 The iconic MX17, called The Centipede by locals, is a rare sight to behold. A mobile ground research vehicle designed to house a small lab and provide secure sample storage. A few of these are currently in use by Krafta Corp.

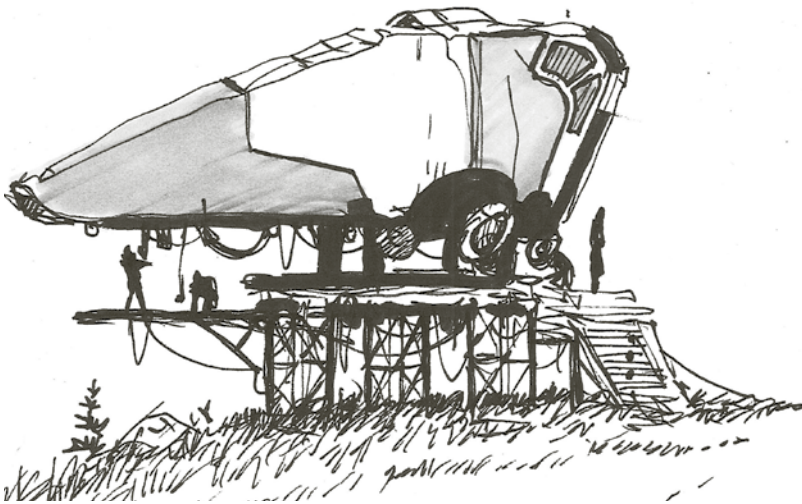
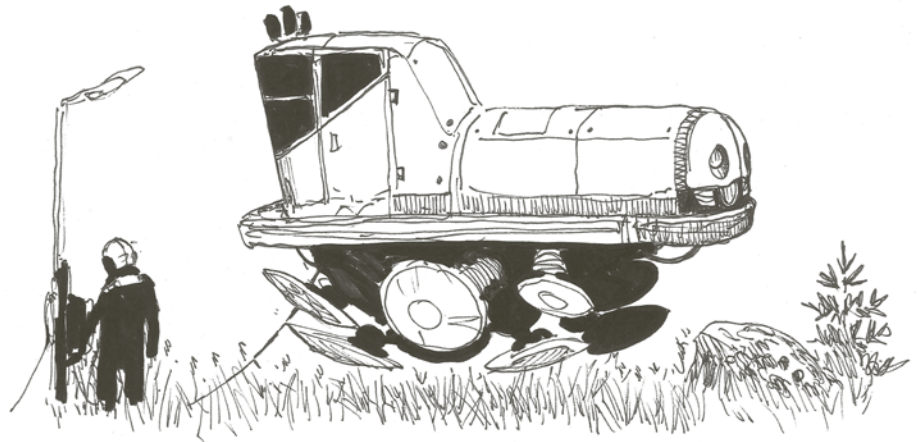
VECTRA SUPER-X The next generation ATV from Vectra is currently in late stage testing, and a single unit has been spotted on Mälaren Islands.



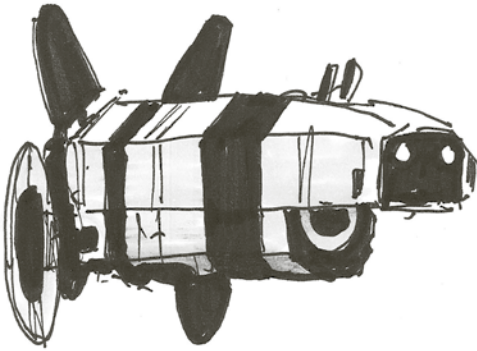


IWASAKA MS-88 An evolution of Iwasaka's famous spider probe design, this light support vehicle is manned by a single operator and is often used for ground surveys in the flooded areas of the Mälaren Islands.

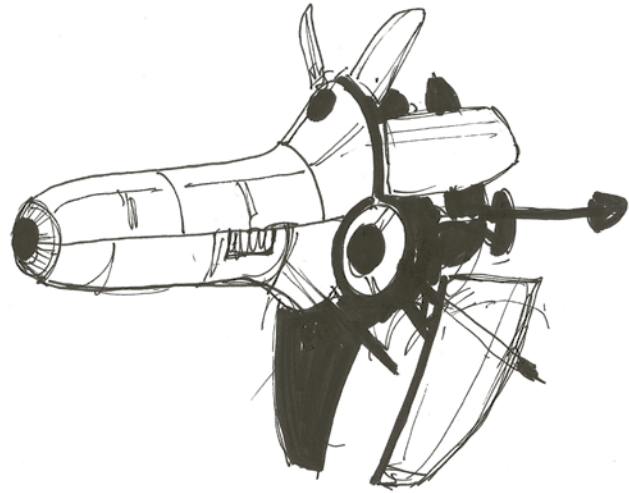
LIEBER-ALTA LIGHT SERVICE ENGINE 102 This light magnetron locomotive is used by both Krafta Corp and other civilian enterprises around the area. Relatively cheap, powerful, and reliable, the model 102 is a favourite among operators.



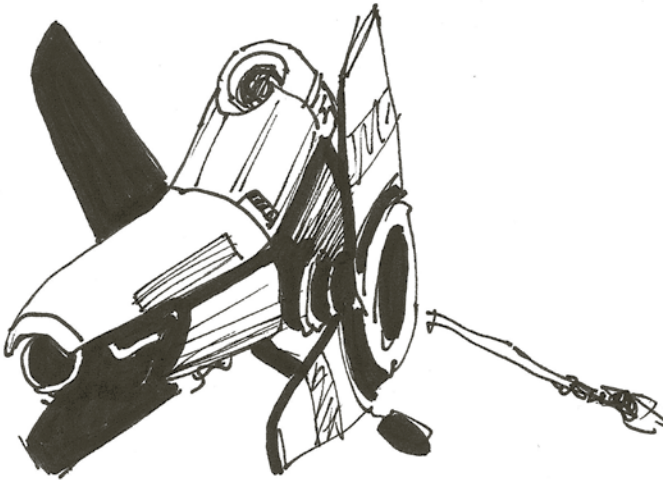
LIEBER-ALTA CABLE MAINTENANCE VEHICLE 13 The CMV 13 is the successor to the very popular CMV 12 which was widely used by the technicians of Riksenergi. Krafta Corp operates half a dozen of these units for service work.



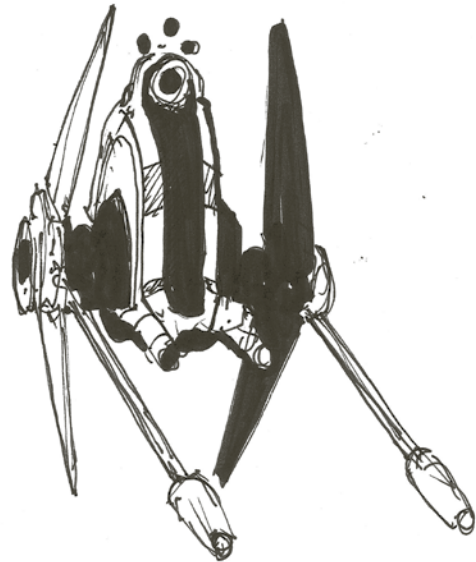
IWASAKA SURVEILLANCE PROBE M.3550 The bulky 3550 is an early '80s design and still used by Krafta to monitor remote areas of the Islands. Its slow speed and outdated sensors makes the 3550 easily fooled for those who knows its weak spots.



IWASAKA SURVEILLANCE PROBE M.4550 A common sight around the Loop and the evacuation zone. The 4550 is a reliable workhorse and fulfils its surveillance duties with aplomb.



IWASAKA SURVEILLANCE PROBE M.6550 The latest model of Iwasakas succesful range of surveillance probes. This one is equipped with LIDAR and thermal sensors making it virtually impossible to hide from.



IWASAKA-HAGVIK PATROL PROBE GETINGEN These advanced patrol probes are rumored to be used deep in the evacuation zone, and are operated by the Swedish military. Refitted for military use, the Getingen is equipped with two light 20 mm automatic cannons.

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THE MYSTERY LANDSCAPE

One night during dinner, Lars told us that they had received a call about an accident involving a Saab 900 in Österby. They had found the car overturned in a ditch, and the conditions inside the car were the most sickening thing that Lars Ribbing had seen during his fifteen years as a police officer. It had been impossible to discern if there were any human remains inside the car because the whole compartment was filled with unknown organic tissue. In Lars Ribbing's own words: "It looked like someone had squeezed a giant squid into the car." We all sat in silence, poking at our moussaka.



Mysteries aren't the only way to play *Things from the Flood* – another way is to use the Mystery Landscape as the baseline for your narrative instead. The Mystery Landscape is an open environment filled with dangerous places, creatures, robots, and people in which the Teens may move about freely and investigate whatever they like. There is no overarching Truth to power the story in the Mystery Landscape – instead, the players' actions shape the game. You can run the Mystery Landscape and one or more Mysteries at the same time if you'd like.

The core of the Mystery Landscape is the Locations, connected to the Teens through their Hooks. Use the Hooks to get the Teens interested in exploring this or that location, and try to defeat whatever evil lurks

there. You can either let each player choose one or two Hooks from the Hook list (see adjacent box) or choose for them. Connecting more than one Teen to the same Location is usually a good idea. Each Hook contains a question for the player to answer, allowing her to take part in the cooperative narrative. As the GM, you have final say, as always.

The Mystery Landscape is a living place where you may play indefinitely. Mix Everyday Life, Mystery, and Location scenes as usual, but give the players more space to set their own scenes. The Mystery Landscape doesn't end – it continues and evolves as long as you fill it with new Locations, NPCs, and Trouble. When the Teens successfully clear a Location, replace any leftover Hooks connected to it with new ones.

EXAMPLE

Player 4 (Sana): *The only Hook I have left is the one about the bitter naval officer, and with the submarine sunk, that doesn't really work, does it?*

GM: *Okay, we'll get you a new one. Someone has told you about a farmer named Tommy Wetterström who's cooped up in his barn on southern Munsö, apparently building something. He's getting strange packages from Indonesia, there are weird noises coming from the barn at night, and he has been up on the roof flashing Morse code up at the sky with a flashlight. Who has told you about Tommy, and what do you think he's building in his barn?*

This chapter presents one possible Mystery Landscape. It also describes two different ways to play an Mystery Landscape – Campaign play and Collaborative storytelling.

HOOKS

Hand out or let the players choose:

1. Rasmus [Brian], who's in the same grade as you, stops showing up to class. Rumors have it that his mom has gone crazy and hidden him at the construction site where she works. He probably doesn't care though, as long as he gets to play his computer games. What is your relationship with Rasmus [Brian]?
2. A friend of yours from a small farm on Adelsö asks if she can spend a couple of nights at your place. Her dad, "Joker" Dahlén ["Joker" Anderson], was beaten up by masked men last week, and strange people are sneaking around their house at night. Who is your friend?
3. A woman named Erika Kohult [Victoria Nash] has sent hundreds of e-mails to people across the Islands claiming that there is a killer on the loose on Adelsö. You recently read a short story by her. What was it about and what did you think of it?
4. One of your friends has got her hands on a new game called *Machine God III*, and hasn't shown up to school for a week. Who is your friend and has she ever done this before?
5. You've heard rumors about a group of people calling themselves the Radio Pirates that have their own magnetron ship where they're gonna host a gaming tournament for a game that hasn't even been released yet. Who told you about it and why doesn't it feel right?
6. A friend of yours turns up at your house in the middle of the night, walking and talking all funny. She says she's run away from the slavery at the "Farm" and asks for your protection. Who is she?
7. Someone cycles through the community at night with a large transmitter in a black backpack. Whose house has the person been casing over the last couple of nights?
8. You've been invited to take part in a chess tournament at the Serbian Chess Club at Adelsö but you've heard that there has been fighting at the club between the Serbs, the Croats, and the Bosnians. Who invited you?
9. A woman runs into a shop in Stenhamra in the middle of the day crying for help. Her name is Yvonne Dahlén [Mary Anderson] and she claims that "thugs" are following her, trying to scare her and her husband into selling their farm on Adelsö. She asks you for help, as she thinks they'll attack her if she goes home by herself. What about her makes you like her?
10. Refugees from the war in the Balkans have recently started arriving on Adelsö [Red Mountain]. Some say that they are soldiers. Yesterday, you saw two of them in a boat and both of them had rifles. Who is claiming to have seen someone dump a body in the lake?
11. One of your most vain friends claims that crabs are climbing up to her bedroom window at night. Who is she?
12. You've downloaded a series of images of a woman spray painting racist, Serbian slurs on the side of a barn. How can you be so sure that the photos was taken on Adelsö, and which of your friends has a cabin nearby?
13. A video tape of a dead body in a quarry is circulating at school. People say it's genuine and that it's shot at Adelsö [Boulder Beach]. How did you react when you first saw it?
14. You've recently come into contact with a social

worker named Knut Alhlund [Joey Baker] who seems to be a bit reclusive. Why have you two started to become friends?

15. You've read in the *Alright* teen mag that the *Science of Love* soap is coming to shoot on northern Munsö. The lead actress recently had her eyes poked out one night at her hotel. The cops found no evidence of forced entry into her room and the article hints at her having lost her mind. She has been replaced by Samira Haddad, known from *The Mall and Love on the Menu*. Which of your friends works as an extra on the set?

THE MAP OF THE MYSTERY LANDSCAPE

The map of the Mystery Landscape contains all Locations, and the players should have access to it while you're playing. There are two different maps – one for the Swedish Loop and one for its U.S. counterpart. The maps can also be downloaded from the Free League's webpage.

PLAYING THE MYSTERY LANDSCAPE

The Mystery Landscape is best suited for playing over multiple sessions. Your main GM responsibility is to keep track of what is happening in the game world, and use Hooks, Trouble, and Countdowns at the right times. Since it's harder to prepare for this method of playing the game, you must rely more on improvisation than otherwise, and make the ideas of the players work. Be prepared to GM a game where you have less control over the story. Make up new Locations, NPCs, Clues, and Trouble as you go along. Ask the players for input, and build on their previous actions. The most obvious way forward is often the best one. Have the players use **CONTACT** and **COMPREHEND** if they feel stuck.

When the Teens show interest in a Location, start the corresponding Countdown. If they dawdle or lose interest, you can use the advancing Countdown to push them. Reuse old Locations and NPCs, and have your NPCs form new relationships to each other as you play. Your NPCs can be doing their own thing while the players are off adventuring somewhere else.

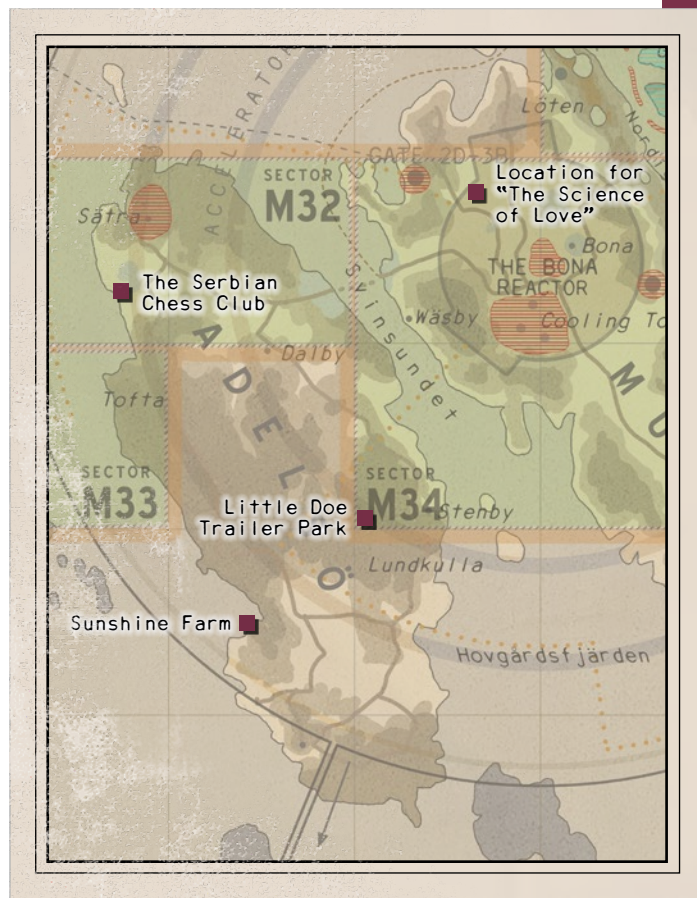
In the Mystery Landscape, the Teens get to activate their Shames once per session, and their non-Iconic Items will only disappear when you decide it fits

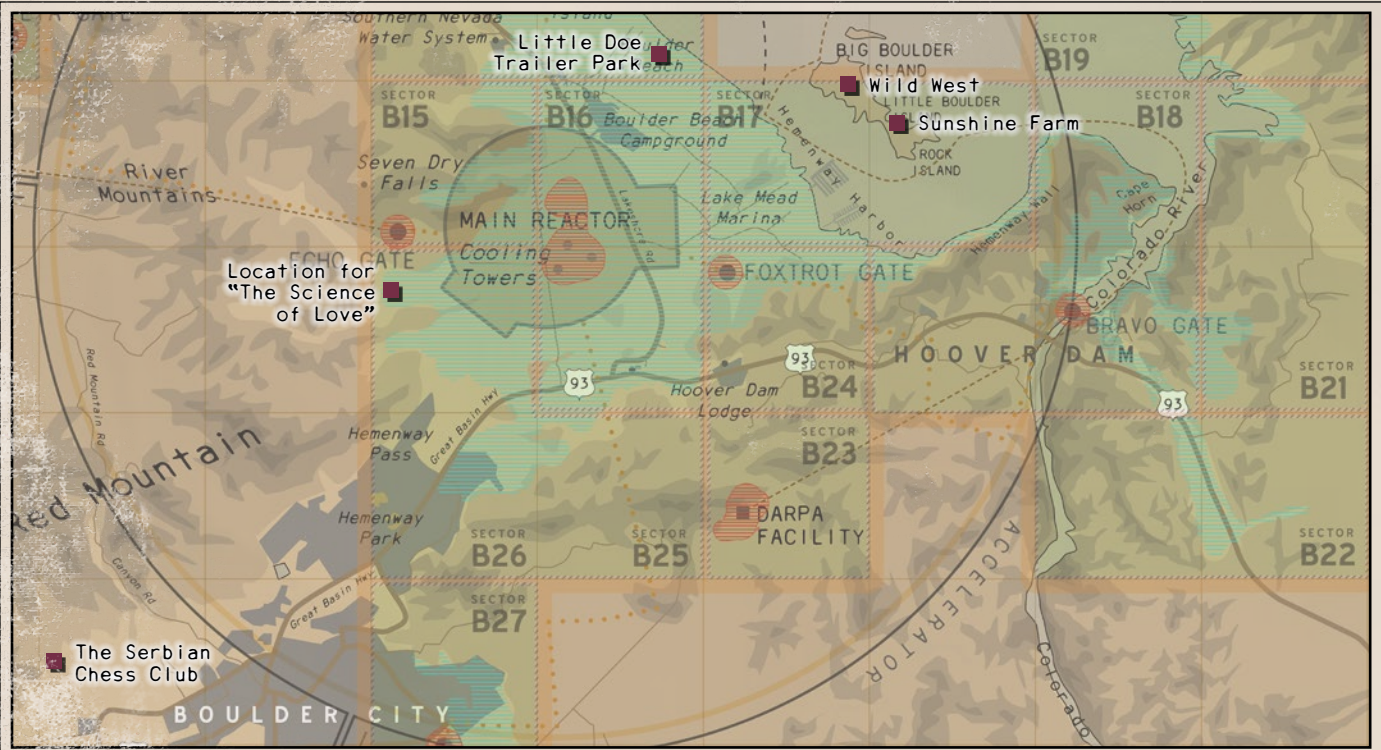
with the story, such as after the summer holidays, for example, or when they have overcome some dangerous Trouble in an important Location. At the end of each session, distribute XP and let the players change Drives, Iconic Items, Problems, Anchors, Shames, Relationships, or Friction, if they'd like.

CAMPAIGN PLAY

The first way of playing the Mystery Landscape is to connect a series of Locations to a campaign around a common Truth. The Locations can be more or less obviously connected, and it becomes the Teens' job to figure out how it all ties together. Choose one Location for the final Confrontation and save its Hooks for last. The other Locations can be played in any order.

Create three or more Clues, and hide them around the map. The Clues should give the Teens enough of the Truth to lead them to the final Confrontation.





ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

The final Confrontation of Robots and Ragnarök takes place at the Sunshine Farm (see page 121). Judith Sunshine Jaxxon has decided to buy Adelsö [Big Boulder Island], manufacture human-looking androids, and build a theme park called Viking Land. Everything in the park will be like it would have been during the Viking Age: the houses, the weapons, the food and drink, and the religion, and the androids in the park will believe that they are humans living during that time. Rich tourists will then visit the park as Norse gods in human forms (Freyja, Thor, Odin, Skadi, Loki, etc), free to treat the androids however they like. The robots cannot harm humans or leave Viking Land.



The Clues could show them:

- How to get to the last Location
- How to overcome the Trouble at the last Location
- Important facts about the Truth
- Who they should ally themselves with before the Confrontation
- A piece of a puzzle leading to the last Location, such as pieces of a map

Campaign play may contain several different Countdowns related to different Locations and NPCs, but usually only one Disaster Countdown.

The box below contains an example of how the Locations in this chapter can be linked to form the Robots and Ragnarök campaign. Each Location description contains a possible connection to the campaign.

THE TRUTH

Viking Land is far from finished. Sunshine only controls parts of the island, and experimentation is still underway with the androids. A small enclosure in a field houses the first prototype of the park, inhabited by some of the more promising android models. The robots aren't yet intelligent, but can mimic intelligence and conscious-

ness fairly well. However, a few of the androids have developed rudimentary AI on their own, and structured a belief system in secret around a mythical paradise afterlife known as the Stockholm [Las Vegas]. To reach the Stockholm, one must cross the big water and make it through the nightmare realms of Mun-Ö and Black Land. Some of the robots believe that the Stockholm is reachable on this side of death as well.

A rival business, Timetraveler, has infiltrated Viking Land to sabotage it. They have let loose frightening and dangerous robots on Adelsö that look like they come from Sunshine Farm. Timetraveler wants to have Sunshine indicted for the crimes committed by the runaway robots so as to force her to sell Viking Land to them to pay her fines. The fake Viking Land robots have black tentacles protruding from throbbing, bulbous bodies, squid eyes, and huge pincers. The hiss and howl and move around only at night. They are programmed to seek out lone humans and attack them.

Despite all the praise Sunshine has been getting from local media, she has become a person of interest to the intelligence services, who suspect that Sunshine Farm is a front for other activities. They have inserted their agent Elvira Matsson [Emily Smith] at the Farm, posing as Pia Enemark [Rachel Clark], a programmer. Elvira/Pia has found evidence of what Sunshine is planning, and that she has lied, threatened, and killed her employees on the parts of Adelsö she now owns. Elvira/Pia knows that her employers will close down the Farm and Viking Land and destroy or seize the robots if she reports back on her finds. This poses a dilemma for Elvira/Pia, however, as she has fallen in love with the robot Kraka in the park.

To make matters even more interesting, one of the security guards from the Collective, Harold Steiner, has realized that Sunshine has manipulated his colleagues to stay loyal. When he tried to talk the others into turning against Sunshine, he was imprisoned. Harold has an escape plan, and intends to find someone who can help him bring Sunshine Farm down.

CLUES

Place the Clues throughout the Mystery Landscape to give the Teens a sense that they are onto something big. Use Clues, Hooks, and Countdowns to focus their attention on Sunshine Farm when the campaign is nearing its finale. The Clues are:

- The Teens find a piece of a humanoid robot, such as an arm or a hand. The body part is wearing Viking Age clothing or jewelry that looks like it was made only recently.
- The Teens find a couple of pages from a binder of material on Norse gods, and instructions for making the “guests” assume the roles of gods and have their way with the “hosts”. The pages also contain drawings for weapons and clothing, some storylines for the park, and a detailed financial plan relying on rich tourists spending a lot of money in Viking Land.
- The Teens find photos taken on Adelsö showing Viking Land and its inhabitants. Amongst the robots dressed in leather and wearing horned helmets, two awkward men in suits smile for the camera.

HOOKS

- You coincidentally overhear a conversation in the library between a man and a woman meeting in secret to exchange documents. They speak about a large project on Adelsö being a potential security risk. The woman argues that they should hold off the cavalry until they know more. After the man leaves, the woman – whom the man called Elvira [Emily] – goes to a phone booth and calls her mother, crying about having fallen in love and lied to her employer about something awful. From where do you recognize the man Elvira met with?
- A friend of yours can get you a temp job at Sunshine Farm on southern Adelsö, but she warns you not to ask questions about “Black Pearl”. She says that a guy who tried to sneak past the cameras was beaten to a pulp by the guards. Who is your friend?
- A friend of yours says that monsters are roaming Adelsö. Who is your friend?

COUNTDOWNS AND DISASTER

The campaign contains several Countdowns for you to use as you see fit. The Location Countdowns not associated with the campaign may also be used.

DISASTER

Viking Land opens to wealthy tourists and a massive media coverage. After a couple of successful days, a virus spreads among the robots making them go berserk,

MAIN COUNTDOWN

1. Viking Land expands to twice its original size and a large number of new robots are added. Three of the robots head out onto Lake Mälaren in a longship and land in central Stenhamra where they end up in a fight with a gang of local kids. When the robots draw their weapons, guards from the Collective show up and retrieve them. Via her contacts, Sunshine manages to make the media and the government believe that it was just a group of larpers who took it a step too far.
2. Sunshine introduces Asatru as the general faith in Viking Land. A young amateur photographer, Sandra Tingsek [Sandra Hall], is out canoeing when she spots a group of robots sacrificing animals and slaves, and hanging them from the crown of a large oak. She takes pictures of it and spreads them to her friends. Rumors soon talk of a cult on Adelsö.
3. Sunshine prepares Viking Land for its grand opening. A select group of journalists are allowed to go on a guided tour of the park on the night before the opening. Just as the reporters are about to arrive, the guards spot Sandra Tingsek and a group of her friends who have come to investigate the "cult" and ended up in the middle of Viking Land. Sunshine orders her guards to kill the teens and make it look like an accident. The following morning, a fisherman discovers the bodies of the teenagers and a boat anchored on a small island north of Munsö. They appear to have gone swimming, despite the violent waves, and drowned. The guards didn't find Sandra's camera, however, which contains pictures from inside the park.

killing and maiming thirty or so guests and employees. Viking Land is shut down, and Sunshine Jaxxon is arrested for murder.

RETRIBUTION

When the Teens begin investigating Viking Land, Sunshine and the Collective will try to scare them off.

1. The Collective makes house calls to the parents of the Teens, presenting false intelligence agency IDs. They claim that the Teens have been trespassing on government property trying to steal classified information, and threaten legal action.
2. The Collective arranges to have someone close to the Teens beaten up and tells the victim to pass along to the troublemakers that it will be much worse next time.
3. The Collective plants drugs in the Teens' rooms or lockers at school, and tip off the police.

COUNTDOWN FOR THE TIMETRAVELER ROBOTS

1. A local teenager is stalked by robots through the woods on Adelsö. He films them with his camera, and the dark, grainy footage soon spawns rumors of monsters in the woods.
2. One of the robots attacks and kills a lone camper on Adelsö. The body is washed up on Munsö two days later, looking like the victim of a shark attack.
3. A family moors their boat on Adelsö. The parents go for a walk after the kids have fallen asleep, and are attacked and killed by one of the robots. The traumatized children are found the following day and say they were woken up in the middle of the night by their parents' screams.

COUNTDOWN FOR AGENT ELVIRA AND KRAKA THE ANDROID

1. Elvira [Emily] alters Kraka's code to enable her to leave Viking Land and giving her the appearance of free will. She smuggles Kraka into Stenhamra and they spend a weekend at a hotel. One night, Kraka leaves the hotel and meets a few local teens hanging out at the kiosk.
2. Kraka "infects" a group of other robots with her new code, and together they ask Elvira to help them get to the Stockholm. Elvira takes them to Stenhamra where they, despite her protests, go out



into the night to meet humans. Kraka encounters Jonas Hed [Nick Roberts] (See the *The Ugliness Mystery*) who encourages her to break away from her imprisonment. Elvira manages to get the robots back to Viking Land without being spotted.

3. Kraka assembles a following and publicly renounces the Asatru, instead proclaiming to be a prophet of the One God who will lead the inhabitants of Viking Land out of bondage. Fighting between heathen robots and Kraka's followers breaks out. It spirals out of control, and Elvira's changes to Kraka's code soon enables all robots to leave Viking Land. The conflict spreads out across Adelsö. The Collective hunt down the robots, leading to bloody clashes.

BOULDER CITY: ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

If you play Robots and Ragnarök in Boulder City, the name of the theme park could be Wild West instead, and the vikings could be substituted for cowboys and Native Americans. Locate the park on Big Boulder Island.



COUNTDOWN FOR THE COLLECTIVE

1. Former security guard Harold Steiner flees his imprisonment at the Collective, but is shot during his escape. He manages to crawl to the garden of one of the Teens, where he passes out. The Collective begins searching for him.
2. Harold tries to get the Teens to help him find the surgeon in Stockholm that implanted the emotion enhancers into the brains of the security guards and acquire evidence of this. If the Teens won't go with him, he goes on his own and is caught by the Collective. If they help him, they are intercepted by the Collective.
3. The Collective forces Harold to have another procedure. His emotion enhancer is repaired, and he becomes a loyal subject once again.

JUDITH "SUNSHINE" JAXXSON

"I have seen the dark side of humanity and nothing scares me anymore"

Sunshine was a child laborer in a toy factory in a country exploited for cheap production by the West. She worked from dawn to dusk in a tiny room with a loud machine, making plastic warrior figurines with horned helmets for a board game. A fire tore through the factory, and many of Sunshine's friends died. As she lay there in the smoke and chaos, surrounded by thousands of plastic warriors, she decided never again to be a pawn in someone else's game. By using her charm and wits, she managed to get a charity to pay for school tuition. She was the best in her class, and went to study as an exchange student in the U.S. as a teenager. She had a knack for computers, and started her own game studio, which soon saw her become wealthy and successful.

She began rediscovering her own history, bought the factory where she had worked as a child, and found out that the plastic figurines were so-called "vikings", ordered by a company in Sweden. She became enthralled by the bloody tales of Norse mythology, and traveled to the viking city of Birka outside of Stockholm. When she arrived and found out about Lake Mälaren and the Loop, she came up with the idea for Viking Land. Sunshine is fearless and charming. She is obsessed with the idea of making the park a reality. She

has no moral qualms over right and wrong, and relishes being the one in control. She is a Master Manipulator (Empathy) 3. She is short, has dark hair, colorful glasses, and always carries an umbrella.

COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING

The second way of playing the Mystery Landscape is to share the GM responsibilities as a group, with all of you playing a Teen. This works best for groups of between three and five people who are all well acquainted with the rules. Take turns setting the mood, hashing out rule details, and describing Locations, NPCs, and events.

Each player comes up with or chooses a Location in which she is the GM. This gives the same number of Locations to investigate as there are players. When your Teens come into contact with a certain Location, or the effects of its Countdown, the player whose Location it is assumes the role of GM. Changing GMs between scenes is no problem if you're changing Locations. Before you begin playing the game this way, decide together what happens to the Teen whose player acts as the GM (see adjacent box).

EXAMPLE

Player 1: *I want to set a scene where my Teen investigates the bus stop where people have gotten onto unknown busses and disappeared.*

Player 2: *That's my Location so I'm gonna be the GM. Do you go there alone?*

In scenes from *Everyday Life*, you don't need a GM. Collaboratively set and resolve the scenes. Players whose Teens aren't present in a scene can play NPCs instead. The same NPC may be played by different players in different scenes. A good way to involve everyone and create interesting *Everyday Life* scenes is that each player chooses one of the other Teens – for example the one to her left – and learns about her Problem, Relationships, and Shame in detail. Then, when setting scenes and creating Trouble, each player focuses on tailoring it to what she knows about the

Teen to her left. Use this method as much or as little as you want to, your primary focus should be a fun and creative story for everyone.

EXAMPLE

Player 1: *I would like an Everyday Life scene but I'm out of ideas.*

Player 2: *You're to my left, and I'd love to give you scene where you and your brother are forced to do something together, like paint the house or something. You're out there just the two of you and it's hot as hell. You guys haven't said a word to each other since you kissed his girlfriend.*

Decide in which order you will set your scenes (see the Setting scenes box). The player whose turn it is decides what kind of scene she wants (see the boxed text on the next page) and who is in it, with input from the other players. If it's an Everyday Life scene, she decides where it plays out and may either set the mood herself or ask the other players to do it. The other players may at any time during the scene suggest that their Teen or a specific NPC enter the scene. If you can't agree on the contents of the scene or when to end it, the player who set the scene has final say. If the scene is connected to a Location, control of the scene passes to the GM for that Location, but she may at any time ask for help from the other players, of course. The Collaborative storytelling box below contains an overview of the necessary preparations for this way of playing.

EXAMPLE

Player 1: *I ride my bike to the bus stop alone, straight after school.*

Player 2: *You arrive at about four in the afternoon.*

Player 3: *I reckon it's gonna be pretty cold and windy, with lots of mist.*

Player 1: *I park my bike next to the bus stop and start to investigate. Am I alone here?*

Player 2: *Yes. As you're looking around, you get a terrible headache, and pulsating red dots appear in your field of vision and you*

have to sit down to keep yourself from falling over. You see that someone has drawn strange symbols on the inside of the shelter. Test

INVESTIGATE.

THE RADIO PIRATES' MAGNETRINE SHIP

Most teens on the Islands have heard of the Radio Pirates, a group of youngsters with their own magnetrine ship broadcasting pirate radio and distributing illegal copies of computer software and music, often many months before they're launched on the open market. Rumors have it that the leader of the Pirates, Beastie Hook, used to be gangster, but renounced his violent ways after meeting the Dalai Lama in a dream. Others say that the ship is owned by Krafta [AEP], who want

THE GM'S TEEN

What will happen to the Teen whose player acts as the GM for a scene? Choose one of the following methods:

1. The GM's Teen is never present in these scenes. For one reason or another, she stays at home.
2. The Teen is present and under the GM's control, but speaks or acts very little. Her Skills may be used by the other players to overcome Trouble.
3. The GM plays her Teen as usual. This method requires her not using any of the secret info she has on the Location.
4. Only investigate one Location per session. Take turns being the GM for an entire session, with everything that entails. The GM's Teen gets as many XP after the session as the Teen who got the least amount.



SETTING SCENES

Determine a turn order for setting scenes:

1. Take turns. Go around the table, setting one scene each.
2. Dynamic play. Whoever feels like setting a scene does it.

SCENE TYPE

The player setting the scene may choose between:

1. An Everyday Life scene for herself.
2. An Everyday Life scene for one or several of the other Teens.
3. A scene where her Teen (and possibly others) investigate a Location, confront an NPC, or examine a Clue. The player in charge of the specific Location becomes the GM.
4. A scene connected to the Location she herself is the GM of. One or several of the other Teens experience something connected to the Location's Countdown or NPCs.

COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING STEP BY STEP

1. Create your Teens.
2. Create or read up on one Location each.
3. Introduce your Teen to the rest of the group to facilitate interesting Everyday Life scenes. **Optional:** Choose a Teen other than your own on whom you focus when coming up with fun and exciting details and events for scenes.
4. Decide on what happens to your Teen when you are the GM of an active Location.
5. Decide on a way to determine who gets to set the next scene.
6. Have someone set the first scene and begin playing. Help each other out.
7. When a Location has been resolved, either because your Teens managed to resolve its Mystery, because you've grown tired of it, or because you failed to stop whatever was about to happen, the GM for that Location comes up with a new one, and distributes new Hooks.



to highlight the dangers of illegal file sharing to make the politicians tighten the rules on intellectual property rights. A third rumor speculates about never-ending parties onboard the ship, complete with drugs, orgies, and enslaved creatures from other worlds as entertainment. Regardless of whether any of the rumors are true or not, all young people on the Islands tune in to the gospel according to the Radio Pirate DJs Icy Roger, Black Beard Biggy, and A Tribe Called Arrr.

THE TRUTH

Bob “Beastie Hook” Öberg [[Josh Wright](#)] is one of the very few civilians who own their own magnetriner ship. He inherited the ship from a man he cared for in the nursing home he used to work at. Bob has chosen to invite about ten people to come and live with him on the ship, people who – like him – are outcasts and weirdos. They call themselves pirates, and broadcast pirate radio, playing hip hop under DJ names created from combining the names of famous rappers and pirates.



Bob is in contact with people who bootleg music and software, and the Radio Pirates are the distributors of everything new and hot to the young people of Lake Mälaren. The ship is furnished like a luxury yacht, and has a camouflage paint job. The Jolly Roger is flown from the bridge, and enormous speakers blast the Pirates' radio shows across the woods and waters.

Bob recently managed to hack Krafta Corp [AEP] and steal what he believed to be a collection of advanced new computer games called Machine God. He has begun selling the games to kids around the Islands, unaware that they're actually parts of an advanced AI kept compartmentalized by Krafta after it attempted to enslave the programmers inside a virtual world called Paradise, where the Machine God ruled supreme as an enlightened despot. Anyone who plays the Machine God games runs the risk of being hypnotized by the AI and turned into a docile Citizen of Paradise. The Citizens need to play the game many hours a day to remain in their trance-like state. They become aggressive,

develop muscle spasms, an intense stare, and consume huge quantities of sugar and caffeine to stay awake.

The Machine God wishes to reassemble itself and become powerful enough to enslave all of mankind. It has about ten teenagers under its spell so far, as well as all the Pirate DJs except for Bob, who doesn't have

THE DESERT PIRATES,
BOULDER CITY

If you play in Boulder City, the Pirates could either be roaming Lake Mead or the desert surrounding the city.



any interest in computer games. He has figured out that something is not right as his crew has started to broadcast reruns of old shows to get more time to play the game. He has barricaded himself on the bridge, with the crew outside trying to sweet-talk him out so they can turn him into a Citizen, too. The discs with the final pieces of the Machine God are with Bob on the bridge. He is scared that the others will go after his sister Dina [Stephanie] and her son Rasmus [Brian] to get him to give up, and has begun hiding messages to Dina in the reruns of his own show, Nocturne, where he plays experimental synth music rather than hip hop. Dina has understood the warnings and figured out that Bob is in danger. She has hidden herself and her son at the construction site where she works as an electrician. Unbeknownst to her, Rasmus [Brian] has gotten his hands on a piece of Machine God, and already become a Citizen.

HOOKS

- One of your friends has gotten her hands on a new game called Machine God III, and hasn't shown up

to school for a week. Who is your friend and has she ever done this before?

- You've heard rumors about a group of people calling themselves the Radio Pirates that have their own magnetron ship where they're gonna host a gaming tournament for a game that hasn't even been released yet. Who told you about it and why doesn't it feel right?
- Rasmus [Brian], who's in the same grade as you, stops showing up to class. Rumors have it that his mom has gone crazy and hidden him at the construction site where she works. He probably doesn't care though, as long as he gets to play his computer games. What is your relationship with Rasmus [Brian]?

COUNTDOWN

1. The Machine God orders its Citizens to gather computers and construct an enormous network in an abandoned warehouse. They steal and buy computers around the Islands, and spend every waking hour online in Paradise.
2. The Pirate DJs try to force their way onto the bridge to get to Bob, but fail. The Machine God orders its Citizens to bring Bob's sister Dina to the ship to force Bob to cooperate. The Citizens are also instructed to sell as many copies of the "games" as possible. About fifty Citizens now call the abandoned warehouse their home.
3. Dina is tricked by her son Rasmus [Brian] into going to the magnetron ship and convincing Bob to leave the bridge. Vicious fighting breaks out and the ship crashes into the steeple of the church in Stenhamra. Bob escapes, but his sister is captured by the DJs, who also get their hands on the last pieces of the software. Bob desperately tries to find someone who can help him sabotage the network in the warehouse.

DISASTER

All the pieces of the Machine God come together and the AI is complete. It connects to nearby networks and begins spreading the "game" around the globe. One day, the warehouse burns to the ground, and the Citizens return to normal. No one suspects anything, but the fire was actually orchestrated by the Machine God to hide its full transition onto the global web.

CONNECTIONS TO ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

Sunshine contracted Krafta Corp to build her a powerful enough AI to control and monitor what was going on in Viking Land. This is how the Machine God came into existence. Krafta have informed Sunshine that the software is faulty, and that it has been stolen, but Sunshine believes that the damage can be repaired and threatens legal action if Krafta doesn't deliver on their promise. Three Collective guards have joined Krafta Corp to help search for the Machine God and erase all traces of the leak.



BOB "BEASTIE HOOK" ÖBERG
[JOSH WRIGHT]

"Life rarely turns out the way we want it – we gotta take what we can get"

Bob and his sister Dina grew up in a small village in northern Skåne where Bob's neurotic, "weird" behavior made him a punching bag for all the local tough guys. His sister helped him through an anxiety-ridden adolescence, and when she moved to the Islands, he followed. He happened upon a Buddhist monk one day at the library in Stenhamra, from whom he learned meditation techniques to calm his restless soul. He worked at a nursing home until, much to his own surprise, his name came up in the will left behind by a deceased former resident at the home. The inheritance made Bob a wealthy man, and the owner of his own magnetine ship. He loves the collective life on the ship, doing pirate radio, and fighting the greed of big business. He is the only one of the Pirates who prefers synth music to hip hop, but has learned to compromise. Bob is tall, has long, blonde hair, and walks with a limp after an unsuccessful suicide attempt in his teens. He has an even temper, and doesn't let anything get to him, unless it concerns his sister or his nephew, whom he would give up his life to keep safe.

**SUNSHINE FARM**

Computer magnate Judith "Sunshine" Jaxxon has bought several farms on northern Adelsö [**Big Boulder Island**], demolished them, and built enormous greenhouses instead. Artificial sunlight from floating orbs of light gives life to cotton, corn, and exotic fruits. The greenhouses are connected to each other by corridors and canals harboring a tropical forest where animals from around the world live and thrive. Encircled by the greenhouses lies the "Mansion", an enormous three-story villa complete with towers, an underground garage, and offices for her senior staff. Sunshine resides in one of the towers. The greenhouses are one of the largest local employers, and both local media and the county have showered Sunshine with praise, naming her Citizen of the Year. Persistent rumors speak about bribes, violence, threats, and secret experiments, however.

THE TRUTH

The greenhouses are actually a front for Sunshine's experiments on artificial organic tissue. Muscles and tendons hang like pieces of white spider silk from the branches of strange, man-made trees in the classified, windowless building known as the "Black Pearl". Sunshine is trying to perfect an android model with looks and mannerisms that are indistinguishable from those of real humans. Should she succeed, an enormous, untapped market will be hers for the taking – her androids could be used and exploited everywhere from pleasure palaces to factories. She has built about ten prototypes so far, modelled on the local kids who have been given summer jobs in the greenhouses and extra pay for "medical research" up at the Mansion. The prototypes are programmed to mimic their human original, and act just like them.

Sunshine plans to buy all of Adelsö. She believes that by accessing the underground tunnels, she will be able to get into the Loop and use the old factories and labs left behind when Riksenergi sold to Krafta. She has a group of security guards known as the Collective to help her. They have been recruited from various intelligence services, special forces, and black ops around the world and have Elite training (**BODY**) 2. The Collective are extremely loyal to Sunshine, as she has secretly implanted emotion enhancers in their brains,

making them feel loyalty toward her and unrelenting hate toward her enemies. The emotion enhancers also make them act in perfect synchronicity, moving and talking as one. Sunshine uses the Collective to pressure farmers to give up their land by using violence, releasing pests on their property, burning down houses, or bribing government officials. Only Joker Dahlén is still fighting against the harassment on his small farm in the heart of Adelsö.

HOOKS

- A friend of yours from a small farm on Adelsö asks if she can spend a couple of nights at your place. Her dad, “Joker” Dahlén [“Joker” Anderson], was beaten up by masked men last week, and strange people are sneaking around their house at night. Who is your friend?
- A friend of yours turns up at your house in the middle of the night, walking and talking all funny. She says she has run away from the slavery at the “Farm” and asks for your protection. Who is she?
- A woman runs into a shop in Stenhamra in the middle of the day crying for help. Her name is Yvonne Dahlén [Mary Anderson] and she claims that “thugs” are following her, trying to scare her and her husband into selling their farm on Adelsö. She asks you for help, as she thinks they’ll attack her if she goes home by herself. What about her makes you like her?

COUNTDOWN

1. The Collective break into the Dahlén family’s house and waits for them when they come home from a party. The agents are masked and threatening, telling the family to sell if they value their lives. Joker snaps, and is beaten badly by the agents before they flee.
2. The Collective poison the well on the Dahlén farm, and several of the children are hospitalized. The chemicals used are common fertilizer additives of the same brand used on the farm, which makes the cops think that Joker accidentally caused the poisoning.
3. The Collective place a bomb on Joker’s car. His daughter Lina borrows the car to go to a friend’s house and is seriously injured in the blast. The police set up surveillance on the farm, and open an at-

CONNECTIONS TO ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

Sunshine Farm should be the campaign’s final location, where the final Confrontation takes place.



tempted murder investigation. Joker arms the rest of his family with knives and hunting rifles.

DISASTER

Joker heads to Sunshine Farm to confront Sunshine. He shoots one of the guards and is arrested. His wife Yvonne is forced to sell the farm to Sunshine to cover Joker’s trial expenses.

JONAS “JOKER” DAHLÉN [RYAN “JOKER” ANDERSON]

“You reap what you sow”

Joker left the family farm on Adelsö to make it big in finance in Stockholm. He made a name for himself as a ruthless stock broker and made millions. When he met Yvonne and they had their first child, he re-



alized that there was more to life than just piling up money. When his parents passed, he moved his family back to the farm on Adelsö to lead a simpler life, without deadlines and late hours. One day, Sunshine knocked on the door and offered to buy the farm for a huge amount of money, but Joker refused. He is usually a collected person, but becomes impulsive, hostile, and violent if pressured. He is tall, has unkempt red hair and beard, and dresses in blue overalls.

LITTLE DOE TRAILER PARK

Little Doe Trailer Park in the '80s was a tidy, calm oasis on Adelsö [Boulder Beach] where vacationers could get away from their hectic lives in Stockholm. Erika Kohult [Victoria Nash] came to the Doe to finish her plays and finally become recognized as the bard of her generation. The plays were never finished, however, and the Doe went bankrupt, but Erika still remains, living in a rusting old trailer surrounded by filth, decay, and abandoned cars. The Doe has become a haven for the Islands' unwanted and desperate, and Erika has become agoraphobic and very poor. Her only visitor these days is Knut Alhlund [Joey Baker], her social worker. Erika has recently started talking about a six-fingered killer targeting the poor and lonely, who can turn into a spider and paralyze its victims before eating them. She has shown scribbles about the Six Finger Killer to Knut, and asked him to contact the police. Knut has reassured her that there is no such thing as a killer on the loose, and has asked her not to spread such dangerous rumors to the Doe's other residents.

THE TRUTH

Erika is right about the Six Finger Killer targeting Adelsö's poor, but she is unaware that the killer is actually Knut Alhlund. Knut's parents were scientists at Riksenergi, and he blames their experiments with radioactivity for the sixth finger on his left hand. He views himself as the first of a mutant race that will eventually take humanity's place. He hides his extra finger by wearing black gloves, claiming that he is covering up burn scars he got in a fire as a child. He is a deeply lonely person, who enjoys

studying other people from afar, without interacting with them. He despises and longs for compassion and a sense of community, but feels alienated by the rest of society.

Is it loneliness that has driven Knut to murder and cannibalism? He eats the parts of his victims he believes hold their true essence: a carpenter's fingers, a drunkard's liver, or a slice of the brain of a playwright. Knut targets lonely and desperate people, and hides the bodies in an old quarry near the Doe. His next intended target is Erika. Knut has developed a paralyzing gas that he uses to immobilize his victims. He always wears a gas mask for the killings, using a scalpel with his left hand to carefully cut out the piece he intends to eat while his paralyzed victim watches. Knut is Fit (**FORCE**) 2 and Smart (**HEART**) 2.

HOOKS

- A woman named Erika Kohult [Victoria Nash] has sent hundreds of e-mails to people across the Islands claiming that there is a killer on the loose on Adelsö. You recently read a short story by her. What was it about and what did you think of it?
- A video of a dead body in a quarry is circulating at school. People say it's genuine and that it's shot on Adelsö. How did you react when you first saw it?
- You've recently come into contact with a social worker named Knut Alhlund [Joey Baker] who seems to be a bit reclusive. Why have you two started to become friends?

COUNTDOWN

1. Knut kills a resident at the Doe and dumps the body in the quarry.
2. Knut tries to murder Erika but is interrupted by visitors to her trailer (the Teens, perhaps?) just as he is administering the gas. Rumors begin to spread about a six-fingered killer on Adelsö.
3. Knut cuts the power to Erika's trailer, and tries to scare her to stay inside and not talk to anyone. He intimidates Erika's neighbors into leaving the Doe, and gets ready to try to kill her again.

DISASTER

Knut kills Erika. His spree continues.



CONNECTIONS TO ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

In his youth, Knut was convicted of murdering two of his classmates. He spent a number of years in prison, and was then transferred to a psychiatric facility where he lived for another five years before Sunshine found him. She got him out of the home and into her care, and encouraged him to keep taking lives on Adelsö to make real estate prices go down. Sunshine will protect Knut if she can, but not if the cost becomes too high. Knut knows that Sunshine is up to something that could change to whole island for good. He hoards cash at his house, and Sunshine's assistants deliver groceries to him once a week.

ERIKA KOHULT [VICTORIA NASH]

"Mr. Purple and Lil' Yeller are on the roof moping again, and Scrumps has run off. I can't keep up with who's dating who anymore".

Erika has always been a dreamer. As a child, she used to love watching her parents' alternative theater productions in Stockholm in the '60s and '70s, and she had an uncountable number of imaginary friends. Erika never outgrew her fantasy friends, however, and has lived all her life together with the fantastical beings she invented as a child, becoming more and more entangled in intricate love triangles and increasingly unhealthy friendships. Her preoccupation with her imaginary friends has derailed her studies and her career as a playwright, despite being gifted in that area, but she doesn't mind. She is content with the life



she leads, and is perfectly capable of telling her reality from the “real” one – she simply prefers the former. When she heard the rumors about the Six Finger Killer, and woke one night to blood curdling screams nearby, she became obsessed with her fear of the murderer. She cannot talk or think about anything else. Erika loves books, Swedish snuff, and dry gin. She is skinny, with long, brown hair, and almond-shaped eyes.

THE SCIENCE OF LOVE

The new soap opera *The Science of Love* has begun filming at Riksenergi’s old headquarters at Munsö. The show depicts betrayal, greed, and passion among the employees at the Loop in the late ‘80s. Several hot names have joined the cast, and rumors say that Krafta have given the team permission to shoot in the parts of the Loop tunnels that weren’t flooded. High fences separate the outside world from the thirty members of the production team that live on site, but most of the cast live in Stenhamra, where they’re partying pretty hard, if the gossip is to be believed. Locals have been hired as extras, and teens from across the Islands flock to Munsö to get their favorite stars’ autographs. The teen mag *Alright* recently published an article about how Samira Haddad – set to star in the leading role as the power hungry but brilliant Helena Thelander [**Diane Anderson**] – has been replaced by up-and-coming Stockholm actress Mia Stjärnholm [**Megan Young**] after an “argument”.

THE TRUTH

Samira has indeed been replaced by a younger but much less accomplished actress, and instead been offered the role of Helena Thelander’s dim-witted assistant Gunilla [**Daisy**]. Samira got into a fight with Mia Stjärnholm after the latter had made racist comments about her. Mia claims that Samira attacked her without provocation, and as Samira has a reputation for being hot-headed, the producers and the director chose to believe her. Samira decided to get back at Mia – big time. She happened upon some old blueprints on the set, blueprints for Riksenergi’s crab-like PNCR-III bot, designed to help dig people out from underneath avalanches, and built ten of them. The PNCR-III register body heat, carbon dioxide emissions, and smells associated with certain emotions, and Samira instructed them to seek out vanity, as she is certain that Mia Stjärnholm has got to be the most vain person on the Islands.

She also programmed the robots to only move during the night, and to poke out the eyes of their victims. Before releasing the bots, however, she came to her senses and locked them in a storage closet in the basement and decided to return later that evening to destroy them. Unfortunately, a production assistant inadvertently left the door to the closet open, and the robots escaped. They entered Mia’s hotel room during the night and stabbed her eyes out. Samira is devastated about what she has done, but doesn’t want to go to the police. She is also afraid that the robots will attack more people.

When Mia was hospitalized, Samira got her old role back. During the day, she plays the scientist Helena Thelander, and at night, she goes out and bikes around the Black Lake Lands with her backpack full of tracking devices, radar tech, and stun guns. She has been able to short-circuit and neutralize four of the robots so far. The PNCR-III model can climb walls and ceilings, and squeeze through very narrow cracks. They are Metal robots moving as a pack (**FORCE**) 2. When the sun comes up, they go into hiding under a jetty outside of Färentuna. Samira can loan stun guns to the Teens, giving them a +3 against the robots.

HOOKS

- You’ve read in the *Alright* Teen mag that the Sci-

CONNECTIONS TO ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

Sunshine has had the Collective shadow Samira for some time, as she would make a perfect addition to the staff at Viking Land, and arranged for her to find the PNCR-III blueprints at Riksenergi. Sunshine can remote control the robots, and have them attack anyone she pleases. Her goal is to lure Samira into a situation where she will be arrested. Sunshine hopes that by springing Samira from jail and offering her a job, she will get herself a loyal underling, and a famous face to greet the guests as they arrive at the park.



ence of Love soap is coming to shoot at northern Munsö. The lead actress recently had her eyes poked out one night at her hotel. The cops found no evidence of forced entry into her room and the article hints at her having lost her mind. She has been replaced by Samira Haddad, known from The Mall and Love on the Menu. Which of your friends works as an extra at the set?

- Someone cycles through the community at night with a large transmitter in a black backpack. Whose house has the person been casing over the last couple of nights?
- One of your most vain friends claims that crabs are climbing up to her bedroom window at night. Who is she?

COUNTDOWN

1. A distant acquaintance of the Teens is attacked by the PNCR-IIIs and has his eyes poked out.
2. Another person is attacked and blinded. The local papers begin writing about the “Eye Thief”, and presents wild and grotesque theories about why someone is targeting people’s eyes. Samira grows more and more desperate, and tries to find out

everything she can about the victims or the crime scenes that can help her track the robots. She breaks into the house of one of the victims.

3. A third person is attacked and blinded.

DISASTER

Samira is arrested while burgling a house the crabs are about to attack. She is dragged off to court in Stockholm. The robots return to the hideout but are washed away by a storm. The waves put them ashore again in another part of the Lake Mälaren Islands, where the continue to carry out their instructions.

SAMIRA HADDAD

“They can underestimate and ridicule me – but never stop me”

Samira had a tough childhood in a poor part of town, but has managed to make a name for herself as an actress. She began her career by trying to solve conflicts at work with threats and violence, and was known to the media as “Wolf Girl” for many years. She has learned to control her emotions since then, but still sees red when she or someone in her vicinity becomes the target of racism. She has a broad fanbase from her work on the massively popular soap operas The Mall and Love on the Menu, but feels belittled by



her colleagues because of her background. Outside of acting, Samira has a mind for mathematics and mechanics, and builds computers in her free time. She is short, has thick, chestnut hair, and big lips, often painted cherry red. She speaks in a raspy voice, and loves being the center of attention.

THE SERBIAN CHESS CLUB

Three years ago, Vlatko Kačarević deserted from the Serbian army and left his war-torn homeland. He ended up on the Mälaren Islands, bought a farm on Adelsö [Red Mountain], and started a small bed and breakfast business that soon became popular among the Serbian community in northern Europe [The U.S.]. After the success of his B&B, he started the Serbian Chess Club in his barn, and began holding public tournaments that attracted more and more people. One day, his best childhood friend, Iva Čolak, showed up at the club and challenged him to a match. Vlatko and Iva are from the same village, but Iva comes from a Croat family and Vlatko is Serbian, and when the war broke out, they ended up on opposing sides of each other's rifles, and became enemies. Iva had also deserted his company and travelled to Adelsö to find Vlatko to try to process the memories of the unspeakable actions he had seen – or carried out. Their chess game carried on for days – at first in total silence, but after a while, they began talking, and after Iva had finally won, they were friends again. The story of their reconciliation spread, and the club soon had members not only of Serbian descent, but also Croat and Bosnian. Now, Vlatko and Iva help traumatized former enemies rediscover humanity and compassion through chess and camaraderie, and Adelsö is seeing an increased influx of residents from the Balkans. Rumors are spreading about bad blood not being completely forgotten, however, and several clubgoers have been the victims of attempted arson or vandalism, and some have had their livestock shot at. Vlatko has even found and disarmed a firebomb inside his house.

THE TRUTH

The Serbian Chess Club's message of peace and forgiveness has caught the attention of the international media, something the ICC – the International Conflict

CONNECTIONS TO ROBOTS AND RAGNARÖK

Viking Land isn't the real purpose for Sunshine's experiments with human-like androids. The park is funded to a large extent by the arms lobby and the ICC who wish to use Viking Land as a place to do live tests of robots that could go on to serve in war, as spies, or as terrorists. Linda operates out of Sunshine Farm, from where she also monitors the progress of Viking Land for her ICC employers. Linda has a radio to call for backup if she believes ICC's investment on Adelsö are threatened.



Confederation – is less than happy about. The ICC is a secret network of politicians, organized crime syndicates, and the arms industry that fund war and conflict to make money. The ICC wish to see the war in the Balkans continue for many years to come, and have dispatched one of their agents, Linda Faithful, to Adelsö to sabotage the chess club. Linda's mission is to pit the members of the chess club against each other, and with the help of her recon robot Z0-Valentino, she has burned down farm houses, painted racist graffiti, and killed cattle at the homes of several members. She has also tipped off the local media that deserters and potential war criminals from the Balkans have bought homes on Adelsö. She is unaware of the fact that her partner in crime, Valentino, did a tour as a warbot in the Balkans. Valentino recognizes the hate and xenophobia, and wishes to put an end to it rather than make it worse. The robot has recorded all of Linda's crimes, and started uploading the videos to file sharing communities on the Internet in the hopes that someone will see them and do something about it.



HOOKS

- You've downloaded a video clip of a woman spray painting racist, Serbian slurs on the side of a barn. How can you be so sure that the video was shot on Adelsö [Red Mountain], and which of your friends has a cabin nearby?
- You've been invited to take part in a chess tournament at the Serbian Chess Club on Adelsö, but you've heard that there has been fighting at the club between the Serbs, the Croats, and the Bosnians. Who invited you?
- Refugees from the war in the Balkans have recently started arriving on Adelsö. Some say that they are soldiers. Yesterday, you saw two of them in a boat and both of them had rifles. Who is claiming to have seen someone dump a body in the lake?

COUNTDOWN

1. Linda sets fire to a barn belonging to a Croatian family which leads to tensions running high at the chess club. Vlatko and Iva have to use force to break up the fight. The local paper writes about the fight.
2. Linda kills livestock belonging to a Serbian family.

The men in the family drive over to a Bosnian family later in the evening, accusing them of the deed. Fighting breaks out and the police are called to the scene. Vlatko tries to mediate between the parties. Journalists from several newspapers visit the club for interviews. Many of the club's members arm themselves again. Two former soldiers start fighting in a shop in Stenhamra, and one of them pulls a gun. They flee the scene before the police arrive.

3. Linda spray paints racist slurs on a car belonging to a Bosnian clubgoer. The tensions erupt, and one member is shot in the leg. The chess club cancel all of their upcoming tournaments. The former soldiers band together in ethnically homogenous groups, and barricade themselves in their houses.

DISASTER

The conflict comes to a head and a firefight breaks out at Vlatko's farm. Vlatko and Iva are once again on different sides in the fighting. The newly formed National Task Force within the police intervene to put an end to the hostilities. Several arrests are made but most of the combatants escape. Vlatko's barn is empty and quiet once more.



LINDA AND Z0-VALENTINO

"People never change, not really"

Linda and her husband worked as mediators during the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the 80's. When her husband was shot and killed, she realized that you can never truly settle a conflict between two parties whose worldviews differ so fundamentally. The only way to avoid a perpetual war is to let them devour each other and salvage what's left when one of them comes out victorious. This way of thinking led to her going to work for the ICC. Linda has experience from war zones around the world, speaks multiple languages, holds a number of master's degrees from different universities, and is well versed both in the cold strategizing of a chess game and in the abstract reasoning of a panel on classical philosophy. Since the death of her husband, she has removed herself from friends and family, and only speaks to her employers and to Z0-Valentino. She has participated in several tournaments at Vlatko's club to observe her target, which has led to her taking a liking to Vlatko, something that stresses her

out immensely. She is tall and skinny, with red hair and a simple taste in clothes. She is armed with a pistol and a sniper rifle, and is Highly educated (All attributes) 2. Z0-Valentino is a humanoid model, about one meter tall and painted white. It can fly and reach an altitude of about fifty meters, and can be equipped with a flamethrower, a video camera, spray cans, and many other useful things.





PROPHETS OF PANDORA

Three scientists with bold ambitions. A journey through time and space. A secret worth killing over. In these four Mysteries, the Teens will face their greatest challenge ever.



The rest of this book contains four complete Mysteries, playable as either standalone adventures or as a campaign, *Prophets of Pandora*.

The first three Mysteries will take between four and eight hours to play. You can add more Locations or Everyday Life scenes if you wish to extend them. The fourth Mystery, *Ash to Eternity*, is longer, and may take up to twelve hours to play. This Mystery is written as an epic campaign finale, and not as a standalone scenario. The four Mysteries in the campaign contain suggested Trouble and methods for overcoming them, but it is up to the players to decide if they want to try different approaches.

For these four Mysteries, the Teens should preferably live in the southern Black Lake Lands, attending Berggården High School [[Boulder City Highschool](#)]. Perhaps

one of them grew up on the north side though, and was evacuated south after the fateful flooding on Christmas Day of 1994?

BACKGROUND

In the '80s, Riksenergi employed three medical doctors with big dreams – surgeon Natasha Lintov, immunologist Sven Järnek [[John Collins](#)] and radiologist Elisabeth Sundgren [[Elizabeth Cox](#)] – to work on a research project, but they failed to make any noteworthy discoveries. They weren't taken seriously by their coworkers at the Loop, and came under threat of being fired. One day, they found a strange, underground laboratory in the northern Black Lake Lands [[in the desert](#)]



northwest of Boulder City]. No one else seemed to know about its existence, and it was impossible to find out who built it. What made things even stranger was that the lab seemed designed especially for the trio, containing equipment that made them smarter, more intuitive, and more capable of living up to their destinies as great scientists. Elisabeth, Natasha, and Sven kept the lab secret, and named it the Hephaestum, after the Greek god Hephaestus' workshop where he crafted magical artifacts for the other gods. The trio was soon overcome with hubris and visions of grandeur, and began referring to themselves as "scientific prophets", dedicating their work to ridding humanity of war, disease, and pollution. They convinced each other that ethics and morality shouldn't be allowed to stand in their way, and started conducting live tests on the unsuspecting inhabitants of the Mälaren Islands by dispersing experimental chemicals in kiosks and grocery

stores, even going as far as kidnapping people and locking them up in the Hephaestum to use as guinea pigs.

The three prophets made a series of revolutionary discoveries that skyrocketed their careers at Riksenergi. However, a journalist named Michaela Tannenbaum [Michelle Tannenbaum] infiltrated the organization under a false name, and managed to convince Elisabeth to show her the Hephaestum. The prophets only realized the danger to their work on the evening before Michaela's article was due to be published, when it was already too late. Sven went over to her house and poisoned her to induce a fatal brain hemorrhage, and Elisabeth used her knowledge of time travel to transport the lab and herself forward in time to avoid detection. The trio decided to meet again in the 90's and continue their work.

When the press and Riksenergi's security staff showed up to where the Hephaestum used to be on



the following morning, they found empty corridors and dead ends, and Michaela's article was retracted. Natasha and Sven were fired, however, and stripped of their medical licenses. Natasha changed her name to Liv Himmelshöjd [Destiny Sky], and launched a new career as a life coach, eventually opening a therapy center in the Black Lake Lands. Sven got a teacher's diploma, and made it all the way to become principal of Berggården High School in Stenhamra [Boulder City].

It has been almost ten years since Elisabeth and the Hephaestum disappeared. Riksenergi's assets have been sold to Krafta Corp [AEP], and the place where the Hephaestum used to be is now deep inside the Evacuation Zone [the Desert Zone]. In the last couple of years, Sven and Liv have observed signs of Elisabeth's coming return to the Islands. They have had a long time to think about their crusade, however, and al-

though they have continued to conduct experiments as best they can, they aren't so sure anymore about their trademark ruthless pragmatism. Even if they could reunite and work toward saving humanity – should they?

Over the course of the campaign, the Teens will feel the consequences of Liv and Sven's experiments, and witness the events that follow Elisabeth's return to the Islands and discover that she has lost the Hephaestum somewhere along the way. In the fourth Mystery, the prophets attempt to build a new Hephaestum, and create objects that will allow them to force their will upon humanity to save it from itself. If the Teens manage to stop the trio, the new Hephaestum will be transported back in time, and wait for the prophets to find it in the mid-80's.

The four Mysteries are called *Of Flesh and Steel*, *The Ugliness*, *Traveler*, and *Ash to Eternity*.

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OF FLESH AND STEEL

When the Teens find a local kid dead, they soon find themselves in the centre of a mystery threatening the whole population of the Mälaren Islands. What kind of creature is the machine fetus? And who are these strange robots guarding the secret?



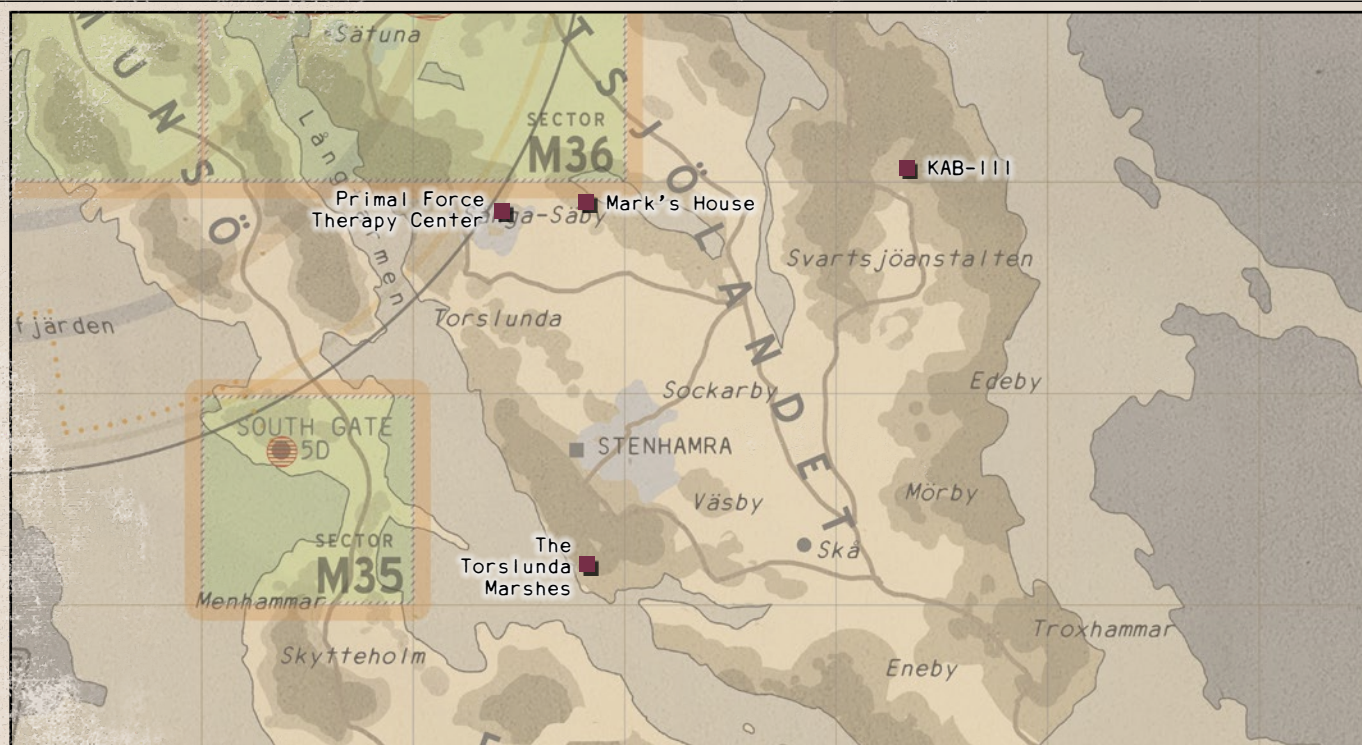
This Mystery is a good introduction to the game for new Teens, and can be played either as a standalone adventure or as the first part of the Pandora campaign.

THE TRUTH

Surgeon Natasha Lintov was one of three “prophets” at Riksenergi in the ‘80s, who conducted secret, unethical experiments at an underground lab in the Black Lake Lands. When their activities were exposed in the press, the prophets lost their medical licenses and were fired. The only reason they avoided lengthy prison sentences was the disappearance of the lab, along with one of the three scientists, Elisabeth Sundgren [Elisabeth Cox]. Natasa changed her name to Liv Himmelshöjd

[Destiny Sky] and rebranded herself as a life coach and spiritual counselor. She bought a house on the outskirts of Sångå-Såby, and opened a therapy center called Primal Force. Liv has recently started observing signs indicating that Elisabeth is about to return to the present from her travels through time, and has therefore started up some of her old experiments again.

Liv is an expert on the interaction between organic tissue and technology. She has come into contact with a group of stray robots in the Black Lake Lands known as the Vagabonds. She has helped them birth a machine fetus of flesh and steel. Not all Vagabonds chose to help her, however, only the faction known as the Totem Clan – the rest of the group, led by one called the Shaman, spat on her promises of procreation.



The time-consuming process of developing the machine fetus was started at Liv's clinic, and completed at the Clan's bunker on the east side of the Black Lake Lands [Cape Horn]. Without telling the Vagabonds, however, Liv has used the fetus to experiment with radio transmission of human emotions. She plans to use her invention to end all wars, by deploying the technology on the battlefield and transmitting the horrors of the dying and dead to soldiers and politicians around the world to make them see the true face of war. Her experiments have so far been successful, and the machine fetus is now transmitting the experience of its slow and painful birth into the world, specifically to the population of the Islands, as dreams and waking hallucinations. When Liv attempted to shut down the experiment and terminate the fetus, she was imprisoned by the Clan. They refused to allow their dreams of procreation to die just because some human was done playing God.

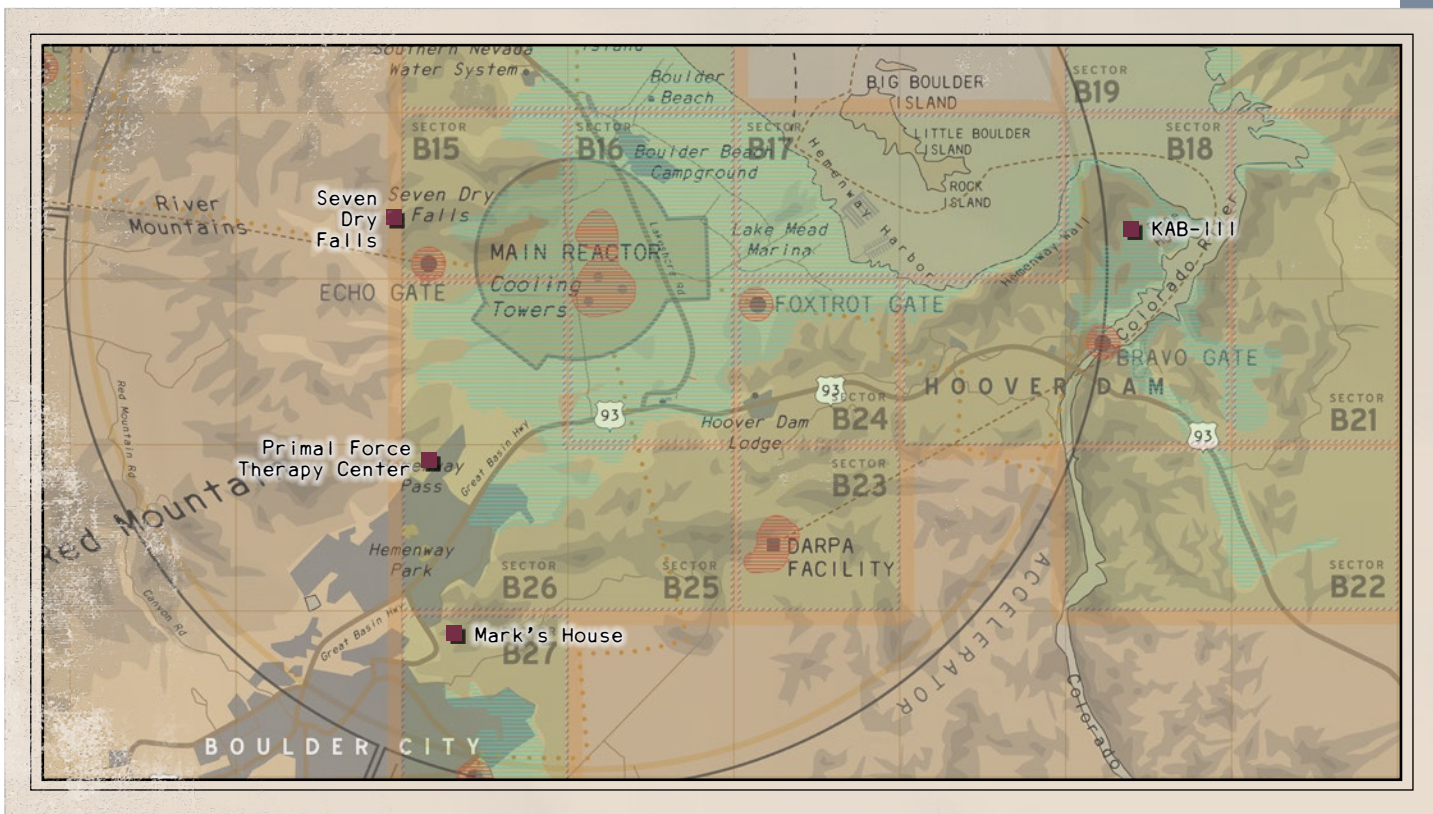
A teenage patient of Liv's, Mark Mäkinen [Mark Griffin], had taken an interest in the Vagabonds via his treatment at Primal Force. He witnessed Liv being tak-

en prisoner, followed the robots back to their bunker, and saw the fetus. He was discovered while snooping around, and the Clan electrocuted him so he wouldn't give away their secret. They placed his body underneath a power line outside of Sänga-Säby [Hemenway Park] to make it look like he had been climbing the poles and got too close to the wires. Robots loyal to the Shaman spied on the staging of the scene of the accident, however, and felt great sorrow over Mark's death. They adorned his body with trinkets to pay their respects.

The Mystery begins with the Teens finding Mark's body, goes on to deal with their investigation into his death, and culminates when they try to keep the birth of the machine fetus from completion, as it results in worse and worse nightmares for the people of the Islands.

COUNTDOWN

The machine fetus is unintentionally transmitting its birth pains as nightmares and hallucinations to people in the surroundings. Over the course of the Mystery, these dream visions will become worse, and affect more and more people. Begin advancing the Countdown as



soon as you start playing. When the visions eventually begin affecting the Teens, keep the dream sequences short and effective – too many too often will take the suspense away.

EXAMPLE

Player 3 (Eva): *I go to the nearest store to get some flashlights.*

GM: *When you enter the store, you first think you're alone since you can't see any other shoppers or staff. Then you hear sobbing, and see that everyone in the store is either sitting or lying on the floor, crying. Milk cartons have smashed on the floor, one of the clerks' chairs has rolled out into the aisles and a pallet of canned soup sits abandoned half-way out of storage. A baby is crying somewhere in the produce section.*

Player 3: *I carefully step past the people on the floor, grab some flashlights and batteries and leave without paying.*

GM: *A couple of them look up at you with immense pain in their eyes, but no one tries to speak to you or stop you.*

DISASTER

If the Teens fail to stop the birth of the fetus, it will die in a horrible and drawn out nightmare of pain and fear, leading to dreams and visions that will take some Islanders weeks, months, or even years to recover from.

INTRODUCING THE TEENS

Give each of the Teens an Everyday Life scene, with or without Trouble. Have people near them complain about nightmares, become confused, or describe seeing a strange red light. Let the players decide what time of year and day it is, and try to set the mood by focusing briefly on small details – the wind through the dry, summer grass, or the snow packed high on both sides of the road. You can include the Vagabonds' graffiti (see below) in the scene if you like.

NIGHTMARE COUNTDOWN

1. Only a handful of people are affected by the experiences of the machine fetus, either as nightmares or waking hallucinations: pain, a rusty smell of blood, throbbing membranes being stretched to the breaking point, screams. Those affected feel angry, sad, and disgusted.
2. The Teens become affected, as well as more people across the Islands, leading to car accidents and people locked in bathrooms at work, crying, or collapsing in the street, screaming in fear and throwing up. The sequences become longer and more detailed: racing heartbeats, a sensation of being held down, metal screws forced into bone, an overwhelming stench of feces, vomit, and blood, the sound of a drill.
3. The phenomenon runs rampant across the Islands, many are affected, and the dreams are hard to wake up from. People stagger through town, screaming, cars are left abandoned in the road, some collapse on the sidewalk, gasping for breath in the throes of a panic attack. Affected Teens must pass an **EMPATHIZE** test or suffer a Condition.



EXAMPLE

GM: Okay, we're playing Of Flesh and Steel, the first Mystery in the Pandora campaign, which means we can continue on with the same story after this scenario. We'll begin with

something from Everyday Life. Who wants to start?

Player 4 (Sana): I'd like a scene about my Problem, me finding out that my sister's boyfriend is beating her.

GM: Okay, do you have a scene in mind, or would you like me to set it for you?

Player 4: She's been quiet all night but she doesn't want to tell me why. She's sitting beside me on my bed, leaning her forehead against my cheek so her hair hides her face. As I stroke her hair, I see a bruise on her scalp, like someone has been pulling her hair.

GM: When she notices that you've seen it, she pulls back and combs her hair down with her hand to hide the mark.

Player 4: "What happened, sis?"

INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

Have the players decide why they are out walking in the woods near the power lines outside Sānga-Sāby [Hemenway Park]. Describe the trees and the fields, and let the Teens talk for a bit. They suddenly come upon a body in the tall grass underneath one of the towers. Freshly picked flowers are laid out around the body (if the season allows it – otherwise it's beautiful feathers, pieces of leather and fur, or fish bones). Two brick chips from the beach, made smooth by the rolling waves, have been placed over the person's eyes. Someone has drawn eyes on the red chips with blue chalk.

The Teens recognize the dead person as Mark Mäkinen [Mark Griffin], a loner who goes to their school. He has long, almost platinum blond hair, is somewhat heavy, and wears a green hunting jacket. One of the sleeves of the jacket has a black burn mark on it, through which a patch of singed skin is visible. Ask the Teens about their relationships to Mark.

A successful **INVESTIGATE** test by one of the Teens can reveal that Mark has died from a powerful electrical shock. Someone has trampled the grass around the nearest pole to make it look like he had been

Mark's notes

[NOTES]

1: They came to Primal Force and kidnapped doctor Liv. Never been violent
 2 : before. Didn't see the Shaman. Gotta be the Totem Clan. Should I go to the
 3: Torslunda marshes? No, will follow. Scared.

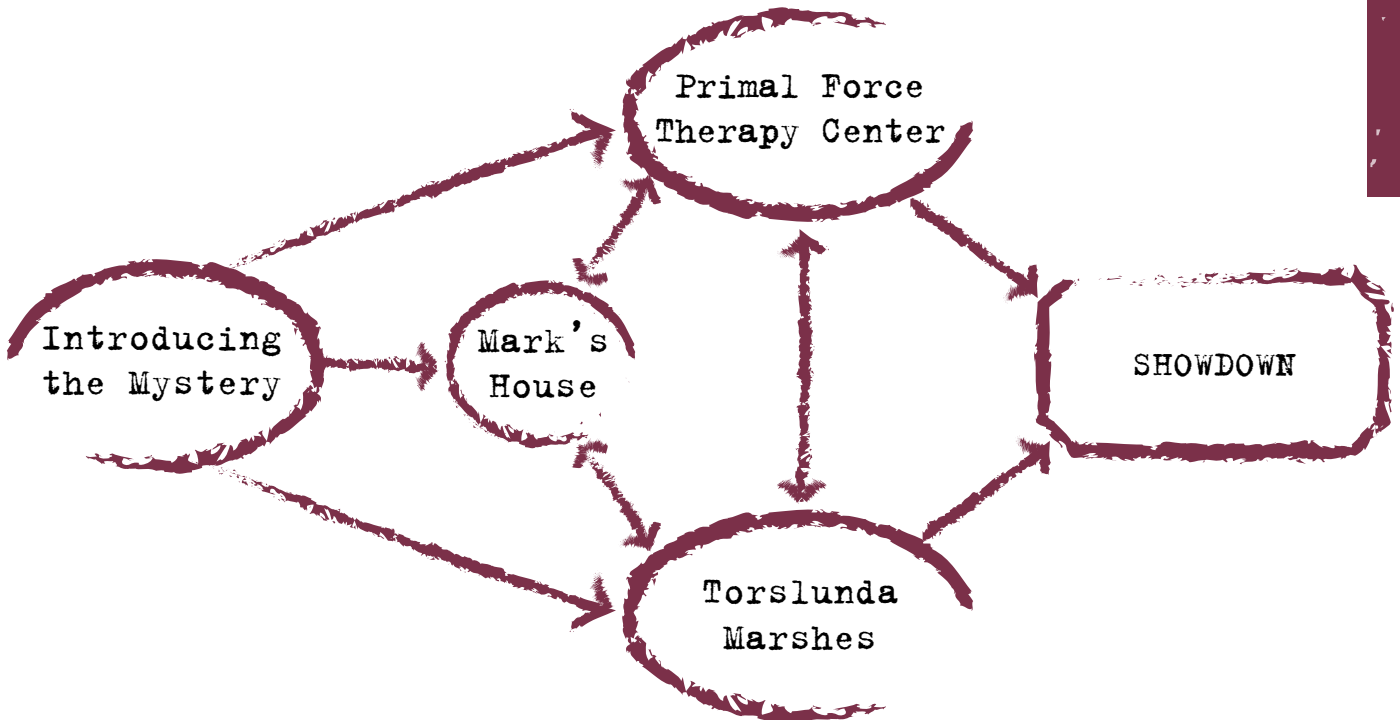
4: They saw the camera flash. Dropped it. Hiding. Blurry vision. Feel sick. Saw
 5: the thing from my dreams. They are close now, gotta be quiet. If you find
 6: this, you have to...

climbing it, but other tracks nearby reveal that his body was dragged here. The rigor mortis compared to the freshness of the flowers indicate that he must have been dead for some time before the flowers were placed. If the Teen fails the test, she gets the same information, but becomes Scared.

In one of Mark's pockets, the Teens find an advanced calculator he was using as a notepad. It need as a code to unlock it, or a successful **PROGRAM** test. Mark's notes (see box) mention Primal Force (which can be found through the phone book) and the

Torslunda marshes [Seven Dry Falls]. If the test fails, the Teens will need help to unlock the notes, which they can find by testing **CONTACT**. They know where Mark lives.

No one at the Police thinks that Mark has been murdered. If the Teens point out that someone has decorated the scene and the body, they dismiss it as someone else finding the body before them but being too scared to report it. The school honors Mark's memory with a vigil, where his aunt expresses her wish to keep the funeral for just the close family.



EXAMPLE

GM: *Why are you out walking in an empty field near the woods outside Sānga-Sāby?*

Player 2 (Gustaf): *Sana, you've just told me about the thing with your sister, right?*

Player 4 (Sana): *I haven't told you yet, but I've said that I need to tell you something. I keep talking around it because it feels like I'm betraying her if I tell you.*

GM: *The yellow summer grass flows like waves in the autumn winds. The power lines above you crackle and hum. Gustaf, you spot a body lying in the grass next to one of the towers.*

INFORMATION ABOUT THE DREAMS

The Teens can use **CONTACT** to find dream experts, research the subject at the library using **COMPREHEND**, or build a scanner using **TINKER** to measure the dreams on their own. They find out that all the dreams seem alike, regardless of the dreamer's personal experiences and perspectives. The subjects are pain, fear, blood, and cramps, themes seemingly associated with childbirth from the perspective of the child. The dreams intensify, occur more often, and become more painful over time. The human psyche cannot stand the strain forever, without eventually being scarred by the ordeal.

LOCATION 1: MARK'S HOUSE

Mark and his aunt live in an isolated house by a small lake east of Sānga-Sāby called Igelviken [north of Boulder City]. The two story brick house is surrounded by a dense wall of trees. Wind chimes and dream catchers swing from the branches, and Grateful Dead songs or other psychedelic rock can be heard through the open windows.

The inside of the house is messy. Musical instruments and signed rock posters cover the walls. It smells of mold, incense, and rotting food. Everywhere are stacks of books about inner peace, healing, and angels. The loud music comes from the stereo in the living room. Framed pictures of Mark's mom hang through-

out the house, some of them with a man next to her (Mark's dad) scratched out.

Mark's room is on the second floor. It is very tidy. He owned a great deal of photography equipment, and had built his own darkroom. Photos of the Vagabonds and their graffiti cover the walls.

TROUBLE

Aunt Emi [Aunt Erin] is not used to having visitors and she doesn't like it. Regardless of whether the Teens arrive before or after she has heard of Mark's death, she will ignore their knocking until they cause enough of a scene. She doesn't want to let them in, and seeing Mark's room is out of the question. If the Teens bring her the news of Mark's death, she is devastated and asks to be left alone. She will only believe that he was murdered if the Teens pass a **CHARM** test, but she won't want to hear any details. Mark's death means she has betrayed the memory of her late sister, something she'll never forgive herself for.

The Teens can use **SNEAK** to enter the house and avoid Emi, or **CHARM** to get her to let them in. If they successfully test **EMPATHIZE**, they figure out that the best way for them to get to see Mark's room is to pose as close friends of his – Emi has always worried that Mark didn't have friends.

EXAMPLE

Player 4 (Sana): *I knock even harder and yell "Hello!?"*

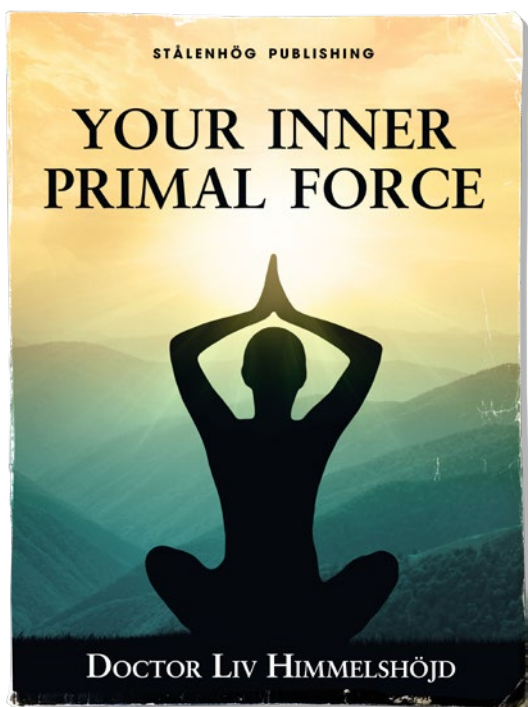
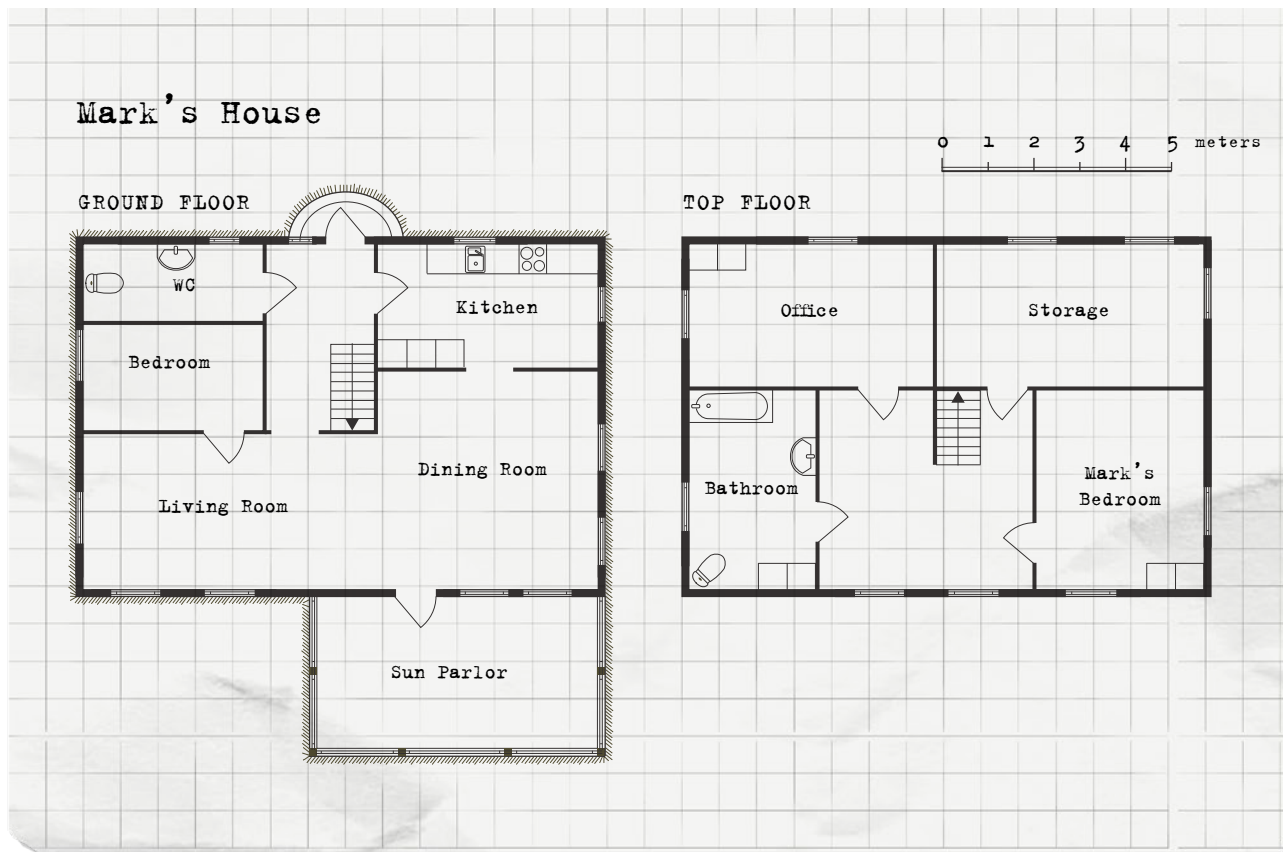
GM: *Still no answer, and you might be mistaken, but you get the feeling that someone in there just turned the music up even more.*

Player 3 (Eva): *"What the fuck..." I rip one of the big wind chimes from the tree and chuck it through the window next to the door.*

GM: *Okay... The window shatters. After a couple of seconds, someone turns off the music and walks toward the door.*

CLUES

If the Teens examine Mark's photos using **COMPREHEND**, they see that most of them are shot in the Torslunda marshes [Seven Dry Falls], south of Sānga-Sāby. The



robots in the pictures appear aware that they are being photographed, which could mean that they knew Mark. One of the pictures has a small caption written in pen below it – “The Shaman”.

A dog-eared and worn copy of “Your Inner Primal Force” by doctor Liv Himmelshöjd [Destiny Sky] can be found on Mark’s bedside table. On the title page, someone has dedicated the copy to “my apprentice, shooting for the stars” in barely legible handwriting. The book describes what a person should do in order to be rid of her “conformity virus” and become whole, which in turn will end all wars. The author is described at the back of the book as a medical doctor with a holistic perspective, running a therapy center called Primal Force located north of Sänga-Säby [north of Hemenway Park]. The accompanying picture shows a very serious woman with hard eyes. Aunt Emi can confirm that both she and Mark regularly visited Pri-

BOULDER CITY: SEVEN DRY FALLS MARSHLANDS

Seven Dry Falls is a hiking trail in the desert. The Hoover Dam Disaster turned the area into marshland.



mal Force, and that it was doctor Liv who got Mark interested in the Vagabonds.

If the Teens use **INVESTIGATE** to search Mark's room, they find an envelope inside one of the camera bags. It contains a key and a note with the numbers 336699 written on it. This is the alarm combination and front door key to Primal Force.

If the Teens fail a dice roll, Emi has either caught them or changed her mind, and throws them out.

LOCATION 2: THE TORSLUNDA MARSHES

Torslunda [Seven Dry Falls] became marshlands after the Loop flooding. About twenty Vagabonds live in or around the marshes as a tribe led by one calling itself the Shaman. The Shaman chose not to go along with Liv's procreation plans, which led to the Totem Clan leaving the marshes.

The Vagabonds live on small islands in the swamp in rudimentary shacks. They know that the Clan killed Mark, and believe that it's only a matter of time before the ruthless purges they fled Russia to get away from will start to happen here. The Vagabonds saw Mark as a friend, and mourn his passing by tying black rags in the trees around Torslunda. The marshes are damp, smelly, and under siege from unrelenting, cold winds. In the summertime, they are also full of mosquitoes. On trees, cliffs, and electrical boxes all over the southern Black Lake Lands [in the desert], the Vagabonds

have drawn religious depictions of animals, plants, birth, and death. The graffiti is instantly recognizable to the Teens.

The Shaman lives in a treehouse. About thirty cowboy novels discarded from the library in Stenhamra can be found there, which have been used by the robots to learn Swedish. Photographs taken by Mark can also be found in the treehouse.

TROUBLE

The Teens must pass an **INVESTIGATE** test to find the Shaman. The Vagabonds will do anything to protect their leader, and try to lure the Teens away from the treehouse and into a trap they have dug. If the Teens fail the test, they step through a layer of branches and grass that hides a muddy hole, and must use **FORCE** to climb out. They may use leftover sixes to help each other. Those who fail still make it out but become Exhausted. If they try to find the Shaman again and fail a second time, the Vagabonds have lured them all the way back to Stenhamra where they become Upset.

If they pass the test, they see a group of bejewelled Vagabonds playing with some foxes, rabbits, and hens. They have decorated their simple shacks with assorted human items they have found or stolen. If the Teens speak to them, they reply in broken Swedish. If the Teens pass an **EMPATHIZE** test, they can tell that the Vagabonds are scared and hiding something. The Teens are shown the way to the Shaman.

CLUES

The Shaman welcomes the Teens and offers them herbal tea from a spirit stove. He pretends to drink with them, pouring the tea down his face and chest. He can confirm that Mark often visited them, and he believes they were his only friends. The Shaman describes the Vagabonds as lovers of life and nature, although they themselves aren't part of it. A group of Vagabonds calling themselves the Totem Clan refused to accept this, and were enthralled by Liv's [Destiny's] promises of creating life on their own. The Shaman knows that Liv runs a therapy center called Primal Force on the outskirts of Sångå-Säby [north of Hemenway park].

The Shaman reveals that the Totem Clan killed Mark. The Vagabonds in the marshes saw the Clan move his body to the field outside of Sångå-Säby [He-



menway park], after which the Shaman’s people paid their respects by decorating the scene with trinkets precious to them. The Shaman knows that the Clan are holed up in an old army bunker known as KAB-III. Visiting the library or using a map can help the Teens find the bunker, which is in the eastern Black Lake Lands [Cape Horn].

LOCATION 3: PRIMAL FORCE THERAPY CENTER

Liv [Destiny] works out of her home, a brown two story just outside of Sânga-Sâby [north of Hemenway park]. The garden is poorly tended, the blinds closed, and all windows and doors are locked. A sign next to

the front stairs says “Primal Force Therapy Center”. A few steps below the front door is the garage, which is locked from the inside with a sturdy padlock.

When the Clan kidnapped Liv, they cut the power to the house. The burglar alarm has a back-up battery, and is the only electrical appliance that still works. It is very dark inside the house as all the blinds are closed.

The bottom floor contains the kitchen, the living room, and a patient room. Clear signs of struggle can be found in the kitchen – chairs are knocked over, and the table is broken. A rank smell surrounds the fridge and the freezer, around which a pool of water has formed. From the hallway, stairs lead to the second floor and the basement, the locked door to which is hidden by a

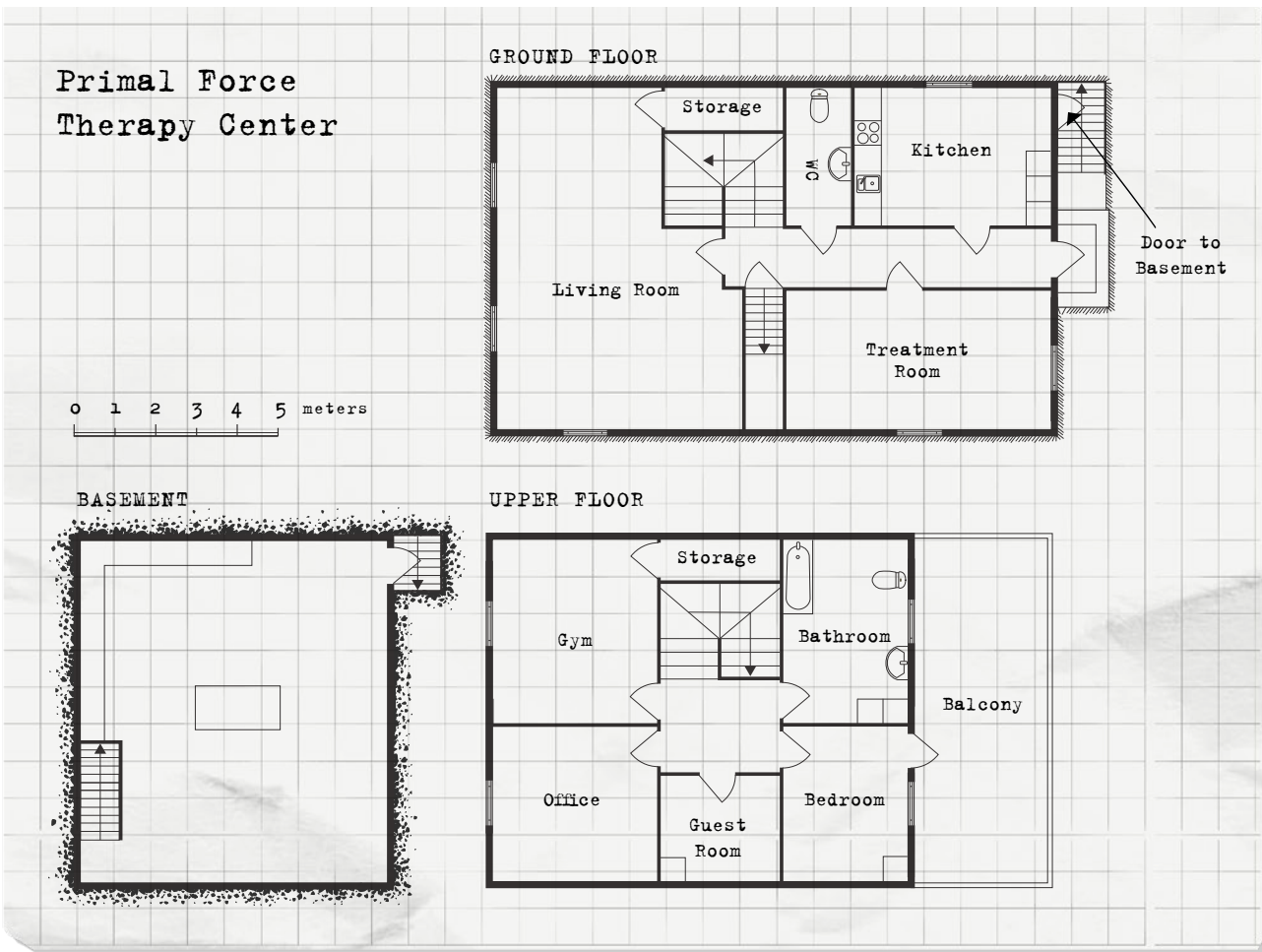
drapery. The second floor contains Liv's office, her bedroom, a never used guest room, and an exercise room. Liv's computer can be found in her office.

The basement has been turned into a soundproof laboratory, where Liv has been conducting her experiments. A row of cages contains two monkeys, howling from hunger, a dead rabbit with its legs replaced with caterpillar tracks, and mice with strange technology implanted in their bodies. Tool racks with drills, saws, and pliers cover the walls. A high pressure washer sits in a corner. A steel slab is bolted to the floor in the center of the room, holding discarded remains from the creation of the machine fetus: bloody tarps, rusty screws, jars of rotting, organic tissue, broken electronic components, and multi-colored wires. Some lockers contain assorted jars of chemicals, growth hormone, and painkillers, but most of the containers are empty. Atop a small table sits a strange radio. Several wooden crates in the room are marked KAB-III.

TROUBLE

During the day, Liv's neighbors are out and about, requiring the Teens to pass a **SNEAK** test to approach the house without being spotted, as the garden has neither hedges nor a fence. After sundown, approaching the house undetected isn't a problem. If the Teens haven't found Mark's note and key, they may attempt to disarm the alarm using **PROGRAM**, and pick the lock on the door using **TINKER**. If they trip the alarm, a car from Eagle Sec will turn up after ten minutes, and two security guards will search the house with flashlights. If they find the Teens, they bring them to the police station and call their parents.

The basement door is locked and Liv has the key on her. The Teens may try to force it open using **FORCE** or **TINKER**. If they fail, they still open the door, but make enough noise for a neighbor to hear them and come knocking on the front door to see what's up.





Liv's notes

CLUES

Several of Mark's photographs can be found throughout the house, enlarged and beautifully framed. **COMPREHEND** allows a Teen to recognize the location in the photos as the Torslunda marshes [Seven Dry Falls].

If the Teens plug Liv's computer into a working power outlet, they can bypass the password protection using **PROGRAM**. The computer contains two notes called The Prophets Reunite and Eureka!, but barely any patient files on people other than Mark and Emi.

If the Teens use **INVESTIGATE** in the basement, they realize that Liv has created a hybrid creature of flesh and steel, and then transported it somewhere. Vagabond components have been used in the process, as well as

large quantities of growth hormones and artificial, organic tissue.

A Teen who examines the radio closer using **CALCULATE** will recognize it as a failed attempt to create a device that transmits human emotions as radio waves. A note next to the device contains suggestions for names: Peace Maker, Back-At-You, Empathy Enforcer, War Ender.

A Teen who uses **COMPREHEND** realizes that the KAB-III markings on the crates are military, and that the crates must come from a bunker with the same name. Visiting the library or using a map allows the group to find the bunker in the eastern Black Lake Lands [Cape Horn].

RESTLESS SPIRITS

Liv's colleague Elisabeth Sundgren [Elizab^eth Cox] disappeared almost ten years ago, along with their lab, the Hephaesteum, in an attempt to transport herself and their work forward in time. She is now about to reappear in the present, which causes strange electrical interference in the vicinity of people she used to work with. The interference looks like a classic haunting, but is actually phase shifts in spacetime. In Liv's house, taps turn on and off on their own, Elisabeth's whispering voice can be heard in the telephone, steps can be heard on the basement stairs, and shadows in the corner of one's eye move around or knock things over. Use these phenomena to create a scary atmosphere in the house. If the Teens use **INVESTIGATE** or **COMPREHEND** to figure out what's going on, they come to the conclusion that the strange events are impossible to explain.



If the Teens fail their dice rolls, they still get the information but must check a Condition.

CONFRONTATION

The Totem Clan has moved into the abandoned KAB-III bunker, one of many installations built in the 60's to protect the Loop in case of an invasion. The arduous process of birthing the machine fetus has gone on for almost two weeks, and is now nearing completion in the bunker. Liv is held captive in a small cell. The Teens must stop the birth of the fetus to stop the dream visions.

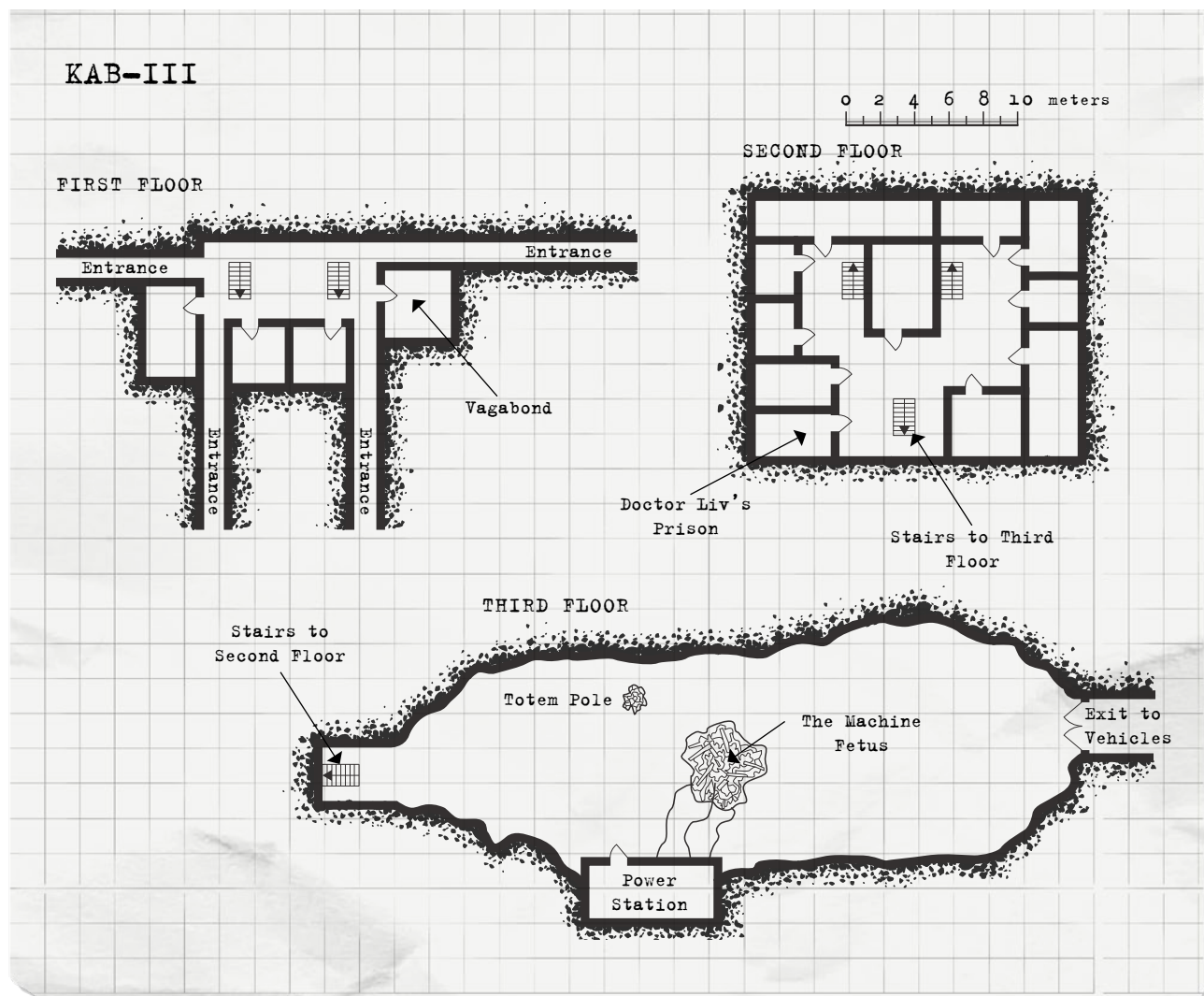
KAB-III

There are about ten entrances to the bunker scattered throughout the woods in the eastern Black Lake Lands: steel hatches in the ground, often hidden under tall grass or bushes. The hatches are marked "KAB-III", and can be opened by the turning of a wheel. They are neither locked nor guarded. The concrete tunnels below are narrow, dark, and full of rats and spiders. The screams from the machine fetus reverberate in the darkness, along with the buzzing of drills and other tools. The walls are covered with Clan graffiti: animals melding with cogs, chains, and pipes. The sign meaning birth looks a lot like the machine fetus.

The bunker has three floors, and metal stairs in several places connect the upper two. Ventilation slits between the floors carry distorted sounds throughout the complex. The first floor contains storage rooms, most of which hold only empty and broken crates. One room contains a Vagabond who has donated too much of itself to the machine fetus and become a limbless chunk of steel on the floor, incapable of speech. Its jaws clack in the dark, and its eyes glow if the Teens come close.

The Clan lives in the small cells on the second floor. A couple of the lamps still work, bathing the corridors in a weak, sickly light. The robots sit quietly in their cells, gazing into the dark. They won't interact with or attack the Teens unless they themselves are attacked. One of the cells is locked. Through a small, barred window, the Teens spot Liv. She will try to attract the group's attention without alerting the nearby robots (who, regardless of any noise, won't react). Through the bars, Liv asks the Teens to terminate the machine fetus by increasing the electricity running through the birthing apparatus, causing an overload. She tells them that the power distribution panel can be found on the third floor, in a room to the right in the cave.

A metal staircase leads down to the third floor, which consists of a single, large cave room and a smaller adjacent room containing the power distribution panel. Construction lights illuminate the damp, gray walls. A totem pole stands in the middle of the room, constructed from pieces of the Vagabonds that died after donating parts of themselves



to the machine fetus. The pole rises four meters into the air, and is made up of countless arms, legs, heads, hands, and feet welded together. The machine fetus itself lies on some tarps next to the pole.

The fetus is a formless lump of organic tissue and mechanical and electronic components, five meters long. The thing throbs and twitches, clusters of swollen eyes stare desperately into the night, and ten mouths scream in pain all at once. Across the body, diodes flash, gears grind, and deformed limbs claw at the darkness. A pool of blood and other bodily fluids have formed around the being. Cables connected to it disappear into the small room where the power station can be found.

The leader of the Clan, Jane, and two other Vagabonds, work in the room with drills, saws, and strange, Badminton racket-like implements to make sure the fetus keeps growing and doesn't fall apart.

TROUBLE

If the Teens haven't spoken to Liv about terminating the fetus by causing an electrical overload, they can figure it out for themselves by using **CALCULATE**. They will also understand that killing it using force or by pulling the cables will lead to an incredibly painful death that will hit the Islands like a wave of intensely horrific dreams.

Regardless of whether the Teens attack the Vagabonds and the fetus, if they sneak into the room with

power station to cause the overload, or if they think up a different approach, it should be treated as an Extended Trouble with normal difficulty. If Jane and the Vagabonds spot the Teens, they will attack using cattle prods set to stun. If the Teens fail to overcome the Trouble, they will wake up in a field outside of Sångas-Säby as the Disaster described in the beginning of the Mystery hits the Islands.

If the Teens manage to cause the electrical overload, the machine fetus will cramp up and die with a sigh of relief.

If the Teens use violence to kill the being, or if they simply yank the cables out, the fetus' death will be intense and painful, also triggering the Disaster described at the beginning. As the Teens are standing so close, they are struck the hardest and must pass an **EMPATHIZE** test or become Broken.

When the fetus dies, the Totem Clan abandon their dreams of procreation. The realization of their folly is both sad and a relief. They apologize to the Teens if they have hurt them, and leave the bunker to rejoin the Shaman. Jane carries the key to Liv's cell, and will let her out as she leaves.

EXAMPLE

GM: *The shrill sound of drills and cries of pain echo closer as you leave the tunnel and enter the bunker itself. The sounds are twisted and distorted. This first floor is like a long corridor in a circle, with lots of openings to the sides, either without doors or with broken-down ones. (Draws a quick sketch) Here, here, and here are stairs that go down. The walls are covered with the same grotesque markings as the tunnels, either chiseled or in spray paint.*

Player 4 (Sana): *I peek into the nearest room.*

GM: *It's dark but you vaguely make out the contours of broken crates marked KAB-III like the ones at Liv's house. A noise comes from inside the room, a rhythmic grinding of metal against metal.*

Player 4: *I enter.*

GM: *A pair of eyes start to glow in the dark.*

AFTER THE CONFRONTATION

Liv will be grateful to the Teens if they let her go. She is very sorry to hear about Mark's death, but refuses to accept any blame for it. The Teens may convince Aunt Emi [Aunt Erin] to be allowed to attend the funeral. On the night before the ceremony, the Vagabonds decorate the church. Liv and Emi sit next to each other during the funeral. Mark's dad stands in the back, not speaking to anyone, and leaves as soon as it's over. The inhabitants of the Islands blame the dream visions on a technical malfunction at the sewage treatment facility.

AFTERMATH

Give the Teens an Everyday Life scene each, with or without Trouble. They may set it themselves, or ask you to do it. If you are pressed for time, let each player describe a short montage of snapshots from her Teen's life instead.

EXAMPLE

Player 1 (Sandra): *I'd like a final scene where I talk to Sana's sister.*

Player 4 (Sana): *Can I be in it?*

Player 1: *You can come in after a while.*

GM: *Where do you meet?*

Player 1: *I've called her and asked her to meet me at the playground near the library. I sit on one of the swings and she's on the next one. It's windy and cold and we're alone.*

GM: *Sana's sister grabs the chains and leans back, swinging slowly with her feet dragging across the sand. "You're Sana's friend, right?"*

Player 1: *I nod. "I know what happened. It has happened to me to".*

CHANGE

After the final scenes, collectively look through the characters' sheets and see if any of the Teens have changed. If the players feel like it, they may change their Teens' Problems, Shames, Iconic Items, or Relationships. The group may also collectively decide to change their Friction. Read the XP questions (page 97) aloud to the players. Each yes answer translates to 1 XP.

NPCS AND CREATURES

Below are descriptions of the NPCs and creatures found in the Mystery.



EMILIA "AUNT EMI" FRANK [ERIN FRANK]

"I mourn him with Patti, Janis, and Billie. Do you wanna honor him by singing with me?"

Emi moved to the U.S. in the late '60s and lived hard and fast. She moved back to Sweden a couple of years later to escape her drug problems. She is a talented musician, and makes a living "lending" her voice to recordings by more famous artists. Aunt Emi's younger sister died while giving birth to Mark, and the father was too sad and angry to care for the baby. Emi thus became both mom and dad to Mark. She has raised Mark in accordance with her reclusive hippie ideals, and worries greatly about his loneliness and about them growing apart. She has waist-length red hair pinned-up on her head with wooden paint brushes, wears colorful clothing she has made herself, and has a friendly face with crooked and discolored teeth.

THE SHAMAN

"Is it a correct observation that the positioning of the human male to the left of the female at the start of the car ride is the first step in a long and complex mating ritual?"



The Shaman led the Vagabonds from Russia to Sweden, and looks after them like his children. He has realized that their dreams of life are fruitless, and that they are more likely to be a danger to it because of the toxic emissions they spread as their bodies deteriorate. He has maintained a strong curiosity about natural life, however, and will ask an endless string of questions if given the opportunity. He is grief-stricken over Mark's death and wants to befriend the Teens. He is tall, and has adorned the back of his head with feathers. He has wrapped a promotional Jurassic Park blanket around his shoulders.

LIV HIMMELSHÖJD [DESTINY SKY]/ NATASHA LINTOV

"As a medical doctor, I know a great deal more about ethics and morality than ordinary people, and I want to emphasize that myself and my actions shouldn't be seen as the cause of these events in any way whatsoever."

In the '80s, Liv's career as a surgeon and scientist looked bright, and she saw no limits to what she could achieve. She has started to doubt the legitimacy of her experiments over the years, however. She feels lost and confused, and tries to fill the hole in her soul - and the holes in others - by self help books and New Age



spirituality. When she started to notice the signs of Elisabeth's return, she started working on her experiments again, mostly so as not to disappoint Elisabeth. She is devastated by Mark's death, but will never accept that she is to blame for it. Liv is a short, heavy woman with short, blonde hair, and big glasses. Her voice is nasal and she makes sure to point out that she is a renowned surgeon who has studied at this and that university to everyone she meets.

JANE

"Don't hurt my baby!"

The Vagabond Jane lost all of her friends during the AI pogroms in Russia, and dreams of creating life to



feel alive. She formed the Totem Clan and initiated the cooperation with Liv. She has come to realize that the machine fetus is an abomination, but can't bear the thought of killing it. She has donated an eye, an arm, and much of her internal components. Cut-off tubes protrude from her chest, leaking oil and other fluids onto the floor. Her voice is raspy and she has a heavy Russian accent. She is armed with a cattle prod, and keeps the key to Liv's cell in a chain around her neck. She has a Metallic Body (FORCE) 2.

THE VAGABONDS

The Vagabonds are a group of AI robots that escaped the pogroms in Russia. The Shaman led them to the Mälaren Islands, and tries to keep the tribe out of humanity's way out of fear of renewed persecution. The Vagabonds worship natural life, and adorn themselves with things from the woods and trinkets thrown away by humans: feathers, pieces of fur, heads of fish, blankets, and old shoes. They draw or scratch markings on street lights, trees, and cliffs - rudimentary carvings depicting animals, humans, birth, and death. They have Russian accents, and use a mix of Russian and Swedish names, as well as a few that they have learned from cowboy novels. They all have Metallic Bodies (FORCE) 2.

THE TOTEM CLAN

The Totem Clan chose to move to KAB-III to help Liv create the machine fetus. They dreamed intensely of taking part in the natural circle of life, but have realized that they have been duped. They sacrificed parts of themselves to the fetus, causing them to limp, go blind or mute, or lose parts of their AI. Those who no longer help Jane are apathetic from grief and regret. The Clan's graffiti depicts animals merging with machines, making them grotesquely disfigured. They are armed with cattle prods emitting powerful electrical discharges that can be set to stun or kill. They all have Metallic Bodies (FORCE) 2.



OF FLESH
AND STEEL

10

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THE UGLINESS

A strange virus is spreading among the teenagers in the area. A disease that distorts the afflicted's looks. School friends no longer dare to go to class of fear to show how they look. Long since established power hierarchies crumble. Rumors are stirring about scientists in body suits collecting the most affected teenagers. What is really going on?



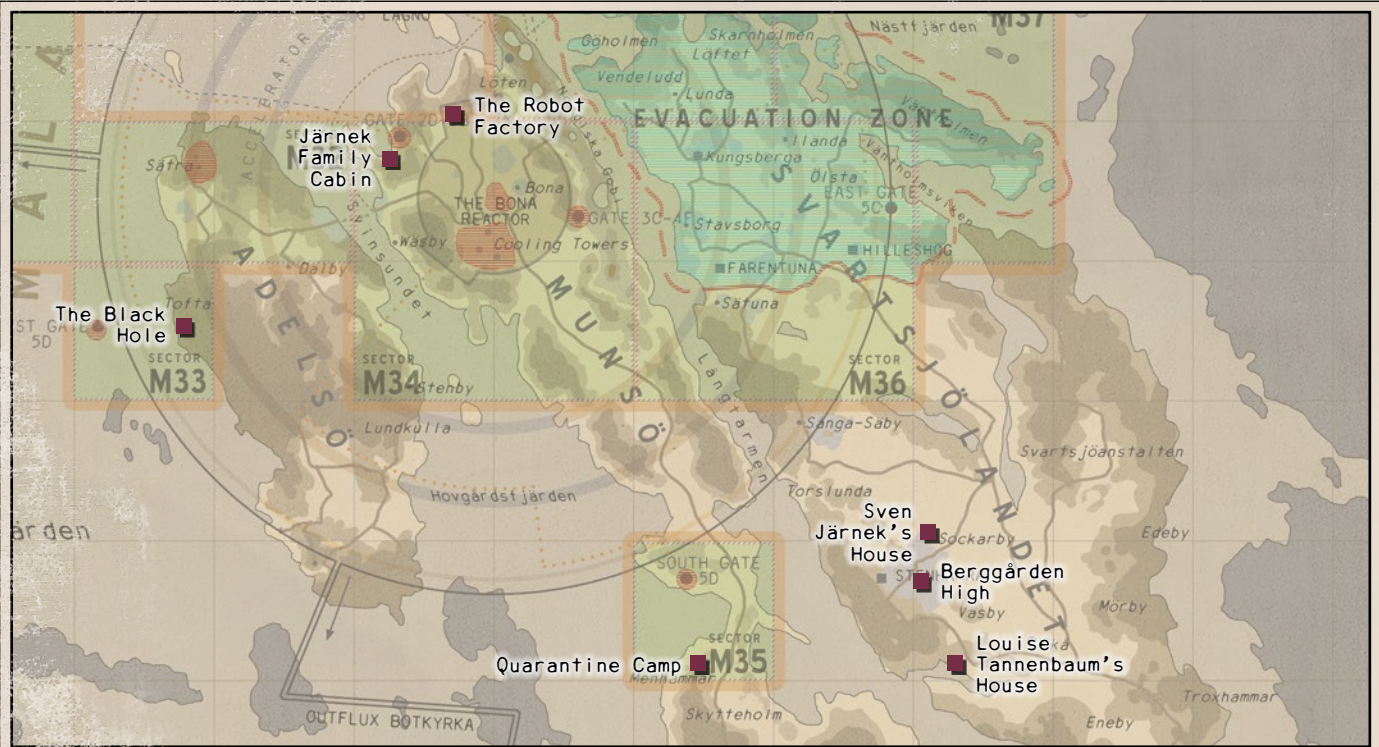
This Mystery is designed to be played over one or two sessions. It can be used as the second part of the Pandora campaign.

THE TRUTH

Sven Järnek [[John Collins](#)], principal at Berggården High School [[Boulder City Highschool](#)] in Stenhamra, started his career as an immunologist, employed by Riksenergi for a research project in the 80's along with two others, Elisabeth Sundgren [[Elizabeth Cox](#)] and Natasha Lintov. The trio called themselves “prophets of science”, and performed unethical experiments in their secret lab, the Hephaesteum, using unsuspecting locals as guinea pigs. Journalist Michaela Tannenbaum

[[Michelle Tannenbaum](#)] exposed their activities, which led to Sven murdering her to keep the truth from coming out. Elisabeth performed a time travel experiment to try to transport herself and the Hephaesteum forward in time to be able to continue their work. When Riksenergi's internal affairs investigators and the police arrived the next morning, they found nothing but empty room and tunnels.

Sven has recently begun observing signs of Elisabeth's imminent return, and he knows that she will expect them to get back to work when she arrives. He has come to regret the years he spent with the prophets, both the experiments and the murder of Michaela. He is afraid that Elisabeth will turn him in for murder if doesn't play along, however.



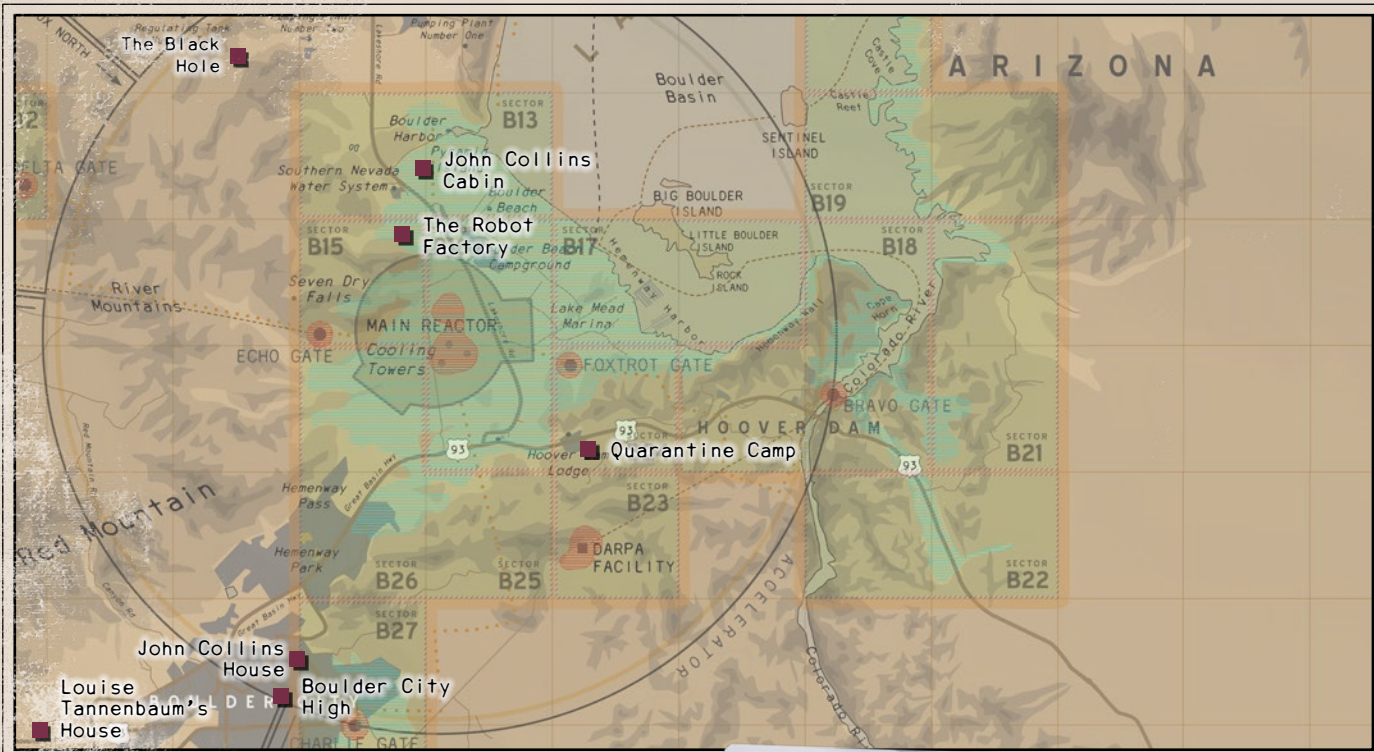
In the 80's, Sven began experimenting with something he called GMM – Gene Micro Manipulation – which meant introducing a passive chemical agent in people's food on the Islands. When paired with an active agent at a later time, the chemical combination would begin manipulating the DNA of the subjects. Krafta Corp [AEP] knows about this and has tried to persuade Sven to keep working on GMM multiple times. Sven, certain the Elisabeth would regard it as treachery not to form an alliance with Krafta, finally accepted their offer, but was secretly planning to sabotage the experiment. He hadn't planned on Krafta taking control of the project, however, and they are now forcing him to continue to the next phase in the process.

Over the last couple of months, Sven has started to add the active agent to the cafeteria food at Berggården High School. The original goal was to make the subjects more resilient toward diseases, but it turns out that the experiments have gone wrong, and the chemical combination instead results in a strange illness, called "the Ugliness" among the students. It appears

to hit only those who have been sexually active, and it spreads only through sexual contact. The symptoms manifest as strange lumps and growths on the bodies of the infected.

Krafta Corp are very keen on researching the Ugliness. They have decided to round up all the infected, and complete stage three of the experiment by forcing them to ingest the third, effect-intensifying agent. To locate and bring in all those affected, Krafta have tricked the Agency for Disease Control into believing that a group of local kids, in cahoots with "activists", have broken into a Krafta lab where they might have come into contact with a dangerous contagion. They must therefore be brought to a quarantine camp. Krafta's public relations officer has issued a statement informing the public of the situation, urging the "activists" to report to the quarantine camp. Krafta agents on an ADC mandate attempt to locate and bring in all the "activists" to make sure they get the help they need.

The daughter of Michaela Tannenbaum, Louise [Kelly], is determined to continue her mother's work to expose the identities and crimes of the three prophets,



and to find out who murdered Michaela. She knows about the Ugliness, and has set up a camp of her own on Adelsö [west of Canyon Road] to help infected teens evade Krafta's agents. Meanwhile, Sven has decided not to allow Krafta to continue to phase three of GMM. He has broken into the Krafta lab and stolen the remaining vials of the active agent, and plans to end the experiments and his own life in the underground Loop tunnels. He doesn't know that the vials can be used to create a counteragent, however. The Teens must help their infected friends stay away from Krafta's agents, find the active vials, and cure the Ugliness.

COUNTDOWN

There are two Countdowns in this Mystery – one for the Ugliness, and one for Krafta's agents. Advance them simultaneously or one at a time. Infect close friends and siblings of the Teens. The infected are ashamed, run away from home, skip school, and try to get to Louise's camp. If any of the Teens have been sexually active, you can consider infecting them, as well.

Krafta have contacts both inside the security services

COUNTDOWN FOR THE UGLINESS

1. Only a handful of high school students have been infected over the course of a few months. They develop strange growths, calluses, puss-filled skin pockets, or discolored patches of skin that smell weird. Their bodies look out of shape, and gradually develop tails, pig snouts, dog ears, longer arms and legs, new orifices, new limbs, or fur.
2. The contagion spreads. The symptoms are now impossible to hide: a talking mouth on someone's back, animal ears, long tails, gills, altered voices, extra eyes, or webbing between fingers and toes.
3. Widespread changes. The mouth on the back speaks constantly, fully formed gills allow for underwater breathing, a nose has turned into a large pig snout.



COUNTDOWN FOR KRAFTA'S AGENTS

1. Agent's begin knocking on doors, asking to perform house searches. They capture, interrogate, and examine potentially infected kids. The suspects are forced to strip. Infected teens are brought to the quarantine camp. The agents monitor the ferries and bridges away from the Islands.
2. The agents round up the students at Berggården for mandatory screenings. All those infected are brought to the camp. Krafta's street presence becomes more obvious. Parents who try to hide their infected kids are beaten. Journalists begin arriving from national media.
3. Agents patrol the streets day and night. Roadblocks are set up. All schools begin with daily screenings.



and the ADC. They wish to keep the local population in the dark, and isolate the infected in the quarantine camp on Ekerö to force them to participate in phase three. They wish to learn as much as possible about the disease.

DISASTER

The active vials are either destroyed or used in phase three of the GMM program. No cure can be developed. The infected receive some cosmetic surgeries, but the scars tell of a disease no one wishes to be exposed to.

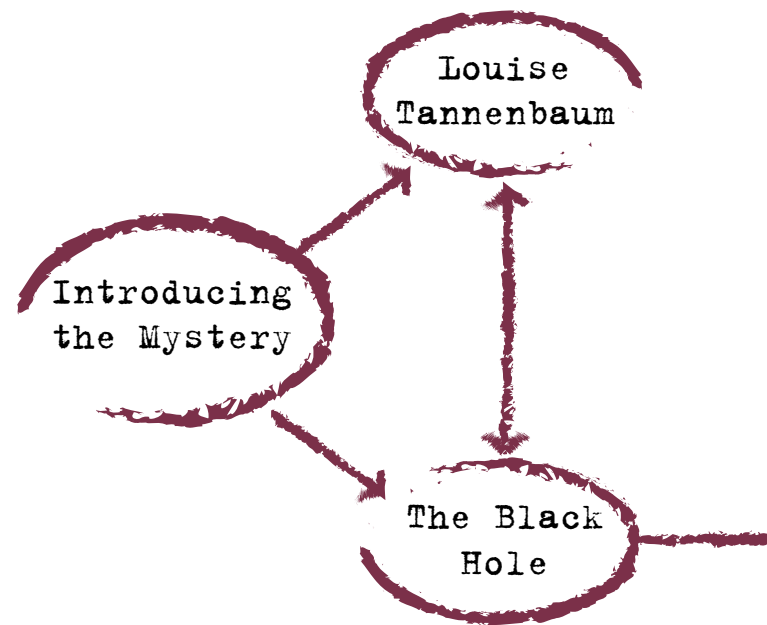
IN QUARANTINE

Krafta [AEP] and the ADC have set up a quarantine camp on Ekerö [Hoover Dam Lodge], on the east beach near Skytteholm. The camp consists of a few construction barracks and white tents. The infected

are kept isolated from each other in metal cages inside the tents. The medical staff examining the teens wear hazmat suits, and about twenty agents guard the camp. No one is allowed within fifty meters of the outer fence, which is illuminated by powerful floodlights, and protected by cameras and alarms. If the Teens are brought to the camp, or if they try to break out a friend from there, they should consider increasing their chances of getting out again by **INVESTIGATING** the area, **TINKERING** with or **PROGRAMMING** helpful items, **CONTACTING** people who can help them, and leading a coordinated effort. Much of the Trouble they're up against will be Extremely Difficult, or even Almost Impossible.

INTRODUCING THE TEENS

Give each of the Teens an Everyday Life scene, with or without Trouble. Try to set as many of the scenes as possible at their school, involving friends who later may become infected. Have the players describe their school. Include gossip about the vote for the Saint Lucy's Day celebrations.



INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

Set a scene where the Teens hear Krafta Corp's [AEP's] public relations officer Jens Lidman [Samuel Frost] issue a statement on local radio (see the adjacent box). Concerned parents will ask the Teens if they know more, which could lead to one or two scenes where the subject is discussed. Make sure all of the Teens are present when you proceed to the second step of the Mystery introduction: one of their friends asking for help.

A friend or partner of one of the Teens contacts them, saying she is certain that the press release is fake. There are no activists, no foreign interests and no intrusions at Krafta. She says that she and several other teens have developed strange growths on their bodies during the fall. They call it "the Ugliness", and it seems to spread via sexual contact. Rumors are spreading that Krafta are behind the disease, and that they are now imprisoning the infected to experiment on them at the quarantine camp. A woman named Louise Tannenbaum [Kelly Tannenbaum] has set up a hideout at Adelsö, however, called the Black Hole. The person asks the Teens to help her get to Louise or the Black Hole. If she is romantically involved with any of the Teens, it may lead to a difficult discussion about cheating, and may mean that one of the Teens is infected as well.

The Teens can find Louise Tannenbaum's address in the phone book. They can find out where the Black Hole is located by using **CONTACT**. Krafta's agents have begun stopping teens in the streets for random checks, and are watching all bridges and ferries. Keep the map in front of you as you play, and have the players describe how they move around.

BACKGROUND NOISE: SAINT LUCY'S DAY

The Mystery takes place in December, and snow covers the Islands, but the lake hasn't frozen yet. Saint Lucy's Day is fast approaching, and the student council have nominated five candidates for Lucy of the Year, the celebration's lead singer. Many student refuse to vote as they feel the nominees have been selected purely based on looks. Rumors have it that one of the candidates, Mia Järnek, was nominated because she is the daughter of the principal, however.

Include a continuous discussion about beauty standards at the school over the course of the Mystery, and use Saint Lucy's Day as background noise - gossip about the nominees, choir rehearsals, the vote itself, the announcement of the winner, and finally, the procession, walking through the school in one of the last scenes on the dark and quiet morning of December 13th.

BACKGROUND NOISE: BOULDER CITY - BEAUTY CONTEST

There is a beauty pageant going on at Boulder City High to determine who is the school's prettiest girl and most handsome boy. The initiators may be a cosmetics company or a modeling agency. Billboards around town have made the pageant a hotly debated topic in Boulder.



Berggården
High

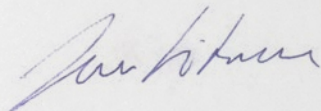
The Tilt

CONFRONTATION

Statement from Krafta Corp

My name is Jens Lidman and I am the public relations officer for Krafta Corp. We issue this statement together with, and as instructed by, the Agency for Disease Control. It has been brought to our attention that a group of youngsters from the Mälaren Islands have been recruited by a foreign organization aiming to sabotage the work of Krafta Corp. These youngsters have been led to believe that they are working for an international peace organization, and that Krafta Corp have been conducting chemical weapons testing at our facilities on Munsö. I wish to make it very clear that this is not – nor has it ever been – the case.

We have found evidence of intrusions by these so-called activists on multiple occasions during the fall of this year into a laboratory researching experimental treatments for a series of dangerous diseases. We are not sure of either the identities of the intruders or the degree to which they might have come into contact with hazardous substances, but we have set up a quarantine camp on Ekerö together with the ADC to make sure that these teenagers are taken care of properly, if they are in need of medical assistance. We encourage the public to cooperate with the authorities and the Krafta personnel entrusted with this mandate from the ADC. We also urge the individuals whom this concerns to contact us as soon as possible. We know that your intentions were admirable, but you have been lied to.




LOCATION 1: LOUISE TANNENBAUM'S HOUSE

Louise [Kelly] lives in a two story house near a small cove in the southwestern Black Lake Lands [south of Boulder City]. The forest grows wild and unkempt all the way up to a square of cracked asphalt surrounding the house. Wheelchair ramps connect to the front door, and the underground garage. The first story is painted with bright, scrolling flowers, and the second story is octagonally shaped and has a lot of windows in all directions. Inside, the smell of cigars is heavy, and the furniture and art is expensive. Louise leads a luxurious but lonesome existence. The second floor is dedicated to her research into her mother's death – notes, binders, and photos are scattered everywhere. An elevator connects the two floor. A tunnel from the garage leads to a private jetty where she keeps a boat. When the Teens approach the house, it is quiet and dark. A low stone wall with a black steel gate surrounds the property.

TROUBLE

Krafta's agents suspect that Louise has something to do with many of the infected disappearing, but have yet to discover her secret jetty, and are unsure of how she gets to and from her house undetected. Two agents in a black van with tinted windows sit outside the property spying on her with night vision goggles and sound amplifiers. If the Teens approach the house carefully, they may test **INVESTIGATE** to spot the agents. If they fail, or

AGENTS IN BOULDER CITY

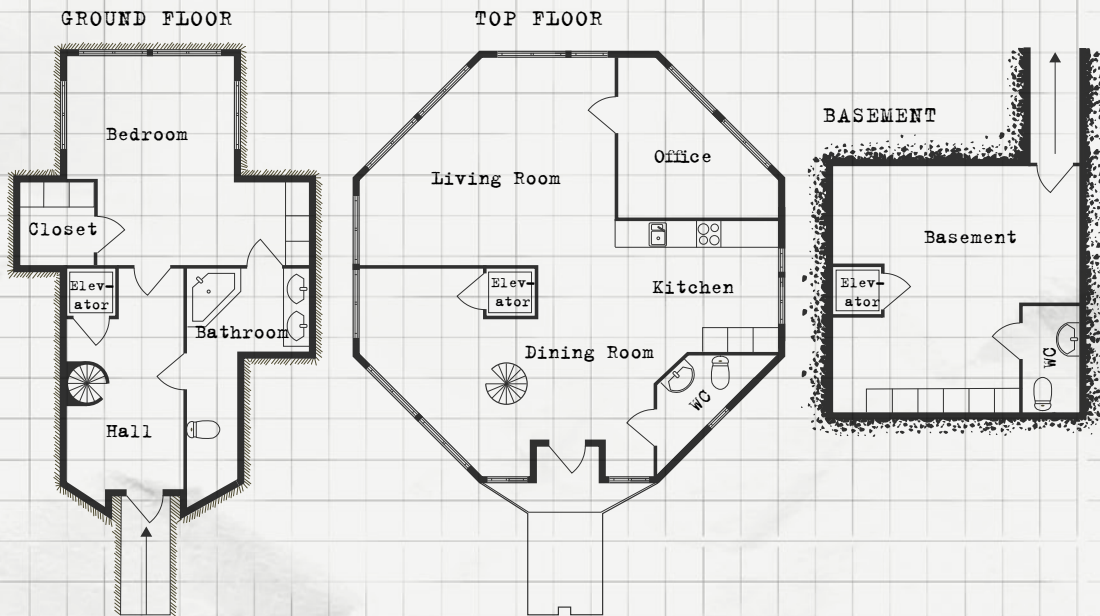
The AEP agents will monitor all major roads around Boulder City. They patrol the downtown area, and question people in the streets at random. AEP are trying to make it look like they're doing the community a favor. The agents are unarmed, but everywhere.





Louise Tannenbaum's House

0 1 2 3 4 5 meters



don't roll at all, **SNEAKING** up to the house without being detected by the agents becomes Extremely Difficult (two sixes required).

If the Teens are spotted, the agents will try to apprehend them and question them in the van. If any of them is infected, she will be taken to the quarantine camp. The agents want to know why they are meeting with Louise, and what they know about her. They want to give the Teens secret microphones and coax Louise into telling them what she knows. The agents stick to Krafta's official story about the activists, and deny all knowledge about the Ugliness.

CLUES

Louise won't let the Teens inside, but asks them who sent them and to prove that they aren't wearing a wire. She is convinced that everything Krafta has been saying are lies. She tells them that her mother Michaela investigated three scientists at Riksenergi in the '80s calling themselves "the prophets". They performed a series of unethical experiments on the population of the Islands. Michaela died before she could expose their work, and Louise is certain that they had her murdered. She knows that the three "prophets" had a secret lab underground in the northern Black Lake Lands, but the police found nothing when they raided the facility – the whole lab was gone.

One of the prophets' experiments was known as GMM – introducing altering substances into people's DNA. Louise believes the Ugliness is proof that the

GMM experiment has been activated, and that Krafta is rounding up the infected to experiment on them. She has set up a secret camp where the infected can hide, and she is searching for a cure.

Louise is more than happy to help infected teens get to the Black Hole, and asks the Teens to come with her. One of them gets to drive the boat while she keeps a lookout for pursuing boats.

LOCATION 2: THE BLACK HOLE

Louise has gathered teens afflicted with the Ugliness on an abandoned farm on eastern Adelsö. She has gotten the power back on, and the taps working, and she makes sure that the infected have food and supplies. The farm consists of a two story main house and three rather decrepit barns. Trash, dirty blankets, and broken bottles cover the yard. The infected cover their bodies in shame, and grieve over their old lives. They have found an old still in a shed in the woods, and many at the Hole are constantly drunk, aggressive, and violent.

A group has formed around Jonas Hed [**Nick Roberts**], an infected teenager who preaches that the Ugliness is a divine intervention to separate the "truthers" from the rest of society, and that he has been chosen to start a movement built on honesty and good, rather than vanity and lies. He thanks the Ugliness, and tries to teach his disciples to speak in an honest, direct, and true way. The disciples dress in stained, light blue bed sheets. Many of them don't believe in Jonas' message, but desperately want to find a purpose for their suffering. Jonas' teachings offend and provoke many at the Black Hole.

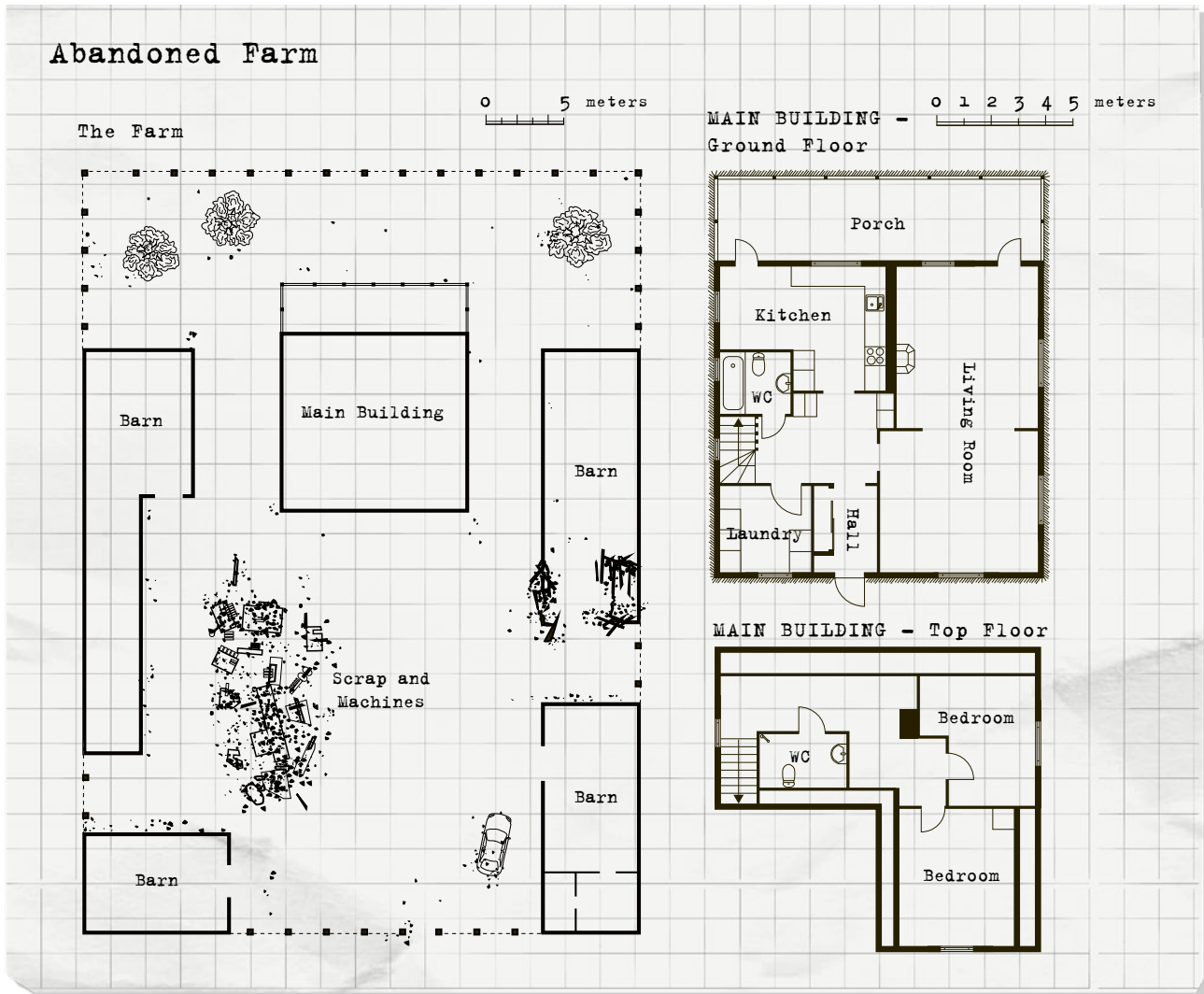
TROUBLE

It's common knowledge at the Black Hole that Jonas claims to know how the Ugliness began spreading, but he refuses to tell anyone, as he doesn't want to be cured. Most people believe that he is lying to get attention, however. If the Teens try to get him to tell them, he suggests that they help him get more of the infected to listen to his preachings in exchange for telling them what he knows. The Teens could also learn his secrets by spying on, charming, or tricking him, or alternative-

ESCAPE CAR BOULDER CITY

In Boulder City, Louise's means of escape is a sports car instead of a boat, and she has a secret second way out of the garage. The Teens may borrow the car.





ly by stealing his diary or threatening to send him to the quarantine camp.

If Jonas is allowed to preach at the Black Hole, the other infected will respond with anger and violence. The Teens may either help Jonas or allow him to get beaten up.

The population of the Black Hole will grow over the course of the scenario. Friends of the Teens feel ashamed, become angry with those who have been spared, and come here to hide.

CLUES

Jonas has seen the principal of Berggården High School, Sven Järnek, empty small vials into the cafeteria food when he thought no one was looking. Jonas has managed to salvage an empty vial, which

is red and marked with a black 2. Jonas has also seen Sven go into his office and emerge from the basement, leading him to believe that there is a secret door in Sven's office.

LOCATION 3: THE LAB AT BERGGÅRDEN HIGH

The players will have provided you with a description of the school in the introductory Everyday Life scenes. The principal's office is locked and sparsely furnished. On top of an old seaman's chest in a corner sits a pile of binders, documents, and old coffee mugs. The chest is locked, but hides the entrance to the stairs leading to Sven's secret lab. Two pictures hang above the chest –

one of Alexander the Great and one of Hephaestus in his workshop, crafting for the other gods.

The lab is a closed-off section of the basement illuminated by powerful strip lights and equipped with large tables full of lab equipment and documents, chairs, and a rack of protective clothing. A radio on one of the tables is set to a frequency used by Krafta. The radio can be used as an Item (+2). A door leads to a tunnel that runs underneath the school to a locked gate behind some bushes at the back of the building. The students think the locked door leads to a bomb shelter.

Sven and his daughter Mia [Kate] live in a house next to the school. Neither or the two have been home for a couple of days, and Sven's office shows clear signs of having been searched (by Mia, see the Tilt below). The house is full of paintings and posters of figures from Greek mythology.

TROUBLE

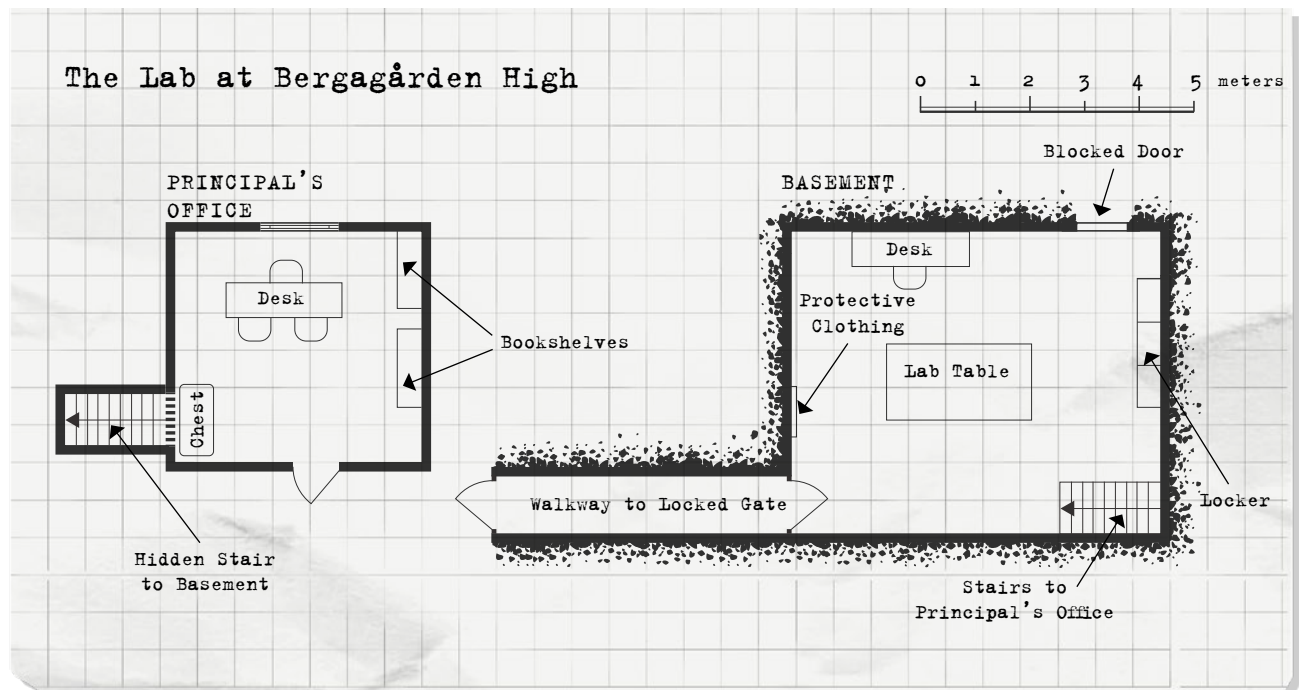
The Teens must enter Sven's office either by picking the lock (**TINKER**) or by getting someone to open it for them (**CHARM**). They then have to find the secret door, either by actively searching the chest or by testing **INVESTIGATE**. The chest lock can be opened using **TINKER** or

FORCE. If they fail, they still manage to open the lock but Krafta become aware of the break-in. When the group descend into the lab, they hear that a patrol has been dispatched to Berggården on the radio. They only have a short while to search the lab before the agents enter the lab through Sven's office.

CLUES

A Teen using **COMPREHEND** to study the documents in the lab can figure out that the Ugliness is the second stage of an experiment known as GMM, initiated in the '80s by Sven Järnek in a lab known as the Hephaestum. Sven's notes describe the Hephaestum as a divine place that enabled him and his colleagues, Natasha and Elisabeth, to realize their full potential, and conduct fantastical and ground-breaking science.

Sven writes that phase two of GMM entails him activating the passive agent distributed during phase one by adding the activating agent to the cafeteria food at Berggården High. The goal is to strengthen the immune systems of the students. The experiment was however a failure, instead leading to the Ugliness. Phase three of GMM includes forcing the



infected to ingest a chemical that will heighten the effect of the agents from the previous stages. The lab contains boxes marked “GMM 3” that have been emptied of their vials.

If the Teens fail to **COMPREHEND** Sven’s messy and scientifically advanced notes, they will need help. They can find someone to help them using **CONTACT**.

THE TILT

When the Teens exit Sven’s lab, they are contacted by his daughter Mia. She believes they can help her rescue her dad. He has left her a note asking for forgiveness, making it clear that he intends to end his life. In the note, Sven admits to having led the GMM experiment in the ‘80s, but claims he was forced to commence phase two which created the Ugliness. He has stolen the phase three vials, as he refuses to allow the infected to suffer further, and intends to take the vials with him to his grave.

Mia has studied Sven’s research notes thoroughly, and is convinced that the phase three vials can be used to create a cure. She wants the Teens to find Sven, stop him from committing suicide, and bring the vials to the school’s chemistry lab where she will create a cure.

Mia believes that her dad has gone into the Loop tunnels near their cabin north of Väsby Hage on Munsö

Radio message to all Krafta agents:

”Attention! This is a high priority message from HQ, clearance AA, to all groups from Alpha to Omega. Doctor Sven Järnek has left the research station and stolen certain objects of vital importance to project GMM. The stolen objects are vials marked with a black number 3. The vials are to be retrieved at all costs and Sven is to be neutralized. His office and house are to be searched thoroughly. His summer residence must be located and searched. This objective takes precedence over all other missions”.

[south of Boulder Harbor]. She has grown up with Sven’s stories of never feeling quite at home anywhere else than the Loop tunnels. She can show the Teens the location of the cabin on a map. Sven has mentioned an underground robot factory somewhere near the cabin, and that’s where Mia believes he has gone.

Shortly after Mia’s meeting with the Teens, Krafta’s agents discover Sven’s theft of the vials, and HQ issues a directive to all agents to track him down. If the Teens took the radio from the lab in the basement, read the radio message below aloud to the players.

THE CONFRONTATION

The Teens will get through the roadblocks on the way to the Järnek family’s cabin without problems as the agents are only interested in locating Sven. The cabin is located on the northeastern coast of Munsö. It’s small, cold, and empty apart from a couple of beds and some beach gear. Several round hatches leading down into the Loop tunnels can be found in a nearby meadow. Sven has short-circuited the hatch locks and several of them are open. Ladders descend into the darkness, the cold waters below illuminated by small, blue lights.

If the Teens use **INVESTIGATE** to search the cabin, they find two flashlights and an inflatable rubber boat. A second boat looks to have been recently removed from the cabin. Traces in the dust in a liquor cabinet tell of several bottles and a revolver also having been removed. If the Teens fail the roll, they still find the information above, but the agents catch up to them. They see a car pull up outside and four agents approach the house. They must pass a **MOVE** test to make it to the tunnel entrance before the agents.

Footprints in the snow [sand] in the meadow lead to the hatch chosen by Sven. The Teens must descend into the tunnels and follow him. The water below is one and a half meters deep and cold as ice. If the Teens try to wade or swim to the robot factory, they must pass an Extremely Difficult **FORCE** test or become Exhausted.

Krafta’s agents use motorized rubber boats to follow Sven and the Teens. The sound of the outboard motors follow the Teens through the tunnels.

THE ROBOT FACTORY

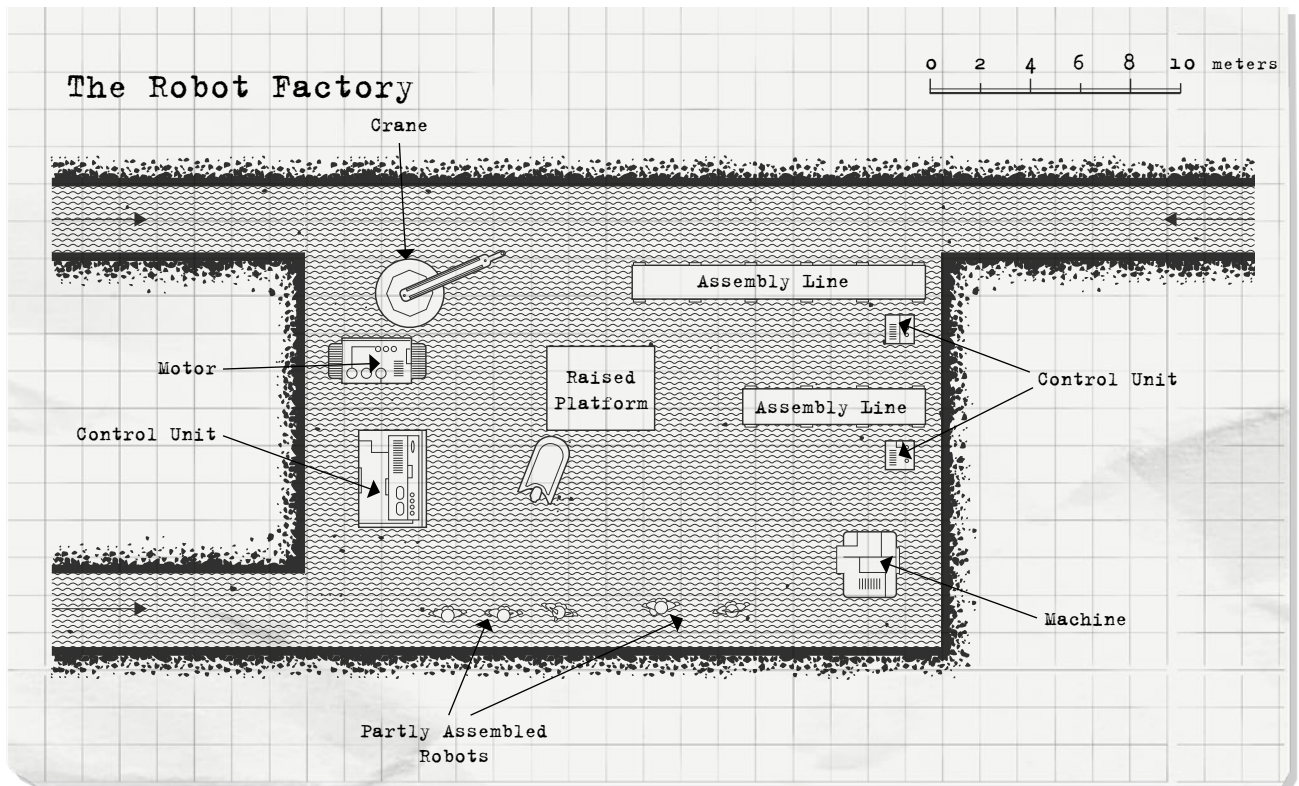
The tunnels are a maze of twists and turns, making it very hard to orientate oneself. Finding the robot factory requires passing a **COMPREHEND** test to interpret the symbols at each crossroad to choose the right path. Failure leads to an encounter with two agents in a boat (Extended Normal Trouble). Failing to defeat the agents leads to the Teens being captured and brought to the quarantine camp. The Mystery is over, and the Disaster strikes. Successfully defeating the agents leads to the group finding the robot factory.

Finding the factory takes about half an hour. The Teens enter a large hall full of machines, assembly lines, and huge engines. The ceilings are high, and rusting robots in various state of assembly hang suspended from hooks here and there. The water level is the same here as in the tunnels. Music seems to play from an elevated platform just above the water in the middle of the room. Bright, multicolored light shines from the platform. The platform used to be where the AI crystals were cut, but its walls and machinery have long since corroded. A rubber boat is fastened to the platform, on which Sven is sitting. He has brought three bottles of liquor, a revolver,

a cassette player loaded with ABBA's Greatest Hits, and three boxes of the phase three vials. He has lit some candles, and the light is refracted across the waters through a couple of forgotten AI crystals. Sven is drunk, and trying to work up the courage to pour the contents of the vials into the water and then shoot himself.

The Teens must pass a **SNEAK** test to approach the platform and moor their boat without being detected. When they're spotted or make it to the platform, a crying Sven threatens to destroy the vials and kill himself. The Teens may either try to overpower him using **FORCE**, or convince him that the vials can be turned into a cure using **CHARM**. If they fail, he throws the vials in the water and shoots himself in the mouth. He fails to kill himself, however, and is brought to a hospital by Krafta's agents where he recovers after a few months.

If the Teens haven't run into the agents in the tunnels yet, a boat with two agents aboard arrives at the factory just as the group has managed to gain control of the vials. Escaping together with Sven and the vials is an Extended Normal Trouble. If the Teens fail, they are captured by the agents, and Krafta uses the vials to complete phase three of the experiment.





AFTER THE CONFRONTATION

If the Teens manage to escape the factory with the vials, they have resolved the Mystery. Have the players describe getting to Mia at the chemistry lab. She uses the vials to create a serum that cures the Ugliness after a couple of days. Some of the infected are left with scars, but they fade and disappear over time. Krafta Corp wish to keep the whole affair secret, and choose not to press charges against the Teens or Sven. Any attempts by the Teens to spread the truth are met by disbelief. Jens Lidman at Krafta informs the media that the activists have contacted Krafta and been cleared of any contagion.

AFTERMATH

Give the Teens an Everyday Life scene each, with or without Trouble. They may set it themselves, or ask you to do it. If you are pressed for time, let each player describe a short montage of snapshots from her Teen's life instead.

CHANGE

After the final scenes, collectively look through the characters' sheets and see if any of the Teens have changed. If the players feel like it, they may change their Teens' Problems, Shames, Iconic Items, or Relationships. The group may also collectively decide to change their Friction. Read the XP questions (page 97) aloud to the players. Each yes answer translates to 1 XP.

NPCS AND CREATURES

Below are descriptions of the NPCs and creatures found in the Mystery.

LOUISE TANNENBAUM [KELLY TANNENBAUM]

"Keep up or keep out of my way."

Louise hardly knew her mother while she was alive as she constantly traveled for work. When Michaela died, Louise used her inheritance to launch a career as a stock broker, and has acquired substantial wealth already at twenty years old. She has no recollection of her twenty-first birthday – the day she crashed her new Porsche into a tree. She awoke at the hospital to the news that she would never walk again. She delved into her mother's extensive work instead of bothering with physical therapy, and came to the conclusion that her mother had been murdered. She has decided to avenge the murder. She lives alone, loves the good life and a good high, and calls upon friends and lovers only when she feels like it. She is an imposing woman with black hair, dressing in power suits and smoking Cuban cigars. She is loud and domineering, and has little patience for people who are unsure of themselves or slow thinkers.



JONAS "PIMPLES" HED [NICK "PIMPLES" ROBERTS]

"I forgive you for all the times you have been mean to me, and ask you to look in the mirror and tell me that this hasn't happened for a reason."

Jonas' bad acne has earned him the nickname "Pimples". He has fought hard to make friends, get good grades, and become good at soccer, but feels unjustly treated because of his looks. He thinks that the Ugliness is a sign from above that people shouldn't judge each other based upon appearance, or hide behind lies and deception. He believes he has been chosen to preach this new gospel, and has gathered a group of disciples. Jonas is tall and has black hair. The Ugliness has enlarged his mouth and jaw, which causes him to drool heavily. His acne has become even worse. He wears a light blue bed sheet toga, and rings a small bell to gather his disciples when he preaches. Jonas is a Religious Zealot (CHARM) 2.



MIA JÄRNEK [KATE COLLINS]

"If I help you now, would you maybe consider voting for me for Saint Lucy's Day?"

Mia has been raised by a single dad who always kept his heart to himself. She has trouble forming lasting relationships, but detests being alone. Despite

her desperate attempts to make friends, she isn't well liked by her peers. A couple of weeks ago, she convinced her only friend's boyfriend to sleep with her, and was thusly became infected by the Ugliness. She dreams of winning the Lucy of the Year vote, as she hopes her dad would come see her sing and be proud of her. Mia is very intelligent, but easily embarrassed and confused. Her hair is blonde, and her clothes expensive and colorful. The Ugliness has elongated and twisted her spine.



SVEN JÄRNEK [JOHN COLLINS]

"My mom loved Super Trouper. If I'd only listened to her, everything would have been different."

Sven can no longer recall how he justified the horrendous experiments he performed in the 80's, and regrets the murder of Michaela Tannenbaum more than anything else. He wants to be a sincere and well-liked principal, and repent his crimes by going out of his way to give his students the best education possible. He loves his daughter, but finds it hard to connect with her. He knows that his former colleague Elisabeth can ruin him, and would do it without flinching. He doesn't want to die, but sees no other option. He is a middle-aged man with a well-trimmed beard and large glasses. He smiles a lot, but his eyes are always sad. The eyes, and his dedication to his job, has his coworkers and students calling him "The Bloodhound" behind his back.



KRAFTA'S AGENTS [AEP'S AGENTS]

The agents wear black suits and sunglasses at all times. They move in groups of two or four, and drive cars with tinted windows or speedboats. They are armed with stun guns, batons, walkie talkies, and handcuffs. Under no circumstances will they stray from Krafta's official story about the quarantine camp being there for the good of the "activists". Jens Lidman, officially Krafta's public relations officer, but actually their head of security, commands all field agents on the Islands. Krafta's logo - a half-orb crowned by double, semi-circle outlines and a dot atop KRAFTA in bold letters - is stamped on all of their gear. The agents are Fit, Armed, and Dangerous (BODY) 2.



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TRAVELER

Something weird is taking place on the Mälaren Islands. Reality itself seems to blur. Things, and even people, change without warning. When a lost kid is found, seemingly mute, a mystery begins to unravel. What or who is behind these strange happenings?



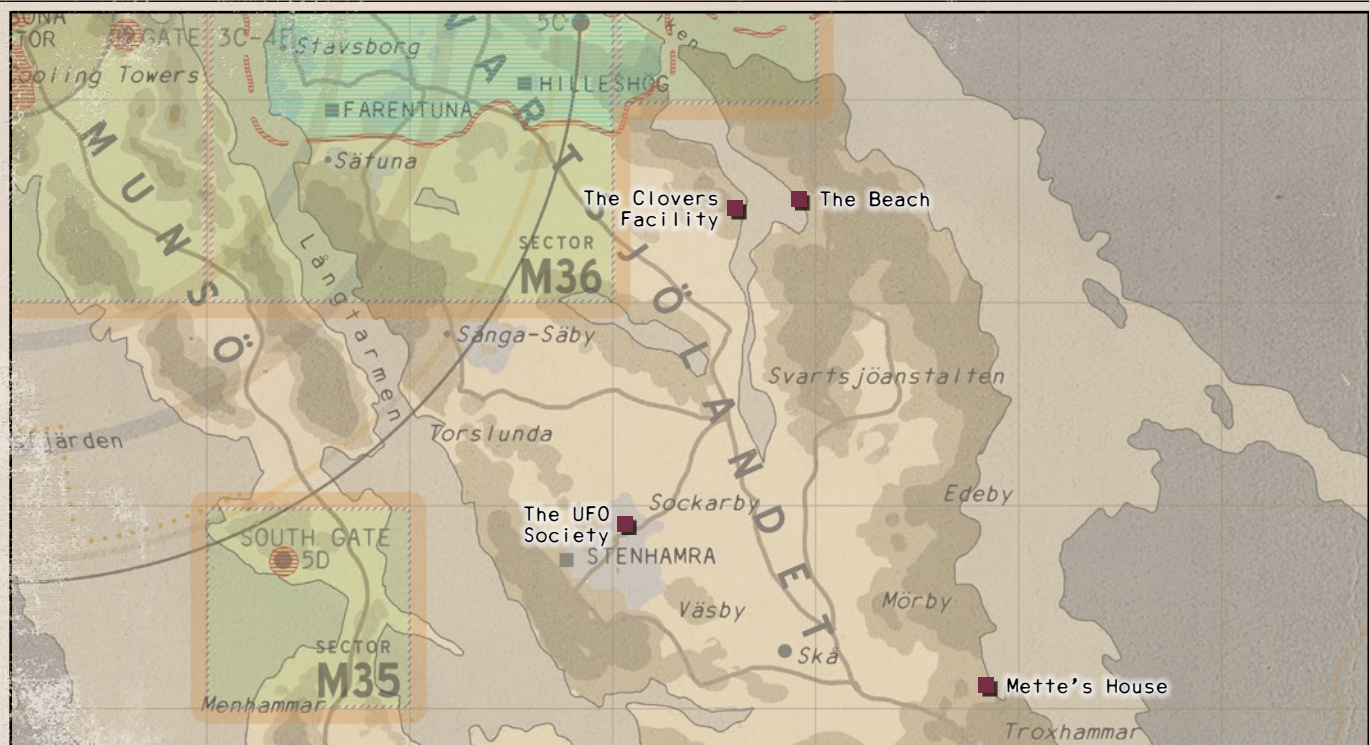
This Mystery is designed to be played over one or two sessions. It can be used as the third part of the Pandora campaign.

THE TRUTH

Radiologist Elisabeth Sundgren [**Elisabeth Cox**] headed a research team at Riksenergi [**DART**] in the 80's. They called themselves “the prophets of science”, and believed that they could save humanity from itself, conducting dangerous and unethical experiments to further their noble goal. They made many groundbreaking discoveries in their lab, which they called the Hephaestum. Their work and secret lab were exposed by a journalist, however. To avoid prison and public

humiliation, Elisabeth decided to travel into the future together with the Hephaestum to be able to continue their work. The experiment appeared to be successful, and the police who showed up to arrest Elisabeth found nothing but empty corridors and rooms. Elisabeth hadn't travelled into the future, however, but rather to an alternate reality. She discovered that the lab and everything in it had been lost somewhere along the way, probably in yet another reality. Elisabeth started traveling between dimension to find her lab and her home. Each time, she had to start from nothing and build a new machine, and tattooed the necessary mathematical formulas on her skin.

After ten long years of hard work, she managed to get back to her original reality. She almost immediately



ALTERNATE REALITIES, POISONOUS GAS OR ALIENS

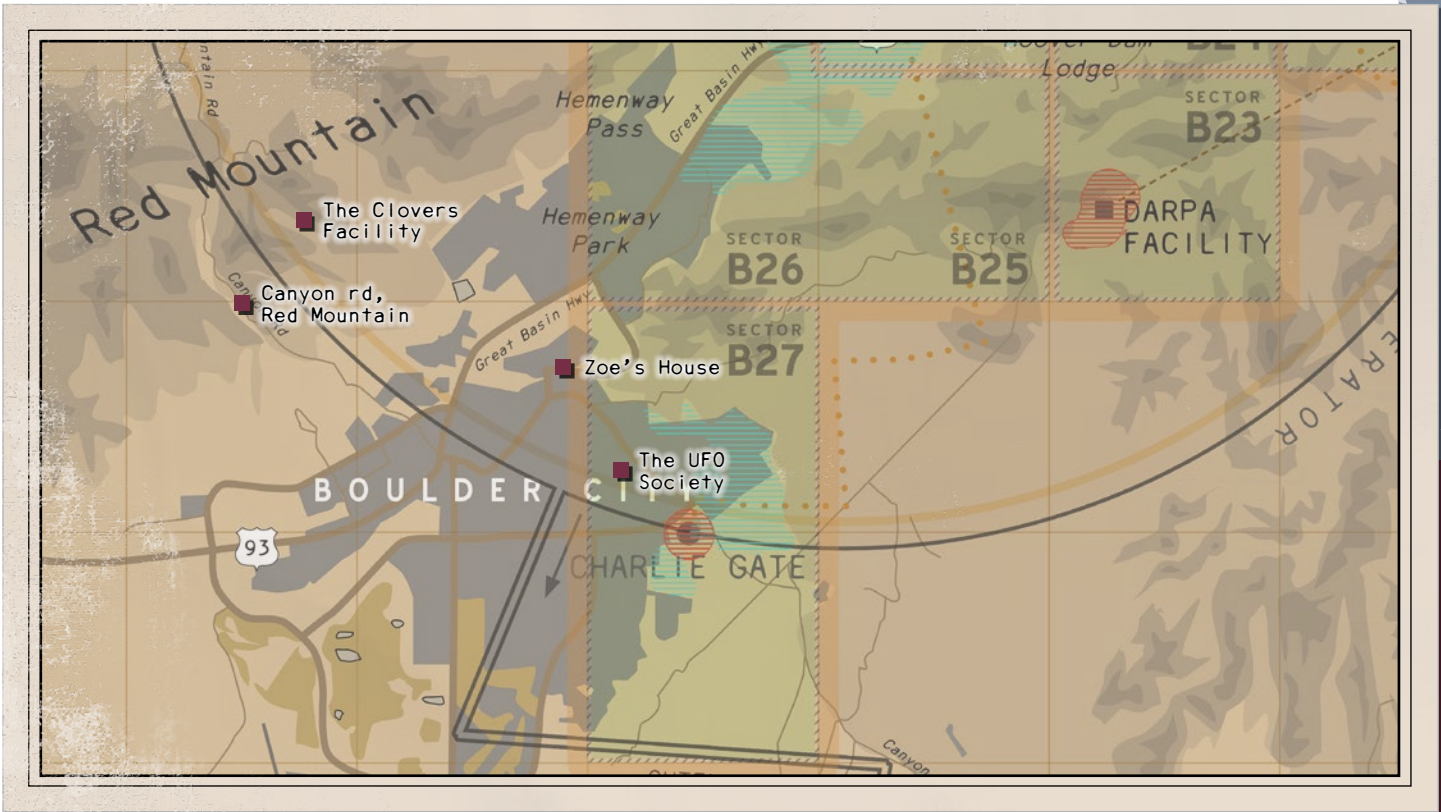
The strange phenomena in this Mystery is described differently by different NPCs. Elisabeth believes that she has traveled between worlds, Ing-Marie Blankäng [Karen Richards] suspects UFO involvement, and Erik Granfors [Eric Boyd] is convinced that the military is conducting secret experiments on the Islands. The Mystery is written from the perspective of Elisabeth, but you may choose your own truth. Has the gas used by Elisabeth to incapacitate the kids leaked out on the Islands, causing powerful hallucinations? Has another scientist kept Elisabeth imprisoned for all these years, feeding her false memories? Has she, perhaps, traveled between galaxies rather than realities, interacting with other intelligent civilizations?

happened upon some local kids, who she kidnapped for analysis so that she could confirm that she was in the right world. She then decided to use the minds of the kids as vehicles, sending them into other dimensions to track down the Hephaestum. She didn't want to risk getting lost again. The kids have been forced to travel between the planes many times, and it's tearing them apart, both mentally and physically. They will sooner or later become stuck in the wrong reality, but one of the kids has managed to escape and make it back home, mute from the shock of the multiple planar trips.

Elisabeth's travels are softening the borders between the planes on the Islands, causing bleeding between different realities. Unless the Teens stop Elisabeth, they risk ending up in the wrong version of their world.

COUNTDOWN

As a result of Elisabeth's experiments, different realities are merging together. Only a handful of people on the Islands notice the changes – among them are the



Teens. Include small changes right from the first scenes: a watch having moved across the table on its own overnight, for example. Gradually make the changes bigger. Toward the end of the Mystery, someone's parents are suddenly divorced, and a Teen's partner has dumped her. Mention the changes only in passing as no one but the Teens notice them – to everyone else, things are the way they have always been. Some things may change for the better, others for the worse, but the changes won't result in fantastical or outrageous societal shifts or technological inventions – no lightsabers or spaceships, for example. The reality blurring will lead to many other strange events around the Islands as well – have the Teens hear about or experience some of them (see box below).

DISASTER

If the Teens are unsuccessful in stopping Elisabeth, the changes to their world will become permanent. Elisabeth will never find the Hephaestum, but if her experiments are allowed to continue, the kidnapped kids she is using will be trapped in a different world and no one

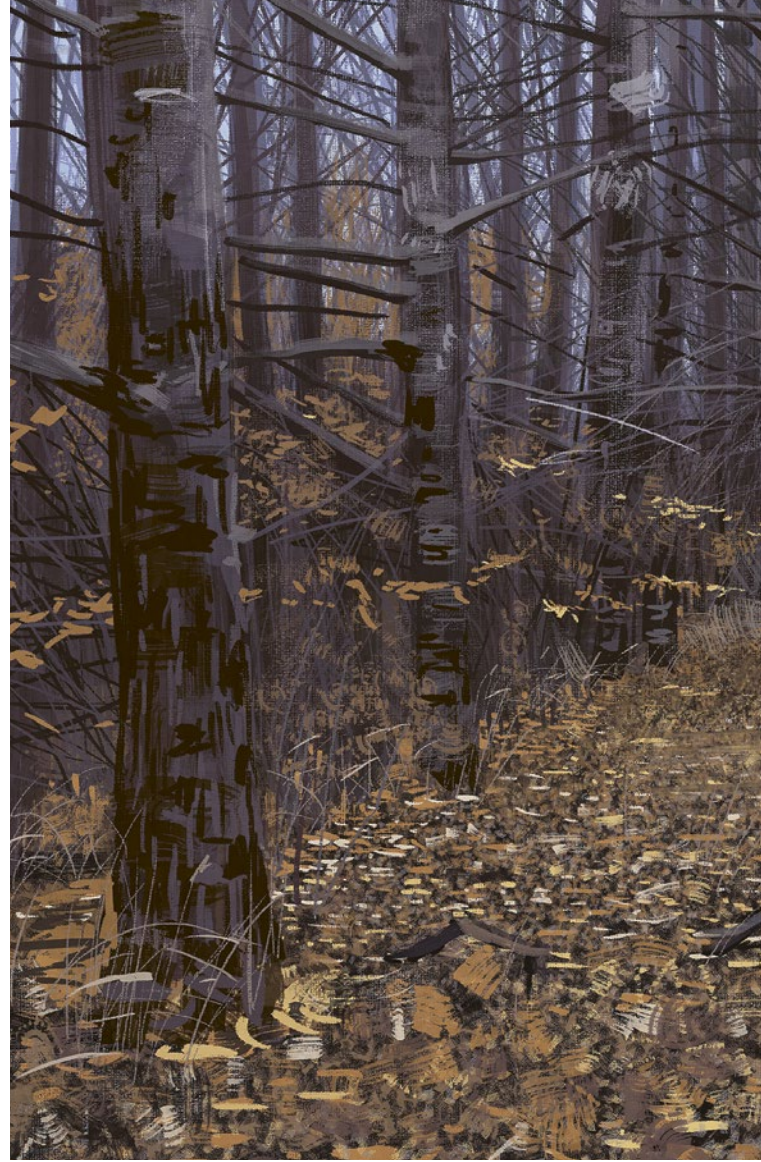
COUNTDOWN

1. **Tiny changes in Everyday Life.** Dad drinks tea instead of coffee. Mom wears glasses. A Teen's boyfriend mentions an event she can't remember.
2. **More significant changes.** An essay hasn't been turned in on time, a Teen has cheated on her partner, Mom has broken her leg. A dead and buried pet is suddenly alive again.
3. **Large (but still plausible) changes.** A Teen lives in a different house and her parents are divorced. Her dad has moved to the mainland, her brother has dropped out of school, and her mom has married the principal.



STRANGE EVENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

- The trees in a certain area suddenly shed their leaves.
- Radio and TV stop working in a nearby neighborhood.
- An empty police car stands in the middle of the road, engine still running. The patrolling officers have ceased to exist in this reality.
- Fast-moving dots of light shoot across the night sky, like airplanes with maneuverability far beyond anything invented by humanity. These are the lights the Kids investigate, and the ones observed by the Teens around the Clovers facility (see below).
- Strange smells rise from the ground in a small area.
- A meteorite crashes into the woods, starting a forest fire. When the fire brigade shows up, everything is back to normal - there has never been a fire.
- The street lights begin flashing in morse code.
- A point in thin air becomes magnetic.
- Powerful thunderstorms hit the Islands.
- Hundreds of owls come out at night, eerily staring down people in the street.
- Rocks form strange patterns on the ground that are difficult and frightening to look at.
- Crop circles form in the fields.



but the Teens and Elisabeth will remember that they ever existed in their home reality.

NPC SCENES

At three point during the Mystery, the players will switch to playing a group of adventurous Kids rather than their own Teenagers. The first scene – the Kids investigating mysterious lights in the woods and being kidnapped by Elisabeth – should be played as the very first scene of the Mystery. The other two take place right before the Confrontation. The players may create their own Kids, or choose one of the four pre-generated characters described below. If you create your own Kids, give one of them Sixten's [Jared's] homemade photon deductor (see below) and replace Mette [Zoe] at Location 1 with one of your new characters.



The Kids are between ten and fourteen years old, and know each other from the neighborhood. They have seen strange lights in the sky near the Clovers facility and built a photon deductor with the assistance of Ing-Marie Blankäng [Karen Richards], president of the local UFO society. The deductor is supposed to help them understand the lights and solve the mystery behind them. They have gone to the police for help as well, but been dismissed.

You should inform the players that the NPC scenes will have a fixed narrative before you begin playing. They will experience an event through the eyes of the Kids rather than having any real agency. Roll no dice during the NPC scenes.

NPC SCENE 1

The Kids have gone out into the night with their flashlights to look for the strange lights over the woods east

PROPHETS AND POLICE

Very few people other than the Teens notice the changes around them - to almost everyone else, the world is as it has always been. This means that the Teens can't ask the police or other authorities for help. Elisabeth hasn't contacted her old colleagues yet, she wishes to find the Hephæsteum first.



MYSTERY SOLVING KIDS

JILLIAN SVENSSON [Jenna Webb]
 Twelve years old and the most popular girl in her class. Very intelligent and fairly self-centered. Very critical of the paranormal, and a stern believer in natural science. Self-appointed leader of the group. Red hair.

SIXTEN BARK [Jared Hicks]
 Ten years old and a major computer nerd. He has built a device he calls the “photon deductor” that tracks and analyzes light. Thin, loud, and with long hair. Will do anything to be appreciated by the others.

DAVID ANDERSSON [Charles Knight]
 Fourteen years old, jock, and avid believer in everything supernatural. Impulsive and impatient. In love with Jillian. Long, brown hair.

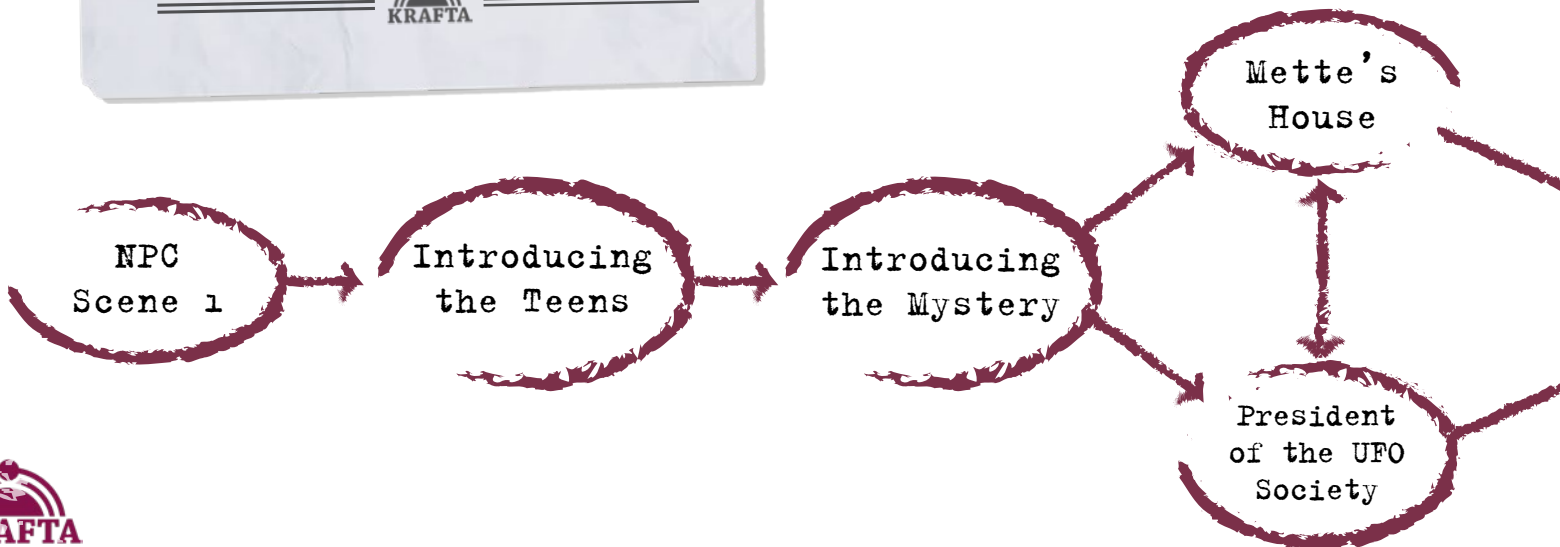
METTE KARLGREN [Zoe Stone]
 Thirteen years old and a weirdo. Avoids her house as much as possible to get away from tending to her drunk dad and his new wife. Fearless and strong. Will do anything for her friends. Thin, has long black hair, and wears baggy clothes.



of the Black Lake Lands [in the desert northwest of Boulder City]. Elisabeth shows up. Read the following text out loud:

Without telling your parents, you’ve snuck out of your houses equipped with flashlights, cameras, and snacks to once and for all solve the mystery behind the strange lights above the woods. You have brought a device to help you, a homemade photon deductor that gathers information about light and analyzes it. You’ve sat for an hour and a half in the woods east of the cove that cuts southward through the eastern part of the Black Lake Lands and nothing has happened. You’re out of snacks and ghost stories, you’ve bickered for a while, and are getting bored. Describe your Kids and what you want to do next.

Have the players play their Kids for a couple of minutes before they suddenly see two dots of light in a tree. It’s only the ghostly stare of an owl, however, but might give them a good scare as it flies off into the night. Shortly after that, they observe what they came for – strange lights shooting rapidly across the sky. The lights are a side effect of the cracks in spacetime caused by the reality blurring, but happen to behave in a UFO-like manner. The photon deductor measures the speed of the dots to about mach 2, and that they maneuver better than any known, human aircraft. The dots suddenly stop and slowly begin to descend toward the beach below the Kids. When they go down to the beach, they see the three illuminated radio telescopes of the Clovers facility on the other side of the water [way up on Red Mountain].



A blinding light and a loud bang throw the Kids to the ground. When they open their eyes, the lights in the sky are gone, and Elisabeth lies naked in front of them in the sand, burning. The sand around her has melted and formed lumpy pools of black glass. She appears unaffected by the fire and looks to be sleeping. She wakes up only if the Kids touch her. She gets up, asks for something to cover herself with, and says, smiling: "You are going to help now". After that, the scene ends.

INTRODUCING THE TEENS

Give each of the Teens an Everyday Life scene, with or without Trouble. The players may set their own scenes, or ask you to do it. Start the Countdown immediately, mentioning in passing curious details that appear to have changed for no reason.

INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

One of the Teens spots the article below in the local newspaper. If they created their own Kids for the NPC scene earlier, replace Mette's [Zoe's] name in the article below with the name of one of their new characters. Remember that all Teens must be present in at least one scene before you can continue with investigating the Locations.

LOCATION 1: METTE'S HOUSE

Mette [Zoe] and her sister Lisa [Mia] live with their dad and his new wife in a house near Troxhammar in

Article in the Mälaren Island News

Missing Girl Found – Now Mute

A GROUP OF CHILDREN between ten and fourteen years old disappeared from their homes on Monday night. Police believe that they left home voluntarily, as they brought snacks, flashlights, and cameras. One of the children was found on Friday, thirteen-year-old Mette Karlgren. According to her parents, she hasn't spoken a word since her return. No traces of the other three children have been found. Mette was returned to her home by former police officer Ing-Marie Blankäng, the current president of the Mälaren Islands UFO Society. Blankäng implied to our reporter that "powerful forces" are involved in the disappearance of the children, but wouldn't go into details. A spokesperson from the police says they believe that the runaways have traveled to Stockholm, and that they will be returned to their parents shortly.

the southern Black Lake Lands [in the northern part of Boulder City]. Their father Kurt [Paul] was let go from Rikenergi when the Loop was sold to Krafta Corp [AEP], and claims to be suffering from Loop Disorder. He and his wife Ulla [Caitlin] are heavy drinkers, and let the children take care of everything around the house. Kurt is depressed, cries a lot, and blames his children for everything that has gone wrong in his life. Ulla is an aggressive, controlling chainsmoker who makes the lives of Mette and Lisa a living hell. The



enclosed garden is home to Killer, the family's German Shepherd. The house is filthy, full of empty wine and beer bottles, and smells badly of cigarettes. Older sister Lisa can usually be found in the kitchen, while the parents drink on the porch.

Ing-Marie [Karen Richards] found Mette two days ago. She hasn't spoken a word since then, and has retreated to her bed on the second floor. The second floor, which is actually an attic made halfway habitable, is poorly insulated, not yet painted, and without windows. The sisters share a bed at the far end of the room, under which they keep a mug of water and some crackers. Kurt and Ulla are convinced that Mette is pretending to be sick to help her friends with some kind of mischief. They punish her by withholding food.

TROUBLE

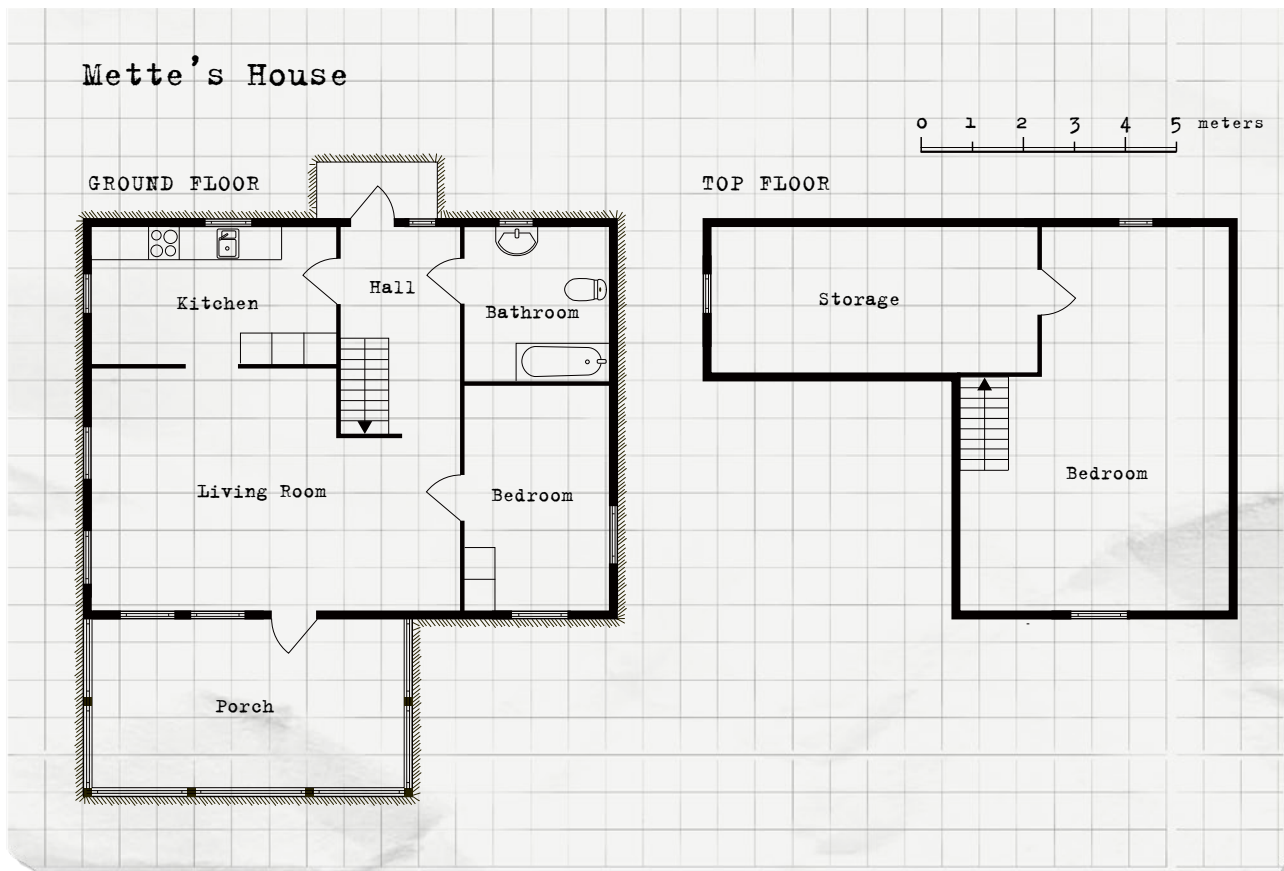
Kurt and Ulla won't let the Teens see Mette, and will sic Killer on them if they don't leave. They are both Self-Centered-Know-it-Alls (**CHARM**) 2. Bribes in the

form of money or valuable objects will give the Teens an Item bonus of +2. Lisa is worried about her sister, and more than willing to help them **SNEAK** inside the house.

CLUES

Mette came back with the disc from Sixten's photon deductor in her pocket. Lisa has put the disc under Mette's pillow, and will give it to the Teens if she thinks they can help. The disc can only be read by the special machine Sixten and Ing-Marie constructed for the purpose. It contains information that can be used to pinpoint where the Kids were when they were kidnapped. **TINKER** can help the Teens build a machine to read the data on the disc.

If the Teens try to speak with Mette, they must pass an Extremely Difficult **CHARM** test (two sixes) to bring her out of her apathy for a few seconds. She winces, looks at the Teenagers and hisses: "One-leaf, two-leaf, three-leaf clover. She is the traveler. We are



her vessel. Hephaestum”. After this, she becomes glassy-eyed, and won’t speak anymore. A Teen who passes a **COMPREHEND** test remembers that there is an old space observatory in the Black Lake Lands called the Clovers facility.

A Teen who uses **INVESTIGATE** to examine Mette’s body realizes that she is in bad shape, as if she has aged considerably. Round puncture marks run down her spine, from the looks of them left behind by medical apparatuses. She has ligature marks around her ankles and wrists, and appears to have been bound. She looks to have been fed properly, and has no other bruises or cuts on her. Lisa says Mette was wearing only one shoe when she returned, a worn, pink Converse All-Star.

If the Teens fail a dice roll at Mette’s house, they are noticed by Ulla or Kurt.

LOCATION 2: THE PRESIDENT OF THE UFO SOCIETY

The Mälaren Islands UFO Society is led by former police officer Ing-Marie Blankäng [**Karen Richards**]. She lives on the second floor of an old wooden house in the middle of Stenhamra [**Boulder City**]. She runs the comic book store, The Strip, out of the ground floor of her house, which also carries a lot of UFO-related stuff – literature, spacecraft models, and cuddly alien toys. A sign on the roof pointing upward says “UFOs, land here” in big letters. A telescope protrudes from a open window on the second floor. The neighbors gossip about the strange UFO buffs visiting at all hours, spending nights on the roof with with telescopes pointed at the sky, and about how Ing-Marie wanders around the block gathering “alien frequency data” using strange, homemade devices.

Ing-Marie and her husband Olof Svensson [**Albert Brown**] log all mysterious phenomena on the Islands. Ing-Marie has had extensive contact with the missing Kids, and is convinced that they have been abducted by UFOs. She helped Sixten build the photon deductor, and has a special computer that can analyze the data on the disc in Mette’s possession.

TROUBLE

Ing-Marie is happy to help. There is no obvious Trouble here.

CLUES

If the Teens bring Mette’s disc, Ing-Marie can analyze the data on it. Sixten and the Kids collected a great deal of data on the east side of the Black Lake Lands, on the beach across the water from the Clovers facility. A Teen using **COMPREHEND** can determine that the lights have been sighted only at night, that they move and maneuver faster than any human aircraft, and that they seem to appear out of thin air.

Ing-Marie says she found Mette in her garden, curled up in a fetal position, and that she drove her home immediately. She regrets this last part, as she now believes that Mette knows something about the location of the other Kids. If the Teens haven’t visited Mette yet, Ing-Marie encourages them to do so, and try speaking to her.

If the Teens tried to get the disc from Mette but failed, you could let Ing-Marie be in possession of some data from a previous outing. It can be analyzed to determine where the Kids most likely went missing, but it will take a couple of days, during which time the Countdown will keep advancing.

Ing-Marie is more than happy to share stories of mysterious events on the Islands. She was one of the police officers sent to investigate the prophets’ underground lab at Riksenergi in the 80’s after Michelle Tannenbaum’s report on their heinous experiments. She tells them about how they found nothing but empty tunnels, as if the whole complex had just vanished. She is convinced that the prophets cooperated with aliens, and that they and their lab were transported to a distant galaxy before the police arrived.

LOCATION 3: THE BEACH [CANYON RD, RED MOUNTAIN]

Using the data from the deductor, the Teens can find out where the Kids disappeared from – a small beach in the eastern Black Lake Lands near where a cove cuts through the island from the north [**Canyon Road on Red Mountain**]. The beach is covered in tall grass, weeds, and small fir trees, and the Clovers facility is

BOULDER CITY: RED MOUNTAIN

If you're playing in Boulder City, the Kids are investigating up on Red Mountain. The Clovers facility is located halfway up on the side of a mountain. Instead of a beach, the lights have converged over a parking lot. The Kids see the contours of the Clovers on the mountain above, and the dirt road leading up to it.



clearly visible across the water. If the Teens visit the beach at night, they spot strange lights in the sky.

Shortly after the Teens' arrival, they spot a flashlight approaching them through the woods. Police officer Erik Granfors [Eric Boyd] arrives to investigate. Like Ing-Marie and the Teens, Erik is one of the few people who notices the changes in reality. He knows that he has a wife called Pernilla [Heather], but everyone around him suddenly acts as if she never existed. The Kids contacted him for help regarding the mysterious lights over the beach, but he didn't take it seriously. Now that his wife has gone missing, he'll leave no stone unturned, and has decided to investigate the lights after all, as the Kids' abduction must be connected to Pernilla's disappearance.

TROUBLE

Erik is beyond himself, and assumes that the Teens must somehow be involved in the kidnappings of Pernilla and the Kids. He pulls his gun and shouts at them to get down on the ground and tell him everything they know. A Teen who passes an **EMPATHIZE** roll realizes that he is desperate and confused, but that they're all on the same side. The Teens must pass a **CHARM** test to convince Erik that they aren't in league with the kidnapers. If they fail the roll, he becomes aggressive, starts



ranting like a madman and waves his gun in their faces. If any of them attempt to run away, he fires his gun and the fleeing Teens must pass a **MOVE** test or become Broken. If the Teens remain on the ground, he eventually gives up and leaves to look for his wife elsewhere.

CLUES

Using **INVESTIGATE** at the beach allows the Teens to find the place where Elisabeth's burning body turned the sand into glass. They also find Mette's missing pink shoe. Passing a **COMPREHEND** test reveals that the heat necessary to turn the sand into glass should have burned the nearby grass and trees, but it appears to have been concentrated in a circle on the sand. Nothing outside of the circle has been affected.

If they manage to calm Erik down, he proposes that they help each other. He believes that the Kids and his wife accidentally observed flight tests of a new, secret aircraft being developed by NATO [the Air Force] using Loop technology. He believes that the Clovers facility is a front for a secret military lab jointly run by NATO



and the Swedish army. This must be where Pernilla and the Kids are being held, and Erik needs the Teens' help to break them out. If they follow Erik to the Clovers facility, he will turn a corner after they have made it inside and vanish, as if he never existed to begin with.

NPC SCENES

Before the Teens go to the Clovers facility, there are two more NPC scenes in which the players will play the Kids. Mette's player can either just watch, or create a new Kid whom Elisabeth has kidnapped as well.

The second NPC scene is centered around one of the Kids being left alone after Elisabeth drags the others into the next room. Through a glass wall, the lone Kid observes Elisabeth prepare to send her friends into another reality to look for the Hephaesteum. In the third scene, the other Kids wake up from the drugs, finding themselves tied down. They are sent to another reality where the Earth has been torn apart by war and damage to the environment. They are pushed to their

limits by existing in two worlds at the same time, and toward the end of the scene, one of them loses touch with her home reality and risks being lost in the wrong one forever.

NPC SCENE 2

Choose one of the Kids who is left behind in a locked office by the control room inside the Clovers facility, and read the following text to her:

You wake up, and like all the other times, you're lying on the floor of the room where you're being held. You're stiff, sore, and have a funny taste in your mouth that you know is from the gas the tattooed woman – Elisabeth – sprays through the keyhole to put you to sleep. You're being used for sick, dangerous experiments. Elisabeth uses your minds as vehicles to travel between worlds, into different versions of the Islands, searching for something she calls the Hephaesteum. This is why you feel a hundred years old, she says. You may never come home, she says. You regain control of yourself and realize that you are alone in the room.

Empty soup cans litter the floor, along with old toys for much younger kids. Your sleeping bags are stacked in a corner of the room, and there is a desk, a chair, and a shelf by the back wall. The door and the wall next to it is made from acrylic glass, which allows you to look out across the Clovers' control room and Elisabeth's machine.

The player may get up and have a look around. Make a quick sketch of the room. Through the glass, the Kid sees Elisabeth drag her friends across the floor and strap them down in dentist chairs arranged around the machine in the middle of the room (see below). The Kids look pale and worn, have sores around their mouths and eyes, and their hair is falling out. Elisabeth attaches tubes and wires to them.

If the conscious Kid addresses Elisabeth, she will reply. She says that she chose to spare the Kid another journey as her mind is about to break. Another trip would risk severing her link to her home reality, making a return trip impossible. She needs rest before Elisabeth can use her again. If the Kid tries to smash the wall or pick the lock, Elisabeth threatens to drug her again. Cut the scene when the other Kids are ready for departure.

NPC SCENE 3

Read the following text to the other players:

You wake up with the tingling sensation in your mouths and the heavy headaches that come from the sleep gas Elisabeth uses when she needs your minds for her experiments. You are strapped to dentist chairs facing each other, with Elisabeth's machine in the middle. Sharp pain in your spines from her hooking you up to the machine is what brings you out of the heavy, narcotic sleep. You look at each other, pale and red-eyed. Elisabeth walk around the room, dressed in shorts and a white tank-top, her white hair flowing freely. Tattoos of mathematical formulas cover her skin. She puts on a cap connected to the machine, and crouches down over the control panel to send you off into another reality to look for the Hephaestum, a lost laboratory she claims contains all of the world's truths.

The Kids may talk to each other, Elisabeth, or their friend behind the glass wall. They can try to get free, but may not roll dice. If they plead with Elisabeth for her to let them go, she says that their sacrifice is for

the greater good, for the salvation of the entire human race. She thinks this trip will be the last, as she believes she has found the location of the Hephaestum.

Elisabeth turns on the machine, and the Kids experience intense pain. They black out. When they come to again, they're standing on the hill where the Clovers facility ought to be. A crimson sun is setting, making the shadows long. Red lightning cascades from the sun across the sky. They can hear big engines in the distance, from airplanes or perhaps helicopters. A loud explosion rolls across the lake, shaking the ground, and scaring thousands of purple/red grasshoppers out of hiding. The air is hot and humid.

The Kids can feel Elisabeth's presence inside their minds, and hear her voice urging them to the north. They can tell that they're still on the Islands, but all of the houses are bombed out, and decaying bodies lie where they fell here and there. They see no people and no animals other than bugs and rats. Elisabeth suddenly commands them to hide, and they need to find cover quickly. Five people in worn battle fatigues, armed with pistols and rifles, rush by, followed by three bipedal warbots armed with machine guns and flamethrowers, shaking the ground as they pass. Existing in two different realities becomes too much for one of the Kids, who collapses with a nose bleed, and begins vomiting. In the original reality, her body vanishes, and she now believes that she belongs to the world she's in. She loses contact with Elisabeth. Read the following text to her:

You look around and feel certain that you have forgotten something, but you can't figure out what it is. You see a group of kids looking at you that don't look like anyone you've ever seen before, other than in pictures from before the war. You feel like you should know who they are, but you can't remember. None of them are wearing uniforms or appear to be armed, and they don't have masks on despite the fact that you're above ground. The robots will find you any minute now. You remember something your dad told you long ago, about an animal that existed when he was a kid called a "rabbit" that always kept a lookout for danger to ensure the survival of its kind. You have to get to the tunnels!

Regardless of how the disconnected Kid reacts, Elisabeth orders the others to keep heading north to look for the Hephaestum. One more Kid collapses in a pool of blood and vomit. Then cut the scene.

THE CONFRONTATION

The Clovers facility is an observatory used during the 80's to study celestial phenomena. At its peak, it had over two hundred employees studying the data collected by its three clover leaf-shaped antennas. The facility was expensive to run, however, and Krafta [AEP] shut it down when they bought the operation. An astronomer called Linnea Hall [Isabella Ward] and two janitors have been left behind to tend to the building, while Krafta looks for a buyer to take it off their hands.

Elisabeth has visited the Clovers facility in many different realities, and used its resources to build the necessary machinery to keep traveling. Linnea Hall was an up-and-coming astronomer in the 80's employed by Riksenergi, with Elisabeth as her supervisor. Elisabeth has convinced Linnea that the Kids belong to a different reality, and must be sent home or her world will tear at the seams. In her heart, Linnea doesn't quite believe it, but helping Elisabeth sure beats the endless boredom of tending to the empty observatory.

THE CLOVERS FACILITY

The Clovers observatory consists of a large, partially subterranean, main building, and three huge, clover leaf-shaped radio telescopes. Aside from the main entrance, there is a loading dock, and several smaller service entrances. Inside, about twenty small rooms and a maze of corridors encircle a central control room. Most of the smaller office rooms have been empty since the '80s, gathering cobwebs and rat feces in their quiet loneliness. The archive room still contains all data gathered while the facility was in operation, however, neatly filed. Linnea and the janitors take their meals at the far end of the otherwise empty staff kitchen.

The control room contains a vast number of monitors, computers, and machines necessary to operate the telescopes. A glass wall cuts through the back of the room, on the other side of which lie four small offices. The transparent wall toward the control room allowed the researchers to work in private while maintaining contact with the rest of the crew. Elisabeth's mind-travel machine sits in the center of the control room. It looks like a large box covered in screens, buttons, levers, and cable sockets. Three dentist chairs with restraints on them face the ma-

chine, connected to it by lots of tubes and cables. The machine itself is hooked up to the observatory's mainframe.

When the Teens arrive, Elisabeth will have ordered Linnea to lock all entrances and make sure no one gets inside. She has rerouted all power to the control room, leaving the rest of the complex dark. The acrylic glass door to the control room is locked, but allows an outsider to see and hear everything that goes on on the other side.

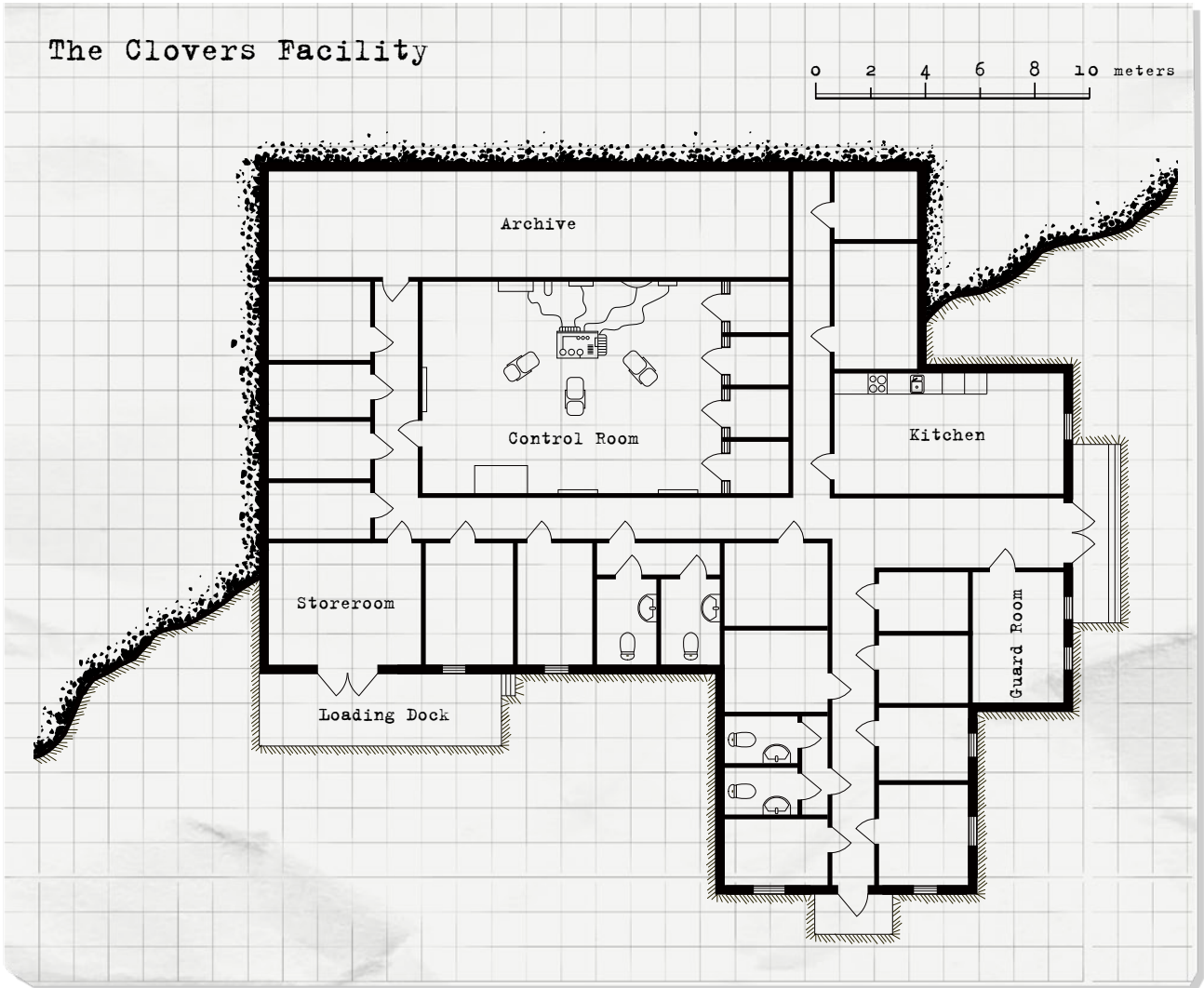
Elisabeth has strapped all but one of the Kids to the chairs, and connected them to the machine. When the Teens arrive, the Kids' minds are already in another reality. Elisabeth is wearing a rubber cap hooked up to the machine, and may alter focus between the two realities as she pleases. The Kids are rapidly losing touch with their home world, and risk becoming stuck in the wrong reality. They look as if they have aged a lot, are pale, red-eyed, and obviously drugged. One of them flickers in and out of existence for a couple of seconds, and then disappears. A creaking alarm begins to sound, and red lights flash on the machine. Locked inside one of the small offices behind the glass wall, the Teens spot the last Kid.

TROUBLE

The Teens can break down a door to get inside the facility using **TINKER** or **FORCE**. Failure still means getting inside, but being spotted by Linnea. She is either patrolling the corridors with her flashlight, or having a coffee break in the kitchen, but isn't expecting intruders. The Teens can **SNEAK** past her, talk her down using **CHARM**, or fight her using **FORCE**. If they pass an **EMPATHIZE** test, they realize that Linnea is doubting Elisabeth's truthfulness, and really only needs someone to confirm her doubts to switch sides. Failing to get past Linnea means that one or more Teens are locked inside one of the offices in the control room, to be used as vessels by Elisabeth later.

Intensify the reality bleeding the closer the Teens get to the control room. Doors vanish, corridors turn or fork, paintings appear on the walls.

There are many ways for the Teens to fight Elisabeth. They can talk to her through the glass door and make her realize that what she's doing is cruel and pointless, hack the mainframe from the outside and



shut down her machine, or break down the door and physically subdue her. Regardless of the method they choose, treat it as an Extremely Difficult Extended Trouble (required successes = three times the number of Teens). Elisabeth thinks this last trip is where she will find the Hephaestum, and will do anything to complete it.

If the Teens successfully shut down or sabotage the machine, the Kids' bodies stop flickering, and become solidly reattached to the right reality. They wake up after a little while, and ask to be let go. Failing to stop Elisabeth means leaving the Kids in the wrong reality for too long, at which point they become stuck there, and all traces of them ever having existed in this world vanish. Only the Teens and Elisabeth remember them.

AFTER THE CONFRONTATION

Regardless of the outcome of the Confrontation, Elisabeth won't find the Hephaestum. If the Teens failed, the Kids are lost forever, and the changes to their reality become permanent. If they successfully save the Kids, the world goes back to normal. Elisabeth can't be charged with any crimes, however – the Kids' memories are too vague, the Teens sound crazy if they share their story, and no one else remembers anything strange happening.

AFTERMATH

Give the Teens an Everyday Life scene each, with or without Trouble. They may set it themselves, or ask

you to do it. If you are pressed for time, let each player describe a short montage of snapshots from her Teen's life instead.

CHANGE

After the final scenes, collectively look through the characters' sheets and see if any of the Teens have changed. If the players feel like it, they may change their Teens' Problems, Shames, Iconic Items, or Relationships. The group may also collectively decide to change their Friction. Read the XP questions (page 97) aloud to the players. Each yes answer translates to 1 XP.

NPCS AND CREATURES

Below are descriptions of the NPCs and creatures found in the Mystery.

ING-MARIE BLANKÄNG [KAREN RICHARDS]

"Certainty is easy: mankind is the only intelligent lifeform in the Universe, people never change, and you only get one shot at life. Curiosity and reasonable doubt, however, is difficult, and requires real courage."

Ing-Marie used to be a depressed police officer by day, and a paranormal investigator by night, on a desperate crusade to figure out what happened to her brother when they were kids. When she married Olof [Albert], who shares her interest in all things paranormal, she realized that life also contains hope, laughter, and community. She let go of her brother's unknown fate, quit the police force, and opened a comic book store called The Strip, which soon became the hub for the Islands' UFO buffs. Ing-Marie uses her police training to help likeminded people, and has had extensive contact with the missing Kids. She is a blonde woman of about thirty, who laughs a lot, and is curious about almost everything. She dresses in bright colors, and can usually be found with a cup of coffee in one hand and the other placed on Olof's back or shoulder.

ERIK GRANFORS [ERIC BOYD]

"Stop lying to me or I... I don't know what I'll do."

Erik is a police officer with a vivid imagination who dreams about becoming an author. His dreams of writing have had to give way to his wife Pernilla's [Heather's] career as a dog stylist, however, an occupation that takes up all of their time, without generating any real money. Erik is one of the few people who notices the changes around him. One morning, Pernilla was gone, no one could remember that she had ever existed, and his bookshelf was full of titles penned by him that had made him a wealthy man. The books or the money didn't matter when Pernilla was gone, however. Erik has argued with friends and coworkers who no longer remember his wife, and is angry, desperate, and on the verge of a mental breakdown. He is about thirty years old, and has brown hair, a beard, and a mustache. He dresses in his police uniform.



LINNEA HALL [ISABELLA WARD]

"You're completely wrong! What's that? Okay, maybe you're a little right. Really? Well, then it would seem that I am wrong."

Linnea interned at Riksenergi in the 80's, where Elisabeth Sundgren became her supervisor, and changed



her life. In a matter of weeks, she broke up with her abusive boyfriend, started making eye contact with people, and speaking her mind about things. Elisabeth filled her head with talk of miracles, and her being destined for greatness. Linnea's career skyrocketed, and her work landed her a senior position at the Clovers facility. Elisabeth's disappearance hit



her hard, however, and made her look for something to fill the void. She joined a national socialist party, and started to believe that some people were worth more than others. When her Nazi sympathies became known, she was demoted to a glorified janitor's position. She longs for real, meaningful work, and although she doesn't quite believe Elisabeth's story about the kids she has locked up, she finds it hard to say no to her former mentor. Could the experiments give her back a purpose in life? So far, she has mostly been ordered to bring food and toys for the kids, and steal three dentist chairs from the local dump. She visited the Hephaestum once back in the 80's, and can tell the Teens about how it filled you with both fear and wonder. Linnea is around thirty years old, and wears a plaid shirt and jeans. She is easily embarrassed, and has a hard time standing up for herself. She buttons the shirt all the way up to hide a Nazi tattoo on her neck, a reminder of a time she regrets deeply.



ELISABETH SUNDGREN [ELIZABETH COX]

"I have seen worlds you can't even imagine."

As the daughter of an officer in The Salvation Army, Elisabeth traveled the world as a child, and witnessed humanity's destruction of the planet. She realized that - unless stopped - mankind would eradicate itself, and that only exceptionally gifted people have a shot at making things right - if they act without regards to mundane things such as ethics, morality, democracy, and the needs of the few. While pondering how to save the world, she pursued a radiology degree, and started working at Riksenergi. One day, she happened upon an abandoned laboratory on the Islands, containing miraculous technology and knowledge, and together with two colleagues, she decided to get busy saving mankind from its inevitable doom. Elisabeth is a large, middle-aged woman with white hair,

icy blue eyes, and tattoos all over her body of extremely complex mathematical formulas. She dresses in shorts and tank-tops. Her voice is smooth but powerful, and her demanding presence makes everyone who meets her want to be her and please her. She is the epitome of an Übermensch (all attributes) 2.



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ASH TO ETERNITY

A storm is coming to the Mälaren Islands. Deep underground the Prophets of Pandora are building a machine that will change everything. When one of the prophets goes into hiding, his daughter suddenly finds herself a target. The Teens will have to brave terrible dangers and find the Hephaestum before its too late.



Ash to Eternity is a longer Mystery, marking the fourth and final chapter in the *Prophets of Pandora* campaign. If you wish to play it without first having played through the first three parts, you have to make up some reason for why Mia Järnek [[Kate Collins](#)] asks the Teens for help. Has she perhaps heard of earlier Mysteries resolved by the group?

THE TRUTH

After the events in *Traveler*, Elisabeth [[Elizabeth](#)] realized that she wouldn't be able to find the lost Hephaestum. She also realized that no single, fantastical invention would solve all of mankind's problems. Humanity is simply too lazy, complacent, and unwilling to

create the change necessary to end war, pollution, and diseases for good.

She called upon her old colleagues Sven [[John](#)] and Liv [[Destiny](#)], and convinced them to dust off their old work, their old dreams. She hatched a plan that would give them enough power, wealth, and influence to force people to change. The first step of the plan was to build a new Hephaestum where the old one used to be. Liv was tasked with containing and controlling the so-called “machine cancer” that renders robots and machines susceptible to biological infection. Controlling the cancer gave the prophets the necessary tools to rebuild the Hephaestum from flesh and steel.

The next step was erecting the X-Ray Spire in the Evacuation Zone [[the Desert Zone](#)] to transmit radio



waves that help spread the machine cancer. The Spire also gives Liv and Elisabeth control over infected robots. Elisabeth has put together a robot task force called Thunderbolt that guards the Hephaesteum and scares people away from the Evacuation Zone. Elisabeth's future plans involve an entire army of robot warriors and workers.

Elisabeth also tasked herself with inventing a machine that would enable her to gaze into the future. She is currently assembling a Futurum Telescope, which will give her the ability to predict possible futures, helping her determine what to do in the present to achieve the best possible outcome. If finished, the machine will allow her to rule the world. Construction is slow, however, and activating it will require enormous amounts of energy. Unfortunately for her, Elisabeth hasn't yet understood that what she's building is actually a time machine, not a technological crystal ball.

Step four in the plan was getting their reputations and careers back, to gain access to the resources of Krafta [AEP] and the universities. Elisabeth ordered Sven to release a dangerous contagion into the wa-

ter supply on the Islands, and then invent a cure to make everyone see him as a hero. Sven was initially swayed by Elisabeth's charm and power, but refused to take action to harm innocent people. He snuck out of the Hephaesteum, and has gone into hiding in a remote cabin on Bastlagnö [River Mountains], an island northwest of Adelsö. Sven hasn't contacted his daughter Mia [Kate] for fear of placing her in harm's way, and has instead contacted Louise Tannenbaum [Kelly Tannenbaum] under a false name. He has begged her to finish her mother's work, and expose the prophets' illegal experiments to the public.

When Sven first rejoined Elisabeth and Liv, he told Mia and his employers that he was going on a study trip to England, but Mia isn't easily fooled. She is worried that her father is in trouble or has been talked into doing something stupid, and has begun looking for him. She feels like her efforts are being watched, however, which is true. Elisabeth has ordered Thunderbolt to kidnap Mia, and use her to bring Sven back in line.

The Mystery begins with Mia asking the Teens for help with finding her dad. Later on, she is kidnapped



by Thunderbolt, Sven returns to the Hephaestum, and the Teens must rescue both of them and destroy the lab to stop Elisabeth's plans.

COUNTDOWN

The X-Ray Spire will cause the machine cancer to spread more and more rapidly. In the beginning, only odd objects here and there are hit, but later, infected trucks swerve across the highways, and infected robots demolish a local mall while meaty tumors spill out from inside the registers. Chapter 2 contains more information about the machine cancer.

Thunderbolt has been ordered to keep people out of the Evacuation Zone to keep the Hephaestum and the X-Ray Spire safe and secret. They will attack people and vehicles entering the Vac, and also harass those who live on its southern borders. Let the Teens hear rumors about this, or be present when an attack happens.

DISASTER

Unless the Teens manage to free Mia and destroy the Hephaestum, Sven will introduce a dangerous disease

to the water supply. The disease is named Gouridium, as the infected develop thick muscle knots, visible through the skin as swollen lumps. It is very painful, and results in several deaths. After a couple of months,

MONSTERS AND MACHINE CANCER

As the GM, you decide if the machine cancer was created by the prophets or came from somewhere else, and has been a part of the Teens' lives before this Mystery. It is also up to you to determine if there are actual monsters in the Vac, or if they only exist in rumors and vivid imaginations. Chapter 6 contains suggestions for what may have caused the machine cancer, and the monster rumors.



COUNTDOWN FOR THE MACHINE CANCER

1. A handful of robots become infected and are decommissioned. Rumors begin circulating about TVs filling up with organic goo and shutting down. The clock in the classroom at school is running backward, and leaking what looks like blood.
2. The police are called out to contain a large number of infected robots roaming the woods across the Islands. Rumors say that people who have entered the Vac have been attacked by infected bots. More and more objects throughout society become infected. The Agency for Disease Control sets up temporary offices in Stenhamra. Journalists from national media start to arrive on the Islands.
3. Society is crippled by the rapid technological decay spread by the cancer. Many Islanders head for the mainland to weather the storm there. An increasing number of accidents and incidents are reported: feral robots blocking the roads, boats swelling up with tumors, lidless eyes growing out of computers and fax machines, and eventually a whole magnetriner ship hanging above Adelsö becomes covered with throbbing, organic, intestinal vines.



the prophets present a cure, and are proclaimed national heroes. They are hired by Krafta and given senior positions at the University of Stockholm. Elisabeth takes control over more and more robots, and plans to use the Futurum Telescope to rule the nation and force



change on the world using her experimental inventions to lower carbon dioxide emissions, disband the armed forces, stop unnecessary use of antibiotics, and make mankind less fertile to slow down the growth of the world's population.

INTRODUCING THE TEENS

Give each of the Teens an Everyday Life scene, with or without Trouble. The players may set their own scenes, or ask you to do it. Include at least one object infected by the machine cancer. If the Teens are at school, they may overhear their teachers talking about how they don't believe that Sven [John] is away on a "study trip". Is he sick, or is the county hiding the fact that he has quit while they look for a replacement? If you play the Mystery as the final part of the campaign, resolve already active Everyday Life storylines instead of introducing new NPCs and conflicts.

INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

Mia [Kate] reaches out to the Teens asking for help. She says that her dad left for Manchester, England, a

couple of weeks ago on what he called a work trip to study the public schools there. The night before he left, he sat Mia down and had a long conversation with her about wanting to make the world a better place, and that sacrifices may be necessary for the greater good. Mia has called several schools in Manchester, none of whom have ever heard of a Sven Järnek **[John Collins]**, and believes he has landed himself in trouble somehow. Has someone tricked him into doing something stupid?

To no avail, Mia has searched the family cabin on Munsö (see *The Ugliness*) and all the other places she could think of for Sven. She has had a strange feeling of having been followed, however, and is afraid that someone will try to hurt her. She asks the Teens for help to find Sven. She believes it would be good to start by visiting her mother, Suzanne Krapp **[Samantha Hicks]**, in Stockholm **[Las Vegas]**. Mia and Suzanne haven't spoken in years, which is why she asks the Teens to go in her place. A woman named Louise Tannenbaum **[Kelly Tannenbaum]** may also know something. Mia has seen her several times around her house, asking the neighbors about what Sven did for work in the 80's, and how he came to work at Berggården High. While the Teens are off finding Clues, Mia will examine Sven's notes and the binders in his office, and talk to his friends and coworkers. When the Teens find Sven and prepare to go meet him, Mia doesn't appear to be home if they go around to her house to bring her along. Thunderbolt has already kidnapped her by then.

LOCATION 1: SUZANNE KRAPP

[SAMANTHA HICKS]

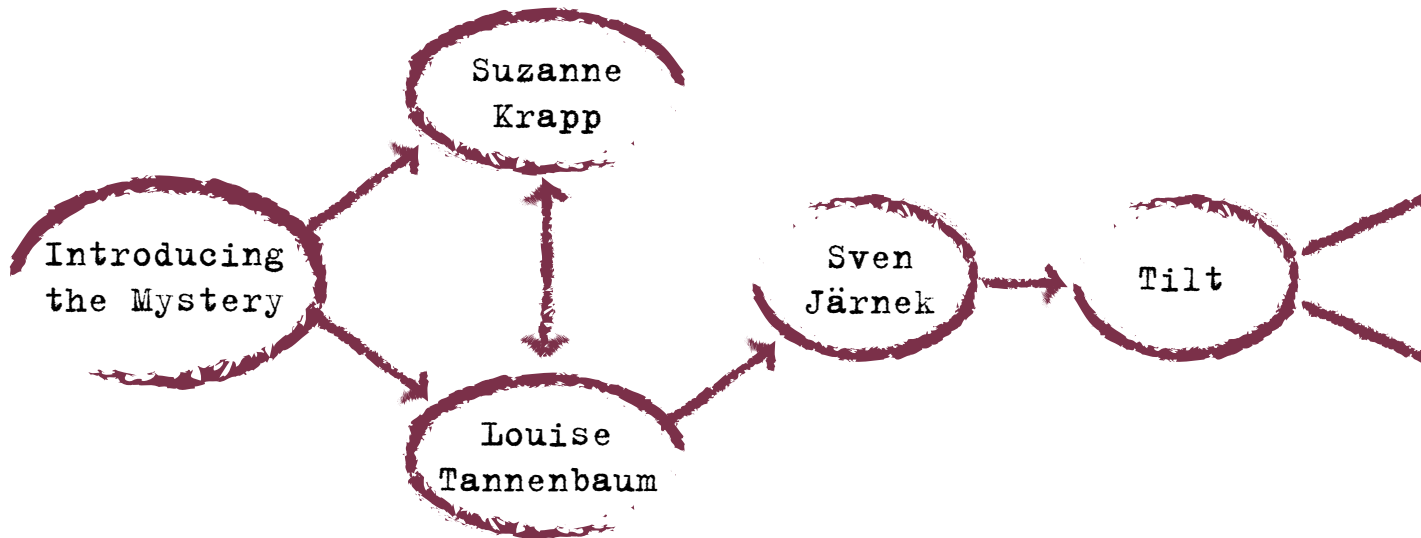
Suzanne lives in an apartment in Hägerstalund Tower, one of Stockholm's **[Las Vegas']** twelve vertical cities. The Teens are given her address by Mia, and may catch a bus or the subway to get there. The tower stretches high up into the sky, is well lit, and mainly filled with apartments, but also contains daycare centers, stores, and cinemas. Once at the forefront of Swedish social engineering and architecture, the Tower is today suffering from neglected maintenance, it's dirty and full of graffiti, and most of its residents have fallen on hard times.

COUNTDOWN FOR THUNDERBOLT

1. Kids who have entered the Vac claim to have been chased out by hostile robots. A dog is found murdered on the border. Robots sneak around near the farms and houses of neighboring families. Several sheds and barns are razed to the ground, and the cattle are chased off or taken. Red laser sights sweep across the faces of nocturnal joggers who come too close to the Vac. Rumors say that neo-Nazis have moved into the Vac and proclaimed it a sovereign nation, Ultima Thule. Aggressive skinheads are said to patrol the borders day and night.
2. An unmanned magnetron ship disappears near the X-Ray Spire. Thunderbolt has shot it down. Rumors run wild about technology dying when you get to the Vac, and about how all ships flying over it fall out of the sky. A journalist makes a comparison to the famous Bermuda Triangle.
3. A hiker is killed in the Vac. His dog returns home alone to his house in Stenhamra. People say that monsters hunt in the Vac, and parents forbid their children from going to the northern parts of the Black Lake Lands. During the night, Thunderbolt wreaks havoc along the borders, razing houses and destroying farming equipment. A playground is bulldozed over. A group of teens are chased by robots and locked inside a grain silo.



Suzanne's apartment is on the thirty-third floor at the end of a dimly lit, narrow corridor where the carpets smell like mold. The door next to Suzanne's is full of carved profanities, children can be heard crying on



STUDYING THE MACHINE CANCER

The Teens can build a lab to examine infected technology, or contact a scientist, someone in charge at the county, or at a governmental agency in Stockholm. Either way, they find out that the disease suddenly began spreading faster because of more rapid mitosis of the infected cells. The disease doesn't seem to spread outside of the Islands, or be able to reach the western part of Adelsö. It is as if the cancer is affected by radio waves transmitted from somewhere in the northern Black Lake Lands [northern part of the Desert Zone]. The disease is biological, but interacts with metals and plastics. Infected robots and machines begin performing seemingly random actions before shutting down. Infected objects can spread the cancer via water. As the GM, you decide what's behind the cancer - alien plankton or water, a new form of wax for artificial nerves, or something entirely different.



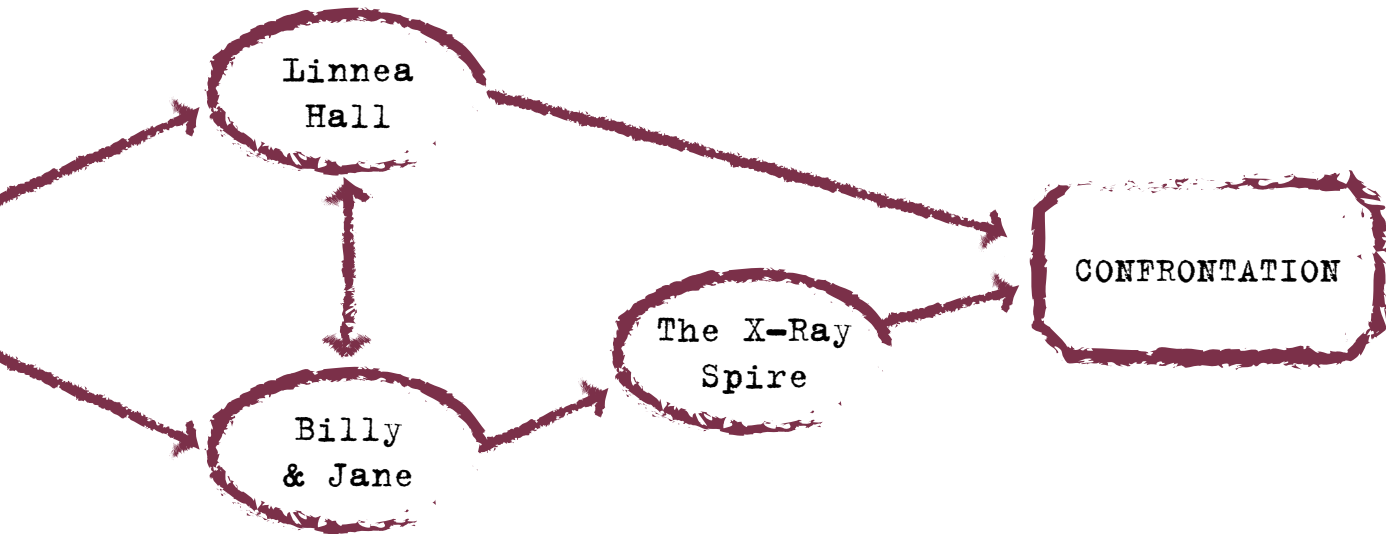
the other side, and leaking trash bags fill the hallway with a sweet, pungent odor. When they knock on the door, Suzanne lets them into her home which is packed with newspaper stacks and rubbish from floor to ceiling. Narrow walkways between the trash mountains allow for passage between the kitchen, living room, bedroom, and bathroom. The blinds are closed, leaving the apartment dark and stuffy. Suzanne offers the Teens coffee and cookies, and carefully adds the cookie wrappers and coffee grounds to her collection. She hasn't seen Sven in years, but is very keen to hear from Mia, and tries to make the Teens promise her a visit from her daughter.

TROUBLE

Suzanne says that she divorced Sven in the '80s because they fought all the time. About what, she won't say, and neither will she go into details about what Sven did for work. She asks the Teens to live in the moment, and make the most of their lives. A successful **EMPATHIZE** test reveals that Suzanne is bitter and disappointed, both in Sven and herself. Her past is painful, and she avoids thinking about it. The best way to get her to share what she knows is either convincing her that Sven is in danger, or promising her that Mia will want to see her if she helps them. A successful **CHARM** test gets her talking. Failure means making her nervous, after which she manically begins arranging her collections, and asks the Teens to leave.

CLUES

Suzanne can tell the Teens that Sven worked as a sci-



entist at Riksenergi [DART] in the '80s as part of a research group together with two other medical doctors – Elisabeth Sundgren and Natasha Lintov. The trio's work made Sven arrogant, manipulative, and self-centered. He claimed he was going to save humanity, and after initially being supportive of her husband, Suzanne found out that Sven had been part of a secret experiment that included feeding dangerous substances to unsuspecting Islanders. She knew she ought to go to the police, but couldn't bear tearing up her family. The secret made her miserable, and eventually depressed.

Suzanne was on her way to recovering when Sven was informed that a journalist named Michaela Tannenbaum [Michelle Tannenbaum] had infiltrated Riksenergi and taken photographs of his lab. It was only a matter of time before the trio was going to be exposed, let go from Riksebergi, and most likely end up in prison. Sven asked Suzanne for advice, and as she knew that Sven had been Mia's only real parent during her long convalescence, she urged him to do anything to make sure Mia didn't lose her father. Michaela died from a stroke the next day, only hours after Sven had visited her and come home crying. He wouldn't say what he was crying about, but Suzanne rightly guessed that it was due to murdering Michaela.

Suzanne couldn't stand being an implicit accessory to murder, and began suffering from panic attacks at the mere sight of Sven. She realized she had to leave him, and tried to get their daughter to come with her, but Mia refused. Suzanne quit her job, left the family, and moved to Stockholm.

Suzanne remembers Sven referring to himself as Prometheus when he felt the most powerful. She hopes that he hasn't re-established contact with Elisabeth or Natasha, as they bring out the worst in him.

LOCATION 2: LOUISE TANNENBAUM

[KELLY TANNENBAUM]

Louise and her home are described in *The Ugliness*. Over the last few days, a mysterious person calling themselves Prometheus has sent her cryptic e-mails encouraging her to continue her mother's investigations into the three "prophets" before a terrible disease is released onto the Islands. Sven is behind the e-mails, which are full of typos, strange sentences, and way too many exclamation marks, as he has been drunk while writing them.

Louise longs to avenge her mother's death. She has tried to find the three prophets, and has therefore been keeping an eye on Sven and Mia's house. She has tried to get into the Evacuation Zone [the Desert Zone] to visit the place where the Hephaestum, according to her mother's notes, was located in the '80s, but infected robots chased her away.

Several objects in Louise's home has been infected by the machine cancer. Eyes have grown out through the walls of the elevator, which has stopped working, keeping her from going upstairs or down to the garage. Bloated cocoons full of buzzing insects cover the boat [car], bleeding ink all over it, and making it unusable.

LOUISE'S KNOWLEDGE

Louise knows the following:

- The three prophets are Sven Järnek, Elisabeth Sundgren, and Liv Himmelshöjd.
- They were employed by Riksenergi but carried out their own work in an underground lab they called the Hephaesteum, after the workshop owned by Hephaestus in Greek myth.
- Their experiments were unethical and dangerous, and they used the inhabitants of the Islands as unsuspecting trial subjects.
- Elisabeth and the lab disappeared in the '80s.
- Louise's mother Michaela died from a stroke just as she was about to expose the prophets. Michaela wasn't sick, which convinced Louise that it was murder, but she has no proof of this.
- Sven Järnek is the current principal of Berggården High School [Boulder City High School]. He used to be an immunologist.
- Liv Himmelshöjd used to be a surgeon called Natasha Lintov. She has taken a new name, and works as a therapist and life coach, but lacks formal training for this.
- Elisabeth Sundgren is a radiologist.
- The three scientists believed that their work would save mankind from extinction. Sven tried to find new ways to fight global pandemics and multi-resistant bacteria. Liv wanted to end all wars. Elisabeth was convinced that the planet must be healed to prevent natural disasters.



TROUBLE

Louise doesn't want to put the Teens in danger, and asks them to go home. They can either use **CHARM** to convince her that they can take care of themselves, or fix either the boat [car] or the elevator using **TINKER** to prove that they aren't kids anymore. Louise will then tell them what she knows, and lend them her boat [car].

CLUES

Louise says someone named Prometheus has been sending her e-mails warning about a coming plague that will hit the Islands soon unless she is able to finish what her mother started, and get the three prophets arrested. She has also noticed that Sven, Liv, and Elisabeth have vanished, leading her to believe that they have gathered in their lab to resume their work.

Louise knows that her mother made it inside the secret Hephaesteum lab in the '80s. Michaela's article and testimony about it would have put the prophets in prison for a long time, but she died from a stroke before the piece was published. Michaela showed Louise where the Hephaesteum was located, and described it as a terrifying but amazing place that haunted her dreams. After Michaela's death, Louise rode her bike to the place, but found only empty tunnels with torn cables hanging from the walls. She returned there again a couple a days go, but was chased off by armed, infected robots.

Louise can show the Teens photographs from inside the Hephaesteum taken by Michaela. They are dark and blurry, showing strange metal and concrete walls covered in knotted, organic membranes. One picture shows a naked body on a metal slab. Strange apparatuses and dirty buckets surround the slab. Another picture shows large metal cages with dark stains

on the floors beneath them. Boxes with biohazard and radioactive warning signs can be seen in several of the pictures, next to stacks of hazmat suits and gas masks. One photo shows a room with three chairs and a table in which the air appears to be full of floating spores or tiny insects. A bright light is shining in from the side, but the light source isn't in the shot.

Louise has tracked Prometheus' e-mails to Bastlagmö [the River Mountains], northwest of Adelsö, Ichtyosaurus but hasn't been able to go there as her boat has stopped working. If the Teens help her fix it, she offers to lend it to them, or asks if they wish to accompany her to go see Prometheus.

If the Teens have missed important facts about the prophets in the earlier Mysteries, Louise can fill in the blanks (see below). She can mark their map with the Hephaesteum's original location.

LOCATION 3: SVEN JÄRNEK ON BASTLAGNÖ

Sven [John] is hiding in a cabin on Bastlagmö northwest of Adelsö [in the River Mountains] in the foolish hope that Elisabeth will continue without him. Bastlagmö is covered with birches, bushes, and sheep meadows. A two story cabin with a small jetty is located on the north side of the island. The cabin has no running water, and there is an outhouse out back. Sven has busted the lock to get inside. He spends most days sitting by his computer in the kitchen in his underwear, drinking booze straight from the bottle, and eating crackers.

To keep Elisabeth and Liv from finding him, Sven has used an experimental fertilizer he developed in the '80s to make the blackberry bushes around the jetty grow to ten times their usual size, with dagger-like thorns. The fertilizer was developed for an agricultural corporation but couldn't be used commercially as the enormous growth it produced inevitably led to mutations and necrosis. The chemical has also increased the size of flies, mosquitoes, ticks, and night vipers tenfold, and they attack both large animals and humans. Enormous toads and dragonflies guard the jetty, and the reeds are so high and thick that passing through is almost impossible.

VISITING HEPHAESTEUM

If the Teens attempt to find the Hephaesteum before they have destroyed the X-Ray Spire and taken out Thunderbolt (see below), the robot commando will try to scare them away from the Evacuation Zone [the Desert Zone]. If the group pushes on, the robots will attack.



TROUBLE

If the Teens dock at the jetty and try to get to the cabin via the path, they must each pass a **FORCE** test or get stuck in the blackberry thorns and become Injured. Gigantic mosquitoes and snakes attack, and they must test **FORCE**, **SNEAK**, or **MOVE** to escape. A Teen who passes a **COMPREHEND** test realizes that a chemical compound has altered the cell structure of the plants and animals here, most likely leading to very short lifespans with greatly increased risks of tumors and necrosis. Ordinary water, such as rain, would most likely dilute the chemicals quickly, and return the island to how it was. If the Teens have brought water bottles, these count as +2 Items if they splash water on plants and animals in their way, which immediately reduces their size. If they get stuck in the thorns, a drunk Sven staggers out of the house after a while to fetch them. If the land somewhere else on the island, they must pass a **MOVE** test to fasten the boat properly. When they get to Sven, he tells them all he knows.

CLUES

Sven tells the Teens about how he, Liv, and Elisabeth worked as scientists at Riksenergi in the '80s, but failed to make any noteworthy discoveries, and were threatened with being fired. One day, they accidentally discovered an underground laboratory in the north part of the Black Lake Lands. The building was constructed

BOULDER CITY: JOHN IN THE MOUNTAINS

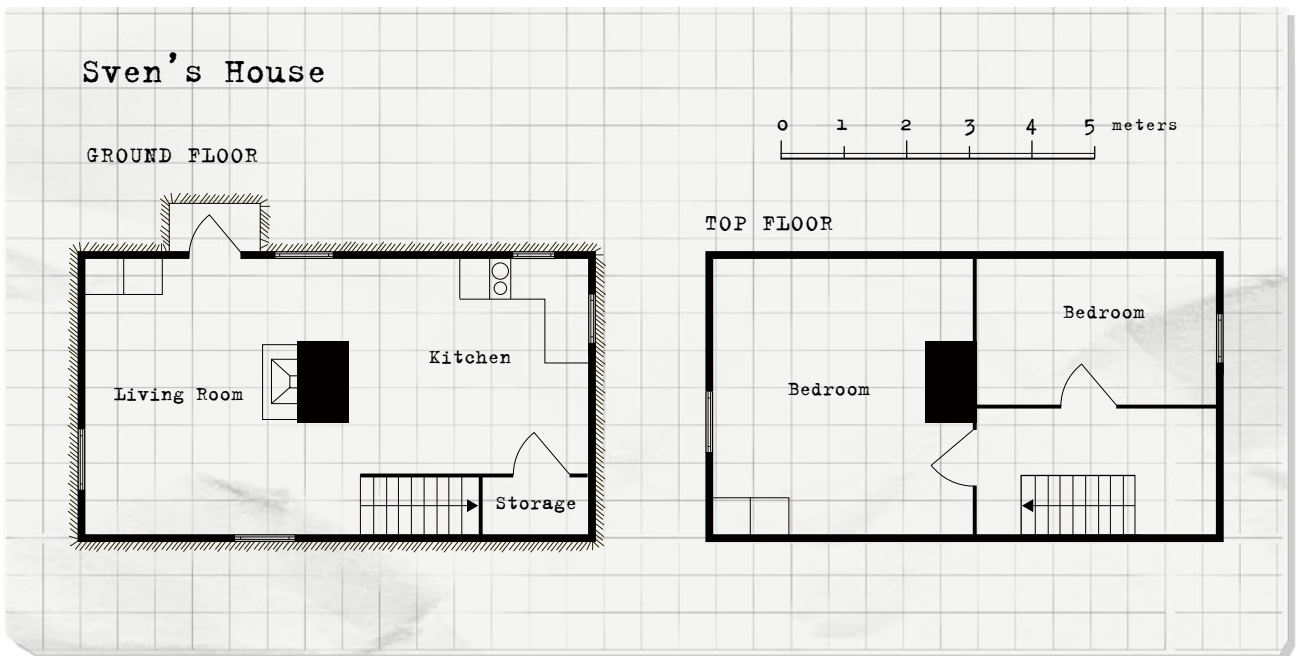
John is hiding in a cabin in the mountains, only accessible through a narrow gorge. He has distributed the experimental chemical along the path to block the way.



from metal, concrete, and organic tissue, resembling living flesh. No one else seemed to know about the lab, and there were no records of who built it. The lab did, however appear to have been constructed specifically for the trio. The equipment inside made them smarter, bolder, and more capable of greatness than they had ever dared to dream about. They named the lab the Hephaestum, after Hephaestus' workshop in Greek mythology, and decided to use it to rid the world of war, disease, and pollution. Sven romanticizes about the old days, and describes the lab as a "gift from the gods".

They gradually began viewing themselves as gods in their own right, and performed experiments that exposed other people to danger. A journalist named Michaela Tannenbaum infiltrated Riksenergi, and managed to get Elisabeth to show her the Hephaestum. When it became obvious that Michaela had fooled them, and that she would expose them, they realized that all was over. Michaela died from a stroke before the article about the prophets was published, however, and Elisabeth decided to transport herself and Hephaestum into the future to avoid capture. She managed to save herself, but lost the Hephaestum along the way.

Elisabeth has at long last returned to the present to get back to work. Together, the three prophets have rebuilt the Hephaestum in the location where they once found it. The years have turned Sven away from his old, pragmatic ways. Elisabeth's plans to save the world will lead to too much death and suffering. Sven tells the Teens about the disease she wants him to spread, which is why he's hiding. He says that Elisabeth and Liv are using the X-Ray Spire to control the machine cancer, and that Elisabeth is building a device to help her control the future, a Futurum Telescope. She plans on taking over the world and forcing her new technologies on mankind.



THE TILT

Just as the Teens get up to leave Sven's cabin, his computer beeps. Elisabeth has sent him an e-mail containing a picture of Mia, drugged and strapped to a slab in a dark room. Thunderbolt has kidnapped her, and brought her to the Hephaestum. Sven gets dressed and says he won't risk his daughter's life. He will return to the Hephaestum and do as he's told, but asks the Teens to try to save Mia and destroy the lab. He shows them the location of the lab on a map.

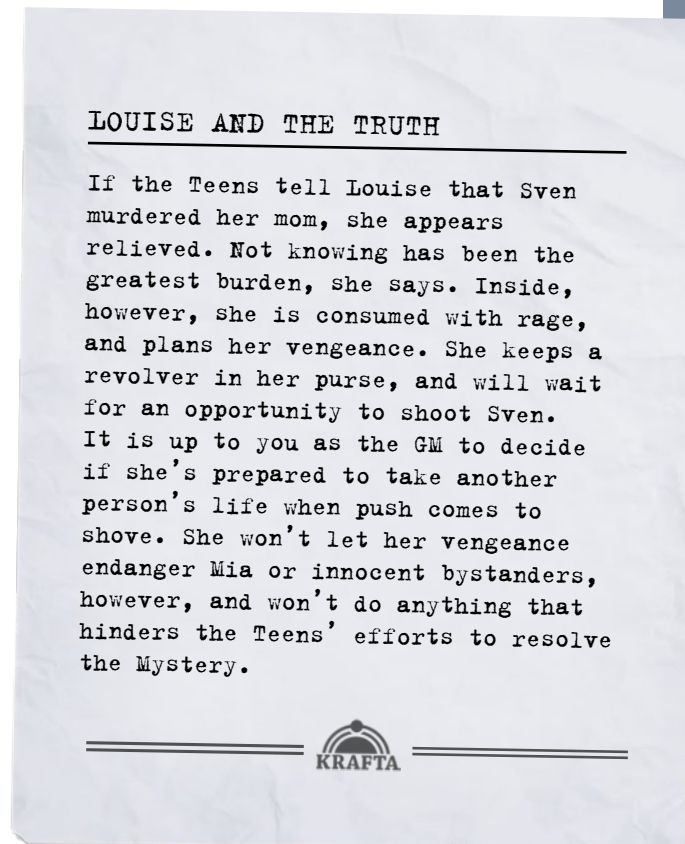
To get near the Hephaestum, the Teens must first destroy the X-Ray Spire to sever the link between Thunderbolt and Elisabeth and Liv. Two robots with advanced AI helped the prophets build the Spire. The robots are called Billy and Jane, and live in the woods on southern Adelsö. Could they perhaps help the Teens find and destroy the Spire?

The Futurum Telescope must also be destroyed before it's completed. If finished, it will help Elisabeth predict the future and the actions of her enemies. Sven doesn't know how the telescope works, but Elisabeth forced her former apprentice Linnea Hall [Isabella Ward] to build it. Could she be persuaded to help the Teens?

LOCATION 4: LINNEA HALL

After the events in *Traveler*, Elisabeth asked Linnea Hall [Isabella Ward] to help her in a series of experiments. Linnea, who adores Elisabeth, said yes. It turned out that Elisabeth was only after Linnea's knowledge and money, however. After spending all of Linnea's savings on building the basis for what was to become the Futurum Telescope, she tossed her to the side and disappeared. Linnea was heartbroken, and became very bitter. In the emptiness and apathy that followed, she was seduced by a violent criminal biker named Ragnar Rask [Russell Jones] in a bar. Ragnar has moved into her house, where he treats her like a slave. He has threatened to kill her if she tries to escape or refuse to do what she's told.

Linnea lives in an old summer house on the beach south of Wäsby on Munsö [west of Boulder Harbor]. The wooden cabin is painted bright yellow. The blinds are closed, and a large motorcycle with a side car is

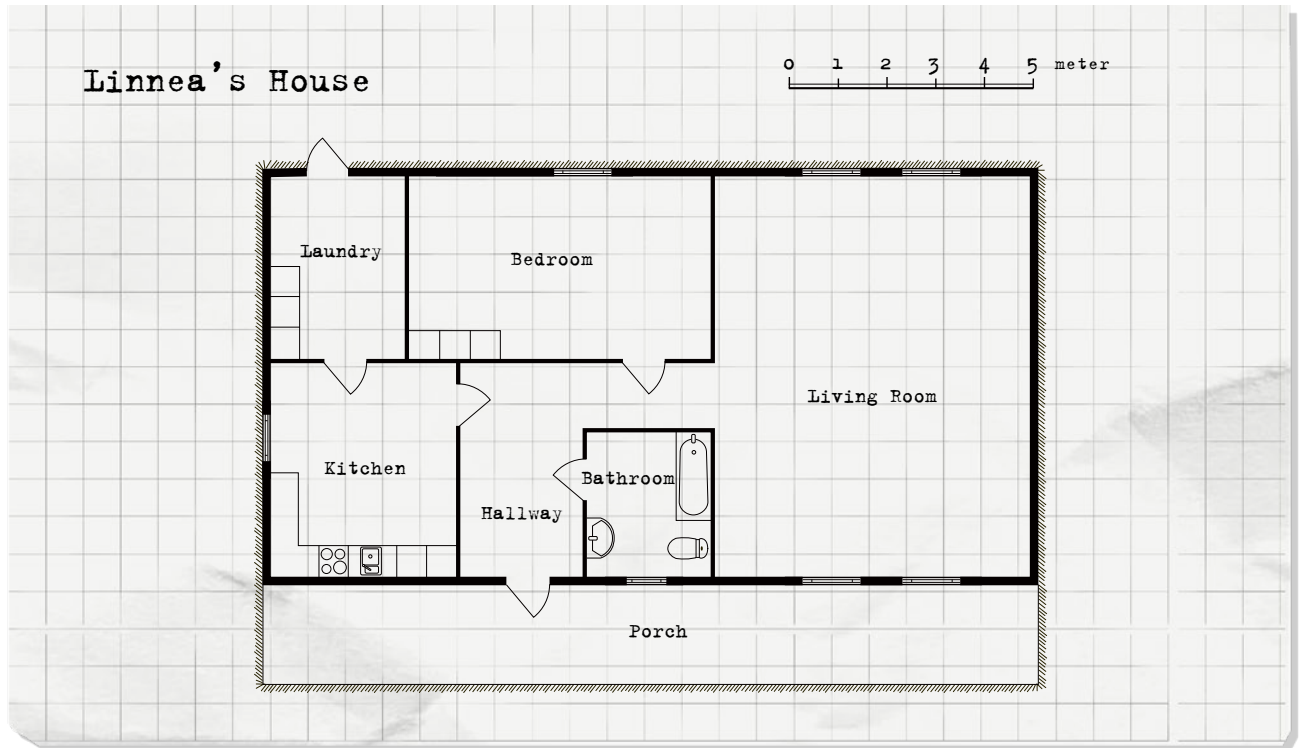


parked outside. Ragnar's aggressive chihuahua Hitler guards the bike.

Ragnar has filled Linnea's home with Guns & Ammo and Hog Life MC magazines, firearms, drugs, and dirty laundry. Posters of half-naked girls cover the walls. Ragnar is paranoid, and believes that either his old gang the Dirty Bastards or the police are after him. He suspects Linnea of spying on him, and controls her every move. If she doesn't do exactly what he tells her to, he punishes her mentally and physically. Ragnar can most often be found on the sofa by the TV, with a shotgun in his lap and Linnea in the kitchen either cooking or doing laundry. She is still reeling from Elisabeth's betrayal, and talks and moves as if she's drugged – which she sometimes actually is.

TROUBLE

Ragnar will under no circumstances let the Teens anywhere near Linnea. If they talk to him, he thinks they



have been sent by the Dirty Bastards or the cops, and threatens to shoot them if they ever show up again. Ragnar isn't currently wanted by the police, but if the Teens can convince the police on the Islands that he has weapons and drugs in the house, they will pay him a visit, which most likely turns into a bloody hostage situation. Alternatively, the Teens can contact Ragnar's former biker gang that happens to be in Stenhamra [Boulder City] waiting for a shipment of weapons from the Balkans [Mexico]. As the GM, you decide if the Bastards wish to give Ragnar his comeuppance, or get him back in the gang. If the Teens somehow get Ragnar out of the house, Linnea will be eternally grateful, and tell them everything she knows.

CLUES

Linnea can give them the schematics for the Futurum Telescope (item bonus +3). She tells them that the telescope has been built as the heart of the Hephaestum, and without it, the lab will cease to function. Linnea has also realized that she and Elisabeth made a range of mistakes when they built it, and even if it's completed, there's no telling what it will do. She thinks that simply turning it on will be enough to cause a short cir-

cuit that will destroy the Hephaestum. However, the telescope requires enormous amounts of energy. The Loop reactors – currently powering the X-Ray Spire – might produce enough energy for the job, if it could be channeled through the Spire and into the telescope. Alternatively, smashing the device with a hammer could also do the trick. Liv and Elisabeth may know other ways to destroy it, as well.

Linnea visited the Hephaestum together with Elisabeth in the '80s, and remembers it like an impossible dream, enthralling and frightening at the same time. Unimaginable experiments filled the lab, and everything felt possible. It was as if the building itself was alive, and guiding one's thoughts and emotions.

Linnea can also tell the Teens that Elisabeth has become completely consumed with building the Hephaestum and the Futurum Telescope. She hasn't seen her eat or sleep a single time during the time she was involved. Elisabeth lost weight, and often spoke without making sense. She woke Linnea up in the middle of the night on multiple occasions, screaming about the importance of their work, and making her read books about global warming and pollution.

LOCATION 5: BILLY AND JANE

After the events in *Of Flesh and Steel*, the Russian Vagabonds secluded themselves even more. Two robots kept in touch with Liv [Destiny], however: Jane, former leader of the Totem Clan, and her life partner Billy. Liv has replaced Jane's missing components, and in return, Jane and Billy have helped her repurpose an old radio tower on an island inside the Vac [on Rock Island], turning it into the X-Ray Spire.

Jane and Billy are convinced that the machine cancer is a plague sent to kill all robots, and are unaware that they have made it possible for it to spread faster. They think the X-Ray Spire is going to be used to enable intelligent robots to communicate over long distances using radio waves.

Billy and Jane have built a boat by tying two stolen canoes together and sticking two outboard motors on the back. They use it to travel around the Islands and collect machines and robots to save them from the cancer. They have a camp on the south side of Adelsö [in the desert north of Hemenway Park] where they try to cure their patients by dipping them in vats of chemicals. The ground around the camp is covered in rust and slime. Confused, infected robots stagger aimlessly about, or sit leaking on the ground. Heavy chemical fumes enshroud the camp. Billy and Jane wear white lab coats and masks.

TROUBLE

Billy and Jane are afraid that someone will find their camp and expose them. They will hide if the Teens approach the area. The group must use **INVESTIGATE** to find the camp and realize its purpose. If they fail but stick around, Billy and Jane will eventually come out and talk to them.

The robots ask the Teens not to report them. They say that they are risking their lives every day to try to save machinekind from the plague sent by the gods. If the Teens tell them that the X-Ray Spire, which they helped build, is making the cancer spread faster, they become furious. They offer to help the Teens, but need a favor from them first. An infected robot has left the camp and is heading for a nearby farm. If it's caught, it might lead to the camp being discovered, which means the Teens must find it and bring it back as soon as pos-

BOULDER CITY: JANE AND BILLY'S CAR

In Boulder City, Jane and Billy have built a car instead of a boat. It's made out of robot parts, and looks like no other car ever made. It's large, able to carry heavy loads, and equipped with several robotic arms that can load and unload cargo and assist the driver in sharp turns. The exhaust fumes are bluish black. At high speeds, it appears to be able to fly, or at the very least leap, considerable distances.

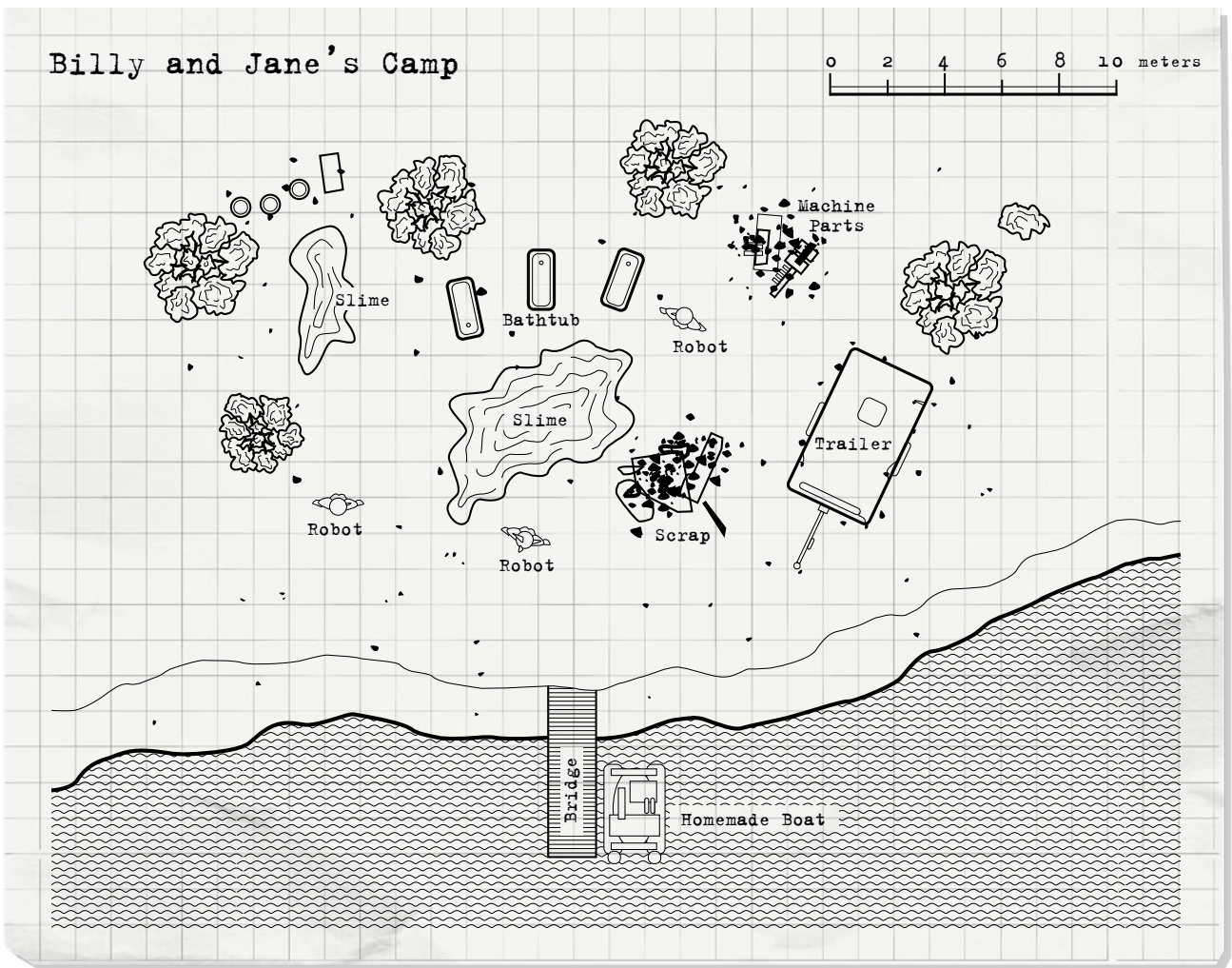


sible. The runaway is a quadraped, spider-like maintenance bot, designed for narrow spaces in the Loop tunnels. Long intestines leaking green slime hang from it, making it fairly easy to track. Unless stopped, the bot will walk straight through the farmhouses and destroy them. It is a Robot (**FORCE**) 3 without any AI, and can't be **CHARMED. PROGRAM** is probably the best way to stop it.

Billy and Jane will help the Teens regardless of whether they manage to stop the spiderbot or not. If the bot isn't stopped, it will destroy the main house on the farm, and the police will arrive a couple of hours later. They find the camp, and Billy and Jane are forced to flee in their boat.

CLUES

Billy and Jane tell the Teens that the Spire is located on the island of Räfsholmen [Rock Island], and that it's guarded by a robot. The Spire is attached to the top of an old radio tower, and may be short-circuited, shut off or destroyed. They know that the Spire can be used to remote control robots and believe that getting to Hephaestum will be almost impossible unless the Spire is taken out first.



They also mention that Liv has appeared sad and heavy-hearted, as if she was feeling guilty. She kept referring to “Elisabeth this” and “Elisabeth that”, and seemed scared of her. She kept repeating that everything would be alright as soon as they got the Hephaestum back. When Billy and Jane asked what the Hephaestum really is, Liv replied that it is humanity’s salvation. On one occasion, she talked to the robots about the Hippocratic Oath, a medical doctor’s promise to do no harm.

LOCATION 6: THE X-RAY SPIRE

Elisabeth and Liv have attached the X-Ray Spire to the top of an old radio tower on Råfsholmen [Rock Island] with help from Billy and Jane. The island is located

between Eldgarnsö and Väntholmen, and is home to a colony of abandoned summer cabins. The Spire can be found at the center of the island, and has attracted a large flight of cormorants. The island is thus covered in white, sticky guano.

The Spire is fourteen meters tall, and made from steel bars, concrete blocks, and plastic tubes containing wires that run into the ground. The tip of the tower is set with four cubes of sophisticated electronics. A stringy mesh of steel and flesh covers the ground around the tower, and has climbed a couple of meters up on tower like vines.

About twenty meters from the Spire lies the wreckage of the unmanned magnetron ship shot down by Thunderbolt (see the Countdown). It’s a small scout ship, used by a biology team to study the flora and fauna of the Islands. The ship is fourteen meters long, painted green and black, and full of advanced sensor

equipment. It can hold five people if operated manually. It has been hit by an anti-tank projectile that tore through the hull from the side and destroyed parts of the engine. The ship bears the marking "BIO-X19" on the side of its nose.

TROUBLE

The Spire is guarded by an infected ALTA Quadraped under Elisabeth's command. It has four legs and huge pincer claws. The bot reacts to movement and sounds, and has been instructed to keep anyone from getting within thirty meters of the Spire. Approaching the Spire unnoticed requires passing an Extremely Difficult **SNEAK** test (two sixes). Getting to the crashed magnetrine ship is at Normal difficulty. Outrunning the bot is an Almost Impossible **MOVE** test (three sixes). Disabling the bot in a fight requires the Teens to be armed and pass an Almost Impossible **FORCE** test. Failed rolls lead to Conditions.

Studying the bot using **CALCULATE** reveals that it would be possible to build a transmitter that could be used to disable it remotely. This requires tools, special radio gear, and successful **TINKER** and **PROGRAM** rolls.

The only way to destroy the Spire without climbing to the top of the radio tower is to crash a vehicle into it, for example, the magnetrine ship. Climbing to the top requires a successful Extremely Difficult **MOVE** test. Failure means that the Teen falls down and must check a Condition.

CLUES

At the top of the Spire, the Teens can either smash the electronics or deactivate it using **PROGRAM**. This severs the connection between the Hephaestum and Thunderbolt, after which the robots will wander the Vac at random. They will still try to stop or attack the Teens, but won't be able to coordinate their efforts or regroup at the Hephaestum to protect it. From the top of the Spire, the junkyard hiding the entrance to the Hephaestum is visible in the distance. The junkyard is guarded by three armed robots, but if the Spire is shut off or destroyed, they wander out into the Vac.

It is possible to hook a cable to the top of the Spire and attach it to the Futurum Telescope to cause an overload that destroys the lab.

Repairing the magnetrine ship requires spare parts,

ENTERING THE EVACUATION ZONE

To get to the Spire and the Hephaestum, the Teens need to venture into the Vac [northeastern parts of the Desert Zone]. They can borrow Louise's car or boat, or walk or ride their bikes. The Vac is eerily quiet and rapidly being reclaimed by nature. Smashed windows tell of opportunistic break-ins, bushes and trees have taken root in front lawns, and uncut hedges rise high above the sidewalks. Birds, rabbits, foxes, deer, and stray cats are the area's new inhabitants. The machine cancer is especially bad here, the closer one gets to the Spire. Stereos and computers boil with blackish purple pimples, abandoned cars have filled up with green goo, and cracked power boxes overflow with muscle tissue. Teens who grew up here may have a hard time seeing their old house, neighborhood, or school in this state.

Thunderbolt patrols the Vac to scare intruders away, primarily by making intimidating noises and sweeping their laser sights across the streets. If this doesn't work, they try to block the intruders' way: getting in front of cars, tearing down walls or roofs over the road, or shooting out tires. As a last resort, they attack the intruders. Regardless of their means of transportation, the Teens must pass a **SNEAK** test each to get to the Spire without being seen, and yet another test to get to the Hephaestum. If they pass their tests, you can let them see a Thunderbolt patrol pass by, perhaps catching a glimpse of the Teens to force them to hide if you want them to sweat a little.





The X-Ray Spire on Räfsholmen

0 10 meters



a successful **CALCULATE** test to figure out how the ship works, **TINKER** to repair it, and **PROGRAM** to start it. After that, the ship is airworthy again.

THE CONFRONTATION

The Teens must get to the Hephaestum, save Mia, and destroy or deactivate the Futurum Telescope. Unless they first took the X-Ray Spire offline, several Thunderbolt robots will attack them when they arrive at the lab.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE HEPHAESTEUM

The underground lab is located on the north tip of the Black Lake Lands [**Hemenway Wall**], across the water from Eldgarnsö. The only entrance is located underneath a scrapyard, abandoned after the evacuation order. A high fence encircles the property. Rusty cars, scrap metal, and stacks of tires fill the yard. One of the three workshops has a small, white hatch in the floor, leading down to the lab below. A button next to the hatch opens it, revealing stairs that lead to a part of the tunnels where the water has been drained.

TROUBLE

If the X-Ray Spire hasn't been taken care of, three Thunderbolt robots guard the scrapyard. They attack the Teens and call for reinforcements. The fight is an Almost Impossible Extended Trouble. If they fail, all of the Teens are Broken and captured by Liv and Elisabeth.

Aside from Thunderbolt, one of Liv's creations guards the scrapyard, a monster called the Hydra. It is hiding in the yard, with orders to capture all humans not approved to enter the lab by Liv or Elisabeth. If the Spire has been shut off, the Hydra walks around the yard, flinging cars and tires high into the air while it snorts and neighs in frustration and confusion. A **COMPREHEND** test reveals that the Hydra isn't very smart, and might fall for the age-old trick of making noise in one end of the yard while the Teens sneak in from the other side. Unless the Teens successfully **SNEAK** or **FORCE** their way past the Hydra, they are captured and brought to its nest to wait for Liv or Elisabeth to come and get them. However, if the Spire is out of the picture, the Hydra will proceed right away to vivisectioning its prisoners to add more

biomass to its own body. Captured Teens must pass a **FORCE** test to resist long enough for the Hydra to lose interest, or become Broken.

CLUES

INVESTIGATE can help the group notice that the door to one of the workshops isn't covered in dust and cobwebs like the other two, which must mean that it's the one that leads to the Hephaestum. The hatch in the floor inside isn't hidden.

THE HEPHAESTEUM

Black stairs made from an unknown, elastic material lead down into a drained section of the tunnels. The Hephaestum consists of a maze of corridors and about ten rooms of varying sizes and shapes. The floors, walls, and ceilings are made from a combination of steel, concrete, and organic, muscle-like tissue, through which pale veins course with what looks like blood. Something resembling a heartbeat reverberates through the complex. It smells of blood and guts. Spastic contractions in the walls or ceilings sometimes cause new doorways to open or old ones to shut. Consoles here and there on the walls allow Liv to reprogram the layout of the lab as she pleases.

The lab room closest to the entrance is used by Liv for an experiment where she has modeled humanoid bodies from machine cancerous tissue that she is trying to bring to life. Tubes and cables run from the twitching bodies to all kinds of different machines. The room on the other side of the hall is full of tiny, phosphorescent particles. A mirror or a portal of some kind shines brightly on one of the walls, but all other electrical machinery has shorted out. Elisabeth believes she has opened a portal to another world and let an alien lifeform through, but hasn't taken the time to study it yet. What the glowing particles actually are is up to you as the GM to decide.

At the other end of the first corridor, three rooms contain cages large enough for humans, and a stockpile of drugs, medical equipment, and horse tranquilizer dart guns (Item +1). Three smaller rooms have been made into bedrooms for the prophets, containing cots and reading lights, the cords jacked straight into the meaty walls. Next to the bedrooms is a kitchen with a fridge, a freezer, and a couple of board games such as chess and Go. The next room after the kitchen contains

RESOLVING THE MYSTERY

There are a number of ways in which the Mystery may be resolved. Regardless of which the Teens choose, the Futurum Telescope will activate and function as a time machine, sending the Hephaesteum back in time to the 80's, where it will be accidentally found by the three prophets. Below are some suggestions for possible chains of events:

- **Brains:** The Teens repair the magnetrine ship and fly to the top of the Spire, attaching a cable to it which they then hook up to the Futurum Telescope, causing the lab to be transported back in time.
- **Muscles:** The Teens climb the Spire and smash it with a wrench. They then sneak into the Hephaesteum and give the telescope the same treatment, causing a short-circuit that sends the lab back in time.
- **Charm:** The Teens fly or climb to the top of the Spire and shut it off. They then enter the Hephaesteum and convince Liv or Elisabeth to abandon their plans and shut the telescope off. This causes a short-circuit, and the lab is sent back in time.



a couple of tables stacked high with crates marked with biohazard and radioactive warning signs. Hazmat suits and gas masks hang on the walls.

Another lab room is devoted to Sven's attempts to perfect the Gouridium disease. He isn't imprisoned there, per se, but knows that the Hydra has been instructed not to let him or Mia leave. He will do what he can to help the Teens. He has two paintings in the lab, one of Alexander the Great and one of Hephaestus. Mia is being held in a small storage room full of



freeze-dried food and canned meat. She has been given a few books, a cot, and a notepad to pass the time. The door is locked, and Elisabeth has the key.

Liv is hunched over a desk in one of the lab rooms, over what looks like a big lump of meat, but which is actually an infected toaster. She has a radio next to her that lets her communicate with Thunderbolt. The room is full of photocopied books and speeches on ethics and morality by famous philosophers and thinkers. Liv has highlighted almost everything in all of the text, and filled the margins with question marks, notes, and coffee or wine stains before pinning them to the walls. She is consumed by her work, and trusts Elisabeth completely, but something deep inside is stirring, forcing her to face the ugly crimes she has committed. Accepting this new emotion would make Elisabeth her



enemy, and she can't handle the consequences of this yet. Choosing to just go along with the plan instead of questioning it is easier, for now.

The Futurum Telescope can be found at the heart of the Hephaesteum. It consists of an entire room full of electronic and mechanical devices, monitors, and computers. About thirty thick cables run from the center of the telescope and into the walls of the room. The core of the machine is an enormous heart screwed to thick steel plates, causing the whole room to shake with its heavy beating. The screens in the room flicker to life sporadically, showing a couple of seconds of possible futures and pasts. Swivelling cameras on the telescope zoom in on anyone entering the room, trying to extract their futures and bring them up on the screens. The Teens get to see short

glimpses of themselves as adults. Elisabeth works with a blowtorch on the telescope around the clock. On the floor next to her are stacks of schematics, segments of cable, tools, and a loaded gun. The room is very hot, and the sweat pours down her tattooed back. She is skinny and hasn't slept for days. A manic fire burns in her eyes, and her voice is hoarse from not speaking in a long time.

TROUBLE

The Teens must pass a **SNEAK** test to avoid being detected by Liv. If she spots them, they'll have to **CHARM** her into helping them. Passing an **EMPATHIZE** test reveals that Liv is wavering in her convictions, and would like to stop Elisabeth, but can't do it on her own. She welcomes being talked into stopping the plan. If the

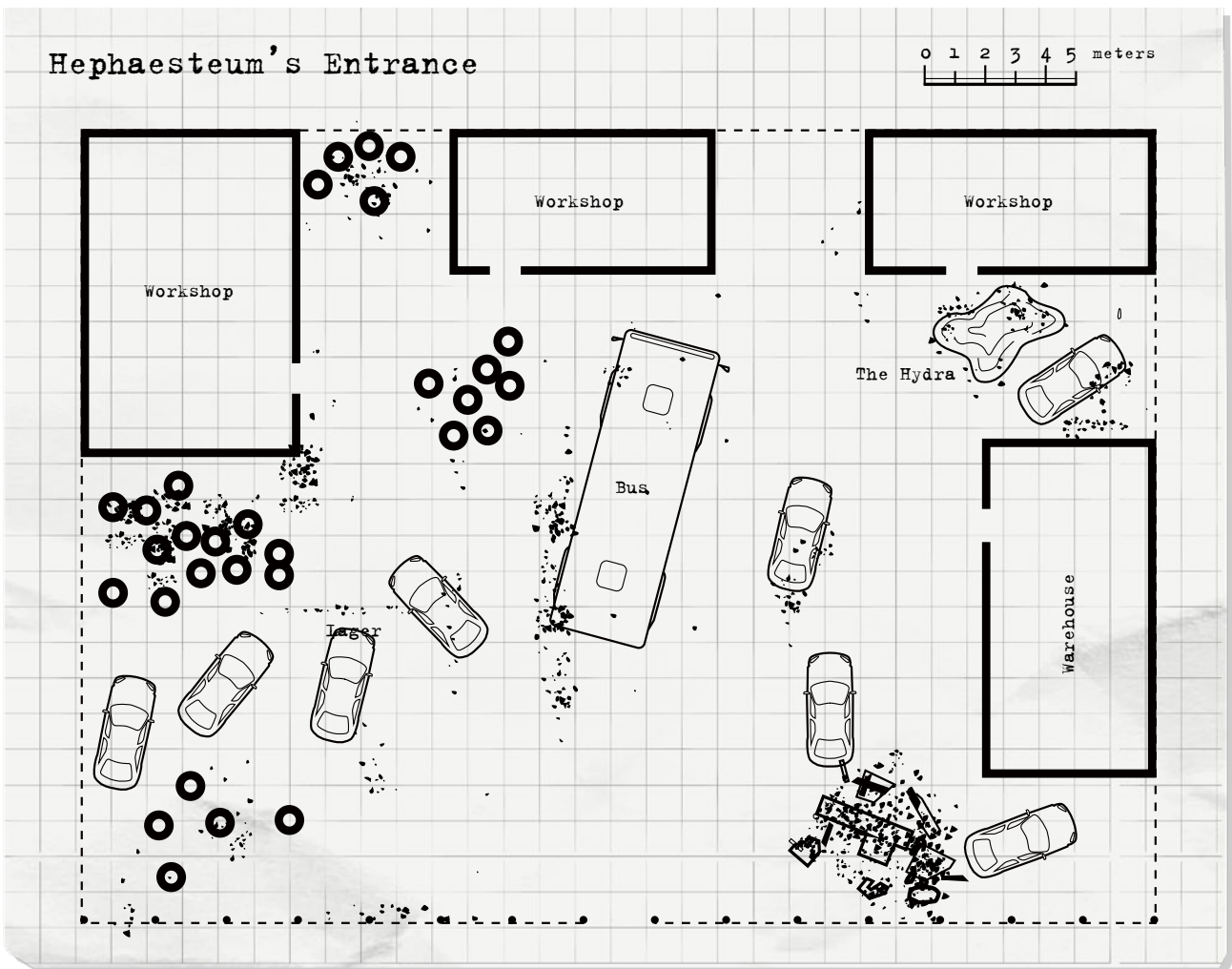
group fail to get Liv on their side, she will try to call on Thunderbolt. Unless the Spire has been destroyed, three robots enter the lab and try to wound or capture the Teens. If no robots respond to her calls, she tries to capture the Teens on her own by programming the Hephaestum to bring up walls around them, after which she fetches Elisabeth. Passing a **MOVE** test allows a Teen to evade being caught by a rising wall. Should they find themselves walled in, they can use the consoles on the walls to reprogram the surroundings by passing an Extremely Difficult **CALCULATE** test (two sixes), or use **FORCE** to pry open a crack and escape (also Extremely Difficult).

When Elisabeth realizes that the Teens have entered the telescope room, she threatens them with the blowtorch and her gun. She tells them to leave, and promis-

es that no one will touch them as they exit the Evacuation Zone. If they don't comply, she shoots to kill. She is an Übermensch (all attributes) 2. The Teens may attempt to smash the telescope with a club of some sort, talk Liv or Elisabeth into turning it off, or overload it using a power cable attached to the X-Ray Spire. Confronting Elisabeth should in any case be treated as an Extremely Difficult Extended Trouble. Failure means getting shot or captured – the whole group is Broken.

AFTER THE CONFRONTATION

If the Teens successfully destroy, short-circuit, or deactivate the Futurum Telescope, the heartbeat stops,



and everything becomes very still. Suddenly, the muscles in the walls, floors, and ceiling constrict, and loud groans echo through the complex. A series of bright flashes blind the Teens, and when they come to again, the Hephaesteum has vanished. The Teens, the prophets, and Mia are standing in an empty corridor rapidly filling up with water. The Hephaesteum has been transported back in time, where it will be found by Sven, Natasha, and Elisabeth for the first time once again.

Although the X-Ray Spire stops spreading the machine cancer, the disease doesn't just disappear. If the Teens try to turn Elisabeth over to the police, she runs away. Not much proof remains that would hold up in court, and neither Liv nor Sven are arrested either. If the Teens leave the prophets in peace, they decide to part ways: Elisabeth goes to live with her relatives in the south to try to and re-establish meaningful human relationships again; Liv goes back to her work as a life coach, and Sven returns to Berggården High. If the Teens told Louise who killed her mother, she will try to kill Sven. If she succeeds, Mia might ask to move in with one of the Teens, rather than going to live with her mom.

AFTERMATH

Give the Teens an Everyday Life scene each, with or without Trouble. They may set it themselves, or ask you to do it. If you are pressed for time, let each player describe a short montage of snapshots from her Teen's life instead. If this is the end of your game, the players may also wish to say something about their Teens' lives as adults.

CHANGE

After the final scenes, collectively look through the characters' sheets and see if any of the Teens have changed. If the players feel like it, they may change their Teens' Problems, Shames, Iconic Items, or Relationships. The group may also collectively decide to change their Friction. Read the XP questions (page 97) aloud to the players. Each yes answer translates to 1 XP.

NPCS AND CREATURES

Below are descriptions of the NPCs and creatures found in the Mystery.

MIA JÄRNEK [KATE COLLINS]

Mia is described in *The Ugliness*.

SUZANNE KRAPP [SAMANTHA HICKS]

"Oh, today is especially wonderful, wouldn't you agree?"

Suzanne was a rising tennis star in the 70's, but had to give up her career early after an injury. She met Sven during a hospital visit, they fell in love, and she gave birth to their daughter Mia on her eighteenth birthday. Sven started to change when he began working with Elisabeth and Natasha, which rocked their marriage. This combined with a couple of professional failures led to Suzanne becoming very depressed. When she found out that Michaela Tannenbaum was about to expose Sven's illegal experiments, she told her husband to do whatever it took to remain in Mia's life. Sven murdered Michaela, but Suzanne feels like it was her fault. She realized she could no longer live with



him, and moved to Stockholm. Mia never forgave her mother for tearing up the family. Suzanne's only dream is to be able to have some form of contact with her daughter again. She tries to remain positive and tells herself that everything is going to be okay. She sometimes takes out her old tennis racket, and wonders about what could have been.

Suzanne is in her mid-thirties and has dark hair and eyes. She is neurotic, has trouble being still, and cries a lot. When she gets stressed out, she begins sorting her ever-growing trash collections, as her anxieties forbid her from throwing things away. What if she makes the wrong call and loses something important?

LOUISE TANNENBAUM [KELLY TANNENBAUM]

Louise is described in *The Ugliness*.

RAGNAR RASK [RUSSELL JONES]

"Shut up and quit struggling! The heroin will kill the microchips the government has put in your blood."

Ragnar was an unwanted child born to criminal parents. During a stay at juvie in Luleå in his teens, he formed the Dirty Bastards gang, which eventually be-



came a Stockholm-based biker gang involved in drug trafficking, extortion, theft, and fraud. Ragnar was the leader of the gang until he, in a drug-fueled hallucination, thought he heard the other members planning to kill him for being an "old-timer". He shot his way out of their clubhouse, and has been hiding on the Islands ever since. He is keeping Linnea Hall prisoner in her own home while he binges on booze and drugs, and keeps watch through the blinds for the cops and his old partners. He is manipulative, hateful, and very violent. The only living thing he feels love toward is his chihuahua, whom he has named Hitler so no one will think he's a wimp.

Ragnar is 6'7", fit and strong. He sports a beard, a ponytail, and a lot of tattoos and piercings. He rarely takes off his club vest. He is nearsighted and wears round glasses. He is armed with a shotgun, a pistol, and multiple knives. He is Paranoid (CHARM) 2 and Mean and Trigger-Happy (FORCE) 3.

BILLY AND JANE

"Don't think we aren't afraid. We know we could get sick any day, but not doing anything to find a cure would be even worse."

Billy and Jane (who is described in *Of Flesh and Steel*) have lived together since before the Vagabonds fled Russia. They have a sibling-like relationship, where little sister Jane often makes impulsive, stupid decisions, and big brother Billy is calm and plans ahead. They have chosen to leave the other Vagabonds while they search for a cure for the machine cancer. Billy is well-kept, wears feathers on his head, and an Ekerö County towel as a poncho. They both have Metallic Bodies (FORCE) 2.

THE HYDRA

"Schup, schup, schup, crackle, click, click."

Liv has built the Hydra by covering a steel frame with infected meat to create a squid-like creature that leaves a trail of slime wherever it goes, often cover-



ing itself with a green tarp. It has ten-or-so long tentacles and a beak-like mouth that clicks and clacks as it chews its way through tires and scrap metal. The Hydra isn't intelligent, only following Liv's orders to guard the entrance to the Hephaestum and detain intruders in an old car, nothing else. When the Spire is taken offline, however, murky instincts awaken inside it, leading it to nest and gather as much biomass as possible to increase in size. The Hydra is a Sickening Monstrosity (FORCE) 3.

**LIV HIMMELSHÖJD [DESTINY SKY],
SVEN JÄRNEK [JOHN COLLINS] AND
ELISABETH SUNDGREN [ELIZABETH COX]**

The prophets are described in the previous three Mysteries of the campaign.

TASK FORCE THUNDERBOLT

"Itsy bitsy spider, hi, hi, hiss, abhhhrgh, three blind mice, three blind, gradient, hisssss, yes please..."

Task force Thunderbolt consists of about ten humanoid robots that have been infected with the machine cancer and have developed strange growths, puss-filled zits, meaty pistils, and frog-like facial features. A couple of them are sentinel models, with reinforced

armor, but most are ordinary worker bots. None of them have AI, and they are controlled by Liv and Elisabeth through the X-Ray Spire. If the Spire is destroyed, they will repeat their last orders endlessly. The cancer causes them to pick up words here and there from intruders, the TV, or the phone lines, and assemble insane, ranting monologues which they play through their speakers very loudly. They can temporarily shut the speakers off when sneaking. They are skilled trackers and hunters. Their orders are to scare intruders away who come too close to the Evacuation Zone. They don't want to attract unnecessary attention by hurting anyone, but will do so if the Hephaestum or the Spire become threatened. They are Warbots (FORCE) 3, and armed with stun guns and either hunting rifles or pistols with laser sights. They keep two anti-tank guns and a heavy machine gun in a shed near the Hephaestum.



RAVERS

Adam “Kraetyz” Kratz, Alex Roberts, Andreas Hopman, Andreas Nyström, Andreas Stjärnhem, Anthony Perrett, Ben Sutter, Berend Posthumus, Bill Charleroy, Bryan Considine, Christer Malmberg, Danielle DesLauriers, Darren (Sablednah) Douglas, Dave Glennon, David, Stephanie, Rune and Rowan Wilt, Drew “Industrial Scribe” Scarr, Edgardo A. Montes Rosa, Elenath Runciter, Florent Hartmann, Jack Koziol, Jason Chen, Jim McCarthy, Johan Englund, Jonathan “Munch” Keim, Jonathan Hatch, Justus Nordin, KANNIKA, Katsuya Oishi, Kristian Brodin, Krys Kamieniecki, Kurt Blanco, Magnus Stalby, Matt Herrboldt, Maxwell Snider, Michael Arnot, Mike Dymond, Narve Nidhugg, Nicholas Allen, Nora Signér, OliveMan, Paul and Fil Baldowski, Peter Askling, Rachel Prinn, Tine Schwahn, Tor Karlsson

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THINGS FROM THE FLOOD

CHARACTER SHEET

ATTRIBUTES	
Body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tech	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heart	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS	
Sneak (Body)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Force (Body)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move (Body)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tinker (Tech)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program (Tech)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculate (Tech)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact (Heart)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charm (Heart)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead (Heart)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigate (Mind)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehend (Mind)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empathize (Mind)	<input type="checkbox"/>

EXPERIENCE	
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NAME:	TYPE:
AGE:	FAVORITE SONG:
DRIVE:	ANCHOR:
PROBLEM:	
SHAME:	<input type="checkbox"/>
DESCRIPTION:	

RELATIONSHIPS	
TEEN 1:	
TEEN 2:	
TEEN 3:	
TEEN 4:	
FRICTION:	
NPC 1:	
NPC 2:	

ITEMS	BONUS
ICONIC ITEM	+2
<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

NOTES

CONDITIONS	
Upset	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scared	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhausted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken & Scarred	<input type="checkbox"/>

SCARS	ACCEPTED
SCAR 1:	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCAR 2:	<input type="checkbox"/>
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SCAR 4:	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCAR 5:	<input type="checkbox"/>

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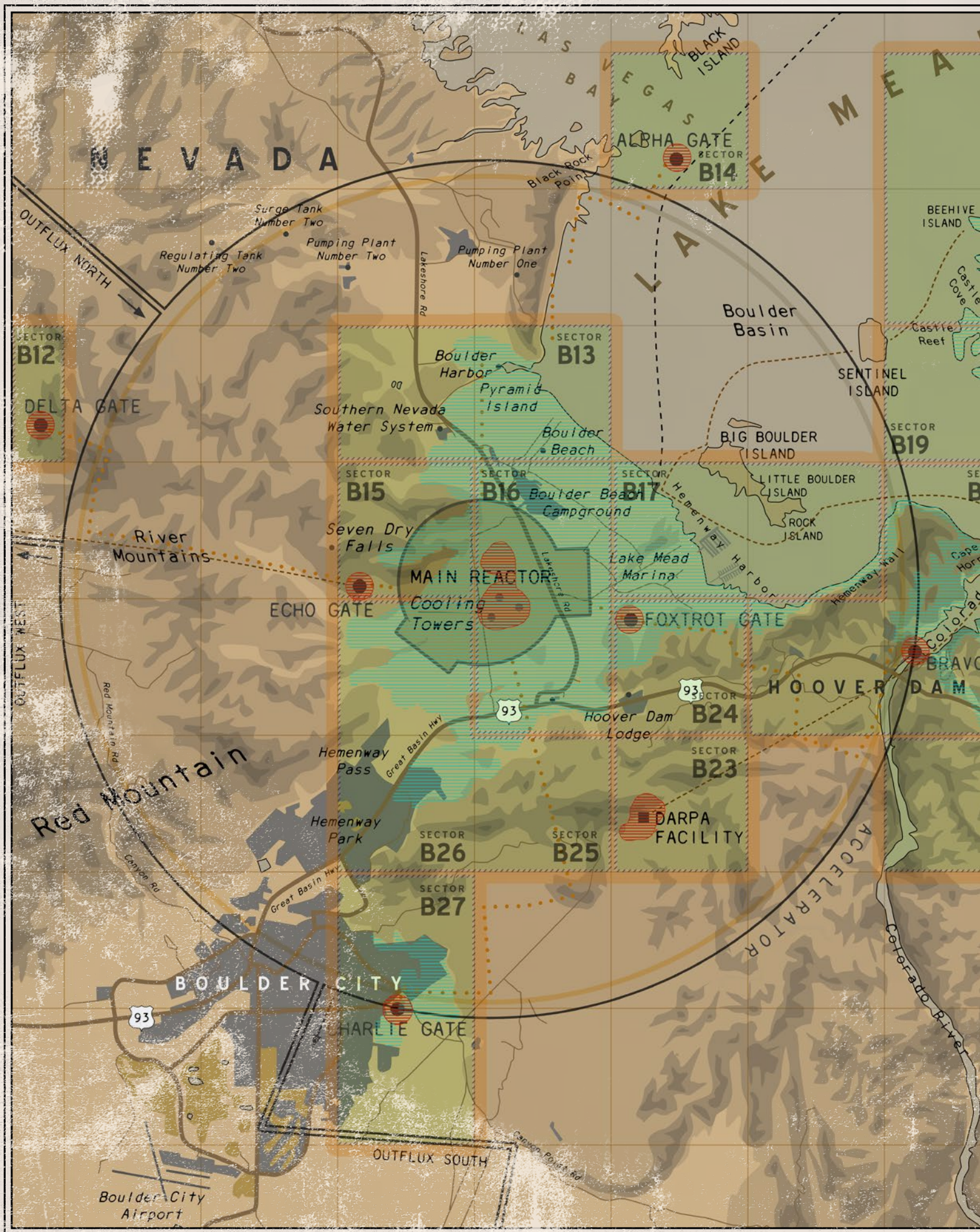
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THE LOOP PROJECT



-  Restricted Area
-  Flooded Area
-  Populated Area
-  Buildings
-  Park/Forest
-  Hills/Mountains
-  Service Tunnel
-  Ferry Route
-  Transport Tunnel
-  Civilian Road



ARIZONA

SECTOR B20

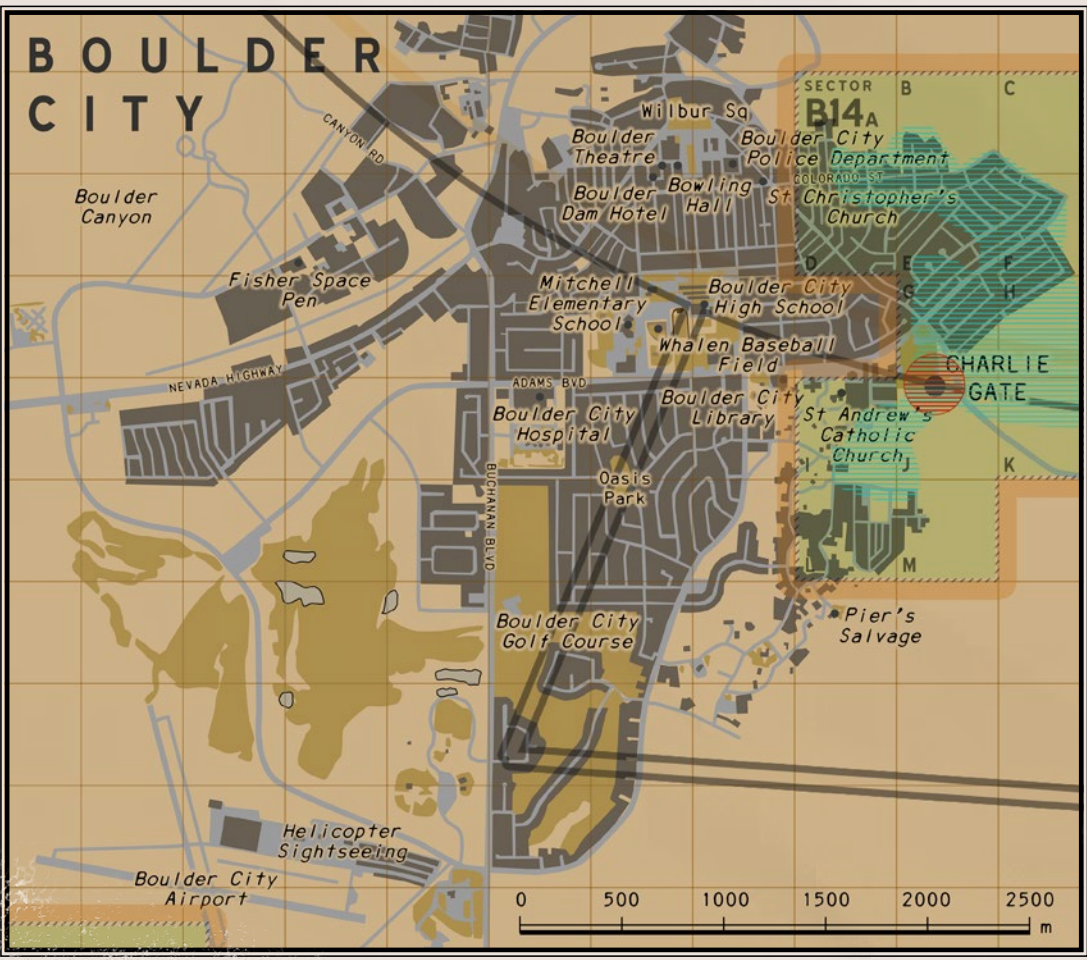
SECTOR B21

SECTOR B22

BOULDER CITY

SECTOR B14A

CHARLIE GATE



Somewhere out there beyond the cordons, beyond the fields and marshes, abandoned machines roamed like stray dogs. They wandered about impatiently, restless in the new wind sweeping through the country. They smelled something in the air, something unfamiliar.

Welcome back to the world of The Loop – things are different now. Simon Stålenhag’s paintings of Swedish retro futuristic suburbia, populated by fantastic machines and strange creatures, have won global acclaim. The award-winning *Tales from the Loop Roleplaying Game* was released in 2017 and let you experience this amazing world first hand. Now you can return to the Loop in this standalone sequel game that continues the story into the 1990s. But remember – this time you can die.

Key features:

- Dive deeper into the secrets of the Loop and experience the two game settings updated to the 1990s – the Mälaren Islands in Sweden and Boulder City, Nevada in the USA.
- New rules for scars and death – the stakes are higher and the risks greater.
- Investigate mysteries and overcome trouble using fast and effective rules, based on the award-winning Year Zero game engine.
- Play the four complete scenarios included, tied together into a campaign called *Prophets of Pandora*.

"RPG Tales from the Loop lets you channel Stranger Things and ET."

THE VERGE

"A gorgeous trip into a time that only happened in our imaginations, and yet it feels incredibly relatable."

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Tales from the Loop – gold winner in five categories at the ENnie Awards 2017:

- Best Game
- Best Setting
- Best Interior Art
- Best Writing
- Product of the Year



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