

ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE FANTASY RPG

CLOUD EMRESS



THE SEED VAULT



FOR USE WITH THE
MOTHERSHIP
SCI-FI HORROR RPG

1E

SAMANTHA LEIGH

THE SEED VAULT

LOCATION: B32 (Cloud Empress: Land of Cicadas)

Content Warning:

The Seed Vault contains bugs, chronic illness, skin disease, and body horror.

One week ago, a group of Farmerlings found the entrance to a massive vault. Within are seeds of plants thought long extinct: ancient grains, juicy vegetables, and medicinal roots. Rumors of this discovery spread quick as wind, perking the ears of dealers and the damned. For those with the Molting, the vault may be their last hope, as the only known cure comes from an herb lost to time: the exuvino. Even if the vault does contain exuvino seeds, will the Farmerlings inside hand them over? Who else might be after this herb, or other seeds within the vault?

THE VAULT

A collection, a preservation, an ostentation. Commissioned by Caspian, an affluent collector from the ancient days, the seed vault served as both doomsday provision and pompous exhibition. The vault held Caspian's entire collection, hundreds of thousands of seeds, all on display for visitors to marvel at during their tour.

Upon Caspian's death, the vault was passed down to their descendants who promptly left it to the weeds.

SERVICE TUNNELS

Some rooms in the vault have a hidden door to the Service Tunnels, a network of passages behind walls and under floors. These locked doors blend into the walls of the vault and can be opened with a keycard (currently in Elm's possession), or through the control board in the Control Room.

These tunnels also lead to a large space beneath the Display Room—if the security system is activated, the seed boxes drop into this space for safekeeping.

CASPIAN'S ARM

A mechanical arm belonging to the vault's original owner. While worn, this relic allows the bearer to speed up a plant's life cycle—flowers bloom in seconds, trees sprout and die in a day.

Caspian's Arm can only be worn in place of a person's right arm.

THE MOLTING

The first sign of the Molting is fingernails peeling like a sun-rotted rind. From this point the infected has three summers until their skin follows, sloughing off to leave just the blood and meat below.

Old texts and passed-down whispers say the Molting is cured by drinking tea of steeped exuvino during the hottest summer day. This herb, a translucent, yellowish root made up of a hundred thin layers, went extinct during the burning of the world in the time of the Torturers. Or so it was thought.



ENCOUNTER TABLE

If the vault is too quiet, roll on or choose from the encounter table below.

1d10	Description
1	The Farmerlings at the Entrance have overpowered the guards and begin to swarm into the vault.
2	Someone presses the red button on the control board and initiates the vault's lockdown.
3	An alarm rings through the vault. The full-grown Imago under the vault stirs, causing the Lobby's floor to shake. If another loud noise occurs, it will burrow into the Lobby.
4	Rake decides to break into the Garden Room. She and the guards prepare to ram their way inside.
5	Someone accuses Bud of being a Lordling.
6	Elm sneaks into the Control Room and flips a lever on the control board. Roll on the control board table.
7	Bud creates a distraction in an attempt to sneak into the Display Room.
8	Loud clamoring comes from the walls of the vault. Elm is trying to scare the Farmerlings away.
9	One of the guards approaches the PCs to strike a deal. They'll help the PCs gain entry to the Display Room if they help them wrest control of the vault from Rake.
10	One of the Farmerlings in the Lobby tries to fight their way through the guards, taking up their attention.



RAKE

Resolute Farmerling
(she/her/they/them)

INSTINCT: 50 AP: 5 WOUNDS: 4

Belongings: A handwritten poem, an empty locket, an ornate flask filled with syrup, stitched Imago-chitin breastplate (5 AP), sickle (1d10 Damage), dagger (1d10 Damage), keyring for some seed boxes.

Rake did not ask to oversee operations at the vault. Standing in the Display Room, her hand caked with layers of dirt, she saw hope in the seeds where others would see power. Even with the weight of the vault on their shoulders, Rake greets strangers with a chipper welcome. Her smile reaches her eyes despite the bags beneath them.

Nothing slips past Rake, which is why they firmly believe the ghost of Caspian haunts the vault. What else would explain the banging in the walls, the electrical outages, the missing papers? She worries that removing seeds will invoke Caspian's retaliation and does not realize this "ghost" is Elm, a Farmerling living in the vault.

Rake refuses to pass out seeds until they have a plan, one that ensures the seeds' survival for future generations without inciting violence amongst the Farmerlings.



BUD A.K.A. CHALICE

Disguised Lordling
(he/him/they/them)

INSTINCT: 40 AP: 2 WOUNDS: 3

Belongings: An ocarina, a frayed bracelet, a worn-down worry stone, gold filigree bracers (poorly concealed), revolver (1d10 Damage), saber (2d10 Damage).



ELM

Cursed Farmerling (she/her)

INSTINCT: 42 AP: 0 WOUNDS: 3

Belongings: A cracked pair of glasses, a small notebook of pressed leaves with doodles in the margins, dagger (1d10 Damage), keycard to Service Tunnels.

Chalice thinks they are a master of disguise. They are not. Everyone with eyes, ears, or a nose can tell that Bud the Farmerling has too soft of silks, too smooth a tongue, and too pungent a perfume.

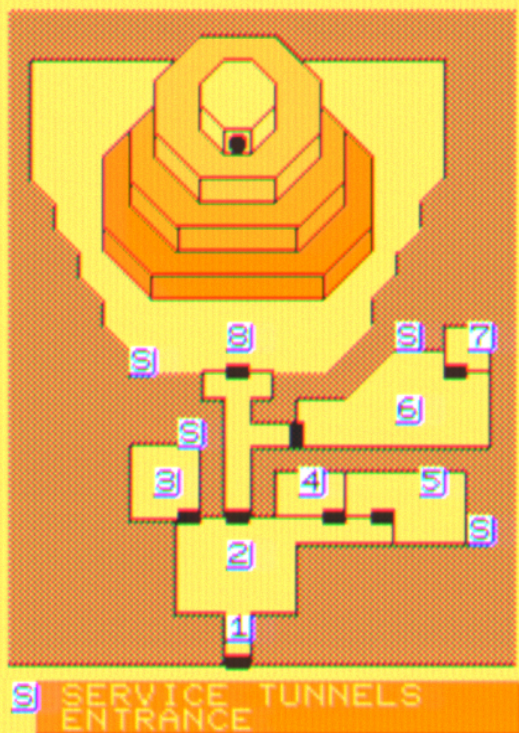
When rumor of the vault landed in the clouds, Chalice volunteered to journey to the Breadbasket. He seeks to return with proof of the vault's value; a single picklemelon seed would be enough reason for the Lordlings to seize the vault for themselves and shower Chalice with accolades.

Obtaining this seed is proving more difficult than Chalice expected. Rake, despite her beautiful eyes and handsome smile, refuses to let Chalice step a single toe into the Display Room. He's instead taken to schmoozing with the guards while keeping an eye out for Farmerlings to exploit.

After a fatal fall, Elm gasped back to the Hereafter cursed with a gopher's head. Luck had her stumble upon the seed vault, and weeks of careful lockpicking granted her entry. She has lived here for years, away from pitying eyes.

Under Elm's soil-stained palms, the Garden Room bloomed into a sanctum. She stores surplus food in soil freezers and packages fresh, spare seeds back into their proper boxes.

When Farmerlings blew open the vault's entrance, Elm barricaded the Garden Room by piling soil bags against the door. She creeps through the Service Tunnels and startles Farmerlings at every opportunity: clanging hand shovels, tossing clay pots, even messing with levers in the Control Room. Elm would do most anything to keep her home—she cannot bear the possibility of uprooting her life again, and may ask trusted individuals for their help in driving out the Farmerlings. Elm is not a fighter and will try to escape into the Service Tunnels when faced with direct confrontation.



1. ENTRANCE

Built underground, the seed vault is only visible by its heavy front door, now covered in scorch marks. Close inspection of the locks reveals tiny scratches, as though they were picked.

Many Farmerlings mill about outside. Some just arrived, others have been camping for days. Speaking with them reveals most have already had an audience with Rake, who refuses to hand out seeds.

A couple of guards stand just outside the door. If the PCs indicate they want something from the vault or to speak with the person in charge, the guards will lead them to Rake. Rake wishes to hear all pleas as she decides how to handle seed distribution. A sickly Farmerling with no fingernails argues with one of the guards, demanding an exuvino seed.

2. LOBBY

A high, domed ceiling greets visitors to the seed vault. Scattered throughout the lobby are low tables and plush, half-rotted chairs. A welcome desk sits in front of a door marked "Staff Only." Around the room are faded works of art, dried-up soil pots, and glass cases with the decaying remains of pressed flowers. A tall portrait depicts a person holding a wreath, shoulder-length hair flowing in the breeze. Their mechanical right arm has long, pointed fingers, while their left hand is covered in rings. A plaque underneath reads "Caspian, the Collector."

A few Farmerlings, part of Rake's crew, stand guard at each door. Those not in the crew play cards, fidget, or sleep in sagging armchairs, waiting for Rake to decide what to do with the seeds. Bud is here, jovially chatting with one of the guards. Perceptive PCs might hear the shifting of dirt and stone beneath the floor. A full-grown Imago slumbers under the vault, stirring in its sleep.

3. CONTROL ROOM

Buttons and levers cover the control board, the labels faded to illegibility. A large red button sits in the center. If PCs are noticed entering this room, a guard follows them inside. Rake has told everyone to keep their hands off the controls, for fear of damaging the seeds.

Pressing the red button initiates a lockdown. A metal wall closes over the entrance, trapping everyone inside until the button is pressed again. If anyone, including an NPC, interacts with the control board, roll 1d10:

1–2	A high-pitched alarm rings through the vault, waking the full-grown imago that was slumbering underground. The imago tunnels through rusted metal and emerges in the Lobby.
3–4	Faulty wiring causes a fire in a room chosen by the Warden.
5–6	An overloaded circuit causes the electricity to go out.
7–8	Ancient cameras flicker to life, displaying extremely grainy images of each room.
9–10	All doors to the Service Tunnels unlock with a click.

4. OFFICES

A few desks sit under flickering fluorescent lights. Dusty books and yellowed papers are scattered across the surface of the largest desk.

Unless something draws them away, Rake is here. They refuse to give seeds to the PCs unless a substantial favor is offered. She will relent to allowing the PCs to look through everything in the Offices and Equipment Storage, on the condition they do not remove anything from the vault.

The writings on the large desk catalog the number of seeds in storage. If the PCs take interest, Rake will mention the logs are inaccurate—some boxes have too few seeds, or too many. Perceptive PCs might notice that most discrepancies come from edible plants.

5. EQUIPMENT STORAGE

Shelves packed with empty seed packets, blank labels, and office supplies. Shipping crates are piled in the far corner. Propped against a wall sit a few framed art pieces depicting various plants. This room contains a door to the Service Tunnels.

6. GARDEN ROOM

The door to the Garden Room will not budge, having been been barricaded from the inside by Elm. Strong PCs might be able to move the door with great effort. Long furrows of soil are lush with fruits and vegetables (including picklemelon). Sun lamps hang from the ceiling, heating the room and amplifying the scent of loam. A compost machine churns in the corner. The walls are covered in ink sketches of trees and flowers. There is a 50% chance Elm is here, bracing for confrontation—otherwise, she is creeping around the Service Tunnels and will return shortly. She is more likely to flee than fight. If the PCs make it clear they mean no harm, Elm might ask for their help in clearing the vault from intruders. This room contains a door to the Service Tunnels.

7. SOIL FREEZE

Walk-in freezer that contains bags of different soils. Frozen fruits and vegetables line the shelves.

8. DISPLAY ROOM

A couple of guards stand outside the Display Room. Inside sits a shining hill of glass boxes, each containing seed packets for a different species. Ramps and walkways weave around the display. The rarest seeds sit highest on the hill. Plaques and drawings indicate which box is which. Each aluminum packet is labeled with the seed variety. Labels written by Elm have not faded like the others. The box for exuvino has a single packet containing three seeds. At the very top of the hill is Caspian's tomb. A locked glass case displays Caspian's Arm.

Many Farmerlings walk around taking inventory. They unlock seed boxes using keyrings found in the Offices. PCs can attempt to pick the locks, but a botched attempt results in an alarm sounding and the box dropping into the Service Tunnels. This room contains a door to the Service Tunnels.

Credits:

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