

Let Us In

A NEO-70S HORROR ADVENTURE IN THE LASTLANDS

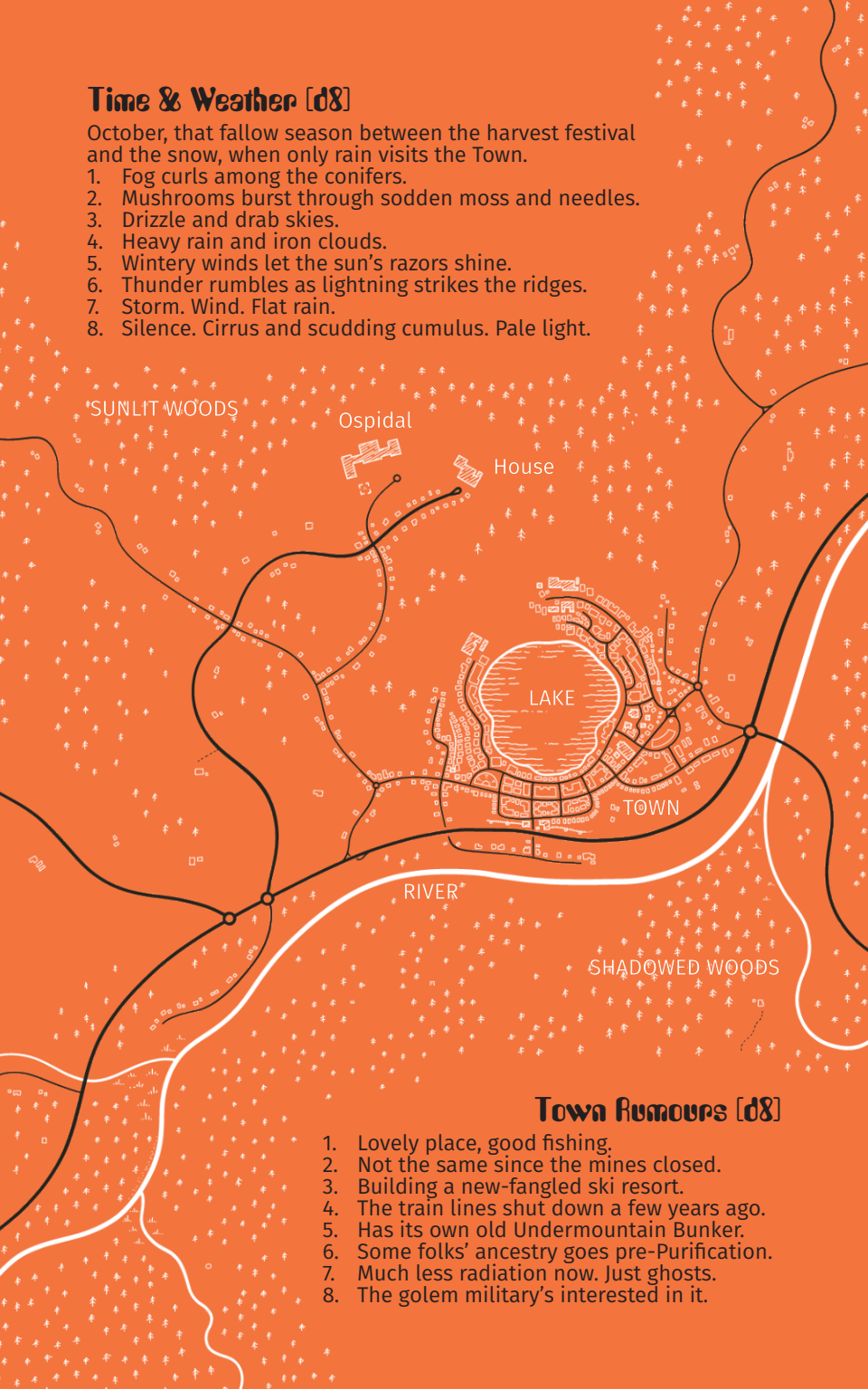


L U K A R E J E C

Time & Weather [d8]

October, that fallow season between the harvest festival and the snow, when only rain visits the Town.

1. Fog curls among the conifers.
2. Mushrooms burst through sodden moss and needles.
3. Drizzle and drab skies.
4. Heavy rain and iron clouds.
5. Wintery winds let the sun's razors shine.
6. Thunder rumbles as lightning strikes the ridges.
7. Storm. Wind. Flat rain.
8. Silence. Cirrus and scudding cumulus. Pale light.



Town Rumours [d8]

1. Lovely place, good fishing.
2. Not the same since the mines closed.
3. Building a new-fangled ski resort.
4. The train lines shut down a few years ago.
5. Has its own old Undermountain Bunker.
6. Some folks' ancestry goes pre-Purification.
7. Much less radiation now. Just ghosts.
8. The golem military's interested in it.

Let Us In

LUKA REJEC

—system-neutral one-shot horror in the Lastlands for four ordinary heroes—

Attention

This is a (roughly) 3-hour horror rpg adventure for one referee and up to four runners. It deals with unsettling themes and doesn't guarantee a happy ending. The ref should review the content and adjust it to suit their group. The goal is to have a thrill, like with a modern 70s horror movie, not leave the table bummed out.

The referee may want to create a mimeograph or thermo-fax of the pages labelled "handouts."

Credits

Thanks to Ahimsa Kerp, with whom we walked and talked through the adventure. Thanks to "Jasher" and "Owl", who listened and agreed it had legs. Thanks to the Knights Grammarian for proofreading. Thanks to the Heroes who tested variations of the adventure.



This is a limited first edition print run of *Let Us In* by WTF Studio and Exalted Funeral Press

Art and Text ©2021 Luka Rejec

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www.wizardthieffighter.com

www.exaltedfuneral.com

SURROUNDINGS

THE OSPIDAL

Aeropad

THE COMMON

THE GROUNDS

- (a) High Fence
- (b) Main Gate and Guardhouse
- (c) Covered Portico and Drive
- (d) Depot and Shed
- (e) Generator Hut
- (f) Garden Wall and Door
- (g) Garden
- (h) Doghouse
- (i) Heritage Tree
- (j) Back Gate

(1) GROUND FLOOR

- Foyer
- Staircase and Mezzanine
- Cloakroom
- Day Room
- Receiving Room
- Library
- Dining Hall
- Conservatory
- Kitchen and Pantry
- Servant's Quarters

THE ROAD



<2> UPSTAIRS
Master Bedroom
Panic Room
Five Guest Bedrooms
Attic Stair

<3> ATTIC
Storage
Taxidermy Workshop
Holosphere Crystal

<B1> DOWNSTAIRS
Game Room
Wine Cellar
Science Lab
Fallout Shelter



The Arrival

The western sky swiftly shades from red to purple. The fast stars emerge like gemstone necklaces in the reflected sunlight, blip-blip-blip. The slow stars pierce the sky's silky awning, wink-wink-wink. The town lights blaze like flares, hiss-hiss-hiss.

A distant dog howls; a pack answers. The eyes of sheep glint in the headlights' glare as the Matador autogolem turns down the gravel drive. Pale dust sparkles on the teal machine. The black gate, topped with spikes and razor wire, stops the vehicle. With a fizz, an orange floodlight comes on. With a whine, the electric motor pulls the gate open. The autogolem stirs and rolls inside.

The sleek, modernist mansion slides into view, its front door ajar. A dog begins to bark. The gate closes behind.



The Letter

<<Rumpled, as though it had been folded away in a pocket.>>

"Elmeno/a, my dear, please ignore the previous letters. You do not have to come and take us home. Everything is alright and my worries now seem pretty foolish. Aranca is taking all possible precautions and my mind is quite at ease.

Use the little extra I wired you to get something nice, perhaps that hiking exosuit you wanted for the Mountains of the Moon. Or a holiday—you have been studying so hard at the academy, after all.

With love and affection,

—your aunt, Vira."



FOUR HEROES

The Relative

Elmeno/a Zyatibor 2nd branch

Wellborn Second City poet / socialite / model / entrepreneur / athlete / student with a trust fund. Raised by the aunt while parents worked the Wellborn City-servant circuit.

Motivation • Check on Aunt Vira. Ensure their inheritance is safe.

Action 1 • Biometric access. A locked thing opens. Uses: [][[]]

Action 2 • Ruthless. Elmeno/a succeeds flawlessly at a task. Someone else suffers the consequences. Uses: []

The Friend

Amato/a Lashtrada IV Tier

Scholarborn Second City scholarship student. Elmeno/a's factotum / drinking buddy / friend for hire. Paid a stipend by Elmeno/a's parents to keep the wealthy scion safe.

Motivation • Keep Elmeno/a safe. Graduate. Get a job, a spouse, a two-up-two-down.

Action 1 • Quiet competence. A marginal success has no negative consequences. Uses: [][[]]

Action 2 • Scream of the butterfly. Everyone around Amato/a is shocked and stops what they are doing. Amato/a gets a free unopposed action. Uses: []

The Driver

Banya Gatopardi

Outcity servant resident of Mountainard stock employed by Aunt Vira to drive her autogolem and watch Elmeno/a. Served in the freedom-bringer army as a cook and tax collector. Dishonourably discharged.

Motivation • Stay alive. Keep the lovely autogolem safe. Keep Elmeno/a alive. Make a mint.

Action 1 • Dirty fighter. Goes first in a conflict and gains a bonus. Uses: [][[]]

Action 2 • Untouched. Banya shrugs off all damage they took the previous round. Uses: []

The Guide

Yasha Okovi

Outcity Mountainard of old lands-knight stock stretching to the First Bunker Times. Fought the freedom-bringers in the '33-37 Upper Moon Police Action / 2nd Moonlands Popular Liberation Struggle. Hired by Elmeno/a as a local expert.

Motivation • Kidnap or threaten Elmeno/a's aunt for a ransom. Reclaim their Underpalace from Second City colonial squatters.

Action 1 • Local expert. Knows where to find something useful nearby. Uses: [][[]]

Action 2 • Hidden pistol. Surprise! Yasha's opponent is shot dead. Uses: []

HIDDEN HANDOUT • The referee describes the four heroes, keeping actions and motivations secret, then hands out the chosen characters.

Game Opening

Let Us In begins when the heroes' autogolem rumbles to a stop in the driveway, the gates closing behind them automatically. Nobody comes to greet them at the mansion's yawning front door.

People Are Odd by The Other Doors starts on the audio.

Strange beige people appear at the gates and rattle them. In unison they cock their heads and say, "Good afternoon, may we come in, please?"

Each player then rolls on the flashback table (at right) to "remember" something odd their hero saw on the way.

Humanity Tracks

Each hero's humanity track is only visible to the referee. Their starting score is underlined.

The Relative • P 2 3 4 5 M

The Friend • P 2 3 4 5 M

The Driver • P 2 3 4 5 M

The Guide • P 2 3 4 5 M

The Assistant • P 2 3 4 5 M (p15)

Po-hu touch • Every time a po-hu grips a hero, such as with a handshake or shoulder squeeze, they inject "uplift spores" and the player rolls a d6. If the result beats the hero's humanity score, the hero drops a point closer to becoming a po-hu themselves. When their life score drops to P, the hero has become a contented member of the po-hu hive mind.

Monstrous • Every time a hero murders in cold blood, tortures, consumes human (or po-hu) flesh, or does another horrible deed, they move a point closer to becoming a monster. When their score reaches M, they become immune to the po-hu touch—the hive mind is repelled by their inhumanity.

System

Each pre-generated hero comes with limited-use actions. In all other respects, the heroes are ordinary people. The referee should adapt the heroes to their preferred game system—ideally one that's fast and easy to use for their table.

d8 Know Resolution

This pared-down method may be enough to run the adventure.

Heroes take turns in an order that makes sense to the referee.

Every time a hero attempts something risky, they roll a d6:

If competent • 1 failure, 2–3 marginal, 4–6 success.

If unskilled • 1–3 failure, 4–5 marginal, 6 success.

Failure: The character fails.

Marginal: The hero can succeed if they accept a complication devised by the referee—perhaps they try to rush past a po-hu, but it strikes them as they pass.

Success: The hero achieves their goal without further problems.

When circumstances or tools favour a character, they add a +1 bonus to their roll. If both environment and equipment are on their side, they add +2.

Flashbacks [d8]

1. Youths bouncing balls off a brick wall in perfect time.
2. A park full of people staring at the sun.
3. Calm children gathering dead birds in a pile.
4. Row of farmers gazing at the heroes' autogolem in unison.
5. Empty streets, dusty vehicles.
6. Families file out of dark houses as the heroes pass.
7. Empty pens, no animals to see.
8. The thermal plant is dark despite the chill.

Time Structure

After the flashbacks, the game proceeds at three speeds, depending on the action.

As the heroes **explore the mansion**, turns are measured in tens of minutes.

During **fight or flights**, turns are shorter: moments or seconds.

While the heroes **wait**, turns stretch to 4–6 hour watches.



Pacing the Adventure

The referee uses real-time hours to determine in-game events. The first hour of play fore-shadows problems while the heroes explore the mansion. In the second hour, explicit threats emerge and resources run out. In the third hour, the heroes must act if they are to survive.

This pacing is optional. The referee may adapt the adventure to other durations.

Adventure Timeline (game time)

Weeks Ago • First po-hus ascend into their unity. Aunt Vira sends her letter.

A Week Ago • Po-hus spread through the town.

Days Ago • Aranca fails to find a “cure,” then disappears.

Earlier • Po-hus overwhelm the town and cut communications. Aunt Vira dies.

Now • The heroes arrive at the mansion. Game starts.

Soon • Po-hus surround the mansion and ask to be let in.

Later • Po-hus begin building the cupola at the ospidal.

A Few Days • The cupola is complete. The town disappears under a probability dome.

A Few Weeks • The cupola and the po-hus disappear and join the stars. The town is left hollow; all the spirits departed with the po-hus.

Regarding the Rumours

All the rumours are red herrings.

Events (based on session real time)

D6	FIRST HOUR	SECOND HOUR	THIRD HOUR
1	Static on t' holospheres.	Mains power goes out.	The food runs out.
2	An orange light blinks on the backup generator. There's only fuel for a day or two.	The holosphere plays snatches of song, “...no one sings me lullabies, and no one makes me close my eyes...”	The power runs out. The nights are dark and full of po-hu voices.
3	Neonspheres flicker erratically.	Tree boughs threaten to break in the wind.	The mansion grows cold.
4	Prognosticators warn of a cold front.	Taps run dry, the pipes must be cut.	Stored water goes bad.
5	The pantry hasn't been resupplied recently.	The po-hus clamour and call continuously.	The po-hus won't stop crying.
6	There's no hot water in the taps.	A brick breaks a window. Shouts; “Why won't you invite us in?”	Nobody is coming to save the heroes. Realization sinks in.

The Po-Hus

The post-humans, the po-hus, are the polite, creepy, and implacable antagonists of the adventure. They are the former inhabitants of the Town, ascended to a unified post-humanity. This is a new development. Their origin is unexplained.

They function as uncanny valley vampires, spreading by injecting baseline humans with nematocysts full of uplift spores. These link the human with the higher group mind. Because of some deep-level programming (or politeness?), they cannot enter a home uninvited. However, once one is allowed in, all the po-hus feel free to enter. As the first po-hus appear, more walk out of the trees and mist to surround the mansion.

They stay there, ignoring cold and rain, waiting to be let in.

STANDARD PO-HU ATTRIBUTES [D8]

1. High-end '80s PC beige skin.
2. No stronger than ordinary humans.
3. Comfortable in cold and rain.
4. Survive without food.
5. Self-grooming hair and skin.
6. See quite well in the dark.
7. If not killed, swift regeneration.
8. Anemone-like rosettes on palms.

TYPICAL PO-HU BEHAVIOUR [D8]

1. Synced emotions and actions.
2. In-group telepathy & perception.
3. A federated group mind.
4. Feel no sorrow, loss, or pain.
5. Aware that time is short.
6. Want humans to join them.
7. Use rosette nematocysts to spread uplift spores.
8. Frustrated with recalcitrants.

SOME SAMPLE PO-HUS [D8]

1. A doctor and her nurse.
2. Twins with pigtails.
3. A hayseed gardener.
4. A distinguished butlerette.
5. Three neat aunties.
6. A couple with a pram.
7. Militiamen and their wagon.
8. A stapling of office workers.

THE PO-HUS GATHER [D8]

1. Crowd at the main gate.
2. Press against the high fence.
3. Perch on a zelkova by the garden.
4. Wait at the back gate.
5. Stand in the ospidal grounds.
6. Sit in the road.
7. Ring the doorbell. Over and over.
8. Sing syrupy songs in the night.

THE PO-HUS TRY TO CONVINCE [D8]

1. Pleading, "Let us in."
2. Breathing down the phone line.
3. Explaining, "It's cold out here."
4. Scratch on the windows.
5. Bang on the gate, "We won't just wait forever!"
6. Cut the power lines
7. Throw gravel, rocks and bricks.
8. Shout, "You'll like it, you'll see!"

UNUSUAL PO-HU TACTICS [D8]

1. Motionless in shrubbery & leaves.
2. Inhuman, deafening screams.
3. Leap and run, regardless of injury.
4. Shout directions to disorient prey.
5. Smash glass with bleeding fists.
6. Grapple wheels with arms & legs.
7. Dance forward in eerie symmetry.
8. Swarm like a pack of dogs.



The Po-Hu Touch [d8]

It takes a few minutes for the uplift spores to expand the mind space of a new candidate. In those minutes, the last flickerings of the old person experience:

1. A spike of pain as the nematocysts burst.
2. Pins, needles, and fire as the spores spread.
3. A flood of terror as the ego is flushed away.
4. A panic attack, like a little death.
5. Numb hollowness, as when teeth are plucked.
6. A contented comfort in shared emptiness.
7. A spacey rush; spiritual union.
8. Dissolving beyond existence and nonexistence.

In the session's final hour, the heroes choose between breaking for freedom or waiting out the po-hus.

Waiting It Out

The heroes must solve resource problems to wait out the po-hus.

Water • If the heroes dig a well, collect rainwater, or recycle their bodies' waters, they will survive.

Heat • If the heroes huddle in one room and use furniture, books, or deadwood in a fireplace, this will suffice.

Food • There is enough food for a week. After that, the heroes start to starve. They can boil book covers, bugs, grass, and nuts to improve their odds. A po-hus provides food for a week.

The ref skims through the wait. Each day they ask how a hero deals with the situation. Every few days, they roll (table, p9) to see what happens.

THE PO-HUS DISAPPEAR

Weeks later, the po-hus disappear. The survivors feel lessened, like part of their spirit has also departed.

Breakout

There are four clear options. The players may invent others.

THE HEROES' AUTOGOLEM

The sleek Matador is stylish, but not powerful. Without a good distraction, the po-hus will stop it with their bodies, then batter through the windows.

THE MANSION AUTOGOLEM

The rugged "J.A.S.H.E.R." van would toss po-hus like nine-pins, but its heart needs to be replaced. The nearest candidate is by the ospidal. The Matador's heart is too weak.

THE AEROVATOR

If the heroes summoned help, a

levitant was sent to the ospidal. There, the two pilots were turned into po-hus. After fighting to the aeropad, the heroes can fly out of town. Po-hus will try to clamber into the aerovator.

ON FOOT

To improve their odds, the heroes can split into two groups, sacrifice someone to the po-hus, let the po-hus enter the mansion from one side, use foggy weather, and other distractions. Some po-hus will pursue no matter what.

Escape

The po-hus stop at the hazy boundary of the Cupola dome and judge the heroes with pity in their eyes. Passage back is impossible. Slowly, the barrier fades and takes the po-hus with it.

Après

For a while, the newsmakers print crazy stories about mass suicide, subterranean raiders, and flesh-eating rain. Nobody believes the heroes when they tell the truth.

If Elmeno/a survives, they inherit the mansion after two years of legal wrangling.

Eventually, a real-estate consortium buys the whole town and turns it into an R&R facility for soldiers on leave. After another police action, it becomes picked refugee settlement area.

Roll Credits

Each player narrates a short scene from their hero's life after the adventure (roll d6 minus humanity score):

<-1 • A misfortune befalls them.

-1 to 1 • Some good, some bad.

1< • A happy end. For now.

The referee can then tease a sequel. Whether it gets played depends on box office profits.

The Grounds

So long as the fence holds, the po-hus treat these areas as private and off-limits—unless they have been invited in.

HIGH FENCE

Posts, link mesh, and razor wire concealed by hedges.

- A falling tree or broken bough would break it.

MAIN GATE AND GUARDHOUSE

Solid, oiled, automatic. Small whitewashed guardhouse, a couple of wicker chairs round a table with a backgammon board. Black was winning.

- Portable refrigerator half-full of ice tea.
- Padlocked locker: shotgun.
- Exit: to the Road.

COVERED PORTICO AND DRIVE

Lush ferns & palms. Slumbering J.A.S.H.E.R. autogolem van.

- The van's heart is missing. Replace to move it again.

DEPOT AND SHED.

A corrugated steel roof covers water and gasoline tanks (mostly empty) and a simple brick shed.

- Shed: axe, chainsaw, coiled wire, drill, hammer, lawn mower, nails, scythe, and shears. Can of lighter fluid.
- Neat stacks: tyres, bricks, cement, tarp-covered sand.
- Crate: hand pump, buckets, hose.
- Tub: ammonium nitrate fertilizer.

GARDEN WALL AND DOOR

Rustic stone wall tufted with moss and flowers. Stout door bolted on the garden side.

- Aesthetic. Climbable.

GARDEN

Slightly overgrown. Patio, triple triangle furniture, barbecue pit.

- Orchard: ripe plums, figs, grapes. Unripe olives & persimmons.
- Flowers & herbs: rude health.
- Vegetable patch: devastated by red slugs.

DOGHOUSE

Large and comfy. Enclosed by a stout fence. Big black dog inside, stressed and hungry.

- Dog: friendly, scared of po-hus and cats. Name tag: Lovie.

HERITAGE TREE

Ancient linden carved with cherubim dominates rear garden.

- Heavy boughs reach over the fence: could break in a storm.

BACK GATE

Stout, sticky, loud. Padlocked.

- Intervidy: calls servants' room.
- Exit: to the Common.

GENERATOR HUT

Soundproof, mossy concrete.

- Metal door: combination lock.
- Generator: fuel for 1 day.



Surroundings

All these areas are open to the po-hus. Alerting one po-hu will quickly bring others.

THE ROAD

A lane loops around the mansion. Hedges and picket fences divide the small cottage lots.

- Cottages: po-hu families, household appliances.
- Useful piece of equipment: one in six chance per cottage. Can be any item the heroes require for a scheme: new generator, autogolem heart, crystal ball, etc. Roll once for each item.
- Folk traditions: fat bear dolls, buckwheat garden gnomes, glass window flowers, nailed coins.

THE COMMON

Unfenced field between the mansion grounds and the ospidal.

- Utility building: supplies for lawn parties, poles, small generator, megaphone.

THE OSPIDAL

The central government built a lovely sanatorium in glazed brick and raw concrete to curry favour with the town. It is decorated with golden mushrooms and green suns.

- Topiary hedges: decorative privacy, not protection.
- Parking lot: scattered autogos.
- Ambulance gare: two restricted-use heavy autogos.
- Reception: full of medical po-hus.
- Emergency wing: po-hus assembling the radioactive Cupola Engine.
- Patient wing: eerily empty.
- Flat roof: great for a last stand.

THE AEROPAD

A clear plate with a tether pole.

- Bare: no sneaking to the pad.



Aranca's Mansion

The po-hus will not enter without an invitation, even if the large windows are broken. They would try to pull someone out, however.

GROUND FLOOR

FOYER

Cool minimalism in polished concrete. Double-story ceiling with spider-knot chandelier.

- Cubist sculptures: heavy, metal.
- Shrine of hygiene: washbasin, soap, disinfectant, paper towels.
- Exit: driveway.

CLOAKROOM

Discrete entrance, functional.

- Wardrobes: a fine coat and a rugged coat. A good place to hide from a mob in a hurry.
- WC: creamy sandstone, water.

STAIRCASE & MEZZANINE

Double-helix of glass and steel.

- Rail: waist-high tempered glass.

WAITING ROOM

A place for guests to while away the day. Minimalist sofas, glass tables, and a drinks cabinet. Tele-vidy set. View of the driveway.

- Tables: four chess variants, three-day-old newspapers.
- Headline: *Hysterical Contagion?*
- Cabinet: blending wines, soda, mineral water.
- Holosphere: no reception.

RECEIVING ROOM

Pine panelling, comfortable sofas, fireplace, coffee table. View of the garden.

- Coffee table: alabaster ashtray, two cups, withered flower, empty box of sleeping pills.
- Fireplace: paper ash, poker, logs.
- Display: sabre, shield, & halberd.
- Humidor: cigars, butane lighter.

LIBRARY

Larch panelling, high-backed pleather chairs, carved brazilwood table, fitted shelves, custom-bound books.

- Shelves: letter knife, bronze cricket trophy. Inside trophy: small revolver.
- Books: cosy mysteries, travel guides, biology & zoology tomes.
- Table: dominoes set up like a snake, book of short stories. Short story: *Starvation Artist*.

DINING HALL

Burnished steel dining table, twelve high-backed tubular steel chairs, long ebony sideboard.

- Table: one delicate china setting, half-eaten meal, a note.
- Note: "I'll be back by lunchtime with the milk and eggs. Don't worry, stay in the house, everything will be alright. —A."
- Sideboard: silverware, candlesticks, carving knife.

CONSERVATORY

Thick with tropical plants, hummingbirds, and butterflies. Wicker rocking chairs.

- Chair: Novel: *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

LOCATIONS 3

- Plants: golden mushrooms. Restore one point of humanity when smoked.
- Exit: garden entrance.

KITCHEN AND PANTRY

Stainless steel and enamel. Walk-in refrigerator.

- Cooking station: butane gas cylinder, cleaver, skewer, rolling pin, cast iron pan, knife set.
- Pantry: wheel of sheep cheese, pickled mushrooms, prosciutto, salted anchovies, empty shelves.
- Refrigerator: half a cow.

SERVANT QUARTERS

Broken-in hand-me-down furniture. Reproduction of *The Scream* next to the house intercom.

- Cupboard: DIY tools, bottle of flammable schnapps.
- Service elevator: to attic stair and wine cellar.
- Exit: Back door.

DOWNSTAIRS

GAME ROOM

Oak panelling and a lingering haze of smoke. An ornate snooker table lords over a rugged foosball table, a pinball machine, and a folded card table.

- Shelves: surprisingly extensive board game collection.
- Racks: snooker cues, golf clubs, paddles, whip.

WINE CELLAR

Ancient barrel-vaulting and clay floors. Rack upon rack of select vintages. Tasting table & chairs.

- Wines: a history of the last 80 years in bottles.
- Cichéti: salami, prosciutto, white cheese, olives, pickled sardines, baccalà, crackers.
- Service elevator: to servant quarters.

SCIENCE LAB

Renovated, modern, fully-equipped private laboratory. Gleaming steel furniture. Operating table.

- Equipment: scalpels, saws, beakers, burners, goggles, scales, lab coat, thick gloves.
- Table: dried blood, notebook.
- Notebook: Aranca Sadvik, "Notes on Small Team Tele-Empathetics XII".
- Note 1: "aurora this far south ... unusual. Related to recent tests?"
- Note 2: "servants haven't shown up ... Marl suspects that bug that's been going around."
- Note 3: "changes at the cellular level ... swift regeneration ... unusual structures ... incredible resistance to heat and cold ... susceptible to decapitation."
- Last note: "Vira is very worried. Should be able to break out with the J.A.S.H.E.R., but missing heart. Remember, Dr W mentioned their spare."
- Refrigerator: When opened, a beige hand with an anemone-like rosette on its palm falls out. Inside: the rest of a dissected, dismembered po-hu.

FALLOUT SHELTER

Heavy blast door can be bolted from inside. Two musty beds. Very old rations.

- Tins of food: even odds of gastric distress. Enough for a week for one person.
- Water: stale, metallic-tasting.
- Medical supplies: deteriorated but usable.

UPSTAIRS

The sound of dripping water from the master bedroom.

MASTER BEDROOM

Tasteful shades of beige and camel. Grand bed, panoramic view. Discrete bathroom door. Water on the floor.

- Bedside table: bronze lamp, carved ivory aubergine.
- Bathroom: egg-shell marble, an inch of water, a straight razor, and a large bath full of bloody water and person.
- Person: Aunt Vira, deceased.

PANIC ROOM

Sound-proof, weapon-proof room with a bed, canned goods, and a closed-circuit holosphere system.

- Hidden armoured door: activate with bronze lamp. Currently locked from inside.
- Inside: Marl Belegard, Aranca's assistant, hiding from po-hus.

If a hero is killed or turned into a po-hu before the final escape scene, the referee presents the Assistant hiding in the panic room as a substitute.

The Assistant

Marl Belegard

Descendant of settled Step-pelanders, Marl inherited a mid-dling estate and immediately became a devoted big game hunter. Later, after an ecological turn, they associated with the scientist Aranca as a specimen collector and research assistant.

Motivation • Escape the po-hus. Prove Aunt Vira committed suicide. Get the scientist's notes to the Second City.

Action 1 • Elementary. Plant proof of suicide or madness. Uses: [] [] []

Action 2 • Chainsaw Massacre. Use a chainsaw or similar weapon to mow down a wave of po-hus. Or people. Uses: []

FIVE GUEST BEDROOMS

Neat, tidy, modern, a tad sterile.

- Toiletries: like a boutique hotel.
- Curios: collection of pulp adventure novels, decorative sawed-off shotgun, colourful northern neckerchiefs, model temple of Saint Cleareyes, or a traditional talon wheel.
- En-suite bath: shower, basin, seat, wash hose, ink kelp wreaths.

ATTIC STAIR

Behind a discrete door in the panelled wall.

- Steep stair: easy to fall.
- Service elevator: to servant's quarters.

ATTIC

STORAGE

Chests of old clothes, sheets, and souvenirs stacked to the rafters.

- Chests: uniforms, boots, enamelled cuirass, helmeted diving suit, ceremonial war club.

TAXIDERM MY WORKSHOP

Work tables and displays. A draft disturbs the dust.

- Worktables: hooks, cutters, scoops, syringes, chains, needles, pins, glue, borax, modelling clay, formalin, paints, jar of glass eyes.
- Trophies: bear's head, three white mice, eagle, a brace of passenger pigeons.
- Living owl: on a stand by a port in the wall. Name tag: "Slayer".

HOLOS PHERE CRYSTAL

Modern, 2-way holosphere equipment, vacuum crystals, wires, knobs, and antennae. Ozone smell.

- Long-range holosphere: requires new valves. The osp-idal would have them.
- Call aerovator: takes a day to arrive. Lands at the aeropad, where a po-hu swarm converts the pilots.



Inspiration

Alain Goraguer - "Déshominisation (I)" - La Planète Sauvage (1971)
Blur - "Song 2" - Blur (1997)
Can - "Mother Sky" - Soundtracks (1970)
Daft Punk - "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" - Discovery (2001)
Daliborovo Granje - "Žal" - Hainin (2020)
Denis & Denis - "Noč" - Ja sam lazljiva (1985)
The Doors - "People Are Strange" - "Strange Days" (1967)
Electric Guest - "Troubleman" - Mondo (2012)
Godspeed You! Black Emperor - "Static" - Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas to Heaven (2000)
Joy Division - "Candidate" - Unknown Pleasures (1979)
Lebanon Hanover - "I Believe You Can Survive" - Tomb For Two (2013)
Lorn - "Anvil" - Vessel (2015)
Mariya Takeuchi - "Plastic Love" - Variety (1984)
Melanie Safka - "Beautiful People" - Affectionately Melanie (1969)
Phantasmagoria - "Poziv U Raj" - single (1989)
Pink Floyd - "Echoes" - Meddle (1971)
Sleep Party People - "I'm Not Human At All" - Sleep Party People (2010)
Talking Heads - "Psycho Killer" - Talking Heads:77 (1977)
Le Tigre - "Deceptacon" - Le Tigre (1999)
Tropic of Cancer - "Stop Suffering" - Stop Suffering (2015)
Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats - "Valley of the Dolls" - Mind Control (2013)
Unseen Guest - "Let Me In" - Out There (2005)

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