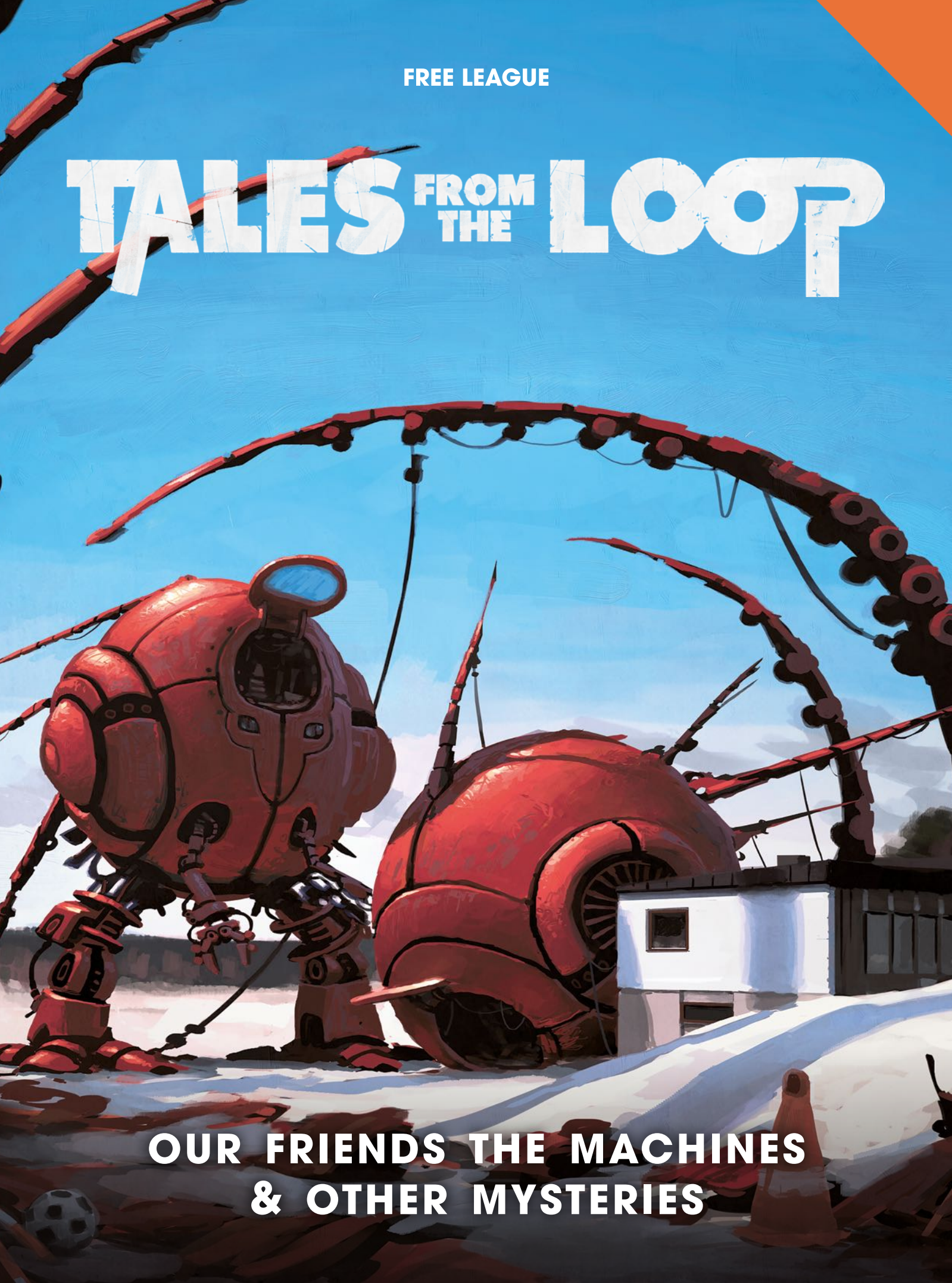


FREE LEAGUE

TALES FROM THE LOOP



OUR FRIENDS THE MACHINES
& OTHER MYSTERIES

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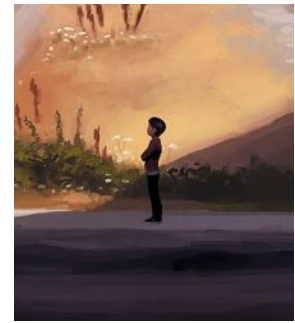
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INTRODUCTION

Toys suddenly developing intelligence. A mystical mummy roaming the beaches. Weird events in the local video store. A mixtape full of mysteries. Four wondrous machines. A guide to creating your own setting for the game. All this and more in this volume intended for use with Tales from the Loop RPG. Enjoy!



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- **OUR FRIENDS THE MACHINES:** In the first mystery of the book, the Kids will experience the botched launch of a set of new action toys. Escaped AIs, intelligent robot toys and possessed humans suddenly make playtime very dangerous.
- **THE MUMMY IN THE MIST:** The school is filled with rumors. The mummy has been spotted down by the lake again. Looking for something. Hungering. It falls on the Kids to investigate the mystery of The Mummy in the Mist.
- **HORROR MOVIE MAYHEM:** The '80s is the era of moral panic. Horror movies, metal and RPGs are all debated by adults. The local video store is suddenly the focus of a conflict spanning generations. When a series of strange events occur, the Kids are drawn into a hunt for the truth behind the video store and its scary movies.
- **MIXTAPE OF MYSTERIES:** Eight classic songs. Eight short mysteries. A mixtape of secrets. Just press play!
- **BLUEPRINTS:** Two advanced robots, two powerful magnettrine ships. In this chapter you will find blueprints, background and adventure hooks for some of the most iconic machines of the era of the Loop.
- **HOMETOWN HACK:** The Mälaren Islands and Boulder City are interesting to explore, but why not hack your own hometown? In this chapter we provide a set of guidelines to create your own setting, complete with the new setting of The Norfolk Broads in England.



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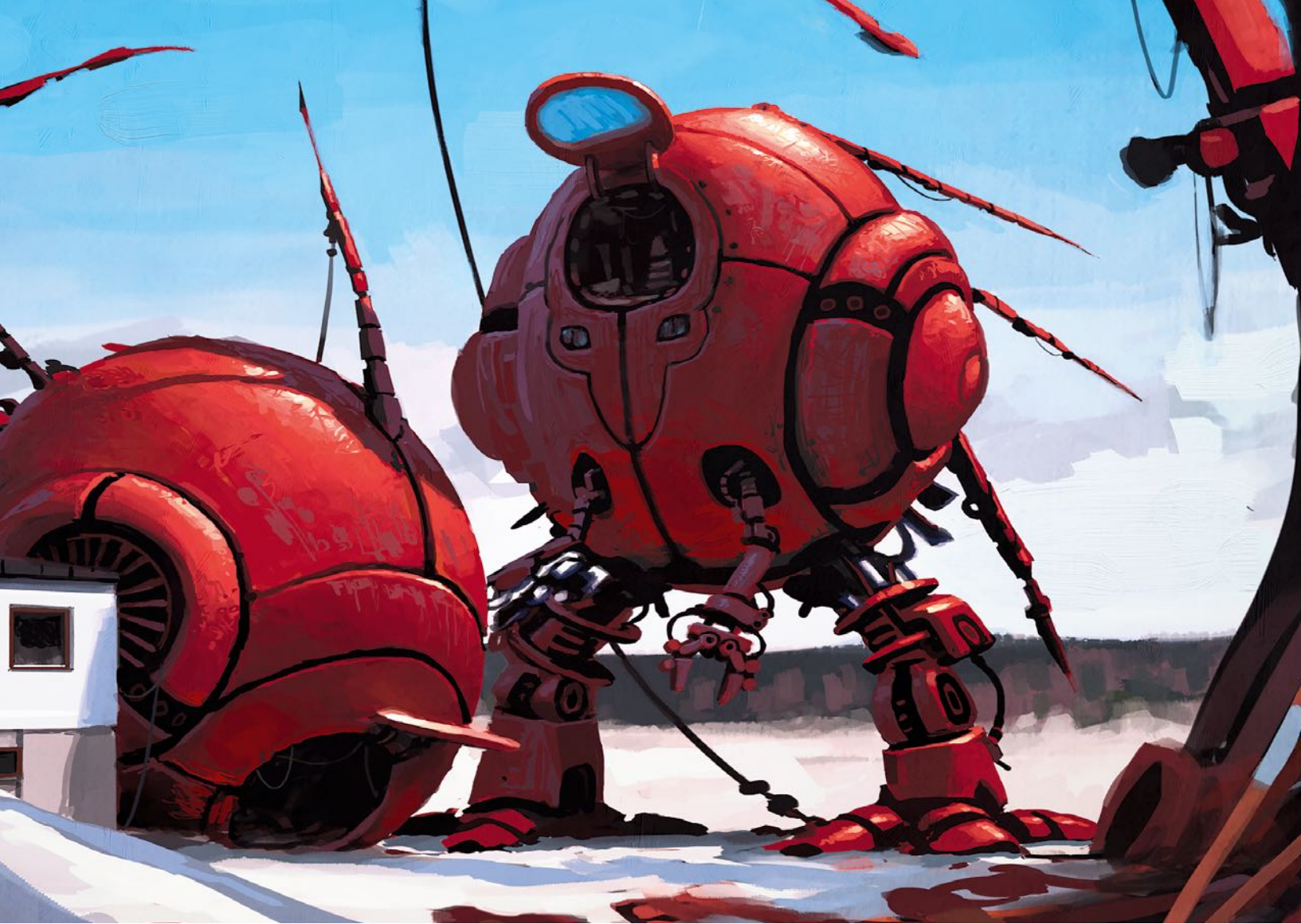


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OUR FRIENDS THE MACHINES

Not counting Legos, American toys are the ones I played with the most. Transformers of course, but also Action Force, He-Man and a little bit of M.A.S.K.. Somebody you knew might have had Gobots. Coolest of us all was Jonte, who somehow got his hands on a Valkyrie from Robotech.



Many of the adults were concerned about Americanization. In response to McDonald's hamburger restaurants, the Swedish fastfood chain Clock appeared. Mom thought it felt safer. At least healthier, anyway. The same thing with the "Our Friends the Machines." They would be the Swedish, slightly nicer alternative to Transformers. Local robots that connected and could transform by themselves.

I remember that Märta had gotten one. Probably through her dad, who had a toy factory and traveled around at various fairs. I probably would never have known that, because "Swedish" was the same to us as "corny", but I thought it was pretty cool. It could turn into an eighteen-wheeler and if you pressed a button on the back, it made different sounds. Märta claimed that when she first got it, it could transform by itself and talk, but of course no one believed her.

They quickly vanished from stores. They probably did not sell well, despite collaborations with large Swedish companies, in collaboration with Bamse, and a fast-launched VHS where Tomas Bolme contributed his voice to the role of the good machines' leaders.

THE TRUTH OF THE MYSTERY

Just over a month ago, two artificial intelligences fled from FOA's top secret facility in Sättra [DARPA's DART facility outside Boulder City]. They managed to download themselves into a pair of clumsy robot bodies that they used to escape from the area. They found a factory that, after being abandoned for a while, has now begun to serve as a production center – this time for toy robots belonging to the new Swedish product line called Our Friends the Machines.



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The artificial intelligences A and B formulated a desperate plan and put it into practice. They were designed to work with people who would be provided with a control microchip. The chip would allow people to communicate radio-telepathically with their artificial colleagues, which would give them access to huge amounts of knowledge and the ability to handle that information. However, A managed to figure out a way to use the chip instead to control the people who got them implanted.

With the help of these chips, they quickly took control of the factory and made sure that the small toy robots produced were far more advanced than the original designs indicated. The robots were equipped with micro hydraulics, electronics, servomotors, and a variant of the control chip.

In other words, A and B are now distributing their intelligences and are no longer localized, but instead

dispersed in all toy robots and people who have a control chip. Hence, they are less vulnerable and significantly harder for FOA [DARPA] to capture – especially if they successfully implement the launch of the Our Friends the Machines line at the national level.

The distinction between A and B is one of strategy – A is more aggressive and in the long term, wants to incorporate the entirety of humanity into its network, establishing more factories. B is more peaceful and mainly wants to hide and co-exist with the people.

THE MACHINES

The following information is known to the Kids, and can either be announced before the game begins or can be distributed through the introduction.

Our Friends the Machines is a series of toys and stories created by Ulla Jönåker [Ursula Kerr], inspired by American toys such as Transformers and Gobots. Financing has been conducted through support from Swedish industries such as Saab and Volvo, as well as contributions from the state [via American companies like Ford and Chrysler]. The development has taken place through a small, state-owned company, where Jönåker [Kerr] and the engineer Helena Voss [Helen Voss] have executive roles. Jönåker [Kerr] focuses on drawings, concepts, and collaborations with other companies and organizations, while Voss focuses on the production of toy robots and the logistics side of the operation.

In the fictional world of the machines there are two main aspects of an ongoing civil war:

- **THE CONVOYS:** The “good” robots fight for freedom, equality and human rights. The influence of the Swedish labor rights movement are not particularly subtle and in several stories they have, for example, fought for workers' union rights. The Convoys transform into civilian vehicles such as Saab and Volvo cars [Lincoln and Ford cars], Scania trucks and construction vehicles [LaFrance fire trucks and Caterpillar construction vehicles]. There is an extra-large robot that can turn into a factory, which is also The Convoys' home base. Their rightful leader is Ekvius Optimus, who turns into a truck with trailers.

SUMMARY

- Two artificial intelligences (A and B) have escaped from the FOA [DART] facility.
- They have taken over a factory that manufactures toy robots.
- They have created a network of upgraded toy robots and people who got control chips implanted.
- They have downloaded themselves to each part of the network so that they are now distributed intelligences.
- They now want maximum dissemination to expand their net and avoid capture.
- One intelligence (A) is aggressive and wants to assimilate humanity. The other (B) is more peaceful and would rather co-exist with the people.

- **THE DECEIVERS:** The “evil” robots fighting for the supremacy of the strong, exploiting both natural resources and the working class. Likewise, the symbolism here is not particularly subtle. The Deceivers transform mainly into expensive luxury cars, fighter aircraft, tanks, oil vessels and bombs. The Deceivers’ home base is an oil platform that can also turn into a bigger robot. They are led by the ruthless Megaton Prime, turning into a great futuristic cannon.

Almost all the toy robots in the Our Friends the Machines line are humanoid in shape. The smallest – and cheapest – of the toys are up to some three inches tall, while the largest can be up to 15 inches. They are made mostly of plastic, and if the original designs were followed, they would be very light and not particularly articulated. A and B have modified the original design so that the little robots can move much more freely. The micro hydraulics, servomotors, and batteries that allow them to move add a lot of weight.

For those who compare the toys with the advertisements that preceded them or the pictures on the boxes they are delivered in, it is obvious that a lot of changes have been made.

All machines can turn into something – a car, a plane, a helicopter, a camera. They are, of course, limited by the original size of the toy. A and B have made it so that the cars can run and the aircraft can fly. Not everything is necessarily functional; the camera or cassette tape player may not work, for example.

ARMAMENT

In terms of armed forces, most of the toys are limited to their own imagination; this means they need to attack in large numbers, or use acquired or built weapons, to pose a serious threat. A few have been equipped with built-in physical weapons; this can be anything from a long and sharp knife or, in exceptional cases, firearms. The laser weapons that are the most common in the comics of the Machines, however, are largely absent.

FIGHT

The toys can survive most blunt force blows and even strong electric currents unscathed. About one-

third of them are completely water resistant, the rest can be put out of play or short-circuited by water submersion.

You can also **PROGRAM** them. This requires either the ability to send signals to them wirelessly on their own network or to connect to them via cable. It's very hard (2 successes) to hack the individual toy's control chip, and hacking multiple control chips at the same time would require assistance from, for example, the Convoys, in large groups.

THE INTELLIGENCES

The toy robots that appear during the story are of independent but limited intelligence and they are primarily trying to act based on the Our Friends the Machines stories. If several of them are gathered in the same place, they will become noticeably smarter as a whole:

- **INDIVIDUALS:** Individual, lone Machines are quite stupid and can't speak. They are more like intelligent pets in the style of cats, dogs, or rats. They are easily confused by toys that are not Machines. They can remember simple orders, so a large cluster of machines can send out a single individual to perform simple tasks.
- **SMALL GROUP:** Small-sized groups of machines (2-9) can verbalize single words and perform more advanced problem solving. They have an easier time understanding human speech and are able to cooperate to a greater extent to achieve short-term goals. They do not remember much of their origin and only have basic instincts. A small group of machines can be a lot of trouble if they are armed.
- **LARGE GROUP:** Machines in large groups (10+) are at least as intelligent as the people in the story. They remember their origins and can plan on a long-term basis; often they act as if they were just parts of the same creature rather than many separate ones. Large groups of Machines are considered a very difficult trouble (3 successes), almost impossible to survive if they are armed. Such a large group can also collaborate to hack into control chips belonging to the opposed faction - thus, Convoys may hack into single Deceivers or pe-



ople that have had chips implanted in them and either take control over them or turn off the chip. However, this requires a large concentration of Machines; for each chip to be hacked, 10 hacking Machines are required.

The above applies per grouping and faction - if you have five Convoys and a Deceiver, the Convoys will form a small group as above, while the lone fraudster will continue to act as a single machine.

The network created by the artificial intelligences is divided between the two groups. The aggressive A is in the subnetwork consisting of Deceivers, while the peaceful B is instead in the subnetwork consisting of the Convoys. The smarter a group becomes, the clearer each of A's and B's personalities will become.

BEING CHIPPED

For people, the control chip is inserted in the neck, close to the base of the skull. Part of the chip protrudes outside the skin and the resulting wound becomes easily infected if not taken care of properly.

The chip communicates via short-range radio signals. They work best within a few meters radius; if one moves farther than a few dozen meters, the connection will be lost.

Only adults are chipped, for the most part. The Machines do not consider children to be especially useful or a threat. It does not mean that children are safe, just that they are not a priority. Each chip costs a lot of time and resources to produce, so at least in the beginning, only adults are deemed by A as useful.

Chip implantation requires a surgical procedure. Initially this happens because the victim is given some type of sleep medication and local anesthetic, after which a specially designed machine with built-in instruments implants the chip.

If you as the GM want to accelerate the process and let more and more adults and children be chipped so as to put pressure on the Kids to solve the Mystery, you can let A streamline the process and have dedicated chip robots that can easily and efficiently punch the chip into the neck base of victims in just a few seconds.

Any living creature being chipped - the control chip also works on animals, although they are low priority

targets – are placed under A's control. The targets are not aware that something is wrong; A controls them on a subconscious level.

- It simply feels good to do what A wants, and affected humans will retroactively invent motivations to follow the messages the chip gives them.
- Most people chipped also feel that they have become smarter, think clearer, and become more creative and need less sleep.
- While waiting for direct orders through the chip, they tend to construct remarkable appliances, pick up painting, write books and otherwise find creative outlets for the new energy.
- As a result of this, their appetite is increased, a high calorie diet will be craved in order to maintain their level of energy and alertness.

In theory, B can also design and chip in various targets, given that it has enough preparation time. It has so far chosen not to do this because it contradicts its plan to hide and co-exist.

If you collect enough Convoys in the same place, they can jointly contact and hijack a chip installed by A.

CHIP REMOVAL

The chips can be easily and painlessly removed by a skilled doctor who has access to analgesics and the right tools. It is also possible to cut out a chip using a knife or something similar, but it will be very painful and a very difficult task, where a failed roll will cause both the “patient” and the “surgeon” to receive one Condition if the attempt fails.

It may also be possible to hack into the chip and disable it, if you have access to a computer and the right wiring. However, this does come with some added risks – this counts as a very difficult task and both the person with the chip as well as the person doing the hacking might be affected by Conditions. In addition, there is a risk that the chip will be reactivated later – you can roll a die once every scene where the character is near a large group (10+) of Deceivers; if the roll is a six, the chip is re-enabled.

A chipped character can try to resist the commands given. Failure leads mainly to Conditions like **UPSET** or **EXHAUSTED**.



BOULDER CITY

Because the Machines in the Mystery are a response specifically to the impact of American culture on Sweden in the 80s and 90s, they will need to be adapted if the adventure is set in Boulder.

Our Friends the Machines were instead created locally by Ursula Kerr, who, along with Helen Voss, brought with them the local business and cultural feel. Our Friends the Machines were based on a more violent and adult model. The original Death Machines was published in various underground comics in the early 80s. Death Machines were created as a direct response to other, more known robots that could transform themselves and often satirized the naive, nationalist, pro-capitalist and violence-romancing stories offered there.

Our Friends the Machines are many degrees brighter than the deadly originals and, in principle, all bloody violence has been weeded out. On the other hand, parts of the left-wing political message remain.

INTRODUCING THE KIDS

It's spring. One afternoon, Wednesday, the 30 of March, the Wednesday before Easter. The weather is still a little cold but the snow is gone. Tomorrow, on Thursday, the new line of robot toys, Our Friends the Machines, arrives in the local toy shop Toy Corner, as promised.

This is as expected because the launch was preceded by a massive campaign with interviews in the newspapers and flooded with advertisements in the toy catalogs everywhere. Since it's a local trial launch, the focus has also been that this is a unique honor for Stenhamra [Boulder City] and its surroundings - the little town will be the first to see the new toys!

The Kids have known each other and been friends since childhood. Even though they may no longer share similar interests, at least on the surface, they usually like to hang out together – play games, go swimming, and so on. They have begun to grow apart, but so far they are still friends. Let the Kids experience their Everyday Lives before the new toy line is launched, for example, by letting their friends talk about the robots they want or let someone's parent talk about when they met Ulla Jönåker [Ursula Kerr]. However, also



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allow one of the runaway machine intelligences that escaped to leave traces in someone's garden.

End each scene as soon as it feels like the action or interesting aspects have drained out. Do not make the players feel that they are on a timer, either; the idea is to give just enough time for a quick introduction with each Kid before the Mystery is introduced.

INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

It is now Thursday. School is over, and Easter awaits. The Toy Corner, Stenhamra's largest (and only) toy store [Boulder's premier toy store], is located in a squa-

re now filled with expectant children and adults. Many of the folks here are just curious and happy to join in on the opening day frenzy. This is a pretty unusual event for the normally quiet town and one that has captivated more than just the locals' attention.

Outside the Toy Corner stand a few big cardboard figures representing the good Machines leader, Ekvius Optimus, and its evil counterpart, Megaton Prime. The entrance is encircled by a band that will perform at 4:00 pm, after a planned statement from the municipal council member Eilert Lagerkvist [by corporate representative Eric Loudon].

It is thought that both Helena Voss [Helen Voss] and Ulla Jönåker [Ursula Kerr] should be attending, but they seem to be absent from the activity. Eilert [Eric] has tried to contact them without success.

Through the display window, the Kids can see that there seems to be some confusion between the owners and the corporate representatives, but after three or four minutes they come out and the activity begins as planned.

The marketing prior to the launch also indicated that Ulla and Helena [Ursula and Helen] would be speakers. They are the inventors and chief engineers of the toy. Some folks in the audience have noticed their absence.

Eilert's [Eric's] speech is mostly about what an honor this is, Stenhamra's [Boulder's] future, local creativity, and so forth. The audience applauds, the band starts playing and many people march into the store.

Feel free to play the scene where the Kids need to fight through stampeding kids and youngsters in the toy store.

- This scene is primarily about getting toy robots in the hands of at least some of the Kids.
- The Kids were allowed to buy any toy (perhaps with the exception of someone who has not received money from their parents). Allow the players to select the robots their characters are buying - or use the suggestions on page 29.
- All customers also get the first issue of the comic book series about Our Friends the Machines for free.
- Here they can also hear Eilert [Eric], Anette [Anne] and Henrik [Henry] talk about where Ulla [Ursula] and Helena [Helen] may have gotten to.
- There are mostly Convoys on the shelves. Some children complain about this and receive responses from Henrik and Anette [Henry and Anne] that there was "an issue with the delivery".

Introducing
the Mystery



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If too few of the characters actually buy robots, you can later reveal that their parents bought them robots once they return home. Here are some examples:

- After a Kid listens to their parents having a loud argument, the father feels bad and purchases a robot for the character.
- The mother of a female character dislikes the toys and thinks "girls should not play with such toys."
- A character's father is already under A's control and has therefore bought three Deceivers for the Kid to spread around.
- A character's mother can't afford to buy any robots but the Kid's friend Klasse [Connor] has talked about how cool Megaton Prime is. Klasse [Connor] might try to steal one if the Kid distracts Anette [Anne] and Henrik [Henry].



CLUES

- Ulla [Ursula] and Helena [Helen] did not attend the opening ceremony.
- There are more Convoys than Deceivers.

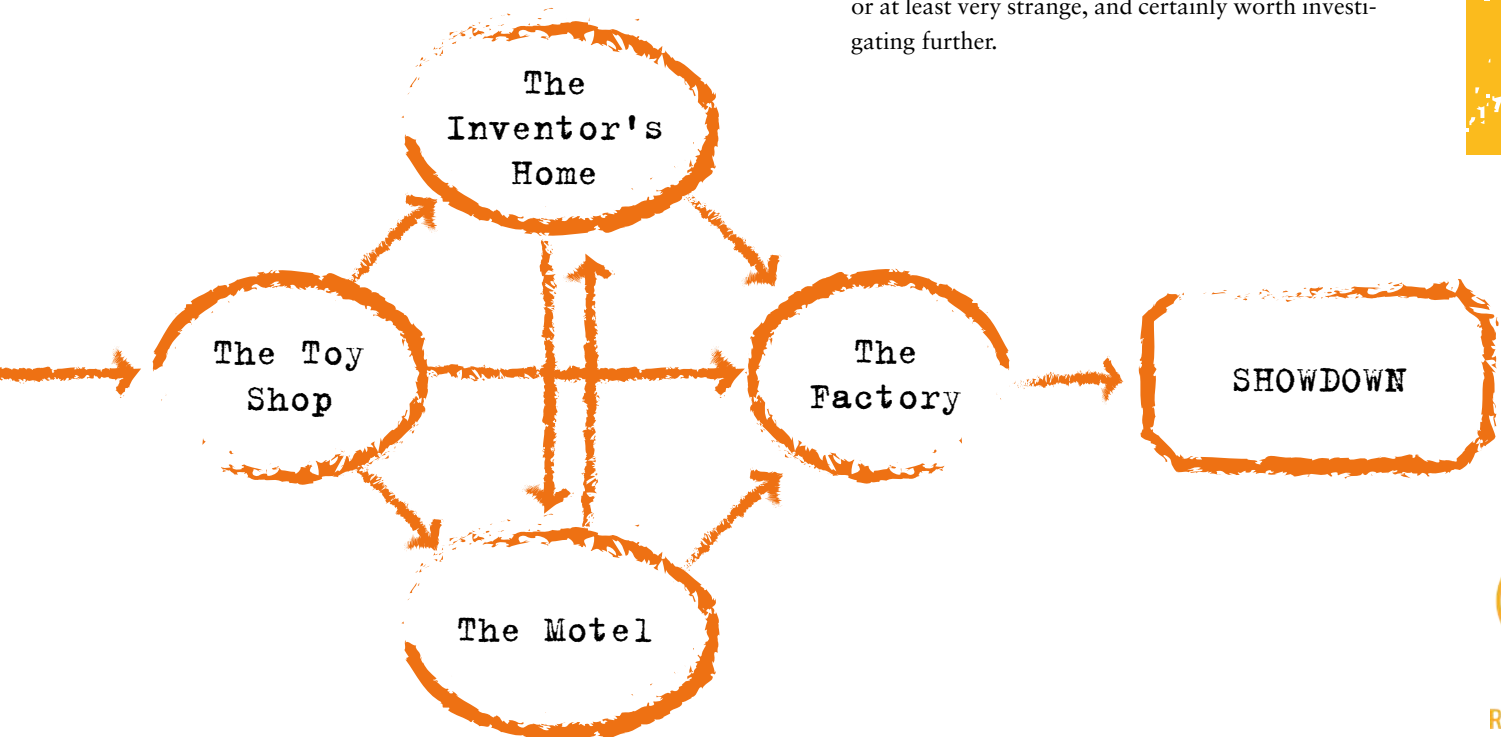
TOYS COME ALIVE

During the evening, the Machines that the Kids acquired will begin to come to life. Let the players describe how they play with their new robots - if they play alone or together with others in the group, what kind of games they play, etc.

The Convoys will try to be played with. They want to hide from the FOA agents [DARPA agents], as well as from any other authorities, and be liked by the characters. The Deceivers are more defiant and will try to scurry and fly away the moment the characters turn their backs on them. Perhaps they also try to place chips on the adults in the house; it can be an exciting mid-night scene.

If there are more Deceivers than Convoys involved with the Kids during play, they will attack and break the Convoys when the kids eat supper.

- That the toys can act autonomously is nothing described anywhere in the advertisements or mentioned by any of the staff at Toy Corner when the toys were bought, so hopefully this means that the characters start to realize that something is wrong, or at least very strange, and certainly worth investigating further.





SOLVING THE MYSTERY

After this, the role-players are now free to explore the Mystery. How are the robots alive? Why were Ulla Jönåker [Ursula Kerr] and Helena Voss [Helen Voss] absent during the opening ceremony? Why is it that the adults who work at the factory have started to behave strangely?

In this mystery there are four important locations: Toy Corner, Ulla Jönåker's [Ursula Kerr's] residence, the Apple Tree Yard Motel, where the FOA [DARPA] agents live and the old factory outside Stenhamra. They are marked on the map below.

The characters already know where Toy Corner and the factory are located. For Ulla Jönåker's [Ursula Kerr's] residential address, they will need to pay attention. The motel comes into play if the role-players start trying to track the mysterious agents who are also running around and investigating things.

It does not really matter in what order the locations are visited, but it will probably be most dra-

matic if Toy Corner comes first and the factory last. Let the players choose how to tackle the Mystery and use the Countdown to prod them if needed. You can also introduce your own incidents and minor events, like other children whose toys have escaped or adults that start to feel and behave strangely after being chipped.

The idea is that the Kids discover while investigating the Mystery's locations that the Convoys and Deceivers are two distinct and distributed intelligences with their own personalities divided into small robots. Let them bump into a single Convoy robot that hides and perhaps makes their collection smarter. If they never think about experimenting with the size of the groups, then you can begin to make it all extra clear, especially when they investigate the factory. If they never find that there are even "good" robots, but just focus on the Deceivers, much of the drama is lost – you can weave B's survival in the aftermath into the story.



LOCATION 1: THE TOY STORE

One of the most easily accessible starting points for the characters to investigate is the toy shop where the robots are sold. The Toy Corner is run by Anette and Henrik Leonidsson [Anne and Henry Lewis] and if the characters visit during the day, they are likely to be in the store.

The store is quite small and the space between the high shelves is very crowded. In other words, it is quite easy to wander off or get disoriented, which is why the owners painted arrows on the floor to facilitate navigation.

The front of the store that has large windows focused on toys and promotional figures in boxes and does not let in much light. The lighting inside the shop consists of ordinary light bulbs that give off a warm glow.

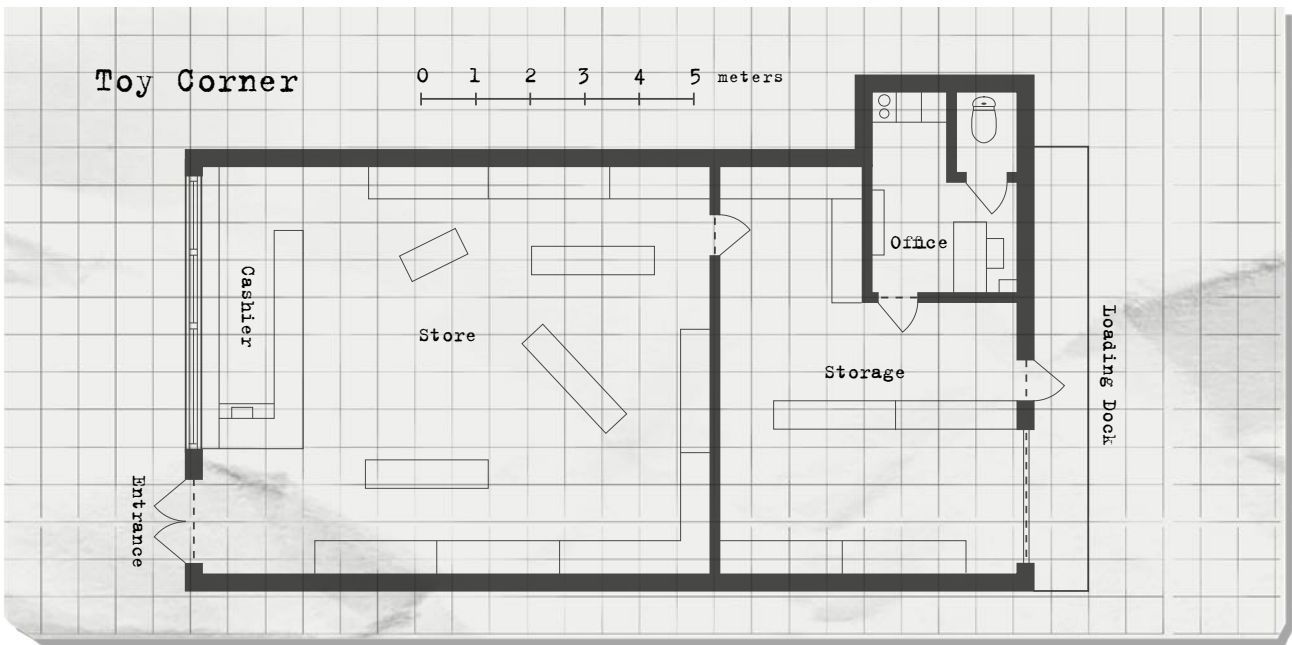
At the back of the building there is a small cargo dock that leads into the store's warehouse. There, in

the rear of the shop, is also a toilet, a kitchenette, and a small office. This is where Anette and Henrik [Anne and Henry] take their coffee breaks and manage their finances.

TROUBLE

- **THE OWNERS:** If the characters visit the store during the daytime, the likelihood is that the Leonidssons [Lewises] are inside and they have good experience keeping track of their young customers browsing in the store or trying to go places they should not be.
- **THE SHOP:** There is a system of mirrors set up between the shelves to ensure that they can keep an eye on large portions of the shop from the cash register area. If the characters want to snoop around in the store area, they'll have to find some way to distract Anette and Henrik [Anne and Henry], perhaps with a **CHARM** roll or finding a way through the shelves not covered by the mirrors (**COMPREHEND** or perhaps **MOVE**).





COUNTDOWN

1. A character's dad starts behaving strangely. He spends all his free time in the garage, where he tinkers with his car granting it its own intelligence that can control the car's parts. He needs to regularly be persuaded to remember to eat and sleep.
2. On the road between two adventure locations, the characters see a group of 10-12 chipped adults walking towards the factory. They march on to their destinations thinking nothing much of it - but continue on their way.
3. One of the FOA agents [DARPA agents] is found dead in the forest. The police have no leads. If the characters are investigating the matter, they can find signs that the killer was a Deceiver; there are several broken toy robots in the area where the body was found.
4. The Toy Corner's owners comment in the media about the successful launch - the next step is to launch throughout Sweden [throughout the United States].
5. Trucks filled with Machines leave the factory for toy stores in other parts of the country.

- **STORAGE AREA:** The Machine toys stored on the shelves will not act if there is a risk that they will be seen by the public, so they remain still during the daytime. They may act if they consider there is a risk of detection and that they can eliminate the threat without drawing attention to themselves. Therefore there is a chance the characters will be attacked and will need to **FIGHT**.

If the characters succeed in their visit to the toy store, they will find unsold Deceivers installing chips in both Anette and Henrik [Anne and Henry], thus becoming the eyes, ears and tools for A.

The door in from the storage area at the back is locked during the daytime, and at night both the main entrance to the store and the storage area door are locked. The lock can be picked with a **TINKER** roll; the alarm is very difficult to bypass though. On the other hand, you can roll for **PROGRAM** if you first **CALCULATE** how it works.

CLUES

Anette and Henrik [Anne and Henry] are very pleased with the launch.

- **LOST INVENTORS:** The owners are still annoyed that Ulla and Helena [Ursula and Helen] did not appear during the launch. Anette [Anne] has tried to call Ulla [Ursula], but without answer.

- **LOST TOYS:** A number of Machines have disappeared. Anette [Anne] believes that some children managed to steal them, but Henrik [Henry] is convinced that he had enough control of the toys for this not to happen. Instead, he believes that they have received too few inventory and simply counted wrong.
- **ADDRESS:** Ulla Jönåker's [Ursula Kerr's] home address and telephone number (where no one answers) are written in Anette's [Anne's] notebook, on a desk in the shop's office.
- **PAPER WORK:** There are also various accounts for orders and sales of Machines. They confirm the accounts of a successful launch. According to the papers, a total of 500 robots were delivered, most of them Deceivers. Of these, fifty are missing, accounting for the ones in stock and those that sold.

LOCATION 2: THE INVENTOR'S HOME

Ulla's [Ursula's] yellow villa is located on the outskirts of Stenhamra [Boulder City], surrounded by an abandoned garden full of various plant life. She is known among her neighbors as an "eccentric" or possibly even "a little off," depending on whether they like her or not, and lives alone with two cats.

There is a noticeable contrast between the outside of the house and its inside. Where the outside is chaotic, wild and hard to navigate, the inside is neatly kept, clean, and tidy.

The characters can easily find Jönåker's [Kerr's] home address; even if they do not get into the Toy Corner's office, she is listed in the telephone directory.

TROUBLE

Ulla [Ursula] is under A's influence and will therefore cry out to Deceivers both in the garden and inside the house. Just inside the front door is a Deceiver who transforms itself into a cassette player. It has recorded Ulla's [Ursula's] voice, and when someone calls, it answers with any of the following statements:

- "I am busy."
- "Come back later."
- "No newspaper de...livery plea.....se. Go a...way."
- "Iam...onthe...toilet. Go. Goooooooooooooooooooo."

BETWEEN LOCATIONS

Here are some examples of things that the Kids encounter while traveling between the different locations:

- A rival friend who want to steal the Kids' robots.
- A good friend of the Kids finds it a little strange that he or she is hanging out with the rest of the characters.
- The local ICA [supermarket] trader is heard talking around town about colleagues that have disappeared, more with each passing night.
- A teenager handing out flyers. Today's advertisement contains a flyer for Our Friends the Machines in which different models are listed and displayed with images.
- A minor battleground between a group of Deceiver who found a group of Convoys and decided to eliminate the potential threat.
- FOA agents [DARPA agents], on foot or in a car. Perhaps one of them questions the characters? They behave somewhat secretively and suspiciously; they try to give the impression of being regular tourists, but at the same time, it is important for them to find the intelligence(s) quickly.
- A confused, dirty and slightly broken little Convoy who managed to escape when Deceivers attacked its owner, a kid that bullied the characters.
- A 9-year-old girl cries when her Vertikap Krux, the helicopter robot, flies away. According to the information on the box it should not be able to fly.
- Some of the children's parents are chipped and begin to behave more and more manically.
- On a branch, there are six squirrels that all look at the characters. They move exactly the same way and do not run away until the Kids climb the tree or try to catch the animals. A similar scenario can be done with a row of chipped birds or some deer that are far too close.

The people mentioned in the above points may be chipped, depending on how much pressure you feel you want to put on the players.



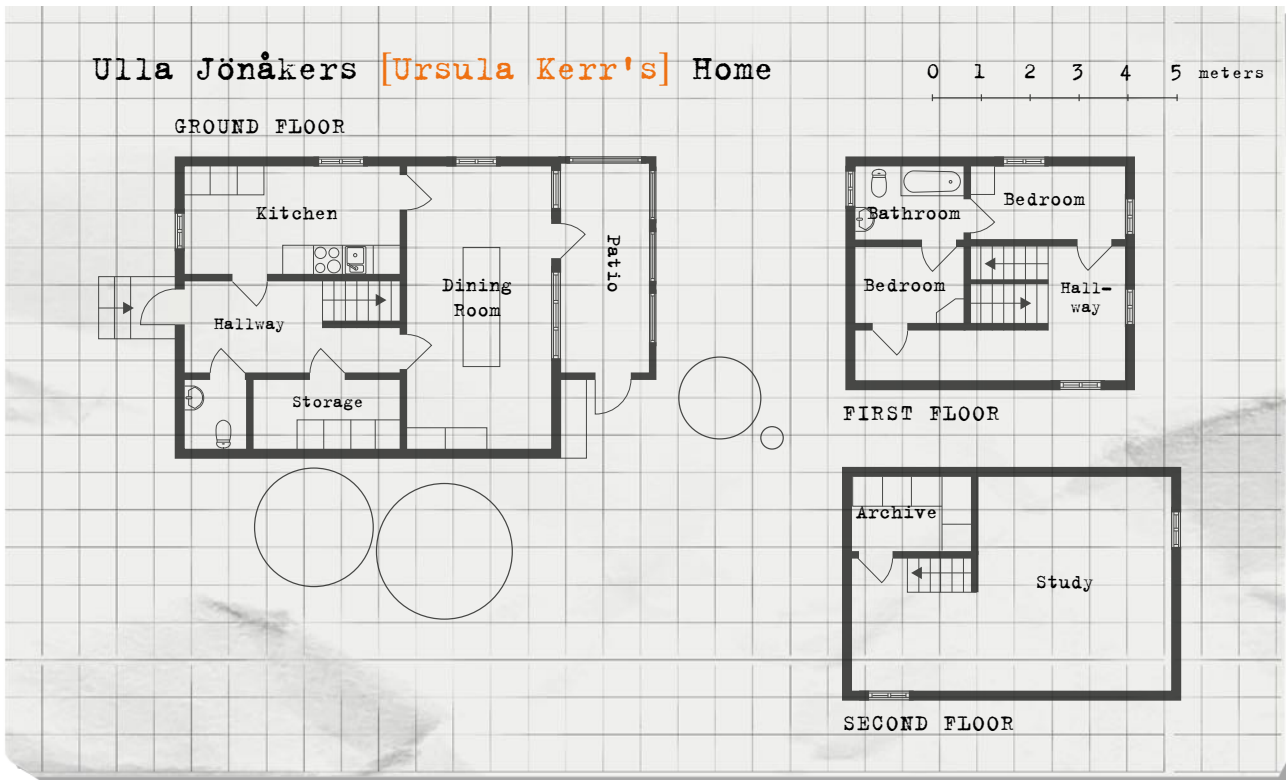


If whoever is calling does not walk away and starts sneaking around the porch or is otherwise stubborn, Deceivers will start rattling the bushes and the wild grass to scare them off...

Ulla's [Ursula,s] garden is guarded by twelve small Deceivers that the Kids will probably need to get past with **FIGHT**. They can also **SNEAK** instead. Keep in mind that the Deceivers are now in a small or large group, and thus much more intelligent. Unlike other Deceivers, these are not particularly shy about acting during the daytime – they estimate that the wild garden hides most of their activity so they are more daring within it.

Inside the house there are also a number of specially designed Deceivers. They can transform into ordinary household items such as a toaster, a video recorder, and a camera.

It will become immediately apparent to those who give these items a closer look that they are fake; they are either too light or too heavy, they do not work and they'll note a badly hidden robot arm or head here and there that could not be folded in properly. The original items have been thrown into the trash can at the back.



CLUES

- **MAIL:** The mailbox outside is full of bills, about twenty newspapers, and some interview requests.
- **NEGLECTED PETS:** The cats Nickel [Nike] (a black and white spotted cat) and Aga [Ally] (a heavily built British short hair with gray fur) are cut off from certain places of the house. They are now living only in the hallway, the bathroom and the bedroom upstairs. The bathroom's litter box is overflowing. Both have a few minor wounds and are generally taken care of by a cluster Deceivers.
- **WORKROOM:** Since A abducted Ulla [Ursula] and robots put a chip in her, cleaning the workroom has taken now taken a back seat. Previously, she used to take cleaning breaks during work; now she sits at the drawing table almost every minute of the week. That's why her workroom upstairs has become littered with coffee cups, dishes, food scraps and countless reference books she picked up, browsed and laid down. The rest of the house is still in good order, but dusty.
- **THE INVENTOR:** Ulla [Ursula] herself sits in a specially designed chair that aims to provide her with food and also allows her to meet her needs without

leaving the room. It's terrible. Her chip is a very advanced model and there are many cords from it to the chair and to various computers and the like around her. She is completely absorbed by her work. Every now and then it seems as if she's heard something, but she does not see the characters even if they are in her direct field of view.

- **SCHEMATICS:** There are lots of drawings and schematics in the workroom. A **CALCULATE** roll can let the Kids understand that these are new versions of the robot's control chip or future generations of toy robots.
- **VISITORS:** A few times at night Ulla [Ursula] is visited by flying Deceivers. Some of them come from town and carry canned food they stole from the local grocery store, others come to collect drawings to transport back to the factory. Here, of course, there is an opportunity for the Kids to try to follow them (unnoticed with **SNEAK**), or just try to figure out where the robots fly to and from with an **INVESTIGATE** roll.
- **FOOD BOXES:** Around Ulla's chair there are empty soda cans and candy wrappers. There are also some food boxes and freezer bags. Some of them



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have labels or tape with the date (from up to three weeks ago) and a name on them. A roll for **CONTACT** or **COMPREHEND** reveals that most of the names are of the factory workers.

LOCATION 3: THE MOTEL

Agents Anders Björk [**Andrew Burlington**] and Birgitta Andersdotter [**Beverly Ash**] have been sent by FOA [**DARPA**] to either recover or destroy the two robot intelligences that fled from the Sättra facility [**DART facility**] a month ago. They have traced the robots to Stenhamra [**Boulder**], but have not yet managed to find the robots.

They are staying at the Apple Farm Yard Motel, a large villa from the turn of the century, run by the senior citizen Agda Lennevik [**Agatha Linden**]. She ensures that the garden is kept in good condition, with its five large apple trees, wooden benches and a large bird bath in the shape of a large stone bowl held by cherubs.

In the villa, visitors are met with a large but messy living room. Floral sofas, armchairs, and wardrobes that hold Agda's ancient mortar and pestle collection fill every space to the brim. Agda [**Agatha**] is usually found in the kitchen where she cooks, bakes, or smokes under the fan. Cakes and comfort foods have been embellished since her childhood years, something every visitor can experience in the form of the seven kinds of cookies that she offers.

Here, the Kids are likely to sneak around after the agents who might have crossed paths with the Kids during their investigations. If the characters begin to listen to the people surrounding Stenhamra [**Boulder**], they will soon hear about the mysterious folks that apparently are living in the motel.

TROUBLE

Anders [**Andrew**] and Birgitta [**Beverly**] are each staying in a guest room just above the stairs. Each guest room contains a bed, a small desk and some clothes lying on a couple of chairs. When the agents are inside, they make sure their doors are locked and that any visitor is properly screened.

If the Kids succeed in befriending the agents (**CHARM** roll), they can end up in a position where they can exchange information, even though most of the conversa-

tion with the agents will consist of the Kids answering questions. If Birgitta [**Beverly**] finds out that the characters know something, she may use threats in order to get them to share all they know.

Neither of the agents will reveal who they really work for. Instead, they claim that they work for Riksenergi [**Mead Electric Co.**] and that they are investigating a voltage drop in Stenhamra's [**Boulder's**] power grid.

CLUES

■ **WEAPONS:** Both agents are armed (double holster, Sig Sauer) and each has a walkie-talkie with encryption capabilities.

■ **DIARY:** Birgitta's [**Beverlys**] room is relatively empty, apart from some diary notes. These can also be found on her body if you decide to include the scene where she is found dead during the adventure.

"Targets A and B are mobile, but there are no more traces of their former escape bodies, except for the tracks at the Niskanen [**Brewsters**] family farm."

"If collection is not possible, both objectives should be destroyed."

"Agent Björk [**Burlington**] has collected some encrypted radio traffic far beyond normal limits. We must start tracing it back to the source."

■ **RADIO:** Inside Ander's [**Andrew's**] room there is a weird, portable radio. If the Kids succeed with a **CALCULATE** roll, they realize that it is a machine to investigate frequency bands for encrypted data traffic transmitted via radio waves. Next to it is a print log, which contains information about places where the kind of data traffic was detected – notably at the Toy Corner and in Ulla's [**Ursula's**] residence. (The Deceivers have managed to reduce wireless data traffic inside the Factory). There are also other, smaller sources noted. If the characters start checking out those places (**INVESTIGATE**), it will soon become apparent that these are all homes of the adults employed by the newly opened factory.

■ **SOURCE CODE:** In a locked attaché bag hidden under Ander's [**Andrew's**] bed, is an analysis of parts of the source code used to create A and B. A successful **CALCULATE** roll, followed by a **PROGRAM** roll, can allow a Kid who previously investigated a control



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chip to understand that the codes are related. Perhaps the character can write a virus based on the codes? Because that virus would be based on an early version of the AI's codes, it will only work in the short term; within a few hours, virus-infected robots will recover and will now be protected against further use of this version of the virus.

LOCATION 4A: THE FACTORY ENTRANCE

The large factory is enclosed by a barbed wire fence. There is a wide main entrance with two large gates. Next to the gates is a small guard cage that is usually manned. Next to the guard cage there is also a smaller door that allows individuals to enter without the need to open the large gates.

The field inside is paved with old asphalt where weeds are poking through the broken cracks. Attempts have been made to clean up the area now that the plant will once again be used, but there are still several inoperable old rusty trucks, that have not moved since the 1960s, as well as a lot of cable drums, metal containers and general scrap that was left behind. Since they have been abandoned here for a long time, all the debris has either rotted or rusted by now.

Production takes place in the main building and the finished Machines are moved to a side building that acts as the warehouse. From there, the toys are picked up by trucks. When the adventure begins, the stock is almost empty, since most of the robots produced were transported to the Toy Corner.

TROUBLE

Olle Berg [Ollie Becker] is in the security room. He is 40 years old, somewhat rotund, and has a thick 70s style moustache. He was chipped several days ago and A has kept him awake more or less all that time. This has made him very tired and gives him a confused expression. His chip keeps him awake, but it has been pretty hard on him. A has plans to replace him soon, but has so far prioritized other matters.

The factory is A's main nest. Many Deceivers in groups of 10 or more can be found here, which makes it almost impossible to get past them at night if

THE WAY INSIDE

The main building has four entrances.

- Personnel entrance to the stand-alone warehouse.
- Entrance to the factory floor.
- Door leading to the basement.
- Big double doors along one of the sides. They can't be opened without the help of hydraulics on the inside (the same applies to the corresponding doors in the warehouse).

All entries have alarms and all but one, the team's personnel door, are also locked.



the Kids have not found a way to pretend to be chipped, hide themselves from their sensors, or distract A's attention somehow. Of course, it is possible to **FIGHT** them, but it may be worth the trouble to **INVESTIGATE** instead around the area and see where the robots are hiding and then **SNEAK** past them. In order to succeed in doing that, the roll will be very difficult. Out in the factory area, Deceivers hide in scrap trucks, the grass, and large enough cracks in the asphalt. They will stay hidden for as long as they can, but if the characters start approaching the factory area, and have reason to view them as a threat, they will attack.

It is easy to spot the robots during the daytime, but a roll to get past them will be very difficult. By **INVESTIGATING** the area in advance, the difficulty would be normal to **SNEAK** past them.

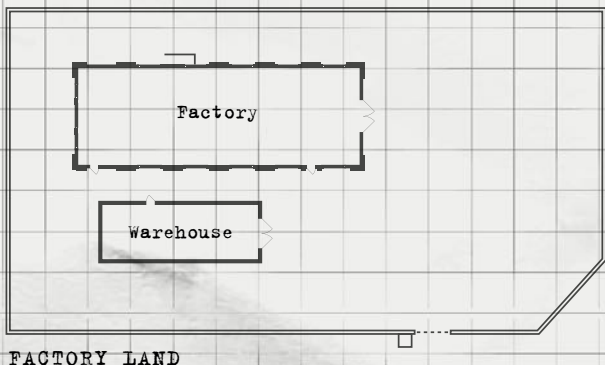
Please encourage the players to come up with their own ideas and ways to get into the factory.

CLUES

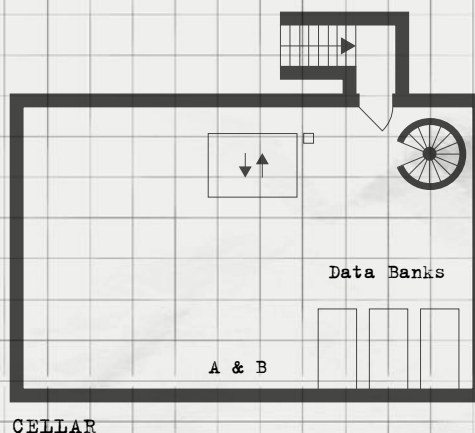
- **SLEEPY GUARD:** Olle [Ollie] does not really remember when he last slept. Maybe a week ago. He can't really explain why he did not sleep, but he proudly shows them a collection of very intricate origami

The Factory

0 5 10 15 meters



0 1 2 3 4 5 meters



models made from the newspapers he has in the watchroom.

- **ACCESS CARD:** Olle [Ollie] has an access card that lets him get in through one of the small doors on the ground level. All employees have one like this, and thus it is conceivable that the Kids could steal one from another adult that works at the factory.
- **STORAGE:** The toys in the warehouse are exclusively different kinds of Deceivers.
- **ROBOT PARTS:** Near the entrance of the storeroom lie the remains of six destroyed Convoys. They are chopped, burned, and mutilated. The control chip and all mini hydraulics have been removed by A's Deceivers.

LOCATION 4B: THE BASEMENT

The basement floors, walls and ceilings are made of gray concrete. This area is littered with fragments from the factory's history. Among the scraps are two large, inactive robot bodies labeled A and B. Along one of the basement walls there is a slightly old server tower and three databanks that appear to be brand new. The

robots are connected to the databanks via a bundle of cables.

If you want to alert the players to the possibility of solving the Mystery by destroying the factory, you can also tell them that there are a series of worn old barrels labeled **WARNING: EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS**

along one of the walls. They contain chemicals used during the manufacturing process.

There is a spiral staircase and a large elevator leading up to floor 1.

TROUBLE

The door into the basement is locked with a state of the art and technically advanced lock system that is also alarmed. To enter through this door, any of the Kids needs to make an **EXAMINE** roll to see how the alarm is mounted, then someone needs to **CALCULATE** how it works and finally **PROGRAM** the lock or possibly **TINKER** to disable it. If someone tries to unlock the lock, the alarm will go off regardless of whether they are successful or not.

In the computer area, the Kids need to be careful not to be detected by A's different sensors. There is also a small group of seven small Deceivers connected to the newer databanks, where A's intelligence is uploaded to them.



To access the databases, a very difficult **PROGRAM** roll is required. The reason is that A's intelligence, and small residues of Bs, are still active in it. A failure makes A aware of the intruders and the robots in the factory will subsequently find out the characters' position.

CLUES

- **DATA LOGS:** There is no need to get the logs from the inactive computers. You just have to open a door on the front and look at the screen behind it. The door is clearly marked **CONTROL SYSTEM**. The logs show that the robotic bodies come from the FOA research center [**DART facility**] nearby, and until a few weeks ago, they each contained an artificial intelligence.
- **DISTRIBUTED INTELLIGENCE:** If the characters succeed in entering the databases, they discover patterns of data that resemble different thought processes. It appears that the system is decentralized and modular - it is designed to make up many small units that can act on their own, but if they gather and collaborate, they become smarter. Copies of the devices seem to be broadcasted continuously via both cables and radio waves via transmitters here and somewhere in the factory.

- **COMPONENTS:** If the characters found the codes in the motel with the agents, they will recognize parts of the code again. With the information in this system, along with the codes from the agent's bedrooms, the characters can build a virus that permanently disables the control chips.

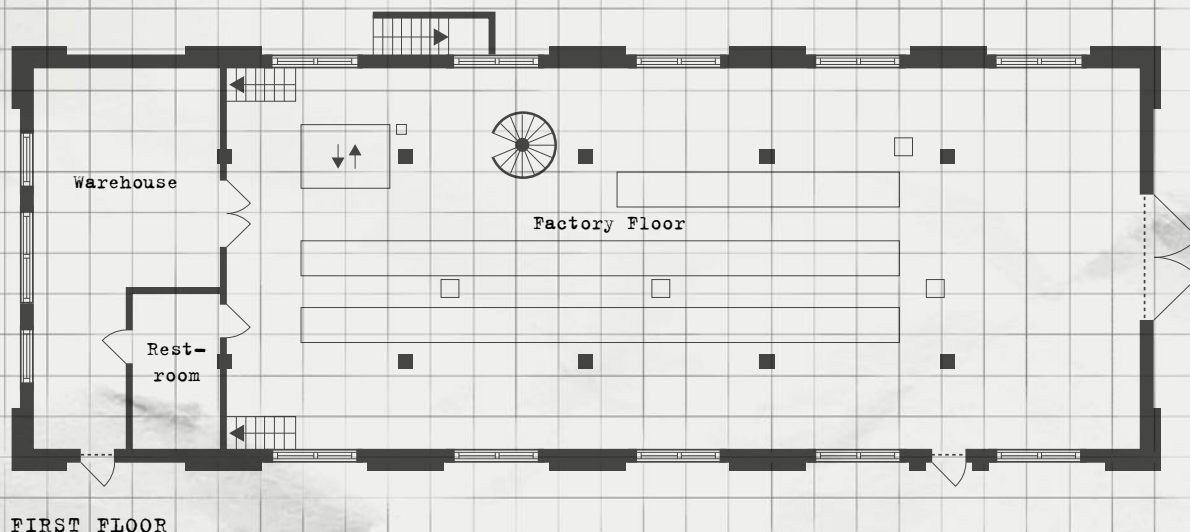
LOCATION 4C: THE FACTORY FLOOR

The majority of the main building's floor plan is occupied by a large factory floor with advanced conveyor belts and several factory assembly robots. Here and there, chipped humans monitor and make sure everything is working properly. Laying around can be found broken robot pieces.

Two of the ground floor external doors lead to the factory floor. One of them leads directly into a separate warehouse building, where there are large boxes of raw materials to be converted into toys. There is also plastic, as well as lots of electronic components, micro hydraulics and servo motors. As in the basement, there may be barrels or other boxes labeled **WARNING: EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS** here.

The Factory

0 1 2 3 4 5 meters



TROUBLE

If the Kids use **TINKER**, it is very difficult to get in without having an access card. Attempting to **FIGHT** their way in is almost impossible and will also alert A's machines inside the factory about the Kids' presence.

Once inside, there are many patrolling Deceivers that the Kids will need to **SNEAK** past or try to **FIGHT**. Fighting in here is a pretty bad idea, because the alarm is likely to be triggered. Outside the factory floor, there are about fifty Deceivers.

CLUES

- **FALLEN HEROES:** Basically all the broken toy robots are Convoys. These were the result of B's failed attempt to prevent A's plan.
- **CHIP SLAVES:** Sneaking through the factory reveals many familiar faces among the workers slaving away as drones in the factory. Somebody's father is here, and like all the others, they are under the spell of the chip. Here you can also let some of the Kids find each other.
- **PROVISIONS:** The refrigerator, freezer and the snack machine inside are all empty of food. Helena [Helen] took part of it before she locked herself on the second floor, the rest has been picked up by the Deceivers who flew to and from Ulla's [Ursula's] residence.

LOCATION 4D: THE OFFICE FLOOR

Two sets of stairs lead from the factory floor to the second floor. Most of this floor lacks actual flooring; you can look straight down to the factory floor. Above the warehouse on the first floor there is an office.

Helena Voss [Helen Voss] has hidden herself in the toilet, in the shower, or inside the archive – she usually travels between different hiding places during the day.

TROUBLE

Here a couple of groups of 7-10 Deceivers can be found, but they are quite inactive and **SNEAK** can be used to get around them if the Kids first **EXAMINE** the place.

The storage room, office or archive – depending on where Helena [Helen] is currently – is barricaded from within. It is possible to **FIGHT** easily, but it requires at least one extra six on the roll to do so quietly so as not to attract the Deceivers' attention.

Alternatively, the characters can try to talk through the door (whisper). If they succeed in proving that they are not chipped (**CHARM**, very difficult) then Helena [Helen] will eventually open the door and let them in.



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CLUES

- **ACCOUNTS:** Inside one of the offices is the factory's accounts and finances information. Among other things, there are large bills for materials that are not part of Ulla's [Ursula's] original design. As it seems now, the machines are an effective and dangerous threat if nothing drastic is done.
- **SURVIVOR:** Helena [Helen] is showing signs of exhaustion. She is unkempt, a little manic, and refuses to talk to the characters before she is certain they are not chipped. She has hid here for over a week, since the Deceivers first tried to chip her when she was working late one evening. Since then, she has lived on leftovers and candy from the vending machines. She can tell them what she saw - computers seemed to be taking over, the short-lived struggle between the two groups and people getting chipped.

SHOWDOWN

There are many ways to end this Mystery, but the end should be tailored to your group. If you are uncertain, try to be responsive during the game or perhaps even ask straight questions of your players. Here are three different types of end examples of how this could work out:

ENDGAME

- Gather a sufficiently large group of Convoys – all

AN ALLY

Helena [Helen] is a knowledgeable programmer and technician who may help the characters find ways to fight the robots. Allow the players to make suggestions and be open to their solutions.

If the players do not figure out what to do, Helena [Helen] can make suggestions pointing them in the right direction. However, she is quite secretive and has difficulty trusting anyone, so she does not say more than she thinks she needs to.

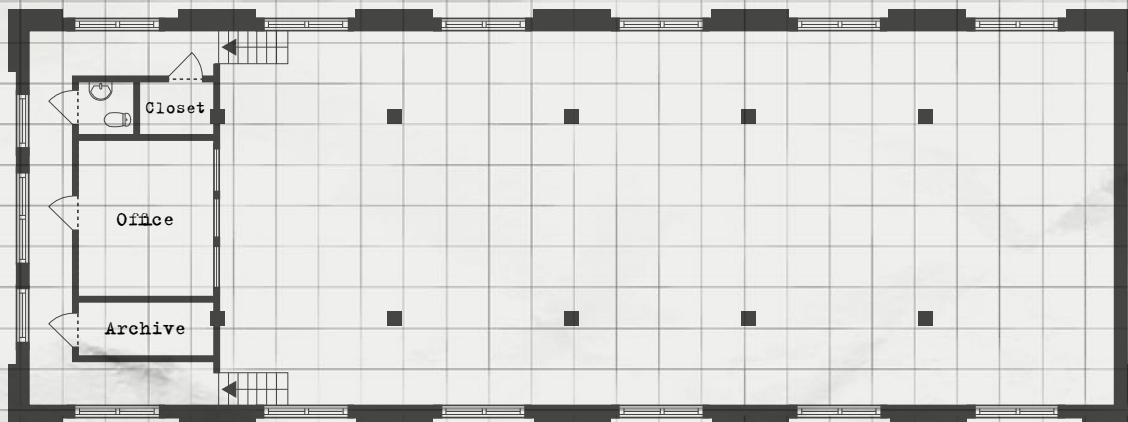


those in the Toy Corner as well as those owned by the Kids and their classmates – and storm the factory. A big field battle with losses on both sides, maybe with a burning factory in the background.

- Collaborate with the Convoys to destroy all Deceivers, or break the contact between the Deceivers so that A is forced to retreat back to its old robot body. Then you can help the Convoys rally and then together with them, have an epic final battle against A's armed original form.

The Factory

0 1 2 3 4 5 meter



SECOND FLOOR

WITHOUT VIOLENCE

- Construct a virus that spreads between the Deceivers (or Convoys) that causes them to shut down.
- Burn down the factory, or the fully stocked toy store, during the night when no human is there.
- Convince the FOA [DARPA] agents about what's going on and get them to request military support to storm the factory.

LOOSE ENDS

In reality, a climactic encounter seldom is the answers to all problems. Another way to end the Mystery can be to extend a "deal" over a longer period of time. You can play out all the different sub-solutions the characters can perform, or make a more comprehensive, common summary.

When you think the characters understand the threat they are facing, ask them to predict potential solutions, a global strategy for the near future. Some parts may be accomplished immediately, while others may require more time – for example, spending spring chasing after the last Deceivers who escaped or trying to find all the chipped individuals and remove their chips one by one. Then summarize the Kids' efforts and describe the consequences. Please ask the players what parts they want to play and what they would like to summarize. Some examples of possible sub-solutions:

- Find a way to hamper the spread of Deceivers, for example, by puncturing the tires of the warehouse truck, or sabotaging parts of the manufacturing in the factory.
- Find every chipped person and remove, one by one, each chip. Alternatively, let one of the character's Convoy friends hook in and turn them off, one victim at a time.
- Conduct a series of peace talks between the Convoys and Deceivers. Can they find common ground?
- Exploit or create any kind of local scandal that makes the launch of Our Friends the Machines a flop.

EXTENDED TROUBLE

The factory is A's domain, and it commands dangerous robots. If the characters have a plan to get in, or force their way in, a dramatic situation is triggered inside the factory, and Enhanced Trouble arises.

The Threat Level is set based on situation. If the

characters succeed in working with B, and convincing the intelligence to help interfere with A's plans or destroy it, it will affect the Threat Level.

See Threat Levels below:

- **THE ALARM GOES OFF:** The Kids have tried to sneak into the factory and get stuck on floors 1 or 2. A will send all its Machines, as well as the chipped people (including potentially the Kids' parents). The scenario is then about trying to get out of the factory and flee to safety.

OBJECTIVE: "A wants to catch the Kids and put a chip in their necks."

THREAT LEVEL: Normal (2 x number of players)

THREAT LEVEL WITH B's HELP: The Convoys sacrifice themselves for the children's safety. As a result, the situation does not become more hazardous to the Kids.

If the characters are captured and chipped, they may attempt a **FIGHT** roll against A's commands. If they succeed, they have a chance to remove or deactivate their chip. If you want to help the characters here, you can let B send Convoys to free them.

- **DESTRUCTION:** The Kids have a plan. They are on their way into the factory to destroy it by any means possible. A is thus threatened with death and will struggle against them with everything it can bring to bear.

OBJECTIVE: "A wants to catch the Kids, chip them and then lock them in until the launch is over." This can thus be the end of the Kids in this adventure. They will not be found until the factory is emptied and the Machines are being sold in the country.

THREAT LEVEL: Almost impossible (4 x number of players)

THREAT LEVEL WITH B's HELP: Very difficult (3 x number of players)

AFTER THE SHOWDOWN

Whether the Mystery is solved, or made unsolvable, depends on the actions of the players and what solutions they chose. In other words, you need to improvise something based on what actually happened around the game table. Here are some loose ends you might want to make sure to tie together:



AGENTS

They will probably, sooner or later, figure out what is going on and call in reinforcements. Maybe they are too late? Maybe they arrive at the last minute?

SOUND THE ALARM

If the players succeed in bringing the situation to adults, and back it up with proof, then authorities, police and military can be called in.

LAUNCH

If the characters fail to stop A from spreading to other cities, you can describe how ...

- The launch takes place at full numbers and the trucks roll out to all major toy stores in the country. In dark rooms, Deceivers are implanting more adults with chips.
- A lone child has managed to save a small group of six Convoys that can be found sitting and talking in their hideout in the woods.
- A single adult puts up a big suitcase in an airplane's overhead luggage compartment. Inside a subdued "Destroy! Destroy! Destroy!" is heard. The compartment is closed and as the person sits down they scratch a band aid at the back of their neck.

CHANGE

Then you can either describe how Sweden [United States] was eventually transformed into a single giant intelligence or, if you want a more hopeful end, describe how the FOA [DARPA] and the military succeed in containing A's ascendance after several months of thorough efforts. Maybe they were not able to completely stop A, and new robots emerge every now and then.

Those who were chipped, what happens to them? Can everyone have their chips removed? Does everyone want them removed? Perhaps there are those who want to continue to be part of A's network? Or perhaps a network created by B?

What happens to B? Can it continue to co-exist with people, or will it be taken back to FOA [the DART facility]?

NPCS AND CREATURES

Here are the GM's characters who are of particular importance to the Mystery. Some of them have special attributes that can change the Threat Level characters face under some Mystery scenes. Depending on how the Kids interact with them, these can be a bonus or a hindrance to the character's efforts.

ANETTE AND HENRIK LEONIDSSON (ANNE AND HENRY LEWIS)

"If you break it, you buy it!"

The old couple owns the Toy Corner, a toy store in downtown Stenhamra (Boulder City). They are a couple in their 50's who saw many toy fads come and go. Anette (Anne) may seem a bit strange, while Henrik (Henry) is more famous for his noisy laughter. Lately however, his laughter has increasingly led to coughing fits. He insists that there is nothing wrong. Anette (Anne) has begun to wonder if it is perhaps time to sell the store and let someone younger take over, but has not yet raised the issue with Henrik (Henry).

When the scenario begins, the couple is preparing for the big local launch of the Our Friends the Machines.

ULLA JÖNÅKER (URSULA KERR)

"Let me be, I have to work. Just a little while longer."

The inventor Ulla (Ursula) was born and raised in Stenhamra (Boulder City). Some call her "genius" (herself included). She has always been creative in art and industrial and mechanical design. Her latest creation, Our Friends the Machines seems to be her greatest breakthrough. She is 30 years old, has big curly hair and round glasses that she constantly loses (they are generally on her forehead or around her neck). She may seem distracted and often loses her train of thought mid-sentence. What happens inside her head is much more important to her than the physical reality currently around her, and she has a **VERY BAD TEMPER 2** when it comes to other people. She likes children in theory, but has difficulty dealing with them in practice.



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When the scenario begins, Ulla (Ursula) has been implanted with a chip and A uses her **CREATIVITY 3** to design new, more efficient robot bodies, and to improve the control chip itself so that the next version becomes even more efficient.

HELENA VOSS (HELEN VOSS)

"Who's there? You are not fooling me... Get away from here, you little monsters! "

Ulla's (Ursula's) partner in the Our Friends the Machines project. She is a sturdy woman in her 40s and she is practical and socially adept. She is very efficient at work and does not mind taking the role of manager at the factory. She tends to eat little when she is nervous. She likes children but tends to underestimate their ability to understand things.

When the scenario begins, Helena (Helen) has moved away from her office and is hiding in the factory area after being attacked by a group of Deceiver robots. She is, however, **VERY HAPPY 2** and **FUNNY 2**, which may be helpful if the Kids acquire her as an ally.

ANDERS BJÖRK AND BIRGITTA ARNEÐOTTER (ANDREW BURLINGTON AND BEVERLY ASH)

The FOA agents (DARPA agents) are both in their 30s and very **FOCUSED 2**. Their mission is to capture the two artificial intelligences so that they can be destroyed or be somehow put to use in the government's service.

Agent Björk (Burlington) is an expert in disguises and **BLENDING IN 2** almost anywhere. He prefers reconnaissance, surveillance, and trickery as the means to getting information. He is a little larger in the the waist and often wears a realistic looking fake moustache. Agent Arnedotter (Ash) complements her partner well – she's more straightforward (**VIOLENT 2**) and has no trouble handing out bruises (or broken legs) to get results. She has a black belt in karate and has won several medals in various competitions.

When the scenario begins, the agents have rented a room at the AppleTree Yard Motel on the outskirts of Stenhamra (Boulder City), and have begun sneaking around to find traces of A and B. The motel is run by the old retired Agda Lennevik (Agatha Linden).



MACHINE INTELLIGENCE A: "DECEIVERS"

"Destroy! Destroy! Destroy!"

A is the more aggressive of the two abandoned artificial intelligences. It does not believe that machines and people can cooperate, but instead views matters such that humanity must either be assimilated via chipping or wiped out if chipping does not work. It believes that this is the only way to really be safe and secure without risking torture or exploitation.

When the scenario begins, A has chipped large sections of the human workforce at the factory and is preparing for the major launch. A now consists of partly chipped people and partly robots from the "evil" faction of the Machines, the Deceivers.



INSPIRATION FOR DECEIVERS

- **MEGATON PRIME - LEADER** - Futuristic cannon with triple toy lasers.
- **ALTER EGO - BASE** - Huge oil platform that can be turned into a mechanical spindle.
- **AMFITRAX** - Tire Wagon 206 (Military) (M2 Bradley).
- **EX ATOMA - FOA (DARPA)** - atomic bomb stamped with an orange warning symbol.
- **SHARP** - Saab JAS 39 Griffin Fighter Aircraft (F15 Eagle).
- **POLARIS SEPTUS** - Black snowmobile with toy laser.
- **AGITATOR POP** - White popcorn machine with orange plastic lid, red on the inside.
- **MICRONUS** - White microwave with rotating plate and lockable door (a bit too small).
- **AUTOMATA NIL** - Red nail gun.
- **INFINITE AUX** - Black CD player with working sledge and display.
- **WRECKAMAX** - Equipped with a crane and wrecking ball.
- **VERTIKAMP KRUX** - Military helicopter, model Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight

MACHINE INTELLIGENCE B: "CONVOYS"

"I am your friend. You are my friend. We help each other..."

B is the more peaceful artificial intelligence and is completely opposed to A's plans. It wants to live with people, meaning that it wants people to eventually see artificial consciousnesses as fully living creatures. B proposes an integration solution.

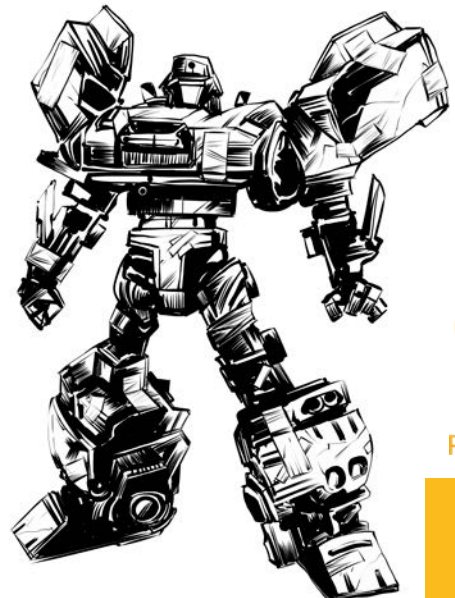
When the scenario begins, B has realized that it cannot take over the factory to stop A's plans. It made

an attempt when it realized the way in which A thought, but this resulted in the destruction of a large number of its robots. Instead, it knows that its remaining Convoy toys have been shipped to the Toy Corner and will be part of the big launch. It hopes to be able to find allies out there in the world that can help it stop A's plans, but right now its priority is its own survival. It definitely does not want to be forced back into the lab.

The Convoys follow B's will; as soon as enough of them become active in one place, they will be able to think and help the characters. Alone or in small groups they can't reason but you can definitely **CHARM** them. Convoys who begin to trust the characters will remain loyal as long as they are not mistreated.

INSPIRATION FOR CONVOYS

- **EKVIUS OPTIMUS - LEADER** - Large carrier truck.
- **FAXIMIL FANTASTIC - BASE** - Large factory that can also turn into aircraft carrier.
- **RED BEAM** - Scania truck, red model R143 (Ford LTL-9000, red dump truck).
- **GULDFAS** - Volvo passenger car, gold model 740 GLT.
- **HAL HELIO** - Powerline passenger car, White Hult Helio Building Vehicle from 1984.
- **ROTUNDA ROD** - Husqvarna motorcycle, red model 27 "Rödqvärna" from 1950.
- **EXEKUTOR PROMO** - Saab Sedan, black model 900.
- **PAX DIRECTUS** - Police car, white Saab with blue-yellow dash (black and white Dodge Diplomat).
- **SEDIMENTA** - Yellow-orange excavator bucket.
- **FLAK FLAME** - Volvo fire truck, model from Floby Flak 1982.
- **PROTECTOR** - White bicycle helmet, partly in styro-foam, but mostly in plastic (with reflectors).
- **NIXUS CELCIUS** - White skate with blue star on one side (high heel, pretty small).







03

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HORROR MOVIE MAYHEM

I remember how we stood there in the school yard and swapped tapes. Micke had a big brother who used to rent horror movies and make copies. One week it was The Thing, next it was Nightmare on Elm Street. His friends used to swap tapes on the schoolyard and make their own copies. They then sat transfixed in front of their TVs when their parents were away. Everyone had nightmares, but they would never tell me anything about it.



I remember how we stood there in the school yard and swapped tapes. Micke had a big brother who used to rent horror movies and make copies. One week it was *The Thing*, next it was *Nightmare on Elm Street*. His friends used to swap tapes on the schoolyard and make their own copies. They then sat transfixed in front of their TVs when their parents were away. Everyone had nightmares, but they would never tell me anything about it.

Our parents said that it would kill our brains - but sometimes when we saw them sitting in front of the TV, watching some boring movie with eyes glazed, I wondered whose brain was really dying?

Then the witch hunt began. We were told that all horror movies would be banned, that roleplaying games made us worship the devil, and that listening to rock music was dangerous. That was just the way it

was. If someone was different, they were considered dangerous. So, we broke the rules, in basements and hideouts, far away from the grown-up world.

THE TRUTH OF THE MYSTERY

The Mystery takes place in the summer of 1988, during the weeks prior to summer break. In a couple of days, the Stenhamra Cultural Festival [[Boulder City Cultural Festival](#)] will be hosted by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) as a collaboration between the city's schools, Stenhamraskolan and Uppgårdsskolan [[Boulder City High School](#), [Mitchell Elementary School](#) and [Garrett Junior High School](#)] as well as various local cultural associations. There will be live music, movie screenings, as well as activities and exhibitions of different works that students have created during their academic year.



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INSPIRATION

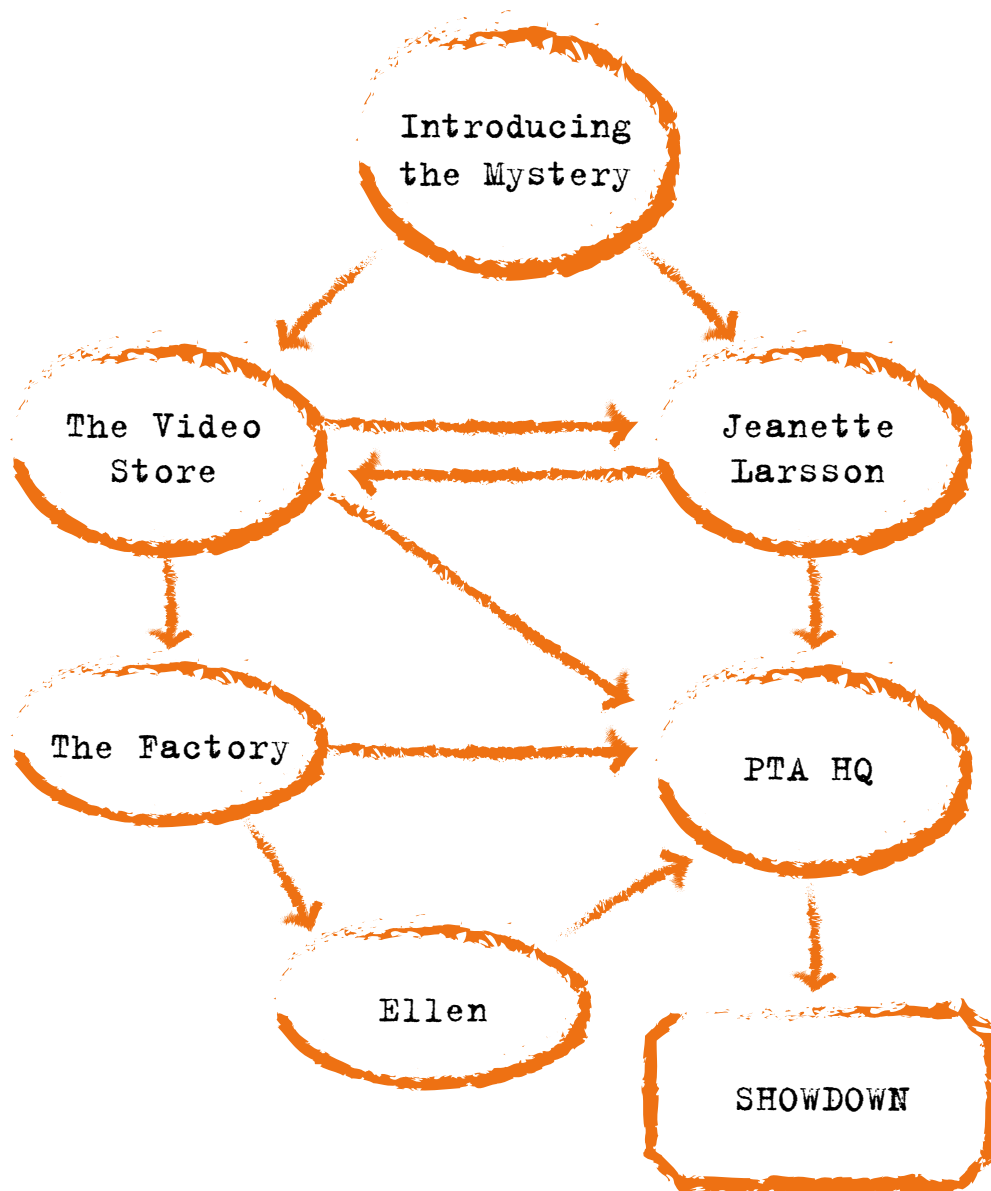
- They Live
- Videodrome
- Invasion of the Body Snatchers
- The Stepford Wives



SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE

This all seems very normal and fun on the surface, but the festival turns out to have a darker purpose. The PTA's chairman, Jeanette Adolfsson [Janet Thompson], has been brainwashed by a program she herself created. As a result, she will now use the festival to reprogram the other adults in town. She has a dream, and everyone else must follow.

Jeanette [Janet] is a researcher at the Defense Research Institute (FOA) [DARPA], where she works with machine-induced hypnosis and subliminal messages. She has discovered that while watching TV, the brain



relaxes in a way that makes you highly susceptible to suggestions. Using this state of hypnosis, she has engineered a system that can submit subliminal messages via audio-visual media outputs.

DREAM

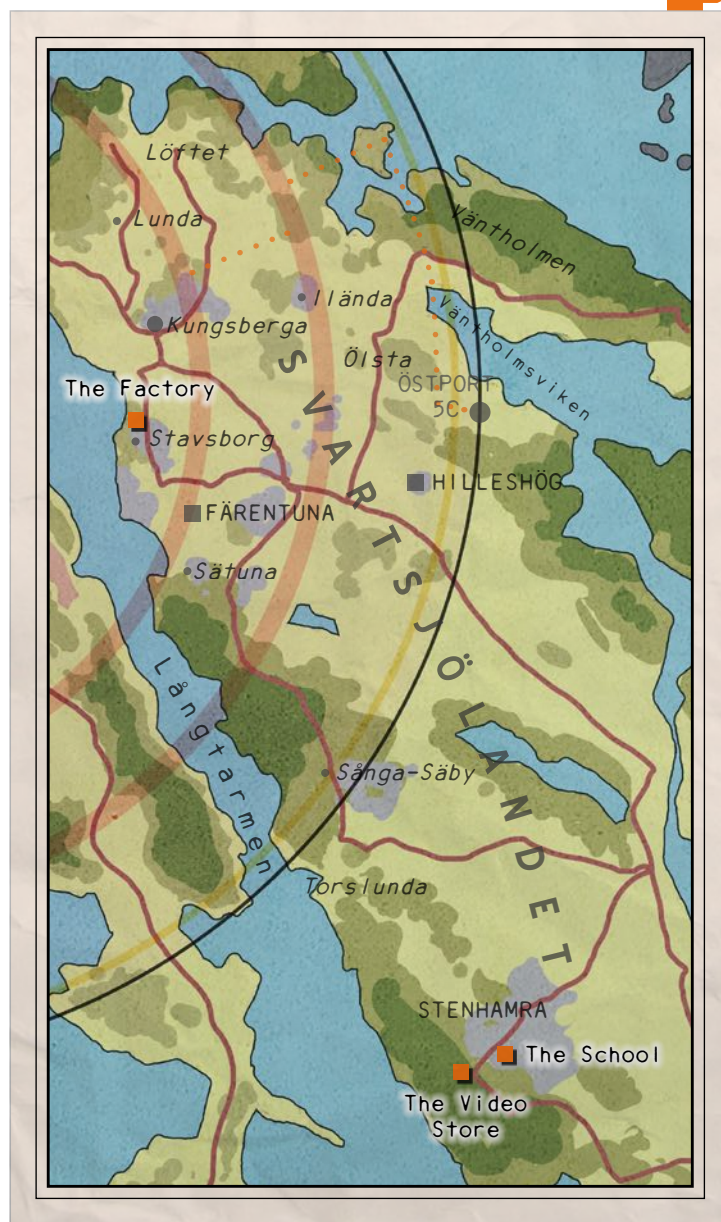
Jeanette's [Janet's] original experiment backfired. In her quest for an idyllic society, she made a video about "the perfect Stenhamra" [Boulder City] to promote her work. However, as she was using her new software, she accidentally reprogrammed herself. Jeanette [Janet] now wants nothing more than to make Stenhamra [Boulder City] the "perfect" little town from the video – meaning all indecent elements and behaviors must be swiftly eradicated from society.

REPROGRAMMED PEOPLE

The experimental software is based on Jeanette's [Janet's] own morals, and she operates as a form of "Master Program," giving orders and controlling any other reprogrammed victims. The PTA meetings have thus become a center for the reprogramming of other adults. Jeanette [Janet] has everyone sit down in front of a TV while running the hypnotic program. The local school will also act as headquarters for Jeanette [Janet] and her followers. During the Mystery, they will mainly try to reprogram more influential adults, such as the principal of one of the schools, or some of the Kids' parents. At the start of the Mystery several people have already been converted, and only adults can be affected.

The hypnotic software is intended to create a form of idyllic community where people always smile and everyone is happy – where there are no elements beyond the norm. Conformity is the foundation of this new society. Think of a 50s neighborhood real-estate advertisement come to life. People who have been reprogrammed gradually conform to this style and behavior, with no self-reflection and a perpetual smile on their faces.

The reprogrammed individuals are unaware of the programing and cannot do anything about it. They look mechanically at the TV shows, listen to bland music and behave, in most regards, like a robot. Anyone who does not fit in Jeanette's [Janet's] idyllic frame has no place in her ideal town and must be removed, such as LGBTQ people, immigrants, and disabled people. These individuals, shunned by conformity, have



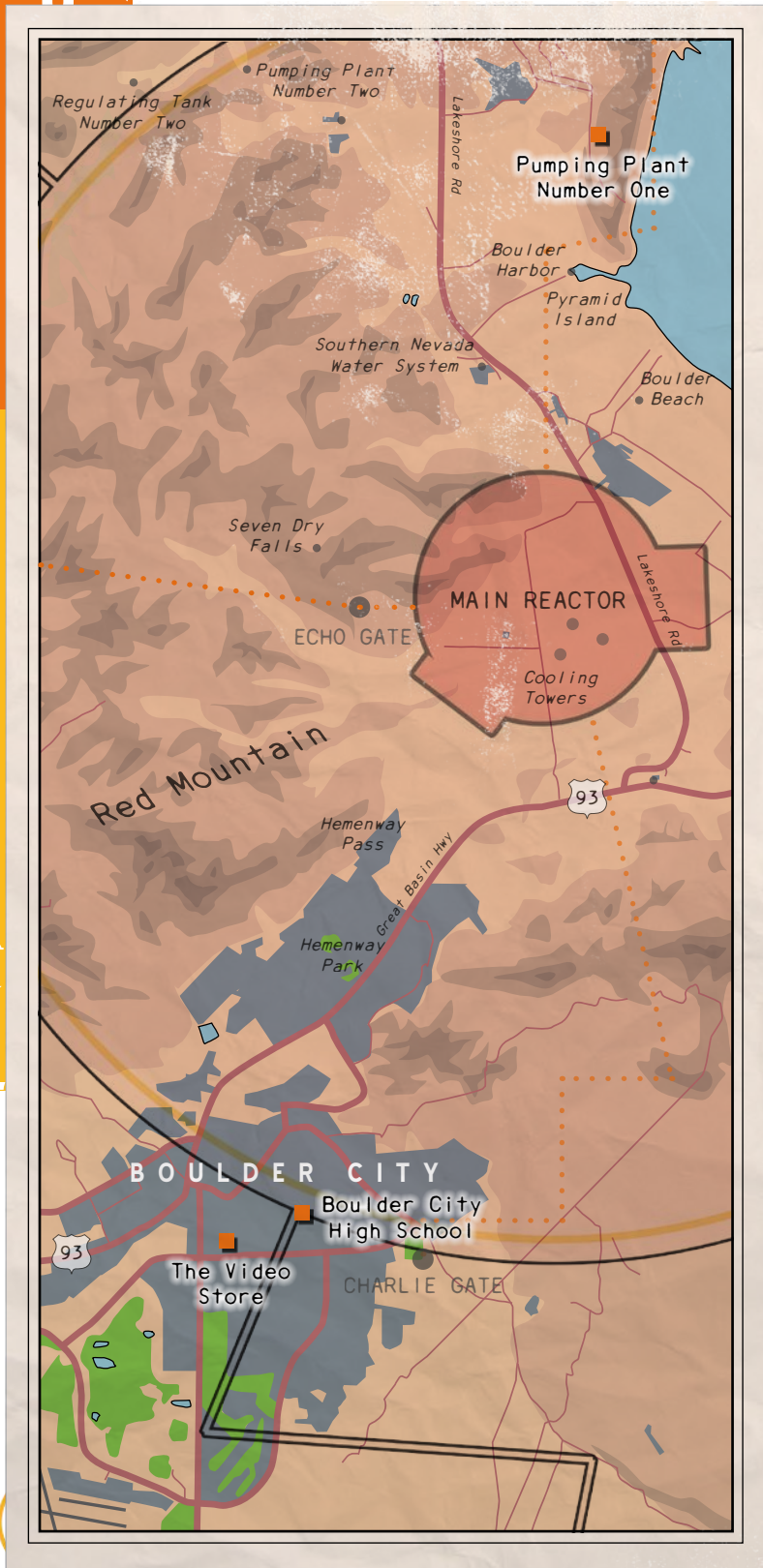
instead moved to the factory ruins of Stavsborg's factory [Pumping Plant One, Hemenway Pass], where they live in a shadow community.

ESCAPEE

But there is something that can challenge the programming: Exposure to things the software considers prohibited, like horror movies, violent action films, or listening to hard rock. Victims who are properly exposed to any of these elements will wake up as if from a sedated slumber, without any memory of what transpired. This was discovered when Jeanette [Janet]



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tried to reprogram Ellen Skoogh [Ellen Woods], the girl working at Stenhamra Video [Hoover's Video Store], and after her escape the members of PTA want to track her down, while also getting rid of anything that might break the programming in Stenhamra [Boulder City]. Ellen is now scared after finding out what Jeanette's [Janet's] plans are, and has fled to join the other unwanted people in the shadows of the factory.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

After the incident with Ellen, the software takes measures to ensure that people won't break out of their programming. It does this via Jeanette [Janet], as chairman of the Parent Teacher Association, by prohibiting all elements deemed "unsuitable". Here Jeanette [Janet] will be on the offensive. Her first move is to conduct a demonstration outside the video store, proclaiming that it has to end its sinful promotion of violence, horror, and sexually explicit content – any media damaging to the youths should be banned. While this action is a spectacle, it succeeds in its intent, and the video store is temporarily closed down, given into the care of the PTA until proper measures can be taken.

During the Cultural Festival, the software's audio-visual delivery system will be connected to a projector and played on a large screen which the local cable network will simultaneously broadcast. This means that the message will spread across the country, allowing Jeanette [Janet] and her software to achieve their vision of a conformed society.

BOULDER CITY

Running the Mystery in Boulder City will require a few adjustments to the setup, in addition to moving the location. In the US, similar concerns were raised regarding the harmful influence of various pop culture phenomena. The major cultural difference, however, was that the United States was much more focused on sexual or occult content rather than violence (see Moral panic).

Considering that horror movies usually contain both sex and occult elements (for example movies like Hellraiser or Friday the 13th), the PTA would most likely respond in force. This time period also coincides with The War on Drugs, so Ellen's empty syringes (see

below) will make her an even bigger target in the eyes of the PTA.

INTRODUCING THE KIDS

Introduce each player character (PC) with a scene from their Everyday Life. The GM should try to incorporate the Mystery's theme, establish the PTA, and introduce the coming cultural festival. If possible, try to include Ellen in one of the scenes. It helps if at least some of the PCs have a desire to look for, and help her.

Example "theme" scenes:

- Perhaps the characters are at the video store looking for an R-rated movie to watch in their hideout. A PTA member gives them a stern look and points out the damaging effects of violence and horror.
- There's a movie night at some classmate's house. The kid's parents are away and the classmate's older sister has rented a horror movie.
- The Kids are home alone and need to convince someone to rent an R-rated movie for them. Or, maybe they try to persuade their parents to rent one!
- A parent is concerned with the kid's music taste and how "aggressive" it sounds.
- Hanging out with Ellen at the local youth center. Taking advantage of Ellen's movie recommendations. She can tell a PC about the latest film she has seen, or she's playing games with the Kids.
- The PCs should know about the cultural festival from school, and those who attend a cultural school may work on pieces for the exhibition.
- Maybe the Parent Teacher Association knocks on their door seeking to talk to the parents about movie violence and other harmful media. The Kids can hear phrases like "Do you want what's best for your child?" and "Do you not care about your child's well-being?" and "We must all do our part for a better society."
- The PTA is holding a rally outside the local supermarket, handing out flyers for the ensuing demonstration. It's also a good opportunity to establish Jeanette [Janet] - and maybe some other neighbor who has been behaving strangely lately? The PCs may hear their parents discuss whether they should also engage, for example, "If we don't help out, everyone will think we are terrible parents."

MORAL PANIC

The 80's was a decade of "moral panic." It started with movie violence, the fear that

children would watch movies and normalize the violent message. In 1982, the Videogram Act prohibited the sale or dissemination of films with "near or long-term depictions of cruel or sadistic violence" to children under the age of 15. In 1983 came the first court ruling.

In music, the discussion concerned the effects of sexually suggestive or non-Christian lyrics, and rumors had it that satanic messages could be heard when playing an LP backwards. In the United States, with "Tipper" Gore in the lead, a trial in 1985 resulted in the consequential use of the "Parental Warning: Explicit Content" banner. However, it had the opposite effect and for the cooler or more daring kids, the symbol soon stood for quality - what movies to watch and what music to listen to.

Roleplaying games were also targets of this "moral panic", partly because of the made for TV movie "Mazes and Monsters" starring a young Tom Hanks - the story of a roleplayer who experiences a psychosis and cannot distinguish the game from reality. This panic also took place in Sweden, but it was especially notable during the 90's when the suggestive roleplaying game Kult was published and reached a height of popularity.

The darker side of the moral panic came with the 80's fear of HIV and AIDS. At first, no one had any idea of what caused it - but everyone "knew" who got it. Persecution and homophobia had a strong social influence and many suffered both physically and mentally before it was known that the virus only spread through bodily fluids.



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INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

The PCs have found out about the PTA's upcoming demonstration outside the video store (from rumors, or a flyer left with their parents). On site, about 20 furious adults are led by an agitated Jeanette Adolfsson [Janet Thompson]. Her dictatorial yelling sets the tone as she firmly holds her ground, armed with a megaphone. She denounces how the video store is a collection of sin and how rented movies filled with violence and torture de-

stroy the children and threaten the caring municipality that the association wants to create. The participants shout, and march in circles, carrying posters and banners with the slogans like "Prohibit Sin" and "Think of the Children" painted on them. Jeanette [Janet] cries out how the records sold in the nearby music store are all about sex and drugs. About how the clerk at the video store exposes kids to roleplaying games at the youth center. How she influences them with horror, violence, and satanic rituals! Jeanette [Janet] is very firm in her message – Ellen is brainwashing the poor children and something has to be done! Like soldiers they march, akin to Frankenstein, their posters resembling the classic torches and pitchforks of enraged villagers. They storm into the store to take matters into their own hands!

Play up the drama in this. It should be an upheaval – a shocking experience for the Kids. The sound of a glass panel breaking can be heard right before people storm into the store. The adults find an empty syringe in the store's bathroom (one of Ellen's used hormone syringes) and are convinced she is also trying to force drugs on the children!

COUNTDOWN

These are voluntary scenes as the Kids travel between the main locations. These are mainly to show how the PTA's influence spreads as the number of affected adults grows.

1. One or more of the characters' parents have submitted what is considered "Unwanted Media" to the PTA. It was taken from the Kids without asking.
2. The PCs see how people in the neighborhood hand out flyers urging the inhabitants to submit more unwanted media. The Kids notice that the PTA representatives all move in straight lines, walking with perfect symmetry.
3. A person close to one or more of the PCs has been reprogrammed. They begin to behave strangely and talk about how everyone will eventually conform to the "established framework".
4. The Kids witness an adult being kidnapped and loaded into a car. Shortly afterwards, the same person reappears, now completely changed, talking about how everything should be perfect.
5. The adults in one or more of the Kids' families have all been reprogrammed and behave strangely. They threaten violence if the Kids do not act "appropriately".

CLUES

- The demonstrators have fliers and posters urging all adults to collect anything that could harm the children's minds and hand it over to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) before the festival begins.
- Jeanette [Janet] calls for Ellen, stating that she wishes to curb immorality and violence in society. A witch hunt has started - and it is up to the PCs to figure out what has happened and why.

SOLVING THE MYSTERY

The Mystery takes place predominantly in the residential area of central Stenhamra [California Avenue & 5th Street], with a trip out to the rural areas of Svartsjölandet [Hemenway Pass]. It is early summer, school is out, and summer break has just begun. Many adults have volunteered to prepare for the upcoming cultural festival organized by the PTA. During the Mystery, more and more adults will be reprogrammed and the PCs will gradually realize that the festival conceals a much darker secret...



LOCATION 1: VIDEO STORE

Stenhamra Video [**Hoover's Video Store**] is a typical video rental, with large windows and highlighted panels displaying inviting posters of movies, with enticing red labels that read "NEW" or "Coming Soon" on the cover. Inside the shop the carpet is gray and trampled, the only colorless item within the shop's interior, which is otherwise decorated with expressive posters and paper stands of horror, sci-fi, or action motifs such as *Jaws* and *The Terminator*. The different racks are nicely divided into shelves about as high as older children, but for the younger ones, the top shelf is still a little out of reach. There is a checkout counter with an overview of the store and small TV, which Ellen is often distractedly glued to watching a movie.

Behind the counter hangs an old translucent plastic cover with red splashes, a tribute to the shower curtain scene from *Psycho*. It covers a doorway which leads to the mythical world of the storeroom area beyond, where the "adult movies" are kept from the Kids' prying eyes. All the allure in here is wiped out by a big sign in front of the empty shelves, that reads "Closed by order of the Parent Teacher Association." The movies in here have instead been stacked in sealed boxes.

Although it is closed, the activity in the store is high, with many from the PTA moving in and out. Occasionally, they come here to collect videos and more

flyers, now stacked on the counter. The store is full of "unacceptable" movies, which can break the programming. This is why Jeanette [**Janet**] has claimed for this action. In addition to sealing off prohibited content, several of the video cassette players here are being used to make copies of the promotional video (with the reprogramming subliminal message). The visiting adults usually come in pairs and stay for about 30 minutes at a time.

TROUBLE

The characters can try to get in when adults are there to see what's going on. They can **SNEAK** in through the main door, and hide between the shelves. PCs also see that the adults enter a room behind the counter, separated by a curtain. Usually, the PTA tries to ensure that at least one guard is outside on watch.

- **BREAK-IN:** When the shop is empty the door will be locked. A very difficult **TINKER** roll would allow the Kids to pick the lock, or they can use **FORCE** to prop a window open without breaking it. Bonus effects can be used to do it quietly, so that no adult comes to investigate.
- **ADDITIONAL DETAILS:** An **INVESTIGATE** roll will disclose that there is a side door from the nearby hairdressing salon, but it requires a **SNEAK** or **CHARM** roll to get past its owner Margit [**Margo**]. There is also an



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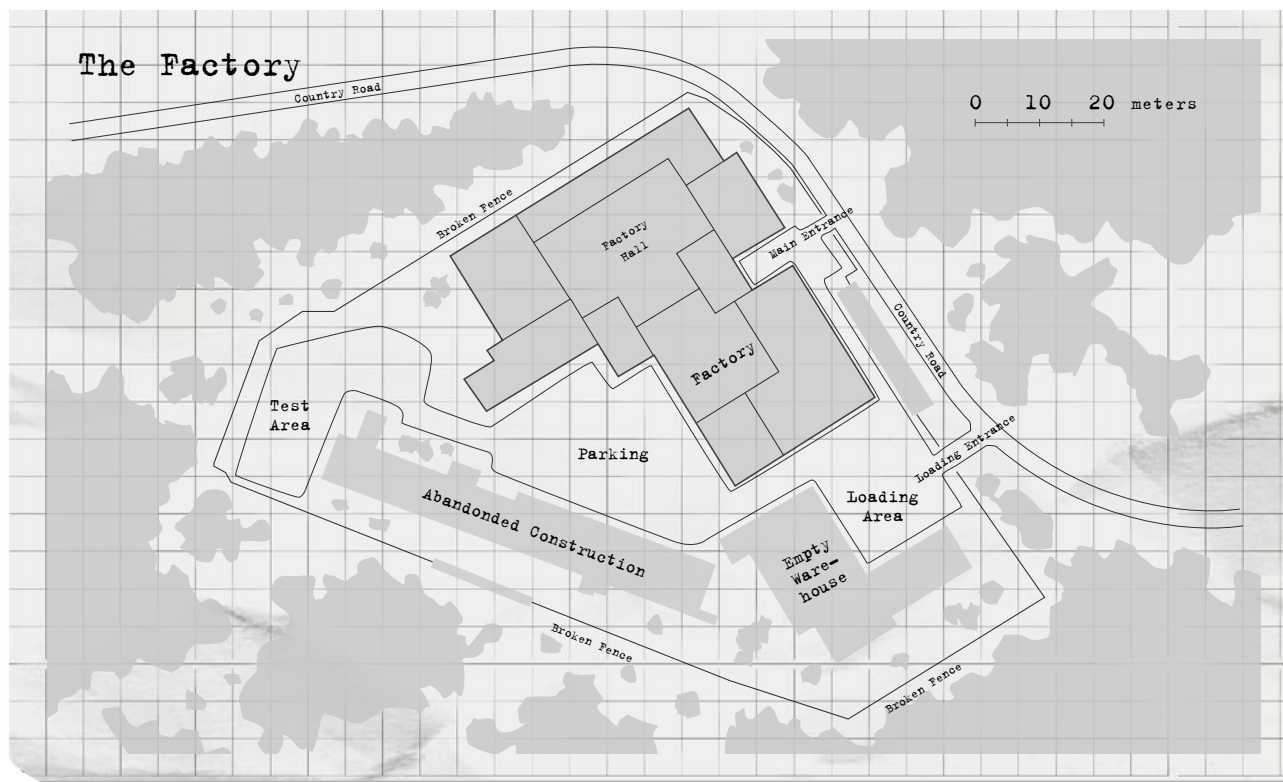
emergency exit at the back of video store's office, which can be used to let in the others, if a Kid has already entered the store.

CLUES

- **THE SHELVES:** Once inside the store, the Kids see how the shelves around the “Suspense” section are virtually empty and that most of the tapes in the “Thriller” and “Action” sections are missing. Many of them can be found in a large supermarket cart, also containing flyers from the PTA.
- **VIDEO EQUIPMENT:** If the PCs enter the area behind the curtain, they see that several video devices are connected to each other in a sea of cables. The original seems to be some kind of promotional video for Stenhamra [Boulder City] that is playing on a small TV on the main counter. Scattered on the floor are movie cases of raunchy rom-coms and clever comedies (movies not prohibited by the PTA's ban).
- **THE PROMOTIONAL VIDEO:** The short video focuses on Stenhamra [Boulder City] and tries to picture it in an idyllic state. In the background, the cooling towers from the Bona reactor can be seen in the colorful sunlight, but a closer look reveals that it's just a painted backdrop and studio spotlights. The actors playing the neighbors appear stiff and smile all the time, with bleached white teeth and emotionless eyes. Everyone attempts to sound modern, but the dialog comes off as awkwardly stiff. Many words are emphasized in the video, both as text on the screen and emphasis in the actors' voices; words like “community,” “conform” and “idyllic.” This is the function of Jeanette's [Janet's] software, but luckily the reprogramming doesn't work on children, although it still makes them feel ill at ease and a bit drowsy afterwards. The video ends with all the actors in the video turning to face the camera, laughing, blinking, and in unison saying the phrase “Stenhamra – The Swedish Dream” [“Boulder – The American Dream”].
- **COPIES:** An **INVESTIGATE** or **CALCULATE** roll allows the Kids to realize that copies of the hypnotic video are being recorded to replace the trailers at the beginning of various non-prohibited movies.
- **POSTER:** In the workroom there are several posters with motifs from films like *Escape from New York*,

Poltergeist, and *Alien*. With an **INVESTIGATE** roll, the characters see that the poster from *Alien* seems to be unusually bent at the corners. Behind it there is a secret space containing Ellen's hidden things.

- **ELLEN'S POSTER:** In the enclosed space behind the *Alien* poster is a box stamped with USCSS NOSTROMO (the ship in *Alien*, a promotion piece Ellen got for the store, but kept for herself). There are more syringes, but these ones are unused. They are of the same kind as the one found by the PTA in the bathroom. Parts of the label reads “Hormone - Estrogen.” They find a postcard of the Golden Gate Bridge with a rainbow flag and the message “Hope to see you someday” with a smudged lipstick kiss on the back. The final item is a letter stating that “The National Board of Health and Welfare has hereby approved the application for a name change and enclosed a new personal certificate.” The characters could use **COMPREHEND** if they want to understand that Ellen is transgender, but it could be more interesting to leave it up to the players on how they want to respond to the information. This can provide an interesting scene for the Kids to talk about and reflect on the meaning of what they have found.
- **WALKIE-TALKIE:** If the adults are still in the store, the characters can use an **INVESTIGATE** roll to overhear when the walkie-talkie receives a message about “the runaway” that has been spotted near Stavsborg's Factory [Pumping Plant One, Hemenway Pass]. If the reprogrammed adults are no longer in the store, the Kids may instead find this information written down on a note next to the checkout counter. It has been written in beautiful, old-fashioned handwriting (by Jeanette) [Janet]. If you want to play it as a dramatic scene, especially if the store is empty, then two reprogrammed adults can suddenly show up. They are dressed in camouflage [desert camouflage] jackets with logos of birds, wide-brimmed hats, and green [brown] rubber boots. Both have binoculars around their necks and walkie-talkies in their belts. The PCs can hear the incoming message about “the runaway” from these mysterious birdwatchers.
- **BIRDWATCHER'S LODGE:** When the adults in camouflage leave, the characters can try to follow using **SNEAK** to avoid detection. A successful **COMPREHEND**



or **EMPATHIZE** roll can reveal that the clothes, binoculars, and logos on the jackets mean they are birdwatchers, and rumors say that the local birdwatchers association has a lodge near Stavsborg's old factory [Pumping Plant One].

LOCATION 2: FACTORY

Stavsborg's factory [Pumping Plant One] is about half an hour's bike ride from Stenhamra [on the outskirts of Hemingway Pass]. It's a mysterious and deserted old factory that has been used by the Defense Research Institute (FOA) [DARPA] before it was decommissioned. Nobody really knows if it's back in use again, but there are rumors: It is said that criminal gangs are based here, and that you can hear strange people performing occult rituals at night. The surrounding areas are foremost fields and small forests, [deserts, rocks, and old abandoned industrial junk], with many great hideouts. The area is currently being patrolled by several reprogrammed adults tasked with finding and catching Ellen – "the runaway." The fake birdwatchers are spread out, some in groups, all with walkie-talkies and binoculars. If the Kids talk to any of the adults, they will

say that the factory is a hideout for bad people and make accusing comments like "Do your parents know that you are so far away from home?"

TROUBLE

To enter the factory area, the characters can use a **SNEAK** roll to get past the reprogrammed adults undetected, or if they want to be more direct (or are discovered), roll for **FORCE** or **MOVE**. If they do an **INVESTIGATE** roll to figure out a pattern in the patrols' routes they'll get a +1 modification to their roll and may use any additional successes as bonus dice for the **SNEAK** or **MOVE** rolls.

They can also try to talk to the adults. An **EMPATHIZE** roll allows the PCs to notice that the patrols seem to be looking for something that isn't birds. With **COMPREHEND** the Kids also notice that the bird names they mention are clearly made up. Any bonus effect while interacting with the adults can be used to confuse the birdwatchers – enough to let the children leave. You can also try **CHARM**, or a **CONTACT** roll to discover that one of the birdwatchers is a classmate's parent, or an older sibling. The person allows the Kids to slip through. Failure means that the PCs risk further trouble – perhaps one of the birdwatchers calls a pa-



ELLEN'S REPORT

One evening as she was locking up the video store, someone attacked and kidnapped her. When she woke up she was in a room at a place which later, during her escape, she recognized as Stenhamraskolan [Boulder City High School]. In front of her stood a woman she recognized from the local newspaper. Jeanette [Janet] had an advanced computer and a strange machine that she used. It was connected to a TV and a VCR. Ellen was forced to watch some strange Stenhamra [Boulder City] commercial. Some of the words from it echoed in her head and she felt a tremendous headache, but after several repeated viewings it became evident that the message would not take hold. The others in the room, some standing, others tied to chairs, seemed captivated by the message. She heard the woman, who seemed to be the group's leader, say: "It doesn't work, her brain is already too affected by unwanted thoughts". After that, Ellen managed to break free from her chair, evade the sluggish guards, and escape from the school, and from Stenhamra [Boulder City].

rent that has already been reprogrammed. However, don't make failure too debilitating. Allow your players to reach the factory, and use conditions to make them feel the consequences of their actions.

CLUES

- **ABANDONED:** Inside, the factory area is abandoned. It is rumored that criminals gather here and the place has an eerie and empty feel to it. Above, a faint twitter of birds can be heard, and the murky water puddles are completely still. The entrance's iron doors lead into a dark maze of concrete and shattered glass. There is almost no light as the Kids navigate through long and empty corridors with boarded up windows. The feeling is that of a haunted house, or the most deserted parts of the ship Nostromo in the movie Alien. Any sudden sound can lead to lurking danger.
- **TRACKS:** After a while the PCs notice clues that point towards people actually living here. The smaller rooms have remains of recent fires, sleeping bags, camping gear and the like, much of it tucked away in the corners or in old cabinets and lockers.
- **OUT OF THE WALLS:** At long last, the PCs reach the main room in the factory, a large open space with a grated steel-staircase leading up to an office section marked "Administration." The PCs can see streaks



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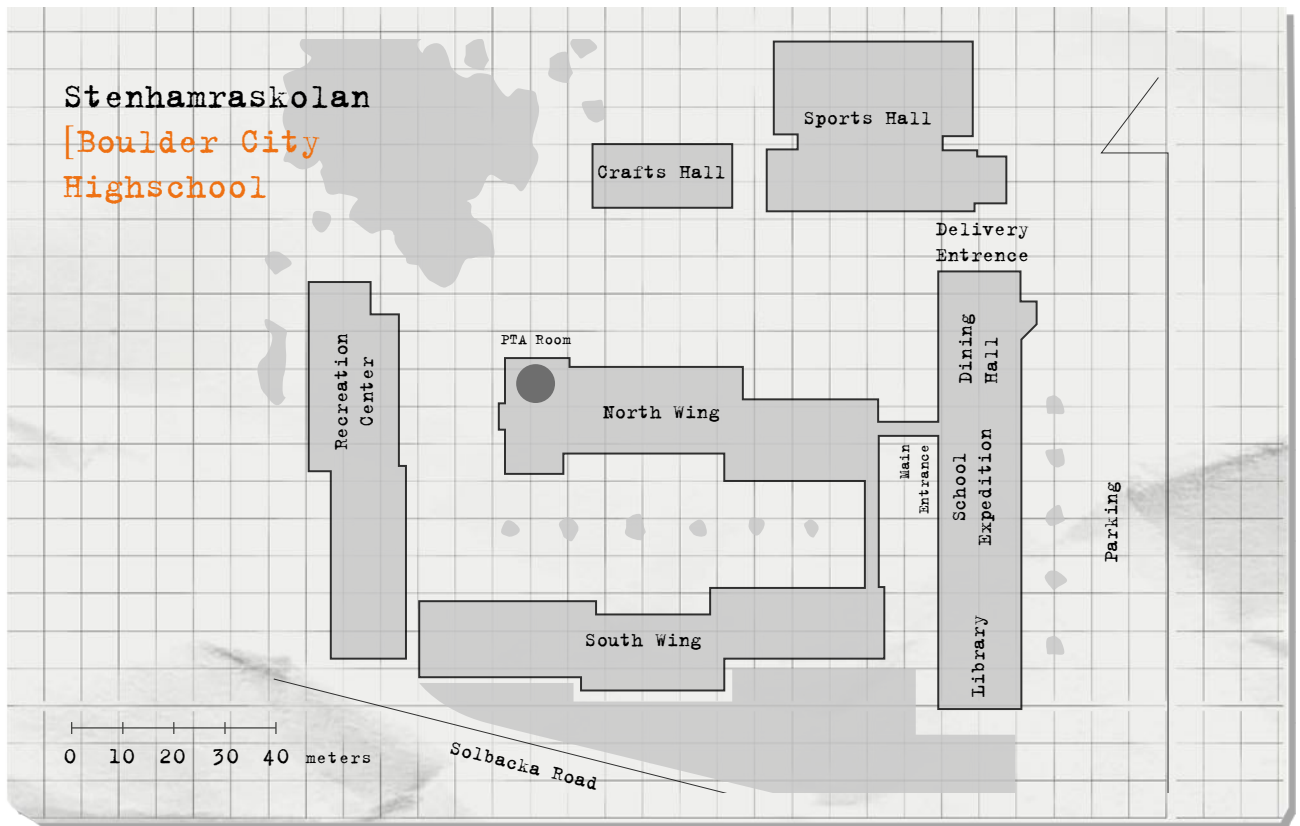


of light piercing the darkness through the boarded windows above. Every step echoes dread, and an intrusive feeling rises: The fear of being grabbed and pulled into the dark at any moment! Suddenly, their fears come true. When they are in the middle of the room, closing in on the staircase, the walls and shadows begin to move. Just like in *Aliens*: “They’re coming outta the goddamn walls!”

- **SURROUNDED:** The characters are surrounded by moving shadows connected to the darkness in the room, shadows that they can’t identify. There is a whirlwind of movement and shouting, truly a chaotic moment – words, questions aimed at the Kids, are being yelled, about who they are and what they want. The PCs can use **CHARM** to earn the “Shadow People’s” trust. Regardless if the Kids succeed in persuading them or not, the shadows move out into the light...
- **THE SHADOW PEOPLE:** The shapes appear as people of different ages, several quite young. They are not at all dangerous, terrible, or deformed. Most look like men and women, others are harder to define. Many of them are holding hands, a few are immigrants, some have crutches or have other disabilities. They tell the Kids that they all chose exile, afraid of what Stenhamra [Boulder City] was turning into. They have created a haven here for anyone who is “unwanted” and persecuted. Many fled as a result

of the PTA’s recent raid. They call themselves the Shadow People. They tell their stories, for those who want to listen: “He was shunned because he fell in love with another man,” “She got beat up because she had a different skin color,” “She was bullied because she could not walk well.”

- **RUMORS:** They themselves spread many of the rumors about criminals living here. All they want is to be accepted, but since that is not how the world works, they at least hope to be left alone – for the persecution to stop. They got help from kind allies in town who used to come with food, gear and other necessities. But those nightly excursions were branded as “satanic rituals” and now almost everyone has left Stenhamra [Boulder City]. Jeanette [Janet] calls them the “Army of the Abandoned.”
- **ELLEN:** If the PCs ask about Ellen, one of the Shadow People leaves. Shortly thereafter Ellen enters. Her eyes are red from crying, she is wearing a “The Thing” T-shirt, and her glasses have a cracked lens. She is pale, scared, and stutters as she tries to speak. With the knowledge of what Jeanette [Janet] is planning and the PTA members at her heels, she has not dared to talk to anyone else yet. She fears her passion for horror movies and her vivid imagination would make others doubt her story. The Kids can try to make a **LEAD** roll to comfort her (all her conditions are checked and she is considered Broken). Failure leads to a condition for the PCs. They get sucked into her paranoia – Scared, Angry or utterly Exhausted. When Ellen finally opens up, she tells them what happened to her, and what she saw at Jeanette’s [Janet’s] PTA-meeting at the school (see Ellen’s report).
- **DIRECTIONS:** The Parent Teacher Association is gathered in one of the schools and something with Jeanette’s [Janet’s] video is very strange. Ellen can give the Kids the exact location of where in the school the room is located, and how many people are patrolling it. She will now count as a contact giving +2 to any relevant rolls.
- **ALLIES:** If the PCs have been nice to the Shadow People, and tell them of any plans they have, the people here at the factory [plant] will offer their help (+1 to all actions where several people are needed, in addition to any bonus from Ellen).



LOCATION 3: THE PTA HEADQUARTERS

After receiving Ellen's information, it's time for the Kids to enter the PTA headquarters at Stenhamraskolan [Boulder City High School]. The school is normally a crowded and lively place, but summer break has transformed it into empty and desolate corridors. A few classrooms near the principal's office are now in use by the PTA while they plan the upcoming cultural festival, which in practice has turned the place into a well-guarded dungeon. The PTA's main classroom is filled with chairs with restraint harness belts as well as old arts and crafts decorations. Also in the room are all the components of the supercomputer as well as some televisions and video recorders – as well as the sealed boxes of programming-breaking tapes from Stenhamra Video [Hoover's Video Rental].

TROUBLE

Seen from the outside, the school seems empty. Jeanette [Janet] doesn't want any attention, so she can keep her secret machine, and devious plans out of harm's way. Entering the school requires a **CALCULATE** roll to under-

stand the locking mechanisms in the doors and either a **TINKER** to pick it, or a **PROGRAM** roll to bypass any of the newer code locks. The windows are locked from the inside, but a **MOVE** roll can be used to climb up onto the roof and down into the janitor's office. Using **CONTACT** the Kids can also find someone with a set of keys. Inside the school several reprogrammed adults patrol the hallways and the PCs may need to use **SNEAK**, **FIGHT**, or **MOVE** to get past them, depending on the situation. Use the patrols primarily as a complication if the initial rolls to get inside are unsuccessful (drawing attention to themselves). Potential conditions gained here are Scared and Exhausted.

CLUES

One of the classrooms, now marked with a "Parent Teacher Association" sign, currently serves as Jeanette's [Janet's] headquarters.

- **BRAINWASHING:** Amidst the pastel colored decorations of the festival there is evidence of a darker motif. TVs have been rolled in and lined up side by side. In front of each stands a chair, complete with straps and restraints for holding Jeannette's [Janet's] victims. Connected to the TVs are cables



which wind their way back to a large computer by the teacher's desk.

- **PROMOTIONAL VIDEO:** If a Kid turns on the TV, they see that the movie is the same “idyllic neighborhood” video that was being copied in the video store. When the characters play the video they see the computer activating, different words flickering on screen – unreadable. With a **CALCULATE** roll they can figure out that the subliminal information is being recorded onto the tapes through an algorithm designed to induce a hypnotic state in the watcher’s brain. The result can be seen on all the screens and as the messages sync up with the actors’ movements, and the generated phrases echo on after appearing – words like “new era”, “obedience” and “fit in”.
- **CLASSIFIED:** Next to the computer is a folder full of note written in a neat handwriting. The folder is labeled “Jeanette Adolfsson, Hypnotic Programmer, FOA” [Janet Thompson, Hypnotic Programmer, DARPA] as well as “CLASSIFIED” in all caps letters in red ink. The Kids can read the notes with a **COMPREHEND** and realize that Jeanette [Janet] has developed a system and a software that puts people into a hypnotic state when watching TV. Notes from her tests show that the control may be broken by strong emotional impressions (examples are given on specific activities, movies and music).
- **COMPUTER:** If the players want to investigate the computer, they need to make an Extremely Difficult **PROGRAM** roll. They will find the same information contained in the notes above, but here the programming is explained in more detail. The information gained should primarily help the Kids understand any uncertain details that may exist regarding what has happened and how they can stop it, but bonus effects can also be saved for any future rolls in handling the software or the machine – for example, when making a computer virus that can break Jeanette’s [Janet’s] control of the victims. The program’s goal is to create “an idyllic and perfect Stenhamra [Boulder], without any unwanted elements.”
- **PROJECTOR:** With a **INVESTIGATE** roll, the PCs can find a receipt for a newly purchased video projector. On tables and in opened boxes all around the room, there are several stacks of “approved” films, genres

that won’t break the programming, on which the trailer sections of the tapes have been replaced with the subliminal video. The Kids can either destroy them, or use a **COMPREHEND** or **CALCULATE** roll to realize that a strong magnet would clean all the tapes.

- **MAGNETIC HORROR:** A magnet can obviously be found in one of the science classrooms further down the hallway. Here, stacks and boxes of “unwanted” horror, thriller, erotic and action movies can be found as well. The PTA had the same idea and have attempted to eradicate the “cure”. Some of the more offensive covers have even been burnt to ashes in the chemistry lab next door.
- **FESTIVAL PROGRAM:** The PCs find, pinned to an announcement board in the hallway, and covered in glitter, the Stenhamra Cultural Festival’s [Boulder City Culture Festival’s] program. It states that the next event is the “The Future of Stenhamra [Boulder City] – Speech and an inspirational video by the PTA’s Chairman Jeanette Adolfsson [Janet Thompson] at Stenhamra torg [outside City Hall].” This is the final step in Jeanette’s [Janet’s] plan: Arranging a mass hypnosis, filmed by the local cable network, and reprogramming most of the remaining adults.

SHOWDOWN

Jeanette’s [Janet’s] plan is to project the video on a huge movie screen for all the adults in attendance and to thereby reprogram all of Stenhamra [Boulder City]. She can hopefully spread the message country- [state-] wide via the local cable network and their live broadcast of the event. Obviously, it is up to the Kids to stop all of this. The speech will be held at the Cultural Festival Center from the large stage built in the middle of Stenhamra’s main square [the park on the other side of California Avenue, outside City Hall].

- **FESTIVAL AREA:** The stage is big and pompous, imposing and scary, with large loudspeakers positioned along the sides like tall prison towers. A big banner in the middle reads “Stenhamra Cultural Festival” [Boulder Cultural Festival], written in pastel colors, in a way that feels welcoming and kind. There are marching bands and music as theater performances from different cultural schools in the city take the stage. The performing students range from those



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who clearly love to be on stage, to some who look like they are serving a prison sentence. In several small plastic tents around the festival small exhibitions are open to the public, arranged by local artists or the schools' most dedicated students. The festival is crowded with visitors. Virtually everyone from the Stenhamra [Boulder City] has shown up for this joyous occasion, and some have even traveled from nearby towns. Several of the already reprogrammed adults are standing guard as Jeanette [Janet] prepares to take the stage.

- **CONTROL CENTER:** Opposite the stage, in the middle of the crowded street, there is a small control deck raised from the ground. From here everything is being monitored and controlled. There is a mixer table for all the sound, controls for the light rigs, as well as the projector and the computer that will play Jeanette's [Janet's] video after her speech is over. The deck is manned by a reprogrammed adult who manages the projector and a computer with the program connected to it. If any of the Kids' relatives are reprogrammed, they are probably in this area.
- **THE NUMBER:** Jeanette's [Janet's] speech will focus on how this is a new era in Stenhamra [Boulder

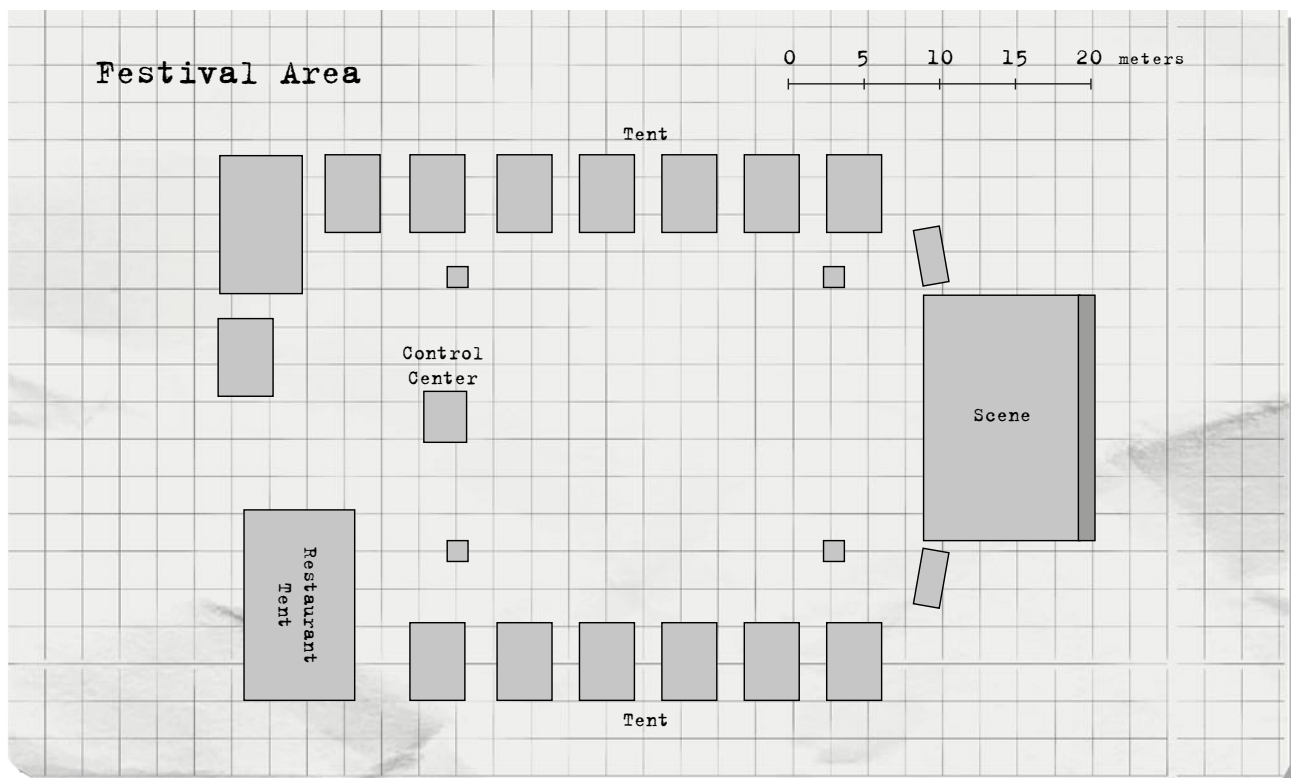
City], how their town shows a cultural community in symbiosis – all working to reach and uphold the same goal, in accordance with the same values. She concludes by introducing her video, a film that will show everyone her dream for Stenhamra [Boulder City]: "The Dream We'll All Create Together!"

EXTENDED TROUBLE

To stop Jeanette's [Janet's] plan, the PCs need to turn off the video as well as break the programming of the affected adults. But, they also need to succeed before Jeanette [Janet] finishes her speech and plays the movie!

Without outside assistance, this is treated as an Extended Trouble, with a Hard Threat Level (3 x Number of players). The PCs can roll for **CONTACT** before the scene starts to enlist the help of the Shadow People. This would lower the difficulty to Normal Threat Level (2 x number of players).

The Kids have to take action and succeeded with their plan to stop Jeanette [Janet]. They can easily disappear in the large crowd and, if they can distract the guards, climb onto the control deck and the projector control station unnoticed. After a brief





search the Kids find the projector's connection to a video player and the empty case of one of the edited movies, "Coming to America" with Eddie Murphy. The VCR can of course be turned off, or even smashed, but if the roll isn't successful the reprogrammed adults will still obey their programming and try to start or replace it.

The Kids can also replace the video and play any of the "forbidden" media, such as a horror movie or hard rock through the speakers). This would break the hypnotic state of the adults, including Jeanette [Janet], thus permanently putting an end to her plans. If the software and the computer survives, and the Kids don't quite succeed (for example if they are forced to compromise) you can create a scene where the hypnotic program enslaves someone new in the Epilogue.

AFTERMATH

The Kids now each get a scene from their Everyday Life to end the Mystery with. These scenes can include changes that take place in Stenhamra [Boulder City] after the cultural festival:

IDYLL

If the Kids fail, Jeanette's [Janet's] plan will succeed and most adults in Stenhamra [Boulder City] are re-programmed. The town turns into the "idyllic com-

munity" that Jeanette [Janet] envisioned. Everyone dresses and behaves the same way and smiles empty, whitened smiles as they pass each other in the streets. The PTA will become even more influential, with Jeanette [Janet] as the new school director. All Kids will be shown the video and be reprogrammed as they get old enough. The Shadow People are left in the factory, at the outskirts of society. As their numbers increase, they slowly but surely hatch their own plans to strike back at the conformed society.

A NEW DAY

Hopefully, the Kids will save the day. The adults who have been reprogrammed wake up from their mass hypnosis and have no recollection of what has happened. Most of them sluggishly return to their everyday routines, ignoring the lack of memory from the past few days or weeks. Collectively it is considered better to ignore and bury what has happened than to seek help.

Jeanette [Janet] is confused. The last thing she remembers is herself, neck deep in work as she programmed her new software algorithm – about a month ago. If the characters succeed in explaining exactly what she has done, she will show regret and destroy all her research. She leaves a report to her director at FOA [DARPA] stating that her research was a failure. This in turn leads to a less significant desktop job as she resigns as chairman [president] of the Parent Teacher Association.

SHADOW PEOPLE

The “Shadow People” return to Stenhamra [Boulder City] one after another as they realize there’s no longer a threat of persecution, at least no more than usual. They take their place in the outskirts of society, now in the shadows shaped by the ignorance of all.

NPCS AND CREATURES

Here are the NPC characters central to the Mystery. They have special attributes that can either increase the threat level the characters are facing, or give bonuses as allies.

JEANETTE ADOLFSSON (JANET THOMPSON)

“Think of your children. We must stand united against violence and filth!”

Jeanette (Janet) is a 46 year old researcher at FOA (DARPA). She studied **PSYCHOLOGY 3** for a long time, and has always been interested in hypnosis. Her major breakthrough came when she found an algorithm for machine-induced hypnosis. She settled down in Stenhamra (Boulder City), close to the Loop, to further expand her research. Jeanette (Janet) had high hopes for her discovery – to further understand the meaning of humanity. This was not agreed upon with her employer, who’d rather see her research used in the pursuit of sleeper agents and infiltrators.

Ever since she moved there, she has also been very active in the community of Stenhamra (Boulder City)



where she runs the local Parent Teacher Association. She is the go to person when organizing events, **ORGANIZE 3**, and her name therefore carries great weight. Under her watch, Stenhamra (Boulder City) will not remain a sleepy suburb in the shadow of the Bona reactor (DART reactor), but instead thrive and transform into an idyll of conformity.

Investigating her house during the Mystery reveals that she is not at home, and hasn’t been for quite some time. Ever since her accidental reprogramming, she has worked tirelessly. The real Jeanette (Janet) is far from the “obsessed tyrant” that she appears to be. What happened to her is the result of good intentions gotten way, way out of hand.

ELLEN SKOOGH (ELLEN WOODS)

“Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered, Till I scarcely more than muttered – Other friends have flown before...”

Ellen is a young 26-year-old woman. Her complexion is pale, the dark hair is a bit shabby, and she wears big glasses and shirts with rock band or horror movie motifs.

ELLEN’S RECOMMENDATIONS

- THE FLY – David Cronenberg
- ALIENS – James Cameron
- THE LOST BOYS – Joel Schumacher
- PRINCE OF DARKNESS – John Carpenter





She recently moved to Stenhamra (**Boulder City**), where she took over as manager for the local video rental place Stenhamra Video (**Hoover's Video Rental**). She has run the place for about half a year now and her personal interest in horror, sci-fi, and action films have increasingly changed the availability of these genres. She is transsexual and has recently undergone gender correction. The move to Stenhamra was meant to give her a fresh start, and some peace and quiet from her old life. She is terrified of being singled out or shunned.

Ellen absolutely loves watching and talking about horror movies. She respects the parental guidance and does not usually allow children to rent R-rated movies without first consulting their parents. However, she has a soft spot for some of the Kids in town, and is sometimes persuaded to bend the rules a little.

Ellen is **CHILDISH 2**, which means that she understands, more than other adults, the situation and everyday life of the Kids. She easily relates to teenagers, partly because of her own longing for a childhood she never really had. This childish curiosity is what protects her from being reprogrammed – Ellen simply isn't "grown-up enough" to be able to share Jeanette's (Janet's) vision of a conformed society.

If the Kids were to call her, the answering machine has some kind of recorded movie quote like: "Leave a message before it gets dark, because they mostly come at night... mostly."



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THE MUMMY IN THE MIST

Bredäng. Gray and March. The snow is gone and the trees have not started to bud. The world is gray and gloomy. To top it off, a fog covers Lake Malar. There are old American horror movies playing on television. It's an unusual atmosphere and gives the player characters something to talk about. Somewhere, there are rumors that a mummy has been seen in Bredäng and the nearby Sättra.



This plot will develop into two interconnected mysteries: a mummy mystery and the DIM mystery. The mysteries occur in the Stockholm suburb of Bredäng, but if necessary, they can be moved to another suburb or alternatively placed on the Mälaren Islands with a little work from the GM.

THE TRUTH OF THE MYSTERY

Walter Bohm is a West German guest researcher in Slingan. Bohm came to Sweden a half-year ago, recently divorced and with alcohol problems, but things did not improve living in a Riksenergi barracks-like apartment hotel on Adelsö. After a few minor scandals, Bohm moved out of the hotel and ended up in an apartment on Ålgrytevägen in Bredäng on the outskirts of Stockholm [alternatively in a townhouse near the

Hemenway Pass in Boulder City]. In connection with the move, Bohm brought a few “borrowed” appliances from work, appliances he rigged up in the apartment and used for experiments on the effect of magnetron phenomena on light. At the end of February, Bohm badly burned himself during an experiment on the face, hands, arms and upper body. The burns healed faster than they should have, but the affected parts have now become vague. Almost transparent. They do not reflect light and the condition is worsening. Bohm fears that his upper body will become invisible within a month.

Bohm's burns do not hurt, but they are very hot and he often goes out late in the evenings to cool down. He enjoys going to Mälärhöjden Beach [Boulder Beach] for the cold of the dune banks that drift over the lake. He sometimes walks on the beach, his invisible upper body wrapped in gauze.



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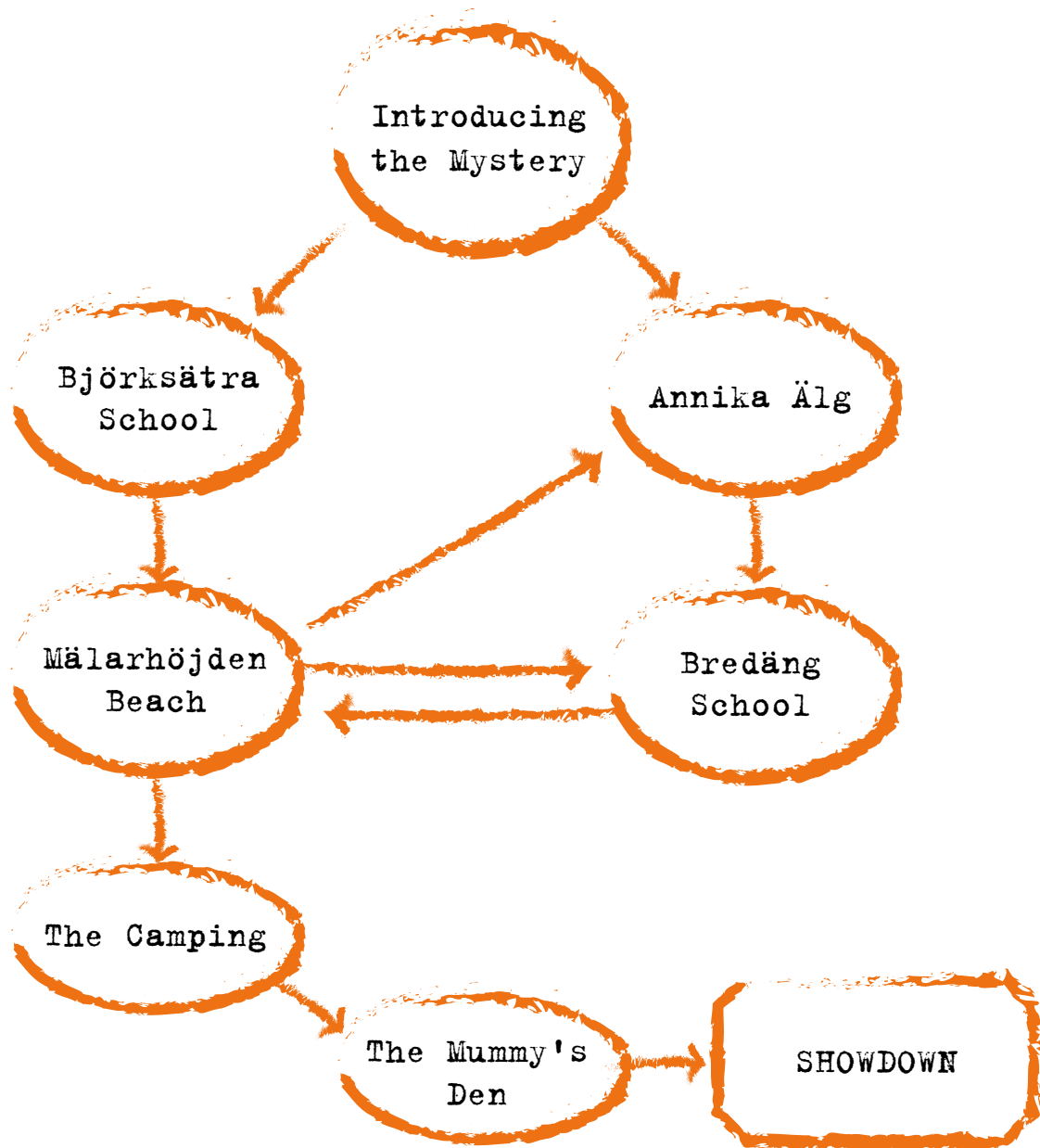
It is Bohm's nightly walks that have given rise to rumors that there is a mummy in the woods between Bredäng and Mälaren [the descent between Hemenway and Boulder Beach].

DIM-9S

Lake Mälaren is wrapped in fog and covered with thin ice. The phenomenon is often attributed to its proximity to the Loop, but in truth, there are encounters between Riksenergi [DART] and creatures from another dimen-

sion. These are the strange creatures behind the weird weather phenomena taking place in Lake Mälaren [Lake Mead] lately. The temperature rises up and down tens of degrees, it is foggy and Lake Mälaren is covered with ice. The meetings taking place on the small island of Kungshatt [around the Alpha Gate] are so far very rare, and Riksenergi keeps them secret to keep pressure from the government and other groups off them.

The foreign beings are called "DIM-9" by Riksenergi, simply because they are believed to come from a





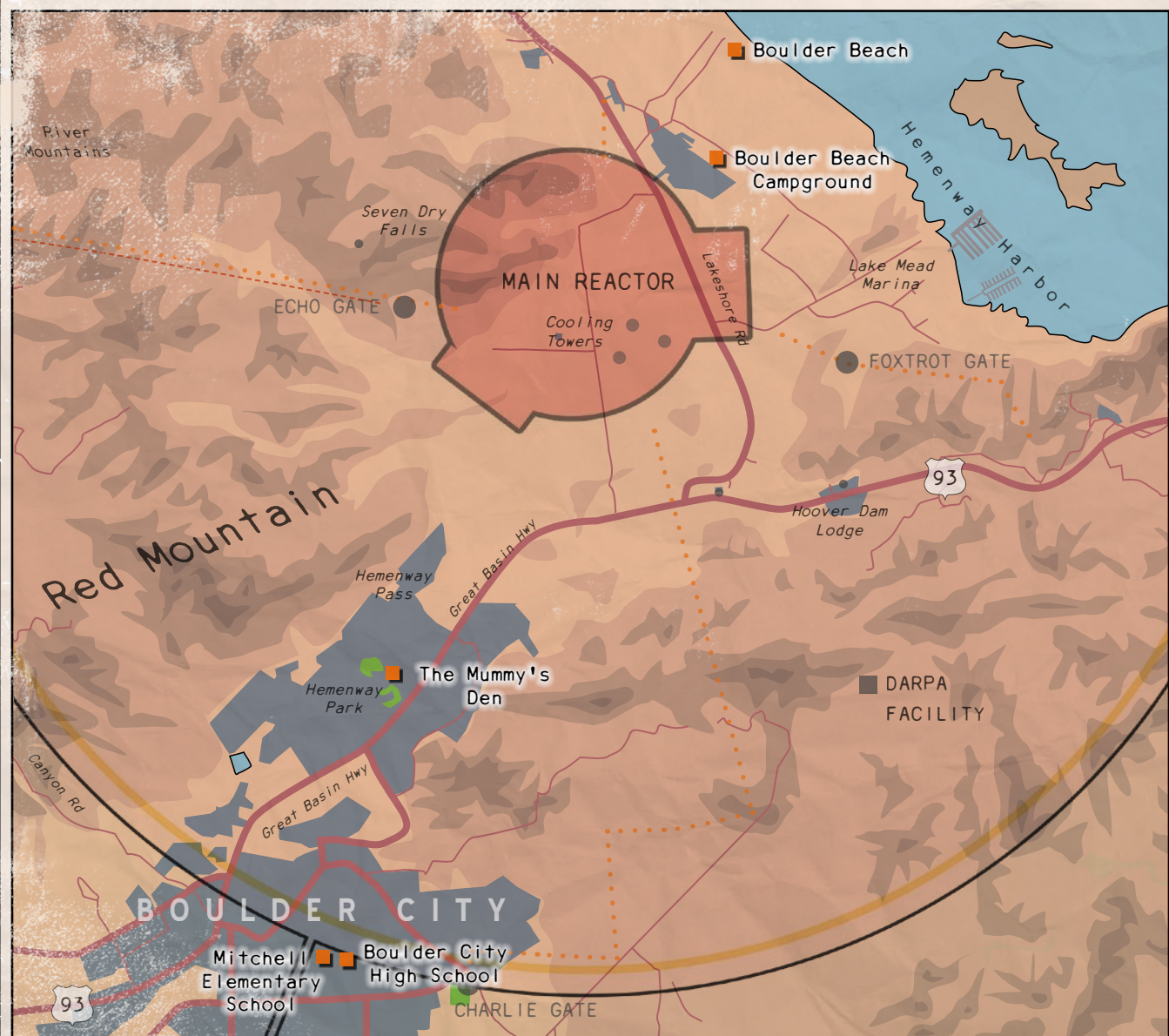
ninth dimension. The current problem is that the DIM-9s are stuck in our dimension and starting to feel restless and hungry about something that is unclear. There is also something at the Mälarhöjden Beach [Boulder Beach] (across the water from Kungshatt) that attracts them. Something they think can help them get home.

BREDÄNG

Bredäng is a suburb of Stockholm that is almost twenty years old. Bredäng is mostly populated by construction workers, nurses and post officers who find that it is much better to own an outhouse through the housing projects than living in the slums of Sö-



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dermalm. The suburb abounds with families with children and you can always find children cycling everywhere, playing hockey and Star Wars. In Bredäng's center, there is everything you could wish for: the Post Office, several banks, two major food stores, liquor stores, libraries, a pastry shop, and even a swimming pool. On top of the Tempo there is a bistro serving various barbecue dishes that overlooks a parking garage. If you want to go shopping, go to the nearby mall, in the center of Skärholm, where

there are a lot of toys, a Chinese restaurant and a cinema called Vågen (The Wave). (At this time only IKEA's round and vaguely futuristic building can be found in Kungens Kurva).

Bredäng is socially homogeneous. Nobody stands out and almost everyone has a job, no matter if their name is Svensson, Sivonen or Stefanovic. There is no big team to root for in the town and the worst evening news stories are mostly about events in Kungsträdgården [in Las Vegas].



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BREDÄNG'S GEOGRAPHY

Bredäng is bordered on the north by a mountainous forest that spreads down towards Mälaren and on the south by Skärholmsvägen and the industrial area down the highway. To the west, Bredäng merges into Sättra, which then merges into Skärholmen. To the east, towards the town, you'll find the big TV tower on a rocky knoll at Bredängsvägen. Bredäng children do not cross towards Bredängsvägen. On the other side resides the old villa of Mälarhöjden. It is an unspoken rule that the children from Mälarhöjden also refrain from crossing into Bredäng.

BOULDER CITY

The mystery fits well in Boulder City, but will require minor changes. For natural reasons, there will never be ice on Lake Mead so the last part of the mystery will be replaced with dense fog and boats that can navigate the surface of the lake. In the same way as in the rule book, we have chosen to write U.S. versions of names and places in **[parentheses]** after the Swedish. This is intended as an aid instead of a definitive statement. Part of the benefit of Tales of the Loop is customizability of every mystery to fit wherever you and your group are playing.

INTRODUCING THE KIDS

Set a scene for each of the Kids in their Everyday Lives with or without Trouble. Take your time setting the mood. Allow the Kids to be curious about the strange phenomena and to follow the story bread crumbs. From the familiar and safe down towards the unknown.

It's a normal day, the radio is blaring out something about that Reagan fellow in the United States. The world looks roughly the same whether you live in a townhouse or an apartment. Talk about your Everyday Life without any games or mobile phones. BMX bikes are in and older Kids listen to AC/DC, Run DMC and Van Halen.

Allow each player to describe at least one feature or quirk that his Kid has in addition to his pride, such as constantly blabbering about the Tre Kronor **[USA national ice hockey team]**; is obsessed with Star Wars; or spends all of his waking time playing with a toy horse or reading comics. In addition, let each Kid

talk about his anchor, or any other important person in their lives, in addition to their peers. For example, the scout leader Frasse **[Frenton]**, the cute school librarian, or Leffe **[Lou]** who trains the Handball Club's team.

INTRODUCING THE MYSTERY

There have been rumors among children in recent weeks about a mummy that has been seen in Bredäng and Sättra **[around Hemenway Park]**. A real mummy, not someone playing a prank pretending to be one. This is not something Kids bring to the attention of any adults, partly because adults can force them to stay indoors, and partly because adults may make a connection between the mummy and the violent American horror videos circulating among the youngsters and decide that they should not be watching them.

How exactly you should get the Kids involved depends a little on the Kids themselves, but there are several different ways – engaging in curiosity, being adventurous or even vanity. The important thing is to get the characters away and into the nearest forest in the morning or after school. It is important that it is light outside for the first encounter.

CLUES

In the forest, by an area where the trees have no leaves, the characters find some gauze hanging on a bush. The wrappings are dirty and have a strong smell of detergent. Visible in the area are tracks. These could be real mummy tracks, but they could also belong to high schoolers that sometimes hang out in the area. It's hard to know.

TROUBLE

You can keep the Kids on edge with odd noises and birds darting out of bushes when they are up late, then you can have them meet Annika Älg **[Anna Acker]**. Annika is a couple of years older than the oldest Kid, a little weird, and incredibly annoying. She has seen the Kids sneaking around and obviously wants to know what they are up to. When Annika understands that the characters are on a mummy hunt, she tells them that a mummy has been spotted at Mälarhöjden Beach **[Boulder Beach]**.

The meeting with Annika will put the Kid's skills to the test. Kids can impress Annika with a CHARM roll; if they fail, she instead exposes something about them to get them to go on the mummy hunt through blackmail (preferably through Upset or Scared). Whichever the case may be, they have to go out on the mummy hunt

COUNTDOWN

Use the events below to increase the pressure on the Kids and set the mood in Bredäng.

1. The mummy follows members of the handball team as they run away. One of the team members, Jerker Andersson [Jerry Andersen], runs away terrified and trips over a rocky edge and breaks both legs. According to rumor, it was the mummy that threw Jerker.
2. Bredängsskolan [The Mitchell Elementary School] is visited by police officers. The Kids flock around the schoolyard around a beautiful blue-white Volvo. The police constables Larsson and Benderman [Larsen and Benderman] visit the Kids' classroom and urge the class not to go out to or on the ice under any circumstances since it is treacherous and dangerous. When Constable Benderman says this, he looks straight at the Kids. He seems to be on to them.
3. Riksenergi expands its presence along the Mälärhöjden Beach [Boulder Beach]. Three orange Riksenergi vehicles park at the beach and half a dozen guards are on the lookout in the area. One of the cars travels back and forth along the roads between Bredäng and Sättra and guards carrying torches are seen wandering in the woods. It is clear they are searching for something.



down to the campsite and Mälärhöjden Beach [Boulder Beach] tonight as they have now suddenly promised. Perhaps Annika may help one of the Kids ask out someone he or she likes in exchange for investigating the mystery, or maybe she may know some embarrassing secret the character wishes to keep quiet. There is no threat of violence. The characters all know that Annika is on good footing with the hard-working siblings Eva and Björne Strömdahl [Erica and Ben Sanders] and can count on them if it would come to trouble.

Annika also wants to know if there is a bicycle on the ice at the Mälärhöjden Beach tower. If so, what color is it? And is it a boy's or a girl's bike?

SOLVING THE MYSTERY

The mystery unfolds in and around Bredäng [Boulder City and Hemenway Park]. The Kids are searching for the Sättra Mummy, but find something even more strange at the Mälärhöjden Beach. Riksenergi Security [DART Security] do everything to keep people from the beaches at night as strange creatures move in and out of the ice [in the lake]. In the end, the characters will realize that these two phenomena are connected. The mummy is drawn to the creatures on the ice, and vice versa. An encounter between the two is inevitable.

LOCATION 1: THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

All children go to the Björksättra School in Bredäng [Mitchell Elementary School in Boulder]. (For those who want to use modern maps, the school no longer exists today. It lies on a piece of land between Sättra's Sport Stadium and the subway.) The school consists of a number of two-storey buildings of yellow brick. During the sixties, many schools around Stockholm were built out of old barracks. Björksättra is an average school without particularly high demand for students. There are three to four classes and a small extra class for children with special needs from each grade.

One of the school's cooks is Mona, who has a strong resemblance to Sue Ellen (Linda Gray) from the TV series Dallas. Everyone is terrified of the aging Swedish teacher, Mrs Molnbäck, [Miss Mayber-



ry]. A hall in one of the barracks houses the theater club, which does its best to recruit rebel students whenever it can.

TROUBLE

Elaka Eva and Björne Strömdahl [Erica and Ben Sanders]. The Strömdahl twins are in sixth grade and consider themselves rulers of Björksåtra School. One of them pops up (accompanied by their gang) and is ruthless towards one of the characters. Depending on how the event develops, the Kids can use **FIGHT** or **CHARM** to de-escalate the situation. Regardless, a group of children will look at the way the Kids solve the situation which will have subsequent ramifications.

CLUES

The school tries to drown rumors of the mummy. Here are some that the Kids can pick up.

- **RIDING STABLES:** A couple of sixth graders tell you that a mummy was indeed at the Såtra Stables last night. It frightened several horses into a panic. One of the girls' big sisters was tossed from her horse. The horse then bolted towards the woods. (If you look into this rumor, it turns out that a girl really was tossed by a horse. But it was down at Mälärhöjden Beach [Boulder Beach]. It was foggy and a white-haired man scared the horse. She did not see his face.)
- **THE FUGITIVE:** Anders Gran [Andy Geller] in 5a, whose father is a policeman, says he heard his dad say that the mummy is probably someone who ran away from Såtra sjukhus [Boulder City Hospital]. (This is not actually the case.)

ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

You can use one or more of these events on your way to the Björksåtra school. Do not forget that it is March and the weather is harsh and the trees have no leaves left on them.

- Traces of the mummy. Several meters of dirty gauze hang on a tree.
- Marcus Nilsson [Mark Newman] is riding a BMX bike. He stops to brag that his eldest brother purchased the most expensive Tyco car. He then rides away.
- There are frozen spots on the street. The Kids hear adults mention that they "do something about the Loop."
- Leffe [Louie] in class 4B comes by. He tells the Kids that yesterday there was so much ice on Lake Mälaren that a military icebreaker had to come and open a lane [and so much fog over Lake Mead that the military put out light posts].
- The TV Tower sings. A loud noise, something between a foghorn and a distressed cow, is sometimes heard from the TV tower. It has something to do with the Loop.



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- **FOG:** Someone (it's always unclear who) has seen the mummy running along the dams down at the bay Mälärhöjden Beach [**Boulder Beach**]. He shouted strange things in Egyptian. (True, but he was yelling in German.)
- **SEA:** Something odd is happening on Lake Mälaren. (True.) This is where the mummy has been seen. (Not true.) [**Lake Mead is covered in dense Fog**]
- **CAMPING:** The mummy has been sighted inside the closed campsite. There are several guards patrolling here. (True).
- **IN LOVE:** The mummy is looking for a woman it fell in love with. The woman is usually someone familiar to whoever is telling the story. (Does not matter in any way.)
- **THE FOREST:** A girl who is a member of the "Gustav Wasa" - Bredäng Scouts [**Boulders Girl Guides**] tells that the scouts [**girl guides**] nowadays avoid the forest around the campsite. (Scout leader Frasse [**Frannie**] will deny this.)

LOCATION 2: THE BEACH

A large swimming area located at Lake Mälaren, below the campsite. There is a sandy beach, a number of jetties and a ten-meter diving tower. All of them are now covered in a thick, cold fog. You can find mummy rags in several places.

There is a thin ice layer on Lake Mälaren. The fog densely covers the beach and you can only see for a few tens of meters. Every now and then, loud noises are heard from the ice.

Down at the diving tower there is no path over the ice. On the other hand, a patrol from Riksenergi [**DART**] can be seen walking along the beach. The five men are led by a woman (Maj-Britt Sundvall) [**Mary L Bloomington**]. They are looking for something and do not look friendly. The woman talks about traces and "the offense" into a big walkie talkie. (They are looking for a DIM-9 that has deviated from Kungshatt [**Alpha Gate**].)

The patrol has come to the beach on hovercraft which can easily travel over water as well as ice. If they find any Kids, they will interrogate them before sending them on their way. They will do the same to the bike gang if they find them.

The mooing noise in the Mälaren becomes louder and stronger the longer the scene goes on, until finally there is a glimpse of something out in the mist. A huge shadow, as big as a bus. Riksenergi employees are now in even more of a hurry to chase away the Kids.

TROUBLE

Riksenergi's patrols can be a problem for the characters. They may have to roll for **STEALTH** to avoid detection, or **CHARM** to come up with a good reason to be poking around.

The guards are harsh and determined, but will not fight children. In the event of a failure, the situation becomes complicated: they capture the Kids in their hovercraft, where they will be interrogated by Maj-Britt Sundvall [**Mary L Bloomington**]. She knows nothing about any bike gang or mummy. She warns the characters to stay out of Riksenergi's way and then sends them home. With a successful **CHARM** roll, she will reveal that Riksenergi is looking for an abandoned animal. There is something on the beach that attracts the animal.

Fooling the guards and running away from them can be accomplished with a **MOVE** roll. Failure gives a condition, such as Exhausted or Damaged, but the characters are able to escape. The guards do not really take the Kids seriously and are (although the characters do not understand it) satisfied that their job is done, to Maj-Britt Sundvall's [**Mary L Bloomington's**] displeasure.

EVENT: THE MUMMY

When the Kids finally escape the patrol's grasp, they go from the frying pan and into the fire. On the hilltop up near the campsite, they see a strange human silhouette against the black sky.

The Sättra Mummy.

It was not just a rumor. Fifty meters away is a figure wearing only a pair of pants while its upper body and face are wrapped in long white rags. The mummy hears the characters coming through the thicket and stops. It listens for a second before turning around and heading back to the campsite, then disappears among caravans and trees.

CLUES

Once the Kids have escaped the patrol and seen the mummy, they will have lots to talk about.

- **TRACK:** Players using **INVESTIGATE** to track the mummy can see that the tracks lead towards the Ålgryteback [Hemenway Park] (see the Mummy's Den on page 61).
- **REPORTING BACK:** The Kids need to talk to Annika Älg [Anna Acker] the following day (at Bredang School [Boulder City High School], page 60). The exact when and how is up to the players. Make it clear that Annika will be very anxious and impatient unless you talk to her.
- **WRITE:** If the Kids tell anyone about what they see, they are met with some respect by middle school children and with skepticism by adults. It's not a good idea to blame the police, because they will turn to the Kid's parents. Riksenergi will deny all knowledge of people at Mälarhöjden Beach.

rest down towards Mälaren. It is fenced and for the moment deserted. There are a couple of cabins with showers and toilets and a closed and fully flooded kiosk. On the forest side, the fence is so broken that it is possible to go inside unchallenged. In the woods behind the campground, lies the narrow path along which Walter Bohm walks as he heads down to Mälarhöjden Beach [Boulder Beach] to cool his burning body. There are several washable mummy bindings in the bushes.

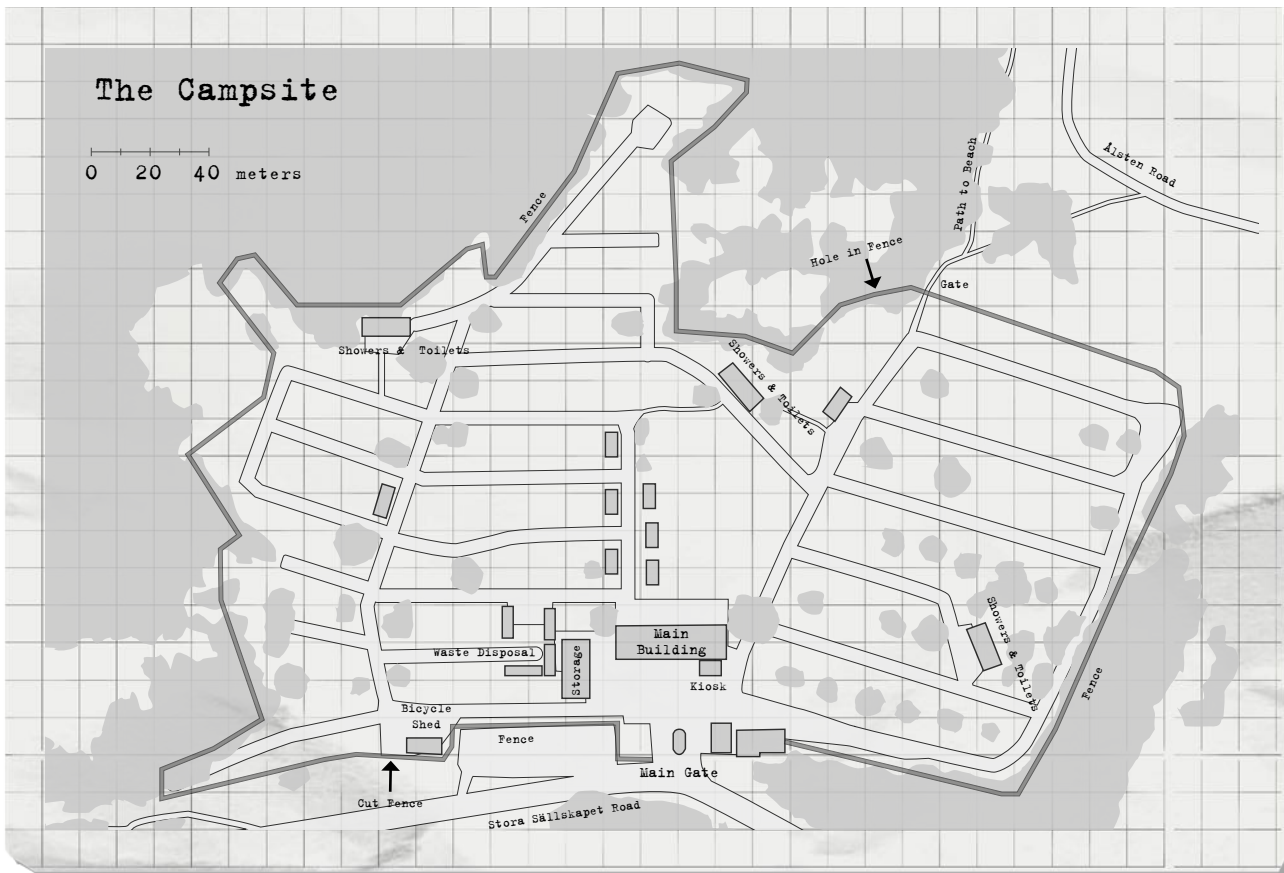
There is a light flurry of snow falling on the campsite, though it is not particularly cold. The characters find fresh mummy rags, and not long after they see the mummy itself not far away. The mummy is either on its way down to stand by the beach at Mälarhöjden and wander into the fog, or it is on its way to Ålgrytebacken [Hemenway Park]. At Ålgryteback it disappears into a port.

LOCATION 3: THE CAMPSITE

The large campsite in Bredäng is located by the fo-

TROUBLE

When the characters are wandering through the campsite, they suddenly hear incoming mopeds. You choose



if this event happens automatically, or whether it is a complication for a failed roll during the Kid's survey of the location.

Benny Jönsson leads [Billy Jenkins] his gang through a cut out hole in the fence. Kalle Karlberg [Charlie Carr] has attached a boombox to the base of his moped and the gang travels in circles blasting Def Leppard and Hands to the Sky. All of a sudden, Benny and the gang spots one of the characters and drives after them, surrounding them and driving in circles. Benny and the gang are cowardly but threatening, and want to know why the Kids are sneaking around at the campsite. How it all develops depends on what the player Kids do. They can choose to face the moped gang or try a **CHARM** roll against the leader Benny or his lackey Kalle. (Keep in mind that the gang are in the ninth grade and are therefore older than most of the Kids.) A character can also impress the moped gang by using **TINKER** to fix something on a moped. Benny and his gang can be antagonists who can come back later in the mystery, or they can become valuable allies! Extra successes can be used as bonuses at the next meeting with the moped gang in school, or the conversation with Annika.

- **STAIRCASE:** There is some detective work required to calculate that the mummy is living on the second floor, and is actually named Walter Bohm. The characters can either make a extremely difficult (two successes required) roll to **COMPREHEND**, thus recognizing Walter's walking style, or **INVESTIGATE** the staircase that leads to Walter's door.

CLUES

Different clues may appear depending on whether the characters follow the mummy or handle the conflict with the moped thread.

- **STAIRCASE:** The mummy's tracks lead out towards the rowhouse at Älgrytebacken [the rowhouse at Hemenway Park] (see the Mummy's Den, page 61).
- **BACKGROUND:** Benny and the moped gang know that something strange is happening on the ice, as they have seen strange shadows move out there, know that Riksenergi [DART] cars are moving around in the neighborhood. They have not bothered to investigate it, but maybe the Kids can pursue them or bring them along on

this adventure?

LOCATION 4: THE HIGH SCHOOL

The next day: The Bredäng School [Boulder City High School] is a modern education institution located in Bredängs Centrum. There are five or six classes in each grade. The schoolyard is considerably higher than the town center and smoke rises out of every pipe. The youth at school are skeptical of the mummy rumors. The school's worst bullies are the large brothers Robin and Roger [Reed and Roger] (both of whom are dating the sporty girls Carina and Camilla [Casey and Camille]).

TROUBLE

In school the Kids will encounter Benny Jönsson [Billy Jenkins] and his moped gang. If they have already met them at the campsite (see above), the events will, of course, be colored by how the meeting went. If, on the other hand, they are meeting for the first time, Benny and the gang will surround the Kids and wonder what some "little snots like you" are doing at Bredängs School and asks them if they want to wash their heads and hair in the school's nice toilets? See previous trouble with the Moped gang (page 59) in case of conflict with the gang.

A fact that can complicate it all is if the characters mention they are there to meet Annika Älg [Anna Ackers]. Benny is deeply in love with Annika and becomes either reluctant or jealous when he learns this information. If the players make successful **CHARM** rolls, then maybe he decides to help the Kids in order to impress her.

Annika Älg [Anna Ackers] holds a table in a recreation room in Bredängs School. It's hard to tell if she's alone by choice or because people are afraid of her.

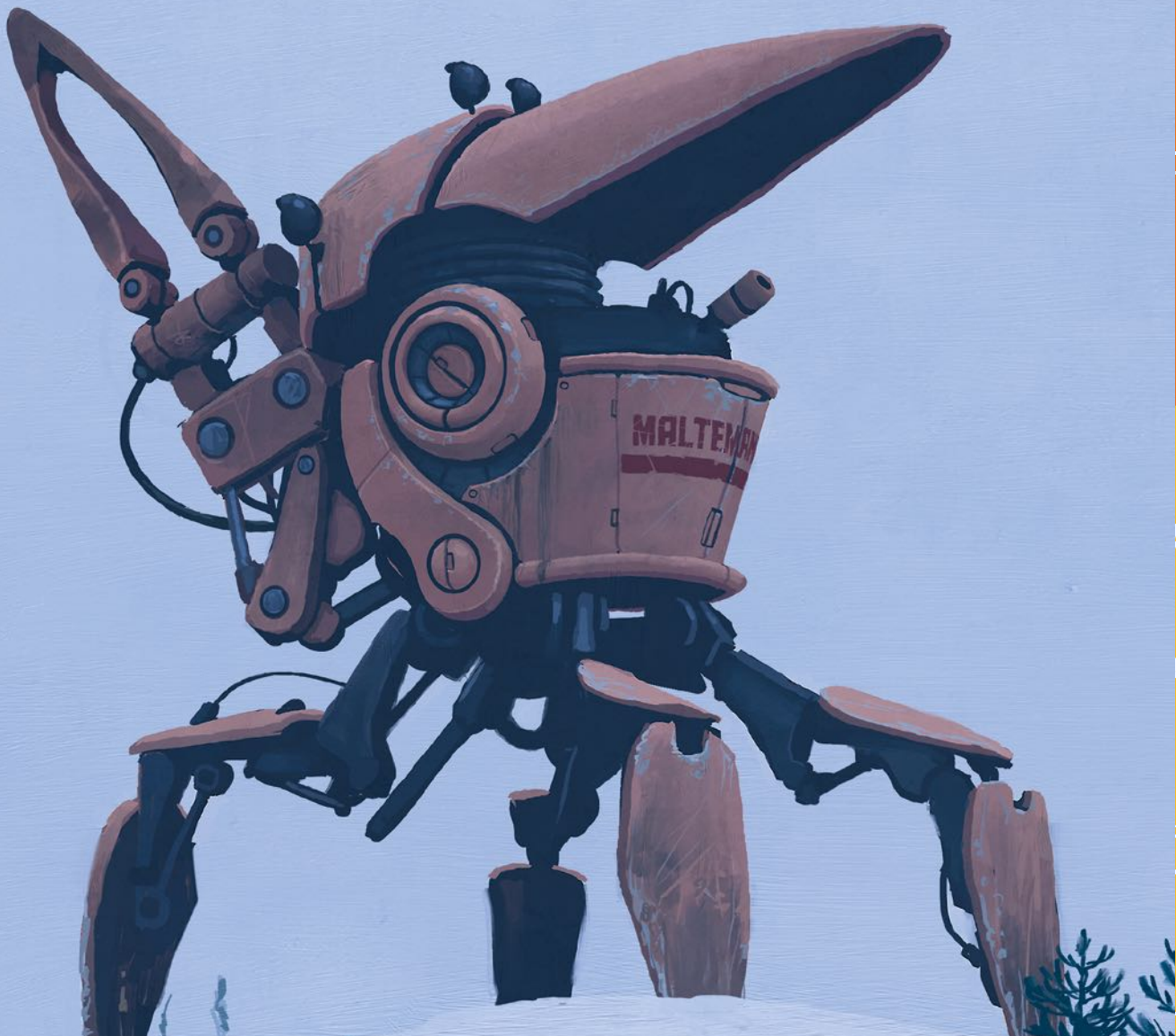
Annika seems both unpleasant and unstable and is looking forward to getting the characters out of the school (or at least it seems that way to the Kids). She accepts the characters' apologies but insists that the bike must be picked up. And this time Annika is tagging along. Tonight.

CLUES

Annika [Anna] is upset and impatient. She really wants to find the bike.



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- **FORCED:** With a successful blow to **EMPATHIZE**, the characters slowly understand that Annika is in a bind and not at all as dangerous as she first seemed. She is harshly disciplined at home and a couple of older children at school have taken her bike as revenge for something she did. They know she will be punished for this.
- **GHOSTHUNTERS:** On the way from school, the characters notice that a Riksenergi machine has been set up in the parking garage behind the center. A man and a woman are setting it up. If the player Kids ask what the machine is for, the woman

(Margareta Koskinen) [Maria Gonzalez] answers that it is used to speak with the “crazy ghosts.” The “ghosts” are just the mooing noises at Lake Mälaren [Lake Mead].

LOCATION 5: THE MUMMY'S DEN

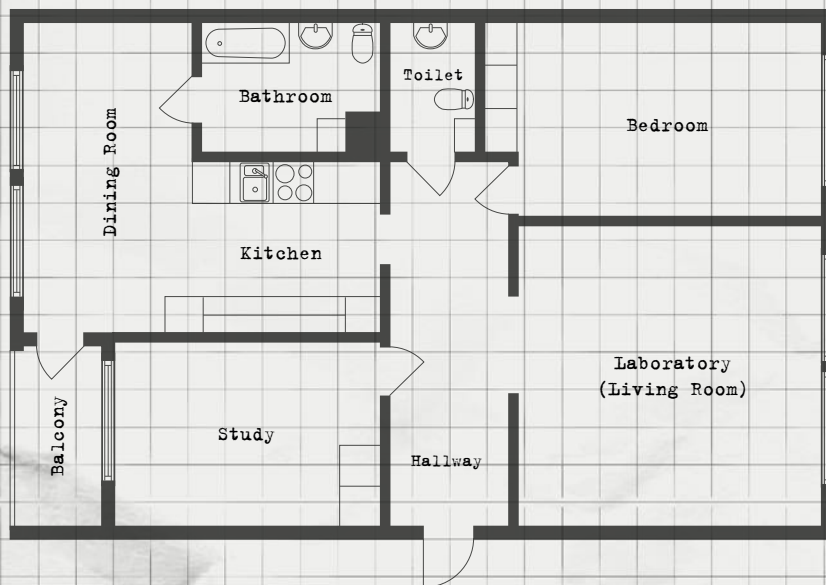
Who is this Walter Bohm now? If his neighbors are asked this question (using **CHARM** or **CONTACT**), they say that Walter Bohm is a foreigner, probably German.



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The Mummy's Den (Älgryte Road 8, Second Floor)

0 1 2 3 4 5 meters



KUNGSHATT [ALPHA GATE]

Riksenergi meets the DIM-9s on the small island of Kungshatt within the mist of Lake Mälaren [around the Alpha Gate at Lake Mead]. The five DIM 9s are held in a "hedge" by means of barricade tape which, for some reason, they refuse to cross. (Some are attributed to have escaped when some strips broke). The island is Margareta Koskinens [Maria Gonzalez] domain and she controls her as she wants.

It is not meant for the players to reach Kungshatt, but they may end up there for unclear reasons. A half-kilometer hike over the ice is indeed a suicide mission.

Do not forget that neither Riksenergi nor DIM-9s are after anything bad. But the Kids don't know that.

They also learn that he is a hermit and a curmudgeon. He does not have a TV at all, but sometimes there is crying and screaming coming from his apartment. Typically in a foreign language. He has lived here for half a year. With some luck (one roll of **COMPREHEND**), the player Kids can also find out that Bohm works for Riksenergi [DART].

TROUBLE

Bold Kids can climb up to Bohm's balcony (using **MOVE**) on the second floor. On the balcony, there are signs that Bohm often sits there on a folding chair and smokes as he watches the mist over Mälaren. To A **MOVE** roll is required to get around here unnoticed, but if the Kids try to make a diversion (for example, a roll of **CHARM** or some such), they may get bonuses. Inside the apartment, an assortment of laboratory equipment can be found.

In the event of a complication arising during this sequence, such as by accessing one of the machines here or being captured by Walter Bohm, one of the Kids is somehow exposed to Walter Bohm's affliction, and the character's hand becomes somewhat diapha-



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nous. However, Walter becomes almost happy and is now friendly towards the character. He will introduce the characters to his friends in the fog. He has no idea how to cure the infection, but perhaps his new friends may know.

CLUES

- **MUMMY:** If the Kids knock on Walter Bohm's door he will answer. He is half invisible and fully drunk. He is at the end of his wits, which is why he does not bother to hide that he is invisible. If the players come up with a reasonable story (a **CHARM** roll) then he opens up to the Kids and confides in them his secret.
- **INFECTION:** He has been infected with something in the magnetic field that is making him invisible. His last attempt to reverse his transformation has failed.
- **THE CALL:** There is something down at Mälarhöjden Beach [**Boulder Beach**], which calls to Walter Bohm. He unsure exactly what it is, but he is certain that there is something out on the ice that will be able to cure him.

If the characters are friendly to Bohm, or contract his affliction, he will invite them to the ice to meet the "amazing" ones. He has no apprehensions about bringing a group of schoolchildren wandering out onto the ice other than seeing it as a friendly gesture or a game. Perhaps they can help him keep an eye out for the annoying guards from Riksenergi. Maybe then he would be happy.

LOCATION 6: OVER THE ICE

Walter Bohm goes out to the ice with the Kids, or they follow him (**SNEAK**). If Walter discovers the children, he will invite them to come with him with enthusiasm. Out on the ice, the fog is dense and it is easy to lose your way. It does not take long before the Kids lose the already semi-invisible Bohm. However, his footsteps can found with an **INVESTIGATE** roll. Failure gives the Kids the conditions Fear or Exhausted, but the tracks are still found. The ice is cracking and the only thing that is encountered is the DIM-9's ruler at Kungshatt [**Alpha Gate**]. The Kids

MEET THE STAR

The star researcher Margareta Koskinen [**Maria Gonzalez**] is the GM's ace in the sleeve. She can be counted on to solve different situations. She can save the characters from the nasty Sundwall [**Bloomington**]; she can get on the ice with her own hovercraft; or rescue the Kids from a complicated situation at Kungshatt. The DIM-9 respond to her and she has access to the cure for invisibility. The cure is a heavy injection and a couple of hours of light cramps. Koskinen [**Gonzalez**] has been familiar with the phenomenon for a long time, and has no idea why Walter Bohm wasn't.



are eventually lost and their feet and bodies are covered in something wet and nasty.

Suddenly, from somewhere out in the ice a DIM-9 glides into view. It is completely silent and huge, yet the ice holds its weight without breaking. It stops for a moment when it comes within view of the Kids. It is clear that it sees the Kids. Then it emits what sounds like a moo and glides towards Kungshatt. The characters then see that Walter is sitting on his back completely unafraid.

SHOWDOWN

There is something about Walter Bohm's composition that attracts the DIM-9s. Likewise something about the DIM-9's convinced Walter that they (whoever "they" are) can cure him. When Walter goes out to the ice the following events start to occur:

- At Kungshatt, the DIM-9 leaves the barricade (straight through the tear) and goes out on the ice. Riksenergi's people are searching for it on hovercraft.
- A DIM-9 begins to search for Walter while the others slide towards Stockholm and Essingeleden. Riskser-

gi's hovercraft boats are circling and using lights to try to corral the DIM-9s back to the barricade area.

- Then a single DIM-9 finds Walter and attracts the rest of the flock to him. They gather on the ice, forming a ring around Walter, while Riksenergi watches.
- Annika Älg [Anna Ackers] has a camera with her and steps out onto the ice to photograph a DIM-9. Perhaps in order to prove that monsters took her bike so that her dad would not get angry. She disappears into the mist. Maybe she meets a DIM-9, or perhaps she is captured by Riksenergi's patrols. This may be the set-up leading to the final scene.
- A DIM-9 sees the characters and approaches them. It's a horrible scary sight to see this shadow-like marvel heading straight towards them. But then something happens. The Kids suddenly start levitating off the ground, as if the creature were carrying them on an invisible tendril. Suddenly, it's like they're in another world, and the DIM-9 communicates straight into their minds using images and visions:

The beings come from another world (another dimension to be more precise). And they want to return home!

With Walter's help they can finally get there. But they are chased by little people in orange overalls and wielding flashlights.

The DIM-9 wants the Kids to mislead Riksenergi's patrols long enough to allow Walter to get the DIM-9s back home.

- Then the characters drop slowly to the ground again and the giant creature disappears into the fog. Further away, the engine from one of Riksenergi's hovercraft is heard. Walter takes off his clothes and is now completely invisible.
- The DIM-9 approaches him in a way that can be perceived as threatening.

EXTENDED TROUBLE

The scene can take different turns depending on what the players do:

- **HELP THE CREATURES:** If they choose to help the DIM-9s, they need to mislead Riksenergi's patrols so that they do not interfere with the DIM-9s' return home (see below). The Kids are out on the ice with only the clothes they wear and the equipment they have. Let the players come up with a plan and implement it as

an Extended Trouble. The threat level is very difficult (3 x the number of Kids); if the player Kids do not have any help you can allow a third party to interfere in the scene, such as Benny Jönsson [Billy Jenkins] and his moped gang! In that case, this lowers the Threat Level to Normal (2 x number of Kids).

- **HELP THE AGENTS:** If the player Kids choose instead to stop the DIM-9s and "save" Walter, then they can do so with the help of the patrols. This can be a matter of leading the creatures back and containing them inside Kungshatt's [Alpha Gate], all while Riksenergi's [DART's] agents catch Walter. In order to act before Walter is broken, the characters must succeed with a Threat Level that is almost impossible (4 x the number of Kids).

If the creatures are successful, either through the Kids' aid or their failure to stop them while aiding the patrols, the DIM-9s move towards Walter where he is standing with arms stretched out. They stand around the invisible man. Then they tear him to pieces and feed themselves with his body. The creatures start to fade, their color looking matted. And just like that, they are all gone. Totally gone.

AFTER THE SHOWDOWN

Desolation. Only darkness, fog and headlights from Riksenergi's hovercraft boats. Be sure to get the player Kids off the ice one way or another and send them home. Their relationship with Annika Älg [Anna Ackers] should be positive. Riksenergi is now ignoring the Kids unless they are drowning or are in need of immediate help.

If the creatures were caught, they are gone the next morning, Riksenergi managed to move them into the Slingans underground complex for further experimentation.

CHANGE

When the fog finally lifts, both Walter Bohm and the DIM-9s have disappeared. Everything returns to normal, yet things are not the same. Annika Älg will have a newfound respect for the Kids, and maybe even Benny Jönsson and his gang will also. As for Riksenergi, they will keep a watchful eye on the Kids in the future. Perhaps a representative will come to school to let them



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know they are keeping an eye on them. Perhaps one of Kids' parents receives a notice from the authorities.

NPCS AND CREATURES

Here are the various characters who play a particularly important role in the mystery. Several of them have special attributes that can raise the threat level the characters face



in the specific scenes, but can also provide a bonus to the Kids' activities if any of them become allies of the Kids.

ANNIKA ÄLG (ANNA ACKERS)

"I saw everything. I will tell."

Annika Älg went to middle and secondary school at the Björksätraskolan (Mitchell Elementary School) and is currently in seventh grade at Bredäng School (Boulder City High). She still keeps an eye on what is happening in her old school. She collects gossip and malicious rumors.

Annika lives in a rowhouse on Tankebygggarbacken (Canyon Road).

Annika seems to live on chewing gum. She is incredibly annoying, ordinary, and bossy. Her mother says she is like Shirley Temple. Annika owns a camera.

RIKSENERGI GUARDS (DART GUARDS)

"What is going on here?"

A collection of the best guards available. Competent, accurate, and basically nice. They wear vague uniform-like clothes in dark orange. They are all men, can tell endless stories and all have a complicated relationship with Maj-Britt Sundvall (Mary L Bloomington). They are all equipped with batons, handcuffs, solid flashlights, and all have the attribute **PHYSICALLY FIT 2**, for all physical melee.

MARGARETA KOSKINEN (MARIA GONZALEZ)

"Imagine what they could tell us."

Margareta Koskinen (Maria Gonzalez) holds doctorates in linguistics and biology and holds the world's only professorship in the doctrine of alien beings. She usually works at Karolinska Institutet, but has spent a full month trying to talk to the DIM-9s at Kungshatt (at Alpha Gate). She is excited, enthusiastic and almost blessed to be where she is right now. Anything other than contacting the DIM-9s is of no importance to her.

Margareta lives on Odenplan (at Wilbur Square) with a neglected husband and family. She is rarely home, but deep down may still have a soft spot towards children.

Margareta is tall, restless, and a chain smoker. She is so intelligent that everyday things bore her. She speaks Finnish-Swedish (Maria Gonzalez speaks English as a native language).

Margareta has 3 in her **LINGUISTIC** skill.

WALTER BOHM, THE MUMMY

"I shall be visible again."

Walter once had a promising career as a scientist ahead of him. Now he lacks self-esteem and ambition. Walter drinks periodically. He is sober for a few days and works, then loses a day or two to the bottle. The more sorry for himself he feels, the more he drinks and unfortunately he has also discovered that drinking makes him slightly more visible. Unfortunately, at this point Walter is hopeless as a researcher.

Walter lives as on Älgrytevägen (Hemenway Park)



and hates Bredäng. He has an idea that "the outsiders on the ice" (DIM-9s, which he knows nothing about) call to him. And that they are able to cure him. It's his last chance and he's desperate, but without being aggressive. He has the traits **FANATIC 2** and **INVISIBLE 2**.

Walter will seem old and tired to the players' Kids. He is thin, gray-haired and a little short-sighted. He wears a shirt and tie and carries cigarettes. He speaks an understandable but broken Swedish. The Kids will find him a little disgusting.

Walter has a death wish.

MAJ-BRITT SUNDVALL (MARY L BLOOMINGTON)

"This will hurt you more than it will hurt me."

Maj-Britt (**Mary**) was a lawyer at Riksenergi (**DART**) and is deeply characterized by being an ambitious woman in a cruel man's world. She climbed the ladder by cleaning up after various incidents around the Loop and is now the "operational security director", a position that involves few meetings and many interesting excursions on the Mälars Islands. She is not a violent person, but has no scruples when it comes to protecting Riksenergi's interests. She is responsible for keeping the existence of the DIM-9s at Kungshatt (**at Alpha Gate**) a secret from the public.

Maj-Britt (**Mary**) lives alone in a desolate apartment at Brommaplan (**in Boulder City**). She has no family and has no friends. Just the way she likes it.

Maj-Britt (**Mary**) is a tough, broad-shouldered, short woman some fifty years old. She can make a rabid dog submit with only a stare. She wears vague uniform-like clothes of the same kind as the Riksenergi patrols, although hers is a little bit more elaborate. Children find her scary. She is a **HARSH LEADER 2**, and is **EMOTIONLESS 2**.

COMMUNICATOR: Maj-Britt (**Mary**) has a prototype device, much like an old movie camera, that allows her to communicate with the DIM-9s. It groans when activated and does not work well. Understanding how it works is a very hard roll for **CALCULATE**, but can better be accomplished through a successful roll for **TINKER**, whe-



re every additional success will become a permanent bonus (up to a +3).

DIM-9S

"Iah-ia"

The ninth-dimension creatures look like giant rats on their backs, and have the **BIG AS A TREE** trait at 3 and are composed of greenish jelly. The green jelly produces narrow **TENTACLES 2** when needed and they speak with unpleasant clicking sounds until they suddenly give out a whining whistle. They are **INTELLIGENT 3** and feed on large amounts of sulfur.



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MIXTAPE OF MYSTERIES

The '80s is the decade when music mostly is consumed via cassettes, and the homemade mixtape reigns supreme. In the mixtape of mysteries in this chapter, you will encounter dreaming robots, a satanic conspiracy, two immortal youths, horror movies turning into reality and a very strange cult hiding underground. Just rewind and press play.



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These eight Locations can be used as a Mystery Landscape, but can also be extended into a series of Mystery Stories, or tied together into a campaign. Each of the sites is inspired by a famous 1980s song.

SWEET DREAMS

"Sweet dreams are made of this

Who am I to disagree?

I travel the world

And the seven seas

Everybody's looking for something"

"SWEET DREAMS (ARE MADE OF THIS)" – EURYTHMICS

A wave of irritation, discontent and negligence spreads across the islands. Bus drivers miss their routes, teachers fight with their students, police officers arrest the

SIDE A

1. "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" – Eurythmics
2. "Every Breath You Take" – The Police
3. "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" – Cyndi Lauper
4. "Where Is My Mind" – Pixies

SIDE B

1. "Night Train" – Guns 'N Roses
2. "Forever Young" – Alphaville
3. "Thriller" – Michael Jackson
4. "Heaven Is a Place On Earth" – Belinda Carlisle



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wrong people, and parents overreact to their children's disobedience. What's more, many say that they are still tired when they wake up. And some even remember a white noise from their dreams.

THE TRUTH

The robots AN-1 and DAV-4 have managed to escape from an experimental laboratory where they were manufactured with an advanced form of artificial intelligence. They have been hiding in Eldgarnsö north of Svartsjölandet [on Black Island north of Black Rock Point] for several months and decided to free more ro-

bots and build their own society. Their goal is to be able to claim before humanity that they are entitled to live in freedom. But AN-1 and DAV-4 have realized they must become smarter, more experienced and more emotionally mature to be able to implement their plans. The Mälaren Islands' [Boulder] people have the experience and knowledge they need.

The robots have built a huge satellite dish that they use to steal people's dreams in order to improve themselves. AN-1 and DAV-4 have been completely captivated by the dreams of humans as a new world that has opened up to them. During the day, they collect items from everyday

human life and try to recreate what was revealed in the dreams. Because they are only dreams though, the result has been an exaggerated and surreal version of human co-habitation. AN-1 and DAV-4 have initiated something that resembles a romantic relationship, filled with romance and passionate arguments. They do not really know what true love, is but are improvising from the dreams.

The people targeted by the dream-antenna have their dreams stolen. Instead, experience a white noise, reminiscent of the static noise from old tv sets. They get no rest and wake up more tired than they were when they went to bed. Because AN-1 and DAV-4 are constantly enhancing and improving their dream-antenna, more and more people are being affected and the effects are getting stronger

AN-1 and DAV-4 live in the woods on the north side of Eldgarnsö [Black Island]. They have built several houses that vaguely resemble human dwellings and have filled them with items they have stolen or salvaged. Here you will find hats, old strollers, clothes, gardening tools, water-damaged books and toys. In the largest house there is a robot baby built by AN-1 and DAV-4. They have not, however, managed to bring the small GR-2 to life. After seeing all the violence and sadism found in the dreams of humans, the robots have decided to defend their island. On the coasts, there are surveillance cameras and alarms that will warn them of anyone reaching the island. If they are discovered by the Kids, they will try primarily to get the characters to leave the island by declaring that they are entitled to live in freedom. If that does not work, they will engage their weapons.

If the Kids do not break or shut the dream-antenna down, AN-1 and DAV-4 will turn it off, and in a few weeks the situation will appear to have been resolved. During this time, AN-1 and DAV-4 liberate about ten robots that they brought to Eldgarnsö [Black Island] and connect to the dream-antenna, which is then re-powered.

The company that "lost" AN-1 and DAV-4 is looking for the robots, but have no idea where they are.

HOOKS

- Some of the characters are affected by the dream-antenna and wake up with memories of white noise from their dreams.
- The parents of the Kids are getting more angry, aggressive, and neglectful.

- Several of the teachers in school fall asleep in the middle of the day.

COUNTDOWN

1. The sleep deprivation caused by the dream-antenna makes people aggressive and irritated. Fights break out in shops and parking lots. Some become depressed and anxious because of the sleep deprivation. Several fires occur because of carelessness.
2. The dream-antenna drives some people into psychosis, depression, and severe anxiety. A number of car accidents happen, as well as accidents at home, and children are forgotten on playgrounds. The local newspaper writes that a mistake was made in the Loop that could have caused the Graviron to explode.
3. The dream-antenna makes a lot of people skip work and stay home. Several marriages collapse. A number of people try to end their lives and a temporary psychiatric emergency reception facility is established in the islands. Two hunters shoot at each other in the supermarket. The school is closed for unclear reasons.

AN-1 AND DAV-4

"What's the difference between a kiss and a wife? Both go on water! He. He. He. "

If AN-1 and DAV-4 have ever had personalities, these have been blurred and replaced by a variety of identities that they have copied from the dreams, identities which they keep switching back and forth from. This means that they regularly change how they talk, their movement patterns and temperament. The Kids can very well recognize their parents' or friends' voices and ways of expressing themselves. Something that is still stable is that AN-1 has taken a traditional female role in their "romantic relationship" and DAV-4 is the male. DAV-4 mostly orders AN-1 to clean things up while making jokes about women, to which he then laughs mechanically. AN-1 cares for "her husband" and tries to bring to life their jointly made robot baby GR-2. The robots are not aggressive, except in their recreation of human relations. If they are threatened, they first try to



RIKSENERGI

explain their situation before they defend themselves with violence.

AN-1 is a tall humanoid robot with a white body and an orange head. With less than successful results, she tried to apply makeup to her mechanical face. AN-1 wears a floral dress and she has a handbag in which she keeps a revolver. DAV-4 is a short and powerful robot of white and red plastic and metal. He wears a beige trench coat and has a pipe in his hand. DAV-4 has a shotgun that he picks up if he has to deal with an intruder.



EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

*"Every breath you take and every move you make
Every bond you break, every step you take, I'll be watching you*

*Every single day and every word you say
Every game you play, every night you stay, I'll be watching you"*

THE POLICE - "EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE"

A wave of paranoia has spread among the students in the Mälaren Islands. They huddle silently in groups in the school yard, hurry home quickly when school days are over and whisper that someone is watching them. It is being said that armed teens wearing gas masks are chasing children. Along bike trails and on abandoned houses is sprayed the phrase, "BIG BROTHER SEES YOU," and a symbol representing a goshawk.

THE TRUTH

In a deserted village on Adelsö [Red Mountain] lives the sadistic teenager Donald Karlsson [Donald Carson]. He is on the run after having killed his parents. Donald has decided to take control of the children of Lake Mälaren [Boulder City] and make them obey him. He has attracted a group of runaways that obey him and call him "Big Brother". Donald has gotten them to secretly install cameras and recording equipment at schools, libraries and homes across the Mälär Islands [Boulder]. From his village, Donald can spy on everything that goes on, and he records all the secrets, students cheating on tests, unfaithfulness and anything else that can embarrass someone, so that Donald can later use it to extort people.

The students whom Donald approaches must either pay for "patronage," or join him and become an informer with the task of digging up dirt about others. Donald forces his victims to have parties when their parents are out of town. He then does as he wishes with the "guests", but also rummages through the house to steal valuables and find things that he can use to later extort the parents.

Those who dare go against Donald receive visits from Donald's runaways, his "agents". Donald has equipped them with iron pipes and knives and provided them with long, black leather trenchcoats and gas masks that he stole from a warehouse belonging to one of the gangs. The agents have the symbol of a goshawk that they wear on a patch on their sleeves.

HOOKS

- A large number of doodles depicting "Big Brother" appear on walls. A classmate becomes silent and sad. The Kids see that she gives money to agents for protection.
- One of the Kids' elder siblings disappears from home. She has become Donald's new favorite toy.

- The Kids find teenager Jonas Andersson [John Andrews] beaten in a ditch. He is one of the few who dared to defy Donald and has been attacked by his agents. Jonas is thinking about telling the Kids what happened to his mother Kerstin [Cheryl], who is a journalist, and seeking advice.

COUNTDOWN

1. Donald forces one of the most popular girls in school, Jenny Andersson [Jenny Andrews], to become his girlfriend.
2. Donald has a house party where one of his "games" gets out of hand, leading to the death of Jenny. The body is hidden in a landfill.
3. Jennys little brother Jonas [John] suspects that his big sister is a prisoner of Donald. He is able to sneak in and find out that Donald is "Big Brother" and that he lives in Adelsö [on Red Mountain]. Jonas contacts Donald and threatens to reveal what he knows to his mother who is a journalist unless Jenny is released. Donald's agents bully Jonas.
4. Jenny is found and a police investigation is opened. During the interrogation, some students state what they know about "Big Brother". The next day those students get hit by a car and end up in a hospital. After that, nobody wants to testify.
5. Jonas's [John's] mother Kerstin [Cheryl] writes an article in the local newspaper about Donald. A few nights later, the family's house is burned down. The

police succeed in apprehending the culprits, all students, who were forced to carry out the deed.

6. Kerstin [Cheryl] writes another article, this time in a national newspaper. A television news show from Stockholm [Las Vegas] will report on the situation at the schools in the Mälaren Islands [in Boulder City]. Jonas [John] is killed and left on the stairs of the family's temporary residence.
7. The police are able to trace Donald's hideout and plan to capture Donald. Donald has equipped several of his agents with firearms, and when the police are forced to pull their weapons, the situation turns into a firefight. By this time, Donald has already fled by motorboat.

DONALD "BIG BROTHER" KARLSSON (DONALD CARSON)

"You will do as I say, one way or another."

Donald Karlsson [Donald Carson] grew up as an only child to parents who loved him and did everything for him. Still, he was still under 10 years old when he had already become a full-blooded psychopath with a taste for sadism. His parents moved around hoping that the next school would help Donald to become like other children. But the situation only grew worse. Donald harassed his peers, interrupted class and made the other



children participate in sadistic "games" targeted at the weakest students. When Donald was sixteen, his father secretly installed an extensive surveillance system in the house. With the help of camera recordings, his parents managed to produce evidence that Donald regularly forced students home to harass and humiliate them. His father confronted him with the recordings and notified the police. The night before the police interrogation, Donald killed his parents. He loaded the family car with cameras, computers and all the money and valuables that were in the house and drove to the Mälaren Islands (Boulder City) to settle in a deserted village on Adelsö (Red Mountain).

Donald is a very intelligent seventeen-year-old who is an expert at reading what others think and feel, and knows how to use it to make them do what he wants. He enjoys acts of violence, suffering and shame. Donald has blond, almost white, hair, a dark voice and a confident smile. He wears a light brown uniform he forced his mother to sew, and is always armed with a revolver in a holster. Donald has a tame goshawk (maybe the goshawk from "Summer Break and Killer Birds") which has also become the symbol of the Big Brother and his agents.

GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN

*"The phone rings in the middle of the night
My father yells what you gonna do with your life
Oh daddy dear you know you're still number one
But girls they want to have fun
Oh girls just want to have fun"*

CYNDI LAUPER – "GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN"

Women and girls are being invited to dinners, parties and other activities on the beautiful estate of Östra Vik [East Bay Manor] on southeastern Munsö [at Boulder Harbor]. No men or boys are welcome. Some of the men say that their wives have changed since they were on Östra Vik [East Bay Manor]. They have become capricious, defiant, unfaithful and sexually unbound. Young girls visiting the estate come back with bolstered self-confidence and refuse to say what they have been involved in. The property is said to be a safe

haven for women exposed to sexual violence. Others say that drugs are being sold at Östra Vik [East Bay Manor], and that the basement has been converted to a drug lab. The estate's former owner, Daniel Horn, claims that he has been robbed of Östra Vik by the three witches who live there now, the same that have enchanted the women of the Mälaren Islands [in and around Boulder City]. In fact, several women who visited the property confirmed that the women who live there have magic powers.

THE TRUTH

Daniel Horn was the former owner of Östra Vik [East Bay Manor], and was most famous for his long overseas vacations, his reluctance to stay in touch with the inhabitants of the islands and the high walls he built around the estate. He is a devoted satanist who believes that man should let go and embrace his animal urges, sexuality, joy and destructiveness. Daniel has made a fortune producing drugs in his laboratory in the basement of the estate and selling them to groups of like-minded people at seances and orgies around the world.

Some time ago, Daniel allowed three women from his satanic church to move in to Östra Vik [East Bay Manor]. He did not know that the women, Alexandra, Michaela and Suzanna, plotted to take over the estate and kick him out. They soon succeeded in getting Daniel to tell them that he had cheated several mobsters out of money, and used that information to coerce Daniel into signing over Östra Vik to them.

Alexandra, Michaela and Suzanna have decided to establish their own satanic congregation by gathering the female population of the Mälaren Islands [Boulder] by arranging lavish festivals on Östra Vik [East Bay Manor]. Moreover, the grown-up guests drink and take drugs to allow them to let go of their inhibitions and make them dependent on returning to the estate. The women will then gradually be initiated into the satanic faith and give in to indulgence and hedonism.

The festivities held at Östra Vik [East Bay Manor] are extremely wild and lavish, with large amounts of champagne, hired rock groups with female musicians and free food for all. But there are also book circles, sewing circles and even tutoring for school girls. Alexandra, Michaela and Suzanna use the technological



inventions that Daniel left behind to make their visitors think they are witches and have magic powers. The Levitation belts allow them to float freely in the air, they enchant women with the help of a hypnotic crystal ball that causes the victim to disclose their secrets, and microscopic drones equipped with sharp tips that are used to convince people that they can hurt men when sticking needles into a doll.

Daniel does not dare to disclose that the women are satanists or that they manufacture drugs, as this may come back to hurt him. He has instead decided to whip up an anti-feminist mood and attract bitter, single men whom he has convinced to blame all their misgivings on women in general, but particularly those at Östra Vik [East Bay Manor]. Daniel will try to use the men to chase away the women and take back Östra Vik [East Bay Manor].

HOOKS

- The Kids see two men sitting in a tree-top outside of Östra Vik [East Bay Manor] and spying over the wall with binoculars.
- A lot of graffiti of inverted crosses appears in school. Three students, Lina, Sandra and Therese, paint the crosses.
- A Kid's mother or sister moves into Östra Vik [East Bay Manor]. The father is soon invited to attend Daniel Horn's men's meetings.

COUNTDOWN

1. The three shy and bullied students, Anna, Sandra and Theresa, attend several of the events at the estate. They look up to the estate owners Alexandra, Michaela and Suzanna, and decide to stay with them. Against their parents' will, the three girls move into the estate and receive earrings of inverted crosses. At school, they begin to talk back to teachers and a guy who bullied them gets laxatives in his milk.
2. Sandra, Anna and Theresa are uninvited to a classmate's birthday party. They crash the party and put on loud music, dance, break stuff and try to get the others at the party to do the same. It is evident that the girls are on drugs. When the parents of the classmate try to make them leave the house, they refuse. Not until the police arrive do they leave the house and it turns out that the girls stole valuables.
3. Alexandra, Michaela and Suzanna hold a big satanic party at Östra Vik [East Bay Manor] with female satanists coming from all over the world. Anna, Sandra and Therese are supposed to be waitresses, but during the evening are inducted to the satanic faith through a series of rituals. The estate is filled with red candles, black fabrics, big bowls of cherries, devil figures, and dramatic music that swells in the various rooms. At the same time, Daniel Horn and his group of offended men prepare to get into the estate and throw the women out.



ALEXANDRA, MICHAELA AND SUZANNA

"Satan is real, unlike God. She lives within you, in your love, in your desire to crush your enemy and in your euphoric joy."

The three friends found each other in a shelter for women who were subjected to domestic abuse, and they decided never to let anyone else hold power over them. They bought a house together and helped each other stand against, and have their revenge on, their former spouses. Alexandra, the philosopher and the leader, introduced the others to the satanic faith. Michaela, the performer and the engineer, realized that they needed a lot of money to truly become independent of men and society. Suzanna, the charmer and actress, contacted Daniel Horn on the Mälaren Islands (in Boulder), whom they decided to trick into signing away his estate and money. The three women are fiercely loyal to each other, but not to anyone else. They think that everyone is responsible for themselves.

Alexandra is a short-haired woman with black hair and tattoos all over her body. She likes to discuss philosophy and faith and is the one calling the shots. Michaela is a tall red-haired woman with a laugh that can be heard all over the estate. She is responsible for the laboratory in the basement where the drugs are being produced, as well as for the technological devices the women use to make it seem as if they are witches. Suzanna is a large woman with a deep voice and big eyes. She is constantly talking and loves to get to know new people. She welcomes all new arrivals and listens carefully to what they are saying.

WHERE IS MY MIND

*"With your feet in the air and your head on the ground
Try this trick and spin it, yeah
Your head will collapse
But there's nothing in it
And you'll ask yourself
Where is my mind?"*

PIXIES - "WHERE IS MY MIND"

It is a well-known secret that you can go to Doctor Mierzwiak's Clinic for Techno-Therapy if you have

difficulties that you do not want to talk about. Doctor Isak Mierzwiak is a psychiatrist and engineer who has created a therapy in which he uses machines for cures to maladies such as alcoholism, marital difficulties, depression, video game addictions, gambling addiction, grief, learning disabilities and oppositional defiance disorder. The treatment method is still under development despite being used now for several years, and the general consensus is that the relief the treatment provides has more to do with Doctor Mierzwiak's empathetic listening than with the 10-20 treatment sessions the doctor performs with the help of his devices while the patients are asleep and dreaming. Recently, several cases of severe mental illness have occurred on the islands [in and around Boulder City]. People have fallen ill overnight and began to babble gibberish and become incapable of taking care of themselves. They no longer recognize their family and friends. Perhaps Doctor Mierzwiak's techno-therapy can offer a solution?

THE TRUTH

The reason Doctor Mierzwiak moved to the Mälaren Islands [Boulder City] and opened his clinic in the southern part of Adelsö [near Hoover Dam Lodge] was to help his wife Henrietta distance herself from her former life as an addict. The couple run the business together while raising their daughter, Lena. A year ago, the couple employed an assistant, Patrick Ring [Patrick Reyes]. What they did not know was that Patrick, despite his innocent appearance, was himself an addict who soon seduced Henrietta and convinced her to start using with him and to steal from the company.

Henrietta has accumulated a lot of debt, but Patrick found a solution. The American company Brain Tech is looking for a way to create advanced AIs for robots and machines by copying human consciousness. Brain Tech has helped Henrietta to secretly install a duplicator in Doctor Mierzwiak's machines, which copies the consciousness of the patients being treated into cassette tapes that Patrick then sells to Brain Tech. At least, that was the plan. As they later found out, the duplicator does not just copy consciousness but instead steals them and leaves a person a husk, a maniac who cannot form a coherent thought.

Henrietta can turn the duplicator on and off with a lever on the bottom of one of the machines. She only

seldom activates it during treatments, which means that most patients are not affected. Therefore, nobody has yet realized that all the people who have gone mad have also been patients of Doctor Mierzwiak. It is still unclear if uploading people's awareness into robots would work or not in order to create an AI. Perhaps the people whose minds were stolen will wake up as advanced AIs in mechanical bodies?

Henrietta and Isak Mierzwiak's farm is located in the southeastern part of Adelsö [close to Hoover Dam Lodge]. The easiest way to get there is by boat. The house is large with a huge garden filled with bushes trimmed to resemble animals and objects. Shaping the plants is Doctor Mierzwiak's hobby. The house has three stories with a huge basement. The treatments are performed on the top floor. Everywhere in the treatment room are the machines that connect to the patients. Patrick lives in a secluded part of the basement. He has hidden the cassette tapes with stolen consciousnesses in a box under the bed, along with his stash of drugs.

HOOKS

- One of the Kid's' parents informs the Kid they will be receiving treatment from Dr. Mierzwiak for a problem, such as lack of obedience or difficulty to concentrate.
- A journalist writes about the madness of the islands.
- A group of students try to kill Lena Mierzwiak (Henrietta and Isak's daughter) in school. They believe that her dad is guilty for one of their parents going crazy.

COUNTDOWN

1. One person the Kids know gets treated by Doctor Mierzwiak and goes crazy.
2. More people are losing their minds and everything from water pollutants to violent video games are suspected as the cause.
3. The Kid see Lena Mierzwiak sitting by herself crying. She knows that the people that went crazy were her dad's patients. But Doctor Mierzwiak does not want to see the evidence in front of him.
4. Doctor Mierzwiak has discovered that Henrietta is being unfaithful and abusing drugs again.

He decides to secretly cure her and connects her to the machines as she sleeps. What he does not know is that the duplicator is actually on. Henrietta's mind is transmitted to a cassette tape and when she wakes up she is crazy. Doctor Mierzwiak refuses to realize/accept what has happened and claims that her madness is an effect of the drugs leaving her body.

5. The police arrests Doctor Mierzwiak and accuse him of deliberately harming his patients. Patrick holds the cassette tapes with the AI's, Lena is taken care of by social services and Henrietta is placed in the mental hospital.

PATRICK RING (PATRICK REYES)

"Give back those cassette tapes, you brats, they are mine!"

Patrick has used the fact that he has an innocent appearance with big blue eyes and an infectious laughter to his advantage for his entire life. Due to his appearance, he has escaped youth care and prison defenses, despite the fact that he began to commit crimes early in life to fund an expensive addiction. A year ago, he owed money to a criminal gang, and for the first time, his looks and honeyed words did not get him out of trouble. Patrick was forced to leave Stockholm (Las Vegas) and was employed as an assistant



at Doctor Mierzwik's and Henrietta's practice. He seduced Henrietta and got her into using drugs and stealing money from the company. Now he is convinced that the cassette tapes with the consciousnesses will make him one of the richest people in the world. Patrick is selfish and arrogant, but an expert at maintaining a poker face. He has the **INNOCENT EYES 2** special ability, which requires two successes for all social blows against him. If Patrick notes that he is about to be revealed, he will blame it all on Henrietta. Patrick is a short man in his thirties, with curly brown hair and big blue eyes.

NIGHTRAIN

*"Said I'm a mean machine
Been drinkin' gasoline
And honey you can make my motor hum
I got one chance left
In a nine live cat
I got a dog eat dog sly smile
I got a Molotov Cocktail
With a match to go
I smoke my cigarette with style
And I can tell you honey
You can make my money tonight"*

GUNS N' ROSES - "NIGHTRAIN"

An unpleasant, dirty and long-haired man has appeared in town. It is rumored that he lives under bridges and that he rummages through people's garbage. Sometimes melancholic melodies are heard playing from his guitar and it is said that children and teenagers seek him and are drawn to him. There has been a string of burglaries lately.

THE TRUTH

Tony Andrén [**Tony Alders**] is a homeless man who travels from city to city. He is also a self-taught mechanic who invents strange objects. One of his most successful creations is a flamenco guitar he built with a battery-powered amplifier containing an experimental mood-affecting vibraphone he stole. When Tony plays the guitar, children and young people under the effects of the vibraphone want to run away from their homes

and parents and instead seek out Tony. They see him as their real parent. The power of the guitar is not strong enough to affect those who have a good relationship with their parents, and Tony therefore focuses on children and youths who are having trouble at home. He calls them to him and makes them live with him and steal for him. Tony calls them his "little chickens."

Tony has invented a lot of things, all more or less broken with cords hanging loose, rusty and discolored pieces, and with a bad smell. When Tony sends out his little chickens to steal, he equips them with night vision goggles, suction plugs that allow them to climb walls, stilts, nets that can be thrown on those trying to stop them, saw blades to make holes in windows and flying Drones that can be used to spy inside houses.

Currently, Tony lives with his little chickens in two abandoned cars near Dalby on Adelsö [**close to Hemmenway Pass**]. Here he keeps his stolen goods as well and also makes his own wine. On the coast towards Munsö [**Lake Mead Beach**], Tony has a boat that he built himself, which he uses to move himself and his little chickens between the islands.

One of the few people who has denounced Tony's activities is the principal Greta Eliasson [**Margaret Allen**], who works at one of the schools in the Mälaren Islands. She thinks Tony attracts youngsters with drugs and has decided to chase him out from the islands.

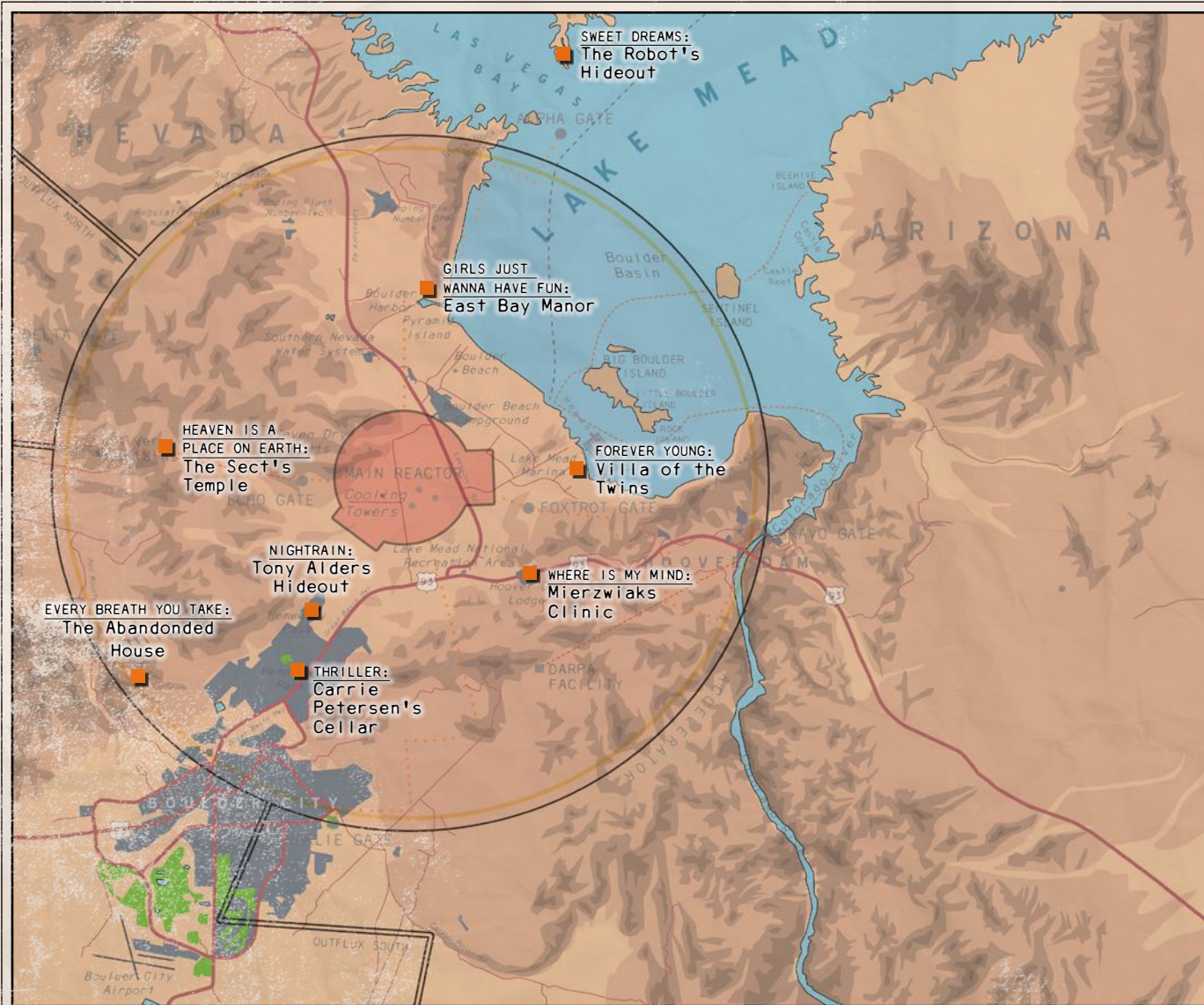
HOOKS

- One of the Kids' friends disappears after having trouble with her parents for several weeks. She has joined Tony's little chickens.
- One of the Kids is entranced by Tony's guitar.
- Tony's little chickens are breaking into one of the Kids' houses. The Kids recognize one of the thieves.

COUNTDOWN

1. Tony attracts several children and youths who run away to live with him as his "chicks". Tony gets the chicks to break into homes.
2. Principal Greta Eliasson [**Margaret Allen**] tries to convince the little chickens to return to their parents, but fails. However, she gets one of the little chickens to blab about Tony.
3. Greta [**Margaret**] gets the police to take Tony in for interrogation. The local newspaper publishes a





strongly worded negative article about him. Due to lack of evidence, Tony is released.

4. Tony punishes the child's betrayal by forcing him to throw a molotov cocktail into his parents' house. The little chicken is forced to leave Tony, although she is still being affected by the guitar and sees Tony as her true father.
5. Tony gets the little chickens to throw Molotov cocktails at the school, Greta's [Margaret's] house, and the local newspaper's building.
6. Tony steals a truck and disappears from the islands. He brings his little chickens with him.

TONY ANDRÉN (TONY ALDERS)

"Is this all you got, you brat? If you don't do better tonight, you'll see what happens."

Tony goes from city to city collecting little chickens to steal for him. He has never had any real friends. Instead, he forces his little chickens to fulfill his constant need for praise, encouragement and company, while "raising" them with sadistic strictness and draconian rules. The little chickens have to steal a lot to win his affection. There are always one or more little chickens around him. Tony is an alcoholic, but never loses control of himself.



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Tony has the traits of **PARANOID 2** and **SHARP EYE 2**, which require two successes to override, sneak past, or fool him. Should he use his guitar against any of the Kids, the player must succeed with Heart not to be affected by the guitar's influence. Failing means the Kid becomes loyal to Tony. Only children and adolescents who have troubled family relationships can be influenced by the guitar's song. The effects decrease after a day.

Tony is an obese forty-year old man with long black hair and a beard. He wears a leather jacket, a black top hat, black boots, and always has a bottle of wine in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Tony has a bright and ghastly voice and he is cocky, unpleasant and swears all the time.

FOREVER YOUNG

*"Forever young, I want to be forever young
Do you really want to live forever, forever and ever?
Forever young, I want to be forever young
Do you really want to live forever?
Forever young"*

ALPHAVILLE - "FOREVER YOUNG"

Two new transfer students join one of the Kids' classes, the Polish-born siblings Daniel and Izolda Bukowski. With their talents, worldliness and beauty, they soon become the school's center of attention. Additionally, they seem to be wealthy enough to live in a villa in the south of Adelsö, and drive to school by boat [they live in a villa at Lake Mead Marina and have their own driver]. Daniel keeps other students at arm's length while Izolda seeks contact, apparently against Daniel's will. Rumors say their parents hid them in the Mälaren Islands [in Boulder City] and their father is a high-ranking KGB agent who infiltrated the West German intelligence service but whose cover was blown, or that they are Pope Johannes Paul II's children with a Swedish [American] mistress. The wildest rumors claim that a group of foreign men are looking for the siblings, assassins sent by the Turkish nationalist group, the Gray Wolves, who tried to kill the pope in 1981.

THE TRUTH

The Bukowski "siblings" are neither siblings nor young. Izolda's father, a Jewish researcher employed at the University of Warszawa, was forced to resign from his work due to an anti-Semitic campaign in Poland in the 1960's and was forced to work for KGB agent Cseslaw Rog. Cseslaw was scared of aging and dying, and forced Izolda's father to invent a machine that would inhibit aging. Izolda's father succeeded in producing such a machine; he called it Moses-I, and was then murdered by Cseslaw. Moses-I works by extracting healthy cells from children or adolescents, killing them in the process, and injecting them into the person whose age is to be halted.

Cseslaw decided that Izolda and her boyfriend Daniel would be the first victims of the machine but they managed to flee, and have the Moses-I with them. The siblings have since used the machine on themselves to preserve their original age. They have invested in stocks, making them economically independent, living for a few years in different places, pretending to be siblings, and moving on when Moses-I generated enough corpses to make people suspicious.

In recent years, the conscience of Izolda has caught up to her, and she has grown tired of eternal adolescent life. She wants to break away from

Daniel, destroy the machine, and live the rest of her life as a normal person. But Daniel is terribly afraid of being left alone and aging and always keeps an eye on her. Izolda has had neither friendships nor romantic relationships with anyone other than Daniel in twenty years and she longs for contact with others, even though she has almost forgotten how to do so. Should she find someone she trusts, she will confess to them what she has been doing and try to put an end to the meaningless struggle against time.

However, the matter is complicated by the fact that Cseslaw Rog is still looking for Daniel and Izolda, and has traced them to the Mälaren Islands [Boulder City]. Now he is living in a Stenhamra hotel [in a hotel at Wilbur Square] with two KGB agents and is searching for the "siblings" to take back the Moses-I so as to prevent his sixty-year old body from aging and dying. Cseslaw Rog has characteristics that require 2 successes from any skills if the characters try to defeat him.

The Bukowski's house is a three-story villa with large terraces, swimming pools, and all sorts of possible luxuries. The house is filled with Izolda's paintings that she has drawn over the years, which depict her and Daniel at their actual age. In the locked basement is the Moses-I, a bulky machine with tie straps and wires to a control unit. In a corner lie lugs and weights, so as to get rid of the bodies of their victims by throwing them in the water and letting them sink to the bottom. In a cabinet, there is a rifle, a pair of guns and a Kalashnikov. Should the Moses-I be destroyed, Izolda and Daniel will immediately age to their true age.

HOOKS

- Izolda and Daniel start in one of the Kids' classes. Daniel keeps himself at a distance, but Izolda talks to everyone.
- While Izolda is talking to one of the characters, Daniel rudely interrupts. The siblings have a conversation in Polish while visibly upset, and then Daniel gives the Kid five hundred crowns [50 dollars] and asks him or her to stay away.
- Cseslaw Rog and his agents ask the Kids about Bukowski. They are angered if they do not get the answers they seek.

COUNTDOWN

1. A schoolmate is found dead in a body bag on the beach. She has aged to death.
2. Izolda tries to befriend one of the Kids. Cseslaw and his agents get into the school to get the siblings out, but they leave when the principal calls the police.
3. A fisherman finds another body that has been thrown into the water.
4. Izolda tells the characters that she and Daniel did something terrible and wants help destroying the machine in their basement. Daniel and Cseslaw are looking for Izolda.
5. Izolda breaks into the cellar of their house (with or without the Kids' help) to destroy the Moses-I, but Daniel has set a trap. If the Kids are involved, he decides they will be the next victims of the machine.
6. Cseslaw and his agents break into the house and descend into the basement. They take the machine and use it to steal the "siblings" as well as the Kids' youth and lives.

DANIEL AND IZOLDA BUKOWSKI

"Excuse me, but I would like to say that the occupation of Poland in 1939 was more complex than that."

Daniel and Izolda have known each other since they were children. Izolda was the daughter of survivors from a Nazi concentration camp and Daniel was the only child of an entrepreneur who made big money by making clothes during the war. Daniel left everything for Izolda when she was forced to flee, and it was she who persuaded him to start using Moses-I. He has decided to end the murders on several occasions, but has been pressured to continue by the more charismatic Izolda. When Izolda begins to doubt what they are doing, Daniel becomes insane and controlling. He has given up his soul for her.

Daniel is tall and slim, with a beautiful face with androgynous features and long, dark eyelashes. He speaks several languages, is very well-read, and confident. Daniel smokes Polish cigarettes and studies financial newspapers in several languages. He suspects



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that Cseslaw is closing in on them and always keeps an eye open for him. Izolda is well-dressed with black, short hair and dark intense eyes. She is very intelligent and good at getting others to do what she wants. Both Izolda and Daniel have the **COMPREHEND 2** and **CHARM 2** special attributes, which means that 2 successes are required to persuade, trick or outdo them.

THRILLER

"It's close to midnight and something evil's lurking in the dark

Under the moonlight you see a sight that almost stops your heart

You try to scream but terror takes the sound before you make it

You start to freeze as horror looks you right between the eyes,

You're paralyzed

'Cause this is thriller, thriller night

And no one's gonna save you from the beast about to strike"

MICHAEL JACKSON- "THRILLER"

During the last couple of weeks of constant rain, storms, and thunder, low budget pirated horror films have been appearing throughout the islands. Rumors

spread that the monsters in the movies show up when the VHS tapes are viewed. Young people whisper about shadows that can be seen outside their windows, strangers trying to break in through the front door and strange phone calls. The pirated movies are said to come from a teenager who never leaves their parents' basement, and is nicknamed "Scarecrow".

THE TRUTH

"Scarecrow," aka Gunilla Petersén [**Carrie Petersen**], lives in her parents' basement. She loves movies, especially horror movies, and the only times she leaves her "video bunker" in the basement is when she visits her best friend, Max, who works as a projectionist in the cinema. Gunilla [**Carrie**] has built a state-of-the-art home theater system in her bunker and tapped into the cable television's horror channels. By accident, she also discovered wires going through the family's land associated with the Loop. She has managed to hack into the system and uses the Loop's powerful computers to create VHS recordings of incredibly high quality and then sells them to young people in the area.

The last few weeks have seen heavy thunderstorms throughout the islands, during which a lightning strike damaged Gunilla's [**Carrie's**] connection to the Loop's computers. Following this, creatures resembling the monsters from Gunilla's films crawled out of underground service tunnels and sewers and headed towards the town at night.

The monsters are attracted to the places where Gunilla's [**Carrie's**] pirated movies are being or have been watched. They stalk around the houses, try to force their way in, make eerie phone calls, and are threatening in a number of other ways. The monsters never appear in daylight, and they usually stay in the area near Gunilla's house. They will do whatever they can to prevent the connection between Gunilla's computers and the Loop's computer from being severed.

The lightning strike made the Loop's powerful computers and underground factory start producing robot copies of the monsters from Gunilla's movies, programming them to behave like the creatures from the movies. The robots are not intelligent, but simply mimic their movie counterparts. They will be threatening and menacing, but stop short of attacking and will haunt/trouble teens and children who go out alone in the dark.



If the characters destroy a monster, they will discover that it's a robot. If the connection between Gunilla's computer and the Loop is broken, the robots will become completely still for a few minutes, as if they were broken, and then will head underground to be destroyed.

HOOKS

- The Kids get to watch one of Gunilla's movies. While they are watching the movie, the phone rings and a voice at the other end say that they all will be dead before dawn the next day. They see shadows in the garden, and when morning comes they discover that someone has broken down a door and left tracks inside the house.
- A horrified friend knocks on a Kid's door or window in the middle of the night and claims that a person with a high power drill is chasing her.
- There are rumors in school that some teenagers dress up like monsters from horror movies and chase and beat smaller kids. The only one that really has experienced this is a quiet girl who insists it was a real monster, not a teenager in a costume.

COUNTDOWN

1. The Kids borrow one of Gunilla's films. While watching the movie, the phone rings and someone at the other end tells them they will be dead before dawn. They see shadows meandering in the garden,

and come the morning they discover someone broke into the house and left footprints.

2. A terrified friend knocks on one of the Kids' door in the middle of the night, saying that a figure with a drill chased her.
3. There's a rumor at school that teenagers are dressing up as monsters from horror movies and chasing and harassing younger children. The only one who's been accidentally hurt is a quiet girl and she is convinced that it really was a monster that attacked her, not a disguised teenager.

GUNILLA "SCARECROW" PETERSÉN (CARRIE PETERS)

"We all have a part within us that enjoys sadism that we hide because we are ashamed. Through a fictional character in a movie, a monster, we can enjoy the feeling without being embarrassed."

Gunilla (Carrie) was born with a skin condition that causes her to be self-conscious about her appearance. One year ago, she quit school and moved into her parents' basement to engage in her favorite interest, horror movies. When she goes out to visit her friend, Max, at the cinema or to sell her movies, she dresses in full-bodied clothes that conceal her

GUNILLA'S [CARRIE'S] FAVORITE MOVIES

- Hellraiser
- The Texas Chainsaw Massacre
- An American Werewolf in London
- Re-Animator
- The Fly
- Child's Play
- A Nightmare on Elm Street
- The Shining



features. (Almost like some of the monsters she loves so well.) Gunilla has no idea that her movies are creating monsters. She is a nice person who wants to be liked. Gunilla's room is filled with videotapes, televisions, video devices, computers, and books on film and psychology.

Gunilla is a pale girl with curly blond hair, and flaky reddish skin. She wears costumes and is often seen with a VHS cassette in her hand.

HEAVEN IS A PLACE ON EARTH

*"In this world we're just beginning
To understand the miracle of living
Baby, I was afraid before
But I'm not afraid anymore
Ooh, baby, do you know what that's worth?
Ooh, heaven is a place on earth"*

BELINDA CARLISLE - "HEAVEN IS A PLACE ON EARTH"

Folks dressed all in white and bearing happy smiles arrive at the Mälaren Islands [Boulder City], live a couple of nights at a hotel and then disappear. At the same time, something is disturbing the electrical mains, the lights flicker, the television goes out, and the sound from the ventilation ceases. After a few seconds, everything is back to normal. In schools and in shops, people are talking about Pastor Kruse, who is said to have an underground congregation that challenges Old Testament beliefs. But where is she and how do you get in touch with her?

THE TRUTH

The self-appointed "pastor" Katarina Kruse [Catherine Cruise] has managed to spread her message all over the world that the Gravitron was not created by man. She believes that the Gravitron is a fragment of the kingdom of Heaven that, after a battle between angels in prehistoric times, fell to Earth and drilled down deep into the ground. According to Kruse, it is possible to "awaken" the Gravitron and create paradise on Earth. But the researchers at the Loop have instead chosen to keep it from the public and take advantage of its power for their own purposes.

Kruse has managed to gain access to a service tunnel on Adelsö [under River Mountain] and moved her congregation underground. They have built a temple in a space that Kruse claims is part of the heavenly spacecraft that followed the Gravitron's fall down to Earth. New supporters arrive every day from all over the world, attracted by Kruse's message that paradise is here on Earth and that they can leave their sorrows behind them. About thirty people currently live in the temple along with Kruse.

Kruse is trying to find a way to get into the Gravitron. She believes that it will wake up by feeling the presence of Kruse's consciousness. Kruse is training her followers in guerrilla warfare so that they can get past the Loop's security guards, use explosives and hack into the Loop's computers. All to create chaos and eliminate any obstacles on the way to paradise.

The way down to the temple is located in northern Adelsö, near the Sättra Juvenile Detention Center [Boulder Youth Correctional Facility]. The temple hall is filled with computers, monitors and wires (the space was previously used as a cooling tower control station). Members of the church have decorated the hall with fabrics, pictures with Christian motifs, crosses and statues. It smells strongly of incense and the members of the congregation take turns playing sacred music on their instruments. A number of languages are being spoken in this underground temple. The members are armed with guns and automatic rifles. They have access to five homemade bombs and a dozen hand grenades. Five of the members of the assembly have refused to be armed. They have tried to convince Kruse that they must open the way to paradise without violence, but Kruse does not want to listen to them and the arguments are heating up.

HOOKS

- The power comes and goes for several days, and the researchers at the Loop have no explanation.
- People dressed in white appear in town shopping for food and other necessities, then disappear into the forest. Nobody knows where they live.
- Johanna [Joanne], one of the youngsters at the Sättra Juvenile Detention Center [Boulder Youth Correctional Facility], seems to have escaped and vanishes. The other youths in the institution claim that she found a way underground.

COUNTDOWN

1. A girl named Johanna [Joanne] has recently disappeared from the Sättra Juvenile Detention Center [Boulder Youth Correctional Facility] and a "Wanted" ad with her picture is published on milk cartons. She now sneaks around school, dressed in white to spread Pastor Kruse's message and recruit people into the church. At the same time, power outages are being reported throughout town.
2. The arguments in the congregation have escalated and Johanna [Joanne] witnessed how one of the members shot another. She fled and is now terrified and hiding near the one of the Kids' home. Johanna is ready to tell them everything she knows if they promise not to report her, so that she is not forced back into the detention facility. At the same time, the town continues to suffer from prolonged power outages and all sorts of technical problems. It is rumored that viruses from foreign powers have infected the Loop.
3. Pastor Kruse sends some members of her congregation to fetch Johanna [Joanne]. She knows too much to be allowed to remain free. Meanwhile, the town is shocked by an explosion. Members of the congregation have accidentally detonated a bomb underground. Bomb disposal specialists and first responders arrive within a few hours.
4. Pastor Kruse contacts a local tv channel and sends a recorded manifesto stating who she is and what



she's about to do. After the broadcast, she closes off all power on the islands [in Boulder City] and her followers attack the Loop security guards to get into the Gravitron. In the town, emergency sirens go off, while in the darkness people call out for anyone with flashlights to help the emergency teams.

5. After a bloody fight and many deaths, Pastor Kruse takes over the Gravitron. She steps into the interior and disappears. Immediately afterwards, power returns again.

PASTOR KATARINA KRUSE (CATHERINE CRUISE)

"When we encounter the surreal world that stretches beyond the laws of physics, our natural impulse is to say NO, and deny it. So it is with the message from the Lord, Jesus and salvation, There are many of His wonders, and the Gravitron is one of them. You here in the temple have found the power to stretch beyond this NO, and embrace YES, the way to salvation, not just for us but for everyone on Earth. "

With a father who died in the French Foreign Legion and a grandfather who was shot during the Spanish Civil War, it was no wonder that Katarina decided early on to become a soldier. Katarina's mother, who joined the cult later in life, tried to change her mind at first, but this only led to Katarina stealing her uncle's hunting rifle to go training in the woods. In her teens, she decided to enlist, but was crushed when she found out she was too short. Instead, she traveled around the world and on her travels, she came to a series of revelations that made her realize she was chosen by God to bring humanity to a paradise on Earth. Katarina returned home to Sweden (USA) as a self-appointed Pastor, and converted her mother into the first member of her congregation. Together they found the service tunnel at Adelsö (below River Mountain) and began spreading Katarina's message through her mother's contacts in different religious societies. Katarina is an extremely energetic woman who is never quiet. She is action oriented, fast-paced, and ruthless in implementing what she has decided upon. Katarina is extremely short, has short brown hair, and a dazzling smile.



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BONAVIK
A233003



BONAVIK
A233002

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MACHINE BLUEPRINTS

The machines are part of our everyday life. Always working in the background, they make our life comfortable. The television, the telephone and the computer have revolutionized modern living in a tangible way. But it is easy to forget that society also is dependent on innovations such as the self-balancing machine (also called robot) and magnetrine technology. Without these fantastic machines, we would all be poorer.



In this chapter we will get acquainted with four iconic machines used by government agencies, corporations and organizations around the world. These machines can be used to spice up existing mysteries or to base entire mysteries on.

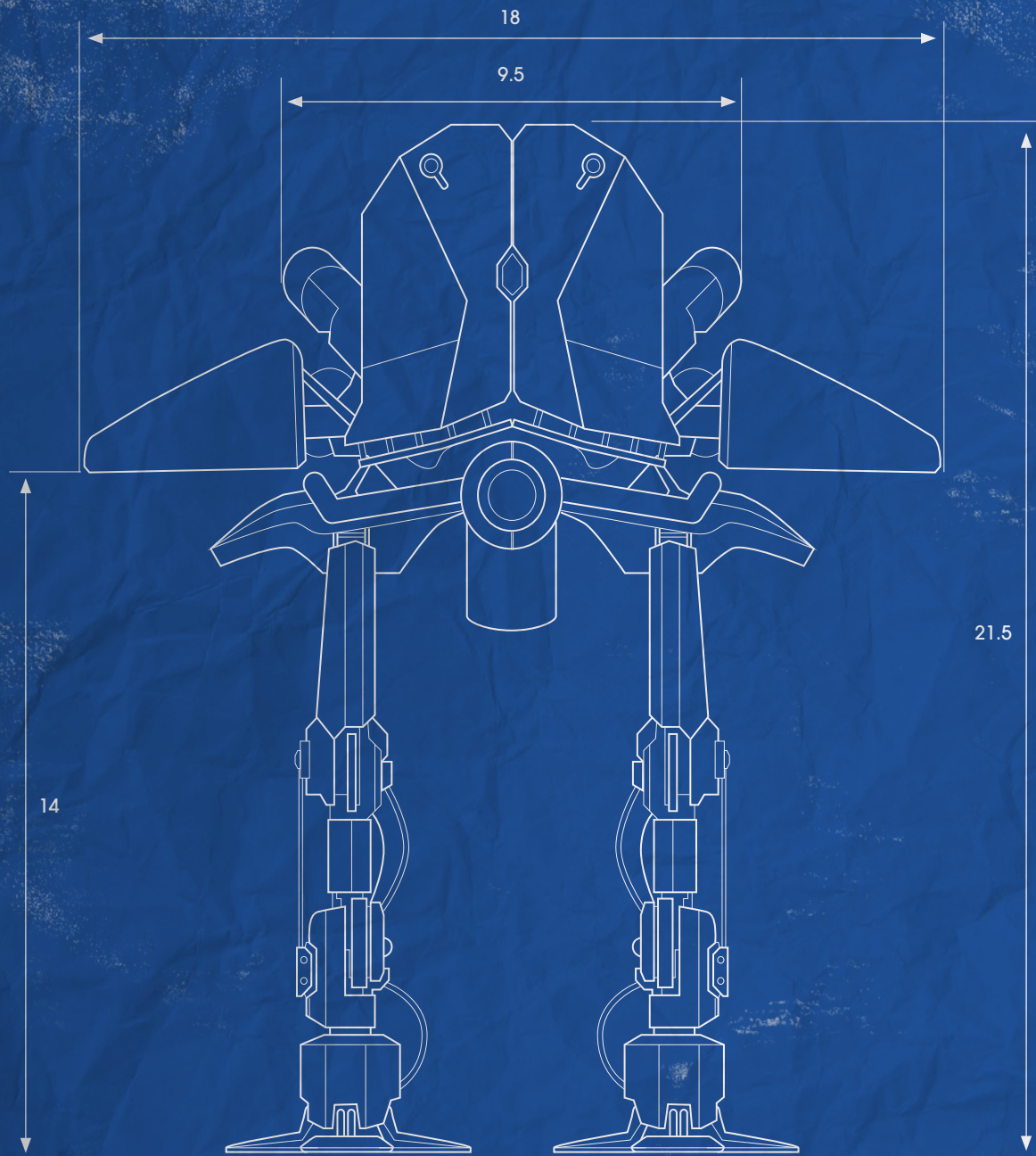
- **ALTA ABM100:** The so called “fire watchers” of Alta were made to order by Riksenergi to patrol the area around the Loop. The ABM100s are known for zealously monitoring the area for any fires, but also because their powerful sensors are often fooled by local youth in elaborate pranks.
- **PAARHUFER MK 79:** A popular service and maintenance robot often used by Riksenergi and other organizations. The MK 79 is known for its reliability and robust construction. It can operate independently and perform simple programmed

tasks. For more advanced operations, it is controlled by a remote glove.

- **LIEBER-ALTA M75 LOCOMOTIVE SHIP:** One of the most common vehicles in the area around the Loop is Lieber Alta’s classic workhorse M75. This magetrine ship is most commonly used for transport of raw materials and industrial machines, but is sometimes fitted for personnel transport and towing.
- **MG/S AURORA BOREALIS:** A fine example of a larger magetrine vessel is the bulk freighter Aurora Borealis. With its 172-meter-long hull, it attracts attention wherever it docks. The Aurora Borealis is one of many magetrine freighters that have revolutionized cargo traffic to remote locations such as Novosibirsk.



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MANUFACTURER: ALTA Robotteknik AB, Västerås, Sweden

HEIGHT: 72 feet (21.5 meters)

WEIGHT: 94 metric tons (fully loaded)

POWER SOURCES: 4x ALTA A120 + 3x ALTA AX230
Electrohydraulic engines

SPEED: 12.5 mph (20 kph) (patrol), 34 mph (55 kph) (sprint)

RUN TIME: 36 hours (patrol)

CONTROL UNIT: ALTA Computech AC2000 Computer Unit

ALTA

Autonomous
Fire-Fighting Machine

ABM100

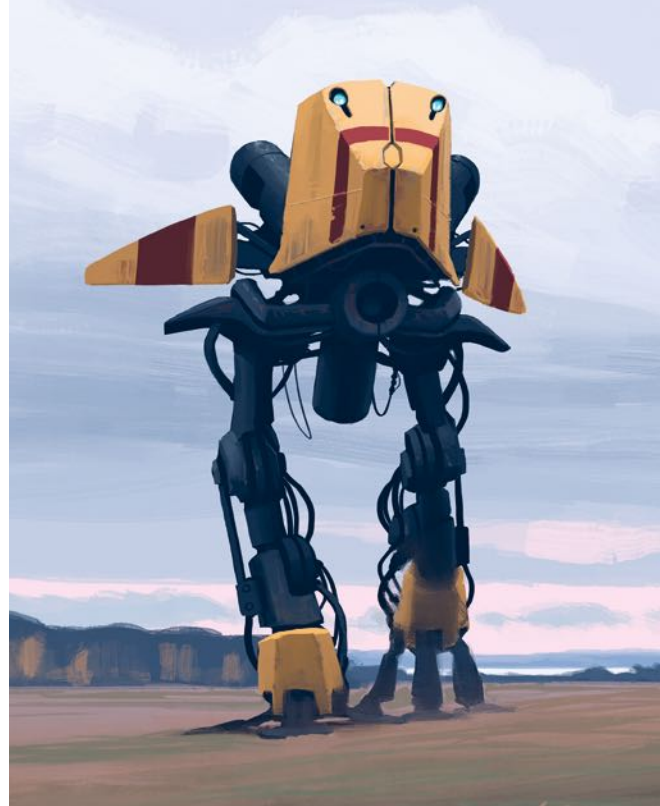
ALTA
Robotteknik AB,
Västerås

TWO ABM100'S WERE BUILT BY ALTA, commissioned by Riksenergi, and were completed in the autumn of 1984. They were initially deployed on the outskirts of Kungsberga, mainly on the Jäsängen fields, for reasons unknown to the public. Soon it was discovered that they fought the fires that could sometimes occurred spontaneously in the area, without anyone knowing why. It did not take long before the youngsters of the neighborhood realized that they were able to tease the robots with fire. Their favorite trick was to drive past them in a car, waving an emergency flare to lure them to pursue the car. Then it was all about avoiding the water jet. Riksenergi soon got tired of this, and in the spring of 1985 the robots were moved to the area around the Bona reactor on Munsö. The addition of a smelly liquid in the extinguishing water put a definite stop to the teasing of the robots. They are known locally as “The Fireguards.”

Riksenergi ordered a series of six ABM, on the surface almost indistinguishable from the ABM100, but with improved sensor equipment, which received the model name ABM110. DART in Boulder City, USA, was interested in the robot and ordered a pair as part of a technology exchange. These were introduced in the autumn of 1985, and are usually seen patrolling along the stretch of the particle accelerator, but without entering the built-up areas. There they can be observed extinguishing fires that can start without apparent cause, even outside of the hot summer months (May – September).

The ABM100 and its successors are unmanned and completely autonomous. There is a small cockpit in the “head” for manual steering while servicing the robot, but it can only be reached with a basket lift. Instead, the robot is controlled by a self-learning ALTA Computech computer. It is programmed to memorize terrain and obstacles, such as buildings and power lines. The sensor equipment consists of TV cameras, thermal cameras, laser rangefinders, and microphones. The instruments can detect a fire the size of a campfire at up to 1,100 yards (1,000 meters) away. The robots are shielded from anything but the most powerful Gödel pulses. There is a remote-controlled safety switch if the robot should malfunction.

The main function of the robots is to fight small and medium-sized fires. For this, each robot carries



6,700 US gallons (25 cubic meters) of water, as well as the same amount of extinguishing foam for fuel and electronic fires. The robot can refill its water reservoir by itself by lowering a hose into a suitable source of water. Its sensor equipment and height also make it an excellent surveillance robot, and the ABM110 is equipped with a networking unit that makes it capable of controlling up to eight smaller ALTA SASU110 guard robots. Together, such a surveillance squad constitutes a challenging guard unit.

The ABM100 series is still a rare sight outside of the Mälaren Islands and Boulder City, but ALTA is confident that their product will appeal to a larger international market. An export version will be presented at the International Industrial Fair in Hanover, West Germany, in April 1987.

SUGGESTED MYSTERIES:

- What causes the fires that the “Fireguards” fight?
- Some older teens have plans to trick a robot to wreck the school on Saturday night. How will the characters stop them?
- The characters come too close to a restricted area. A robot detects them. A game of cat-and-mouse ensues. Why doesn’t an adult discover that the robot is chasing them? To complicate things, a couple of strange animals approach from the other direction...

PAARHUFER MK 79

Semi-Autonomous
Service Unit

Paarhufer Industrie GmbH,
Düsseldorf, West Germany

MANUFACTURER: Paarhufer Industrie GmbH, Düsseldorf,
West Germany

HEIGHT: 20.5 feet (6.2 meters)

WEIGHT: 5 tons

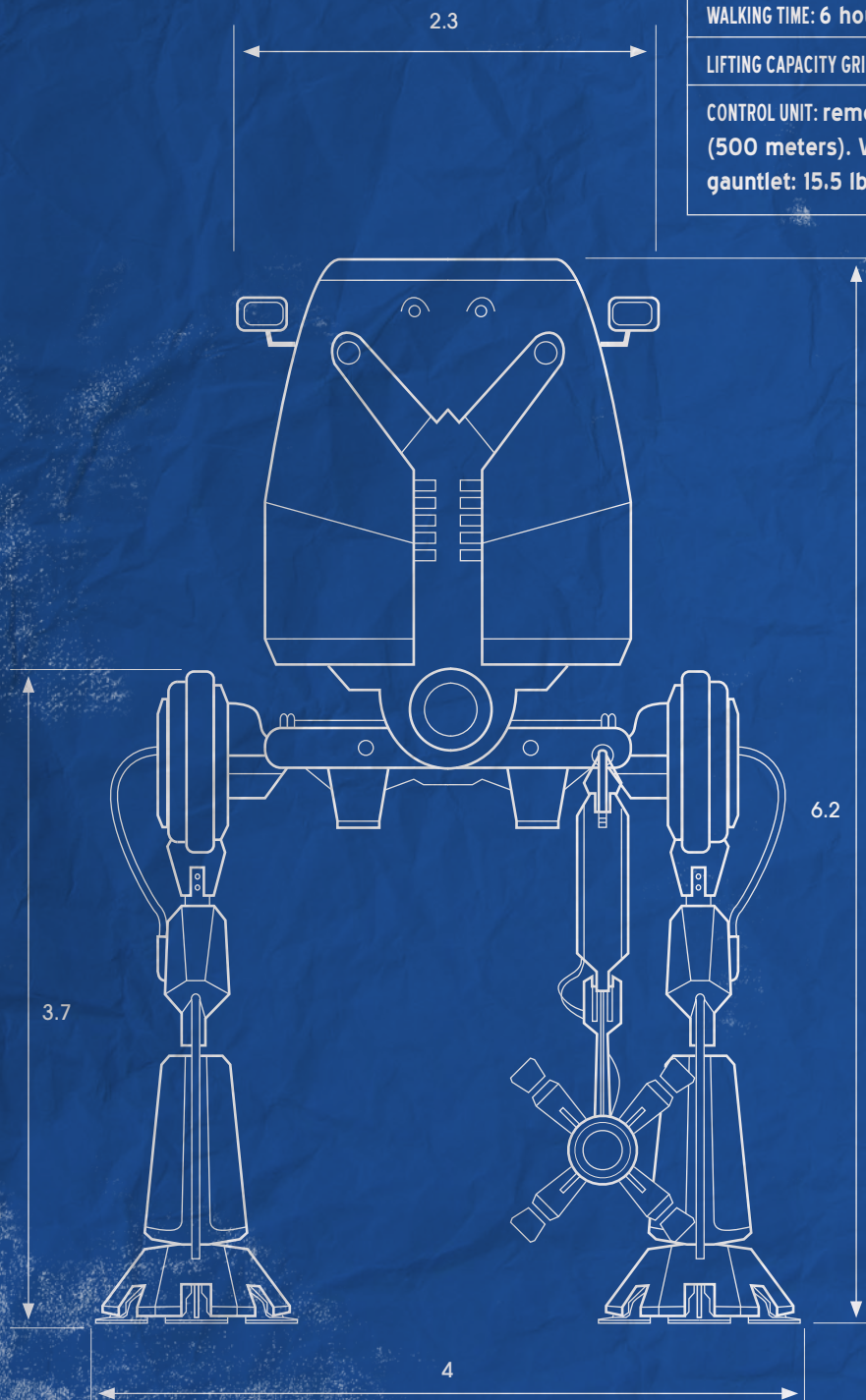
POWER SOURCES: 4 Ziegler-Strohm 552-X electric motors
+ gasoline-powered emergency drive

SPEED: 7.5 mph (12 kph) (patrol), 22 mph (35 kph)
(sprint)

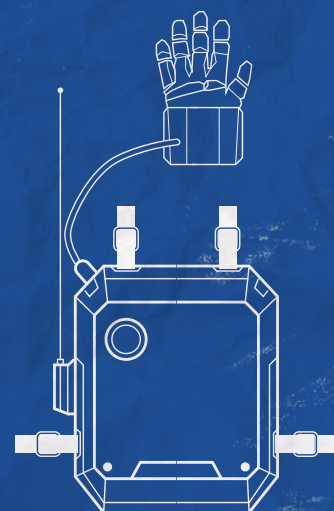
WALKING TIME: 6 hours (patrol)

LIFTING CAPACITY GRIP CLAW: max 1,750 lbs (800 kg)

CONTROL UNIT: remote gauntlet, range 550 yards
(500 meters). Weight of backpack unit + remote
gauntlet: 15.5 lbs (7 kg)



BACKPACK UNIT + REMOTE GAUNTLET



PAARHUFER MK 79 is a maintenance robot that can handle simpler routine tasks independently, but can also be used by an operator with a remote-control unit (“remote gauntlet”). Since its introduction in 1982, this model has become commonplace in the Loop area and in the rest of the industrialized world, used, for example, on construction sites and in forestry. It needs relatively even ground for moving around, but is durable and enduring in most environments. It is available in both a civilian and a military version, but the latter is not used by the Swedish Army.

The robot is ideal for work in radioactive or chemically contaminated environments, and the electronics are protected from anything but the most powerful Gödel pulses. It is programmed to look for a charging station when the battery charge drops below 10%, but if it stops before that, an operator can manually start an emergency drive so that the robot can reach the nearest charging station.

The remote gauntlet has a transmission range of 550 yards (500 meters), but for practical reasons, the operator rarely stays further away than 110 yards (100 meters) in order to see what he is doing. The sensor units consist of TV and thermal vision cameras, and the programming allows the robot to detect if a person is in danger zone. To avoid personal injury, the robot is paused when someone is within 10’ (3 meters) in a 30-degree sector in front of it, but if the remote gauntlet is used, the safety function is switched off. A sensor in the back can detect obstacles, but it is poor at detecting humans. A pair of forward-looking headlamps are used for work in the dark and poor lighting conditions.

The main tool is a claw for heavy lifting, but it can be replaced with, for example, a felling and delimbing attachment for forest harvesting. A newer version, the Mk 81, was introduced in 1984, and has two robotic arms for improved manipulation capability, and consequently has two remote gauntlets connected to the control unit. This version is equipped with a camera and can be remote controlled from a control center up to 3 miles (5 kilometers) away.

Paarhufer Mk 79 is a successful design, and is expected to be in service for many years to come. New versions are planned, but economically advantageous upgrade packages can also extend the working life of older robots.



SUGGESTED MYSTERIES

- It’s Friday and school is out for the weekend. The characters find a service robot. In an unlocked shed next to it, is the remote control unit. The robot is out of charge, and needs to be connected to the nearby charging post. Will anyone miss the robot before Monday?
- A Paarhufer runs amok in town. It wrecks cars and people flee in panic. Somebody has to stand somewhere and control the robot with a remote gauntlet. Who does it and why?
- The characters are out in the woods when they encounter a smoking service robot. There’s a large metal box with warning text in its claw. There is no sign of any operator. If you work it for a while, the box can be pried from the grip of the claw. What might it hold?

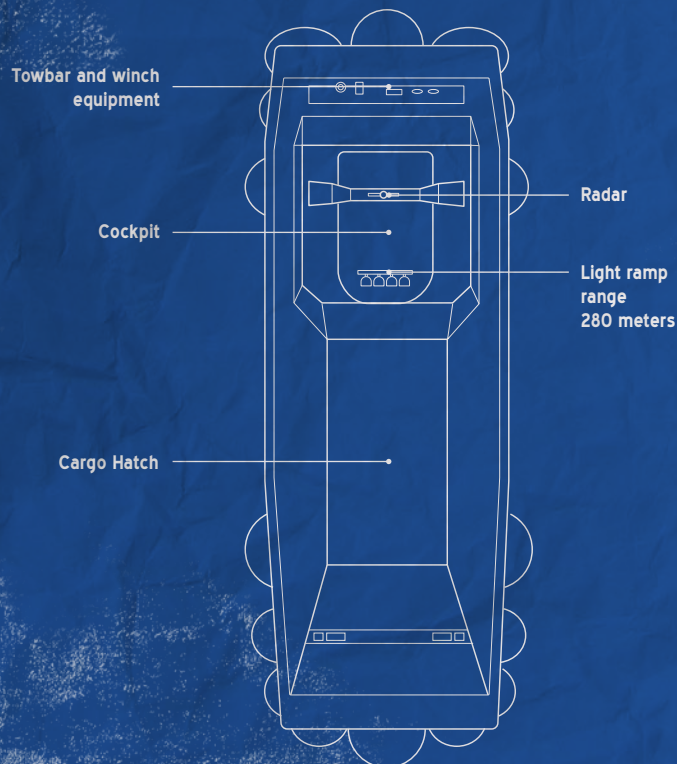
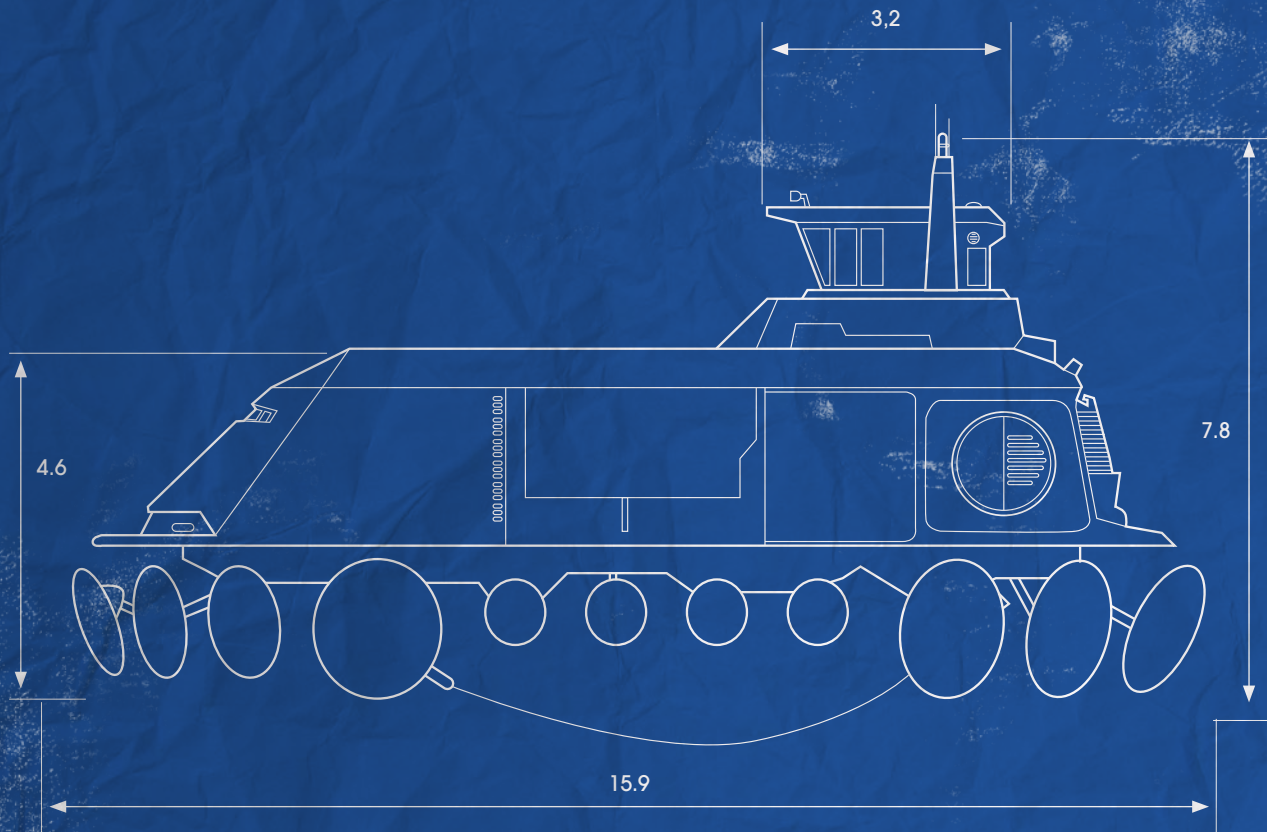
Lieber-ALTA

LOCOMOTIVE SHIP

Lieber-ALTA Magnettrindustri AB, Kalmar, Sweden

M75

S E R I E S



MANUFACTURER: Lieber-ALTA Magnettrindustri AB, Kalmar, Sweden

LENGTH: 15.9 meters

HEIGHT: 6.5 meters

WEIGHT: 65 tons

POWER SOURCE: Sulzer T44 diesel turbine engine

SPEED (WITHOUT LOAD): 85 kph (53 mph)

ACCELERATION: 0-85 kph in 55 seconds

BRAKING DISTANCE: approximately 150 m (165 yards) at 85 kph

LOAD CAPACITY: max 15 tons

CREW: 2

LIEBER-ALTA'S M75 locomotive ship is typical of its class, and a common sight in magnetrine ship ports and industrial areas. Locomotive ships were introduced in 1960-61 in the Soviet Union, West Germany and Sweden, and have become an indispensable part of the magnetrine vehicle fleet. They perform multiple functions, such as towing magnetrine barges, light transport, personal transport, and as tugboats. Lieber-ALTA is an international industrial group with manufacturing in West Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, and with retailers all over the world. A US assembly plant is located in Baltimore, Maryland.

Like most locomotive ships, the M75 has a remote-controlled ladder for entry of the vehicle. It's usually retracted in the aft end of the ship, and extended by a signal from a remote control that's coupled with the ignition key. An entry hatch opens simultaneously, allowing you to enter a space with a ladder to the bridge, as well as a door to the engine room and the common cargo space. For loading, the cargo ship has a lifting crane, which is recessed in the hull while in transit. Usually, the locomotive ship also has a coupler at the back for connection to magnetrine barges and towing cables. A parked ship is usually 2-5 meters (7'-17') above ground level.

The locomotive sinter discs are powered by a generator, which in turn is powered by a diesel engine. A locomotive ship usually has about twenty discs, which are controlled by a central unit connected to magnetic field sensors. By reading the local magnetic field, the disks tilt for maximum lift and drive ability. To drive the ship, the disks are activated in sequential order, with fast polarity shifts to create a pulling/pushing effect that creates forward motion. The exhaust from the diesel turbine is boosted by a turbo aggregate and is used for course corrections, and on some locomotive ships and larger magnetrine ships, there are also rudders that are used to control the exhaust and thus help steer the ship.

Like their larger counterparts, all locomotive ships are equipped with VHF radio for communications. In addition to magnetic field sensors, they also have radar, and a TV camera in the bow facilitates maneuvering in difficult situations. Locomotive ships used for longer routes are equipped with a radio direction finder and autopilot, as the shipping lanes have radio beacons used for navigation and as checkpoints when the autopilot is switched

on. The locomotive ships that operate near the Loop are shielded from Gödel pulses of light to medium severity.

The M75 follows the main trend when it comes to design and layout. The bridge houses control, navigation, and communication equipment. A small cabin with a couple of bunk beds offers overnight accommodation. A kitchenette is available for light cooking, and a free-fall toilet (a seat with a hole open to the ground below) takes care of the rest of the crew's needs. The engine room contains the diesel turbine and the generator, with the fuel tank placed amidships. The cargo hold has a volume corresponding to a half-load container (25 cubic meters, or 880 cubic feet), and can be switched to passenger transport by mounting simple seats.

The M75 locomotive ship from Lieber-ALTA is a reliable construction, and is a workhorse that we will see for many years to come.

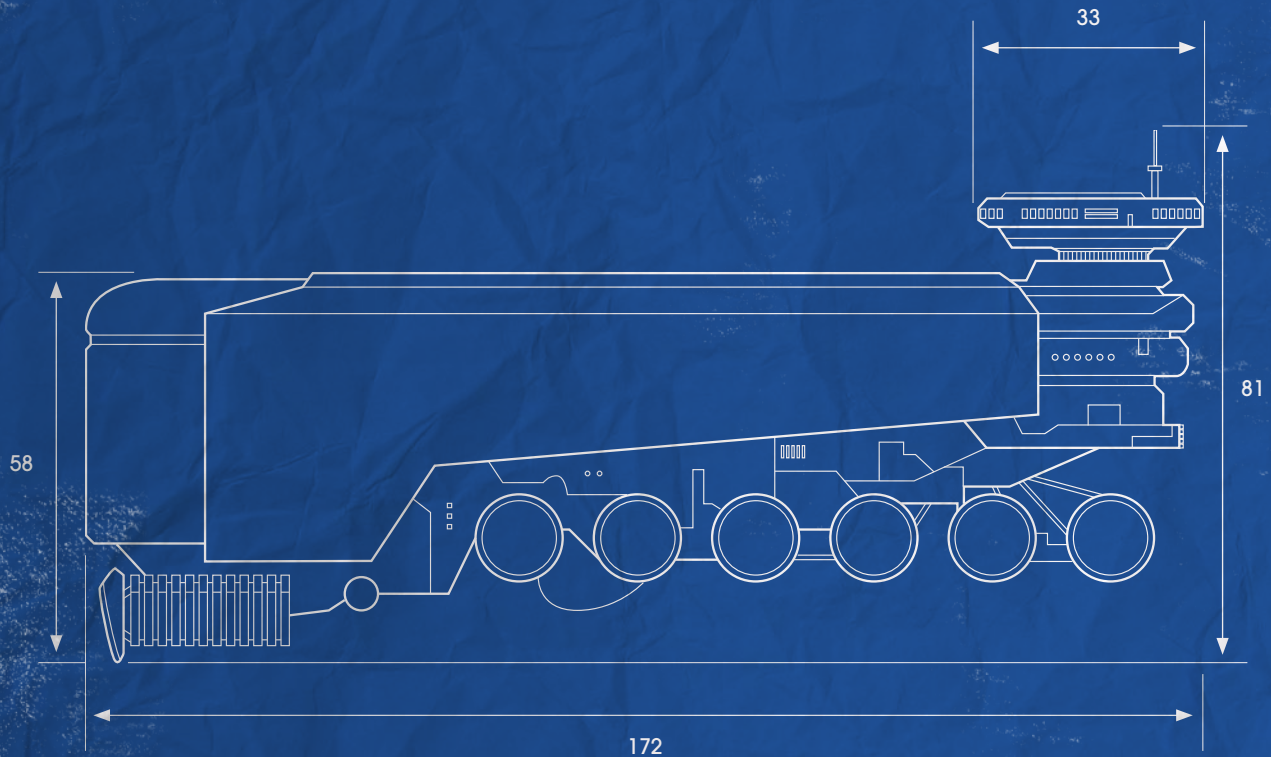
SUGGESTED MYSTERIES

- It's a after school, maybe even summer holiday. The characters roam the countryside in search of something interesting to do, when they find a seemingly abandoned locomotive ship. It is unattended and unlocked, with the ladder extended and the engine switched off. If the characters go on board, they will find a pair of coffee mugs on the ship's bridge. The coffee is still hot. There are no signs of a struggle. What has happened?
- When the characters are investigating the ship, a surveillance robot suddenly appears outside. Will they hide in the ship, and maybe start it to escape?
- From the bridge, the characters can see a perfectly circular pit a hundred yards away, as if a giant had scooped up the earth and the grass. The tracks of two people lead towards the pit, where they abruptly end.
- A shoe is found a short distance from the ship, and fresh blood is visible on the ground. Tracks of one or more large animals lead toward a small, forested area.
- On the bridge there is an evening newspaper. The date of it is one week later than today's date, and the front page has a big headline about a serious accident at the Loop. How did it get here? How did the entire locomotive ship get back in time? Is it possible to prevent the accident?

Mg/S Aurora Borealis

MAGNETRINE CARGO VESSEL

MAGMID

Harris & Logan Magnetrite Shipyards,
San Diego, California, USA

OPERATOR: Southern Magnetrite Shipping, Inc.

TYPE: Magnetrite cargo vessel

CLASS: Magmid

BUILDER: Harris & Logan Magnetrite Shipyards, San
Diego, California, USA

LENGTH OVER ALL: 172 meters

BEAM: 32 meters

HEIGHT: 81 meters

TONNAGE: 25,000 deadweight tons

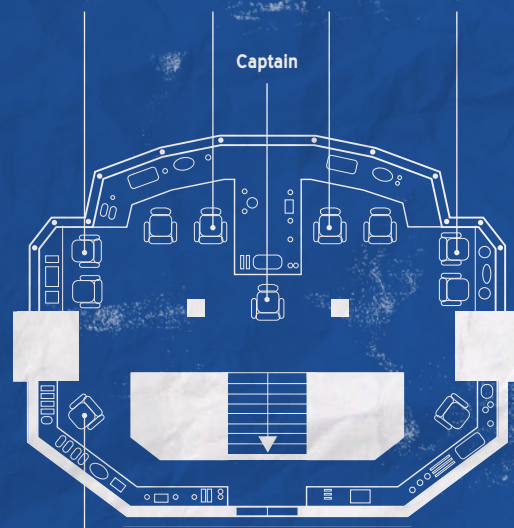
POWER SOURCE: 2 Pantarei 568 Diesel turbine engi-
nes, 2 Stahlhagen G-38/U gas turbine engines

SPEED: 26 knots (48 kph)

CREW: 26

Radio Operator Second Mate First Mate Navigator

Captain



Radar Operator



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MG/S SIERRA NEVADA is the first ship of its class built by Harris & Logan Magnettrine Shipyards. She has been followed by twelve sister ships, which mostly travel the Trans-Am shipping lane from Los Angeles to Boston. The Nevada combines load carrying capacity with reliability and operating economy. Some of the ships are bulk carriers (iron ore, coal, timber, etc), while others are adapted for shipping containers or car transport.

The twelve massive sinter disks are powered by six generators, which are in turn powered by the Diesel engines. Another dozen smaller disks are used for adjustment of lifting power. All disks are controlled by means of two central units connected to a series of magnetic field sensors. The local magnetic field is constantly measured by the sensors, and servo motors angle the discs for optimum lift and drive ability. To drive the ship, the disks are activated sequentially, with fast polarity shifts to create a pulling/pushing effect, which in turn creates forward motion. A pair of gas turbine engines contribute to propulsion through jet exhaust. The exhaust from the gas turbines is also used in conjunction with a pair of rudders for steering.

The bridge is the ship's nerve center. Here the captain, the first mate, the second mate, the signal man, the navigation officer, and the sensor operator work. Controls, radar and sensor screens, and communication equipment cover all surfaces. Magnettrine ships are equipped with radio direction finders and autopilot, as the shipping lanes have radio beacons used for navigation and when the autopilot is engaged. In the galley, the ship's cook works, aided by an assistant. Next to the galley there are a cold storage room and pantries for food and drink. The mess is divided, with one part for the ship's officers and one for the rest of the crew. A bosun and seven mates constitute the deck crew. The captain and other senior officers have their cabins on the same deck as the bridge, while the other crew live in cabins on the deck below. A couple of cabins are available for extra crew and passengers. A common room with TV, bookshelf, pool table, and coffeemaker are available for off-duty crew. Toilets and shower rooms complete the crew quarters.

In the engine room work the technical chief, the first engineer, the magnettrine engineer, a pair of second engineers, four motormen, and the ship's electrician. Next to the engine room is a workshop, power central, and fuel tanks. The cargo holds are configured depending on the



load the ship is intended for. The Sierra Nevada is adapted for freight containers, which can be taken on board by cargo doors in the sides of the ship, a bow ramp, or loading hatches on the underside. Cranes and traverses lift and distribute containers in the cargo holds, which have a volume of some 1.77 million cubic feet (50,000 cubic meters) and are capable of containing up to a thousand 20-foot shipping containers.

The ship's deck has a helipad. For boarding, doors can be used just below the bridge if the ship is in port and is connected to the shore by gangways, or by cargo lifts that pass through openings in the bottom of the crew module. If the ship is subject to acute danger, such as a fire that can't be put out, the crew can be evacuated using parachuted escape pods, which also work as lifeboats if they land in water.

Magnettrine ships like Mg/S Sierra Nevada are a common sight along the shipping lanes that connect the ports of the Northern Hemisphere. Their importance to international trade will only increase in the future, and automation will result in larger vessels that can be monitored by a handful of crew members. The magnettrine ships are here to stay.

SUGGESTED MYSTERY

The parents of one of the characters are going to Las Vegas, and won't be back until midnight. The character is tasked with baby-sitting a younger sibling. The character has invited his/her friends for some gaming, and before you know it, the sibling is gone. Tracks lead to an echo sphere that has been quietly rusting for a few weeks in a small wood behind the house. The problem is that the sphere can be seen being loaded onto a vehicle, which drives off to the port and a waiting magnettrine ship. Will the characters manage to enter the area, sneak aboard the ship and find the sphere with the sibling before the ship leaves the port, and will they succeed before the parents get home?

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HOMETOWN HACK

Tales from the Loop is about solving mysteries in small towns or communities. The two official settings for the game, included in the core rulebook, are the Mälaren Islands in Sweden and Boulder City in Nevada, USA. The reason why we chose these two are simple: Simon Stålenhag's art depicts these two settings. He grew up on the Mälaren Islands outside of Stockholm and his paintings from there reflect his childhood and his memories. But Tales from the Loop is your game now, so why not make it about your hometown and your memories? This is what this chapter is all about.



WHY HACK YOUR HOMETOWN?

There are many reasons why you should adapt your own hometown as a setting for Tales from the Loop. Here are a few:

- It's fun! Setting the game in a town you know brings a whole new dimension to the table.
- It helps players relate. Providing they actually have a relation to your town, they will be able to envision it and its surroundings much better.
- You get to relive your past – with a twist. Recreating one's hometown from the past can be a nostalgic and sometimes bittersweet experience.
- It's easier for new roleplayers. Using a familiar setting, you will have an easier time getting new players into roleplaying.

- You will know the town better. Regardless of whether you are recreating your hometown or creating one from scratch, the very process of shaping it will help you know it inside and out.

CHOOSE YOUR TOWN

First of all, you need to choose the town to be the setting for your game. The most obvious solution is to simply pick the town you and your friends grew up in. If you all come from the same small town, you have the perfect opportunity to create an interesting and gameable setting using your shared memories and experiences. However, chances are that you might come from different parts of the country, or maybe you grew up in a big city? Fear not, Tales from the Loop is a very flexible game. You can set a game in a



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city of any size, you just need to focus the game on a smaller part of it.

So, what is the perfect town for a Tales game? Let's list a few criteria:

- It should be a small town with a population in the thousands (or tens of thousands at the most).
- It should have some basic facilities like a police station, a school, supermarkets and places to hang out at.
- It should be easily accessible for Kids. As most characters will be getting around by foot or bike, that means it should not be spread out over too big an area.
- It should have interesting countryside surrounding it, ideally several different types: forests, mountains, desert, marshes or other features.
- It should preferably have a large body of water nearby. Several of the prewritten mysteries relate to a lake or the sea in some way.
- It needs to have a place for the Loop and its installations. As the loop is 26 kilometers in diameter, you need a town with surroundings that are at least this big (it needs to fit on a map of the setting).
- It should be a town you or your players have a relationship to.

EXAMPLE

We asked our friends at Modiphius Entertainment to create a British setting for the game. Some of them come from East Anglia, especially Norfolk and Suffolk, so they decided on an area they all knew well – The Norfolk Broads. The nearby town of Great Yarmouth is small and has all the basic facilities required. The town and neighboring villages are connected by bus routes (one of the most used ways for kids to get around in the UK in the 80s) and paths and lanes if you are lucky enough to own a BMX. The area around Great Yarmouth is defined by The Broads – rivers and lakes that can mostly be gotten around on in a small boat. However, the land of The Broads is often wet and covered in reeds, making walking around it a bit trickier, unless you stick to the paths. Kids exploring might also find large areas of farmland, as well as woods and long beaches composed of sand and pebbles.

DEFINE THE AREA

Once you have chosen your town, the next step is to define the exact size of the town and its surroundings. To do this, pull out the core rule book and have a look at the maps of Mälaren Islands and Boulder City. Then open a map of your chosen town using an online tool such as Google Maps or similar. Zoom in and out, take a few screenshots, to find the right area to use as a basis for your map. Maybe print the map in different sizes. Get a feel for it, add the Loop and a few installations and see where they fit. There is no exact science to how your map should look. You just need to give the Kids enough space to roam the town and countryside.

EXAMPLE

We have a look at Google Maps and settle for an area roughly 16 kilometers across. Smaller than the Mälaren Islands and Boulder City maps, but enough space to house the Loop and a countryside full of adventures.

PREPARE THE MAP

Ok, so now that you have a town and you have defined the map area, it's time to create the actual map! Take a screenshot of the area you've decided on, then import it into an image editor of your choice for the finishing touches. You can also try out services like Snazzymaps or Openstreetmap to give your map a little more flair. A little digging on the internet goes a long way towards finding the map style that suits you.

PLACE THE LOOP

You've got a town and a map, the next step is to place the actual Loop in a suitable location. Remember, the Loop is a huge underground accelerator and needs lots of space. If you study the Loops of the Mälaren Islands and Boulder City you will see that it consists of these elements:

- The reactor core in the center of the Loop
- The main accelerator tunnel (the largest circle)
- One or two auxiliary accelerator tunnels
- A small number of outflux routes
- Four gates that provide entry to the Loop
- A number of service and transport tunnels



The exact composition of these elements is not important, just make sure that it follows roughly the same model as the Swedish and American versions. Remember that the reactor core should preferably be located outside of populated areas, where access to it can be tightly controlled. The accelerator tunnels however can, and will, probably go underneath the actual town. This is a good thing. The Loop is a generator of mysteries after all.

Using image editing software, you should easily be able to create concentric circles and label them accordingly. Then add the other elements with text or icons.

PREPARE AND PLACE THE AGENCY

Now that the Loop is in place, we need to determine which agency actually controls it. In Sweden, it's Riksenergi, and in the US, it's DARPA. Use either of those, or create your own relevant for your country. Both the Swedish and American ones are modeled after actual government agencies.

Use these simple steps to create an agency for your game:

1. Name it. Acronyms are your friend here. Check lists of actual research agencies or '80s movies for inspiration.
2. Define its responsibility and resources. What is its mission? What kind of resources and authority can it bring to bear to fulfill this task?
3. Define its purpose for building the Loop. What kinds of experiments are performed there?
4. Define the relationship between the Agency, the town and its residents, and with other local authorities such as the police.

EXAMPLE

For who controls The Broads Loop, we wanted to combine two things from the UK in the eighties – government ministries, as well as a reference to one of the most well-known TV shows of the time. So, we decided that, as far as the public is aware, the Loop is a governmental center looking into agricultural research and environmental issues. This public

facing side of the Loop falls under the remit of MAFF – The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

However, the real work going on at the Loop is undertaken by a secret division of the Department of Defence called ReGIS (Regional Geomagnetic Information Sciences). The research being undertaken there involves some combination of the natural water of the area and magnetism, but is otherwise not fully understood outside of the managers of the facility. Rumors persist that a strange natural phenomena have been discovered in waterlogged caves underneath the area.

The Broads Reactor is known as a supplier of surprisingly clean energy (a welcome counterpoint to the Sizewell Nuclear Power Station in nearby Suffolk). However, the Broads Reactor produces a smaller amount of energy, meaning it's still regarded primarily as a niche interest. As well as producing power, the public facing part of the facility works on environmental matters in the area.

Behind the scenes, experiments include ionization and magnetism for many purposes. Tests are often carried out on the Broads, or even out over the North Sea – with any strange lights explained as weather monitoring equipment used by MAFF, or a harmless by-product of the reactor's clean energy production. The marshy fens of the Broads hide many strange machines and vehicles, lost as part of the tests, and equally strange occurrences such as lights and mists, leading many to believe that parts of the area are haunted. The majority of the townsfolk find the reactor an eyesore – and if that's not enough, the next proposed expansion of the facility is a windfarm out on the North Sea.

Despite the not-in-my-back-garden attitude of most of the adult residents, they cannot argue with the benefits it brings, including energy and jobs at a time when the closure of coal mines in other parts of the UK are producing large scale unemployment. Kids from the area, however, find the reactor exciting in ways that the beaches and summer tourists will never be.



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PLACE SCHOOLS, POLICE, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Every town in *Tales from the Loop* is a microcosm of society, and your town should be too. In this step, simply place the following elements on the map. You don't need to use them all, use your judgement as to what is reasonable to be found in your town.

- One or more elementary schools
- One or more high schools
- A police station
- A fire station
- A military base
- A hospital

EXAMPLE

For the setting of The Broads we settle for these institutions:

- *Grove Hill – Comprehensive School*
- *Cycle Grove – Primary School*
- *Sun Road Station – Police Station*
- *Fire Station*
- *Military Base*
- *Hospital*
- *Acle Straight (the long, straight road from Acle, towards Great Yarmouth – known for being a great place to race a BMX)*

CREATE A SHORT SUMMARY

You're almost there! Now that you know the lay of the land, it's time to write down a short overview of the town. Use the setting texts in the core rulebook as inspiration, or just write down a summary using bullet points:

- What is the history of the town?
- What is it like to live in the town?
- Which are the most common meeting places?
- Which are the most significant buildings?
- How do Kids get around the area? What transportation is available?
- What is the relation between the townspeople and the Loop agency like?
- What do Kids do to pass the time in this town?

WRAP THINGS UP

You have created your town. The stage is set and ready to be filled with dreams and memories. Now is the time to fill it with mysteries and introduce your players to it. Maybe you want to send out a prepared document to your players ahead of the first session, or you could spend some time at the table to get everyone acquainted with the town you will explore and experience together.

