

G U R P S[®]

WAREHOUSE 23

THINGS THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE



BY S. JOHN ROSS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

!IN THIS STILL !VENVO

The Ark of the Covenant sits on a shelf next to the gold plates of Moroni and the dissected corpses of the Martian invaders. Frozen in ice you'll find the Jersey Devil beside a Yeti, and a bacteria that can eat any metal – it just can't *stop*. Growing in a hidden hydroponics facility is a plant with a fruit that tastes like steak, with enough nutrition in a single serving to sustain you for a week. The plates they serve it on in the cafeteria are made of a 100% biodegradable plastic that – while it's still fresh – can absorb the kinetic energy of a tank shell without even spilling your drink.

You don't want to know what's in the drink.

The global power balance teeters on the brink of chaos. We touch too much too soon. We discover things we were never meant to comprehend: Relics created by the whim of mad genius, or aliens, or gods – or godlike DEMONS . . . substances so potent that a handful could destroy our world, computers so subtle that no network is secure from their manipulation, sorceries dark enough to annihilate the purest soul.



Illustration by Shea Ryan; colored by Jeff Koke

Somewhere, those with true Power have built a facility to imprison these forces . . . for proper study. For our own good. To insure order. Until THEY decide to unleash them. THEY know WE aren't yet ready for the contents of Warehouse 23. But are THEY? Inside the Warehouse, you might wonder just who – or WHAT – could dare consider itself a master of such power.

Your players will be delighted.
At first.

WRITTEN BY S. JOHN ROSS
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COVER BY BRUCE POPKY
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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GURPS®

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By S. JOHN ROSS

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Edited by Sean Barrett
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Brian Despain, and Shea Ryan

This book is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Nigel D. Findley, author of the original *GURPS Illuminati*. One of the most prolific and eclectic writers in our industry, Nigel passed away on February 19, 1995, at age 35, leaving a legacy of fine reading and great gaming. *They* got a good one.

We would like to thank *Raiders of the Lost Ark* – for that last, incredible warehouse scene that fired so many imaginations – and Stirling Westrup (see p. 126), who first pointed out that every one of those crates could have an adventure in it!

The author would like to acknowledge Dennis Edison Chinault II (for enthusiasm and questions), his mother Madeleine (for junk food), Tim Driscoll (for source material and constant support), Eris (for *Passing Fancies*), Marty Franklin (for loaning me his books and being the loopiest gamer I know), Richard Gillespie (for a place to play), Laurel Halbany (for strong opinions, and a famous hoax), Melina Haberer (for tales of slavic parapsychology), Moose Jasman (for late-night talks and religious insight), Steve Johnson (for playing a hypnotist), Gyeroinya Krasivy (for fortifying Discordian praise), Robert Likins (for books and fellowship), Kimberly Lindsey (for conspiracy theories), Travis Linton (for psychic Yeti research), Chris Reid (for bone marrow), Doug Sheppard (for last-minute Jiffy-Pop), Matt Sullins & Friends (for noise and coffee and acrobats), James Sullivan (for facing nameless horror), Ron Wiltshire (for Elsdon), Terri Wells (for everything), and Elvis Aaron Presley, the Rockabilly Regent of the Red Planet, for the ablative Quantum Jumpsuit and Blue-Shift shoes. To all of you, thank you.

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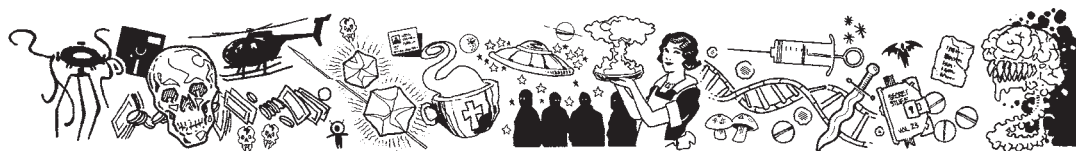
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WAREHOUSE CONSPIRACY UNVEILED TO WORLD!

"It grew out of our control months ago," claimed an unidentified source wearing a black suit. Reports insist that the sub-levels of Warehouse 23 online contain over 5000 crates of unusual items. Subliminal ads co-exist with subversive submission forms. Subfnord.

SJ Games, host of the Warehouse 23 web site, released a statement saying that "you *don't* want to go near the dumpster. But stay tuned; the Secret Masters have big plans, including an actual online game."

<http://www.sjgames.com/warehouse23/>



About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the **GURPS** system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

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PAGE REFERENCES

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set**, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the **GURPS Basic Set** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the **GURPS Basic Set**, Third Edition.

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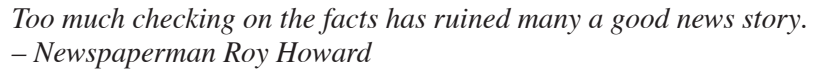
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Ghosts are REAL. Flying saucers are abducting "us" for study. THE SAVIOR has been and gone; His name "was" Elvis. The CIA has perfected the thought-virus, and it's using it in ATLANTIS, right now. IF "you've" ever HAD a flash of paranoia, or a nagging doubt about the "accepted" laws of "physics," you won't be a STRANGER to Warehouse 28.

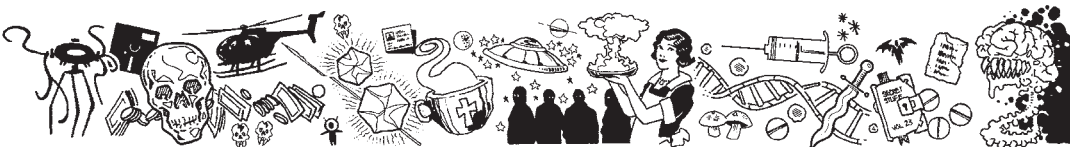
“Warehouse 23” is a sinister fairy tale. The Warehouse is drawn from the same pantheon as the Loch Ness Monster and the Kelly Creature. It occupies the same spot in the heavens as the 100 mile-per-gallon carburetor and the Martian Invasion of 1938. What decent, normal people call urban legends and tourist-bait, the Secret Masters hide in their Warehouse.

Come on in; here's your security card. Don't lose it.

**REPRODUCTION and DISSEMINATION of this
IMPORTANT information is PROHIBITED!!!**

S. John's only personal run-in with the secrets of government warehouses was a visit to one such "Facility" converted into a covert tennis court by the Department of the Navy. One of the dusty catwalks above the courts contained a dead sparrow, presumably of terrestrial origin. He has never visited the Pentagon (much less the section occupied by the Joint Chiefs of Staff) and knows nothing about the purple water fountain in its basement, or any crates of canned pineapple in closets.

He sits quietly on his porch, watching the Fringe, drinking tea.



2 ALTERNATE WAREHOUSES

The contents of Chapter One are rumors. This chapter is a guide to *questioning* those rumors, to build a Warehouse different from the one described there. The exact nature of Warehouse 23 depends on the tastes of the GM and the nature of his campaign.



**ALTERNATE
WAREHOUSES**

Depending on the GM's view of the Illuminati (and the Warehouse owners in particular), it might seem "logical" to assume that the Warehouse has flawless automated defenses, a cunningly designed and impregnable computer network, and an infallible method of inventory and study of its contents. Certainly, the Secret Masters would *like* to be thought of as perfect, but it's doubtful that they are.

The most obvious problem with presenting a “perfect” Warehouse is that it’s almost entirely unplayable. If the defenses are *really* impenetrable, then there isn’t much fun in trying to break in! Besides, the strain on the GM would be tremendous, and it would be very difficult to *seem* fair, even if fairness is the goal.

Fortunately, experience teaches that no building has impregnable defenses, and that it's simply *impractical* to have a motion-sensor at every corner, a retina-scanner attached to every lock, and a camera on every ceiling.

The building's first line of defense is that nobody knows it really exists. This indicates that security in Warehouse 23 is limited to that necessary to keep the Caretakers in line, with a lightly-armed security force and a few automated defenses (state of the art for the *next* Tech Level) just in case.

As for the computer systems and inventory, most real-world networks are as eccentric as the people who build and maintain them, and custom-tailored to *their* needs and interests as much as to the needs of the network's *owners*. And sometimes they just *crash*. On a related note, the inventory system is part of the computer system, and very likely incompatible with the system(s) that was in place before the current network was installed. There may be *thousands* of lots still waiting to be catalogued, sealed off as “unsafe” until each crate can be re-opened, examined, and bar-coded.

Location. The Warehouse must be accessible to its Masters, while remaining inaccessible to those who would destroy or plunder it. Isolated stretches of Alaska, on the surface of the Moon, inside Mount Shasta, under the sea, or any number of distant locales would serve nicely. It might be hidden beneath stately Wayne Manor . . .

Occupants. It might suit the campaign better if the Warehouse is *deserted*. It then becomes a ruin to be explored, and a potentially deadly mystery . . . What killed, or drove away, the owners and Caretakers? If *it* is still inside, the adventurers had best be careful. Alternately, the Warehouse could be “staffed” by robots, or golems, or ghosts, or aliens.

The Real Owners. Those who control the Warehouse (the Masters) could be nearly anybody, from the Vatican to the Food and Drug Administration. While tradition connects it to the United States espionage and defense agencies, or global conspiracies such as the Bavarian Illuminati, it could just as easily be the property of the government of India, or of Great Britain. Maybe *every* government has one, and the nation with the most toys wins.

Cosmology. Whether the campaign takes place in the “real” world, with little or no magic, psi, and alien technology available, dramatically affects the Warehouse. There are five principal “lenses” through which to view any illuminated version of the world (see p. 25); the GM must decide which ones carry the most weight.

CHOOSING A SITE

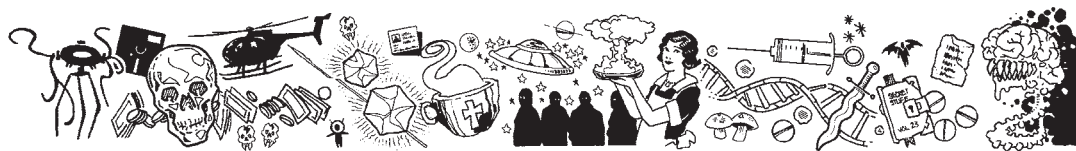
There are major issues to be considered when selecting the perfect location for the Facility.

*It's **Large**.* Either the Warehouse exists in an environment where *nothing* is especially conspicuous (within the Hollow Earth, perhaps, or on the Dark Side of the Moon), or it is designed to blend in with its surroundings. It must either be subterranean, or disguised as some other large structure. The Warehouse might even (from the outside) be a major urban skyscraper.

It Gets Lots of Traffic. Unless the Warehouse is abandoned, many regular shipments should be expected, probably at all hours of the day. Placing the Warehouse in an actual warehouse district of an urban area solves this problem; so does placing it on a military base. Alternately, there could be an entire *town* hiding the Facility.

It Needs Power. And plumbing, too, if living people work there. Usually, this means that the Warehouse has its own generator, and a private water supply. If the Warehouse is in a populated mundane area, it can use local utilities, but the Masters need to cover up any excessive usage.

It Has Strange Emissions. It just might be impossible to keep an accurate count of the types of energies that are contained or actually utilized in



The Secret Masters have a *lot* of toys to play with, and this is a peek into their toy-box.

For the GM, this is a collection of possibilities to consider. Each entry here can springboard an entire adventure, either within the Warehouse or beyond it. What happens if even a minor conspiracy – or just one clever villain – owns a Genetic Interrogation Machine? Or the Spear of Destiny? Or the Green Grimoire?

Better still, what happens if the player characters *themselves* have access to something here? Temptation is a useful dramatic device for any Game Master in the mood to be a little *evil*. “Magic items” aren’t always “treasure.”

GMs running *GURPS Atomic Horror*, *Cliffhangers*, *Illuminati*, or *IOU* campaigns can dump this *entire book* into their campaigns and oversee the ensuing chaos. GMs not quite so crazy should carefully select entries to be “real,” depending on campaign cosmology, but everything here makes juicy *rumors*. Keep the players guessing.

Some entries are devoted to objects. Some are places or entire technologies. Anything described here (or clues leading to them) might be found in the Warehouse described in Chapter 1, or in a Warehouse of the GM’s own devising. Notes relating each entry directly to Warehouse 23 are included, but each stands on its own, and most have origins beyond the walls of The Facility.



It may be magic; it may be simply technology, “sufficiently advanced” as per Arthur C. Clarke’s celebrated equation. Whatever it is, the Conspiracy *depends* on it, for its secrecy, for much of its power, and for its defiance of others. In a fully Illuminated world, magic is everywhere.

The Ark of the Covenant

And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it.

– Exodus 25:10-15 (Authorized Version)

Built according to divine specifications by the followers of Moses, the Ark of the Covenant was constructed to hold the “Sinai Covenant,” the Mosaic contract between the Supreme Being and the twelve tribes of Israel: the Ten Commandments. The origins and earliest travels of the Ark are outlined in the Book of Exodus.

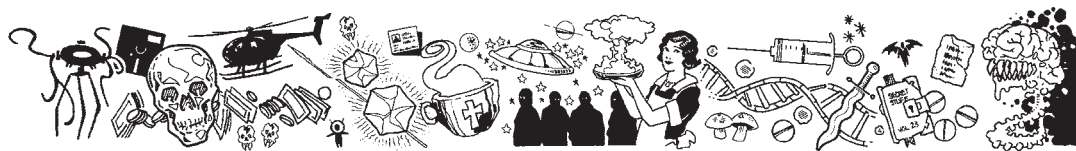
If scripture is accurate, the Ark is the holiest of all relics, the earthly throne of God and the resting place of the original set of laws that were to spell the eventual defeat of polytheism on Earth. It was a hard fight; the ancient Hebrews were polytheists! When times were good, they erected Asherah poles and built temples to Baal and otherwise paid appropriate respect to all of the gods that had normally been worshipped in Canaan. When the Covenant was violated in this manner, the Bible records that God withdrew His protection and the Hebrews suffered for it.

The Covenant didn’t deny the *existence* of other deities – quite the opposite. It was a contract that stated if the Hebrews worshipped God exclusively, that God would protect the Hebrews exclusively, and provide for them. It was a revolutionary idea – one that would take a long time to take permanent root. There were both “practical” considerations (Baal had been bringing rain for as long as everybody could remember – could YHWH do just as well at fertility *and* war at the same time?), and aesthetic ones – the Hebrews had grown up with idols, and were comfortable worshipping them.

The Ark was a symbol essential to the survival of the new monotheism. While idolatry of any sort was strictly forbidden, the Ark answered the Hebrew’s *need* for idols. It was a golden object to be venerated; God’s presence was said to be with it. It was, after all, His throne, providing a physical reminder of His presence and power. The cover was where blood was cast on the Day of Atonement to seek forgiveness for sin (in the Christian cult of centuries later, Jesus Christ would assume the symbolism of the atonement cover).

Moses was either a shrewd political thinker, or truly in contact with a vast intelligence of some sort, or both. The nature of the intelligence (divine, alien, human, or something entirely other) is left to the GM.

Physically, the Ark is as Exodus describes it (see above) with one exception: the atonement cover, like Egyptian arks, has a wooden cover plated with gold, rather than a cover fashioned of *solid* gold (fortunately for the Levites carrying it across the desert). The poles are each about 150 inches long (between eight and nine cubits) and an inch thick, which is consistent with the descriptions of the temple layout in I Kings and II Chronicles. The entire Ark, empty, weighs 250 lbs., including the weight of gold trimmings such as the cherubs and rings. The gold plating is only 1/100th of an inch thick, but the weight of the gold is still more than half of the total weight of the Ark.



Gall pigs are rarely a threat in combat, although they are intelligent enough and strong enough to be trained to fight, if the GM is feeling especially perverse (they could also be engineered with sharp teeth, allowing them to do 1d-1 cutting damage with a Close attack). They can effectively Slam, in any case (give them +3 to ST for knockdown contests).

Gojira

ST: 1,200 **Move/Dodge:** 100/0 **Size:** 100 hexes
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/200 **Weight:** 50,000 tons
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 6d×10 cutting, or Breath
HT: 15/1,000 **Reach:** C, 1-50

“Gojira” is compressed Japanese slang (pronounced “Godzilla” by English-speakers) meaning “Gorilla-Whale.” It is the nickname of the world’s most terrible Atomic Monster, awakened as an unexpected by-product of nuclear testing on a remote Pacific island. Gojira is a bipedal lizard-creature 60 stories tall, capable of absorbing radiation into its body safely and expelling destructive jets of radioactive force from its mouth.

If the monster is stored in Warehouse 23, the GM must decide if it is in a state of suspended animation, or dead. More likely, the Facility keeps a stock of “Gojira cells” and other flesh samples that can be cloned or exploited for their radiation-spawned regenerative qualities.

Gojira's scaly, blubbery skin provides no Passive Defense, but it ignores rounds (and energies) that easily penetrate normal armor; its DR is never divided for any reason. The monster's DR is *multiplied by 10* against any explosion not directly in contact with its skin. In addition, nuclear explosions do one one-hundredth normal damage, and *cannot* kill Gojira, or knock it unconscious. The creature draws its life-energy directly from radioactivity (a reversal of the orgone concept, suggesting that Gojira may in some way be from outer space).

Gojira has High Pain Threshold for combat purposes; it can feel pain, but its DX rolls are not reduced by injury. Gojira rarely experiences knockback from any attack smaller than

naval cannon (1 hex of knockback per 500 points of basic damage). The monster rolls at DX+4 to keep its feet if knocked back.

Gojira regenerates almost instantly. Every turn that it is injured, it regains hit points equal to its *current* hit points. The monster's *minimum* regeneration rate is 100 hits per turn!

The monster can spend ST for additional regeneration; every point of fatigue Gojira willingly takes heals 10 hit points. This requires a single turn of concentration on the part of the monster (no limit on how much ST can be spent in a turn in this manner). Gojira heals fatigue at normal rates unless it has a large amount of local radiation to draw upon, so this is a last-ditch measure.

If the creature's ST is ever reduced to 500 or less, or if it ever takes more than 2,000 points of damage in a single turn, it moves away from any threats as quickly as possible, heading for isolated wilderness or (preferably) open sea, where it makes its home (possibly among others of its kind in Mu and Lemuria).

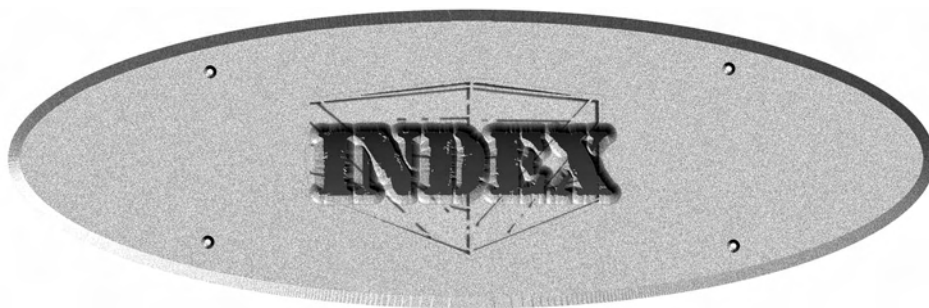
The speed given is in water (the creature's natural element); on land, Gojira walks at a speed of 25, usually crushing buildings underfoot as if they were made of cardboard, amid sparks of electricity from torn power cables. Rolling for damage in cases like this is pointless; houses and vehicles are smashed flat under the foot of the monster; the only defense is to *leave*.

Gojira's principal attack when threatened by real firepower is its "breath weapon," a jet of focused atomic energy doing *as much damage as Gojira wants*. For every point of damage done, the jet has a range of 1 hex. For every 10 points of damage done, Gojira takes 1 point of damage. This damage regenerates normally! Roll against DX to hit, applying normal penalties for size and range (SS and Accuracy rules are ignored, and Gojira gets no benefit from the Aim maneuver). The creature can divide the damage among multiple opponents, provided they are within a 60° (one-hexside) arc. Roll to hit each target separately.

In addition to its claw attack (listed above), Gojira can smash with its tail for 6d×20 crushing damage. This can only be directed to the rear and side of the monster, and only used against ground or water targets. Its claws, when used, are reserved for batting airborne targets and other Atomic Monsters. Gojira never uses its claws against ground targets.

Incidental radiation from the monster's attacks has no lingering effect; it "evaporates" almost immediately. This alone is sufficient mystery to interest the Secret Masters.





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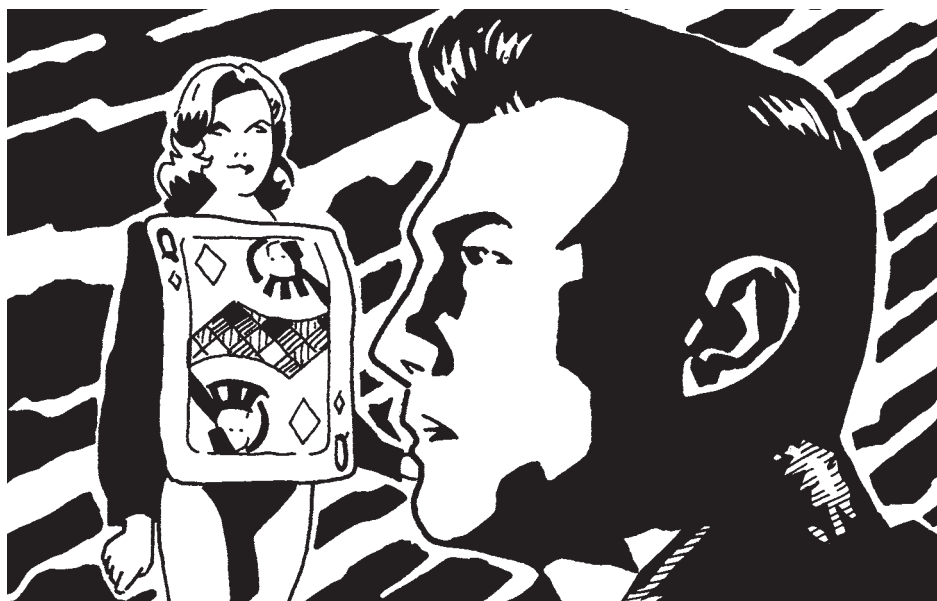
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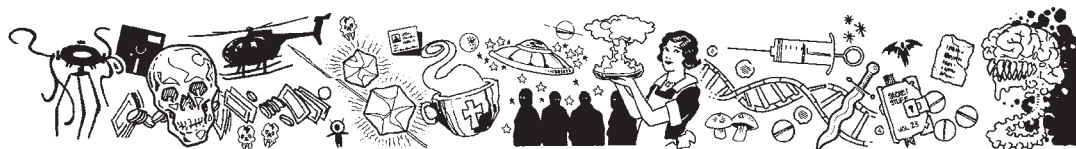
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