

MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

EVIL OF THE ANCIENTS

#9: A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE
BY MICHAEL CURTIS



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A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

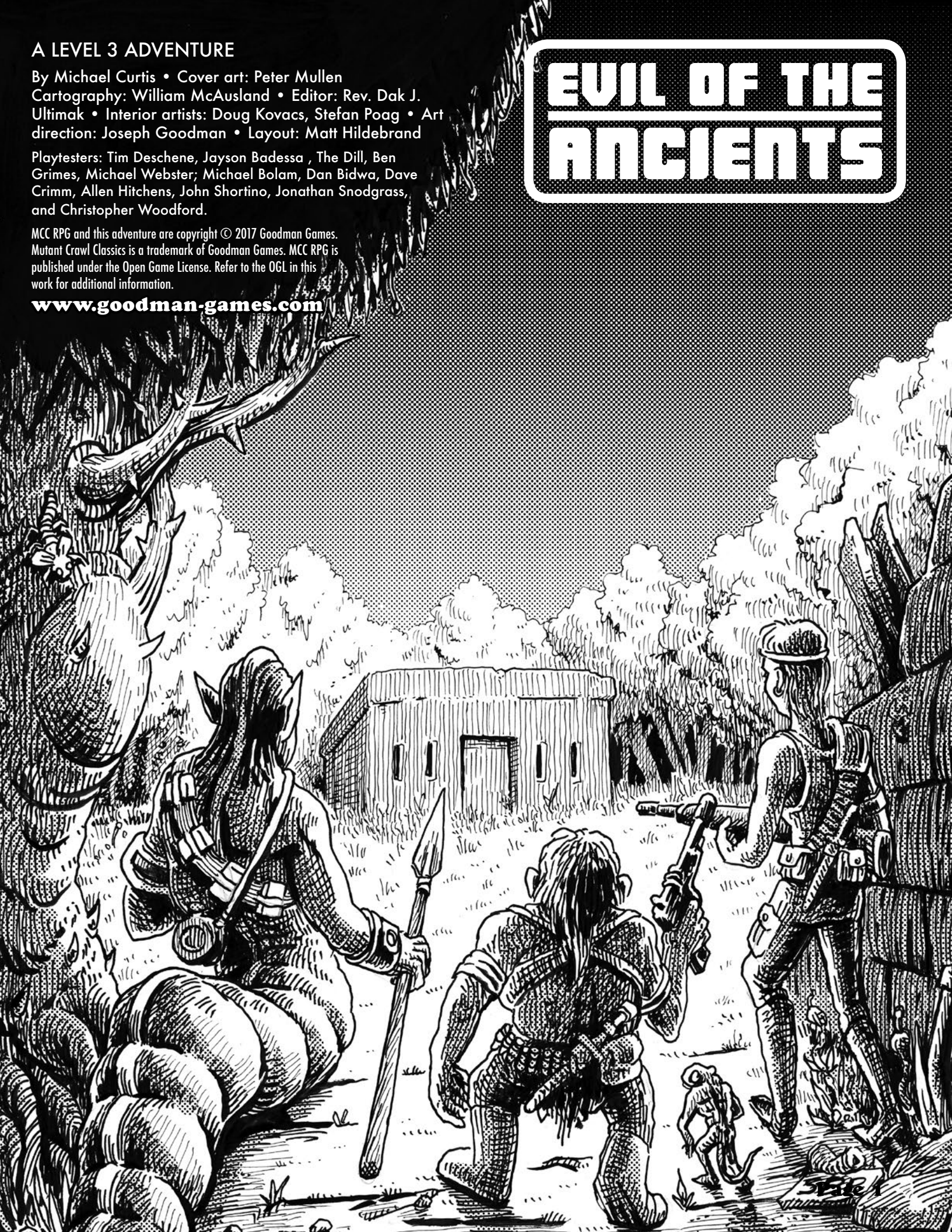
By Michael Curtis • Cover art: Peter Mullen
Cartography: William McAusland • Editor: Rev. Dak J. Ultimak • Interior artists: Doug Kovacs, Stefan Poag • Art direction: Joseph Goodman • Layout: Matt Hildebrand

Playtesters: Tim Deschene, Jayson Badessa, The Dill, Ben Grimes, Michael Webster; Michael Bolam, Dan Bidwa, Dave Crimm, Allen Hitchens, John Shortino, Jonathan Snodgrass, and Christopher Woodford.

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EVIL OF THE ANCIENTS



INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when post-apocalyptic adventures were full of super-science, robots that were there to be mastered, and the finale of every underground adventure was setting the fusion power plant to overload? Those days are back. Mutant Crawl Classics adventures take place in an ambiguous time period after a great disaster has ravaged the world, and it's up to your neolithic mutant tribesmen to go out into the hot house jungles and radioactive deserts of Terra A.D. (After Disaster) and collect the artifacts of the Ancient Ones in order to attain great personal power and savage glory.

Evil of the Ancients is an adventure for the Mutant Crawl Classics RPG and is intended for four to six 3rd-level PCs, but can easily be scaled for higher or lower levels (and can even be used as a zero-level funnel with only minor tweaking!). Although it has ties to a previous MCC adventure, *MCC #3 IncurSION of the Ultradimension*, it is not necessary for the players to have experienced that scenario to enjoy this one.

In *Evil of the Ancients*, the party discovers an abandoned research facility where tears in time and space have left it infected with an unearthly intellect. Strange phenomenon and echoes of the past plague the PCs as they explore the installation, leaving them to speculate whether what they face is supernatural or super-science...or if there's any difference between the two at all.

Evil of the Ancients is unlike other post-apocalyptic adventures. It owes a debt of gratitude to both cosmic horror and gothic ghost stories. Hopefully, this adventure demonstrates there's more to be done with post-apocalyptic genre than just mutants, radiation, and mayhem.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the Great Disaster, numerous research installations around the world pushed the borders of knowledge to their limits, sometimes going beyond what was once believed to be impervious universal laws. One of the organizations behind this bleeding edge research was the Athena Project. The Athena Project staff was comprised of scientists working on the fringes of their fields, each dedicated to pushing humankind's knowledge to new heights.

The Athena Project funded several installations around the world, each dedicated to specific pursuits. One of these facilities, Minerva Station, was a small installation in comparison to its sister complexes. Its staff was comprised of researchers working on the borders of known physics. Unproven theories, specifically research in Loop Quantum Gravity, Entropic Gravity, and quantifiable experimentation with strangelets were the primary focus of this group's work. Assisted by a small staff of support personnel, the Minerva Station researchers conducted their work in a subterranean installation, which for safety and security reasons, had become the norm during the last perilous years of the Ancients.

In the months just prior to the Great Disaster, the Athena Project experienced a scientific breakthrough at one of their installations. An experiment at that complex caused a rift between dimensions, opening the way for alien creatures to enter Earth (as detailed in MCC #3 *IncurSION of the Ultradimension*). This experiment also sent ripples through the entire Athena Project network of installations, producing widespread calamity and unexpected consequences in nearly every one of their complexes.

Far away, at Minerva Station, the dimension-tearing forces opened a tiny and brief tear between worlds. Through that fracture came intangible alien intellects, thought forms known by very few as the Orphans.

The Orphans entrance into this world went unheralded at first. The dimensional tear lasted only a moment, enough time to attract the Orphans' attention, lure them through, then strand them on this side of dimensional walls. The Orphans arrival, undetected by Minerva Station's staff, began to erode away at the sanity of its workers, infecting their minds by simple proximity to the entities' presence. Subject to the Orphans' malignant intellect, Minerva Station's staff turned violent and self-destructive, goaded on by both their mad project manager and the Orphans' contagious mental virus. Within a short time, everyone was dead. Before the matter could be discovered, however, the Great Disaster struck and Minerva Station was forgotten.

The Orphans have remained stuck in the world of Terra A.D. ever since, seeking a way to return to their home dimension. Their attempts to reopen the rift using Minerva Station's staff failed. The pre-disaster humans simply lacked the mental and emotional energy required to fracture dimensional walls. However, in an age of powerful mental mutations, the Orphans might find a suitable source among the inhabitants of Terra A.D. allowing them to tear apart the boundaries of the worlds once more and return home.

It is likely, however, those hapless sources will not survive.

THE ORPHANS

The Orphans cannot be understood by man or mutant, and the author makes no attempt to try and explain their nature, whims, or long term goals. Instead, it is the effects of exposure to the Orphans' presence and their immediate desire that concerns the judge and the PCs.

The Orphans, although present in the world of Terra A.D., do not exist on a physical level. They are best understood as a form of thought virus: intangible, but pervasive, existing throughout Minerva Station on a wavelength undetectable by any physical or mental means. Entrance into the installation exposes the PCs to the Orphans' omnipresence and makes them susceptible to infection.

The Orphans' thought virus not only contains strands of their own alien makeup, but the lingering emotions and memories of the complex's former staff. These residual memories, along with the Orphans' alien intellect, corrupt



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