

The Ayn Atas People's Experimental Memorial Agricultural Research Collective

[\[The Day After Ragnarok\]](#)

Before the Serpentfall, this facility was part of Iowa State College's agriculture department. Students there learned to diagnose and treat common fruit tree diseases; there was also a modest breeding program for new varieties of apples. The farm was left fallow for the first year after the Serpentfall, but was then reoccupied by the Iowa Soviet, greatly expanded, and renamed. The current Research Collective is a sprawling complex of seized fields, forests, and farms just northwest of Ames. Security there is remarkably tight.

If anybody in the Iowa Soviet still asked irrelevant questions, they would have been told that 'Ayn Atas' was a minor heroine of the Revolution, martyred in the process of foiling a capitalist wrecker plot to poison the Ellsworth, Iowa water supply. In reality, 'Ayn Atas' is a backwards anagram of 'Satanya,' a major fertility figure among the Ossetian Narts currently supporting the Soviet Union. For Her own inscrutable reasons, Lady Satanya sent the Iowa Soviet (via very circuitous routes) apple and wheat seeds

that had been particularly blessed by Her; for their own inscrutable reasons, the Iowa Soviet decided to plant and grow them.

The results have been amazing, even by the standards of the Iowa Soviet: not only do the wheat and apples grow even better than in the rest of Iowa, but the very air in the Collective seems cleaner, somehow (if the Serpent Taint Level rules are being used, the Research Collective has a ST Level of 0). It is also indefinably *wilder*. Wild animals found inside the Collective -- there are many -- are slightly larger than average, more aggressive, and possibly even a bit more intelligent. Unmaintained human structures and machines inside the Research Collective tend to break down, rust, or just collapse in a heap fairly quickly.

As for the human inhabitants: there were about one hundred farmers and researchers assigned to the Research Collective. As far as anyone in the Iowa Soviet knows, they're still in there. They just almost never leave the Collective, except to drop off their quota of the People's Grain. It's aggressively normal in there, in fact.

Far too aggressively normal, in fact. The People's Land Agent currently assigned to the Research Collective has sent in the exact same 'nothing to report' report for three

months running, which has oddly escaped everyone's attention. Then again, the Collective's grain obligation is four times higher than any other collective farms, and it's the only one in the Iowa Soviet that consistently overperforms its target goals in food production. That earns a lot of official disinterest.

Should somebody ever does go inside the Research Collective, they will discover fairly quickly that its grain production is merely a cover what what they're **really** growing in there. As for what it is: well. It's not a plant, not an animal, absolutely not a human, certainly being worshipped like a god by the Research Collective's staff, and looks to be growing in time for this year's harvest. Oh -- and it doesn't smell at all right, either. Just in case some heroes were tempted to see if letting the Collective's plans come to term would result in a good, rousing game of "Let's you and him fight."

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