

# NUMENÉRA

## WEIRD DISCOVERIES

TEN INSTANT ADVENTURES™ FOR NUMENERA



BY MONTE COOK



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TEN INSTANT ADVENTURES™ FOR NUMENERA

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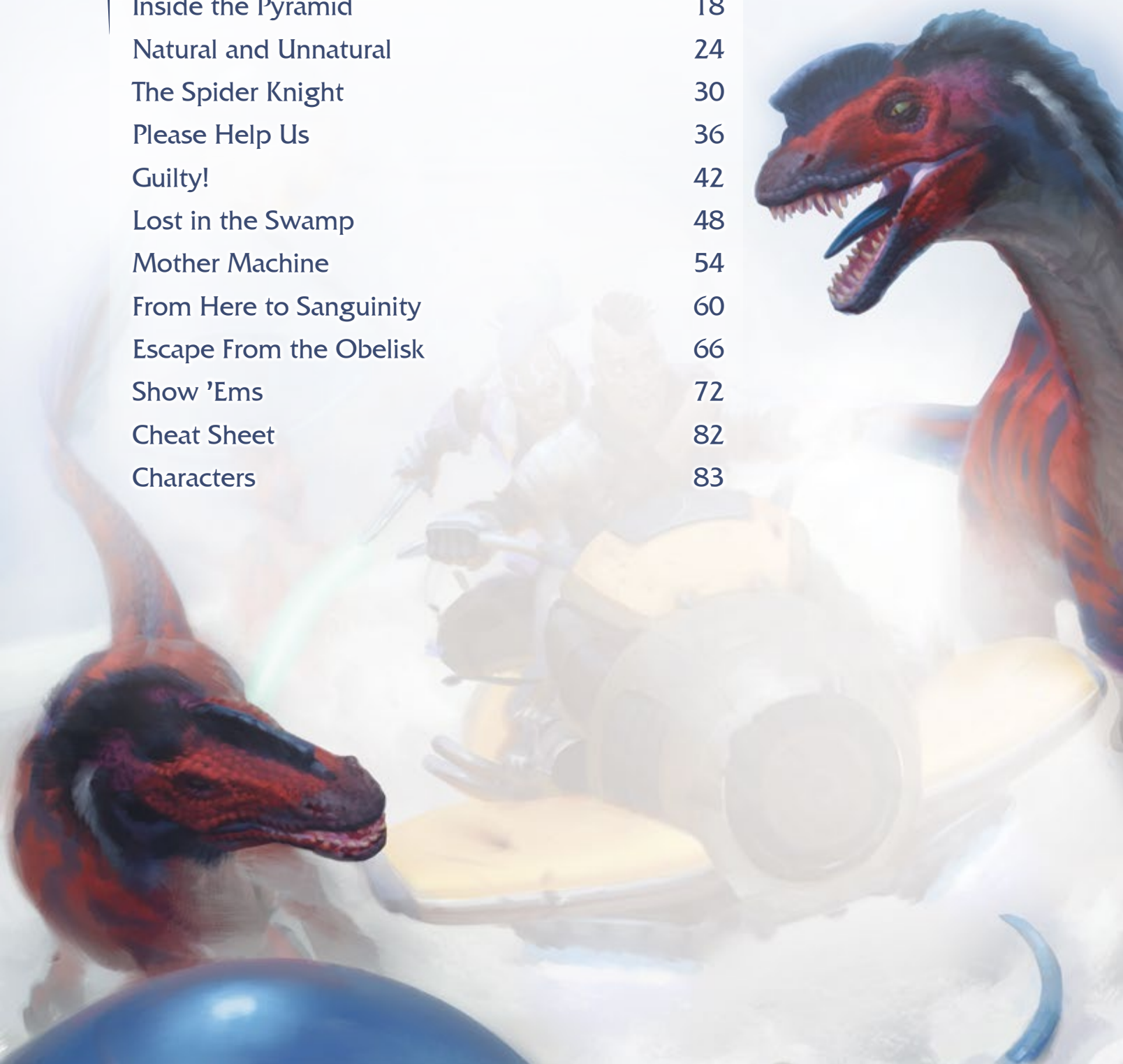
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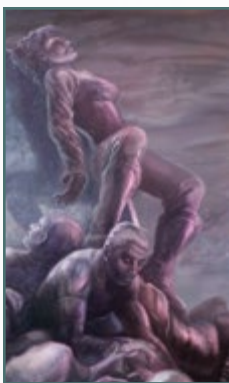
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# INTRODUCTION



Throughout this supplement, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to the Numenera corebook, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn't necessary to look up the referenced items in the corebook; it's an optional way to learn more about the game and provide additional information to your players.



Pacing, page 342

It's Friday night. Your friends have gathered at your house. Someone asks, "What should we do tonight?" One person suggests watching a movie, but everyone else is in the mood for a game. You've got lots of board games, and that seems like the obvious solution, because they don't take any more time to prepare than it takes to set up the board and the pieces.

Those of us who love roleplaying games have encountered this situation a thousand times. We'd love to suggest an RPG for the evening, but everyone knows you can't just spontaneously play a roleplaying game, right? The game master has to prepare a scenario, the players need to create characters, and all this takes a lot of time and thought.

But what if that didn't have to be the case? What if you could say, "Hey, I know. Let's play Numenera," without any preparation? What if you could sit down at the table, hand out some pregenerated characters, and—in the time it takes the players to get familiar with their characters—be ready to run a scenario that will last the evening?

That was my goal when I sat down to create this product. Basically, I had to recreate what a published adventure was and how the GM interacted with it. (I say "interact with" rather than "read" because there isn't time for the GM to read the whole thing carefully—that's the point.) When I did, I realized that the crux of the issue—the real challenge—involved pacing. This will come as little surprise to those who have read some of my other notes about game mastering, because I stress that good pacing is probably the most important trait a GM can have.

The easiest way to deal with pacing is to make adventures completely linear. First the PCs do thing A, then thing B, and finally they reach the climax at thing C. However, not only can that kind of railroading feel heavy-handed, sometimes it just doesn't work. The PCs might do A and B, and then head off on their own initiative and never reach C. That's why it's so much better to empower a GM to handle things more broadly. In other words, don't script out the adventure so that it must go exactly as the designer planned. Instead, give the GM a general plan of where things might lead and what the NPCs and whatnot might do, and then let her go.

For example, say the PCs are looking for a lost explorer in the wilderness, and they come upon a strange automaton in a valley that knows where the explorer is. Rather than create a script where the PCs have to ask precisely the right questions, it's far better to tell the GM what the automaton knows and how likely it is to share that information. She can take it from there.

But what if the PCs don't talk to the automaton at all? What if they hide from it, blow it up, or do something no one could have expected, like fly over the valley using a cypher and never encounter it at all? Is the whole adventure thrown out the window?

Well, unless the GM wants to abandon the adventure altogether, she needs another way to get that information to the characters. That fact drove much of the development of the format for *Weird Discoveries*. The players should be allowed to go where they want to go, do what they want to do, and find interest in whatever they want. But at the same time, the GM needs to guide things along at least enough so that the group doesn't spin its wheels and get frustrated. This meant that in each scenario, certain key factors—which we just call **keys**—needed to be identified to create a possible throughline so that something interesting happens while everyone's at the table.

Keys, page 8



These keys, however, needed to be flexible. The PCs must be able to obtain them in multiple ways and probably multiple places. The keys might even come in different forms—a bit of loot scavenged off a fallen foe, something interesting found behind a secret panel, or a nugget of information learned from talking to the right person.

The door to the room where the cool treasure lies is locked, and the key is in the desk in the mayor's office. But what if the PCs never go to the office? The system presented here allows the GM to quickly determine that the key might be elsewhere: in the pocket of the wandering warrior or in the lair of the six-legged beast. The GM makes sure it turns up at the right time (pacing). She makes sure that the key is in a location where the characters have a chance of coming upon it. That doesn't mean she forces the players' hands—just that the PCs have a chance to find what they need to succeed. That actual success (or failure) is still very much in their hands.

We've all seen it happen while running games. The PCs find some weird object and obsess over it, even though in the original plan (either the GM's or the designer's) it had little meaning. At the same time, the characters ignore the actual clue they were supposed to find. What's a good GM to do? She quickly changes things up so that the object everyone is so focused on *is* the clue they need. Why? Because if she doesn't, things get bogged down and the adventure ends up in a dead end with a table of frustrated players. In other words, she does it to control the pacing of the session. It's still up to the players to use the clue properly.

*Weird Discoveries* assumes that the GM will do that kind of thing, and it empowers her to do so. Each scenario has a number of keys. Either the keys are important to the flow of the scenario or they're things that are just so cool that you don't want the PCs to pass them by—perhaps a challenge to overcome, a bit of amazing treasure, or something the characters will really need.

So keys help with pacing, give a GM a way to manage the flow of things without being draconian, and don't require a lot of prep time. Obviously, the scenarios needed to be short—just a single session—so the GM didn't have a lot of reading. Basically, if something doesn't involve what happens in that session, it didn't need to be in one of our “instant adventures.” We also didn't want a lot of book referencing or page flipping, so as much as possible, once the GM spends about five minutes reading the basic info, she never needs to look at anything but a single two-page spread at the heart of each scenario. The spread has a map or a graphic to show the possible progression of events. Any text pertaining to a spot on the map is right there on that page. No flipping.

To make this work, the scenario write-ups had to be short. Even if we put in a few extra pages of additional notes and whatnot for people who wanted to use these scenarios outside of our low-prep goal, we knew we could still pack a lot of them into a relatively short book, like the one you have now.

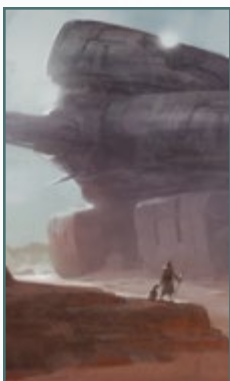
The scenarios in *Weird Discoveries* require a GM to do a little **improvisational game mastering** so she can take a very brief encounter write-up and flesh it out where it needs fleshing. But frankly, every GM needs to be ready to do that anyway. Rather than a designer trying to cover every contingency or crazy scheme the players might come up with, perhaps it's better to arm the GM with the basics and let her come up with more when needed. If the PCs sneak by the abhumans, for example, a lengthy discussion of their battle tactics isn't really needed.

After figuring out the ideal structure for our scenarios, we realized that we had essentially rewritten how published adventures are typically presented and used. And our playtests showed that they are easy and fun to run. We hope that you find that to be true as well.

*Throughout this book, you'll see references to Show 'Ems. These images are designed to be shown to your players at just the moment they come upon a particular scene in the adventure. Show 'Ems are found toward the back of the book, starting on page 72.*

*For ease of use, this book includes the Numenera Cheat Sheet (page 82) and six pregenerated characters (page 83). GMs should feel free to copy or print those tools ahead of time for players.*

*Improv Game Mastering, page 6*



## IMPROV GAME MASTERING

If you're a game master, you've done it without thinking about it. The players came up with some idea—big or small—that you weren't ready for, and on the spot you came up with a response, a judgment call, an answer, or whatever was needed. You used improvisation to run your game, and more than likely, it worked out wonderfully.

Many GMs prefer to run a game with little preparation, making it all up as they go along. Some find this harder. *Weird Discoveries* is an attempt to bridge that gap by empowering those who don't want to spend a lot of time preparing while still

informing those who don't want to make it all up on the fly.

Before we go any further, here's the best bit of advice you'll get on this subject: don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to come up with whatever the game needs. Fear leads to hesitation, and that slows down the game. It also means that you might not make the best decision. Don't think ahead—just come up with what's needed at the moment. Don't think about what another GM would do. Don't think about what the players will think of you. None of that will help—it will only slow you down.





Don't worry about being cliché or obvious. Neither of those things ever ruined a game. In fact, sometimes they're just what is needed (clichés are used often for a reason). You can always inject a nice dose of creativity or weirdness later.

GMs are called upon to make things up on the spot all the time—NPC names, place names, little details (of people, places, and things), game stats, NPC reactions, the consequences of actions, and more. Sometimes whole adventures. But it's not hard. In fact, it's just the opposite. As the GM, you almost can't make the wrong choice. If you say that there's a bakery in the village, then there is one. Poof! No one can tell you there's not.

## GAME MECHANICS

Mechanically, Numenera offers a lot of advantages in improv GMing. NPC stats are a breeze and require no preparation—just give them a level. If you want to get all fancy, give them armor or something special, but that's not necessary—level tells you everything you need to know. A task, an object, or a challenge of any kind simply needs to be rated on a scale of 1 to 10. We do that kind of thing naturally. Just think about it: on a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable is the seat you're sitting in right now? On a scale of 1 to 10, how hard would it be to jump up and touch the ceiling? See? Using improv in Numenera game mechanics is no harder than that.

## USING LOGIC TO GUIDE YOU

Logic is your friend. Make things logical when you create them, and you'll always do well. Things should generally operate the way it seems like they should. Water flows downhill. Animals flee when frightened. Stone walls are more durable than wooden walls. People don't like it when you start murdering in the middle of their town. And so on. The only time you should go against logic is when you're trying to make things weird. Any of the previous statements turning out to be untrue would be weird. (And weird is good in Numenera, but most things should not be weird.)

Don't let game concerns trump logic. Particularly in a game like Numenera, don't worry about "breaking the game" or some such. If it's logical that the wealthy NPC whose house the PCs just broke into would have lots of valuables to snatch, then he does. It's probably also logical that he's got a guard, an alarm, or the like.

The scenarios in this book assume that the GM will use logic, so most of the time, they don't provide those kinds of details. If the PCs go into a cave, it's likely dark and damp and has uneven surfaces. If they go into a tavern, it will have tables, chairs, a bartender, and plenty of drinks. Facts like these are rarely given in the descriptions in *Weird Discoveries*.

## FLESHING OUT THE DETAILS

The devil is in the details, of course. The players want to know how big the town square is, what the water in the pool tastes like, or what happens when they try to activate the crystalline device while holding it upside down.

If you're not sure of a detail, don't flip through the book looking for the answer—come up with it on your own. For example, in *Beneath the Pyramid*, the PCs find the severed leg of a biomechanical beast and use it as a sort of tracking device to lead them to the creature. Does the leg give pulses when pointed in the right direction? Does it move and point in the direction of the beast? Does it send mental images of a direction and distance to anyone who holds it? That's up to you. Go with whatever seems most appropriate or most interesting. It's the kind of detail that any GM can come up with on her own, and by not writing a long paragraph describing how it works (text that the GM needs to read, absorb, remember, and likely later reference), we can make the adventure easier and faster to run.

We've got your back. If there is a detail you need some help with, we'll provide it. But if it isn't provided, make it up! We'll give you a solid framework, but it's the GM who builds the facade that goes over it—the thing that people see and admire. We'll make you look good.

*Sometimes the best adventures are simple ones. A lot of clutter and background get lost without the players ever really discovering or remembering it. Sometimes a good adventure is just starting at Point A, a good reason to get to Point B, and a handful of interesting things that occur on the way.*

## DEVELOPING LOCATIONS

You're in charge of what places look like. If you want the leaves of the trees to be orange, they're orange. Liven up any and all scenarios with weird descriptions as the mood strikes you. A weird tentacled bird in the tree will surprise and delight the players, even if it has no impact on the scenario.

If there are no details about a house or another inhabited place, use logic. A

hermit's cabin isn't going to be bare—he lives there and probably has for years. He'll have food, tools, and some useful equipment like rope or a glowglobe. Never worry about access to mundane items unless it's somehow important to the scenario to do so. The PCs might think of getting a glowglobe as “treasure,” but that doesn't mean you have to manage it.

At the same time, don't worry about describing everything in a location. Allow the players to do some of that for you. Let them say, “I could use more rope. Did the old hermit have some lying around?” If it seems logical, say, “Yeah, he has some stashed with some tools under the bed.”

## USING THE KEYS



The biggest difference between running the scenarios in *Weird Discoveries* and running typical published adventures is that you need to manage when and where the keys show up. A key might be an object, a person, or a bit of information. Regardless, the GM determines when it shows up in the scenario rather than letting the scenario make that decision.

Another way to look at it: the players and the GM working together to create a story is what determines when a key makes its appearance.

There are two kinds of keys: those that are probably necessary for the completion of the scenario, and those that just make things more interesting.

**Keys that are probably necessary.** If the PCs need a device to open a way into the black pyramid in the first scenario (*Beneath the Pyramid*), that device is one of the keys. Since the device is crucial to the forward motion of the session, the GM should pace things so the characters at least have a chance to find it. However, the GM might decide that the device shouldn't show up too soon, for fear that the session will end too quickly. This is her prerogative and is up to her sense of pacing. Some GMs, for example, might want to reward smart play by enabling the PCs to reach their goal early, pacing be damned.

**Keys that just make things more interesting.** These keys are almost their own kind of GM intrusion. Such a key might be a device that causes harm or makes things more complicated. It might be something that helps the PCs (perhaps undoing a key that inflicts harm or complication) but isn't directly related to reaching a successful end of the scenario.

These keys are not crucial, but they make things more fun. What's more, they inject drama into the metagame. If the PCs find a strange-looking device, they shouldn't know automatically that it's directly related to the plot. Maybe it's just a strange device. Worse, maybe it's dangerous. They've got to look at it closely to figure out which.

## DEVELOPING PEOPLE AND CREATURES

Do the same thing with NPCs that you do with places. Maybe you have nothing more than a name, a level, and a few small details for an NPC, but once she's on stage, so to speak, and in the game, she's a person and you've got to portray her as such. That's easy (and often unimportant) if she's a cobbler in the village, but it's more challenging if she joins the PCs on their mission and stays with them throughout a whole session or more. Now you have to delve a bit deeper and give her a personality. Likes and dislikes. Goals and motivations. (If you know an NPC's goals, you always know how she'll react in a given situation. That's why Numenera creature stats include motive.) You should also give a little more thought to what she looks like, what she's wearing, and what she's carrying with her.

The same is true of creatures. You might know how a beast acts in battle, but occasionally throw in a random detail like how it smells, that it has a huge scar over its eye, or something similar. This affects nothing, but it makes things more interesting.

The place you can get tripped up is when the PCs interact with a person or creature in a way you weren't expecting. They might talk to the ravenous beast and try to calm it, suddenly threaten the mayor of the village, or sneak around the guards rather than fight them. You've got to use logic to figure out what the creature or NPC will do. How will it



react? What will it do afterward? This is your opportunity as the GM to do some honest-to-goodness roleplaying. Put yourself in the NPC's place and decide what it would do, just as you would if you were playing it as a character in the game—because you are.

## WHEN IT TURNS VIOLENT

You never know when an encounter might become a combat encounter. Sometimes, all you know about an NPC is the level. Always feel free to assume that an NPC is equipped logically. If she is in a location or a situation where danger is likely, she's probably wearing armor (usually Armor 1). Lots of people, not just warriors, can produce some sort of weapon in a fight by pulling a knife from a boot or grabbing a heavy candlestick from a table. Remember, it doesn't matter what weapon is used, even if it's just a punch or a kick—NPCs inflict damage equal to their level unless described otherwise.

## THE FORMAT OF THESE SCENARIOS

The scenarios in *Weird Discoveries* are designed to be easy to use and easy to grasp with just a quick skim. Each starts out with a brief summary and a few paragraphs that add more detail. Then the most important salient points are called out again, this time in a bulleted list to help you remember them (and to help you reference them later). *You must read all of this and absorb it before play starts.* Fortunately, these sections are short and written for easy comprehension and retention.

Next, you'll find a section that details the keys involved in the scenario. The book's introduction explains how keys work.

Before play begins, you must have a good idea of what the keys are, but you don't need to know how they'll show up. In fact, that's the point. Where the keys are located and when they come into play are decided by the flow of the session.

After the keys, all you have to look at are the Starting Point and Wrap-Up sections, which are pretty self-explanatory.

All encounters that the PCs will experience in the session are found on a two-page spread, organized in a map or chart (which

can be followed just like a map). The encounters are designed to be short and easy enough to skim through before play starts.

- Some of the encounters have symbols designating that one or more of the keys *might* be present.
- Some of the encounters have predesigned GM intrusions, which are always optional.

After that essential spread (the meat of the scenario), you'll find a section called More Details. If you've got time, reading this will help flesh out the details—the places, the people, and so on. But nothing in this section is crucial. The scenario works fine without it.

Finally, each scenario ends with notes for GMs who want to incorporate it into an ongoing campaign or place it specifically in the Ninth World. You'll also find ideas for further development if you want to keep things going after the adventure is done. This includes awarding experience points (XP) for discoveries and actions. *None of this needs to be read ahead of time.* Don't even bother with any of it until the session is over.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

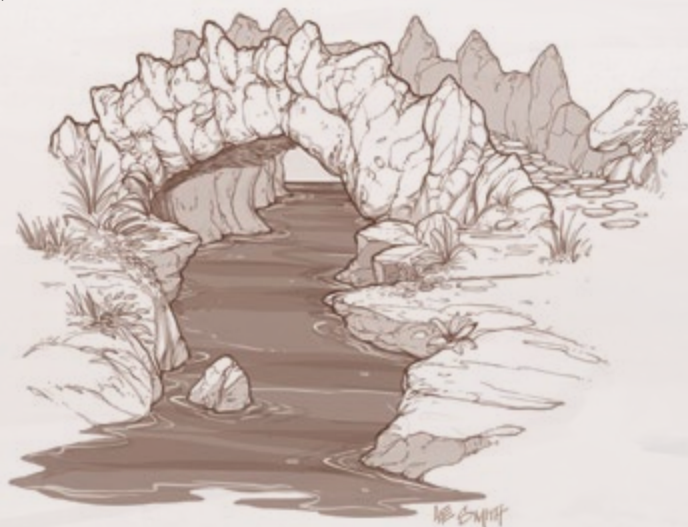
I know you. You're a GM who doesn't necessarily want to use these adventures as impromptu game mastering opportunities. You're going to sit down and read this entire book ahead of time. You're going to prepare for these low-prep scenarios.

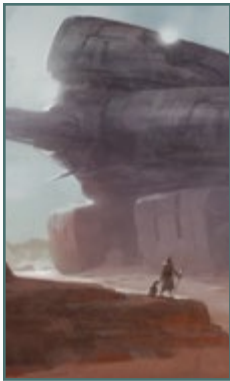
That's okay. It's your book. Use it however you want.

GM Intrusion,  
page 108

*The best way to prepare for when the PCs don't do what you expect? Don't build expectations ahead of time about what they'll do. Don't prepare for them to do one particular thing because then you're not caught by surprise when they do something else. Keep yourself open.*

*This book is divided into ten "scenarios." You will also read the term "session" many times. In this case, the two terms are synonymous. The idea is that each scenario is the equivalent of one four- to five-hour game session for three to five players.*





# CYPHER LIST

*The following 36 cyphers are ready to use to facilitate running the scenarios in this book, alleviating prep time and cutting down on the need to reference books during a session. Use them when you are in need of a “random” cypher.*



Cypher, page 278

**Level 7 occultic device that can be attached to a glove or gauntlet.** One unanchored item your size or smaller within long range is drawn immediately to the device. This takes one round. The item has no momentum when it arrives.

**Level 4 anoetic pill.** Grants the ability to see in the dark for eight hours.

**Level 3 occultic crystal.** Tapping into the datasphere's knowledge, the user can learn the answer to one question.

**Level 5 anoetic sphere with a single switch.** Can be thrown a short distance. Explodes in an immediate radius, increasing the pull of gravity in the area for ten minutes. The difficulty of all physical actions attempted in the area is increased by two steps. Moving through (or out of) the area is the equivalent of moving a long distance.

**Level 6 anoetic cylinder that projects one egg-shaped device up to a long distance.** Explodes in an immediate radius, spraying acid that inflicts 6 points of damage.



**Level 5 anoetic device that can be strapped to one's wrist.** Emits a beam of energy up to a long distance, inflicting 5 points of damage from the heat. All creatures within immediate range of the target suffer 1 point of damage as well.

**Level 4 anoetic adhesive patch that activates when slapped on flesh.** Immediately restores 4 points to the target's Speed Pool.

**Level 6 anoetic pair of crystals.** When the device is activated, any sound produced near one crystal is emitted by the other. Range is unlimited, and the crystals remain active for 28 hours.

**Level 3 anoetic thick liquid that can easily be applied to a blade or needle.** Anyone affected by this poison has his vision inverted; for ten minutes, all he can see is the inside of his own eyes and optic nerves (effectively, he is blind).

**Level 6 occultic rod with some switches.** When activated, the user learns the surface thoughts of all creatures within immediate range. The effect lasts for one round.

**Level 2 anoetic circular device that can be affixed to a chain and worn like a medallion.** Puts the user out of phase for one minute. During this time, the user can pass through solid objects as though she were insubstantial, like a ghost. She cannot make physical attacks or be physically attacked.

**Level 4 anoetic canister.** Three rounds after activation, it begins to sense movement within immediate range. If it detects motion, it explodes with flame in an immediate radius for 6 points of damage.



**Level 3 anoetic slimy paste in a tube.** Once released, this organic slime dissolves 1 cubic foot of material each round for three rounds.

**Level 4 anoetic nanites in a solution in an injector.** A creature injected is trained in persuasion for the next 28 hours.

**Level 5 anoetic handheld device.** Produces a force field that is up to 20 feet wide and 20 feet tall (6 m by 6 m). Anyone touching the wall is instantly teleported backward 15 feet (5 m).

**Level 4 occultic intelligent missile.** User chooses a target within sight, and the missile tracks and attacks that target. If it misses, it continues to attack until it hits or it misses four times. If it hits, it injects a poison that puts the victim in a coma for one minute. After waking, the victim remembers nothing about the previous 28 hours.

**Level 6 anoetic set of tubes.** Sprays a stream of liquid up to a short distance. Where it impacts, it forms a cloud of mist in an immediate radius. All creatures in the cloud drop what they are holding and become horribly sad for one minute, during which the difficulty of all actions is increased by two steps.

**Level 5 anoetic device that can be affixed to a belt.** For one hour, the user can float into the air, moving vertically (but not horizontally without taking some other action, such as pushing along the ceiling) up to a short distance per round. The user must weigh less than 250 pounds (113 kg).

**Level 3 anoetic liquid in an injector.** If a creature is injected, the difficulty of its next action is decreased by three steps.

**Level 3 anoetic needle that can be inserted into flesh.** While inserted, it creates a shimmering energy shield around the user for one hour, during which time he gains +3 to Armor.

**Level 2 anoetic sphere.** Can be thrown a short distance. Explodes in an immediate radius, spraying foam that extinguishes flame (and smells very bad).

**Level 3 occultic handheld device.** When the user speaks into the device, her words are translated into all languages understood by everyone within immediate range, with the audio of each translation aimed at the appropriate listeners. Functions for four hours.

**Level 5 anoetic powder in a tube.** Mixed with water, this powder instantly hardens into a rocklike material. Can cover an area up to 15 feet by 15 feet (5 m by 5 m).

**Level 6 anoetic crystal that can be affixed to a melee weapon.** For the next 28 hours, each time the weapon strikes a solid creature or object, the attached crystal generates a burst of energy that teleports the creature or object an immediate distance in a random direction (not up or down). The difficulty of the teleported creature's actions (including defense) is modified by one step to its detriment on its next turn.

**Level 7 anoetic liquid in a tube.** Immediately restores 7 points to the drinker's Might Pool.

**Level 6 anoetic rod with a crystal tip.** Target touched by the tip falls asleep for ten minutes or until awoken by a violent action or an extremely loud noise.

**Level 5 anoetic handheld device.** User can teleport up to a long distance away and, if desired, bring one other creature of the same size.

**Level 3 anoetic liquid in an injector.** If a creature is injected, it gains +1 to its Speed Edge for one hour.

**Level 2 anoetic crystal.** Once the device is touched to a creature or object, for the next 28 hours, the holder of the crystal knows the distance and direction to the creature or object, as long as it is in the same dimension.

**Level 4 anoetic metal mesh vest.** Once activated, the vest keeps the wearer at a comfortable temperature for 28 hours. During this time, the wearer gains +4 to Armor against cold or heat damage.

**Level 3 anoetic bracelet.** Projects holographic images of the wearer to confuse attackers. The images appear around the wearer, giving her an asset to Speed defense actions for ten minutes.

**Level 2 anoetic liquid in a tube.** Hardens and toughens the drinker's flesh for one hour, granting +1 to Armor.

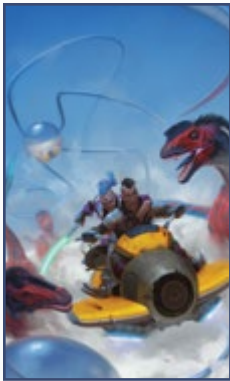
**Level 3 anoetic square of thin synth that can be wrapped around a human like a cloak.** When activated, the fabric takes on the colors and textures of everything around the wearer for ten minutes. This effect reduces the difficulty of hiding or sneaking by two steps.

**Level 4 anoetic small synth cube.** When activated by pressing one side, the cube emits a burst of energy in short range. All poisons, food and water contaminants, and dangerous viral organisms in the area are immediately eliminated.

**Level 6 anoetic handheld device.** Fires a beam at three different targets within long range at the same time. Affected targets cower in fear, losing all actions, for two rounds.

**Level 5 anoetic ring with a crystal.** Allows the user to project a ray of raw force up to 200 feet (61 m) that inflicts 5 points of damage from the impact.





*Codun can be located anywhere near a desert or wilderness area.*

*All rukomol racers are very small in stature. Two racers ride each beast, one steering the head and one prodding the back to get the creature to run faster.*

# BENEATH THE PYRAMID

## BRIEF SUMMARY

Valuable creatures are stolen away by a mysterious mist, and the PCs investigate a ruined city beneath an ancient floating pyramid in hopes of retrieving them.

## DETAILS

East of the town of Codun lies a racetrack a half mile around. Here, locals race 14-foot (4 m) biomechanical insects called rukomol. The PCs happen into town and spend some time at the races. They get to know the most prestigious racer, a man named Uolis, and share in his celebratory

dinner. That night, however, the rukomol belonging to Uolis and two others mysteriously disappear when a thick blue mist rolls in. Uolis begs the PCs to help find his prized mount.

A little investigation reveals the severed leg of one of the missing creatures in the caves used as stables near the racetrack. Further, it acts as a sort of sensor, indicating which direction to travel to find the rukomol it belonged to.

The PCs can follow this biomechanical divining rod to a ruined city of stone beneath a glistening black pyramid from the





prior worlds. The pyramid floats 80 feet (24 m) above the ground, and the 100-year-old abandoned city lies directly beneath it. This is called the City in Shadow. In the ruins, the PCs must discover a way to reach and enter the pyramid, for that is where they will find the stolen beasts, the device that created the mist, and the perpetrator.

Jiale is an odd numenera expert who explored the black pyramid with two bodyguard companions. When he found the device that created the blue mist, he sent it out to retrieve mechanical parts he needed to repair one of his cyphers. About ten hours before the PCs arrived in Codun, the mist reappeared in the pyramid with three rukomol. Jiale turned his attentions elsewhere in the pyramid, assuming the blue mist retrieval system to be faulty. It isn't. As biomechanical creatures, the rukomol do have the components he needs, but he doesn't realize it.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Codun's racetrack and the rukomol stables (found in a series of caves) are east of the town.
- Uolis is one of the premier rukomol racers.
- The leg of one of the biomechanical creatures was severed in the mist, and it can lead the PCs to the missing rukomol.
- The city beneath the pyramid is abandoned, but of human construction. The pyramid is from the prior worlds.
- The PCs need to get inside the pyramid.
- Very likely, the PCs can't get inside the pyramid without the right key.
- The blue mist is part of a numenera system in the pyramid for retrieving mechanical parts at a distance.
- An explorer named Jiale used the blue mist to capture the rukomol, but it was essentially an accident.

## STARTING POINT

Reveal *Show 'Em A* to the players.

Traveling two days from Codun, the PCs see the black pyramid nestled in a break in a stony ridgeline. As they get closer, it becomes clear that a ruined city of stone walls and towers lies beneath the pyramid.

The city was built by Ninth Worlders precisely in the shadow of the pyramid when the sun is directly overhead, leaving most of it perpetually dark. Why they did this, and why they later abandoned it, is unclear. The city has three entrances: on the west, on the north, and on the south. The PCs can use whichever they wish.

## THE WRAP-UP

Inside the pyramid, the room next to the entrance (the one Jiale and his companions now occupy) has a level 6 device that creates the blue mist. It can also return the components (the rukomol) to the place where it found them. The rukomol are in the chamber and are generally unhappy and confused. Getting them out of the pyramid and back to Codun conventionally will involve a lot of beast handling and careful planning on the PCs' part.

*Show 'Em A*, page 72

*Describe the ruined city like a maze of interconnected buildings, all without roofs.*

**Rukomol:** level 3; health 18; Armor 2; long movement

## KEYS

This scenario has two keys. Both are likely devices found in the City in Shadow.

◆ Something that moves a character up to the floating pyramid. This is a psychokinetic effect, and after its main use, the key functions as a level 3 artifact that can move a human-sized object or creature a short distance if it is within long range. It has a depletion of 1 in 10.

▲ Something that allows access to the interior of the pyramid. This probably just opens a door on the underside of the structure.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.

## CODUN

The town has a population of 10,000 and lies at the edge of a desert.

The blue mist that steals away the rukomol comes at night. The journey to the City in Shadow takes about fourteen hours of travel—the better part of two days.

**GM Intrusion:** A group of eight margr ambushes the PCs while they travel through the desert.

## CORPSES

Three dead humans lie decaying in the ruins. They have been dead for a few days and are infested with maggots and other carrion eaters. In addition to standard gear and weapons (including three explorer's packs), the PCs can find a device or a clue to the location of a device that serves as either one of the KEYS. The corpses also have 11 shins and a random oddity.

## THE MAD WOMAN

Lyra (level 4) lives in the otherwise abandoned city, sustaining herself with rats. She rants and raves but is surprisingly hardy and capable. However, she might have a device or know of one in the city that serves as either one of the KEYS. Getting that information out of her is a difficulty 6 task and certainly can't be done quickly.

Lyra has a dart thrower, four darts poisoned with level 4 poison (4 points of Speed damage that ignore Armor), and two random oddities.

## ENTRANCE

The PCs can enter the abandoned city from any of these locations. From the entrance, they can see two towers near the center of the city that reach halfway up to the pyramid.

## THE REPTILIAN BEAST

Scaly and red, this 12-foot-long (4 m) carnivorous lizard (level 5; Armor 2) eats anything it comes upon. If the reptilian beast has the KEY, it is a crystal that seems embedded in its head. While the beast is alive, the crystal gives it telekinetic powers, which manifest in two ways:

- Any physical ranged attack made against the beast is redirected back at the attacker.
- The beast can pull or push one creature or object of human size or smaller a short distance, as an action.

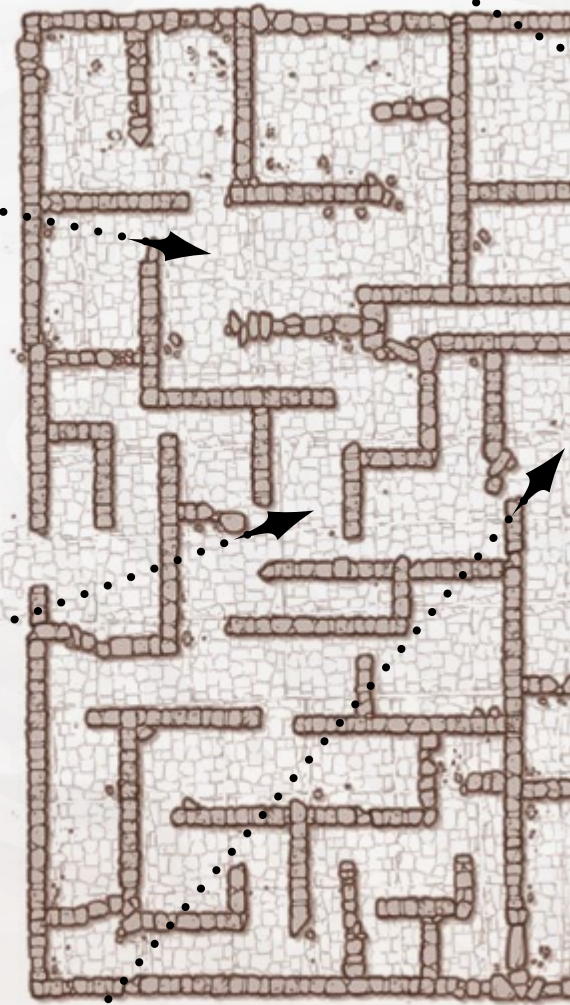
**GM Intrusion:** The fight with the beast causes a section of wall to collapse, trapping the character beneath it.

## THE SHINY CYLINDER

This metal cylinder is 14 feet high and 3 feet across (4 m by 1 m). It is filled with an array of numenera components, but its overall function is a mystery. It can be opened through force or finesse, but doing so is a level 4 task. Either of the KEYS might be inside, along with 20 shins.

**GM Intrusion:** Opening the cylinder triggers an accidental discharge of energy that forces an Intellect defense roll (difficulty 4). Failure means that the opener sustains 3 points of Intellect damage, sits down on the ground, and takes no action other than to count quietly until those 3 points are somehow restored.

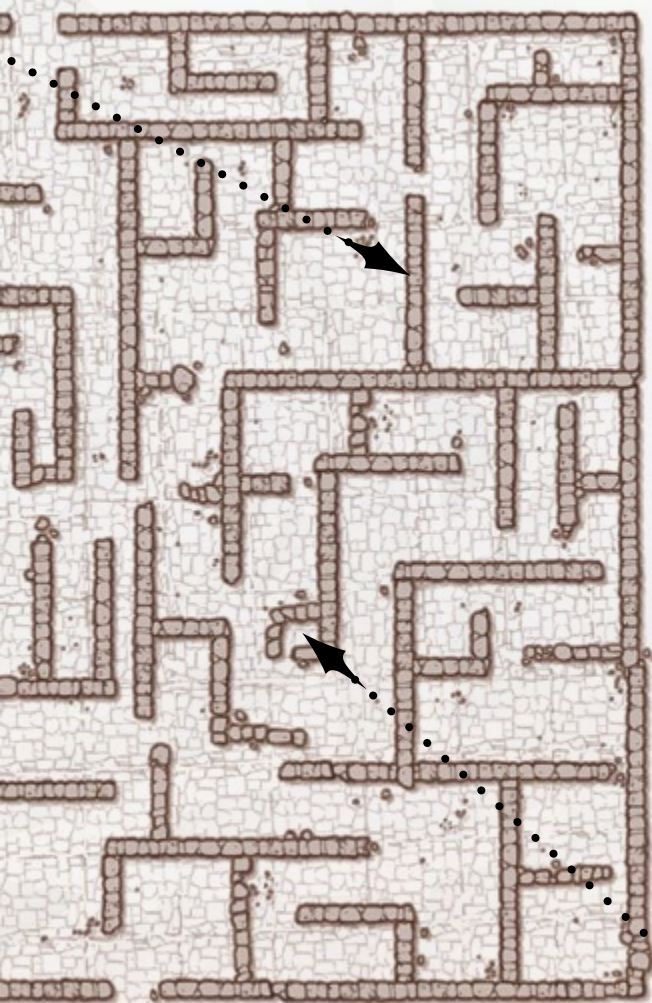
# The City in Shadow



## ENTRANCE

The PCs can enter the abandoned city from any of these locations. From the entrance, they can see two towers near the center of the city that reach halfway up to the pyramid.

100 Feet  
30 m



## ENTRANCE

The PCs can enter the abandoned city from any of these locations. From the entrance, they can see two towers near the center of the city that reach halfway up to the pyramid.

## INSIDE THE PYRAMID

The pyramid is 80 feet (24 m) above the ground.

The interior chamber the PCs gain access to is lit. It's a cube approximately 50 feet (15 m) to a side, filled with numenera control panels, banks of machinery, and walls of mysterious devices. Metallic tentacles hang from the ceiling and wave around, grasping at the air menacingly. Wreckage and metal debris cover the floor.

Jiale and his companions are here, and they likely attack anyone who intrudes out of fear that thieves have come to steal their treasures. Explaining to Jiale that all the PCs want is the rukomol might convince him to negotiate, but the difficulty is increased by one step because he is selfish and paranoid, and he has an odd way of looking at things.

Reveal *Show 'Em B* (page 72) to the players.

The metal arms (level 3) increase the difficulty of all actions in the room by one step for all involved. This means that while attacking is harder, so is defending, so those actions are not affected overall. Any character can choose to ignore the arms and undertake an action normally (effectively decreasing the difficulty of attack and defense rolls for that round, assuming the opponent is still worried about the arms). However, anyone who does so must make a Speed defense roll or be struck for 3 points of damage and held in place, unable to act unless he uses a Might-based action to break free.

Dealing with all the metal arms at once (finding the controls to shut them down, for example) is a level 6 task.

**Jiale** (level 5; Armor 2) is a nano who can project blasts of energy up to long range that inflict 5 points of damage and turn the target's skin blue. The color fades after a few days. He acts as the leader of his group and constantly issues commands to his companions.

**Cheale** (level 3; Armor 3) is a straightforward warrior who never does as Jiale commands. Instead, she always attacks a different target, uses a different strategy, and so on.

**Derroch** (level 4; Armor 1) rarely speaks. He has a "sword" that is actually a stiff metal wire that produces an aura of energy around it. It is a level 4 artifact, functions as a medium weapon that inflicts 6 points of damage, and has a depletion of —.

**Loot:** Each NPC has an explorer's pack, 12 shins, and two random cyphers they scavenged from the pyramid.

## THE DEACTIVATED AUTOMATON

The automaton is at the top of one of the two 40-foot (12 m) towers in the city. Any stairs have long since collapsed, so getting to the top requires other means.

The automaton looks like a metal sphere about 10 inches (25 cm) across with many small holes and nodules. Activating the automaton is a level 6 task. Once reactivated, it produces many spidery limbs and skitters about. If it is the KEY, opening the pyramid is its only function, and it will do so assuming it understands the command. Otherwise, the automaton seems to have no function other than to skitter about and be annoying.

**GM Intrusion:** Reactivating the automaton requires a power source—the sacrifice of a cypher or an artifact hooked up to it (a level 4 task).

*If you have time, read "More Details" on page 16 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### IN CODUN

If desired, you can start the scenario in Codun and play through the race, including gambling, interactions with the locals, and the excitement of a close race. Determine the winner of the race (and the outcome of the bets) however you wish—randomly or through use of narration.

**Uolis:** *level 2, rukomol handling as level 4*

**Tallek:** *level 3, rukomol handling as level 4*

**Hiathyn:** *level 2, Intellect-based tasks as level 4; health 2*

**Ghordra:** *level 5, interaction and perception as level 6; health 20; Armor 3*

Uolis is slight and getting on in years. His partner is Tallek, a much younger but equally small man. Uolis is wealthy from all his success and generous to a fault. If need be, he offers each PC 15 shins to recover his rukomol. Tallek is less likely to trust the PCs but does whatever Uolis instructs, including accompanying the PCs if they request it.

The leader of Codun is a woman named Hiathyn. She is old and gets around town with the help of two burly servants who essentially carry her.

The constable is Ghordra, a tall, muscular woman with long, straight hair, armor made from some kind of insect carapace, and an axe that hovers in the air when she pushes

a stud on the handle. Ghordra very likely suspects that the PCs are involved with the blue mist, as she doesn't trust strangers.

### ON THE ROAD

The trip to the pyramid and the City in Shadow beneath it might be relatively uneventful, but GMs can add an encounter with dangerous creatures, weather, or another traveler, as desired. In general, it's warm and dry during the day and cool and dry at night. The region is filled with biting insects, and nameless creatures that look like winged grouper fish feed on the insects in the air.

### IN THE CITY IN SHADOW

None of the buildings have roofs. Most of the structures are single story, although two towers rise up 40 feet (12 m) near the center of town. Navigating is like moving through a labyrinth, although climbing the walls isn't too difficult (a level 3 task).

There's an eternal chill in all parts of the city except the very edges during sunup or sundown. Tiny reptiles scurry about the edges of the city, but at its heart, it is





lifeless. Here and there, explorers find the remains of rotting wooden furnishings or old sculptures.

### IN THE PYRAMID

Jiale and his companions have only just begun to explore the pyramid and probably used the same entrance the PCs did. They are a nefarious group, and Jiale is a little mad. Even if the PCs talk to them rather than engage in violence, these three likely try to bully, betray, trick, or steal from anyone they come across.

The interior of the pyramid is sprawling and weird, a maze of machinery and mysterious technology—much of it still active, but some quite ruined. The two chambers in this scenario are just the beginning. More can be found in *Inside the Pyramid* (page 18).

### USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

In an ongoing campaign, the GM could take more time to create a friendship between the PCs and Uolis (and Tallek). This might occur as the PCs take part in other, unrelated explorations around Codun or perhaps guard Uolis after a racing rival makes threats against his life. The idea is to make the disappearance of his beloved rukomol so powerful that the PCs take on the recovery mission of their own initiative.

Codun could become a centerpiece to an ongoing campaign, with the PCs returning to relax and enjoy the races from time to time. One way to accomplish this is to have Uolis be so grateful for the safe return of his rukomol that he buys the PCs a house in town.

### PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

Codun and the City in Shadow can be located wherever the GM needs them. But in the absence of other constraints, Codun lies near the center of the southern border of the Pytharon Empire, and the City in



Shadow lies to the south, within Matheunis. This is a cold desert, with rocky, windswept terrain.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering the rukomol (and returning them), and 2 XP for discovering the machine that creates the blue mist.

There are two ways to succeed at the mission. The PCs can use the device in the pyramid to return the rukomol to Codun, or they can get the beasts out of the pyramid physically and lead them back to town overland.

Further exploration of the pyramid is possible and in fact is the subject of the scenario *Inside the Pyramid* (page 18). After the PCs return to Codun, if the people learn some of what they found, Ghordra may wish to mount another expedition to the City in Shadow. If the PCs are willing, she and three other villagers go with them to explore the area further. The GM can introduce a new set of interesting encounters there, perhaps with more details about the inhabitants of the city, why they built it, and why they left. It is possible to dig around and find information about such topics, but the nature of the far older pyramid should remain mysterious.

Matheunis,  
page 208

Pytharon Empire,  
page 161



# INSIDE THE PYRAMID

## BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs explore the interior of an ancient complex looking for valuables and a safe exit.

## DETAILS

This scenario can be used on its own or as a continuation of *Beneath the Pyramid*. If it's used on its own, the PCs discover an ancient pyramid of some black substance that floats 80 feet (24 m) in the air. By activating a numenera mechanism beneath it, the characters are teleported into the pyramid. Now they must find their way out, perhaps discovering some valuables along the way.

If the scenario is used as a continuation of *Beneath the Pyramid*, assume that the entrance the PCs used to get in seals shut and can't be easily opened.

The encounters within the pyramid are strange, involving all kinds of interactions with the numenera. Prevalent throughout the pyramid is the **living conduit**—a sort of energy flow that runs through many locations within the structure via a network of transparent tubes. It is a living creature and likely the greatest danger that the PCs will face in the pyramid.

Every time the PCs enter a chamber that contains the living conduit, it attempts to call to one of them telepathically. It has a soothing, charming mental voice and tries to convince them to stand near one of the tube system's many special valves. It then instructs them how to open the valve. If they do, the creature exits momentarily and attacks. Energy tendrils grip at one or both of the character's eyes and try to tear them

out. A Speed defense roll is required to resist for each eye, and characters move one step down the damage track per eye lost. The living conduit then feeds on the eye(s) it takes.

Once this happens, the creature attempts to convince the characters to betray one another and force their comrades to open a valve.

It's important to remember that this isn't mind control. It's an interaction. The living conduit will attempt to negotiate and even bribe the PCs to do what it wants, and it knows everything there is to know about the interior of the pyramid. Thus, perhaps a character could get information from the being, but it is difficult to trick.

After a while, particularly if it's being rejected, the living conduit will begin to use threats rather than bribes and sweet talk. It can solidify or shatter time around a single creature. Solidified time effectively freezes the character (in stasis, unable to act or be affected by anything), and shattered time makes the character disappear from reality. These effects last about as long as the PCs have been in the pyramid on their current visit, so the longer they stay, the stronger its potential hold on them.

## SALIENT POINTS:

- The PCs are in the pyramid and don't have a clear exit.
- The exit lies beyond a sealed door, which requires a specific key to open.
- The living conduit is living energy, intelligent and telepathic.
- The living conduit constantly tries to convince one of the PCs to open a valve,

**Living conduit:** level 5, resists trickery and lies as level 7; immune to physical attacks; as an action, freeze or temporarily annihilate one creature that fails a Speed defense roll

*Being trapped inside the pyramid is not crucial to the scenario. If the PCs have their own way out (teleporting, phasing, or cutting their way free, for example), that's fine. The point is to explore and discover things within the strange, ancient structure.*



from which it attacks and feeds on the character's eyes.

- The living conduit can freeze characters or make them disappear.

### STARTING POINT

If this scenario follows *Beneath the Pyramid*, the starting point is the chamber of the blue mist machine.

If this scenario does not follow *Beneath the Pyramid*, the PCs have just entered the pyramid. They stand within a large, empty

chamber that is a cube approximately 50 feet (15 m) to a side. A bit of debris lies on the floor. All surfaces are metal, and control panels, consoles, and unidentifiable machinery is everywhere.

### THE WRAP-UP

Whenever the PCs get out, they are likely done with the scenario. However, if they want to go back in for more exploration, there's little stopping them.

#### Ultraterrestrial creature:

*level 4, Speed defense as level 5; health 18; burning touch inflicts 2 points of Might damage and 2 points of Intellect damage because its existence is fundamentally incompatible with creatures of this physical or mental state of being*



### KEYS

This scenario has four keys, all of which are likely weird devices in the pyramid.

- ◆ Something that opens the sealed door. Most likely, this is a device that simply needs to be touched to the door.
- ▲ Something that grafts onto a character and begins burrowing into her flesh. This is likely something that appears to be an inorganic device but then reveals itself to be organic as it latches on. It inflicts 4 points of damage initially and then 1 point of damage per minute (ignores Armor). If the KEY sustains more than 4 points of damage from energy attacks, it grows dormant for one hour. If the character dies, the graft infuses her with a new consciousness and personality that uses her body to flee and perform mysterious and likely incomprehensible tasks.
- Something that can remove the graft. This is likely an object that produces a shock or a liquid that forces the graft to disengage and flee.
- ✦ Something that turns into or releases a fast-moving, amorphous **ultraterrestrial creature** almost twice the size of a human that attacks the PCs. If the creature is defeated, the leftover device is an artifact that creates an extradimensional pocket space that can store one creature or object at a time, in stasis. The creature or object to be stored must be touched and be no larger than about two humans together. If something is already stored in the pocket space when a new creature or object is touched, the original appears next to the artifact. It has a depletion of 1 in 1d100.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.

## STUTTERING DEVICE

Projecting from the wall, a set of spindly mechanisms pulses with jolts of energy that arc from one spindle to the next, stop, and start again intermittently. The KEY is an object that is currently a component of the mechanisms and must be removed (a level 6 task). A failed attempt to remove the KEY indicates that those working at it are jolted with energy and take 4 points of damage. Further, they become fused to the floor and whatever they're touching (including their gear), having been molecularly bonded to it. This effect is removed when a victim suffers at least 1 point of damage from another energy source.

**Loot:** There are 20 shins and two cyphers to be scavenged here.

## WARPING BUBBLES

A metal cylinder 3 feet (1 m) tall floats in midair here. It produces a bubble at the top made of an amorphous substance that inflates and deflates as though it is breathing. If the bubble is touched at all, it pops, creating a spatial warp that takes the cylinder and all within immediate distance to an empty chamber in the pyramid. The machine is otherwise level 5.

If the KEY is here, it is a glowing crystal cube within the cylinder.

## ENTANGLED MACHINE

A cylindrical automaton (level 2) with seven spindly limbs struggles here, wrapped in cables and wires and half buried in debris. If freed (a level 4 task), it immediately trundles off to the Stuttering Device and then rests quietly.

Beneath the debris is a small black pyramid of the same material and proportions as the main pyramid. If one of the KEYS is here, it is this pyramid.

## ENERGY POOL

A circular pool of liquid, 18 feet (5 m) across and surrounded by a small lip, is highly infused with some kind of energy. Anyone who touches the liquid takes 4 points of damage. However, immersing a depowered machine in the pool, including a used cypher of an appropriate type, recharges the device. This works only four times in a given 28-hour period. If the KEY is here, it is an object from another area that must be immersed in the pool to perform its needed function.

**GM Intrusion:** The device placed in the pool overloads and explodes, destroying the device and inflicting 3 points of damage to the character.

## MOSTLY EMPTY CHAMBER

This chamber offers little of interest other than a green synth cube amid the debris, which may be one of the KEYS.

**GM Intrusion:** If the explorers pass through this chamber a second time, a panel in the ceiling opens and a sphere (level 3) drops out. The sphere is 4 feet (1 m) across, transparent, and filled with thick, dark fluid. The character must make a Speed defense roll to avoid being struck for 3 points of damage and knocked prone. There are things moving around in the fluid, and if anyone speaks to the sphere or the creatures inside, the sphere disappears, and the fluid and creatures spill out. The creatures are four steel spiders that are actually automatons. If released from the sphere, they attack and fight to the death.

*Steel spider,  
page 260*

## TELEPORT PLATFORM

Reveal *Show 'Em D* (page 73) to the players.

Suspended by chains, a circular platform of blue glass hangs 8 feet (2 m) off the floor. Symbols of light flash on the floor, and the characters receive a telepathic notice that says the symbols mean “choose your destination.” The platform (level 8) can transport everything on it *anywhere* if that location is known to someone on the platform, but the first person who thinks of a location makes the choice for everyone else on the platform as well.



## THE NADRALIX

Floating in a beam of light, an impossible cube about 10 inches (25 cm) to a side slowly spins in the air. The cube has nine sides and seven corners. Staring at it shakes the sanity of three-dimensional minds, so characters must make Intellect defense rolls or suffer 5 points of Intellect damage. Success means that the character gains some kind of fundamental insight of the GM's choosing. Only one insight is gained, however.

If the KEY is here, it is an abstract concept that, once entered into a human mind, produces the resultant effect and even the resultant object, if applicable.

**GM Intrusion:** The character's mind is so overwhelmed that she has a psychic break and develops a new weird quirk, phobia, obsession, or the like. For example, a character might fear words that begin with the letter L, need to count the number of birds in the sky every noon, or feel the need to wash her hands whenever she smells cloves.

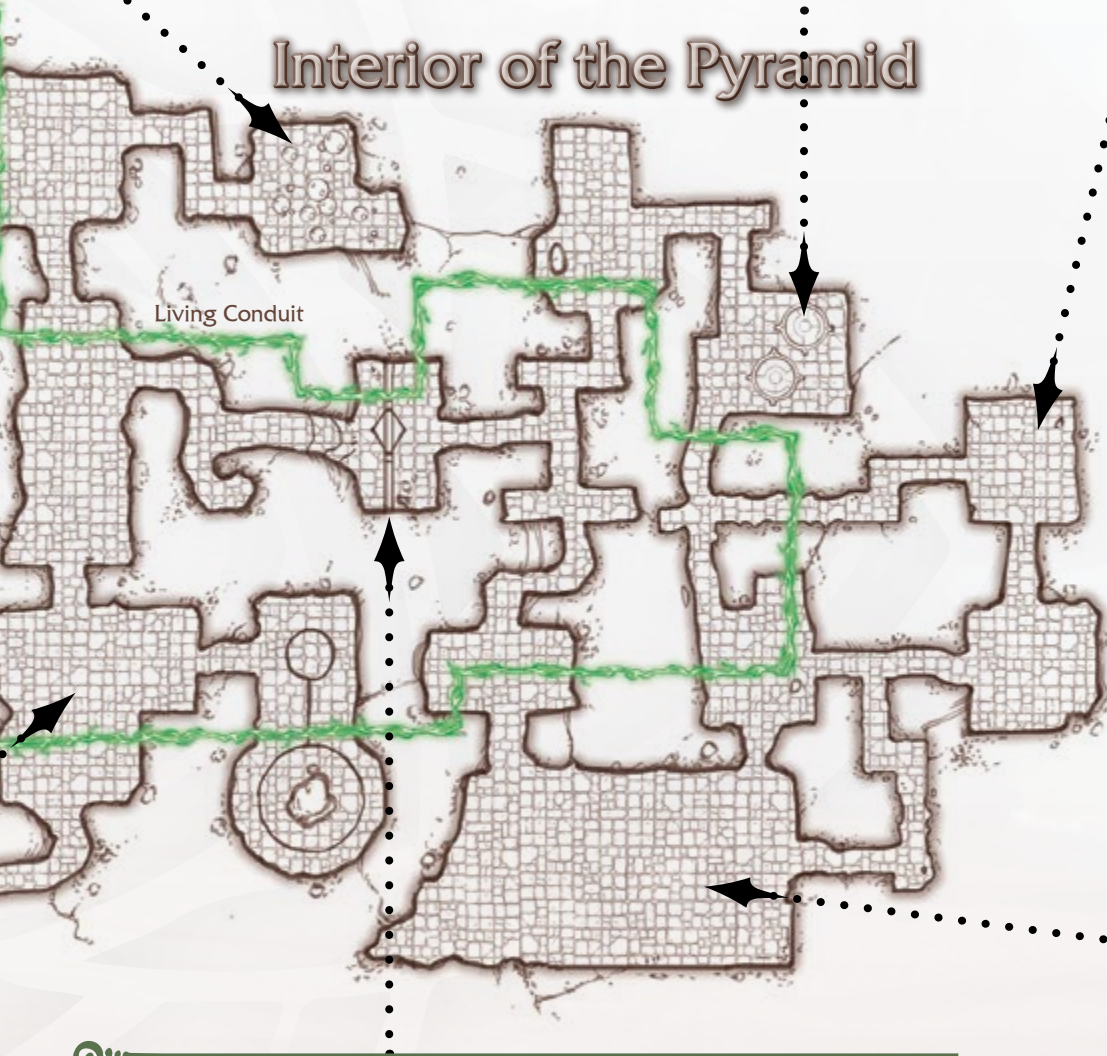


## ORGANIZERS

In this huge chamber, twelve inverted cones of synth stand 14 feet (4 m) high, each filled with narrow slots. Next to each cone, an automaton arranges and rearranges square synth plates within the slots, endlessly. There are thousands, if not millions, of these plates. The twelve automatons (level 3) are ungainly, multiarmed things of metal and glass that ignore the PCs.

Any KEY here can be obtained by interacting with the harried, logical, and obsessive automatons. They can provide the location of the object (elsewhere in the pyramid) if convinced to stop their organizing long enough to talk.

# Interior of the Pyramid



## SEALED DOOR

Reveal *Show 'Em C* (page 73) to the players.

This door is level 8 and will not open by normal means. If touched with the proper KEY, it slides open silently.

Touching the door without the proper KEY causes a device above the door to glow. From the glow, an energy creature (level 5) emerges and attacks, fighting to the death. It is vaguely in the shape of a serpent the size of a human, but with wings and tendrils. Anyone touching the creature or striking it with melee attacks suffers 4 points of damage from energy feedback. It can use its action to disappear and reappear anywhere within long range. A new energy creature appears each time the door is touched without the proper KEY, but never more than once every ten minutes.

**GM Intrusion:** The energy creature enters the body (and mind) of the character, who must succeed at an Intellect defense roll or become possessed, doing whatever the creature commands—namely, attack those attempting to open the door.

*If you have time, read “More Details” on page 22 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### ALTERNATE START

If the GM doesn't want to start the scenario inside the pyramid, the characters can start in a nearby village named Gristen, where they hear tales of the strange structure to the west. If a stronger hook or motive is required, the PCs might be commissioned by a man named Gulvaris to enter the pyramid and retrieve a charged power source for a device he is building. This device is found in one of the unlabeled chambers, but it is depowered and must be charged in the energy pool.

### PYRAMID INTERIOR

The pyramid is full of debris—time is slowly destroying it from the inside out, although the degradation of systems and materials seems uneven and haphazard.

Stranger still, time seems to move at different speeds in the pyramid. This is probably unnoticeable to explorers 99 percent of the time, but occasionally they might see strange “glitches” like a vague stuttering effect in reality, PCs missing what other characters said, PCs seeming to move a bit slowly or freeze for half a second, and so on.

This time distortion is very likely an effect of the living conduit, a being that observes and influences much of what happens inside the pyramid.

### EMPTY AREAS

The map has many empty rooms that are not marked with descriptive text. Like the rest of the structure, these chambers have debris on the floor. All surfaces are metal, and control panels, consoles, and unidentifiable machines are everywhere. Scavengers might be able to find 1d10 shins in each area, but this takes at least ten minutes.

GMs are welcome to add more details to these areas, although doing so means the pyramid exploration will probably take longer than a four-hour session.

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

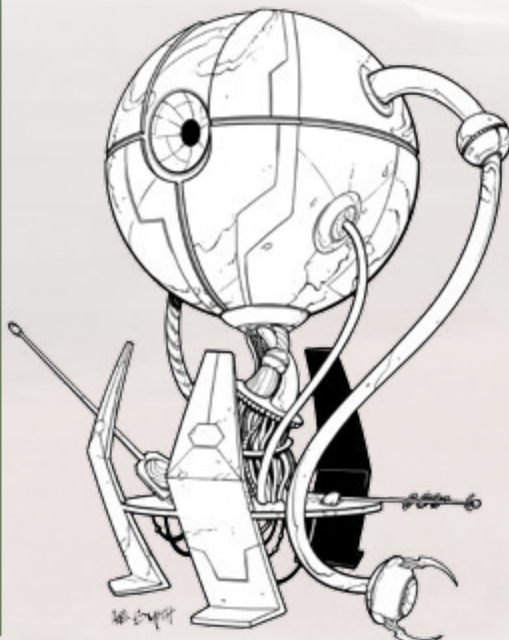
Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under any time pressure).

The pyramid can double as the interior of any ancient technological installation the GM desires. Since stumbling into a weird structure from the past is a fairly common experience for a Ninth World explorer, that makes *Inside the Pyramid* pretty useful. Many GMs will want to hold it in reserve until it's needed to fill that role.

Within the context of a campaign, it's easy to imagine that the PCs need or want something specific within the pyramid. It may be one of the KEYS—the one that turns into an amorphous creature would be interesting, for example—or something the GM places in one of the chambers or adds as a fifth KEY. It might be something the characters need to craft or repair a numenera device, or something they were commissioned to find by a wealthy benefactor or a lonely *nevajin* in the wilderness. Perhaps it's an important clue for a much larger investigation or quest. Alternatively, maybe the PCs enter the pyramid to hunt for a previous explorer who has not returned, sent by her friends or relatives to find her or recover her body.

### PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

The black pyramid can be located wherever the GM needs it. Otherwise, it floats above the City in Shadow that lies just beyond the southern border of the Pytharon Empire,



*Nevajin*, page 248



*Pytharon Empire*, page 161



Matheunis,  
page 208

within Matheunis. This is a cold desert, with rocky, windswept terrain.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 1 experience point (XP) for discovering the energy pool, 2 XP for discovering the Nadralix, and 2 XP for discovering the teleportation platform.

More chambers exist within the pyramid than are detailed here. GMs can expand the pyramid to be as vast as they want. In fact, the interior is very likely larger than it appears and isn't confined to a pyramid shape. The structure certainly holds more strange discoveries and treasures, not to mention more dangers.

If the GM wants to make it easy to return to the pyramid to explore further, she can adapt the teleportation platform. While investigating the platform, numenera-savvy PCs might discover that it can be reconfigured so that a keyed device will allow the user to teleport back to the platform from another location. Cobbling together such a device is a level 5 task if the character is in that chamber, and level 7 if elsewhere.

The living conduit is almost impossible to truly destroy without destroying the entire pyramid. If the PCs angered it, they've

made a powerful and strange enemy. If they return to the pyramid later, they might face further confrontations and interactions with the entity—remember, it runs through the entire structure. What's more, as a result of encountering explorers from beyond its confines after so long, the living conduit might find a way to extend its awareness beyond the pyramid. Perhaps it does this through the devices—cyphers, artifacts, or oddities—that the PCs took out of the pyramid.

Eventually, it learns to communicate and use its time-distorting abilities away from the pyramid to force people to come to the black structure. Once it begins to devour eyes at a distance through energized devices it has come into contact with (or devices that have come into contact with the PCs, as it spreads like a virus), its power grows considerably. If this happens, the only way to defeat the creature is to destroy the pyramid. That involves finding a chamber at the apex with a powerful lens and conductor that can channel energy directly from the sun, creating a massive explosion that will destroy the pyramid, the city below it, and the surrounding area. Reaching the teleportation platform before the explosion would basically be the only way to survive.





# NATURAL AND UNNATURAL

**Iani:** level 4; Speed defense, jumping, and balancing as level 5; Armor 2; move a long distance each round; as an action, can absorb any device it touches. As another action, it can use the absorbed device (if applicable) as though the device were a natural part of it. Given ten minutes, it can transfer the abilities of the absorbed device to all iani. It can also reject a device and spew it out again.

**Guyan:** level 5, seeing through lies as level 4

## BRIEF SUMMARY

Strange creatures stole the only source of fresh water a village has, and the PCs must travel into their lair to retrieve it.

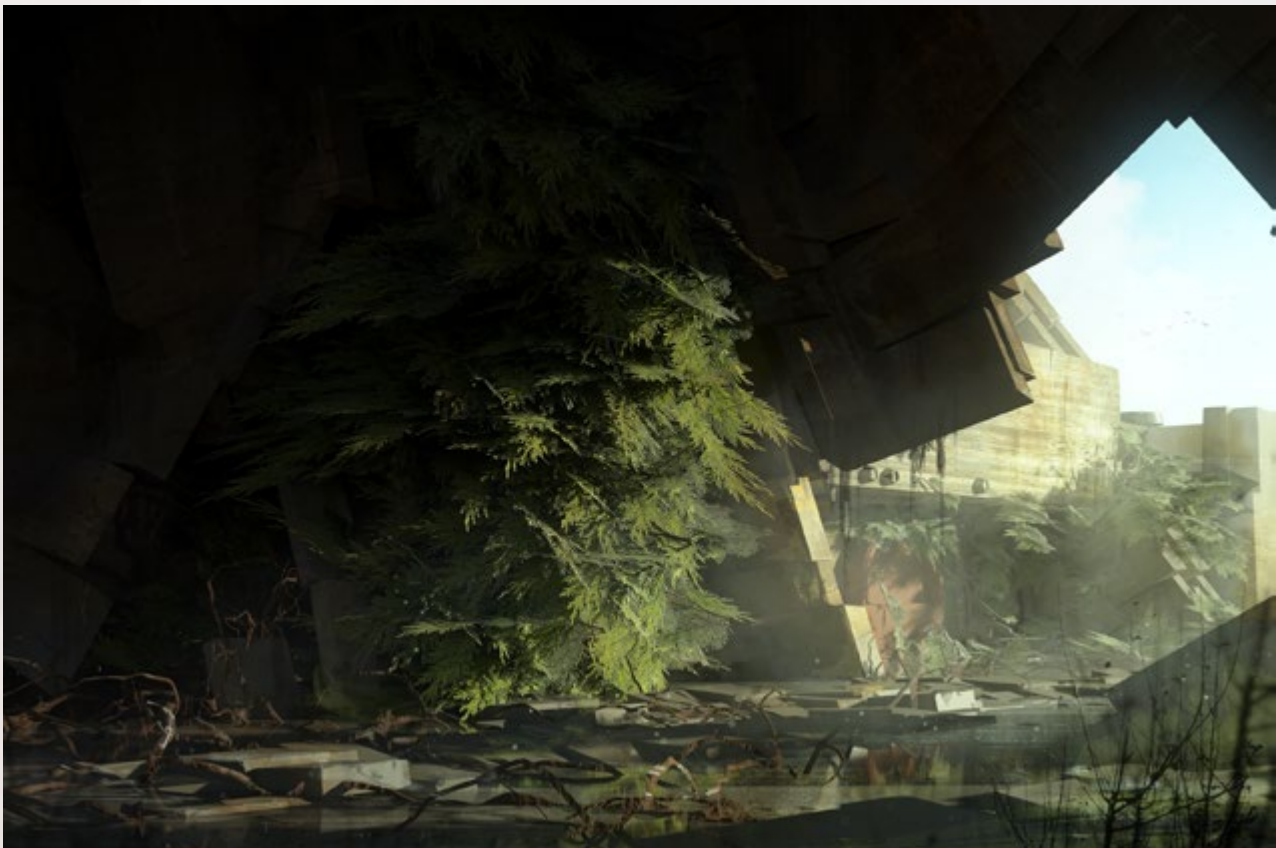
## DETAILS

After dwelling motionless in darkness for millennia, creatures that call themselves the iani have begun venturing out into the lands around their cavernlike lair. The iani are evolved mechanisms with both mechanical and biological aspects. They have the ability to absorb mechanical devices and assimilate them into their bodies. They are

looking for thirteen specific devices that they call “the Legacy,” though no one but the iani understands what that means.

While investigating the human village of Adderstal one night, a band of iani discovered a powerful device in the pool around which the village is built: a condenser that transforms air into clean, fresh water. The condenser is vital to the residents, for all the water within a day’s travel is contaminated and unfit to drink. Unfortunately, the iani took the device.

**Guyan**, the leader of Adderstal, begs the PCs for help when they pass through





looking for supplies. The condenser's already been gone for three days, and things are looking dire. The lone Aeon Priest in the village, **Kuipania**, will reward the PCs with a unique gift if they help. She can make elaborate tattoos that, when complete, permanently provide +1 to Armor when the subject is otherwise unarmored. The tattoos cover much of the person's body and take a full day to complete for each subject. (The tattoos are laced with an array of microscopic, heat- and sweat-powered force field projectors that work in conjunction, but they are canceled out by lots of other heavy materials, like armor.)

To learn what happened, the PCs need to talk to a few people in Adderstal, follow a trail of clues that lead to Old Woman's Bridge, and eventually find the ancient cavern in the woods where the iani dwell. There, the characters can either do battle with the iani or negotiate for the return of the condenser.

#### SALIENT POINTS:

- Adderstal is a village located in a region where the water sources are contaminated.
- Adderstal relies on a condenser device for water, and it is now gone.
- The leader of the village, Guyan, promises that the Aeon Priest, Kuipania, will reward the PCs for helping with tattoos that give protection.
- The condenser was taken by biomechanical creatures called the iani.
- The iani are intelligent but have little experience with the world at large (and humans in particular).
- The iani can absorb mechanical devices.
- The iani dwell in a cavern the PCs must find in order to retrieve the condenser.

#### STARTING POINT

Adderstal is home to a few dozen families. It is built like a set of circles surrounding the pool constructed to hold the water produced by the condenser. The people are hunters, herders, and craftspeople, and there are twice as many thyrans as people.

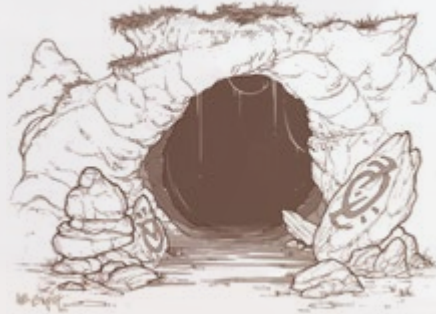
The village has a common house where the PCs can rest, a tavern where they can

get food and drink, and a small marketplace where they can buy common items. (No cyphers or artifacts here, however.)

Guyan, the village leader, recommends that the PCs speak to Miola Broun or Narv the butcher for information, as they both claim to have seen the culprit who stole the condenser. Guyan can also show them where the condenser sat, in a round pool that was recently filled with water but is now empty. The condenser was about as big around as a large man's torso and weighed 100 pounds (45 kg). The villagers have neither the knowledge nor the parts to build a replacement.

#### THE WRAP-UP

The best-case scenario is that the PCs deal with the iani one way or another and return to Adderstal with the condenser. It is possible that they find another way to decontaminate the local water supply, and that's a successful end as well. However, if someone doesn't do something within a week, the villagers will have to leave the area to find water.



**Kuipania:** level 6, numenera-related tasks as level 7

*Thyrans are level 2 creatures with both avian and mammalian features, not unlike feathered goats. They are known not only for their milk and meat, but also for the blue pearls found within the feathers of very old individuals.*

#### KEYS

This scenario has three keys, two of which are sources of information, and one of which is an object.

- ◆ Someone who knows the location of the iani cavern.
- ▲ Someone who saw the iani in the village so the PCs know what to look for.
- Something the iani desire. This is one of the devices the iani call "the Legacy." It has no value to anyone but them.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs four to six cyphers.

## IANI CIRCLE

Eight iani can be found deeper in the cave. They do not really care about the condenser they absorbed and will return it if the PCs manage to open up lines of communication and offer something in return. There is no roll needed if the object KEY is offered to them.

**GM Intrusion:** All the recent activity in the cavern triggers a cave-in. The character must make a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll or suffer 3 points of ambient damage and end up trapped under rubble that will take hours to clear.



## CAVERN ENTRANCE

Reveal *Show 'Em E* (page 74) to the players.

The cavern is wide and open, situated near some ancient, overgrown ruins. Decaying wreckage of metal and synth fills the cavern and covers the ground outside.

Reveal *Show 'Em F* (page 74) to the players.

Two iani watch over the entrance. They attack clearly hostile intruders.

**GM Intrusion:** One of the iani has absorbed a magnetic pulse device. The character's metal weapon is ripped from his hand and tossed a short distance away. If the character is wearing metal armor, he is tossed backward an immediate distance, is knocked prone, and suffers 1 point of ambient damage.

## RELLIN MOR

Rellin (level 5) is a loner. He tends a flock of thyrans and keeps to himself. He's young and tall, with a prominent nose, and he's blind in one eye. His clothing is adorned with blue thyran pearls.

If Rellin is the KEY, he tells the PCs that he recently found strange tracks in the woods, and they lead from the village to somewhere south, on the other side of Old Woman's Bridge. He wears a disk around his neck like a medallion. This is either the object KEY or a random cypher.

Whether or not Rellin is the KEY, he is a mutant with incredible density that gives him +3 to Armor and lets him deal 3 additional points of damage. He also treats all strength-related tasks as if he were level 7. Rellin is terrified that his true nature will be discovered and that he'll be exiled, persecuted, or killed. He probably assumes that a bunch of strangers coming to ask him a lot of questions are on to him and pose a serious threat.

**GM Intrusion:** The character notices something suspicious, like the deep footprints Rellin leaves when he walks, and Rellin reacts with violence.

## THE BEFOULED RIVER

The river here is pale yellow, contaminated by a broken pipe of ancient origins that spills toxic chemicals into the water. Drinking this water is dangerous and results in 1 point of Speed damage per drink. The river is neither deep nor fast moving.

The local wildlife have adapted to the water, but humans and the creatures they brought with them to the area (thyrans) have not.

↖  
Outside  
of Town

↖  
Outside  
of Town

## OLD WOMAN'S BRIDGE

The bridge is stone and provides a safe way to cross the contaminated water. Eight bandits (level 2) and their leader (level 3) hide here to waylay travelers. They demand all the PCs' valuables. They flee if more than half of them fall in battle.

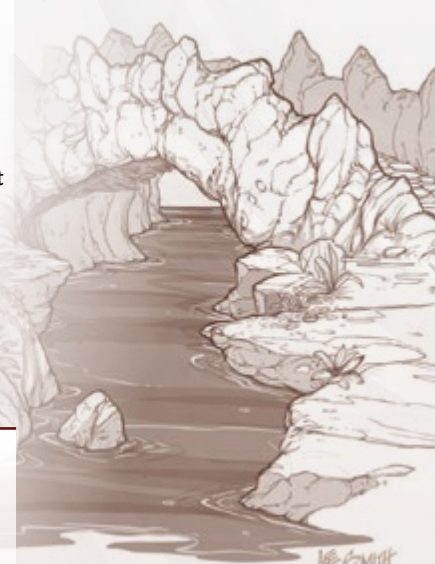
The leader carries a green glowing rod that might be the KEY or might be just a random cypher.

The road from here runs right by the iani cavern.

↖  
Outside  
of Town

## YAMI IN THE WILDERNESS

If the PCs didn't encounter Yami Chetris (level 2) in Adderstal, they should meet her outside of town, trapped on the wrong side of the river because she's afraid of the bandits blocking Old Woman's Bridge. If she is the KEY, she can tell the characters that she saw creatures she had never seen before hanging around a large cave mouth in the woods, which she can lead them to. She describes the iani as "machines acting like animals."



## MIOLA BROUN

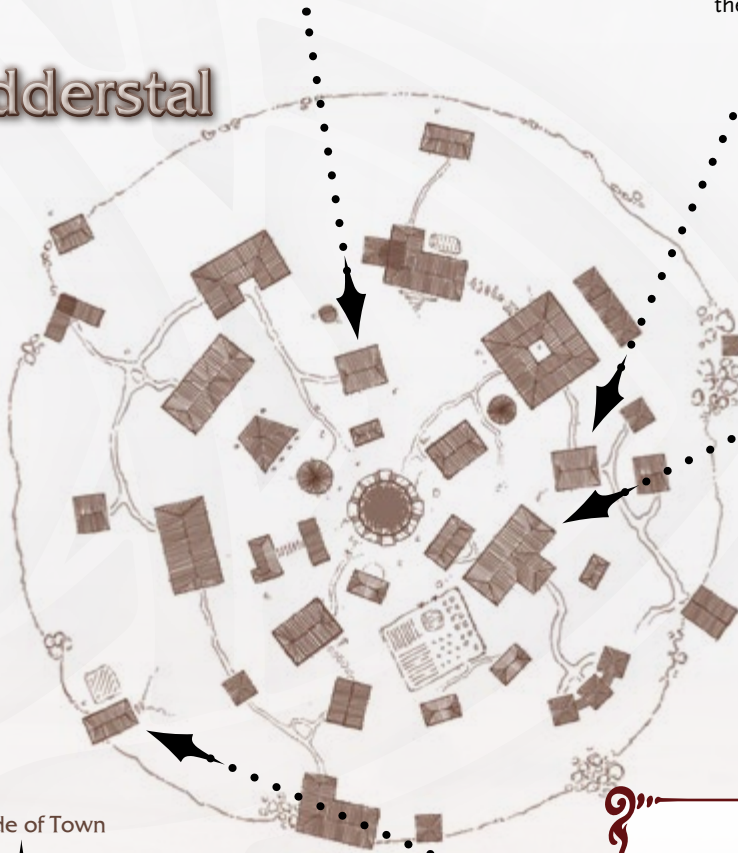
Miola (level 3) is a baker who sells her wares out of her house. She is stout and middle-aged, as well as talkative, opinionated, and overall negative about most things.

If Miola is the KEY, she says that the night the condenser disappeared, she saw strange “unnatural hounds” prowling the streets, poking around in nooks and crannies, and scaring her half to death. These, of course, were iani. She also mentions that Charmele might be involved somehow—she says that the woman is not at all trustworthy.

If Miola is not the KEY, she’s a liar looking for attention and knows nothing about the situation. But that doesn’t mean she won’t make up something. She hates Charmele and is wont to blame her for the condenser’s mysterious disappearance.

**GM Intrusion:** People keep coming to Miola to buy bread or other goods, so she spends lots of time talking to her customers about a variety of (boring, unrelated) things, making it very difficult to keep her focused on the matter at hand.

## Adderstal



Outside of Town

## OANE CRAWFUR

Oane (level 4), a trapper, is young and wiry, with only moderate social skills at best. If she is the KEY, she has seen strange creatures crossing Old Woman’s Bridge recently. She calls them “biomechanical animals.” These, of course, were iani.

**GM Intrusion:** Oane is in love with Guyan, and she gets it into her head that the character is a rival for the leader’s affections. She won’t talk until convinced otherwise.

## NARV THE BUTCHER

Narv (level 5) is a tall, thin, older man who works with his daughter, Junni, and a local boy named Redis to provide the village with meat. He is reticent and assuming.

If Narv is the KEY, he can potentially be convinced to admit that he saw mysterious creatures the night the condenser disappeared. He says they were not natural creatures—more like automatons, but “sort of alive automatons,” as he calls them. These, of course, were iani.

If Narv is not the KEY, he tells the PCs that what they heard is incorrect—he didn’t see anything. However, he might recommend to characters he likes that they talk to one of the Chetris children. He thinks they might know something.

## CHARMELE

Charmele (level 4), tall and attractive, is the owner of the dairy. Her extended family owns a number of thyrans, and their milk is used for cheese and butter as well as for drinking. It’s certainly true that she’s profited by the absence of potable water, but she’s no thief. More important, any advantage she has in selling milk in lieu of water is short lived—she needs water for the dairy to function.

However, Charmele might suggest that the PCs talk to Rellin Mor and Oane Crawford for knowledge of the comings and goings beyond the town itself.

## THE CHETRIS FAMILY

Huni and Estrin Chetris (both level 3) have a family of six children and live with Huni’s aunt Fennia (level 1).

If the family is the KEY, Yami Chetris (level 2), the 15-year-old daughter, says that she was out hunting one day and saw creatures she had never seen before hanging around a large cave mouth in the woods. She describes them as “machines acting like animals.”

If the family is not the KEY, they waste a lot of time providing useless or contradictory information. However, Estrin recommends that the PCs speak to Rellin Mor.

The family has plenty of old junk piled behind their house. The object KEY might be there, as well as up to three cyphers or oddities. Huni might be willing to trade.

*If you have time, read “More Details” on page 28 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

**Aellicon:** level 4; Armor 3



*Aldeia, page 134*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

GMs should be aware that this scenario does not have a lot of combat or action. This is important only in that some groups breeze through noncombat encounters quickly, and the session might end sooner than planned. If this seems likely, other characters in the village can provide additional encounters, either unrelated or as red herrings. Throwing in a few extraneous people for the PCs to talk to shouldn't be too hard.

### ADDERSTAL

The village is simple and quite small, but thriving. Residents dine on thyran meat and cheese, and use their blue pearls for decoration and crafts.

Everyone knows everyone in this small community. Guyan is a well-respected leader, for the most part, although a few hold the opinion that he's the town leader because he's not capable of doing anything else.

The lack of water, however, is likely to have people at each other's throats eventually. A burly, retired explorer named **Aellicon** takes it upon himself to attempt to maintain order, even to the point of usurping Guyan's position, which of course causes strife. Aellicon does not trust the PCs and wants nothing to do with them or any help they might provide.

### THE RIVER

In theory, the PCs could track down the pipe contaminating the water and stop it. Finding the pipe is a level 5 task and likely takes four or five hours. Sealing it off is a level 6 task and will require tools and materials that are at least level 4. This would be an entirely different (but viable) solution to the problem at hand.

### THE IANI CAVERN

The ruins outside the cavern are the origin of the pipe leaking into the river. These ruins are part of an unbelievably ancient structure that is actually part of the cave itself—the "hill" in which the "cave" lies is a piece of that structure, buried in layers of sediment. The "cave" is really just an entrance into the

ruins. The iani are somehow tied to these ruins, but the creatures no longer relate to them in any manner.

The iani have waited, motionless, philosophizing and speculating, for millennia within the darkest recesses of the cave. Their outlook is almost incomprehensible to humans, and communication is difficult as they speak no human languages. Their tongue is more of a machine language of tones of various pitches and lengths. They are extraordinarily intelligent, however, and can interpret much from gestures and whatnot, and they can quickly pick up the basics of a written language, which they can scrawl in the dirt.

The cave and the ruined structure are not entirely stable. At times, they shift and shake, making various portions collapse. Within a decade, the whole cavern, and the attached ruins, will probably cave in entirely, destroyed forever.

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

In many ways, Adderstal can be thought of as the most typical *aldeia* in the Beyond. It can be used as a model for any such village. The PCs might wander into town looking for supplies and get caught up in the adventure. Alternatively, word of the missing condenser might have reached them via a traveler or merchant in their location (though since travel is limited and the woes of a small village are relatively insignificant, such news wouldn't travel too far).

Or, to get even weirder, the contaminants in the nearby river might contain a chemical compound that the PCs require for an unrelated reason—crafting some numenera, developing a cure for a plague, or satisfying the mysterious needs of an Aeon Priest benefactor. In other words, the characters might come to Adderstal because of its water problem, only to be caught up in the scenario when they arrive.

Last, to take things in a completely different direction, the PCs might come to



Adderstal looking for a dangerous mutant named Rellin Mor. There's a bounty on his head because he killed a pair of **Angulan Knights** a year ago with his bare hands. (It was in self-defense, but the knighthood doesn't care.) Fleeing from persecution, Rellin has come to Adderstal hoping to keep his past, and his mutant nature, a secret. The PCs are supposed to bring him to justice but find themselves caught up in the water issue facing the village.

### PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

Adderstal can be found almost anywhere in the Ninth World. However, if the GM has no preference, the village is in the Beyond, on the northwestern edge of the **Ba-Adenu Forest**.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering the iani, and 2 XP for recovering the condenser.

Young Yami Chetris is very likely taken with the strangers who have come to Adderstal—explorers and powerful individuals—particularly if they seem noble and kind. She almost certainly wants to join the PCs' group, and if refused, she might try to follow them when they leave the village to partake in their next "grand quest" even if only as an observer, and even if it means leaving her family. The characters may need to deal with this one way or another, and they may have to go out of their way to return the girl to her family.

After dealing with the iani, the PCs could look into the contamination of the river. This might lead not only to the alternate solution discussed earlier, but ultimately to an exploration of the ruins near the iani cavern. Although the locals say that the ruins are quiet and as innocuous as any natural feature in the area, the PCs might want to look for numenera within them. Getting into the ruins is difficult except through the cave itself, which still offers access. Inside,

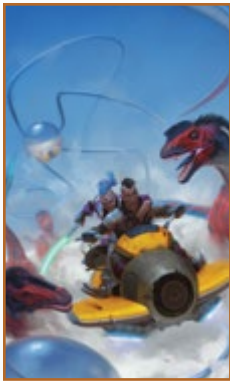
explorers might find cyphers, oddities, and perhaps even artifacts, as well as automatons—which might be considered "proto-iani"—that are likely inactive at first and hostile later. The ruins are unstable (like the cavern), and collapses might hurt or trap explorers.

The iani will soon leave the area to look for the mysterious artifacts they call the Legacy. If the PCs somehow achieved a good relationship with them, the iani might ask the characters for help. The PCs can provide useful guidance as the creatures venture out into a world that is utterly alien to them. The iani know literally nothing about humans or the Ninth World, and their quest will lead them into very strange territories and situations across both the Steadfast and the Beyond. Guides, advisors, aides, and guards would be well rewarded with all the devices the iani find that are not part of the Legacy. Such a journey might lead to any number of other scenarios presented in this book, not the least of which would be *Please Help Us* (the machine in the wall might contain a part of the Legacy), *Lost in the Swamp* (a portion of the Legacy could be in the Mire Sanctum), *Mother Machine* (the machine itself might be part of the Legacy), and *Escape From the Obelisk* (a portion of the Legacy might be in the obelisk).

Angulan Knights,  
page 224

Ba-Adenu Forest,  
page 189





# THE SPIDER KNIGHT

## BRIEF SUMMARY

An outlaw overlord who happens to be the heir to the throne stops at nothing to get what she wants, including attempting to fool the PCs into helping her.

## DETAILS

The Spider Knight is the pseudonym of Fialla Nooran, great-granddaughter of the deposed Queen Nooran of the Isle of Berenock. She has operated for years as the Spider Knight, an outlaw and a malicious villain who takes what she wants and delights in the suffering of others.

Berenock hovers high in the sky above the wilderness, with most people unaware of its very existence. The island is actually positioned on some kind of ancient hovering craft or structure—a large floating disk of metal. The underside is covered

in jagged, growing crystals, while the top is covered in rock, soil, and a small rainwater lake. Trees and other plants grow on the island, a fertile and usually tranquil kingdom high in the sky. The island is about 5 square miles (13 square km), and in the center is a single town that surrounds a glistening palace of crystal.

The Spider Knight arrived on Berenock three weeks ago to claim her birthright. The inhabitants of Berenock have no intention of returning the Noorans to power, for they still remember how despotic the last Queen Nooran was. They sent her away.

While the Spider Knight raises an army (mostly of bandits) to take Berenock by force, she commissions her servant, Orrudis, to obtain a powerful detonation that will aid her efforts. Orrudis comes upon the PCs and asks for their help, lying





about what's going on. He says that the detonation is a recording device that proves that his mistress, Fialla Nooran, is the rightful heir to a throne she is being unfairly denied.

The detonation is actually a viral bomb. When activated, it will unleash a horrific, debilitating virus previously unknown in the Ninth World. The insidious thing about the virus is that the sicker the victim becomes, the healthier she believes herself to be. It affects both mind and body. If the Spider Knight gets this device, she will use it to hold the people of Berenock hostage, forcing them to let her take the throne. She can then solidify her power by using the bomb to intimidate any who might oppose her.

If the PCs bring the "recorder" to Orrudis, he might try to further lure them into the service of his mistress. However, at some point—from some source—the PCs learn that Fialla is actually a cruel outlaw called the Spider Knight. At that point, they need to decide if they have been helping the wrong side of an important conflict or if they should disengage from the situation entirely.

**SALIENT POINTS:**

- The Spider Knight is the heir to the throne of a floating island. But she's also ruthless and vile.
- The Spider Knight's servant, Orrudis, lies to the PCs to get them involved.
- Orrudis says the PCs can help reinstate the proper ruler of her land by finding a recorder that stores genealogical evidence proving her right to the throne.
- The people of the floating island, Berenock, know that the Spider Knight is heir to the throne—they just don't want her.
- The "recorder" is actually a bomb with a potent virus that the Spider Knight will use to threaten Berenock.
- The PCs should eventually learn the truth about the deception and decide what to do.

**STARTING POINT**

Orrudis finds the PCs wherever they are—perhaps in a town called Everton—and presents them with his lie. He offers 20 shins and a cypher to each of the characters if they will undertake a mission for him, and more important, his poor mistress who is denied her rightful throne.

The mission, as he lays it out, is to find a band of evil *murdens* and recover the "recorder." He describes what it looks like and makes it clear that the PCs should not damage, activate, or tinker with it in any way. The device is fragile and very important. He gives them clear directions on how to find the *murden* camp in the nearby wilderness.

**THE WRAP-UP**

If the PCs help the Spider Knight gain the throne, she is grateful and rewards them, with the thought that perhaps they can serve her in the future. Beyond what Orrudis offered, she has all of Berenock beneath her and can provide more cyphers and more opportunity for gain.

If the PCs help prevent the Spider Knight from taking the throne, the people of Berenock are the grateful ones, rewarding the characters with free food and lodging for as long as they desire, along with a cypher each.

Even just giving the people of Berenock the antidote makes a huge difference in their struggle against their new enemy.

*Orrudis: level 3, Speed defense as level 4, lies and trickery as level 5; Armor 1*

*Murden, page 247*

**KEYS**

This scenario has three keys:

- ◆ Someone who can reveal the truth about Fialla Nooran.
- ▲ Something that gives access to the Spider Knight's tower.
- Something that cures the virus in the viral detonation. There are ten doses, but in the hands of a knowledgeable person, such as an Aeon Priest, the cure could be replicated fairly easily.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.



Start

### MURDEN CAMP

Here, four hide tents surround a campfire. The six murdens in the camp attack anyone that approaches.

**Loot:** One murden has 11 shins. Another has an oddity that is a glowing, extremely strong string 6 inches (15 cm) long. A third has a random cypher.

### VERIDON THE TRADER

On the road to the murden camp, this middle-aged, flat-faced man (level 4) drives a small cart filled with various goods—glassware, fine cloths, and a variety of specialized tools. He's talkative and friendly, as he's lonely on the road.

If he is the KEY that can reveal the truth about the Spider Knight, he brings it up only if he hears the name "Fialla Nooran," which he recognizes as the well-known bandit calling herself the Spider Knight. He doesn't know anything about the detonation/recorder, but he knows enough about the Spider Knight to suggest that the PCs have likely been lied to.

Alternatively, if the characters don't specifically mention their mission, Veridon tells them about a floating island called Berenock that is in need of help because an outlaw called the Spider Knight is attempting to seize its throne.

**Loot:** If Veridon learns that the PCs are going after murdens, he offers them an occultic cypher in the form of a complex device that disrupts murden thoughts. This device, when activated, affects all murdens within long range. It cancels their telepathic powers so they cannot communicate with each other or create the mental "static" that harms others. In addition, the difficulty of all actions involving them is modified by one step to their detriment. These effects last for one hour, but once the cypher is activated, it cannot be moved or the duration ends immediately. Veridon will sell it to the PCs for only 10 shins. He hates murdens.

### MURDEN CHIEF

The murden chief (use murden stats but increase to level 4, perception as level 6) can communicate with humans telepathically, but it is painful for humans to endure. Each round, a human communicating with the chief must make an Intellect defense roll or suffer 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) due to long-forgotten disturbing memories that suddenly surface.

The chief is more than willing to parlay rather than fight, offering the viral bomb in exchange for a cypher or artifact of at least level 4.

If he is the KEY that can reveal the truth about the situation, the chief is familiar with the names "Spider Knight" and "Fialla Nooran." Long ago, his people worked with the deposed Queen Nooran.

If he has the KEY that is the antidote, it's because he knows very well what the detonation can do and he wants to safeguard himself against its effects.

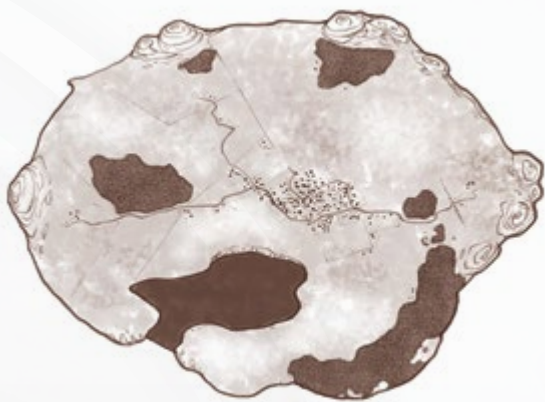
### ORRUDIS

Orrudis is near where the PCs first encountered him, waiting for their return. He pays them the agreed-upon price in return for the "recorder." (Randomly determine the cyphers he provides.) If the PCs seem willing and able, he might take them to the Spider Knight's—or rather, Fialla's—tower so she can attempt to recruit them into helping her further. If so, he sends word ahead so she can continue the ruse of being the kindly, just ruler denied her throne.

If Orrudis is the KEY that can reveal the truth about the situation, it comes in the form of an accidental slip of the tongue. In conversation, he refers to Fialla as the Spider Knight.

If he has the KEY that gives access to the Spider Knight's tower, it is a device hidden on his person that sends a signal for the guards at the tower to stand down. He won't give up the device unless forced to (or unless he is killed).

If he has the KEY that is the antidote, it is because he hired other explorers to get it for him—he didn't want the Spider Knight to die if she used the viral detonation. It also protects him in case she ever tries to threaten him with the virus. He won't give up the antidote unless forced to (or killed).



## THE SPIDER KNIGHT'S TOWER

Reveal *Show 'Em G* (page 75) to the players.

The Spider Knight can be found in an isolated structure miles away from Berenock. She's taken up residence in an ancient tower made of shifting sections of a ceramiclike synth and glass. She uses only the bottom level, as it's the only part where the walls, floors, and ceilings don't move. The upper levels are very dangerous.

Outside the tower, two trained houndlike beasts with orange scales and leathery frills (level 2; Armor 2) and their master (level 3; Armor 1) stand watch. Their master has a crossbow.

The occupied level's interior is mostly one large room that the bandits use for a barracks, a storeroom, and a communal area. The only separate areas are the Spider Knight's quarters and a reception room where she is likely to meet with the PCs if they come to the tower peacefully.

A dozen bandits (level 2; Armor 1) dwell here currently. Each has a melee weapon and a ranged weapon, as well as 2 shins.

If the KEY is here, the Spider Knight's true identity becomes obvious at this point.

## THE SPIDER KNIGHT

Reveal *Show 'Em H* (page 75) to the players.

The Spider Knight is not automatically hostile unless attacked. However, she is imperious and arrogant, quick to take offense, and mean when she's angry.

The Spider Knight wears an energy gauntlet with a depletion of 1 in 1d20, and a helmet artifact that reduces the difficulty of all perception tasks by one step with a depletion of —. She also has two random cyphers and 25 shins.

If the KEY is here, it is an injector in her personal bedchamber.

**Spider Knight:** level 4, perception and deception as level 5; health 20; Armor 3; inflicts 5 points of damage with her sword; blasts cell-disrupting energy from her gauntlet for 5 points of damage up to short range; can make both attacks as a single action

**GM Intrusion:** If seriously injured, the Spider Knight produces a cypher that allows her to turn invisible and go out of phase, which she uses to escape. However, she leaves behind her armor and equipment.

## BERENOCK

Although it floats high in the sky, the tiny "land" of Berenock is easy to reach. The Narsen family lives just below Berenock and uses three niacali ferries to transport goods and travelers all day long (but not at night). They charge 1 shin per person for passage. Niacalis are creatures—part fish, part hot-air balloon—that carry gondolas up and down as they swim through the air, spurred by riders with red-hot crops.

If the PCs travel to Berenock, anyone they meet there might be the KEY that can reveal the truth about the Spider Knight.

If Berenock has the KEY that gives access to the Spider Knight's tower, it can be obtained only if the PCs let it be known that they want to help oppose her. In that case, a young woman with a mech arm named Hua (level 3, subterfuge and lockpicking as level 4) offers to guide them to the tower and show them how to sneak in through a secret entrance in the back, which she found not long ago while gathering information.



*If you have time, read "More Details" on page 34 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### THE SPIDER KNIGHT

Fialla Nooran has had a difficult life, and it has made her cold, violent, and power-hungry. As her pseudonym and armor styling suggest, she has an affinity for spiders. Fialla is very smart—she’s a devious planner and schemer who hates anything she cannot possess or control. If she is denied something that she desires, she would rather see it destroyed. The pain and misfortunes of others satisfy and invigorate her.

Without her armor, Fialla is a rather unremarkable-looking woman with sad eyes. If need be, she can play the role of the rightful heir who has been denied her birthright and wronged by the people who stole her family’s throne.

### THE SPIDER KNIGHT'S TOWER

This structure stood empty for unknown millennia, and even now the current residents occupy only the ground floor. Portions of the upper levels shift and change configuration, seemingly at random. This means that a corridor might connect two chambers one day and not the next. Instead, it might connect to three chambers or lead to a dead end. A chamber might double in size or suddenly be without exits. This makes the tower not only difficult but also dangerous to use. Getting caught as sections shift can mean being crushed.

However, exploring these empty chambers might be rewarding, as there is numenera to be discovered. The Spider Knight intends to do just that, perhaps leading a small band on an expedition into the upper levels, but she has yet to do so.

### BERENOCK

Berenock is a secret little kingdom all its own, and the people of the land like it that way. The current ruler is the regent, **Jiles Bedeuin**. He is an older, fit man with a tall, angular frame. He is well liked and very smart.

About 1,200 people live in Berenock. If need be, they can raise a fighting force

of about two hundred, but in an all-out invasion scenario, they might have closer to five hundred fighters (although some will be quite old, quite young, or not entirely capable).

The people of the tiny kingdom raise crops and tend raefruit trees. They have a mostly vegetarian diet, but the occasional trader brings meat and fish from the land below. Craftspeople in Berenock make various objects out of the unique crystal that is prevalent in the land.

The folk of Berenock have few facilities for visitors, as they hardly ever get any. They are insular but not unfriendly. Perhaps their most remarkable qualities are their unity and their steadfast allegiance to each other and to Berenock, which might stem from when the previous generation overthrew their evil queen (the Spider Knight’s great-grandmother).

### LIKELY COURSES OF ACTION

The flow of this scenario can go many ways.

**The PCs do as they’re asked and call it a day.** This is the path of least involvement. The characters get paid to do a relatively easy job and then move on. This course of action will make for a short adventure.

**The PCs do as they’re asked, and then decide to help the Spider Knight further.** After the characters obtain the viral bomb, Orrudis (without clueing them in on everything) invites them to help “Fialla, the true heir” take her throne by force. Perhaps the PCs continue to be misled into thinking this is all a good deed, or perhaps, ultimately, they don’t care about such things and just want to get paid.

**The PCs discover early that the Spider Knight is evil.** This can happen in many ways—from Veridon, from the murder chief, by examining the viral device, or through questioning Orrudis. At this point, they’ll probably either turn against her to help Berenock or not get involved at all.

**The PCs discover late in the game that the Spider Knight is evil.** This likely happens after visiting Berenock or the Spider Knight. Again, at this point, the characters will probably either turn against her to help Berenock or just leave.

*Jiles Bedeuin: level 4, diplomacy and seeing through deception as level 5*



## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

Perhaps the best way to make this adventure work in a campaign is to have the PCs either hear about or encounter the Spider Knight before the scenario starts. Then, when they learn that the woman they've been hired to help is actually the outlaw they already know about, the revelation will have more meaning.

In a campaign, the struggle between Berenock and the Spider Knight can be an ongoing concern. In fact, depending on the actions the PCs take toward the end of this scenario, the GM may wish to draw out the final conflict so that it lasts longer, with larger forces involved on both sides.

## PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

It's easy to place the scenario anywhere, but if the GM has no preference, place it in *Malevich*, about 40 miles (64 km) southeast of Yenth. Obviously, Berenock is independent from *Malevich*, which is possible only because so few people even know the island exists.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering the truth about the situation and the viral detonation. If they stop the Spider Knight or help her succeed in her goal, award them 2 XP.

If the Spider Knight survives this scenario, she will not stop in her attempts to take control of Berenock. If she can't use the viral detonation, she continues to raise her bandit army for an outright invasion. This proves to be a bloody conflict. Eventually, it escalates to the point where her troops march under a spider banner, and she manages to find and train gigantic *arachnid beasts* to serve her as well.

As part of her campaign to take Berenock, she probably tries to obtain some kind of flying craft or mounts so she doesn't have to rely on the niacali ferries. This goal might lead her to try to plunder other nearby locations for numenera discoveries. The PCs could end up in a race against the Spider Knight to find what there is to find, leading into the scenarios *Inside the Pyramid* or *Please Help Us*. Her desire to recruit allies might likewise lead her to contact the Mallah in *Lost in the Swamp* or travel to Akkoris in *Guilty!*

*Malevich*, page 154

**Arachnid beast:** level 4, climb as level 8; bite also carries poison that inflicts 4 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) if a Might defense roll fails





*Yovok, page 267*

**Horrik:** level 4, attacks as level 5; health 15; Armor 3

**Nils:** level 3; Armor 1; has a blowgun and a knife, both poisoned with a toxin that causes paralysis for three rounds (he has three doses)

**Tavarana:** level 4, influences others as level 5; Armor 2

**Yeri:** level 3, resists mental attacks as level 4; can scream to produce level 4 constructs of solid sound (no larger than a 10-foot cube) that she controls.

# PLEASE HELP US

## BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs must decide whether or not to help some people trapped in a strange structure in the wilderness and, if so, how to set them free.

## DETAILS

The PCs come upon a group of people trapped in a half-buried structure, begging for help. The characters can question them and discover that they fell afoul of some kind of mechanism that trapped them in a large cell like a canister. There seems to be no immediate way to free these people, but the trapped folk suggest that there might be some kind of release mechanism nearby.

There is indeed a mechanism, found within an ancient machine embedded in a small rocky cliff in the woods. To get the machine to produce the release mechanism, it must be reconnected to a specific power

cell, which is also in the area. Complicating things further, however, is the fact that nearby *yovoki* use the machine as a shrine. They consider it an idol, or even an avatar, of their weird god.

If the PCs can get the release mechanism and return to the trapped NPCs, all is well—unless in their searching the characters found the device the NPCs originally came looking for. In this case, the freed people will quickly become enemies to get that device.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Some NPC explorers are caught in a numenera trap and ask for help.
- To find a way to open the trap, the PCs will have to search the wilderness.
- The machine in the wall holds the release mechanism.
- There is a power cell that activates the machine in the wall. It's needed to get the release mechanism.
- Yovoki abhumans live in the area.
- The abhumans worship the machine in the wall.

## STARTING POINT

The PCs are in the wilderness, preferably a wooded area, when they hear shouts for help. Not far away, they spot a small metal structure half buried in the earth. Through small openings in the structure, they can see figures inside struggling to get free. There are four people inside, dressed as explorers, with a variety of common weapons and gear, and perhaps a few cyphers.





They can tell the PCs the following:

- They were wandering through the woods, minding their own business (lie—they were looking for the mind mastery device).
- They investigated a plain panel of metal on the ground, and it opened and trapped them (truth).
- Their companion Nuemos is still in the woods somewhere, but he is horribly injured, mauled by a ravage bear (truth).
- They will give the PCs all their shins (32 in total) if the characters find a way to free them. They are sure that there must be a release mechanism somewhere. They will not give the PCs anything before being freed. (Half-truth—they will give the shins, and they could be convinced to give their cyphers as well, but this is a level 5 task.)

Examining the canister/cell reveals:

- The holes through which the trapped people speak are only about 3 inches (8 cm) across.
- The metal is level 8 and highly resistant to physical force of any kind.
- An access panel has a receptacle for some kind of key or similar device. Using this panel to open the canister without the release mechanism is a level 10 task.

Reveal *Show 'Em I* to the players.

## THE WRAP-UP

If the PCs return to the cell and use the release mechanism, they easily free the NPCs. The trapped people are as follows.

**Horrik** has a heavy crossbow and a sword-staff. He is a barrel-chested, square-bearded, mostly honorable sort, although he is full of bluster and bravado.

**Nils** is tall and wiry with a patch over one eye and a mech arm. He has a blowgun and a knife, both of which are poisoned. He rarely speaks and trusts almost no one.

**Tavarana** is tall and striking, with flowing robes covering her armor. She wields a slugspitter artifact that inflicts 6 points of damage at short range. The wise woman is careful with her words, but she's willing to give orders or advice when needed.

**Yeri** is a short, pale white mutant. She is talkative but does whatever Tavarana instructs.

Overall, they are friendly and grateful if freed. However, if the PCs have the mind mastery KEY and the NPCs realize this, they will do anything—including use force—to obtain it.

**Loot:** The group has a total of 32 shins. Each NPC has one random cypher.

*Show 'Em I, page 76*

**Entity:** level 5; health 20; Armor 2; magnetic powers increase the difficulty of attacks with metal weapons against it by one step; can move and manipulate metal objects of its size or smaller at long range—up to three objects at one time as a single action

## KEYS

This scenario has four keys:

- ◆ The power cell that activates the machine in the wall.
- ▲ A level 8 anoetic cypher that creates a powerful cutting beam. The beam cuts through anything of its level or lower, but it lasts only one round and is unwieldy. The beam extends 10 feet (3 m), is 3 feet (1 m) wide, and inflicts 10 points of damage if used as a weapon (the difficulty of using it accurately in that way is increased by two steps). It could be used to free the trapped people, but it would certainly cause them great harm in the process—there's no way for it to cut a significant hole in the canister cell and not strike at least two of the NPCs.
- Something that, when activated, provides a beacon for an ancient entity whose molecules were scattered. The entity is drawn to the beacon and reconstitutes itself. This process takes about four rounds.  
The **entity** stands 8 feet (2 m) tall and appears to be roughly humanoid, but with an opaque, multifaceted crystal for a head and black synth cubes rather than hands. It isn't automatically hostile, and it can speak virtually all languages, but if it is not immediately given something to occupy its attention, it most likely begins playing with (destroying) any and all metal objects the PCs possess.
- ✦ The mind mastery device. This level 9 occultic cypher can control the actions of an entire mob. Once the device is active, all thinking beings of the same species within long range (as long as they are already in a similar mood and mindset) can be given verbal suggestions, which they will try to follow as if the user were a beloved leader. This lasts for ten minutes, although the final suggestion can have minor, longer-lasting (even permanent) effects if desired, such as "Don't trust the woman with the red hat."

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.

## NUEMOS

Nuemos (level 3, all numenera-related tasks as level 4; Armor 1) is nearly unconscious, lying in a thicket, covered in deep wounds from an earlier encounter with a ravage bear. His companions left him here to rest while they continued on. He doesn't know they've been trapped.

If the PCs help him with healing of any kind, he recovers enough to talk. He is generally friendly but very loyal to his friends. He greets any opportunity to investigate or tinker with numenera with enthusiasm.

Nuemos has a leather jerkin, a buzzer, and a wide variety of tools. If Nuemos has a KEY, it is a crystal that serves as a power cell.

**GM Intrusion:** The last time Nuemos was in a village, he was given a description of a dangerous murderer, and the character fits that description. Nuemos is very reluctant to talk with the PCs until they convince him that he has made a mistake.

## PCs' Approach

## THE LONE YOVOK

This yovok travels to the machine with a sacrifice. If the PCs are stealthy as they move, they might easily surprise the abhuman as it hustles through the woods. Otherwise, it will do its best to hide.

If the yovok has a KEY, it is a bundle of rods of different lengths bound with wire along with a cobbled control panel. If not, it has a random cypher.

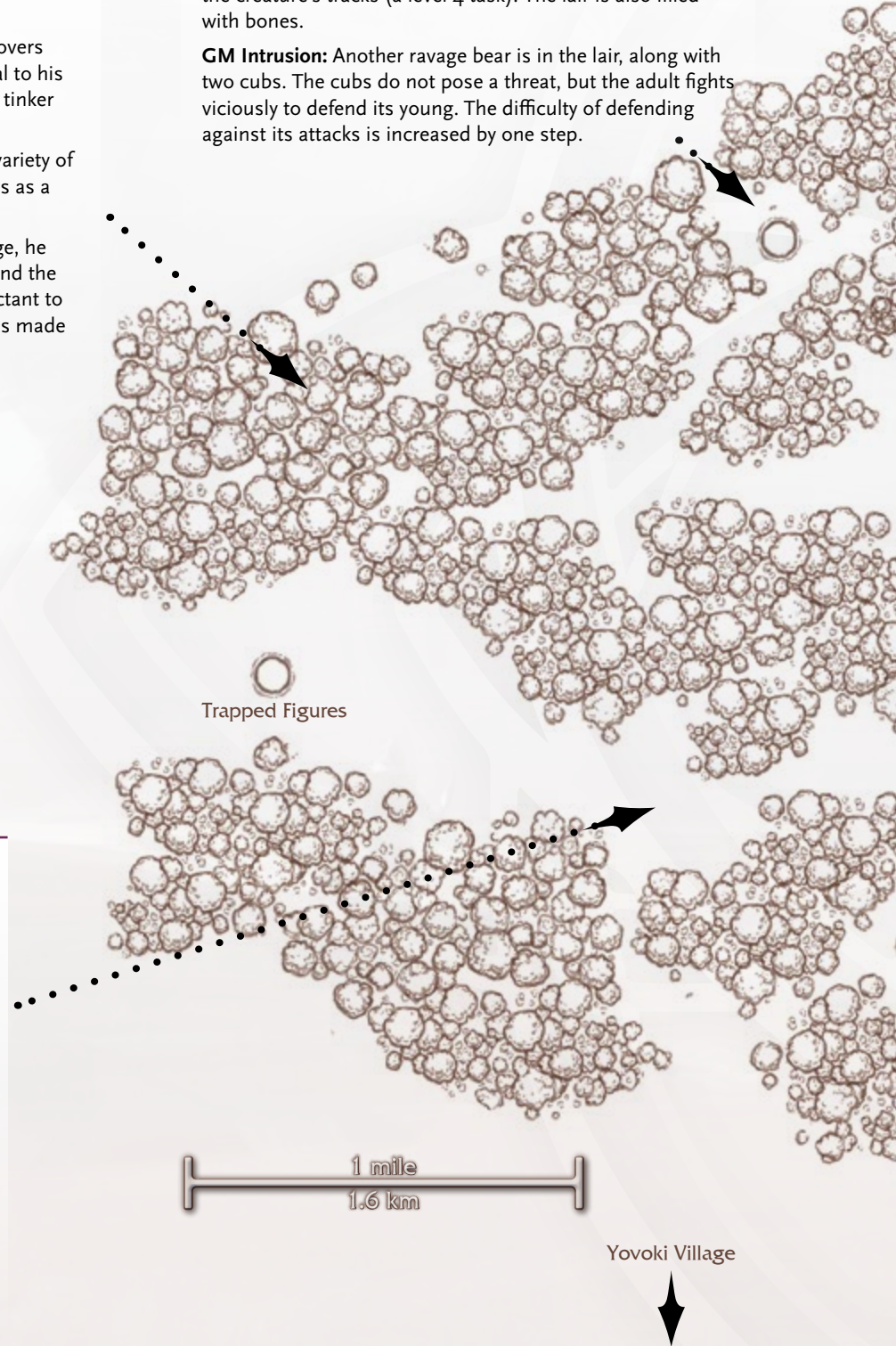
**GM Intrusion:** The yovok possesses a bound bag filled with biting insects that it will hurl like a detonation. All within immediate range of where the bag lands must make successful Might defense rolls or suffer 1 point of ambient damage and lose their action coping with the swarm of nasty bugs.

## THE RAVAGE BEAR

Cautious, stealthy travelers can move through the woods without drawing the attention of the hunting ravage bear and maybe avoid it if they wish. Others will be surprised as it crashes through the brush to attack.

If the ravage bear has a KEY, it is a complex crystal device in a nearby lair. The PCs might be able to find it by following the creature's tracks (a level 4 task). The lair is also filled with bones.

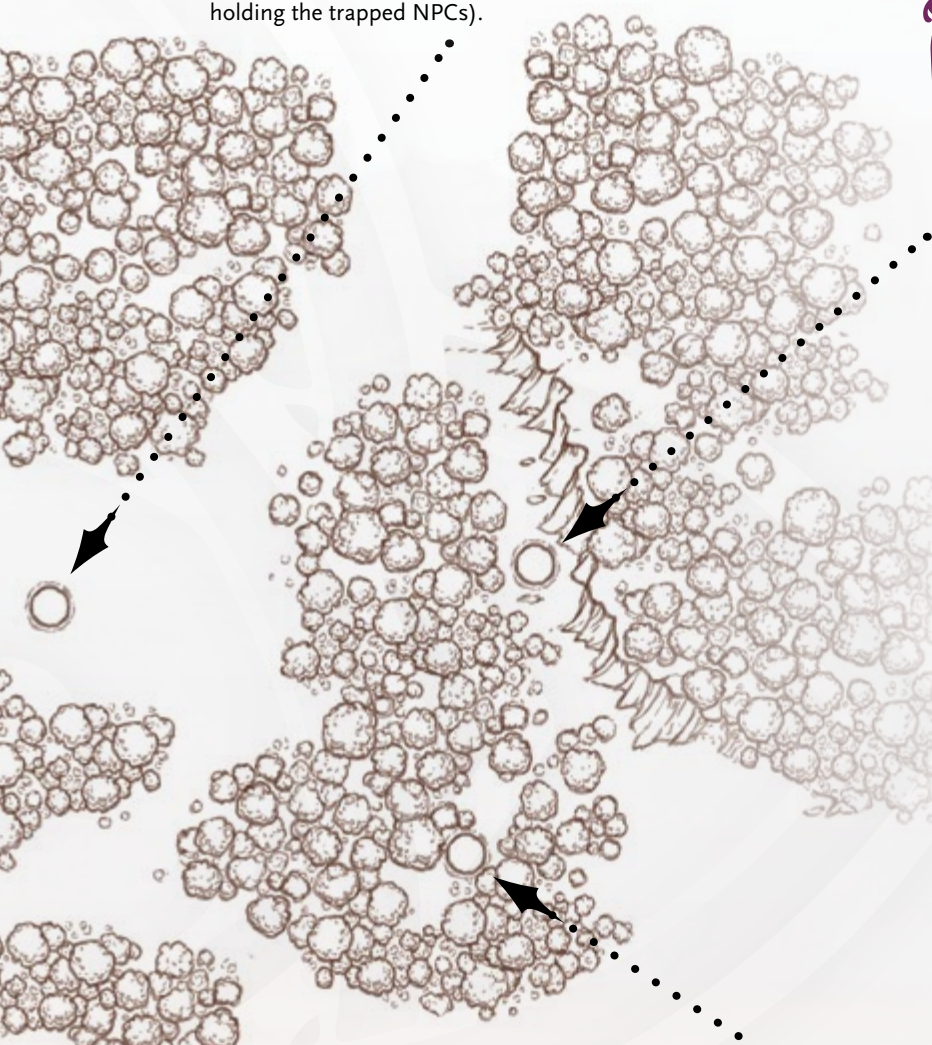
**GM Intrusion:** Another ravage bear is in the lair, along with two cubs. The cubs do not pose a threat, but the adult fights viciously to defend its young. The difficulty of defending against its attacks is increased by one step.





### THE SECOND CELL

This looks like a flat panel of metal covering the ground. Anyone investigating it must make a Speed defense roll as the panel opens and wraps itself into a canisterlike shell half embedded in the ground (exactly like the cell holding the trapped NPCs).



### THE MACHINE IN THE WALL

Reveal *Show 'Em J* (page 76) to the players.

This is an ancient machine of twisting metal, crystal shards, spinning cylinders, and clear tubes filled with various liquids. The machine is mostly embedded in the side of a cliff. Parts of it are concealed by brush and plants that have grown up around and in front of it over long periods of time. Piled on the ground in front of the machine are bones, tools, and strange feather-covered fetish sticks—crude offerings of primitive creatures that worship the machine as a god.

The machine is level 8, but if the PCs have the power cell, the difficulty of attaching it and figuring out how to get the release mechanism is reduced by two steps. Once the machine is activated, it ejects a long-handled device topped with a piece that will clearly fit into the interface on the cylinder cell holding the trapped NPCs. The machine actually does far more than that, but it is nearly impossible for the PCs to determine its full purpose.

If a KEY is here, it is a component that must be removed from the machine. This is a level 7 task; failure delivers an electrical jolt that inflicts 3 points of ambient damage.

**GM Intrusion:** Messing around with the machine results in the character being absorbed into it and then ejected one minute later. The character is moved one step down the damage track but has gained a new random cybernetic component (treat as a random mutation if desired).

**GM Intrusion:** Seven yovoki arrive and fight to defend their shrine.



### THE RUINED GENERATOR

Hidden by trees and plants, this metal and glass dome stands 12 feet (4 m) high and 16 feet (5 m) across. An opening like a triangular wedge removed from the dome provides access to the interior, which is filled with long-wrecked and corroded numenera components. Any attempt to restore or reactivate the old generator results in a burst of invisible, hot radiation. All within short range must succeed on a Might defense roll or move one step down the damage track and break out in oozing sores.

If a KEY is here, it is a synth component that looks a bit like a flat spoon with a short handle and a transparent panel in the center of it.

**Loot:** Scavengers can recover 15 shins and a random cypher.



### THE YOVOKI BAND

This small band of eight abhumans comes from a village inhabited by thirty yovoki. They are on their way to pay homage to the idol of their god, the machine in the wall. They are hostile and attack any human they see, particularly emboldened so close to their holy shrine.

If they have a KEY, it is two oddly shaped crystals that must be fit together like puzzle pieces to activate.

*If you have time, read "More Details" on page 40 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### THE TRAPPED NPCs

The group of trapped NPCs is on a mission for Baron Berrich Vordanal, a local noble, to obtain the mind mastery device that he somehow learned of. They are fiercely loyal to the baron (to the point of death, in fact) but are otherwise reasonable and pleasant people. They don't want to fight or even cross characters who help them, but they feel strongly compelled to follow the baron's orders.

Tavarana is the leader of the group, although just barely so. Yeri and Horrik follow her, although Horrik believes himself to be the leader even as he does what Tavarana suggests. Nils may be the weak link of the group in more ways than one. If someone is going to turn on the others, it will be Nils—anything to save his own hide. However, he's also the most likely to turn on the PCs even if they help, attacking them out of distrust and fear.

Tavarana is in love with the baron and hopes to win his favor by recovering the device he wants. She knows that the nobleman almost certainly wants to use the mind mastery device to control his people, many of whom hate him. The numenera device can help him solidify his hold over his fiefdom. Although Tavarana doesn't fully support that sort of action, she is blinded by love, and the group is loyal enough to her that they are likewise blinded—all except Nils, who has been promised a nice sum by the baron to work with the others.

Nuemos, Horrik's younger brother, also belongs to the group. He's smitten with Tavarana, but his obsession is the numenera. When he was injured in an encounter with the ravage bear, his companions felt it too dangerous for him to continue. Tavarana told him to keep still and wait for them to return. Obviously, they have not.

### THE WILDERNESS

This whole area of the wilderness is filled with the remains of an ancient structure. Only bits and pieces of it have survived,

but they continue to cause problems nonetheless.

### THE YOVOKI

Further encounters with bands of yovoki are likely. This area is their stomping grounds, and they know it fairly well. Despite being crude, vile little things, they are quite intelligent.

The yovoki are wary because a ravage bear or two have moved into the area so close to their shrine. It is possible to negotiate peacefully with the abhumans by using the defeat of the dangerous animals as a bargaining chip. The yovoki might agree to leave the PCs alone or even help them if they rid the area of ravage bears. However, if the characters negotiate with the abhumans, which may not be the best strategy, the yovoki are *very* likely to betray them later.

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

*Please Help Us* is designed to be a random encounter, used while the PCs make their way through the wilderness on an unrelated mission. This makes it very simple to drop into a campaign anytime the characters cross new territory.

An interesting way to do this is to insert the scenario into the middle of a task that is important to the PCs. Now the decision to help the trapped NPCs takes on a new dimension. Taking time out to help takes time away from what the characters were doing and may put additional pressure on them.

However, if the GM wishes, the PCs' mission could be to look for Tavarana and her crew. Perhaps they were hired by Baron Vordanal after his team did not return with the device they were commissioned to retrieve. Alternatively, the characters could be sent to find the same device while knowing that they race against a rival group. What do they do when their rivals are caught in a trap: laugh and move on, or help them out?



## PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

Designed to be adapted to any wilderness where the PCs find themselves, *Please Help Us* could be placed deep in the **Westwood**. This location suggests that, in addition to all else, the PCs might have to contend with the **culovas**, which not only try to drive the intruders out of their wood, but also might try to kill those trapped in the cylinder cell.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for freeing the trapped NPCs one way or another, and 2 XP for discovering the machine in the wall.

Freed NPCs might become long-term allies of the characters. Conversely, the PCs might make a powerful enemy in Baron Vordanal if they killed his agents or prevented him from getting the mind mastery device. The baron will stop at nothing to get what he wants, and if the characters have the device, he will send out a band of six level 3 thieves and assassins with strict orders to kill them and return with it. These agents all have the same poison that Nils carries. (Nils, in fact, was

originally cut from the same shady cloth as these dastardly thugs and killers for hire.)

If the NPC group is alive and well at the end of this session, having the PCs run into them again is a great idea. Maybe they show up to repay the favor when the characters are in a jam. On the other hand, if the PCs made off with the mind mastery device, the NPCs might be the agents sent after the characters. Because of the debt they owe, they might not be so quick to kill the PCs outright, and instead just threaten them and demand the item. Eventually, however, the situation will likely turn to violence unless the PCs can figure out a way to avoid it.

The characters' further explorations of the wilderness are almost certain to bring them into conflict with the yovoki, particularly if the PCs have defiled the abhumans' shrine. It's also possible that ancient—and perhaps damaged and perpetually confused (or even insane)—automatons like **disassemblers** or **Oorgolian soldiers** might be present in this region due to the fact that it was the site of a numenera complex long ago. For the same reason, it's likely that the area holds more discoveries and numenera treasures to be uncovered.



*Westwood, page 137*

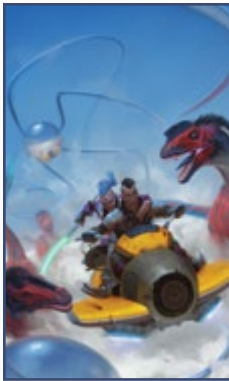
*Culova, page 236*



*Disassembler, page 238*

*Oorgolian soldier, page 250*





# GUILTY!

## BRIEF SUMMARY

Someone is murdering varjellen in a town with a divided human/varjellen population. If the killer isn't found and stopped, tensions will get worse and worse.

## DETAILS

Tensions in the town of Akkoris are high because someone—probably a human—is murdering varjellen. The varjellen demand justice, but if they can't have that, they want retribution. If the PCs are interested in helping, they can speak with the head constable, Bardan Frei.

Bardan has a suspect—a self-proclaimed varjellen hater named Orellik with a history of violence. However, Orellik has disappeared. If the PCs want to help, they can try to find him.

But Orellik is innocent. He knows that he's wanted for the murders and is now hiding out. The actual killer is a sentient mist named Nvrn. Nvrn has no special predilection for killing varjellen (or, actually,

for killing at all) but is defending the entrance to its lair, where it hopes to rest for the next few millennia. It feels it must kill anyone who might be aware of its lair, which lies beneath Goodman's Bridge connecting the two parts of town: the varjellen part and the human part.

Nvrn cannot abide sunlight and spends its time in its dark lair or beneath the bridge until nightfall, when it wanders around. If it notices someone lingering too long on or below the bridge, it murders them.

The PCs may start out by looking for Orellik, but they're likely to uncover evidence of his innocence. And they may find clues to the identity of the real killer, eventually confronting Nvrn in (or just outside) its lair.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Akkoris is a town with a human population and a varjellen population, although the two are mainly segregated on two sides of a river.



Varjellen, page 121

## THE MURDERS

There have been four murders so far.

**Murder 1:** Two months ago, a varjellen named Eelos was found dead on Goodman's Bridge. It had been suffocated. (Eelos saw Nvrn and startled the creature, which reacted with violence.)

**Murder 2:** The week following Eelos's murder, the corpse of a missing varjellen named Faenouc turned up a half mile downstream from Akkoris. Faenouc may have been killed before Eelos. It is difficult to tell, as is the cause of death. (Faenouc was with Eelos when Nvrn attacked. They were murdered together.)

**Murder 3:** Three weeks ago, the body of Qualue was found beneath the bridge, although the condition of the corpse suggests that it did not fall, but instead was strangled right there. The evidence suggests that both the varjellen and the killer climbed down beneath the bridge. (Qualue saw something strange happening under the bridge and climbed down to investigate, where Nvrn killed it.)

**Murder 4:** Two days ago, Yiaen was found dead on Goodman's Bridge in a situation almost exactly like that of the first murder. (Yiaen had figured it out and was looking for Nvrn, so the mist creature killed the varjellen.)



- Varjellen are being murdered, and it is straining relationships between the humans and varjellen in town.
- The main suspect is a man named Orellik, well known for his hatred of varjellen.
- Orellik is innocent.
- Although he conceals it, Orellik's arthritic condition has rendered his left arm useless. This fact refutes most of the evidence pointing at him, but he doesn't know that.
- The real killer is a sentient mist named Nvrnm.
- Nvrnm is utterly alien and wants only to protect the entrance to its lair under the bridge as it prepares to hibernate.
- Nvrnm cannot abide sunlight and acts only at night.

## STARTING POINT

Reveal *Show 'Em K* to the players.

The head constable, Bardan Frei, is a tall, broad-shouldered man with a mustache. He has his hands full keeping the peace in town—particularly with the heightened tensions—and little time to carry out complicated criminal investigations. Thus, he's happy to allow the PCs to do some of that work for him, although what he's really interested in is finding Orellik, whom he is convinced is the culprit.

The PCs get the basic rundown of everything that is known about the murders so far. They're also given the location of Orellik's home and a bit of information about him. He works as a sword for hire,

taking security guard jobs, caravan guard jobs, and the like. He's mean, remorseless, and bloodthirsty. He frequently hangs out at the Wayward Tavern, a rough bar frequented by criminals (this is a dead end—the bar has no clues).

Last, the constable provides the names and addresses of two witnesses for the murders—Michen and Dara—both of whom provide evidence that Orellik is guilty.

## THE WRAP-UP

If the PCs capture Orellik and bring him to the constable, they're rewarded with a total of 20 shins for their trouble. However, if they prove that he is not guilty, they get no reward (though Orellik and his mother might be able to scrape together a small reward of 10 shins if pressed).

If the PCs reveal the real murderer, Bardan Frei gives them the 20-shin reward.

*About a third of the human residents of Akkoris dislike varjellen simply because they are so different. These humans do not trust the visitants and find them physically distasteful. Some varjellen feel that way about humans, but the percentage is lower. However, more and more varjellen now fear humans in the town, for obvious reasons.*

*Two of the encounters, the Vengeful Varjellen and the Fifth Murder, occur whenever the GM decides they do.*

*Show 'Em K, page 77*

## KEYS

This scenario has three keys:

- ◆ Evidence that Orellik could not have been present at the first murder.
- ▲ Evidence that Orellik could not have managed to pull off the third murder.
- Evidence that Nvrnm is the murderer.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.

## ORELLIK'S HOME

This is a simple house, poorly kept. Orellik lives here alone but has not been here for days. The door's lock is broken. The house has nothing of value, but it has plenty of clues that Orellik spends a good deal of time with his aged mother, who lives nearby.

If the house is a KEY that helps prove Orellik's innocence, a very careful search (difficulty 5) reveals a few receipts for caravan guard jobs that he performed, including one from two months ago suggesting that he was 30 miles away from Akkoris the night of the first murder.

**GM Intrusion:** Orellik's landlord shows up and demands that the character leave, stating that she has no right to be in the house.

## ORELLIK'S MOTHER

Orellik's mother (level 2) is a short, kindly old woman who brews tea. She knows where her son is hiding out and will reveal that if the PCs seem like the sort of people who might help him (difficulty 4 task to prove their goodwill under the circumstances).

If she is the KEY that provides evidence of Orellik's innocence, it is because she knows of her son's condition—his left arm is so wracked with arthritis that he can barely move it. He could never climb up and down the bridge, nor could he likely strangle anyone.

## DARA

Dara (level 3) is a human female who works as a laundress. The night of the first murder, she saw a man running down the street away from Goodman's Bridge, and her description fits that of Orellik.

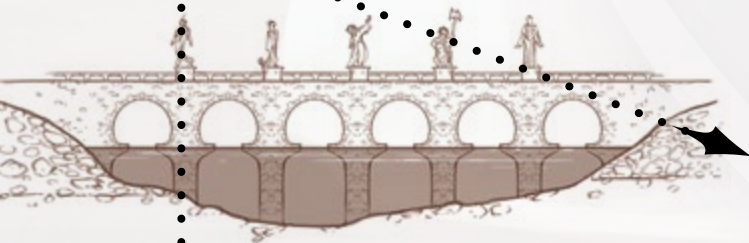
If Dara is a KEY that helps prove Orellik's innocence, she mentions that the man carried a large tool—a shovel or an axe—in both hands. Orellik cannot use his left arm at all, meaning that whomever Dara saw, it wasn't Orellik (and, in fact, it wasn't the murderer at all, but just a man going about his business).

## MICHEN

Michen (level 3), a burly, bearded man who works as a stonecutter, saw a man who could have been Orellik climbing up the side of Goodman's Bridge the night of the third murder.

If Michen is a KEY that helps prove Orellik's innocence, and the PCs really grill him about what he saw, he cracks and reveals that he didn't see anything. He just hates Orellik. He's still sincerely convinced that Orellik is the murderer, however.

Start



## GOODMAN'S BRIDGE

The bridge is made of stone and is quite old. The structure is a series of six arches with a total of seven supports, all of which extend down into the water, which is about 18 feet (5.5 m) deep near the middle (the current is slow). All supports have a stone "shelf" at about the waterline. The body from the third murder was found on one of these shelves.

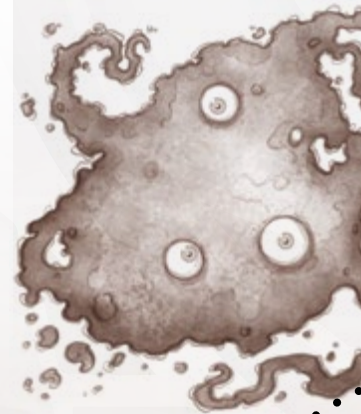
A secret passage in the northern bridge support is accessible via a pivoting stone about 2.5 feet (1 m) above the narrow shelf. Finding the passage with no clues of its existence is a difficulty 7 task. Spending too much time beneath the bridge or discovering the passage is likely to draw the unwanted attention of Nvrnm, which can seep around the edges of the stone.

## NVRM

Nvrnm appears only if its lair is about to be discovered. Nvrnm is a sentient mist (level 4, Speed defense as level 5). It is immune to physical attacks except while in the middle of strangling someone, in which case it takes on a semisolid state. Nvrnm attacks by getting into someone's throat, strangling and choking from within and without. Once it strikes, the victim must make a Might defense roll every round or move one step down the damage track, if Nvrnm uses its action to continue to choke.

Nvrnm is very smart but does not speak any language known today. If communication can be established, it might be possible to reason with it, but doing so is very challenging (difficulty 7).

**GM Intrusion:** (It's very likely that this encounter takes place beneath the bridge.) The character slips and falls into the river. Unless she succeeds on a difficulty 5 Speed-based task, she drops whatever she's holding into the water, losing it to the bottom.



## ORELLIK

Orellik (level 4; Armor 1) hides out in the back of a tavern called the River's Edge owned by an old mercenary buddy, Rollo (level 4, Speed defense as level 5). Orellik is likely to bolt if confronted, possibly leading to a chase through the streets and alleyways. He'll also fight if cornered, wielding a sword in his good hand.

Orellik is bald, scarred, and ugly. He is crude, vicious, and self-serving. But he's innocent of the crimes of which he has been accused.

As a KEY to show his innocence, during a physical confrontation with Orellik, a PC notices that he doesn't use his left arm. In a verbal interaction, he might reveal that he was not in Akkoris at the time of the first murder. And if it will clear him of suspicion, he reveals the secret of his useless arm, although he fears it will also mean the end of his career as a sword for hire.

**GM Intrusion:** Rollo moves in to defend Orellik or distract the PCs while his friend gets away.



## THE VENGEFUL VARJELLEN

Reveal *Show 'Em L* (page 77) to the players.

This encounter comes to the PCs, rather than the other way around. When the GM feels it would be best, an angry varjellen named Arais (level 4; Armor 1) finds them. It is accompanied by a creature it calls the Fuerall, a dangerous fur-covered beast with multiple clawed limbs (level 4, Speed defense as level 3 due to size; health 22; makes two attacks as one action). Arais has discovered that the PCs are looking for the murderer and demands that they reveal the killer's identity immediately so that it can exact vengeance. If the characters do not comply, it threatens to kill them and will try to carry out its threat unless reasoned with or appeased. However, Arais will not fight to the death.

## THE VICTIMS

Most of the victims' homes, families, and friends offer few clues to the identity of the murderer, although finding and investigating them all takes a lot of time.

If the victims offer a KEY to the identity of the real murderer, it comes from the housemate of Yiaen, the fourth victim. The varjellen had been staking out the bridge, hoping to catch the murderer. It kept seeing a strange mist around the bridge and eventually believed that it was some kind of creature that killed people. Yiaen told its housemate, Uraesh (level 3), all its theories before its death. Uraesh is now afraid to talk about it (difficulty 5 to get the information).

**GM Intrusion:** Even though Uraesh clearly has something to tell the character, it refuses to do so until its resentment of humans is overcome.

## THE FIFTH MURDER

This encounter takes place when the GM feels it would be best, preferably in the morning after the fifth murder (which happens at night).

Another strangled victim is found near Goodman's Bridge, but this time it's a human female, eventually identified as Margie Chanalas. She was killed by Nvrn for lingering too long on the bridge (she was, in fact, contemplating suicide by jumping off of it).

After this, Constable Frei seriously doubts that Orellik is the killer, and the town is very confused, which heightens tensions rather than decrease them.

## NVRM'S LAIR

The secret passage beneath the bridge leads down to a surprisingly dry chamber below the river with synth walls, floors, and ceiling. Within it is a huge machine that houses and powers Nvrn's intellect. Destroying it is the only way to permanently kill the mist creature.

**Loot:** Scavengers can take apart the machine and recover 34 shins, six random cyphers, and an oddity (a synth ball that rolls around on a flat surface of its own accord).

## IORTHALIN

An old man who frequently walks along the river around sunrise, Iorthalin saw Nvrn at the bridge the night of the fifth murder. Iorthalin walks stooped with a cane, has no teeth, and talks very slowly.

*If you have time, read "More Details" on page 46 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### AKKORIS

Akkoris is a town of about 7,000 humans and 1,000 varjellen. The town's leadership is and always has been human—the varjellen joined the community later and for the most part are content to remain separate and distinct.

The ruler of Akkoris is **Coshanla Tranor**, the young daughter of the previous leader. She is very intelligent but inexperienced and, like about a third of the humans in town, has a prejudice against varjellen, considering them strange, incomprehensible creatures.

The tensions in the town since the murders began have divided the two populations even more than usual. The two peoples conduct little trade. They don't speak to each other. Most residents avoid the bridges. A few altercations have broken out, requiring the constables to intervene.

### ARAIOS

Varjellen are known for their calm, almost

emotionless demeanor, but Araiios is the perfect example that such is not always the case. It is determined to put an end to the senseless killing and has decided to use force to resolve the matter. Being nonhuman, its approach likely seems a bit off-kilter.

Araiios is a respected hunter and tracker in the varjellen community—an up-and-coming leader amid its people.

### NVRM

The entity known as Nvrn is a being that may have been solid aeons ago. Its mind is not so much stored within the machine in its lair as sustained by the machine. Without the mist cloud, Nvrn has no consciousness until the machine can generate a new one, which takes months.

### THE INVESTIGATION

The PCs might follow up on apparent leads that are not covered in this scenario. Such leads yield nothing of value (unless you decide, on the fly, to fit them in as one of the KEYS). But dead ends are part of any investigation and help pace the scenario.

**Coshanla Tranor:** level 3





The only risk is that the PCs get too bogged down in such things.

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

Using *Guilty!* in a campaign allows the luxury of insinuating the PCs into the situation slowly and more organically. The characters come to Akkoris and are occupied by other matters. All that time, though, they hear about the murders and sense the rising tensions. An old friend and merchant in the town talks about how business is being ruined by the fear and distrust. Eventually, the PCs are drawn into the investigation, but by that time they know some of the people involved—the witnesses, perhaps, or even the accused Orellik. In fact, the conflict could be heightened if the characters know and dislike Orellik.

As a part of a larger campaign, this scenario could be spread out a bit. The hunt for the killer might hit a dead end, for example, at which time the PCs get involved with something else. Later, a new clue appears and drags them back in.

## PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

Akkoris could be located almost anywhere, but barring all other considerations, it lies about 20 miles (32 km) south of Luigolamis in the *Pytharon Empire*, on the Sadara River.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for exonerating Orellik and another 2 XP for discovering the true killer.

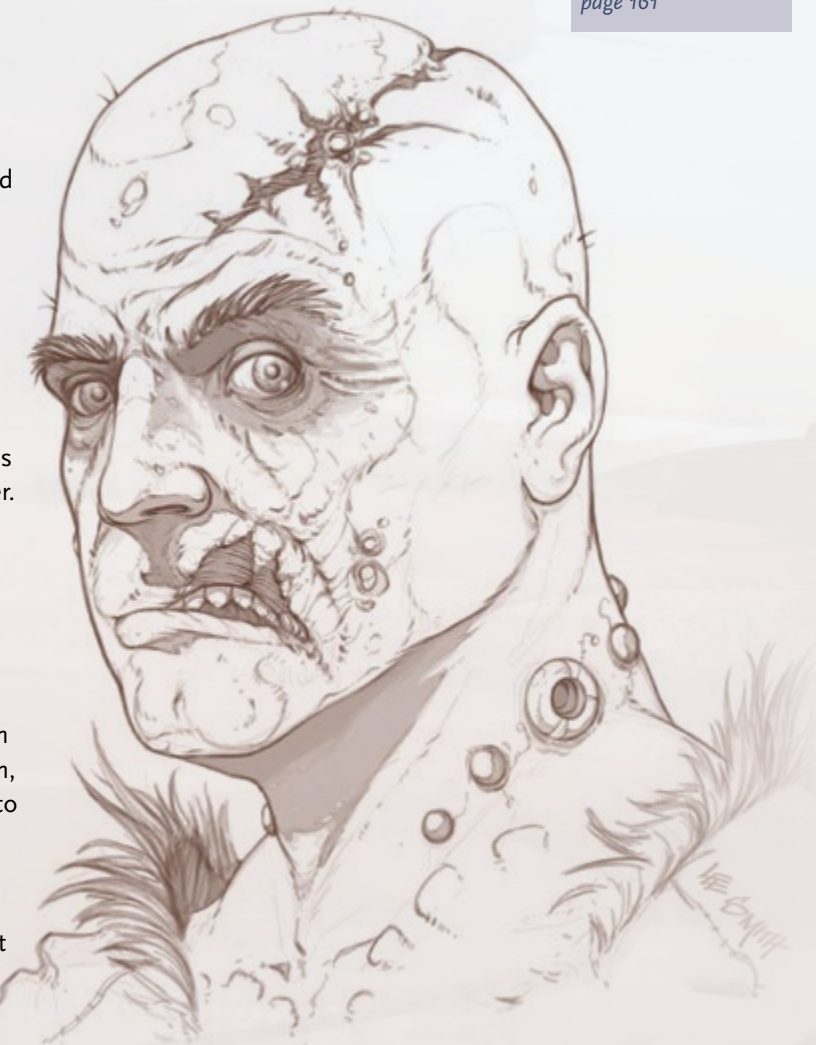
If Nvrnm is exposed, the tensions between humans and varjellen in Akkoris calm down, and no one forgets that they have the PCs to thank for that.

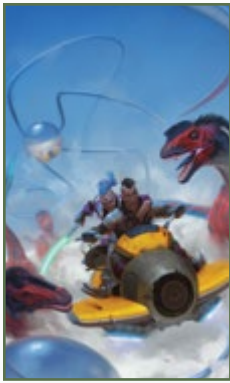
If the machine that sustains its mind is left functioning, Nvrnm will live again, and hunting down the PCs in revenge is not out of the question. More likely, however, the creature once again prepares to hibernate,

and it follows the same process—watching for any locals that might be aware of its lair and killing them. However, if many people now know of its existence, Nvrnm's renewed murder spree might be far more widespread the second time around. The PCs might need to return to help save Akkoris yet again.

Even if the machine was destroyed, an actual varjellen-hating maniac could decide to rebuild it to “resurrect” Nvrnm so that the creature can resume killing visitants. Of course, Nvrnm begins killing, but indiscriminately. To stop it this time, the PCs must find or build a different device that can penetrate a force field in place around the machine. This leads to a search for components, perhaps involving the scenarios *Inside the Pyramid* or *Please Help Us*.

*Pytharon Empire*,  
page 161





# LOST IN THE SWAMP

## BRIEF SUMMARY

A child is lost in a dangerous swamp and the PCs must find her—except that she’s not lost at all, but involved with a strange cult.

## DETAILS

Dariale was a precocious child at age 8. By age 12, she would slip away from her family’s farm and head into the wilds of the nearby swamp for an entire afternoon alone. Today, she is 14, and her most recent foray into the swamp has lasted three days. Her family is distraught, and when the PCs happen by, they hear the tale of woe.

Heading off into the mire, the PCs find clues that lead them to a hunter named Cheosoph. He can inform them that Dariale is not “lost” in the swamp at all. If anything, she is its master—or will be, if she can pass a trial held somewhere to the north called the Mire Sanctum. Cheosoph doesn’t know where it is exactly or what the trial involves, but he’s wary of it, and perhaps even of Dariale.

When the PCs finally find the Mire Sanctum, they find an organization called the Mallah. These are humans who have the essence of some past time imbued within them, and now they carry out the

*The Mallah are humans born in the area around the swamp, where local conditions have been designed to subtly alter their genetics to control them with preprogrammed instructions.*

## MALLAH

Occasionally, in the vicinity of a small swamp, a human is born with just the right traits to be affected by the environment—breathing the air, drinking the water, eating the local plants and animals—and become something more than a normal human. Apparently through some numenera process, creatures from the prior worlds designed this effect so that they could create a legacy of preprogrammed individuals to carry out some unfathomable plan.

The altered humans have banded together in the swamp at a site called the Mire Sanctum. They gather in secret, reject traditional human associations, and call themselves the Mallah. People tend to think of them as witches and sorcerers.

The Mallah are compelled to do things that they don’t understand. Sometimes it is a matter of tending the Mire Sanctum, gathering plants or animals, or singing strange songs with words that no one (including themselves) can understand. Sometimes it involves gathering strangely colored stones found throughout the swamp. They also each have what seems to be a supernatural power. These abilities include:

- Charm Animals (always has a level 3 animal companion, can call another as an action every other round)
- Foresight (defense tasks as if two levels higher)
- Great Strength (related tasks as if two levels higher; deal 3 additional points of damage in melee)
- Mental Strike (short range, target suffers 2 points of Intellect damage that ignore Armor and cannot act for one round)
- Out of Phase (move through solid objects, immune to non-energy attacks, cannot affect solid matter)
- Pyrokinesis (short range, target bursts into flame, taking 4 points of ambient damage per round until extinguished)
- Sense Through Others (long range, use the senses of any other creature—not an action)
- Teleportation (long range, self only, usable each round as an action)



preordained wishes of creatures that lived in the area millions of years ago. Dariale is in the middle of a trial to see if she can join their ranks. She doesn't want to go home. The PCs have to decide what to do next.

**SALIENT POINTS:**

- Dariale is 14 years old and has been missing for three days.
- Dariale has wandered into the swamp before.
- Cheosoph is a hunter in the swamp who might have information about where Dariale is.
- To find Dariale, the PCs must find a place called the Mire Sanctum.
- The Mire Sanctum is home to a group called the Mallah, who have special powers and compulsions linked to a past civilization that dwelled in the area.
- Dariale is attempting to join the Mallah and has no desire to go home.

**STARTING POINT**

The PCs meet Kaldour and Nin (both level 3), the parents of Dariale. Kaldour is very sick and struggling to provide food for his family while Nin cares for their other three children, all younger than Dariale. Nin is distraught at the thought of losing her oldest daughter, and the entire family is suffering without Dariale to help her parents care for and support everyone.

Kaldour is a trapper. He has a chronic cough and old age is getting the better of him. Nin is much younger and quite capable, but there's too much to do without Dariale to help.

**THE WRAP-UP**

Either the PCs convince (or force) Dariale to come home, or they don't. The trip out of the swamp (with or without her) might include an ambush of six Stratharian war moths as a group GM intrusion, depending on the pacing needs of the scenario.

If Dariale is reunited with her family, she is left unfulfilled almost no matter what. Her family, however, is grateful to the PCs and rewards them with food, 12 shins, and an anoetic cypher: a level 10 canister of fireproofing spray (can be used on a nonliving object, giving it +10 to Armor against fire damage for 28 hours).

*Stratharian war moth, page 261*

**KEYS**

This scenario has four keys:

- ◆ A clue that leads the PCs to Cheosoph.
- ▲ A clue that leads the PCs to the Mire Sanctum.
- A plant that poisons a character with its spores, making it impossible to breathe air—only water. A lungful of water lasts for ten minutes. After that time, the character moves one step down the damage track every two minutes until he dies or he takes another lungful of water (and breathing water moves him back up the damage track).
- ★ An antidote for the poisonous spores.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.



## THE SLURPING PIT

This hazard is an area of ground about 20 feet (6 m) across that is really a 12-foot-deep (4 m) pit filled with peat and sludge. A character walking into it or even standing near it will get drawn into its pull. Once caught, a character has five rounds to get out or she will be pulled into the mire, at which point she will drown or suffocate in another three rounds.

If the KEY leading to Cheosoph is here, it is that the hunter shows up at the pit to help trapped characters (see his encounter for more info).

If this encounter offers the KEY that is a poisonous plant, it is a white flowering plant that grows around the pit and floats freely on the surface of the water, spraying spores even as characters are sucked into the mire.



## THE SEER

Nelusah (level 5) is a long-haired young woman with wild eyes and a glowing metal disk on her cheek. She wanders the swamps collecting herbs and plants for various concoctions she makes, some of which are medicinal and some of which are hokum. Her cabin is not far away.

Nelusah is welcoming and generous. She has seen Dariale before but doesn't know where the girl is. If Nelusah has the KEY, she will recommend talking to Cheosoph and reveals where he can be found, but probably only if the PCs trade a cypher for some of her concoctions.

Kaldour and  
Nin's House



## GIANT SERPENT

This creature (level 4) is 30 feet (9 m) long and has a head more like a crocodile than a snake. Its venomous bite inflicts 3 points of Speed damage as well as 4 points of Might damage. The creature also exudes an odor that affects all within immediate distance. Those failing a Might defense roll are caught up in a reverie that precludes any action other than attempting a new Might defense roll each round to shake it off. These characters are automatically struck by the serpent's bite if attacked.

If the serpent is the antidote KEY, one of its organs holds the remedy, although determining this is a difficulty 4 task.

**GM Intrusion:** The serpent entwines the character in its coils, making it impossible for the PC to move unless she uses an action to attempt a Might-based task to get free.



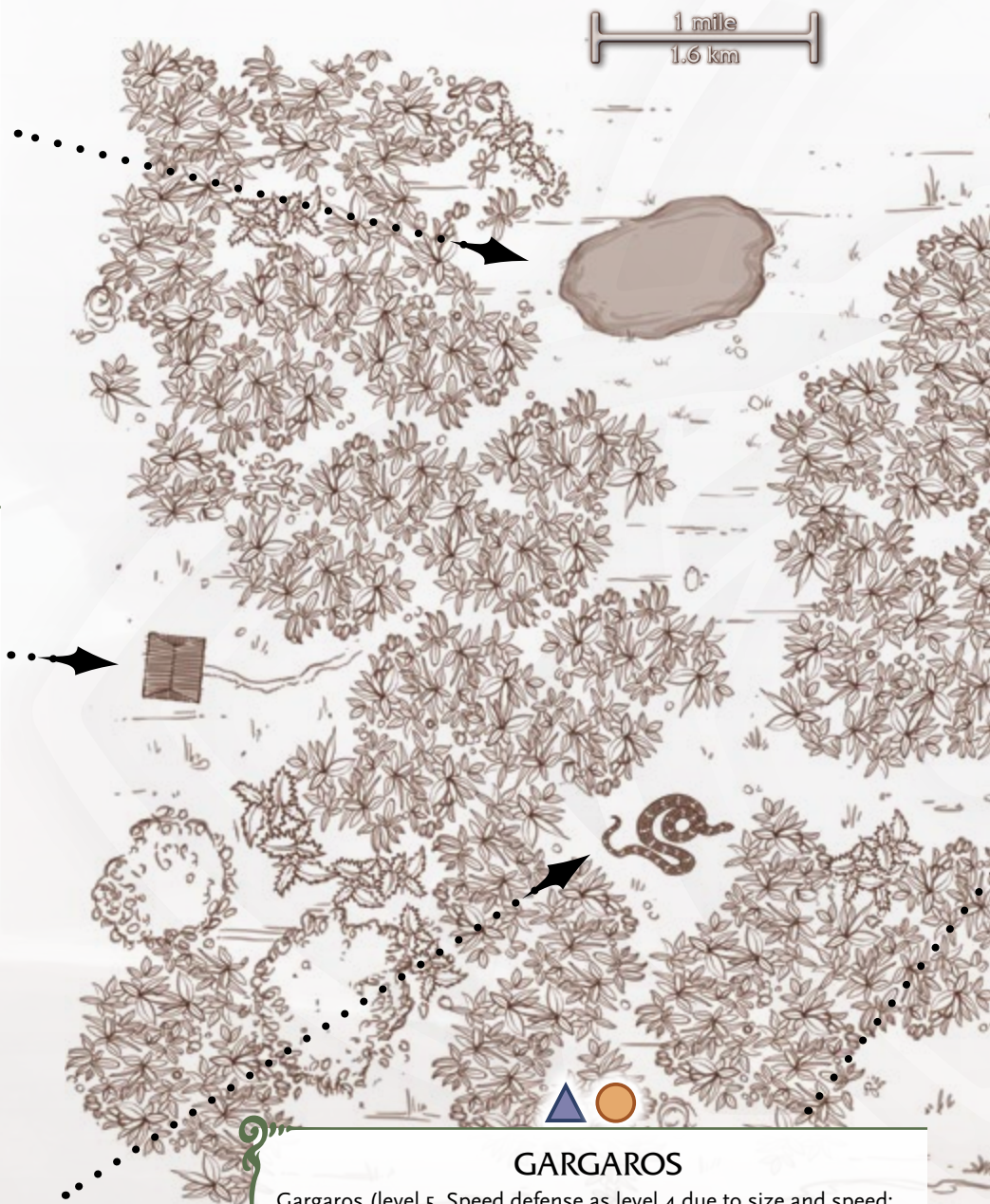
## GARGAROS

Gargaros (level 5, Speed defense as level 4 due to size and speed; health 20; Armor 1) is a hulking humanoid with bulging muscles covered in ritual scars. His first instinct is to attack, but it's possible to convince him to stop and talk—food is a powerful motivator for him. He's not smart and has a limited vocabulary, but the Mallah of the Mire Sanctum consider him an ally, or at least a tool.

If Gargaros is the KEY leading to the Mire Sanctum, it's because his scars are a sort of map of the swamp, and the Mire Sanctum is marked with a special symbol.

If this encounter offers the KEY that is a poisonous plant, it is a white flowering plant that grows in the area where Gargaros is found.

**GM Intrusion:** In the middle of a peaceful interaction, something unexpectedly enrages Gargaros, and he attacks.



## CHEOSOPH

Reveal *Show 'Em M* (page 78) to the players.

Mounted astride his giant, tentacled beast (level 4; Armor 1; makes two attacks as one action), Cheosoph (level 4, attacks with his crossbow as level 5; Armor 2) hunts the swamp. He makes his living selling the hides and meat of the creatures he bags to the surrounding villages.

He's not automatically hostile, but he is extremely wary of strangers in the swamp, and those asking after a young girl are likely to increase his suspicions.

Cheosoph befriended Dariale long ago, and he knows that she has gone off with the Mallah. He knows a little about that group, considering them a strange cult of sorcerers and witches. Dariale, he believes, is bewitched by them, but—if the PCs really get on his good side—he might reveal that what he fears is that she's actually a witch herself. He doesn't know where the Mallah are, other than that they roam the eastern portion of the swamp. Even if the PCs convince Cheosoph to go with them, his fear of witchcraft will cause him to react violently if they encounter the Mallah, and he will flee within two or three rounds.

**Loot:** Cheosoph has two random cyphers and an oddity.

## MALLAH GUARDIANS

The area around the Mire Sanctum is well patrolled, and the PCs probably have to deal with one of the groups. A patrol consists of three Mallah (all level 3; Armor 1). Each of them has one of the following powers:

- **Pyrokinesis:** short range, target bursts into flame, taking 4 points of ambient damage per round until extinguished
- **Foresight:** defense tasks as if two levels higher; armed with a bow and an axe
- **Mental Strike:** short range, target suffers 2 points of Intellect damage that ignore Armor and cannot act for one round

The Mallah will not permit outsiders to reach the Mire Sanctum without the special permission of their leader, Wittenash.

If they possess the antidote KEY, it is an herbal powder they have in their packs.

**Loot:** Each guardian has a random cypher and 4 shins.

## MIRE SANCTUM

Reveal *Show 'Em N* (page 78) to the players.

In a swampy glade, a series of growths almost like tentacles rise up around an altarlike stone with a synth pipe extending out of it.

Six Mallah (all level 3) are here, conducting a ritual trial to induct a new member—Dariale. Using enhanced sensory abilities, they know the PCs are coming (unless the characters took extraordinary measures, like approaching invisibly or teleporting in). Also present is the Mallah leader, Wittenash (level 5; Armor 3), a powerful man with long hair and an eye tattoo on his forehead. His Armor comes from a protective force field around him at all times.

Dariale (level 2) is here, undergoing a ritual to test her powers and nature. She doesn't want to go home. If the PCs want to return her to her parents, they must interrupt the ritual and steal her away or convince her to come with them. Either way, the Mallah will oppose the characters, although they don't want outright violence in the sanctum if they can prevent it.

Convincing Dariale to leave is a level 5 task. If possible, the Mallah try to sway her to stay, requiring that the PCs try again to convince her, this time a level 6 task.

## THE METAL TREE

Standing alone in a glade, a banyan tree of glistening white metal radiates light as if it were on fire. The tree emits radiation that restores vitality. Anyone making a recovery roll within immediate distance of the tree gains double the normal number of points back. However, a second recovery roll made in the same area results in too much energy—the character does not recover any points, and in fact takes 3 points of ambient damage.

A skeleton lies near the tree with the remnants of clothing and gear. Two shins and a serviceable sword are near the corpse.

If the tree is the KEY to the Mire Sanctum, it comes in the form of a map scrawled on dirty cloth in the skeleton's pack, showing the way to the location.

If the antidote KEY is here, it is in the form of an edible blue flower that grows around the roots of the tree.

**Loot:** Three random cyphers and an oddity can be scavenged from the tree, but only if the tree is destroyed.

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### THE SWAMP

The swamp is lush and wet, filled with biting insects, lizards, snakes, and birds of all kinds. Bioluminescent insects of various sizes are common, as are bioluminescent fish swimming in the shallow waters, giving the whole place an eerie glow despite the tree canopy blocking sunlight.

### NELUSAH

A self-proclaimed seer, Nelusah believes she can see the future and brew magic potions. Dramatic and confident, she sprinkles enchanted powders and chants magic spells wherever she goes. She does not take mockery or intimidation well, and she can defend herself quite capably if need be.

Nelusah is not one of the Mallah, although she wishes she were. The Mallah reject her, for she does not have their hereditary manipulation.

### CHEOSOPH

Cheosoph is afraid of magic and witchcraft, so he avoids both Nelusah and the Mallah. He's a very capable hunter and quite self-sufficient.

It's likely that more tentacled creatures like the beast he uses for a mount live in the swamp. Capturing and training one as he did is a task that requires a full year.

### THE MALLAH

An order of witches and sorcerers, the Mallah are individuals who have been shaped by forces across the aeons for reasons unknown. They do things they don't understand, but feel as though they are guided by some sort of divine hand. Unlike most humans, they believe, they are special. Blessed, even. This sets them apart, as do their "magical" gifts.

Although not inherently malicious, the Mallah have no compunction against killing or stealing from non-Mallah. Mainly, however, they just want to be left alone.

Over the years, the Mallah have created a vast array of rituals and dogmatic beliefs to help explain their nature and situation. They

take these ceremonies very seriously. The Mire Sanctum is sacred to them, although they don't know precisely why. They avoid any kind of violence there if possible.

The Mire Sanctum's strange features (including the tentaclelike growths and the synth pipe projecting from the stone) are remnants of the same technologies that led to the gifts and compulsions of the Mallah.

### DARIALE

Explaining how much Dariale's family needs her is a good way to convince the girl to leave the swamp and return home.

Dariale's power is potent. The swamp around her responds to her emotions. When she's sad, it rains. When she's angry, the wind blows and the animals nearby become enraged. Most of the time, these effects are merely cosmetic in the game, but in the end, all events within long range unfold as she desires. In other words, if Dariale wants something to happen, the difficulty of anyone attempting that task is decreased by one step. If she doesn't want it to happen, the difficulty of that task is increased by one step. For events that don't involve a conscious actor (such as something blowing in the wind), assume that things go her way unless they seem too big to affect.

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

Rather than the PCs just happening by, Kaldour, Dariale's father, might be an old comrade of one of the characters. In this case, his illness is the result of some prior adventure gone wrong, and the PC owes him a debt because of it. When Dariale disappears, her father calls in the favor and gets his friend to come help.

Alternatively, perhaps the Mallah draw the PCs into the scenario. Having heard about the mysterious "cult" and their supposed connection to the prior worlds, the characters seek them out, hoping to get answers about an important issue related to other campaign events. Only on their



approach to the swamp do the PCs hear about the missing girl, and only later do they find that the two missions are closely related.

### PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

This scenario is written from the perspective that the (never named) swamp is a small, innocuous mire that the GM can place almost anywhere. But if the GM has no preference, the swamp is located in the Cape of the Maw in northern Ghan. It could also be transplanted into the Caecilian Jungle.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for finding Dariale (whether they get her to come back or not), and 2 XP for discovering at least something of the nature of the Mallah.

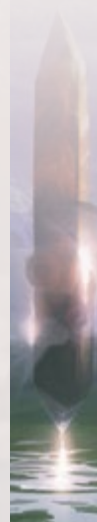
Crossing the Mallah is dangerous. Wittenash is a vengeful sort and will go to great lengths to get Dariale back, get revenge on any who tread into the Mire

Sanctum, or both. A band of six Mallah track down offending PCs a few days later. Two of them carry cyphers that, when thrown to the ground, cause a tendril-like plant (a level 4 creature, precisely like those seen in the Mire Sanctum) to grow and attack all within immediate distance for ten rounds. These vengeful Mallah don't worry about subtlety when trying to kill the PCs. They are unafraid to make their attack anywhere—even in the middle of a busy town square if that's where their targets happen to be.

Dariale will never be happy back at home, the tug of her destiny (her genetically modified programming) too strong to resist. Soon, she will likely run off again to join her people. However, if she stays in (or returns to) the Mire Sanctum, she will find it hard to distance herself from other humans the way other Mallah have, for her family is always in her thoughts. If the PCs encounter her again, they will find in her either a potential ally among the Mallah or a dissatisfied, resentful girl among normal humans.

*Sea Kingdom of Ghan, page 145*

*Caecilian Jungle, page 181*





# MOTHER MACHINE

## BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs must locate and shut down a machine spawning dangerous creatures that are threatening the lives of settlers in a forested wilderness.

## DETAILS

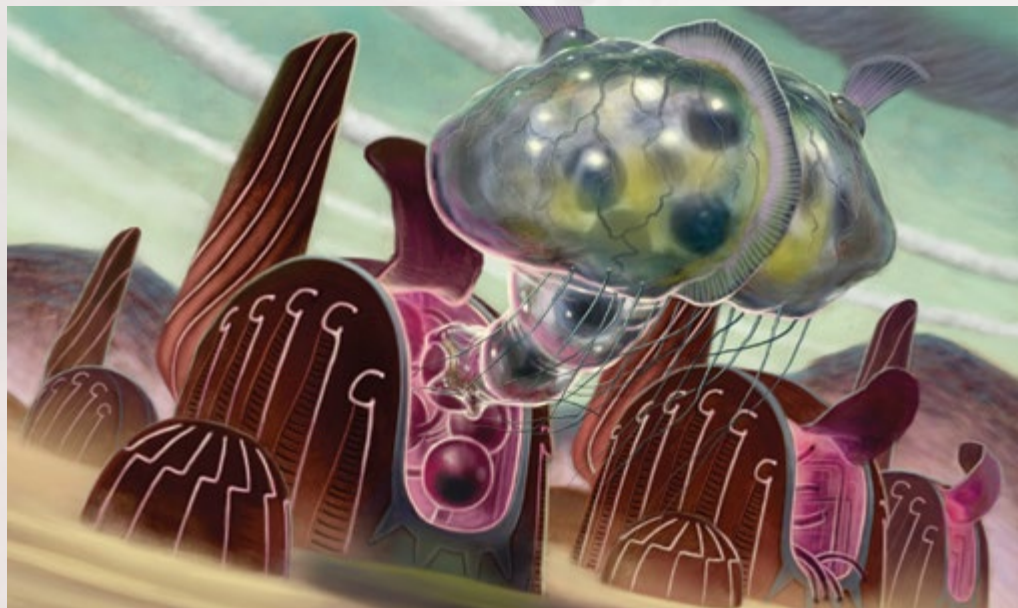
The PCs witness an attack by a horrible creature on a fellow traveler on the outskirts of the village of Dirus. If the characters intervene, they likely save the traveler's life. The survivor, Radan Sheb, explains how awful creatures have been attacking and killing people in the area. The PCs soon learn that everyone in Dirus is in a heightened state of fright and agitation. If the characters offer to help, Elder Brall (the village's leader) promises them a reward—Dirus has a supply of cyphers that Brall is happy to let the PCs look through if they succeed.

*Dirus, with a population of fewer than two hundred people, is probably located in a wooded area in the Steadfast, but any forested wilderness will do.*

If the characters investigate, they assemble clues (some obvious, some subtle) that lead them to a clearing in the wilderness where Mother Machine is located. There, the PCs can attempt to decommission the sentient numenera mechanism or follow up on some of the more subtle clues and try to talk to the machine. If they destroy the machine, the attacks on the villagers stop. If they successfully negotiate with it, the PCs learn something that turns what they thought they knew on its head.

**The Real Story:** A race of outlaw entities known as the cinomar are experts at avoiding detection by humans. Their method of staying hidden is devious: they replace victims with cinomar duplicates.

Mother Machine, a protective device from the prior worlds, learned of the cinomar infestation in the wilderness near Dirus.





She is attempting to stop it by fashioning custom biological creatures called tarza to hunt down and kill cinomar. The tarza have a sixth sense when it comes to tracking down cinomar duplicates.

For their part, the duplicates do not immediately realize they've been specifically targeted by the tarza. When the scenario begins, the cinomar believe that everyone in Dirus is equally at risk from the "monsters."

**SALIENT POINTS:**

- Dirus is a village that sees little traffic, as it is not on any major trading routes.
- The inhabitants of Dirus are afraid for their lives, fearing attacks from nightmarish creatures called tarza.
- The tarza are constructs of Mother Machine.
- The tarza won't directly attack the PCs or anyone else who is not a cinomar duplicate; however, if attacked by the characters, the tarza will fight back.
- At first, the duplicate cinomar inhabitants of Dirus do not realize that the tarza are specifically targeting them.
- The PCs can conclude the adventure—and apparently defeat the threat—without ever learning the real story about the tarza, the cinomar, and Mother Machine.

**STARTING POINT**

Reveal *Show 'Em O* to the players.

The PCs are traveling in the forested wilderness near Dirus. Either a few days beforehand or near the outskirts of Dirus, they meet a fellow traveler named **Radan Sheb**. As the PCs and Radan draw near the rough wooden walls of Dirus, a **tarza** bursts from the trees and attacks. If the characters leave it alone, the tarza attacks Radan; if they attack it, the tarza attacks them in return (which means that if the PCs gain initiative, Radan may never come under direct attack).

If the PCs are interested in helping out, they can speak at further length with Radan or Elder Brall (the village leader), who both have thoughts regarding the nature of the attacks and what might be done to stop them.

**THE WRAP-UP**

If the PCs confront Mother Machine and deal with her without learning the deeper truth, the adventure is a wrap. Things return to "normal" in Dirus (and the cinomar secret remains safe).

If the PCs learn the truth about Mother Machine, they can choose to return to town and eliminate the cinomar duplicates that remain, possibly with the aid of the scanning KEY and tarza lent to them by Mother Machine. Alternatively, the characters can leave Mother Machine to her task.



*Show 'Em O, page 79*

**Radan Sheb:** level 4; *melee tongue lash attack deals poison damage; attacks only if attacked or revealed as a cinomar duplicate*

**Tarza:** level 4; *health 18; Armor 1; short-range psychic attack deals 3 points of damage and ignores Armor; tentacle attack deals 5 points of damage and holds target immobile until target succeeds on a Might-based roll to break free; victims who are cinomar duplicates are injected with poison that causes eventual coma and death unless treated; detonates when killed, inflicting 4 points of damage to all creatures within immediate range*

**KEYS**

This scenario has three keys, two of which are probably sources of information, and one of which is probably an object. Only the first key is required for the PCs to achieve "success" in finding and defeating Mother Machine.

- ◆ Knowledge of (or some kind of map describing) the location of Mother Machine's clearing.
- ▲ Knowledge that the tarza are selective in picking their victims. (Knowing *why* they're selective isn't necessarily part of this key.)
- Something that can scan living creatures, revealing a telltale blue glow in certain cases. Only cinomar duplicates glow blue in the scan, but that may not be clear at first.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs approximately six to eight cyphers.

## DIRUS

A rough wooden stockade surrounds Dirus, which sits within a forest of trees and hilly terrain. Most residents are trappers, hunters, and gatherers. A small tradehouse in town offers rooms to travelers, food, and a place for visitors looking to buy furs and other needful things.



## ELDER BRALL

Elder Brall (level 3, tasks related to leadership as level 5) is drawn to any commotion in town, and she may find the PCs even if they don't come looking for her. Silver haired, 6 feet (2 m) tall, slender, dignified, and not a cinomar duplicate, she doesn't know anything about the cinomar. She *does* know that the tarza are a problem that need to be dealt with.

If Elder Brall possesses the KEY that is knowledge about the tarza, it's only a theory she's developed. She guesses that some people just have tastier blood than others, the same way that some people draw more biting insects.

If she possesses the KEY that can scan creatures, it's a device like a square piece of transparent synth. She salvaged it from the corpse of a defeated tarza and gives it to the PCs. She doesn't know for sure what it does.

If Brall has no KEYS, she's still helpful. She offers the PCs a reward if they help and tells them to speak with the Leblan widow, who lost her husband to the tarza, or to visit a site outside of town where a tarza was defeated.

**GM Intrusion:** If the PCs interact with Elder Brall a second time after at least a day has passed, and after they've learned of the cinomar problem, she has been replaced with a duplicate in the meantime.



## RADAN SHEB

Radan Sheb is a trader who lives alone in Dirus. He is apparently in his twenties, charming, and dark haired, and he has a way with words.

If Radan has the KEY, it's not something he consciously knows. It's only revealed through questioning by the characters. The KEY is actually an unwelcome revelation to Radan, which perceptive PCs might note: "This isn't the first time I've been attacked. A week ago, a tarza burst from the trees, completely ignoring Galken Cutter to go for me . . . wait . . ." If the PCs press the issue, he says he doesn't know why he'd be selectively chosen.

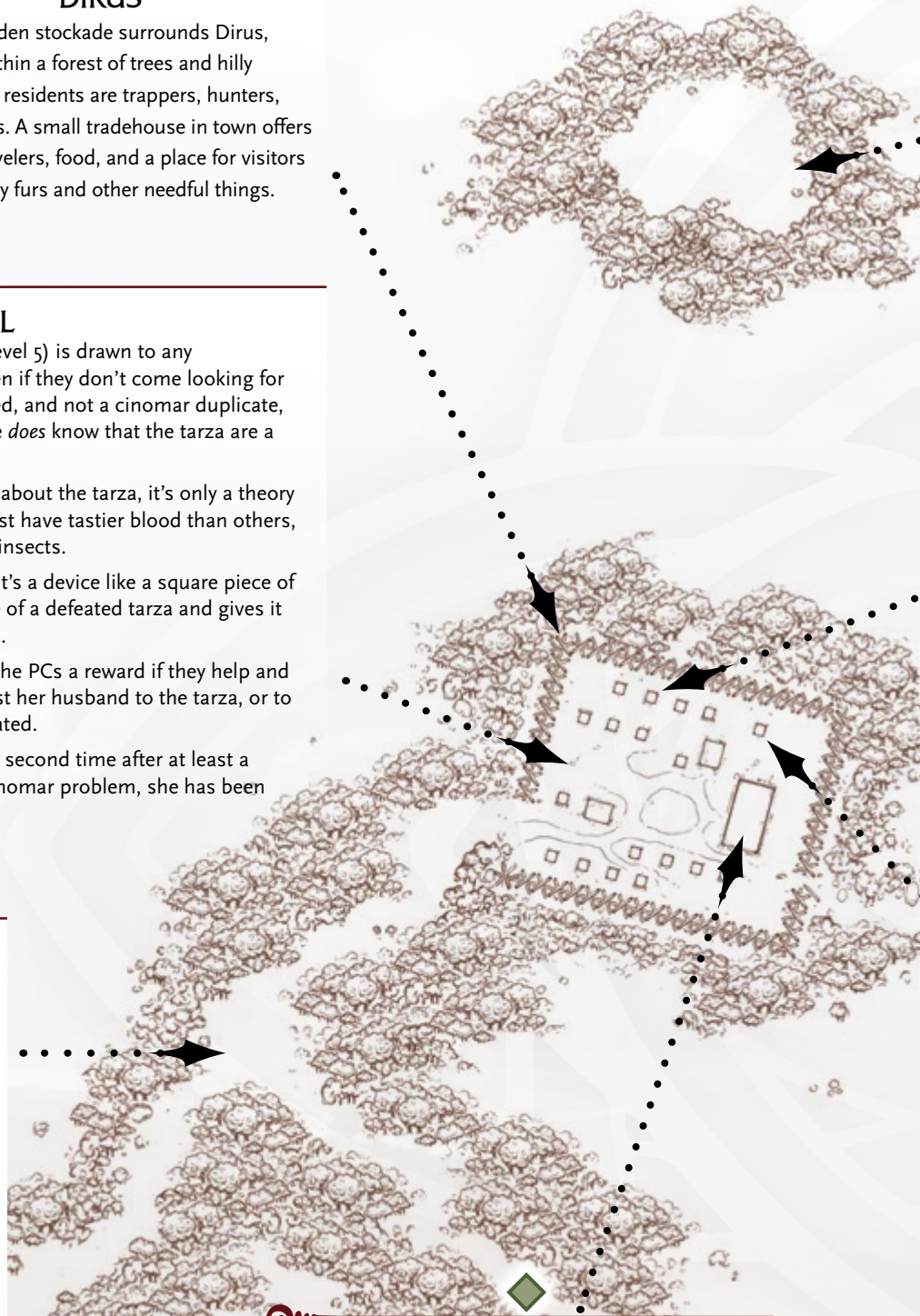
If Radan doesn't have the KEY, he doesn't make the connection that the tarza are targeting cinomar duplicates, and instead offers to accompany the PCs to help deal with the problem. He suggests that the characters talk to Elder Brall, who probably knows more, or maybe Galken Cutter, who was also attacked.

**GM Intrusion:** Radan was poisoned in the Starting Point tarza attack (no one realized it at the time) and passes out. Unless someone makes a successful difficulty 4 Intellect-based roll to heal him, he lapses into a coma and dies.

## HADORM

Hadorm (level 5; melee tongue lash attack deals poison damage; attacks only if attacked or revealed as a cinomar duplicate) liked to keep to himself even before he was replaced; now he's a cinomar duplicate. He's older, short, and slightly flabby. If Hadorm has a KEY, he reveals it only under extreme duress. Otherwise, he doesn't answer any of the PCs' questions, telling them to stop bothering him.

**GM Intrusion:** If Hadorm thinks the PCs are on to him, he suddenly attacks them with his lashing tongue.



## SITE OF TARZA DEFEAT

The PCs likely defeated a tarza when the adventure started; however, they didn't learn anything from investigating the aftermath of its defeat. For some reason, the tarza that Galken Cutter defeated about a half mile north of town malfunctioned and didn't blow up. If the PCs look over the corpse and attempt to salvage numenera, they might find devices that serve as the KEYS. Even if the corpse possesses no KEYS, the characters can still salvage three cyphers from it.

**GM Intrusion:** If Radan Sheb is with the PCs, another tarza attacks; otherwise, the salvaging finally causes the dead tarza to explode (a level 4 attack), inflicting 4 points of damage to all within immediate range.

## LEBLAN WIDOW

Nowa Leblan (level 2) is old and wiry, beset with grief at the loss of her trapper husband, Tarn Leblan. If questioned about Tarn, she describes how lately—just before he was killed—he never seemed to need much sleep and was much calmer than his usual ornery self. (She doesn't know that Tarn had been replaced with a cinomar duplicate.) His body was never recovered. If she has a KEY, it's in the form of vague directions to where her husband used to like to trap: "in a clearing half a day's hike east of Dirus; follow the crick upslope."

If Nowa doesn't have a KEY, she tells the PCs they should talk to Hadorm, who keeps a large garden on the south edge of Dirus. She says Tarn and Hadorm had become close friends recently, and maybe he knows something.

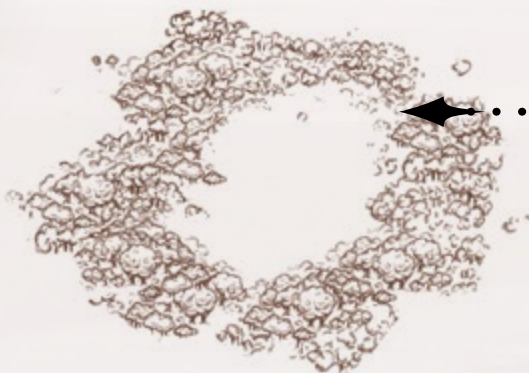
**GM Intrusion:** If one of the PCs says anything that could possibly be construed as a slight against Tarn, Nowa clams up and won't talk until mollified.

## GALKEN CUTTER

Galken (level 5) is a tough old hunter with no hair and a huge nose. He is cantankerous and not happy with company. He's not a cinomar duplicate and has no KEYS.

However, he was instrumental when a tarza was killed north of town, and he will give the PCs directions to where he left the corpse, telling them to check the body themselves if they're so curious.

**GM Intrusion:** Galken is not home; he's off hunting in the wilderness. Tracking him down is a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task.



## MOTHER MACHINE

Reveal *Show 'Em P* (page 79) to the players.

If the PCs approach the clearing east of Dirus, they hear strange gurgling noises and are just in time to view Mother Machine disgorge a wriggling cocoon, from which emerges another tarza. If attacked, Mother Machine (level 5, Speed defense as level 2 because of near-immobility; Armor 3; long-range psychic attack deals 4 points of Intellect damage) and the tarza she just birthed defend themselves.

If the PCs attempt to negotiate, opening communication is a difficulty 3 task. But if they are successful, Mother Machine describes (via a tarza) what she was made for: eliminating the cinomar infestation. She gives the PCs a numenera device that serves as the scanning KEY and asks them to help her track down and eliminate the infestation—or, failing that, to let her get back to her task without interference.

## GALKEN GONE HUNTING

If the PCs didn't encounter Galken (level 5) in Dirus, they could try to track him down in the wilderness (a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task). Unlike in town, he might now have a KEY, having recently run across something fairly terrifying (Mother Machine) in a clearing several miles east of Dirus.

**GM Intrusion:** If Radan Sheb is with the PCs, he arranges for an accident to befall Galken Cutter.

*If you have time, read "More Details" on page 58 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### THE TRUTH

If the PCs never learn about the duplicates, that's all right. The adventure becomes a straightforward creature hunt, and that's satisfying. If the PCs do learn the truth, but only after an extended period of play, the revelation could make a good cliffhanger to end the session on. If you wish, you can pick up the story again in a future session if the characters want to mop up the infestation, making use of the previous material plus information provided here and in Further Development. Or you can wrap up "offscreen," letting the PCs know that thanks to their efforts, the infestation was stemmed.

## CINOMAR DUPLICATION

Each cinomar duplicate exactly resembles the person it has replaced, so even relatives and spouses are fooled (though people closest to the replaced victim note minor personality shifts). Cinomar spread when an active duplicate attacks a sleeping or otherwise helpless humanoid victim with a lashing tongue, which also implants a small egg in the wound. The egg is a packet of cinomar nervous tissue, which takes root and replaces the victim's tissue over the course of fourteen to twenty-eight hours. When mature, a dormant cinomar mind wakes in the victim and the duplication is complete, which means there is no additional body of the original victim to find.

## MOTHER MACHINE

Mother Machine is part of a prior-world security system activated by the cinomar's arrival. In fact, the mechanism in the forest clearing isn't Mother Machine Prime, but only an instance of her that was recently built by nanobots. That instance is dedicated to locating cinomar and destroying them with tarza. But Mother Machine Prime, whatever and wherever that is, has wider concerns, many of which are incomprehensible to humans. In this case, those concerns happened to align.

## TARZA

Tarza (see the stats on page 55) are built specifically to destroy cinomar duplicates. Their poison affects only the duplicates. A poisoned cinomar usually resists the toxin for hours or days before suddenly collapsing in a coma and dying of high fever (unless treated). It's possible that the alien nerve fiber could be burned out of a duplicate, thereby restoring the original victim.

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

Instead of merely wandering by, the PCs might be in the area because they've been





exploring an extensive set of prior-world ruins. Either their investigations lead to the cinomar infestation, or they find evidence of the cinomar awakening in the ruins and follow a trail of tarza destruction to Dirus.

### PRIOR-WORLD RUINS

A series of ruins lies not far from Dirus, which some of the trappers and hunters probably know about. The ruins contain the numenera, and explorers might find cyphers, oddities, and perhaps artifacts.

But farther in and deeper down, the ruins also contain vessels of cinomar eggs, as well as cinomar duplicates that are not humanoid at all but completely alien in form. It's possible that the cinomar are a viral vector responsible for bringing one of those prior civilizations down, or maybe they're just a strange experiment lost to time. They're dangerous either way.

**GM Intrusion:** A cinomar duplicate in the body of a **callerail** (level 7) bursts through a containment wall and attacks a PC. In addition to the abilities noted for the callerail, the creature also has a lashing tongue attack able to implant cinomar eggs.

### PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

This scenario is suitable in any location that includes a tract of woods big enough to require at least a few days of travel to cross. However, *Mother Machine* is particularly suited to the **Westwood**, a vast, lush, and verdant forest that dominates the coastline of Navarene. It's known for ancient redwoods that stretch taller than any other trees in the Steadfast.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for finding Mother Machine. Each PC should earn a further 2 XP if they learn the truth of Mother Machine's presence, and perhaps another 1 XP each if they actively help her clear out the infestation in and around Dirus.

If the PCs learn about the cinomar duplication, especially in conjunction with gaining the KEY that scans creatures,

they may decide to be thorough and scan everyone in Dirus. If they do so, in addition to the duplicates already described, they uncover two more instances of cinomar infestation.

### ADRAN'S HOUSE

No one answers the door, but **Adran**, a strapping man in his forties with sandy gray hair, is found unconscious on the floor of the main room. When first scanned with the device, readings are inconclusive. That's because he is still in the process of changing—he was injected with a cinomar egg several hours earlier, and the foreign nervous tissue is still spreading inside him. In an hour or two, if given the chance, Adran will wake up as a cinomar duplicate. Quick thinking by the PCs and specialized skills or items might be enough to reverse the change. If they save Adran, award each character 1 XP.

**GM Intrusion:** Adran unexpectedly wakes while a PC is trying to heal him and goes for a stranglehold on that character.

### ERRON FAMILY HOUSE

The four members of the Erron family (mother, father, and two brawny sons) are all cinomar duplicates. If the PCs come knocking with the KEY that scans creatures, all the Errons attack at once.

**GM Intrusion:** A PC attacked by a tongue lash is implanted with a cinomar egg and faces a duplication event in her own body.

**Adran:** level 4; melee tongue lash attack deals poison damage; attacks only if revealed as a cinomar duplicate

Callerail, page 234

Westwood, page 137





# FROM HERE TO SANGUINITY

## BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs encounter a priest who asks for their help in rebuilding a religious altar and rescuing two fellow priests.

## DETAILS

The PCs come upon a woman named Rodia perched on the edge of a cliff, frantically attempting to rebuild a strange device, which she calls the Altar of the Sanguine. Rodia and two men named Tesir and Molan are the priests of their respective villages, and every year the three of them separately make the long trek to meet here to worship Sanguinity, hoping to keep their villages safe and prosperous. As part of the ceremony, their god pulls them through the device to the nearby butte, where they perform rituals of thanks and sacrifice.

Sanguinity is a giant creature that seems to be made of or covered in crimson bubbles. It lives at the bottom of a large pit in the middle of the butte.

This year, when Rodia arrived, she found Tesir's and Molan's belongings but no priests, and she discovered the altar was damaged and missing two pieces. Typically, she and the other priests can communicate with each other using telepathic devices when they are within a mile of Sanguinity, but she hasn't been able to reach them.

Rodia believes they might have started the ceremony without her for some reason, and now that the altar is damaged, they cannot find their way back. She asks the PCs for help repairing the altar and retrieving the priests.

The PCs can follow the trail to recover the missing pieces of the altar so that Rodia

can repair the device. They can also perform the ritual with her and travel to the butte; however, she says they must find and bring their own object to sacrifice to the god.

## THE REAL STORY

Although Rodia doesn't know it, the altar is a device that acts as both a teleportation device and a telepathic conduit. Once it is repaired, it will allow everyone within the area to hear each other's thoughts, and it will open the way for them to teleport to Sanguinity.

Sanguinity is not at all what the priests believe it to be. Rather, the god they have been worshipping for so long is an ootheca full of eggs that have been incubating for centuries and have just now hatched. While the eggs were mostly dormant, their telepathic and teleportation powers were limited. Now that the hatchlings are free and hungry, their telepathic pull is strong enough that the creatures in the area heard their call for food and attempted to respond to it, most likely destroying the device in the process.

## SALIENT POINTS:

- A priest named Rodia needs help repairing a numenera device that she calls the Altar of the Sanguine, and then rescuing her fellow priests.
- To find the missing pieces of the altar, the PCs will have to follow clues left by the creatures that destroyed it.
- Once the device is repaired, if the PCs have a sacrificial object, they can perform the ritual and go with Rodia to try to retrieve the priests.



- The “god” they have been worshipping is actually an ootheca full of eggs that have just begun to hatch.
- The priests are being held captive by the creatures hatching from the eggs, and the PCs must find a way to free them.

### STARTING POINT

The PCs are in a dry desert area with lots of crags and buttes. They may hear an odd noise and follow it, or they may just come upon a woman working frantically on a numenera device along the edge of a cliff. Spread out before them, the land dips away into a few buttes and large, deep sinkholes that dot the landscape. Big, long-winged birds fly overhead and below.

The woman is dressed in a silver suit and lots of gear that seems conducive to desert traveling, and it’s clear that she’s experienced with the device she’s working on.

Her name is **Rodia** and she tells the PCs the following:

- She is a priest of a village, and she and two other priests named Tesir and Molan make long treks from their respective villages to meet here every year. They come to worship Sanguinity and offer sacrifices to keep their villages safe and prosperous.
- They perform a complex ceremony using a device, which she calls the Altar of the Sanguine, allowing their god to hear them and transport them to a nearby butte, where their god lives.
- Her god is a giant creature that seems to be made of or covered in crimson bubbles. It lives at the bottom of a large pit in the middle of the butte.
- This year, when she arrived, she found the equipment of the other two priests strewn about and the altar damaged. She believes they might have started the ritual without her, although she doesn’t know why, and that now they cannot return.
- She has mostly been able to repair the altar, but it requires additional work, and two pieces are still missing.

- If the PCs agree to help her, she will happily include them in her ritual so that they can also worship and receive Sanguinity’s blessing of safety and prosperity.

Examining the area nearby reveals the following.

- A trail of silver circles in the dirt that look like metallic drops of blood lead away from the edge of the cliff.
- A series of large, three-toed footprints lead toward the device and then away.
- If the PCs talk and search for more than ten minutes, they likely hear a terrible howl, a bellowing sound that seems to make their very bones shudder.
- Large colonies of long-winged, long-beaked birds constantly circle overhead and down below.

### THE WRAP-UP

PCs who find the missing pieces of the device discover that Rodia can quickly repair the altar and go to find the other priests.

If the PCs decide not to accompany her, they can say farewell to Rodia, who gives them two random cyphers in thanks for their assistance.

If they do go with her, they can attempt to rescue Tesir and Molan. One priest is under the power of the brood, and the other has been thrown to the hatchlings for food.

**Rodia:** level 3, repairing and using the numenera as level 5; Armor 2

### KEYS

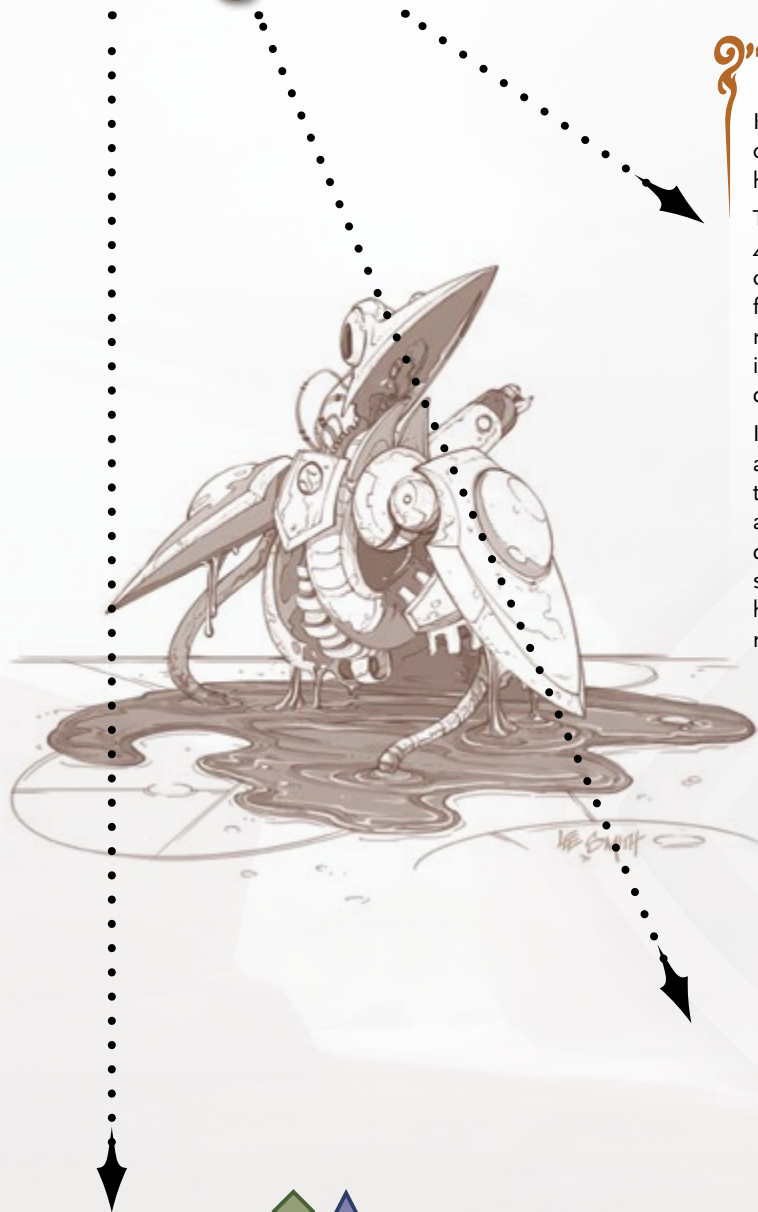
This scenario has three keys, all of which are objects.

- ◆ The part of the device that signals Sanguinity, allowing the god to “hear” the priests as they worship at the altar.
- ▲ The second of two power sources for the device.
- Something for the PCs to offer Sanguinity as a sacrifice. The item can be made of any material, dead or alive, but must be round (ish), bright red, and at least the size of a human head.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.

# Rodia and Altar

## Starting Point



### KNOSIAN CAVERN

Knosian Cavern is more of a hole in the side of a cliff than an actual cavern. If the PCs follow the metallic path of droplets, it leads them here. Inside the hole, the trail of drops is thicker and more regular.

The hole is square, about 3 feet by 3 feet (1 m by 1 m), and goes about 4 feet (1.2 m) deep before it opens into a dark, round room that is only slightly larger than the hole. Inside, a small metallic creature—1 foot (0.3 m) high and about half that in diameter—appears to be melting. Long streams of metal drip from it, and it almost sounds as if it's panting. Attempts to communicate with the creature fail, and it doesn't attack or even move if approached.

If the cavern holds a KEY, it's a large round plate of red metal that appears to be stuck to the creature's side, as if it tried to use the plate to patch that part of its body together. Removing the KEY intact is a level 3 task. The creature is small enough that the characters may decide to take it with them. Repairing it is a level 6 task, requires someone with cold or ice skills or equipment, and takes about an hour. If the creature is repaired, it will follow the characters around, repeating random things that it mishears them say.



### THE INJURED YOLPEN

PCs will likely hear the yolpen's terrible howl long before they see it. If they follow the sound, they will find, in one of the area's few coppers of trees, a large, six-legged elephantine creature lying on its side. Although the yolpen (level 5; Armor 2) might attempt to attack the PCs to protect itself, it's clear at a glance that the creature is in terrible pain due to something lodged deep in the pad of its foot.

Yolpens can speak a pidgin version of the Truth, and if the PCs attempt to communicate with it, it asks them to remove the object from its foot (a level 3 task) and promises not to harm them.

If the yolpen has a KEY, it is the object they remove—a round rod made of metal with a crescent-shaped piece attached to the top of it. Alternatively, if the PCs kill the yolpen, the creature's red heart is large enough that it could be offered as a sacrifice.

**GM Intrusion:** As the PCs are attempting to remove the device, the yolpen accidentally lashes out at the character due to pain.

### CADENTA NEST

As the PCs follow the drops and spatters away from the cliff, they may notice the occasional incandescent purple and blue feather floating in the air. Upon searching the ground nearby, they uncover a well-camouflaged cadenta nest half buried in the ground. If they disturb the nest, a pair of long-winged, long-billed cadentas (level 3, Speed defense as level 4 due to speed) swoops down.

If the nest holds a KEY, it is a fist-sized, shiny green device that appears to shake and rattle of its own accord.

**GM Intrusion:** As the PCs are taking or holding the KEY, a cadenta flies in and grabs at it. The character must make a Speed defense roll to hold onto the KEY. Regardless, the cadenta continues to attack.

## MAN OR BEAST

The characters may happen upon a tall, wiry man named Altin (or he may attempt to ambush them and steal their supplies). Altin (level 3; Armor 2) has been alone in the desert for a long time and has lost much of his humanity, turning to brutality and thievery to satisfy his basic needs. Even his ability to communicate is limited. However, if given something useful or even shiny, he might offer information, although how true or useful it is might be difficult to discern.

Things he might divulge include the following.

- The “talking stick” at the top of the butte is dangerous; that’s why all the big beasts attacked it and why he has stayed away, even though he believes he’d find food and supplies up there.
- He has a metal friend named Vern who follows him around but who must be invisible because he hasn’t seen the little guy lately. If the PCs have fixed Vern (the metallic creature from the cavern) and brought it along, Altin is so delighted to see his friend that he will not attack them and will do his best to help.
- He has seen six humans “go blue” and not come back.

If the man has a KEY, it is a large red pack stuffed with items that he has scavenged and stolen. Inside the pack is a small blue saucer with holes drilled in it, which could be another KEY.

**Loot:** The pack is mostly full of junk, but it also contains two random cyphers, 5 shins, and a 50-foot (15 m) ball of synth cable that sticks only to itself.



## FED TO THE BROOD

Reveal *Show 'Em R* (page 80) to the players.

If the PCs travel through the device, they arrive on the far butte, which is bare except for a floating stone structure. Beneath this structure, in a deep indent in the ground, the hatchlings lie in wait. There appear to be thousands of the creatures, some still in the process of hatching, others not yet hatched.

In the pit with them are at least two bodies that have been stripped of flesh, and Molan (level 3), who appears to be still alive.

The PCs also find Tesir (level 3; Armor 1), who is clearly under the power of the brood’s telepathy. There are signs of a struggle, and it seems clear that Tesir stripped Molan of his clothes, tied his arms and legs, and tossed him into the pit to be eaten. Tesir ambushes the incoming PCs, attempting to do the same to them.

Here, the brood’s telepathic call urges listeners to feed it by whatever means necessary (level 4 Intellect defense task to resist). Overriding the brood’s existing mental hold on a PC is a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task.

The hatchlings attack, biting and clawing the skin from their prey (level 3, mental control as level 5, Speed defense as level 4 due to size).

Rodia, though immune to the brood’s call, is probably so shocked to discover that her god is something else entirely that she might not be much help to the PCs, at least for the first few minutes.

If the PCs go back through the device without subduing the brood, it’s likely that upon their return to the original butte, they will encounter any creatures still being drawn to the device by the brood’s call.

## THE ALTAR OF THE SANGUINE

Reveal *Show 'Em Q* (page 80) to the players.

Once the missing pieces are returned to Rodia, she quickly completes the device (a level 5 task). In that moment, both the teleportation and telepathic abilities of Sanguinity start to return. Any PCs with telepathic abilities will likely hear it first—a soft, sing-song voice. The call urges the characters to come to it, and those who can’t might start to feel antsy and anxious. Resisting the telepathic call is a level 3 task. Once a character resists, he is immune until he goes through the device. Rodia is also immune to the call. In fact, she can’t hear it at all and may be confused about what the PCs are experiencing.

The ritual that Rodia performs requires her to hold the device with both hands and move it in a complicated pattern while uttering a few words in a tongue that is unknown to the PCs. Then she clicks the two pieces together three times, and the device comes to life.

She offers to send the PCs through one at a time, and then follow. Characters who agree to go will be shrouded in dazzling blue sparks and lightning and then completely disappear.

**GM Intrusion:** Instead of sending the PC to the proper location, the device sends an electric shock through the character, dazing her for one round.

**GM Intrusion:** A feathered bearlike creature (level 3; Armor 1; bite deals 4 points of damage) hears the telepathic call of Sanguinity and comes charging at the device.

*If you have time, read “More Details” on page 64 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### THE SANGUNITES

Rodia, Tesir, and Molan are Sanguinites, part of a larger religious order that has long worshipped Sanguinity, a multiplicity of gods that they believe brings good luck, prosperity, health, and safety to their people.

Every year, many of these priests make the trek from their villages to the closest Sanguinity for worship and sacrifice. Although no one knows how many gods there are, it's likely that at least two dozen exist in crater-dens around the world.

### THE BROOD

The newly hatched brood are the young of a creature known as the **minder**. However, because the incubation period is so long and the adults look so little like the young, most people do not realize that they are the same creature.

The minder, about the size of two open hands put together, has deep purple fur and two sets of leathery wings. Nocturnal, it is

nearly impossible to see, although some people hear its telepathic urges as it flies overhead. This has given rise to its mythical status, as most people consider it to be more bogeyman than real, and most will look askance at anyone who says he can hear the minder's call. They are sometimes also known as thought-eaters.

### THE DESERT

This entire area is pocked with large holes plunging deep in the ground and equally large circular bits of land rising up from the surface. Looking at it from atop one of the buttes leaves the impression that something scooped these perfect circles out of the ground and deposited them nearby.

Most of the buttes feature something unique at the top of it—a floating square obelisk, a tree in the shape of a woman's face, a giant blue orb that rolls around the edge of the butte but never rolls off, and so on. The same is true of the holes in the ground; they go deep and are full of nooks and crevices that possibly haven't been explored.

**Minder:** level 3, mind control as level 5, Speed defense as level 4 due to stealth

GMs who have the Ninth World Bestiary could easily substitute a bellowheart (page 24) for the yolpen.



## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

If desired, you can start the scenario with PCs who are aware of the Sanguinites and are seeking them out for another reason. Perhaps they've been sent to find priests who went missing or to retrieve the teleportation device for another client or another need. It's possible that they heard the brood's telepathic call when it first occurred and have been following the creature's trail ever since.

## PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

*From Here to Sanguinity* is suitable in any location that includes large swaths of desertlike terrain. However, the landscape would fit particularly well along the outskirts of the **Jagged Wastes** or within **Errid Kaloum**.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for getting the teleportation device to function.

The PCs may have made some long-term allies in the priests (and, consequently, among the people who live in the priests' villages).

Upon discovering the truth of their religion, the surviving priests might forgo their faith completely, continue the charade so the people in their villages feel safe, or try to destroy all of the remaining broods so they don't harm more people. Those who return to their villages give the characters an open invitation to stop by anytime. Those who try to destroy the remaining broods might invite the PCs to help or just ask the characters to keep an eye out for such creatures on their travels. Broods thrive in protected spaces, such as caves, hollowed-out structures, and very large, empty devices.

PCs who choose to search for more broods and destroy them may come across any of the other adventures in this book as part of their search.



*Jagged Wastes,*  
page 187

*Errid Kaloum,*  
page 191





*The obelisk near Duzanan village isn't the one shown on page 129 of the Numenera corebook—it's not nearly as large and it doesn't produce water—but it has some visual similarities.*

# ESCAPE FROM THE OBELISK

## BRIEF SUMMARY

A deranged nano kidnaps and infects the PCs with a lethal condition. The characters must find an antidote somewhere within the nano's prior-world facility before it's too late.

## DETAILS

An enormous prior-world obelisk hovers within sight of Duzanan village. The obelisk has been there “since forever,” or so the PCs are told if they get a chance to ask about it. To the Duzanan locals, it's just part of the normal scenery, like a cloud that never drifts past. Unbeknownst to the average Duzana,

the obelisk is inhabited by a nano named Glethran. Glethran spent years exploring and slowly converting various cavities and chambers within the obelisk to serve his research needs. What's more, he sometimes plucks travelers passing through Duzanan to serve as experimental hosts to an Iron Wind-derived disease.

At some point—perhaps as the adventure begins—the PCs wake from what they thought was a normal ten-hour rest. They find themselves somewhere completely different from where they began their rest, which was possibly in or near Duzanan, but





potentially anywhere; Glethran has a long reach.

Part of the nano's experiment is to observe and record the PCs' reactions to their new predicament. For their part, the PCs discover that they each bear some kind of weird tumor on their skin that's slowly growing larger. According to a message delivered by Glethran, the tumors will eventually transform each of them into an unmoving solid. The characters may attempt to escape from the obelisk, though it would be wiser to find Glethran first and force him to provide an antidote.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- A nano named Glethran captures the PCs and injects them with a slow-acting "virus" that will eventually kill them unless an antidote or treatment is found.
- The PCs' best chance for survival isn't getting out of the obelisk, but finding an object that will unlock a healing option in Glethran's sanctum inside the structure.
- Glethran knows the ins and outs of the obelisk, and he uses that knowledge against the PCs, mainly by teleporting them around with his Looking Glass.
- Glethran wants to study the PCs as they change and deal with challenges, so he doesn't flee the obelisk even if the characters seem to be finding success.
- The obelisk is from the prior worlds; Glethran has occupied it relatively recently.
- The PCs must find one key that renders them immune to the Looking Glass teleport function, and a second key that will cause the Looking Glass to cure them of their infection.
- The PCs are effectively working against time as well as Glethran's machinations.

### STARTING POINT

After a discontinuity, the PCs awake in an unfamiliar chamber that is obviously of the prior worlds. The discontinuity could be anything—a ten-hour rest, darkness after passing through an odd portal, a flash of strange light, and so on. A two-dimensional

image forms, showing a male human. The man—who almost seems to be standing behind a pane of fogged glass—tells the PCs, "I'm your host. Call me Glethran. As of this moment, you have one day at most before the Iron Wind-derived infection I've given each of you transforms you into a wondrously new but utterly lifeless substance. Until then, have fun exploring the obelisk. If you're especially lucky, maybe you'll get free—for all the good it'll do you. I'll be watching!"

The chamber has four exits. All empty into curved, tubelike tunnels of spongy orange material.

Reveal *Show 'Em S* to the players.

### THE WRAP-UP

The Looking Glass, a level 8 device in Glethran's sanctum (which the nano normally occupies), can cure the PCs if they apply the proper instruction sequence or connect a proper input device to it. The Looking Glass can also send the characters back to where they were kidnapped from, if they wish. **Glethran** is in the chamber, and the PCs must deal with him, too, though he isn't automatically violent.

*The weird tumor is a metal-hard sparkling silver pustule with invasive veins spreading slowly through a victim's skin.*

*The image was sent via one of the functions of the Looking Glass, a device in Glethran's sanctum. Hurting or disrupting the image has no effect on the nano.*

*Describe the interior of the obelisk as a series of winding prior-worlds chambers, connected by ascending and descending tubelike hallways that are spongy and have no windows.*

*Show 'Em S, page 81*

**Glethran:** level 6; health 27; Armor 3 from an esotery; long-range matter-disruption attack inflicts 6 points of damage that ignore Armor

### KEYS

This scenario has two keys.

- ◆ Something that changes the phase of all the characters at once, rendering them immune to Glethran's Looking Glass meddling. This is a dimensional effect, but it could be rendered by possessing the proper knowledge or by application of the proper device.
- ▲ An object or a piece of specific numenera knowledge that serves as a command module or sequence of instructions for the Looking Glass. Using it in conjunction with the Looking Glass will cleanse the infected PCs of their troublesome Iron Wind-derived tumors.

If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs approximately six to eight cyphers.

# The Obelisk

## FLOATING OBELISK

The obelisk is obviously of the prior worlds. The map shows a cross-section view. If the PCs find a way to get to the obelisk's exterior (possibly by using a phase-changer cypher or something similar), they find a fairly smooth synth surface (level 8). Climbing up or down its exterior is a level 5 task. The obelisk's bottom-most point is still about 1,000 feet (300 meters) above the rocky, mountainous ground below. Since the obelisk spins slowly in place, PCs on the exterior may eventually spy the village of Duzanan in the distance.

## WAKE UP

The PCs are deposited in this location by Glethran (using the Looking Glass), and it is where events described under Starting Point occur. From here, they see a total of four passages. Two are dark, faint green light shines from the passage leading down, and cold blue light leaks from the passage leading up.

## PREVIOUS VICTIM

A man named Kadak (level 5) is a previous victim of Glethran who hasn't yet fully succumbed to the nano's infection. Half of Kadak's body (one arm, one leg, and half his face) has been transformed to immobile, silvery metal, increasing the difficulty of all tasks he attempts by three steps. Kadak says that Glethran's image appears sometimes to taunt him, and other times to pluck him from one chamber and drop him into another, instantly. Kadak has given up and is waiting for the transformation to complete so his suffering will end.

Kadak either knows a command phrase or possesses a device that serves as the KEY. Extracting that is a difficulty 5 task, however, because he has lost interest in living.

**GM Intrusion:** Kadak's touch or mere presence causes a character's own infection to advance, rendering the PC's hand into a solid mass of strange material.

## GLETHRAN'S SANCTUM

This chamber is filled with numenera control panels, banks of machinery, and walls of mysterious devices, but none are as impressive as the Looking Glass, which covers one wall.

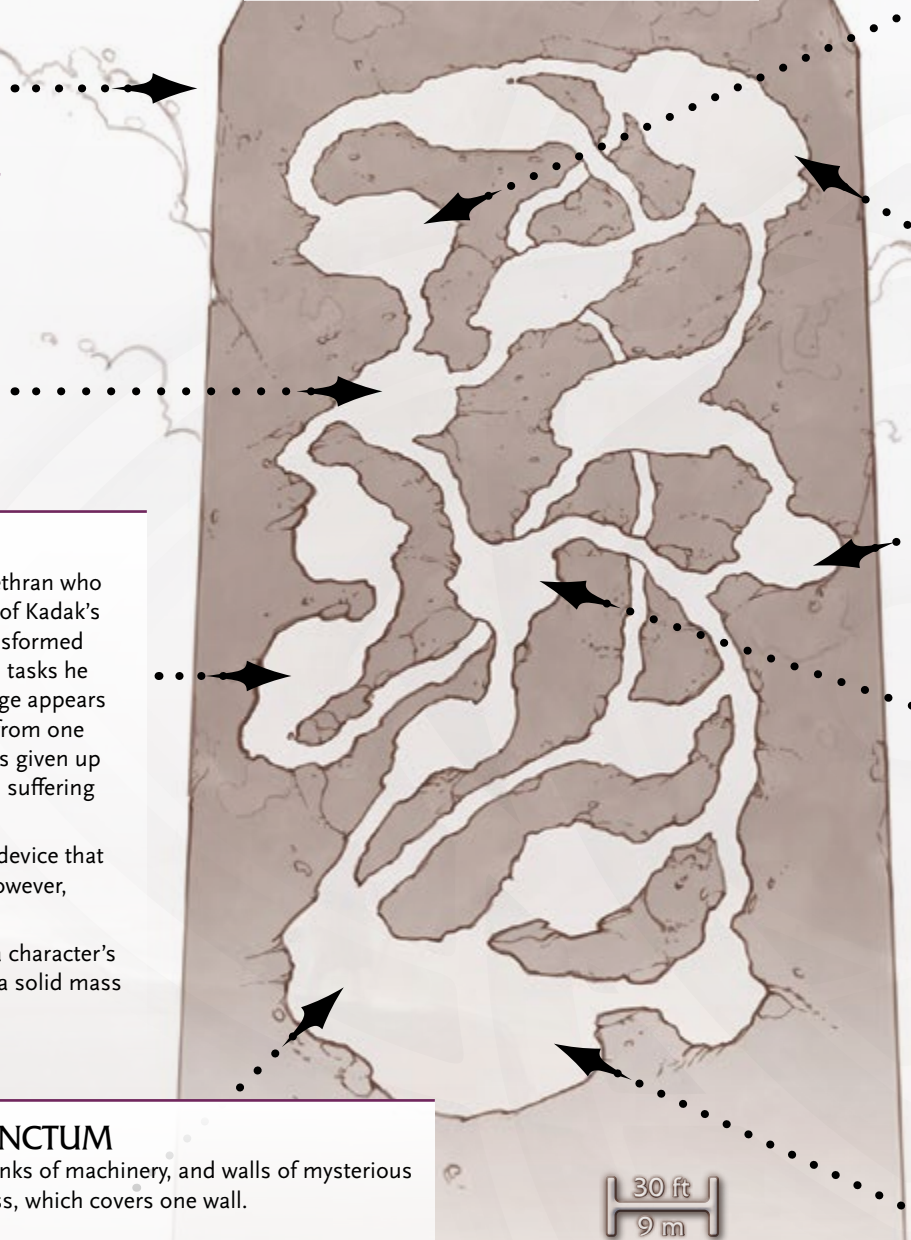
Reveal *Show 'Em T* (page 81) to the players.

Glethran is here on the Looking Glass dais, though he doesn't attack the PCs merely for finding him. He wants to see whether they can save themselves from their situation—he is a dedicated data gatherer. Of course, he defends himself if attacked, and he won't permit the characters to try to destroy the Looking Glass. If engaged in conversation, he indicates that the PCs may have the means to save themselves, if they can find a way to program the Looking Glass in the proper fashion; the nano himself has not discovered the method (though he hasn't tried too hard).

If it comes to a fight, Glethran uses the Looking Glass to pluck a flock of five **tetrahydraz** he's had his eye on for just such an occasion and drop them into the midst of the PCs. If things look bleak for him, the nano attempts to escape through the Looking Glass.

## OBELISK INTERIOR

All the obelisk chambers shown on the map are composed of spongelike orange material that is hard to destroy (level 7). Though some tunnels may seem quite steep on the map cross-section, they are easy to navigate normally.



### THE GREEN WOMAN

A female human with numenera components liberally studding her skin floats in suspended animation in a transparent tube (level 8) filled with green, translucent fluid. Waking the woman even briefly is a level 6 task (a task Glethran has never succeeded at). If awakened by the activation of the external controls, she doesn't seem alarmed. She can communicate telepathically to the PCs in the Truth. She tells them that the obelisk is "still waiting." If she has the KEY, she either tells them a command phrase or mentally instructs the room to produce the device from a previously hidden cavity.

**GM Intrusion:** Glethran teleports one of the PCs who fails a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll into one of the open cube faces of the Grinder of Infinities.

### THE GRINDER OF INFINITIES

A 9-foot (3 m) cube floats in this chamber, about 3 feet (1 m) off the floor. Each of the cube's six sides opens into an interior space that isn't shared with any of the other sides' interiors; some sort of dimensional effect is at play. Each interior space (six in all) is filled with a variety of the numenera, none of which are immediately obvious. Either one of the KEYS might be inside, along with 20 shins, though salvaging a KEY is a level 4 task.

Entering the cube causes the numenera components within to spin up to lethal velocity, and the intruder must succeed on a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll or take 5 points of damage. This continues until someone succeeds on a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task to understand the cube well enough to temporarily end the effect.

**GM Intrusion:** The PC becomes "lost" by falling through a recursive dimensional space within the cube. Finding her way back is a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task.

### SCULPTURE OF HYPERCUBES

A device made of dozens of yellow crystal cubes is fixed in this chamber like a sculpture, shining golden light. It moves constantly, so its shape is always changing. A PC studying the sculpture who succeeds on a difficulty 5 numenera-related task opens a brief link to the datasphere and can ask one question. If the proper question is asked, the answer might be one of the KEYS.

**GM Intrusion:** Glethran teleports one of the PCs who fails a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll back to the Wake Up chamber.

### CREEPING SLIME

Metallic, liquid, and amorphous, this animate slime (level 5; Armor 2; can bludgeon all creatures within immediate range; killed foe is absorbed) is 15 feet (5 m) in diameter. It is attracted to anything that shares its condition, such as some or all of the PCs. It tries to batter them into submission and then absorb them. If the metallic ooze has either KEY, it is a device left behind when the creature evaporates after being killed.

**GM Intrusion:** The touch of the creeping slime advances the PC's infection, giving her a third, silvery arm not under her direct control.

### THE LOOKING GLASS

The Looking Glass (level 8) is an immovable device of vast power. Someone who succeeds on a difficulty 2 Intellect-based task can accomplish tasks similar to what Glethran has been able to pull off—as well as make a portal to most places a PC has previously visited.

**Glethran:** level 6; health 27; Armor 3 from an esotery; long-range matter-disruption attack inflicts 6 points of damage that ignore Armor. Glethran carries a hypodermic needle with eight doses of an Iron Wind-derived virus.

**GM Intrusion:** The PC's infection advances, turning half his face into a solid silvery mass (one eye, half a mouth, one ear, and so on), which increases the difficulty of all sensing tasks by two steps.

**Loot:** About 20 shins and five random cyphers can be scavenged from the chamber, not to mention the Looking Glass itself, though it isn't going anywhere.

### DUZANAN VILLAGE

The town of Duzanan has a population of 6,000 and is situated near a mountain range.

It's about a day's travel from the area of the obelisk. People in the town say they sometimes get travelers, but most strangers who show up in Duzanan seem to leave suddenly, never to return.

*If you have time, read "More Details" on page 70 for information and ideas to enhance this scenario.*

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### INSIDE THE OBELISK

For all Glethran's time and study of the obelisk, it has many chambers and secrets that he has yet to understand, not least of which is the green woman. If the PCs spend more time in the obelisk, they find other chambers containing more humanoids similar to the green woman in stasis capsules (as well as other weirdness). All the static humanoids are waiting for some event, but the PCs probably can't easily determine whether that event is uncountable aeons in the future, or whether it's long past and no one told the sleepers.

### THE LOOKING GLASS

As an immobile artifact under the PCs' control, the Looking Glass has the following statistics.

**Level:** 1d6 + 3

**Form:** Silvery mirror framed by solid, silvery humanoid forms

**Effect:** Each use of the Looking Glass is a difficulty 2 Intellect-based task and can accomplish one of the following effects.

1. Cause the glass to view a location the user has visited before for up to one minute.
2. Cause the glass to view an individual the user has seen before for up to one minute.
3. Project an audible, two-dimensional image of the user to a location or an individual currently shown on the glass.
4. Transport the user and his allies to the location or into the presence of the individual currently shown on the glass.
5. Simultaneously transport up to seven individuals shown on the glass to a location the user has previously visited (assuming none of them have been rendered immune to this effect by one of the KEYS).
6. Remove any deleterious nanobot infection from individuals who transport themselves to another location through the glass (assuming the user has obtained the KEY that grants this functionality).

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d20

### GRINDER OF INFINITIES

This object was an artifact of considerable power and importance to entities of one of the prior worlds. PCs skilled with the numenera who really take the time to study it feel that its full capabilities are slumbering, perhaps beyond recall. They also gain the sense that the grinder might be a shifting portal to an infinity of alternate times, locations, and dimensions. However, the control mechanism for it is lost. If it could be found and the Grinder of Infinities reactivated, who knows what might be possible?

### USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

If desired, you can start *Escape From the Obelisk* with PCs who are not caught unawares, but rather are traveling through the region. Perhaps they were in the area looking for Kadak because they want to collect a 100-shin bounty on him leveled by the Aeon Priests for reasons not explained. Kadak disappeared in the area a few months ago while investigating a floating obelisk. According to the scant notes the PCs have about him, Kadak thought that the obelisk might contain something he called the Looking Glass.

If the characters visit Duzanan, villagers questioned say they remember Kadak arriving a few months before, filled with questions about the obelisk. They direct the PCs to talk with old Anke the innkeeper for information about Kadak, or to Myran for more about the Looking Glass.

### ANKE THE INNKEEPER

Anke, a sturdy woman of middle years, remembers Kadak well, since he left suddenly without paying his room and board (3 shins). If the PCs pay his debt, she can't tell them much more than before, other than to warn them to leave Duzanan; she whispers that all strangers in town tend to disappear suddenly, and no one knows why.

Anke: level 2, detecting falsehoods as level 4



### MYRAN THE HISTORIAN

Myran is a youngish man whose left hand is composed of some kind of solid silvery metal that doesn't move. If asked about the hand, he shrugs and says it happened years ago. He is a bit spacey: his sentences tend to trail off as he's talking, as some new vista of thought occurs to him. Myran's home is full of various numenera, as well as books and scrolls. On the topic of the Looking Glass, he tells the PCs that it's a local legend about a dimensional doorway, through which a user can walk to his heart's desire. Most people say it's only a story, but Myran believes that if the Looking Glass is anywhere, it's up in the obelisk.

### PLACEMENT IN THE NINTH WORLD

This adventure is suitable in any location that includes semi-mountainous terrain in an out-of-the-way area, either in the Steadfast or in the Beyond. However, the obelisk is particularly suited to the foothills of the Black Riage mountains in eastern *Thaemor*.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering Kadak if they help him

in some fashion or were following him to collect a bounty, and 2 XP for discovering the Looking Glass.

The principal measure of success for the PCs is finding a way to get the Looking Glass to cleanse them of their infection.

Further exploration of the obelisk is possible if the GM wishes to flesh out the interior.

If Glethran escapes through the Looking Glass, he will try to return to the obelisk one day. However, before he does, he might inject his remaining doses of Iron Wind-derived virus into hosts in the wild to see how it responds outside the obelisk, potentially setting a terrible plague in motion. If the PCs hear of the virus and the damage it wreaks on victims, they likely recognize it as quite similar to what they once suffered. Since the PCs are now immune and know how victims might be cleansed, the characters are ideally suited to dealing with the problem if they wish to provide aid. This might take place in Berenock, getting them involved in *The Spider Knight*, or in Akkoris, drawing them into *Guilty!*

**Myran:** level 4, all tasks related to numenera as level 6



*Thaemor*, page 152



A



B





C



D



E



F

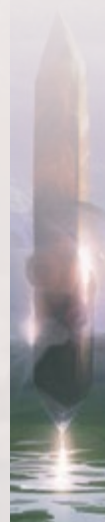




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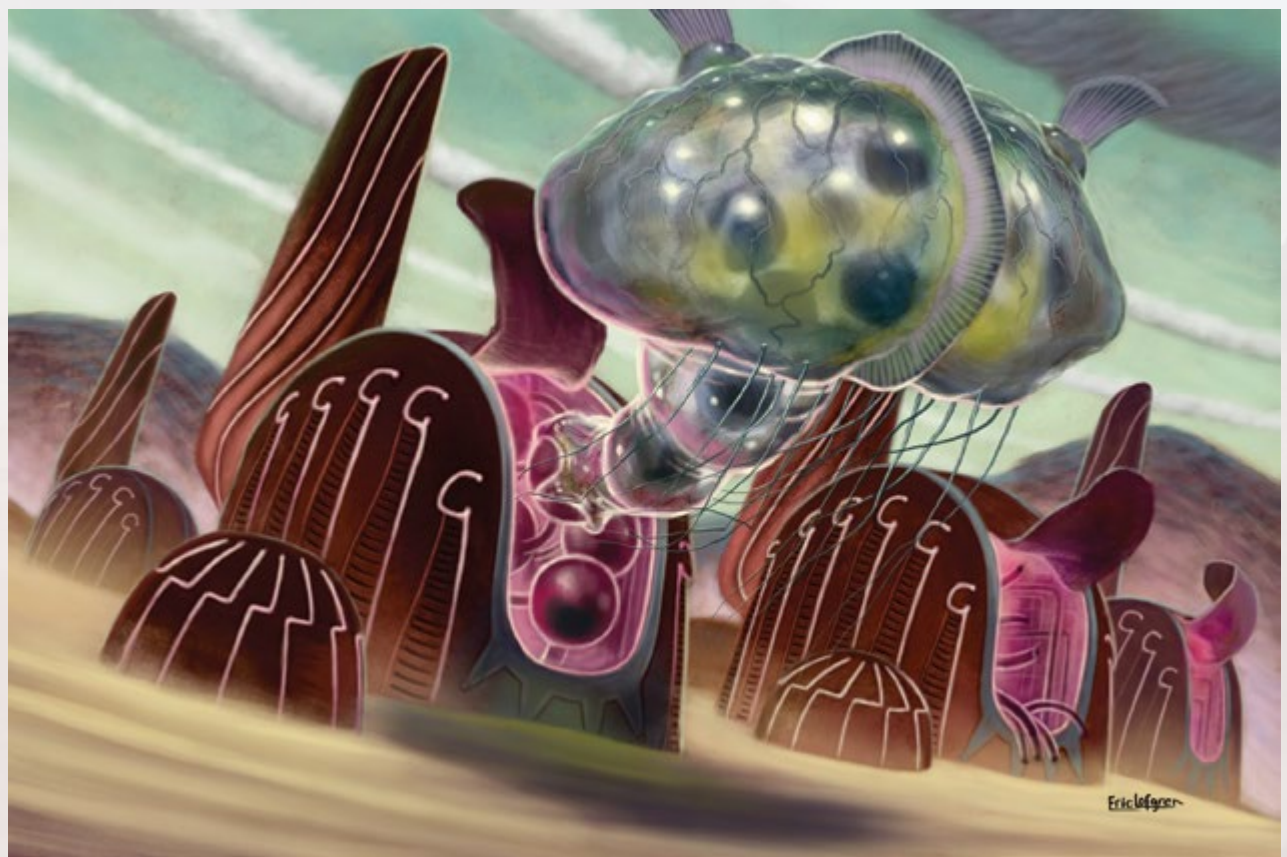




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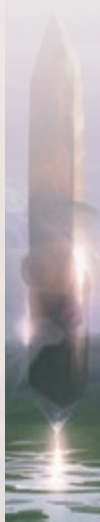




S



T



# NUMENERA

## CHEAT SHEET

### ARMOR

ARMOR TYPE	MIGHT COST PER HOUR	SPEED POOL REDUCTION WHILE WORN
Light armor (1 point of Armor)	1	2
Medium armor (2 points of Armor)	2	3
Heavy armor (3 points of Armor)	3	5

### WEAPON DAMAGE

Light weapon	2 points of damage (reduces the difficulty of the attack roll by one step)
Medium weapon	4 points of damage
Heavy weapon	6 points of damage

### TASK DIFFICULTY

TASK DIFFICULTY	DESCRIPTION	TARGET NO.	GUIDANCE
0	Routine	0	Anyone can do this basically every time.
1	Simple	3	Most people can do this most of the time.
2	Standard	6	Typical task requiring focus, but most people can usually do this.
3	Demanding	9	Requires full attention; most people have a 50/50 chance to succeed.
4	Difficult	12	Trained people have a 50/50 chance to succeed.
5	Challenging	15	Even trained people often fail.
6	Intimidating	18	Normal people almost never succeed.
7	Formidable	21	Impossible without skills or great effort.
8	Heroic	24	A task worthy of tales told for years afterward.
9	Immortal	27	A task worthy of legends that last lifetimes.
10	Impossible	30	A task that normal humans couldn't consider (but one that doesn't break the laws of physics).

### POOLS

Your Pool is the most basic measurement of a stat. Your three Pools are Might, Intellect, and Speed.

### EFFORT

You apply Effort when your character is really working hard to succeed. Applying Effort represents pushing yourself physically and/or mentally, and it costs. But for every level of Effort you apply, you reduce the difficulty of your attempt by one step.

To apply Effort, spend points from the applicable Pool:

- 1 level of Effort: 3 points (minus your Edge, if any)
- 2 levels of Effort: 5 points (minus your Edge, if any)
- 3 levels of Effort: 7 points (minus your Edge, if any)

### EDGE

When a task requires you to spend points from a stat Pool, your Edge for that stat reduces the cost. It also reduces the cost of applying Effort to a roll.

### ASSETS

An asset is anything that helps in a significant way, including a tool or piece of equipment, aid from another character, or a circumstance that benefits the attempt.

If your GM agrees that you have an asset, it reduces a task's difficulty by one step.

### SKILLS

Skills represent general areas of expertise, and are defined loosely and broadly. If your GM agrees that an area of training applies, it's sort of like an asset—it reduces the difficulty by one step. Some characters become specialized in a skill, which reduces the difficulty by two steps. See the *Numenera* corebook (page 25) for a list of sample skills.

## BACKGROUND

### Connection

Uraz is never fooled by your illusions or affected by your tricky abilities. You suspect it has something to do with the mechanism fused to him. You'd like to learn the limits, but you are hesitant to reveal his immunity.

During an attack by broken hounds, you risked your life for Tanasia, which isn't like you. For some reason, she never seems comfortable when that particular incident comes up.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were tailing Karner because of his connections to someone of authority, thinking that maybe you could learn something useful. But he noticed you, and you had to play it off as being interested in the adventure instead.

### Background

Your best friend from childhood is now an Aeon Priest.

## NOTES

# NUMENERA

Crail

NAME

Stealthy

DESCRIPTOR

jack

TYPE

WHO

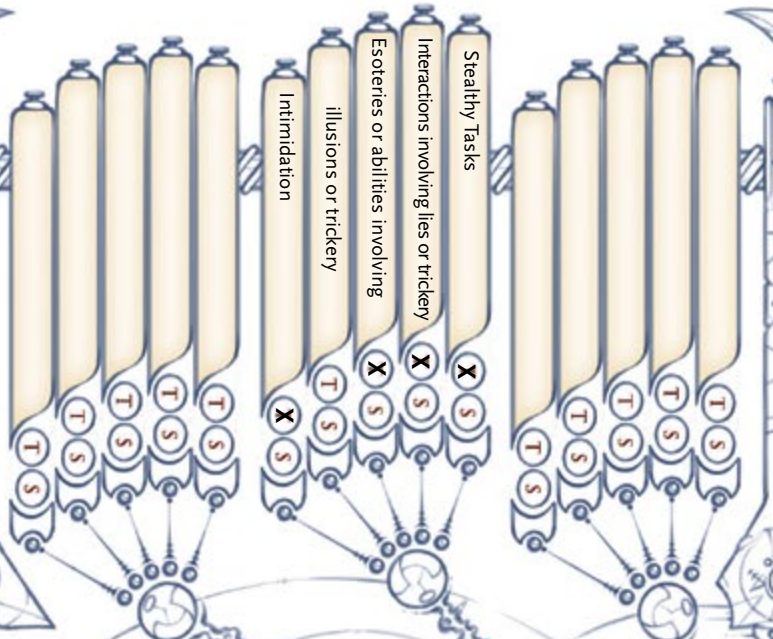
Crafts Illusions

FOCUS



CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION

**SKILLS**



**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

- Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons
- Flex Skill
- Skill with Defense: Speed
- Practiced in Armor
- Minor Illusion (1 Intellect point)
- Inability in movement-related tasks

**1** TIER    **1** EFFORT    **1** XP

**MIGHT** POOL **10** EDGE

**SPEED** POOL **15** EDGE **1**

**INTELLECT** POOL **13** EDGE

**IMPAIRED**    **DAMAGE**    **DEBILITATED**

**RECOVERY ROLLS**

1D6+7

1 ACTION    10 MINS    1 HOUR    10 HOURS

**ARMOR** **1**

**ATTACKS**

Clawed gauntlet (light)	-1	2
Crossbow (medium)		4

**CYPHERS**

- Magnetic attack drill (level 5), page 289
- Monoblade (level 7), page 291

**2** LIMIT

**POSSESSIONS**

- EQUIPMENT**
- Clothing
  - Synth sleeveless tunic (light armor)
  - Explorer's pack
  - Pack of light tools
  - 12 medium bolts

**ARTIFACTS & ODDITIES**

A metallic, halo-like disc that, once placed above the head, floats there indefinitely.

**SHINS** **8**

## BACKGROUND

### Connection

Haro is particularly tuned into your mental powers. While you're within short range of her, the two of you are always in telepathic contact, and (if you were high enough tier), you suspect she would not be harmed by your Psychic Bursts.

You think you saw Uraz sleepwalk one time, though you wonder if it was his mechanical skeleton rather than his own mind that controlled him. The idea worries you, because you suspect you can't affect the minds of mechanisms.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

Crail told you that she had a lead on a potentially lucrative information source. Unfortunately, she's since told you her lead has grown cold.

### Background

You trained for a time with a group of Aeon Priests, and they still look upon you with fondness. Most of them, anyhow.

## NOTES

# NUMENÉRA

**Etolas**

NAME

**Strong-Willed**

DESCRIPTOR

nano

TYPE

WHO

**Commands Mental Powers**

FOCUS



CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION © 2015

### SKILLS

Resisting mental effects **X S S**

Tasks requiring incredible focus or concentration **X S S**

Understanding and identifying numerera **X S S**

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Practiced With Light Weapons

Onslaught (1 Intellect point)

Ward (already figured in Armor)

Telepathic (1+ Intellect points)

Inability: figuring out puzzles or problems, memorizing things, or using lore

1

EFFORT

1

XP

MIGHT

POOL 10

EDGE

SPEED

POOL 10

EDGE

INTELLECT

POOL 19

EDGE 1

IMPAIRED  
DAMAGE  
DEBILITATED

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+1

1 ACTION

10 MINS

1 HOUR

10 HOURS

ARMOR

1

### ATTACKS

Dagger (light)

MOD -1

DMG 2

### CYPHERS

- Datasphere siphon (level 6), page 283
- Eagleseye (level 5), page 285
- Friction-reducing gel (level 5), page 286

LIMIT 3

### POSSESSIONS

#### EQUIPMENT

- Clothing
- A book of the numerera
- Purple head covering artifact adds 1 point to your Intellect Pool (already added to your Pool). If you're ever without the artifact, subtract 5 points from your Intellect Pool; the points are restored if you regain the item.

#### ARTIFACTS & ODDITIES

- Canister that produces an extremely foul odor and a puff of dark red smoke when opened

SHINS 6

## BACKGROUND

### Connection

Etolas can cause your telekinetic powers to act oddly. Every once in a while, if he stands directly next to you, your powers are cancelled, but at other times, they seem to improve.

Karner seems like he's got something to prove to you. You suspect you may have accidentally insulted him and his flowery ways once.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You suspect that the other PCs won't succeed without you.

### Background

You learned nano-sorcery in the temple of an obscure god. Its priests and worshippers, although small in number, respect and admire your talents and potential.

## NOTES

# NUMENERA

Haro

NAME

Clever

DESCRIPTOR

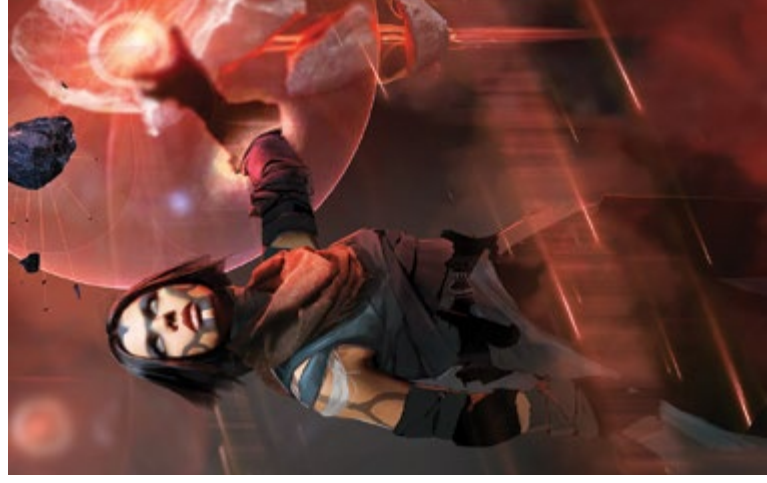
nano

TYPE

WHO

Focuses Mind Over Matter

FOCUS



CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION

**SKILLS**

Skills section featuring a gear mechanism with 15 slots. The slots are arranged in three columns of five. The top row contains 'T S' in each slot. The middle row contains 'T S' in each slot. The bottom row contains 'T S' in each slot. The gear mechanism is connected to a central hub.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Trained in all tasks involving, identifying or assessing danger, lies, quality, importance, function or power.

Mental esoterics

Practiced With Light Weapons

Onslaught (1 Intellect point)

Scan (2 Intellect points)

Deflect Attacks (1 Intellect point)

Inability at any task involving lore and knowledge not related to the numnera

1 TIER

1 EFFORT

XP

MIGHT

POOL 8

EDGE

POOL 11

EDGE

SPEED

INTELLECT

POOL 17

EDGE 1

IMPAIRED

DAMAGE

DEBILITATED

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+ 1

1 ACTION

10 MINS

1 HOUR

10 HOURS

ARMOR

1

**ATTACKS**

Dagger (light)	-1	2

**CYPHERS**

Sheen (level 6), page 294

Stim (level 5), page 295

Catseye (level 4), page 282

3 LIMIT

**POSSESSIONS**

**EQUIPMENT**

Clothing

A book of the numnera

A pack of light tools

**ARTIFACTS & ODDITIES**

Programmable tattoos; you can alter the tattoos on your body if you spend an hour concentrating on how you'd like them to appear.

SHINS

14

## BACKGROUND

### Connection

You are always trying to impress Haro with your skill, wit, appearance, or bravado. Up to this point, anyway, she seems oblivious.

You like to imbibe, sometimes a little too much. You overdid it once, but someone brought you home safely. You're not 100% sure who it was, but it might have been Uraz. So far, you've been too embarrassed to ask.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

Haro made an off-hand comment about some people being more flash than substance, and you joined the group to show her that some people can be both.

Crail kind of creeps you out, but you haven't told her that.

### Background

You have a relative who holds a fairly high position of authority. You ran away from all that because governing and ruling seemed more trouble than fun.

## NOTES

# NUMENÉRA

**Karner**

NAME

**Swift**

DESCRIPTOR

**glaive**

TYPE

**WHO**

**Fights With Panache**

FOCUS



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### SKILLS

Initiative **X S**

Running **X S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**T S**

**1** TIER

**1** EFFORT

XP

**MIGHT** POOL **16** EDGE **1**

**SPEED** POOL **14** EDGE **1**

**INTELLECT** POOL **8** EDGE

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced in Armor

Practiced With All Weapons

Pierce (1 Speed point)

Thrust (1 Might point)

Attack Flourish

(Inability at balancing offset by training in balancing)

**DAMAGE**

**IMPAIRED**

**DEBILITATED**

**RECOVERY ROLLS**

**1D6+1**

**1 ACTION**

**10 MINS**

**1 HOUR**

**10 HOURS**

**ARMOR**

**2**

### ATTACKS

Sword-staff (heavy)	6
Dagger (light)	2
Broadsword, jeweled (med)	4

MOD DMG

### CYPHERS

Detonation, sonic (level 8), page 285

Instant servant (level 5), page 288

**2** LIMIT

### POSSESSIONS

**EQUIPMENT**

Clothing (extremely stylish)

Explorer's pack

Extra throwing daggers x3

Chainmail hauberk (medium armor); reduce Speed Pool by 1 while worn

### ARTIFACTS & ODDITIES

A throwing-verred (twin-bladed short sword) that deals only 1 point of damage, but always reappears in your hand within a few hours if you haven't already retrieved it.

**SHINS**

**2**

## BACKGROUND

### Connection

You risked your life to save Crail's during an attack by broken hounds. You were wounded, and though you were healed, the wound still sometimes pains you. Whether Crail knows this is up to you.

You know a secret word that makes Uraz lose control of the mechanical skeleton he's fused to, apparently awakening a different consciousness within the skeleton. You're not sure the consciousness has the best interests of Uraz in mind, but boy, can it fight!

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

There is a reward involved, and you need the money.

### Background

You trained in an isolated monastery far away. The monks think of you as a sibling, but you're a stranger to all others.

## NOTES

# NUMENERA

Tanasia

NAME

Graceful

DESCRIPTOR

glaiive

TYPE

WHO

Masters Weaponry

FOCUS



CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION © ZJB

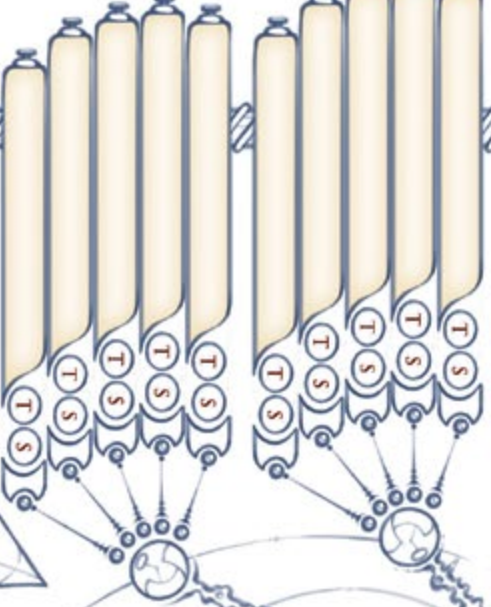
# SKILLS

Balance and careful movement **X S**

Physical performing arts **X S**

Speed defense **X S**

Jumping **X S**



# SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced in Armor

Practiced With All Weapons

Thrust (1 Might point)

Pierce (1 Speed point)

Weapon Master: +1 damage with broadsword (already figured in attacks)

**1** TIER

**1** EFFORT

**XP**

**MIGHT** POOL **16** EDGE **1**

**SPEED** POOL **12** EDGE **1**

**INTELLECT** POOL **8** EDGE

**IMPAIRED**

**DAMAGE**

**DEBILITATED**

**RECOVERY ROLLS**

**1D6+1**

**1 ACTION**

**10 MINS**

**1 HOUR**

**10 HOURS**

**ARMOR**

**3**

# ATTACKS

**Broadsword (medium)** **5**

**Crossbow (medium)** **4**

# CYPHERS

Detonation, gravity (level 6), page 284

Gravity-nullifying spray (level 8), page 287

**2** LIMIT

# POSSESSIONS

**EQUIPMENT**

- Clothing
- Explorer's pack
- Shield
- Synth bodywrap (medium armor); reduce Speed Pool by 1 while worn
- 12 medium bolts

# ARTIFACTS & ODDITIES

Pair of holsters containing metallic objects with handles and triggers that instantly etch tattoos when they are pressed against flesh and the trigger is pulled; one etches a black scorpion, the other a red eye

**SHINS**

**5**

## BACKGROUND

### Connection

Tanasia knows a secret command word that renders you unconscious for up to one minute, during which time a “battle AI” comes online in your fused exoskeleton and acts according to its own mysterious agenda (which the GM determines). Once used, the phrase won’t work on you again until several days have passed.

You once found Karner so drunk (or otherwise altered by a drug) that he couldn’t say his own name. You brought him home and saw him safely to bed. You’re not sure he remembers.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

The parts you need to repair and maintain yourself are running low, and you want to salvage new ones from locations rich in the numenera.

### Background

You worked alongside your father, who was skilled in many things, and in fact fused you to the mechanical exoskeleton when you would have otherwise died from a terrible fall. Then one day he disappeared with no explanation.

## NOTES

# NUMENERA

**Uraz**

NAME

**Mechanical**

DESCRIPTOR

**jack**

TYPE

**WHO**

**Fuses Flesh and Steel**

FOCUS



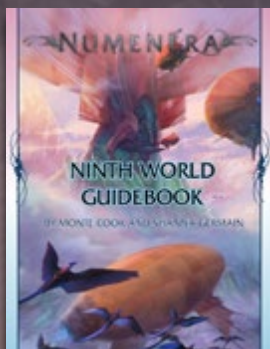
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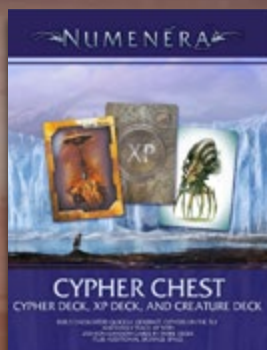
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