

# THE STRANGE™

## STRANGE REVELATIONS

TEN INSTANT ADVENTURES FOR THE STRANGE



BRUCE R. CORDELL



The background of the page features a large, ornate, golden dragon sculpture on the left side, with its head and front paws visible. To the right, there is a window or a screen displaying a cityscape with various buildings and structures. The title "STRANGE REVELATIONS" is centered across the middle of the image, with a blue and white gradient and a slight shadow effect.

# STRANGE REVELATIONS

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## INTRODUCTION



Throughout this book, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to *The Strange* 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.

Keys, page 6

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

If you've heard about, played, or been a game master for *Weird Discoveries: Ten Instant Adventures for Numenera*, then you probably have a pretty good idea of what's in store for you inside this book. *Weird Discoveries* proved to be incredibly popular—so popular, in fact, that I realized I'd be a fool if I didn't "steal" the format for my next book of adventures for *The Strange*. Which is exactly what I did, and it's what you're reading now. You're welcome.

In case you need a refresher, Instant Adventures are designed for when you'd love to suggest playing an RPG for the evening, but no one has planned anything ahead of time. Wouldn't it be amazing if you could say, "Hey, I know—let's play *The Strange*," 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 question, along with the desire to avoid linear adventures that railroad the player characters down a single path with no room for variation, is what led Monte Cook to develop the Instant Adventures format. It allows players to go where they want to go, do what they want to do, and find interest in whatever they want. At the same time, it allows the GM to guide things along at least enough so that the group doesn't spin its wheels and get frustrated. This means that in each scenario, certain key factors—which we just call **keys**—are identified to create a possible throughline so that something interesting happens while everyone's at the table.

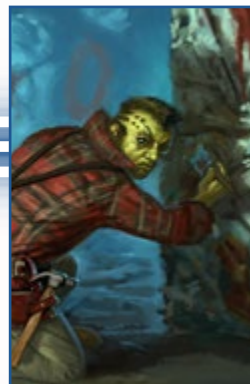
To make it all work, the scenario write-ups are short. Even though we include a few extra pages of additional notes and fun details for people who want to use these scenarios outside of our low-prep goal, we still pack a lot of adventure information into a relatively modest space. Each adventure is essentially two pages of preparation and salient points, two pages of solid adventure material, and two pages of additional notes if the GM has more time or wants to incorporate the adventure into a longer campaign.

The book also has Show 'Ems that go with each adventure. 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 starting on page 72.

The scenarios in *Strange Revelations* ask the GM to do a little improvisational game mastering so she can take a very brief encounter write-up and flesh it out as needed. But frankly, every GM is called upon to do that already in normal games. Rather than a designer trying to cover every contingency or crazy scheme the players might cook up, we think 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 maniac car-driving Valkyries in Cannibal Wasteland, for example, a lengthy discussion of their battle tactics isn't really needed.

All of which means that we've essentially fashioned a new way to present and use published adventures. The wild success of *Weird Discoveries* shows that Instant Adventures are easy and fun to run. We hope that you find that to be true as well.

# GMING INSTANT ADVENTURES FOR THE STRANGE



Many GMs prefer to run a game with little preparation, making it all up as they go along. Some find this harder. The Instant Adventures format attempts 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.

Either way, you'll have to do some improvising. That's pretty much what GMs do. So 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.

## WHERE TO START A SCENARIO

A big part of playing a game of *The Strange* involves [translating](#) into alternate recursions. But here's the thing: when starting a one-off game of *The Strange*, translation doesn't have to be a big deal. If the scenario you've selected takes place in [Ardeyn](#) and your characters are already there, great. But if they're in another [recursion](#) or you're using the pregenerated characters (which the players have no history with), you can just begin the game by saying, "You're in Ardeyn."

To this end, each scenario describes the recursion where the PCs begin and, if necessary, tells you what foci to make active for their characters. The recursions featured in *Strange Revelations* are Cannibal Wasteland, Crash, Steam London, Ruk, and Ardeyn, and the pregenerated characters include the relevant foci on their sheets.

However, if this is the first time you're running *The Strange* or the first time the players are playing it, it's not a bad idea to give everyone a five-minute preamble about how they start on Earth and then translate to a recursion, taking on the context of the new location as they do so.

## FLESHING OUT SCENARIO 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 use their steam-powered suit to fill a hot air balloon.

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 *Cannibal Wasteland*, the PCs might find the petrified hand of a mutant wearing a crystal ring and use it to detect especially intense radiation. Does the hand pulse when pointed in the right direction? Does it move and point in the direction of the radiation? 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 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.*

*Translation, page 125*

*Ardeyn, page 160*

*Recursion, page 136*



## USING THE KEYS

The biggest difference between running the scenarios in *Strange Revelations* 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 to interact with the insane fallen star in order to resolve the adventure (*Starfall in Ardeyn*), that NPC is one of the keys. Since the NPC is crucial to the forward motion of the session, the GM should pace things so the characters at least have a chance to find the NPC. However, the GM

might decide that the NPC 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 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 complications) 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.

*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.*

## THE FORMAT OF THESE SCENARIOS

The scenarios in *Strange Revelations* 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. See the sidebar Using the Keys, above.

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.

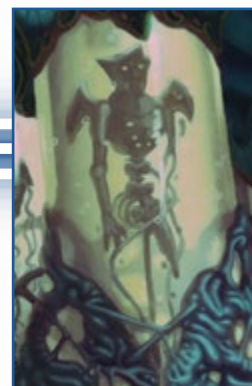
Finally, each scenario ends with notes for GMs who want to incorporate it into an ongoing campaign. You'll also find ideas for further development if you want to keep things going after the adventure is done. This includes awarding experience points (XP) for discoveries and actions. *None of this needs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

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

We 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.

# NEW FOCI



Some of the new recursions described in this book offer foci that do not appear in *The Strange* corebook. Though the pregenerated characters come with the equipment and abilities required to play those characters at tier 1, it's useful for the GM and players to have full write-ups for each new focus.

## DRIVES LIKE A MANIAC

Your skill behind the wheel is legendary. When the engine is racing and the wind's in your hair, you truly feel alive. Where you go, others fear to follow, for the wastes are cruel to those whose vehicles break down. Whether balancing on two wheels (or one), jumping another vehicle, or driving head-on toward an enemy car, you don't care about the risks. You live to drive, and your fondest wish, should it ever come to it, is to die behind the wheel.

Driving is a job for the elite and dangerous, so you wear dangerous-looking clothing and body ornamentation, including a long leather coat, driving gloves, tattoos and piercings aplenty, and an arresting hairdo.

Spinners and vectors are most often drawn to this focus—spinners because they view their vehicle as one more form of expression, and vectors because they can run over their foes.

**Connection:** If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. You promised that character a trip anywhere she wanted to go in your vehicle. She hasn't yet taken you up on your offer.

2. Pick one other PC. You drove a getaway vehicle for him after he committed an offense against a powerful warlord. Trouble hasn't found you because of it. Yet.

3. Pick one other PC. That character tells you he was hired to kill you, but decided not to.

4. Pick one or more other PCs. You accidentally crashed your vehicle when those characters were riding along. Everyone was hurt to some extent.

**Equipment:** Clothing appropriate to your recursion (in *Cannibal Wasteland*, a leather coat and gloves), light armor, a weapon of your choice, filled waterskin, 90 bullets (as currency and ammunition), and, with your GM's approval, access to a motorcycle or car.

**Minor Effect Suggestion:** You can drive an additional 50 feet (15 m) this round.

**Major Effect Suggestion:** You can take an immediate extra action related to driving a vehicle.

**Tier 1: Driver.** You are trained in all tasks related to driving a car, truck, or motorcycle, including mechanical repair tasks. Enabler.

**Driving on the Edge.** You can take a shot with a light or medium ranged weapon and attempt a driving task as a single action. Enabler.

**Tier 2: Survivor.** You are trained at finding food and water in places where such things are difficult to find. This doesn't just mean out on the sands. In the confines of an unfriendly encampment without any bullets, you still might be able to find enough sustenance to get by. Enabler.

**Stare Them Down.** One doesn't play games of chicken against other maniac drivers without gaining mental strength. You're trained in Intellect defense tasks. Enabler.

**Tier 3: Expert Driver.** You are specialized in all tasks related to driving a car, truck, or motorcycle, including mechanical repair tasks. Enabler.

### Drives Like a Maniac GM

**Intrusions:** *The engine develops a knock. The bridge on the road ahead is out. The windshield develops a serious crack.*

**Run 'Em Down.** *Training in driving makes the character practiced in using a vehicle as a weapon. If the vehicle is used to run down a victim or ram an enemy vehicle, treat a car or truck as a heavy weapon, and treat a motorcycle as a medium weapon.*



*A holotablet works like a tablet on modern Earth, but it's a hologram that a user can call or dismiss with a hand motion.*

**Fights Aliens GM Intrusions:** *Your space suit springs a leak. An alien spore infects your breathing apparatus. Alien goo has somehow contaminated your gear.*

*Fights Aliens is adapted from page 45 of In Translation: The Strange Character Options.*

**Tier 4: Sharp Eyed.** Because you must always keep an eye out when you're on the road, you are trained in all tasks related to perception and navigation. Enabler.

**Road Reflexes.** You add 3 points to your Speed Pool. Enabler.

**Tier 5: Something in the Road.** When you use a vehicle as a weapon, you inflict 5 additional points of damage. Enabler.

**Tier 6: Trick Driver.** When driving a car, truck, or motorcycle, your Might Edge, Speed Edge, and Intellect Edge increase by 1. When you make a recovery roll while driving the same, you recover 5 additional points. When you attempt a driving task or an extreme trick—such as jumping a ravine or other vehicle, spinning in the air, landing safely on another vehicle, and so on—the difficulty of the task is reduced by one step. Enabler.

## FIGHTS ALIENS

Aliens are by definition impossible to understand, except for the violent ones. Aliens that are all teeth and digestive enzymes are the easiest ones to deal with. It's the aliens with no clear motive that are the more subtle threat. Some aliens even pretend to be friendly. They give gifts. They offer hope. But you've seen it go bad all too often, and you'll not be fooled again.

Your space suit has been made rugged enough to withstand alien attacks, and it has many holsters and pockets for storing items you can use to take down creatures from other worlds.

Many alien fighters are vectors, but sometimes spinners choose this focus because they are good at ferreting out that which should not exist in the world.

**Connection:** If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. That character's sibling was duplicated and replaced by an alien (you're pretty sure).
2. Pick one other PC. You inaccurately identified that character as an alien, though you figured out your error before much harm could be done. The character may feel differently.
3. Pick one other PC. She knows a secret of yours: one of your parents is an alien.
4. Pick one other PC. That character saved you from an alien attack that would have ended in your death.

**Equipment:** Space suit that serves as light armor, comfortable undergarments, alien sketchbook, holotablet, physical trophy taken from an alien (such as a tentacle or an eye), two weapons of your choice, and 100 credits.

**Minor Effect Suggestion:** If your target is an alien, your attack (or its results) reveals its true nature to anyone else around.

**Major Effect Suggestion:** An alien of level 6 or less becomes intimidated by your single-minded fury and flees if you allow it. If you do not allow it, the alien loses its next turn trying to get away.

**Tier 1: Alien Target.** You are specialized in tasks related to spotting aliens disguised to look like humans, duplicates, and clones. In addition, you inflict 2 additional points of damage when fighting creatures the GM identifies as alien. Enabler.

**Tier 2: Alien Hunter.** When you are tracking, looking for, interacting with, or hiding from aliens, the difficulty of the task is decreased by one step. Enabler.

**Tier 3: Resist Alien Influence.** You have gained a measure of resistance over alien mind control and similar influences. You are trained in Intellect defense tasks. Enabler.

**Tier 4: Improved Alien Fighter.** You inflict 3 additional points of damage when fighting creatures the GM identifies as alien. Enabler.

**Tier 5: Master Combatant.** Choose one type of attack: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. If you're already trained in that type of attack, you instead become specialized in that type of attack. Enabler.

**Tier 6: Alien Death Spiral (3 Speed points).** You can attack all foes within immediate range, whether they are aliens or not. Make separate attack rolls for each foe, but all attacks count as a single action in a single round. You remain limited by the amount of Effort you can apply on one action. Anything that modifies your attack or damage applies to all attacks. If you hit an alien with this attack, you inflict 1 additional point of damage. Action.

## WEARS A STEAM-POWERED SUIT

You possess a delightfully jummy suit of armor powered by steam. The suit is fitted to you perfectly and grants brickly abilities that others can only dream about. Covering you from head to foot, your suit is more than mere butter upon bacon; it protects you, enhances you, and indeed, sir or madam, makes of you a truly stylish toff.

Vectors are most likely to wear steam-powered suits.

**Connection:** If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. You created your suit, or a component of your suit, based on an idea first suggested by that character.
2. Pick one other PC. She's the only one who knows who you are when you're not wearing your suit.
3. Pick one other PC. The steam plumes from your armor scalded that character once, and she still bears the scar.
4. Pick one other PC. That character helped you craft the steam boiler that powers your suit.

**Equipment:** Steam-powered suit, street clothes, toolkit, and debt equal to 20 pounds.

**Minor Effect Suggestion:** You release a burst of steam from your suit that modifies the next action attempted by your foe by one step to its detriment.

**Major Effect Suggestion:** Your steam-powered suit performs better than expected, and you gain an asset to Speed defense rolls for one round.

**Tier 1: Steam-Powered Suit.** Your steam-powered suit is effectively medium armor (+2 to Armor), but you suffer no Might cost or Speed reduction penalties for wearing it. Furthermore, you are practiced in using your gauntleted fists as medium weapons. Enabler.

**Armor-Assisted Action.** While wearing your special suit, you gain +1 to your Might Edge. Enabler.

**Tier 2: Steam-Powered Punch.** You deal 1 additional point of damage with melee attacks when wielding a weapon, or 2 additional points of damage with an unarmed attack. Enabler.

**Tier 3: Steam Blast (2 Speed points).** Up to two targets you select within immediate range are subjected to a boiling-hot steam blast attack that inflicts 5 points of damage. Action.

**Tier 4: Reinforced Armor.** You gain +1 to Armor (for a total of +3 to Armor) while in your steam-powered suit. Enabler.

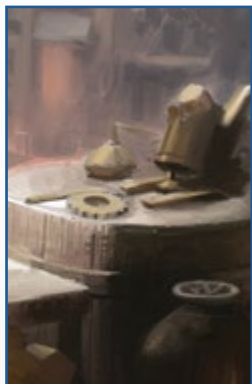
**Tier 5: Steam Flight (3 Speed points).** You can vent steam through your suit's jet nozzles, allowing you to fly for one minute. You can carry up to one other creature of your size with you. Action to initiate.

**Tier 6: Juggernaut (5 Might points).** Until the end of the next round, you can move through solid objects such as doors and walls. Only 2 feet (60 cm) of wood, 1 foot (30 cm) of stone, or 6 inches (15 cm) of metal can stop your movement if you fail a difficulty 3 Might roll. The difficulty increases by one step for each additional foot (for wood or stone) or inch (for metal). Enabler.

**Wears a Steam-Powered Suit GM Intrusions:** *The suit won't come off. A foe pierces the boiler, and it begins leaking water. Your suit burns you after running too hot.*







## CYPHER LIST

*The following 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.*



**Level 5 anoetic syringe filled with orange fluid.**

Immediately restores 5 points to the target's Might Pool.

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

**Level 4 occultic smartphone application.** User learns the answer to one question.

**Level 6 anoetic ebony carved frogs (matched).** When the matched cyphers are activated, someone holding one carving can hear the projected thoughts of someone holding the other carving, and vice versa, for up to one day.

**Level 5 anoetic metallic component.** When attached to a weapon, the next time the weapon (or ammunition fired from it) successfully strikes a target, it inflicts 1 additional point of damage and the target loses its next action.

**Level 4 anoetic sphere.** Can be thrown a long distance, whereupon it bursts in a 5-foot (2 m) radius. Matter within the burst is rearranged in random ways and takes 4 points of damage. Additional effects possibly include briefly altering the target's color, consistency, texture, and so on.

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

**Level 4 anoetic adhesive patch.** Generates a personal force field that grants +2 to Armor for one hour.

**Level 5 anoetic syringe filled with blue fluid.**

Immediately restores 5 points to the target's Intellect Pool.

**Level 7 occultic glove.** 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 5 anoetic eyeglasses.** Images of the wearer appear around her for ten minutes, giving her an asset on Speed defense rolls for the duration.

**Level 4 anoetic transparent film.** When spread across the mouth and nose, the material is absorbed, allowing the wearer to breathe water or poisonous air, or survive in a low-oxygen environment, for up to eight hours.

**Level 6 anoetic red-and-white striped pill.** The user is trained in driving a car, truck, motorcycle, or other vehicle appropriate to the recursion for one day.

**Level 7 occultic helmet with wires and lights.** Upon activating the cypher, the user learns the surface thoughts of all creatures within close range. The effect lasts for one round.

**Level 5 occultic mask with adjustable straps.** Changes the appearance of one human-sized creature. The change takes ten minutes to apply and lasts for one day.

**Level 6 anoetic green pill with eyelike black dots.** The user is trained in one noncombat skill of her choice for one day.

*A Stranger is the term for any creature native to the Strange, rather than Earth or a recursion.*

**Level 7 anoetic wand with red flame design.** Projects a ray of fire up to 300 feet (91 m) that inflicts 7 points of damage.

**Level 4 anoetic canister.** Can be thrown a long distance, whereupon it bursts in a 5-foot (2 m) radius cloud that lingers for 1d6 rounds unless conditions dictate otherwise. Living creatures in the cloud that breathe and think flee in a random direction in fear (or are paralyzed with fear) for four rounds.

**Level 5 anoetic syringe filled with red fluid.** Immediately restores 5 points to the target's Speed Pool.

**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, she can pass through solid objects as though she were insubstantial, like a ghost. She cannot make physical attacks or be physically attacked.

**Level 5 anoetic metallic bracelet.** The user teleports up to 500 feet (152 m) to a location he can see. He arrives safely with his possessions but cannot take anything else with him.

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

**Level 7 anoetic liquid in a tube.** One plant upon which the liquid is poured grows to ten times its normal, full-grown size in ten minutes. If conditions can't support it, the plant eventually dies.

**Level 5 anoetic syringe filled with clear fluid.** If a creature is injected, the difficulty of its next action is decreased by three steps.

**Level 6 anoetic flutelike tube.** Plays a happy tone audible to all creatures within short range. Those who were not forewarned to plug their ears drop what they are holding and become ecstatic for one minute, during which time the difficulty of all actions is increased by two steps.

**Level 5 anoetic white pill.** The user is trained in persuasion for one day.

**Level 6 anoetic ring.** Wearer projects either a ray of raw force up to 300 feet (91 m) that inflicts 6 points of damage from the impact, or two rays of force at two different targets in long range that inflict 3 points of damage each.

**Level 4 occultic crystal.** Projects one predetermined scene within long range. The scene is immobile and can be up to an immediate range in diameter. It includes movement, sound, and smell.

**Level 5 anoetic syringe filled with multicolored fluid.** Immediately restores 5 points to a Pool of the user's choice.

**Level 5 anoetic belt or sash.** 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 6 anoetic rod.** Creates a wall of supercooled air up to 30 feet by 30 feet by 1 foot (9 m by 9 m by 30 cm) that inflicts 6 points of damage on any creature or object that passes through it. The wall conforms to the space available and lasts for ten minutes.

**Level 5 anoetic canister.** Can be thrown a short distance, whereupon it bursts in a 5-foot (2 m) radius cloud that lingers for 1d6 rounds unless conditions dictate otherwise. Living creatures in the cloud that breathe suffer 5 points of Speed damage.

**Level 6 anoetic bracelet with moving dials.** For the next minute, the wearer moves more quickly than other creatures. All attacks, defenses, and contested tasks are modified by one step in the wearer's favor.

**Level 5 anoetic handheld device.** Produces a force field within short range that is up to 20 feet wide and 20 feet tall (6 m by 6 m). Anyone touching the field is frozen in time for one round.

**Level 2 anoetic sphere.** Can be thrown a short distance, whereupon it explodes in an immediate radius, spraying foam that is toxic to aliens, undead, and Strangers. For all such entities and similar creatures, the difficulty of tasks, attacks, and defenses increases by one step for one day.

**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 7 golden pill.** Upon activating the cypher, the user gains access to the next higher ability granted by her focus for one day. If she already has access to the tier 6 ability of her focus, she instead adds 1 to her Might Edge, Speed Edge, or Intellect Edge for one day.

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

**Level 2 crystal.** Once the device is touched to a creature or object, for the next twenty-four hours, the holder of the crystal knows the distance and direction to that creature or object, as long as it is in the same recursion.

**Level 2 ebony paste in a tube.** If smeared over a flat surface at least 3 feet (1 m) in diameter, the paste fades away and becomes a hole into a recursion the size of a pocket dimension. The recursion is permanent, but someone who knows what the opening is can peel the hole from the surface and destroy that entrance. On the other hand, if the paste is smeared on fabric, the fabric can be rolled up, stored, and transported without destroying the entrance.

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







## CANNIBAL WASTELAND

*The natives call their canyon city "the Red Place" and everything beyond that "out on the sand." Recursors call the recursion Cannibal Wasteland.*

*Most mutations caused by Cannibal Wasteland's relentless background radiation are somewhat disfiguring, if not outright harmful.*

*Alternatively, the PCs could end up in Cannibal Wasteland through a GM intrusion or because they are on a mission that requires a visit to the recursion.*

**What a Recursor Knows About Cannibal Wasteland:** *When PC recursors first translate to this recursion, they know the first three salient points.*

### BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs' attempt to translate fails, and they find themselves in an apocalyptic, radioactive wasteland instead of their intended destination. To survive and escape the recursion, the characters must find a place shielded from the radiation.

### DETAILS

A failed translation roll lands the PCs somewhere barren and sandy: Cannibal Wasteland. The recursion is seeded from stories and movies about a bombed-out world where small bands of survivors have resorted to feudalism, cannibalism, and fetishization of cars and guns.

The chief community, called the Red Place, is located in a tunneled and carved canyon fortress. The canyon provides shelter from the storms that rage periodically out on the sand, but no protection from the radiation that causes unsightly mutations in many natives. Madam Protector leads the people who live in the Red Place with an iron fist (literally, a mutant iron fist). Her Valkyries—a group of armed maniacs who drive cars like weapons—defend the Red Place and deliver death to anyone who opposes the protector's rule. The Valkyries also cull the weak and old, who end up as food for the rest of the community.

The Valkyries have recently become aware of a curious location near the canyon entrance where confused strangers occasionally appear out of nowhere. Such visitors are easy pickings, and to this end the Valkyries have set a "Welcome Wagon" to watch the site. When the alarm sounds, the Valkyries drive.

Although the PCs are likely in the dark at first, three things bear on their current situation. First, the background radiation interferes with

all translation attempts, increasing the difficulty of translation tasks by four steps in every location that is radioactive. Second, the Grotto of Whispers is free of radiation. Third, an artifact (a translation anchor) is responsible for pulling recursors off course and into Cannibal Wasteland; it's also housed in the Grotto of Whispers.

To escape the recursion, the PCs must evade or at least survive the initial Welcome Wagon alert, and then follow a trail of clues that leads to the Grotto of Whispers, where they can fight Madam Protector or negotiate with her in return for allowing them to translate away.

### MOOD SUGGESTION

Cannibal Wasteland is brutal and fast moving. The GM could literally force the players to act quickly by throwing a new encounter at them when things slow down, and using bold, brief descriptions to paint each scene.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- A translation failure unexpectedly drops the PCs into a recursion called Cannibal Wasteland, near a community called the Red Place.
- Cannibal Wasteland operates under the law of Mad Science. It is a post-apocalyptic recursion controlled by a robot-armed Madam Protector and her Valkyries, who drive weaponized vehicles. Bullets are used as currency.
- Cannibal Wasteland is home to a few hundred people. The community is built into caves along either side of a canyon that provides protection from the endless sands and sandstorms that rage across a mostly dead and bombed-out world.

- Background radiation in Cannibal Wasteland makes it impossible to translate away, and translation task failures result in no travel at all. PCs recognize that something is blocking them when they begin a translation attempt.
- The Grotto of Whispers is free of radiation, and could serve as a place to escape the recursion.

## STARTING POINT

Reveal *Show 'Em A* (page 72) to the players, and ask them to select their Cannibal Wasteland foci.

The PCs appear in the recursion just beyond the entrance to the Red Place, where *Ragina* and her *Welcome Wagon* wait. All told, several hundred people live in the twisted caves that line the sides of the canyon. To survive, residents hunt the dangerous vermin (rats, multiheaded snakes, and giant cockroaches) out in the sands, and they rely on the protection from rival communities offered by the Valkyries.

When the PCs appear, they must deal with the *Welcome Wagon* and its driver *Ragina* with guns blazing, with stealth, or by attempting to convince the driver to call off the alert.

## THE WRAP-UP

The best-case scenario is that the PCs reach the Grotto of Whispers with as little blood shed as possible behind them. From there, they can translate away without hindrance, and possibly take the translation anchor with them so it ceases to act as a translation magnet for future recursors. The PCs might also find an alternate location where they can translate away from the recursion using the key that detects radiation, though having to do so probably means they are on the run “out on the sand” from Madam Protector’s Valkyries.

**Ragina:** level 3; long-distance ranged attack inflicts 4 points of damage

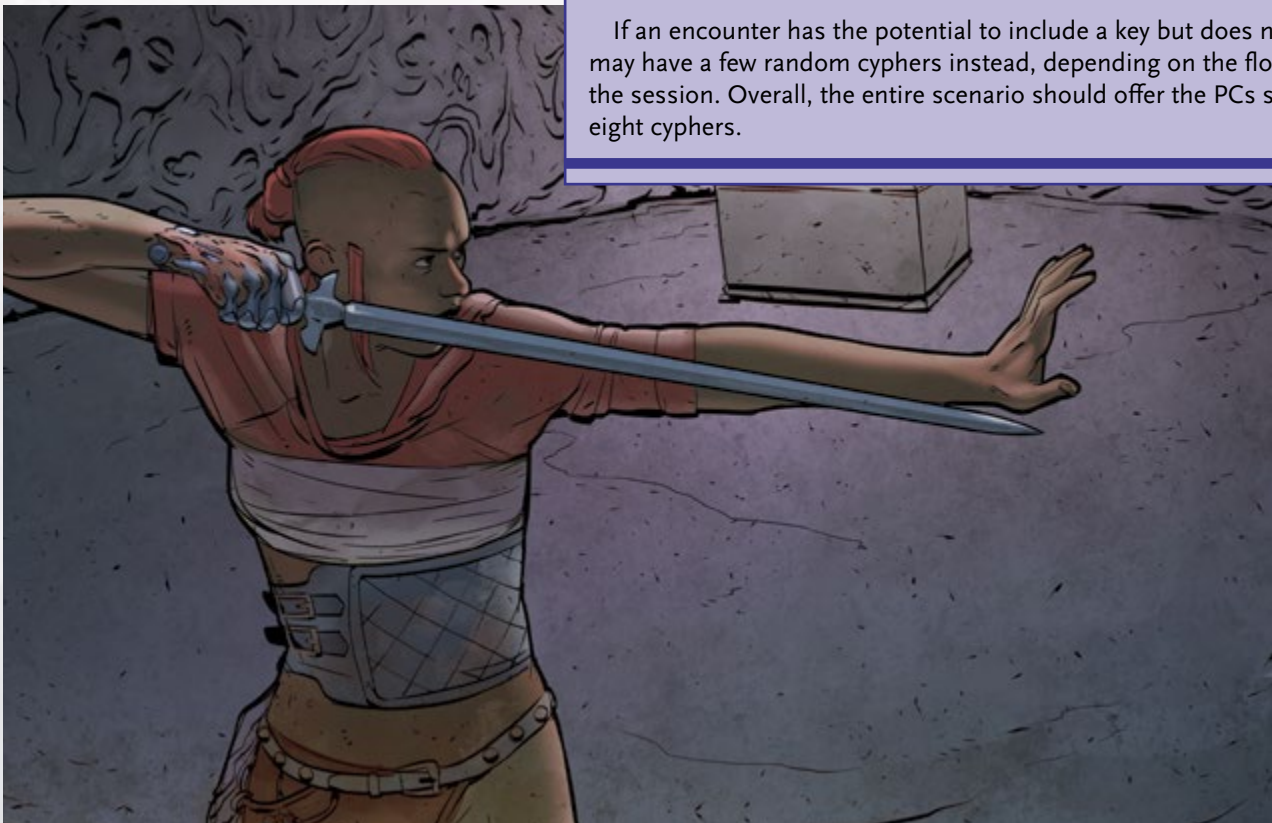
**Ragina in Welcome Wagon:** level 3; Armor 2; moves a long distance each round; long-distance ranged attack inflicts 4 points of damage; run over up to three adjacent targets within short range every other round, inflicting 6 points of damage

## KEYS

This scenario has four keys.

- ◆ Something that informs the PCs that radiation blocks attempts to translate away from Cannibal Wasteland.
- ▲ Someone who knows that radiation doesn’t reach into the Grotto of Whispers.
- A badge, writ, passphrase, or banner to present to the Valkyries for safe passage.
- ✱ Something that measures radiation, like a machine, a mutant cockroach, or a petrified hand with a crystal ring.

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 six to eight cyphers.







## RAGINA AND WELCOME WAGON

The PCs appear a short distance from Ragina the Valkyrie, who watches from behind the impressively sinister Welcome Wagon's steering wheel. A few rounds pass before Ragina realizes that the characters are present. If they haven't hidden before she notices them or engaged her in some other fashion, Ragina sounds the horn. Even then, a clever spinner PC (or anyone good with words) might convince her to sound the "all clear" signal. Otherwise, two rounds later, two more Valkyrie-driven battlecars (stats as Ragina in her Welcome Wagon) race from the canyon and attempt to run the characters down.

If it's a fight, the PCs could flee a long distance, attempt a difficulty 3 Might task to climb up and over the rough terrain separating the flat area in front of the Red Place, and get away on the sand.

If Ragina has the KEY that grants safe passage from other Valkyries, it is a writ she prepares for the PCs after they convince her to aid them instead of kill them.

If she has the KEY that measures radiation, it is in the form of a rusted Geiger counter.

**GM Intrusion:** The character trying to move a short distance in the sand hits a soft spot, and must make a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll or become stuck in place for a round.



## RED PLACE ENTRANCE

Two guards hang 20 feet (6 m) off the ground inside iron cages that they can leave if they wish. If the KEY that provides safe passage is present, it is an object that mollifies the guards.

**Guard:** level 2, rifle attacks as level 4, resisting persuasion as level 3; long-range rifle attacks inflict 4 points of damage

**GM Intrusion:** One guard has a strange mutant glow. When a PC gets close, the glow interacts with the character's cyphers, setting one off (or destroying it).



## WATER PRIEST

The Red Place's water supply is pumped up from below by a noisy gas engine. Maben (level 3) dispenses the water to citizens according to their rank or ability to pay. He is judgmental and condescending, boasting about how he "serves the Water Spirit."

If Maben is the KEY, he describes the knowledge as a blessing of the Water Spirit that keeps the Grotto of Whispers safe from the evil that saturates every other inch of the land.

**GM Intrusion:** A character who drinks water here swallows a poisonous water bug. On a failed Might defense roll, the character takes 2 points of Speed damage for three rounds.

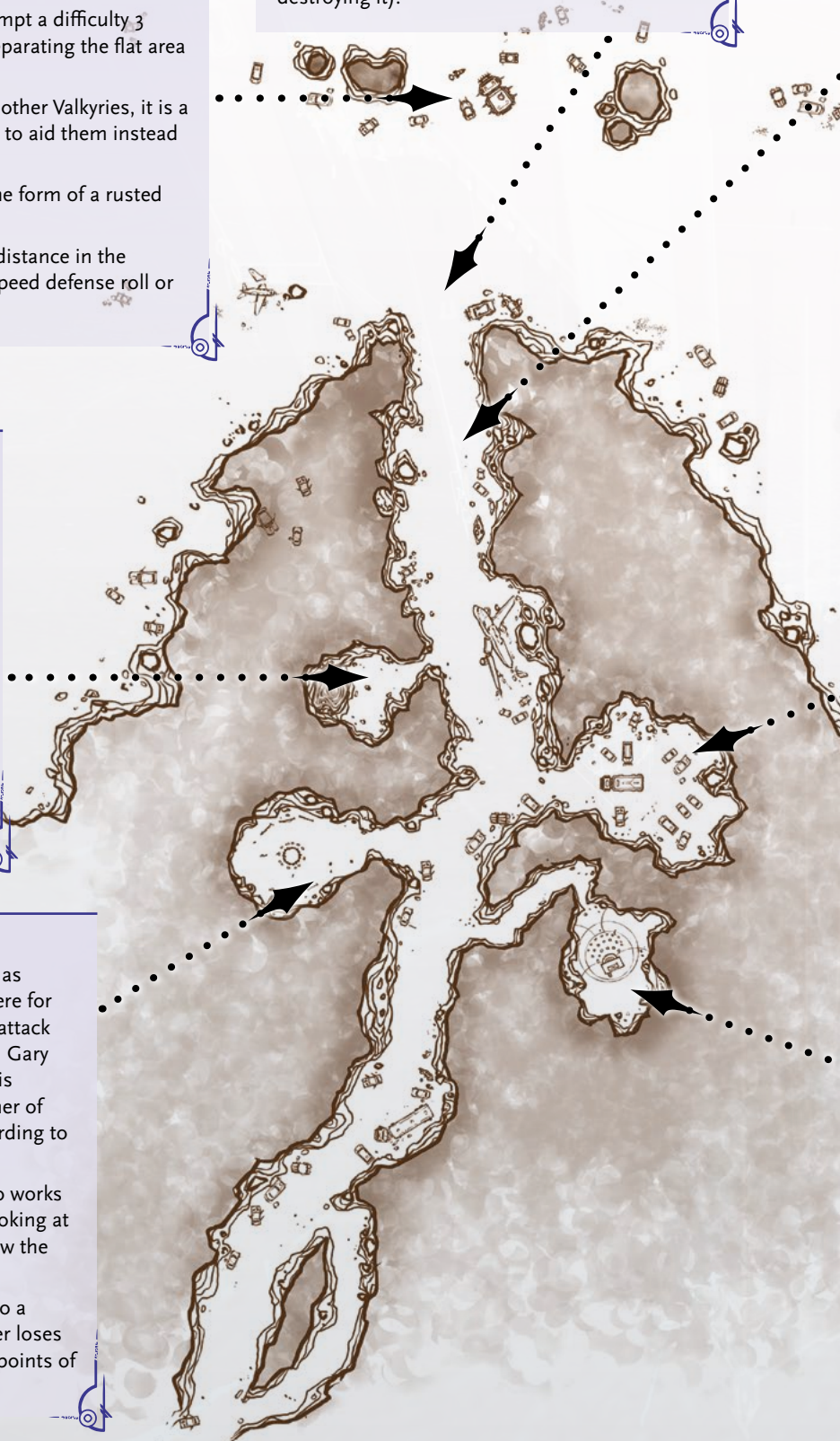


## BARBEQUE BUTCHERY

Wonderful odors issue from this cavern. Vermin—as well as the occasional human culled by Valkyries—are brought here for processing by the gigantic Chef (level 4; Armor 1; cleaver attack inflicts 6 points of damage) and Chef's addle-brained son Gary (level 2). Hides on racks cure all about the cavern, which is dominated by a circular charcoal oven filled with all manner of succulent meat. Chef doles out barbecue to citizens according to their rank or ability to pay.

Chef doesn't have a KEY but knows that an outlander who works in the Garage arrived recently and has the same way of looking at things and asking questions as the PCs. Chef wonders how the outlander would taste in the pot.

**GM Intrusion:** A PC who accepts some barbecue bites into a human finger. On a failed Might defense roll, the character loses the contents of her stomach so violently that she takes 2 points of damage (ignores Armor).





## THE AVENUE

The canyon is filled with decades of trash, bones, and derelict cars, trucks, and even airplanes. A cleared lane allows occasional Valkyrie cars to race up and down the canyon's length. Spotlights bolted to the walls constantly blaze.

Average citizens (level 1) are dressed in rags and covered in oil, and they display minor mutations like bumps, lesions, and skin discoloration.

**GM Intrusion:** A thief (level 2, theft-related tasks as level 4) tries to steal a KEY or some other important piece of gear carried by the character.



## OUT ON THE SAND

Characters who sneak or run away from the Red Place find themselves out on the sand, a tortured landscape of sun-scorched rock, mesas, weird rock formations, and, yes, sand.

Each hour the PCs spend out on the sand, choose (or roll 1d6) to determine what they encounter.

1d6	Encounter
1	Six cannibal mutants (level 2; bite attack inflicts 4 points of damage)
2	Valkyrie patrol of three cars
3-4	Abandoned Valkyrie car (repairable); if it contains the KEY that provides safe passage with other Valkyries, it is in the form of a banner
5	Corpse of previous recursor; if it contains the KEY describing how radiation prevents translation out of the recursion, it is in the form of a personal journal
6	Hidden water springs (and reasonably secure shelter from the elements)

**GM Group Intrusion:** Sandstorm! All characters not under shelter take 1 point of ambient damage each round until they find or fabricate shelter (a difficulty 5 Intellect task) or until the storm ends.



## GARAGE

Racing engine sounds and half-repaired battlecars fill this cavern. Henry (level 2, mechanic-related tasks as level 5) is head mechanic. In addition to a couple of other assistants (level 1), Henry has the help of Jamala Landers (level 3, mechanic-related tasks as level 4). Jamala is a recursor who translated into Cannibal Wasteland on a translation failure and was unable to translate away. Luckily, she knew enough about cars to save her from Chef's barbecue pot.

If Jamala has the KEY that informs about translation being blocked, she says the background radiation saturates almost everything.

If the PCs can do so in a way that doesn't draw Henry's attention, they can discover a few cyphers in the garage, not to mention customized war vehicles and possibly a KEY that measures radiation.

**GM Intrusion:** A Valkyrie walks in to claim her car but becomes suspicious of the PCs' presence and demands to know their business.



## GROTTO OF WHISPERS

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

Flow stone that resembles relief-carved human faces covers the walls of this cavern. An altarlike stone pedestal contains a weird mechanical device the size of a backpack that glows and whispers. This is a translation anchor artifact (see *More Details* on the next page). Madam Protector retrieved it from an outlander about a year ago. It began to glow fetchingly when she brought it to the grotto, so she left it for light.

Madam Protector (level 5; Armor 2; melee fist attack inflicts 7 points of damage) spends most of her time here, practicing her martial prowess in the radiation-free grotto. She demands to know why the PCs have disturbed her, and if she's not satisfied with the answer, she attacks. On the other hand, if the PCs can mollify her by offering something of great value (such as a handful of cyphers, information on rival groups in the desert, or something else), she allows them to translate away—possibly even with the translation anchor, if the deal is right.

**GM Group Intrusion:** Madam Protector sounds an alarm, and four Valkyries (sans their vehicles) respond a few rounds later.

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



Calvin: level 4, tasks related to persuasion and pleasant interaction as level 6

Cannibal Wasteland is a juvenile recursion, only about four years old.



Powerful mutations, page 241

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

This scenario has the possibility for a lot of combat, though characters who wish to avoid it by sneaking or negotiating can attempt to do so with a reasonable chance of success. In this case, PCs might quickly penetrate to the heart of the matter and figure out what to do (find the radiation-free cavern so they can translate away), ending the session sooner than planned. If this seems likely, other NPCs can provide additional encounters, either unrelated or as red herrings. One or two additional encounters with desperate or deranged citizens—complete with disquieting mutations—is easy enough to produce on the spot.



### ARTIFACT: TRANSLATION ANCHOR

**Level:** 1d6 + 2

**Form:** Large glowing mechanical device

**Effect:** When activated, the translation anchor functions constantly until switched off again. If it is active in juvenile or younger recursions, the recursion becomes a magnet for translation attempts that fail, drawing recursors from across the Strange to the default translation location (or the last location a recursor visited).

Study of the translation anchor reveals that it is likely a component of a larger device, one that has additional properties relating to translation, though what those might be specifically can't be teased out.

Unlike normal equipment and artifacts, the translation anchor itself can translate between recursions.

**Depletion:** 1 in d100



## ADDITIONAL CANYON LOCATIONS

Many more locations than those shown on the map and detailed on the previous pages exist in Cannibal Wasteland. The canyon extends for about a half mile in all, ending at the reinforced structure of Madam Protector's tower.

Residents eat barbeque and special cheese made from the milk of rats, giving thanks to the Water Spirit and Madam Protector (and her Valkyries) for saving them from the End of All Things, when the world died.

People are not especially friendly in the Red

Place. Most are too concerned with where their next drink of water or bite to eat is coming from, or whether they've done something to elicit the wrath of a Valkyrie, though as in any community, standouts exist.

A lone community judge named Calvin hears the complaints of citizen against citizen, attempting to arbitrate disputes before they rise to the level of Valkyrie involvement. If Calvin meets the PCs, he may ask them to perform a minor service along the lines of helping another citizen out of trouble or locating a lost child out on the sand.

## VALKYRIE LONGHALL

This series of caverns includes training facilities, an armory, quarters, and parking for Madam Protector's loyal company of Valkyries. All told, the Valkyries number about thirty, though twice that many recruits are in training at any given time. Only about one in three recruits survives the training ordeals to become a full-fledged Valkyrie with the right to claim a battlecar.

Valkyries tend to be women, though several men are also part of the company.

## MADAM PROTECTOR'S TOWER

The imposing structure at the head of the canyon is partly carved into the cliff face. In addition to Madame Protector's opulent quarters, the tower also houses about five Valkyrie honor guard, a luxurious guest chamber for whichever Valkyrie currently serves as the leader's honored companion, and a chamber that stores curiosities and artifacts collected out in the desert.

## ADDITIONAL WASTELAND LOCATIONS

If the PCs get lost out on the sands, in addition to the encounters noted on the previous spread, they might find the following locations.

## CRASHED PLANE

A massive military craft, partly buried in the sand, provides shelter from storms, months of food and water, several cyphers, and the possibility of an artifact.

## SCIENCE FACILITY

This ancient facility contains cyphers, artifacts, and a group of mutants with powerful mutations (as opposed to merely disfiguring mutations). The mutants are suspicious of outsiders but are not automatically xenophobic.

## CANNIBAL WASTELAND ATTRIBUTES

**Level:** 3**Laws:** Mad Science**Playable Races:** Human**Foci:** Adapts to Any Environment, Conducts Weird Science, *Drives Like a Maniac\**, Entertains, Infiltrates, Is Licensed to Carry, Integrates Weaponry, Leads, Looks for Trouble, Regenerates Tissue, Solves Mysteries, Wields Two Weapons at Once**Skills:** Driving stunts, Cannibal Wasteland lore**Connection to Strange:** Brief connections to the Strange might open within the heart of a raging sandstorm.**Connection to Earth:** The trunk of a vintage Ford Falcon Coupe on Earth offers a one-way inapposite gate to a similar car found in the Garage. The radiation suffusing Cannibal Wasteland prevents the gate from working in the opposite direction.**Size:** A few dozen miles (70 km) in rough diameter**Spark:** 10%**Trait:** Crazy. At the GM's discretion, the difficulty of an insanely dangerous stunt, such as jumping between two moving vehicles, is sometimes reduced by one step.*\* indicates focus found in this book**Mad Professor's Gambit, page 66**Drives Like a Maniac, page 7*

As another option, to connect this scenario to a few others presented in this book (such as *Mad Professor's Gambit*), the PCs are asked by their Estate superiors to track down an artifact that has the ability to translate like a cypher. The artifact was procured by another operative a few years ago, but it was mysteriously lost in transit to the Estate. Recent intel revealed that it lies in a recursion called Cannibal Wasteland. In this case, the PCs translate there willingly, though they are still surprised when the radiation prevents them from translating away at their leisure.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering why they can't easily translate out of Cannibal Wasteland, and 2 XP for managing to do so anyway because they found either the Grotto of Whispers or some other location out on the sand.

Jamala the mechanic is especially interested in the strangers who come to the Garage asking questions. She asks the PCs if they are recursors, already suspecting the truth regardless of their answer. She tries to follow them either openly or surreptitiously. Jamala feels like a castaway, and if she thinks the characters have a chance of getting free of the recursion, she wants out, too. Though Jamala is essentially a good person, she's become somewhat crazed in her time spent in the wasteland, and to reach her goal, she might do something illicit to force the PCs to help her—possibly ratting them out to the Valkyries or threatening to do so.

If the PCs leave Jamala behind, she eventually discovers how they got away and translates out herself. At this point, she views the characters as her enemies and does what she can to become their nemesis, remaining crazed ever afterward.

*The Estate, page 148**Premonition, page 32*

## USING THIS IN A CAMPAIGN

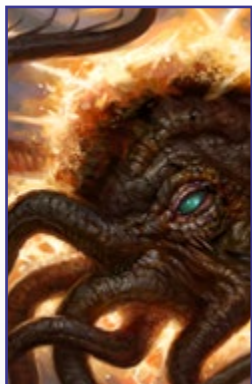
Read this section only if you're using the scenario in a campaign (and thus less likely to be under time pressure).

As initially noted, the appearance of the PCs in the recursion might be completely accidental, the result of a failed translation roll. However, it's possible that their arrival is not an accident.

First, the PCs might be *Estate* operatives ordered to look for other Estate members who disappeared recently while translating. The only thing the Estate has to go on is the theory that failed translations are pulling recursors "somewhere specific, somewhere sandy" (intel gained from a use of the *Premonition* ability). If the PCs were to undertake a translation and purposefully blow it, perhaps they could find where the others went missing.







## A SHADOW OUT OF INNSMOUTH

*Lovecraftian recursions belong to a class of limited worlds seeded by stories of cosmic horror and madness written by author H.P. Lovecraft.*

### BRIEF SUMMARY

A cult on Earth tries to “summon” a malefic entity from a Lovecraftian recursion. Unless the PCs stop it, the cult could eventually succeed.

### DETAILS

The PCs are briefed by the Estate—or otherwise learn on their own—that something potentially Strange-related is happening in the small town of Duvall (population 1,200). Residents report strange sounds and lights at night, alarming smells, and, most worryingly, a rash of suicides by Duvall residents. Further investigation suggests the focus of the trouble lies in a nearby iron salvage yard, one that was abandoned after being condemned for having too many toxic leaks and spills.

Gaining entry into the extensive and dangerous salvage yard, the PCs find clues that a man named Ratliff Mason and a group of his followers live in the area—at least, when they’re not traveling into other recursions. The characters realize that something actively malefic is happening, and to end it, they’ll have to stop Mason while avoiding falling victim to the horrors haunting the yard.

Ratliff Mason was a Lovecraft scholar on Earth. Upon realizing that he was quickened, he plunged straightaway into the fiction he’d spent so much of his life studying. His familiarity, however, didn’t prepare him for the true mind-rending reality imposed by such narratives made real. Mason learned that he should have paid closer heed to the regrets penned by almost all of Lovecraft’s fictional characters.

When Mason returned to Earth, he was different. Secretive and sweaty, with bulging eyes and a slightly green tinge, his human exterior hid a horrifying transformation. He’d become a deep one. On Earth, the laws of

Standard Physics kept him mostly locked in human form. That gave him the camouflage he needed to put together a cult of people who were touched enough by the Strange to help him attain his goal: to practice “summoning” powerful entities from Innsmouth and other Lovecraftian recursions to Earth and allow those creatures to retain their abilities and influence for longer than a few minutes, hours, or days. Ultimately, Mason hopes to call up

### REGION OF NONSTANDARD PHYSICS

Thanks to the efforts of Mason and his cult, reality in the abandoned iron salvage yard has frayed. Sometimes the laws of Magic and Psionics function in the yard. If Mason has his way, sometimes will become always, and once that toehold is gained, he’ll work on expanding the region to affect larger and larger portions of Earth. The yard’s effects include the following:

Abilities, creatures, and foci that function under the laws of Magic or Psionics can function for days at a time in the iron salvage yard without degrading.

Reality itself works against the PCs in the yard. When they first enter the area, GM intrusions are triggered on a d20 roll of 1 or 2 (be sure to reveal this ahead of time, describing it as a malign presence). By the final few encounters, let them know that GM intrusions are triggered on a roll of 1 to 3 or even higher.

Ratliff Mason and his deep one cultists can sometimes cast spells. Their favorite is one called Horrify (short range, target suffers 2 points of Intellect damage that ignore Armor and cannot act for one round).

that thing which no sane person would ever consider rousing from the sleeping city of R'lyeh. But he can no longer be counted among the sane.

With Mason's abilities, artifacts filched from other recursions, and the aid of Lovecraftian entities, the cult created an inapposite gate in an abandoned and condemned iron salvage yard. The gate no longer requires the cultists to maintain or open it; it has become a self-reinforcing phenomenon.

## MOOD SUGGESTION

To establish a horrific mood, contrast the scenes you present between the ordinary and the horrific; if everything is terrifying, nothing is. Linger on the ordinary parts of each encounter so the horrific part that follows stands out. After a horrific scene is concluded, remember that the PCs need a respite (and a nonthreatening, ordinary encounter) so they do not break from the story.

## SALIENT POINTS:

- Something Strange-related, which has apparently triggered several suicides, is happening in or near the small town of Duvall.
- A fellow named Ratliff Mason, previously a Lovecraft scholar, has started a cult in an abandoned iron salvage yard near Duvall.
- Mason is quickened and has started "summoning" malign entities from Lovecraftian recursions to Earth via inapposite gates.
- Even if the PCs kill Mason and his cultists (or get them all arrested), a runaway effect has begun. To close the inapposite gate, the PCs must reverse the ritual Mason used to open the gate in the first place, which involves finding an evil book and a mummified head.

## STARTING POINT

The PCs begin this adventure on Earth, with their Earth foci active.

The characters learn about the small town of Duvall (population 1,200), where residents report strange sounds and lights at night, alarming smells, and a rash of suicides. If the PCs are operatives of the *Estate* or a similar organization, they discover this information during a briefing

by *Katherine Manners* (level 6). At this point, no one at the Estate knows that the oddities are related to Lovecraftian recursions.

## THE WRAP-UP

If the PCs put an end to the runaway inapposite gate randomly opening in the heart of the salvage yard, the cultists lose all trace of their deep one transformations (or infections). The city of Duvall is saved from further strange incidents and suicides, but the PCs gain the enmity of any cultists who survived the intervention, as well as the attention of inimical entities from the Lovecraftian recursion. Hopefully nothing will ever come of that latter fact.

If the PCs don't shut down the inapposite gate, incidents in Duvall escalate. If the Estate fails to handle the situation, *OSR* finally steps in and targets Duvall with a drastic solution involving the words "drone" and "nuke."

*Katherine Manners*,  
page 149

*The Estate*, page 148

*OSR*, page 157



**Deep one:** level 4; health 15; Armor 2; claw attack inflicts 5 points of damage; for more details, see *The Strange Bestiary*, page 39



## KEYS

This scenario has four keys.



Something that begins the process of transforming a PC into a **deep one** on a failed difficulty 6 Might defense roll, giving her a squamous and rugose appearance on Earth that resists translation efforts to undo. At first, the strange appearance and alarming dreams are the only signs of transformation.



Something that ends the deep one transformative curse on a PC.



A collection of evil rituals and spells titled the *Snakotic Manuscripts*. Collected into a bound tome, the manuscripts are needed as part of the ritual to close the inapposite gate, along with the head of a deep one.



Mummified, shrunken head of a deep one. The head is needed as part of the ritual to close the inapposite gate, along with the *Snakotic Manuscripts*.

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.





## DUVALL

### ASKING AROUND DUVALL

The PCs likely begin their investigation by asking around Duvall. Ten suicides have shocked the town in the last three weeks. Sergeant Keiko Evans (level 4) of Duvall's police force is responsible for resolving the situation. Evans discovered that all those who took their own lives complained of bad dreams. She doesn't have an explanation for the other strange things happening around town, other than to suggest coincidence (regarding the suicides) and kids on drugs committing pranks. The PCs can get the names of one or more surviving family members of the suicide victims. If they follow up with family members (such as with Martha Gentry, whose husband Tom hung himself), they learn that in each case the bad dreams were actually nightmares, and all shared one feature in common—unutterable terror about something happening in the abandoned iron salvage yard nearby.

If the mummified head KEY is present, the sergeant has it on her desk as evidence of the “pranks” she believes local kids are perpetrating to put even more of a scare into people.

**GM Intrusion:** The character says or reveals something that makes Evans reconsider the suicides to be murder, with the character as the prime suspect.

### SALVAGE YARD ENTRY

Rusted fencing surmounted by twisted barbed wire surrounds the hundred-some acre footprint of the abandoned iron salvage yard. Signs warn that the area is closed and named a toxic Superfund site that requires extensive clean-up. Inside is a jungle of twisted machinery, dozens of decrepit buildings, standing pools of rusty-looking water, and mountains of junkyard metal blocking sightlines.

Gavin Pearce (level 4, tasks related to computer use and blogging as level 6) wanders the periphery. He writes a blog about the strange lights and sounds he's heard from inside the yard. He is friendly and affable, offering the PCs a turkey sandwich from his hamper.

**GM Intrusion:** Gavin initially reacts poorly to the PCs, thinking they are “the feds” or another secretive group come to quash his inquiry.

## RUST POOLS

Pools of orange water are scattered all over the salvage yard, formed by a broken drainage system and rain runoff. A character who enters or falls into a pool discovers that each one is alive with hundreds of darting creatures that resemble a cross between a tadpole and a leech. The things swarm anyone in the water, automatically inflicting 1 point of damage each round (ignores Armor) from blood loss. Even though most pools are no deeper than 3 feet (1 m), getting out of one is a difficulty 3 Speed task due to the muddy, slippery sides and the swarming leechlike things.

If the deep one transformation KEY is here, it's exposure to the water itself.

**GM Intrusion:** The slippery mud near a pool extends farther than it looks, and characters who fail a difficulty 3 Speed defense roll slip and fall into the water.

## MONSTROSITY

A horrific creature (level 5) that has tentacles and a head like a rat attacks characters who stray near. It can make three tentacle attacks per round as an action, and its slime inflicts 3 points of Intellect damage as well as 5 points of Might damage.

If the manuscript or head KEY is present, it is contained in a nearby chest, which was given to the creature by Ratliff Mason. The chest also contains a few cyphers and loose currency totaling \$500.

**GM Intrusion:** A character affected by the monstrosity's slime must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll or fall into a trance, walk to the closest rust pool, and topple in.

## DEEP ONES

Several cult members have partly transformed into a gaggle of four deep ones, though that might not be clear when they are initially spotted. They spend much of their time discussing the future glory that will come when “the Great Lord” arrives. Their initial impulse is to attack strangers, but they might talk if the PCs convince the deep ones that they wish to join the cult and want to meet the cult leader.

If the manuscript KEY is present, one of the deep ones carries it in a rotting satchel that contains other oddments, including a few cyphers.

If the head KEY is present, it must be removed from one of the deep ones. (The ritual doesn't require the head to be mummified and shrunk.)

**GM Intrusion:** A deep one topples a pile of metal salvage on the PC, requiring the character to make a difficulty 5 Might-based roll to get free.

## IRON TITAN

The area around the summoning gate is patrolled by a massive, 12-foot (4 m) tall iron figure made of scrap metal that self-assembles from nearby junk whenever anyone approaches, with blazing car-headlight eyes that pierce any darkness. The cultists call it the iron titan. It won't let anyone past unless Ratliff gives permission.

**Iron titan:** level 7, Speed defense and balancing as level 4; Armor 4; bash attack inflicts 7 points of damage on target and all within immediate range of target

**GM Intrusion:** Instead of bashing the character, the titan grabs her and begins to pull her in half, inflicting 7 points of damage each round until she breaks free.

## SUMMONING GATE

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

A spherical hole in space hangs in the center of this warehouse, which contains a few parked cranes and blocks of compacted steel waste. From the hole protrude awful tentacles dozens of feet long. Quickened PCs recognize the hole as an inapposite gate, from which Magic and Psionics elements are leaking into Earth. If the hole grows much larger (as it seems to be slowly doing on its own), the insane entity trying to reach through might make it all the way across.

A PC with the Pnakotic Manuscripts KEY is able to puzzle out that the gate can be closed by conducting a ritual that takes one minute and requires only one other component: a deep one head KEY. However, the moment anyone starts chanting, the tentacles try to stop him from finishing. To complete the ritual, other PCs will have to distract the tentacles.

**Tentacle:** level 4; makes three attacks as one action; new tentacles replace those “killed”

**GM Intrusion:** A tentacle grabs a character. If she doesn't get free with a successful Might-based roll, on the tentacle's next round, she is pulled through the gate and likely never seen again.

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

## RATLIFF MASON

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

Weird lights and smells sometimes emanate from the decrepit three-story warehouse claimed for research by Ratliff Mason. If the PCs find him, he is busy inking circles in blood on every available surface (stacked blocks of compressed waste metal). He doesn't attack on sight. Instead, he tries to convince the PCs to help him perfect his summoning gate, which, despite taking on a life of its own, isn't quite strong enough to draw “our Great Lord” through to Earth yet. He'll show the PCs to the summoning gate and see them past the iron titan that guards it, but only if they show their devotion by letting him baptize them in a rust pool.

If Mason has the deep one transformation KEY, it is a spell, touch, or infection that he transmits to PCs who get near him. If he has the cure KEY, it is a spell scribbled on a piece of folded paper.

**Ratliff Mason:** level 5; health 20; Armor 1; can make a physical attack and use Horrify (page 18) as one action



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

## TOWN OF DUVAL

In addition to the people noted previously, the PCs might encounter the following residents of Duvall while they investigate.

**Dustin Edwards:** Garbage collector whose wife committed suicide by hiding in his garbage truck. Dustin has taken to the bars to burn the memory out with alcohol.

**Martha Ashby:** Keeps a coop of chickens just outside of town, close to the salvage yard. Something got into the coop and killed and ate all the chickens, leaving behind slime and footprints that looked like a frog's but were human sized.

**Jessica Khan:** Shopkeep whose daughter committed suicide by drinking a collection of drain-cleaning solutions. Ms. Khan recently started having her own nightmares about the salvage yard, featuring a monster made of metal with car-headlight eyes.

**Scott Mallard:** Scott is a carpenter. His partner Jason killed himself using Scott's nail gun, but Scott doesn't know it. He thinks Jason ran off, though everyone else in town assumes the opposite despite Scott's vehement refusal to believe it. If the PCs investigate, they may find Jason's body in the crawlspace under the house, nail gun still in hand.

## GAVIN PEARCE, THE BLOGGER

Gavin has a camera drone in his car and uses the engine to charge the battery. It takes two hours to charge the drone, after which it will fly for about ten minutes while transmitting data back to Gavin's smartphone. He hopes to fly the drone over the fence and around the salvage yard so he can look around without entering the Superfund site. He's willing to share piloting the drone with the PCs.

Of course, residents of the salvage yard aren't keen about being spied on, and they work to knock the drone out of the sky if they notice it.

## CHARACTERS TURNING INTO DEEP ONES

PCs inflicted with the curse of transforming into deep ones don't win any beauty prizes for their gradual change. But other than dreams about a creature with too many tentacles, they don't suffer any immediate consequences that they can discern. However, if the characters fail to get the curse lifted, things slowly go

downhill. The curse afflicts a PC no matter how she might try to change her appearance by translating into alternate recursions. And after a few weeks, her mind begins to change, too, as her body completes its transformation into a deep one. If nothing is done before the final stages, the PC essentially dies, and a new deep one, quickened to the power of the Strange, is born.

## SUMMONING GATE

A PC who enters the warehouse that contains the summoning gate (which is actually a "leaky" inapposite gate) discovers, if he attempts to do so, that he can take on his Ardeyn focus, another Magic focus, or a Psionics focus, if he has one. Doing so requires entering a [translation trance](#), but one that lasts only a few rounds. On a successful translation roll (difficulty 3), the PC exchanges his current focus with the Magic or Psionics focus. The effect reverses if the inapposite gate is closed or the PC leaves the salvage yard.

## THROUGH THE GATE

Rather than Innsmouth, the summoning gate leads to a recursion of R'lyeh, a city of alien construction whose mind-bendingly bizarre architecture is impossible to achieve in worlds that operate under the law of Standard Physics. The city is usually drowned at the bottom of the ocean, but it has currently risen to the surface, revealing its "coast-line of mingled mud, ooze, and weedy Cyclopean masonry" that, by itself, is enough to send terror sleeting through human minds. But of course, [Cthulhu](#) walks this surface and is peering through the inapposite gate that has appeared over its domain.

## 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 being assigned to investigate Duvall by the Estate or a similar organization, the PCs might come upon the situation as part of some other inquiry, possibly because they were looking to find Ratliff Mason. As a Lovecraft scholar, he knows the potential range of Lovecraftian recursions better than most, and perhaps the PCs need his help in connection to a different matter entirely.

For example, the characters might have learned of the efforts of a cross-recursion



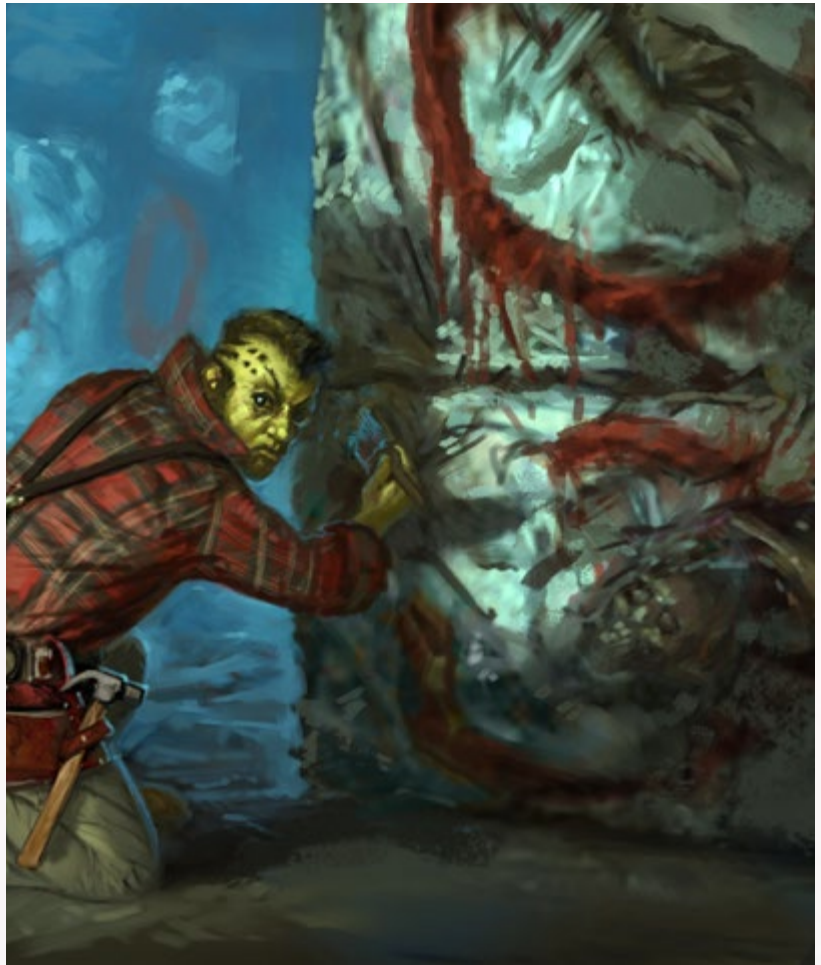
*Translation trance,  
page 126*

*Cthulhu: level 10; mere  
existence is anathema to  
human sanity*

**ARTIFACT: PNAKOTIC MANUSCRIPTS****Level:** 1d6 + 2**Form:** Tome with stony plates binding a sheaf of parchment

**Effect:** When a user reads aloud from the manuscripts in an area or recursion where Magic operates, she can create several different effects, all of which put her at risk. The effect most readily available allows the user to contact the mind of a powerful godlike being. The user must make a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll. On a failed roll, she takes 5 points of Intellect damage, descends one step on the damage track, and takes one other action (determined by the GM) motivated by insane panic. On a successful roll, she takes 2 points of Intellect damage and learns the answer to one question, no matter the scope, from the mind contacted.

The Pnakotic Manuscripts can translate between recursions like a cypher, thanks to the fundament making up the plates binding the sheaf of parchment that is inked with spells.

**Depletion:** —

kingpin to assemble a doomsday device (see *Mad Professor's Gambit*) and found Mason's name as someone to consult regarding occult artifacts. They might learn from Mason that the Pnakotic Manuscripts, which can cross between recursions, are likely the very object someone creating a doomsday device would seek. After all, that's what Mason himself sought, for his own purposes.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for finding Ratliff Mason, and 2 XP for closing the summoning gate.

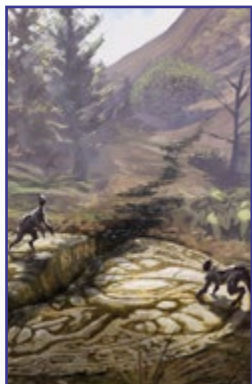
Mucking with entities from Lovecraftian recursions is especially dangerous. Earth organizations aware of the dark energy network maintain a list of banned recursions their members may not visit, lest their interference give the spark (or worse) to an inhabitant. R'lyeh, Innsmouth, and other Lovecraftian recursions are on that list. So if the PCs close the summoning gate, they're still aware that

Ratliff Mason's shenanigans may have started one or more godlike entities down the road to gaining the spark.

But even if that terrifying scenario never occurs, while the inapposite gate was open, it may have left behind an entity that marked the PCs for their interference. The creature (the spirit that created the iron titan) has only a few days or weeks before it completely dissipates, so it attempts to track the characters down first. When the time is right, it animates nearby objects—possibly cars or other vehicles, the interior of a building the PCs are in, or a jet plane the characters are flying on—to attack the PCs. However, the spirit is decaying, so by the time it attacks, it is a level 4 creature rather than level 7. If the PCs defeat the spirit, it falls apart. Among the parts, they can discover two or three random cyphers.

*Mad Professor's Gambit,*  
page 66





*This adventure occurs in the recursion of Ardeyn, but it could be set in nearly any recursion that operates under the law of Magic.*



Ardeyn, page 160

Incarnations, page 162

Lotan the Sinner,  
page 162

**Meena:** level 3, leadership  
and pleasant interaction  
tasks as level 6

**Old Gez:** level 2, tasks  
related to Ardeyn lore as  
level 6



Qephilim, page 163

Age of Myth, page 162

Maker, page 160

## STARFALL IN ARDEYN

### BRIEF SUMMARY

Evil creatures beset nearby communities after a falling star damaged an ancient crypt. The PCs can set things right by figuring out how to repair the crypt.

### DETAILS

PCs in *Ardeyn* run across a village called Efeler that's under attack by malign creatures. Community elder **Meena** describes how misfortune followed after a star fell from the heavens several nights ago (perhaps a starfall the PCs were tracing for their own reasons). Spirits of wrath boil out of the night, attacking the village, while even more terrifying shapes lurk in the darkness beyond. Meena begs the PCs for help. She assumes that the falling star was something evil.

If the PCs ask around town, they can learn a bit more from **Old Gez**, who knows something of the nature of fallen stars. He fears that the Screaming Crypt was disturbed by the starfall up in the hills. Locals call it the Screaming Crypt because of the demonic face carved in the sealed entrance. Villagers rarely go there because it's believed to be haunted.

As Old Gez tells the PCs, the recursion of Ardeyn possesses a sun, seven moons, and a host of stars. Each star is an ancient **qephilim** of great power set in the sky during the *Age of Myth* to watch over the world. Sometimes those stars fall to the ground. This usually happens because a star is corrupted or goes mad, and it descends to Ardeyn to take revenge on every creature of the **Maker** that crosses its path.

Old Gez's knowledge only goes so far, and he doesn't know that sometimes a star's fall is accidental, as is the case for Teremiel, who was knocked from the sky by two fighting dragons through no fault of her own.

Teremiel's fall cracked the seal on the Screaming Crypt. Things long kept in deathless captivity are now free to seep forth. The crypt served as a repository for slain warriors and dangerous weapons gathered after one of the many ancient battles between qephilim who served the **Incarnations** and the demons who served **Lotan the Sinner**. Several such crypts dot the surface and subsurface of Ardeyn.

Meanwhile, Teremiel remains deranged and confused by her fall, acting much like an actual corrupt fallen star. Her abilities wax and wane according to the position of the sun. During the day, she seems almost sane (and is less dangerous), but at night, she's volatile and threatening to everyone. The best way to repair the crypt is to get the star to stop raging and return to her senses. And to do that, a PC will have to return Teremiel's scepter to her. Unfortunately, the scepter broke in her fall, and the pieces were widely distributed.

### MOOD SUGGESTION

Ardeyn is a prototypical fantasy realm. Exploration of the crypt may require someone to sketch the paths taken by the PCs, so have graph paper ready to hand to one of the players in case they want to draw a map.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Residents of Efeler are menaced by foul creatures in the aftermath of a falling star's nearby strike.
- Teremiel, a star and qephilim of ancient power, fell to Ardeyn and damaged a crypt housing deathless spirits (and other evils) from a long-ago battle between demons and qephilim. Now those entities seep forth.
- Sealing the crypt will require Teremiel's power and ancient heritage. Unfortunately,

Teremiel was driven mad by her descent.

- Restoring Teremiel to herself requires returning her scepter to her, which was broken into two pieces during her fall. Those pieces are now scattered in and around the crypt.

## STARTING POINT

Reveal *Show 'Em E* (page 74) to the players, and ask them to choose their Ardeyn foci.

Traveling half a day from Efeler up into the hills, the PCs finally top a rise and see a scar etched across the crown of the next rise. The scar bisects a vast circular stone plug set in the crown of the hill, almost like a cap or seal, which is relief carved to show a demonic visage screaming. The seal is cracked.

## THE WRAP-UP

Inside the crypt (or possibly outside it), Teremiel the fallen star wanders. If, during her brief states of sanity, she can tell the PCs about her destroyed scepter, they can find the two pieces inside (or possibly outside) the crypt. The scepter heals itself if the two pieces are brought together. If the restored scepter is given to Teremiel, it heals her mind. She then repairs the damage to the crypt and returns to the sky like a falling star in reverse.

## KEYS

This scenario has three keys, one of which is the fallen star herself.



Teremiel. The raging figure of an angelic qephilim wanders into view. She is weeping, laughing maniacally, or fighting an evil creature from the crypt. Interaction reveals her to be insane and even dangerous; her dialogue always comes back to variations on “If I only had my scepter, I could think straight again. I don’t want to hurt you, but my mind is fractured. Where’s my scepter? I lost my scepter! Did you steal my scepter? Thief!” The PCs can calm her down by making a difficulty 5 Intellect-based task (difficulty 3 by day), but it lasts for only about a minute at a time. During her calm periods, the PCs can get more information and cooperation out of her. If they attack her, she quickly retreats—probably by flying—to some other location in the vast crypt. Even if the PCs don’t attack her, she rarely stays in the same place for long, and the characters must track her down again later to present the joined scepter to her.



Headpiece of Teremiel’s scepter.



Shaft of Teremiel’s scepter.

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.



**Teremiel, fallen star:** level 6; health 21; Armor 2; flies a long distance each round; long-range burning light ray inflicts 8 points of damage (loses this power in sunlight); for more details, see *The Strange Bestiary*, page 53



## CRACKED SEAL

Much as described, the flat, circular stone seal, carved with a demonic face, is cracked open, revealing a dark cavity descending into the earth. Stairs lead downward into the larger crypt. A pack of four umber wolves roams the area around the seal. An umber wolf resembles a starved, demonic human moving on all fours.

If Teremiel is nearby the first time PCs stand at the cracked seal, it's probably only as a quick flyby, enough for the characters to hear her ranting about her lost scepter.

**Umbur wolf:** level 3, track as level 6; health 15; four or more can make one attack as a level 5 creature inflicting 5 points of damage that ignore Armor

## HUNTERS

Two teenagers from Efeler, Valina and Altan (both level 2), set up a simple camp a few hundred yards (300 m) from the cracked face of the Screaming Crypt in a misguided attempt to hunt evil. Valina was almost killed by an umber wolf pack, and she now lies bleeding and delirious.

If the headpiece KEY is here, Altan has hung it above their camp. He says they found it outside the crypt, right before they were attacked by umber wolves.

**GM Intrusion:** Valina begins to seize and dies unless the character attempting to heal her succeeds on a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task.

## CRYPT FOYER

Like the entirety of the crypt, the ceilings here are 17 feet (5 m) high and the walls are thickly carved with all manner of disturbing imagery featuring skulls, umber wolves, demonic entities, dragons, spirits, and clashing armies.

A pool in the chamber contains inky black fluid that smells like rotting fish. If the fluid hides either part of the KEY making up the scepter, the fluid must be cleaned off (difficulty 4 Speed-based task) before it will pair with the other scepter KEY.

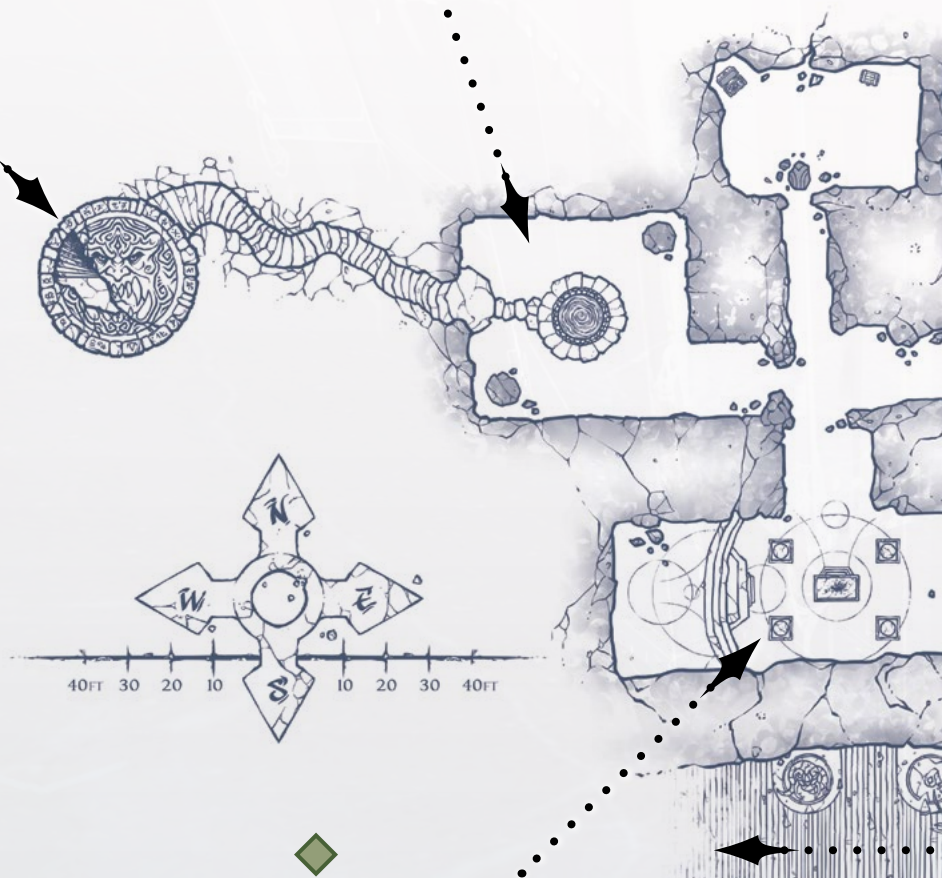
**GM Intrusion:** A character glancing into the pool is menaced by a vision of her own death somewhere in the Screaming Crypt. She must make a difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll or take 3 points of Intellect damage.

## DEMON SANCTUM

The walls of this chamber are carved with designs similar to those in the crypt foyer. Four ivory columns surround an altar on which a bronze urn sits. Disturbing the urn in any way unleashes a demon. If it successfully possesses a character, it makes the host pretend that the possession failed. The demon wants to prevent the PCs from repairing the crypt and returning Teremiel to sanity. If the fallen star wanders by, her challenged sanity makes her believe that a PC is possessed even if the character is not.

**Demon:** level 5, all tasks related to stealth as level 7; health 30; Armor 2; melee flesh-decaying touch attack deals 5 points of damage, or possession attempt requires Intellect defense roll to resist.

**GM Intrusion:** An immaterial hand reaches from the urn and snags the character's soul from his body. The PC must make a difficulty 3 Might defense roll or his soul is pulled into the urn.





## RELIQUARIES

The once-secure doors to these chambers are shattered and burned, mostly gone. The walls are carved with designs similar to those in the crypt foyer. Each chamber contains shattered urns, rotted wood chests, and rusted iron chests, as well as a litter of general debris. Dangerous items and cursed objects were stored here. Most have rotted away to dust, and the bits that remain have lost all but a glimmer of evil power.

If a KEY is here, it lies atop a jumble of valuables potentially found in any single chamber (including a few cyphers and about 50 gold crowns).

**GM Intrusion:** The character finds a cursed mirror, which seems like an artifact that grants 3 points of Intellect per use. However, it actually debits 1 point of Intellect, but it convinces the user of the opposite unless she makes a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll per use. (Depletion: 1 in 1d6)

## STARFALL IN ARDEYN



## FIVE BASINS

The walls of this chamber are of beaten bronze. A basin of clear fluid lies in the center of the room, surrounded by four basins in the sunken corners, accessible by short flights of stairs. The corner basins are filled with magically preserved blood, milk, oil, and wine, respectively. The chamber was used in binding the evils to the crypt. (A character secretly possessed by the demon of the sanctum doesn't want to enter the chamber, and if any of the fluids are splashed on him, the demon is exorcised and forced back to its urn.)

If the KEY is here, it materializes in the central basin if fluid is dripped into it from each of the other four pools.

**GM Intrusion:** A character who is keeping a secret from the other PCs must confess it after interacting with any of the liquids in the chamber unless she makes a difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll.



## MINOR VAULTS

The once-secure doors to these vaults are shattered and burned, mostly gone. The walls are carved with designs similar to those in the crypt foyer. Each vault contains shattered urns and sarcophagi. The remains of evil soldiers of Lotan were kept here, since the corpses retained spiritual residue. Many have since evaporated away, but a swarm of ten wrathful spirits hunts down anyone exploring this area for remains.

If a KEY is here, it lies atop a litter of valuables potentially found in any single chamber (including a few cyphers and about 50 gold crowns).

**Spirit of wrath:** level 2; touch inflicts 3 points of damage; a swarm of five wraths can make a single attack as a level 4 creature inflicting 5 points of damage

**GM Intrusion:** A character triggers a trap; on a failed difficulty 4 Speed defense roll, he falls through a trapdoor that drops him 50 feet (15 m) into the undercrypt, dealing 5 points of damage and moving him one step down on the damage track.



## UNDERCRYPT

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

The walls of these chambers are carved with designs similar to those in the crypt foyer. The wide stairs, flanked periodically by half-broken statues of dragons and other terrors, lead further down into a vast subterranean cavern lit by bioluminescent fungi. Characters who descend find a tangled maze of rock formations, abnormal fungi growths, free-standing crypts, and evil shrines.

For each ten minutes that the PCs spend exploring, choose (or roll 1d6) to determine what they encounter.

### 1d6 Encounter

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | Pack of five umber wolves (level 3, track as level 6; health 15; four or more can make one attack as a level 5 creature inflicting 5 points of damage that ignore Armor)   |
| 2-3 | Crypt containing five undead soldiers (level 3, Speed defense as level 2; health 12; if an attack would reduce its health to 0, its health is reduced to 1 instead if the number rolled by the attack was an odd number). The crypt might contain the headpiece KEY. |
| 4-5 | Mushroom forest; all who enter must succeed on a difficulty 4 Might defense roll or suffer 3 points of Speed damage from poison spores. The forest might contain the shaft KEY.  |
| 6   | Inert dragon corpse. If the Teremiel KEY is here, it is because this is where she rests when the sun is high above the ground.   |

**GM Group Intrusion:** A group of four adventurers (each level 4) finds the PCs in the undercrypt and assumes that they are evil and must be killed (or, at the very least, looted).

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



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### IN EFELAR

A festival taking place in Efeler, the Seven Moons Jubilee, is an annual seven-day event that features food, crafts, and spirits. The main draw is daily wrestling bouts in the town square, where local heroes match up against visiting champions in fights to submission (but never to death, except in rare accidental cases). If desired, you can start the PCs in Efeler during the festival, possibly because one of the characters is presumed to be a visiting wrestling champion. Perhaps the festival is disrupted by the advent of the starfall. If the PCs are not involved in the wrestling contest, determine the winner (and the outcome of any bets placed) randomly or narratively. If they are involved, a PC can win a given bout if she succeeds on two out of three Might-based tasks to gain a wrestling submission over her foe.

**Burak the Bold** is a human wrestler from the *Hazurrium*; he has a retinue of fans and trainers that follow him, and he is favored to win the competition. (Burak secretly cheats by taking a strength-enhancing potion before he fights.)

**Canan the Quick** is a qephilim out of the south who says she has mastered a new form of wrestling that no one has yet defeated; she is considered a rising star. (Canan is secretly a recursor from Earth who knows jujutsu.)

**Danyal** is a local lad who is as strong as an ox and considered the underdog in the competition. Locals root for him, but the odds aren't in his favor. (Danyal is secretly broken-hearted at the apparent defection of his sweetheart, Valina, who went on a hunting trip into the hills with a mutual friend and is overdue by a few days. See *Hunters* on the previous two-page spread.)

### AROUND THE CRYPT

A trip to the Screaming Crypt takes only a few hours and is normally uneventful. However, if the GM wishes to foreshadow the danger there, the PCs might be set upon by a swarm of five wraths on the way.

### IN THE CRYPT

It's always chilly in the crypt, but it becomes downright cold when encounters with spirits or demons are imminent, with breath visibly puffing from the PCs' mouths. It is also dark,

#### ARTIFACT: SCEPTER HEADPIECE

**Level:** 1d6 + 3

**Form:** Elaborate crystal scepter headpiece

**Effect:** If the user speaks the magical word inscribed on the headpiece as part of another action, time slows down for her, allowing her to take one additional action. However, doing so is taxing, and a user who is not of ancient qephilim blood suffers 3 points of damage with each use.

If the headpiece is brought into contact with the shaft of the scepter, the two broken pieces fuse to become one object with the capacities of both.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d10 (Teremiel can recharge this magic if depleted.)

#### ARTIFACT: SCEPTER SHAFT

**Level:** 1d6 + 3

**Form:** Elaborately forged metallic scepter shaft

**Effect:** The shaft can be used as a medium bashing melee weapon. If used against a spirit, an undead creature, or another creature of evil inclination, the shaft inflicts 7 points of damage.

If the shaft is brought into contact with the headpiece of the scepter, the two broken pieces fuse to become one object with the capacities of both.

**Depletion:** —

which means most PCs will require a light source to navigate by. Since it was cracked open, a few insects and vermin (as well as birds and other critters) have entered the crypt, but they all lie dead and rotting in various corners.

### IN THE UNDERCRYPT

This cavity is vast, a few miles wide and deep, and contains all manner of potential threats in addition to those noted, including a *soulshorn* that fancies itself the ruler of the underground "kingdom." The soulshorn, named Gulizar, demands a favor of any PCs it catches. Unless the characters want their souls sucked out and eaten, they should agree to whatever favor Gulizar requests.

It's entirely possible that passages lead from the cavern into the *Roads of Sorrow* and all the many realms beneath Ardeyn where the dead creep and Lotan the Sinner burns.



*Hazurrium*, page 166

**Burak the Bold:** level 3, wrestling and strength tasks as level 5 for one hour after taking his secret potion

**Canan the Quick:** level 3, wrestling tasks as level 5

**Danyal:** level 3, wrestling tasks as level 6 if Valina turns up safe

**Spirit of wrath:** level 2; touch inflicts 3 points of damage; a swarm of five wraths can make a single attack as a level 4 creature inflicting 5 points of damage

The scepter pieces could be artifacts in their own right, if the GM desires.



*Soulshorn*, page 291

*Roads of Sorrow*, page 183





## 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 can turn Danyal (or other NPCs in the village of Efeler) into a friend of the PCs, not just a potential competitor. This might occur as the characters witness Danyal helping people around the village or teaching aspiring wrestlers a trick or two to try when it's their turn to rumble.

## PLACEMENT IN ARDEYN

Efeler and the Screaming Crypt can be located wherever the GM needs them. Otherwise, the village lies on the northeastern edges of the Queendom, where the forested plains meet the foothills of the Nammu Mountains.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for finding both pieces of the scepter and fusing them, and 2 XP for delivering the fixed scepter to Teremiel and helping her repair the damaged crypt (if need be).

If the PCs decide to try their own method of repairing the broken seal (such as advanced magic, stonework mastery, or commanding spirits of stone to do their bidding), they should be able to find success. In this case, Teremiel likely becomes just one more obstacle preventing them from succeeding.

Either way, if the crypt is closed off once more, it's possible that a few of its denizens—such as the demon from the sanctum—escaped in time. In this case, the creature might decide either to take vengeance on the PCs for their actions or to “reward” them with violent aid when they least expect it (or, more likely, least want it) because it believes that it finally escaped the Screaming Crypt thanks to their actions.







## THE WARDROBE

### BRIEF SUMMARY

A series of gruesome murders grips the city. The PCs discover that the only way to prevent more deaths is to close a gate to an ancient recursion located in an antique wardrobe.

### DETAILS

Lisak Auction Services recently received a batch of antiques from Moldova. Among them is a large wardrobe with intricate and grotesque carvings. Over six hundred years old, it originally belonged to the Count of Dragenesti, who was famous for turning away an Ottoman invasion in the 1400s by summoning a huge bloodthirsty army. The unique furnishing is unusually heavy, with a normal outer door over a heavy interior door that bears evidence of multiple iron latches that were removed over the centuries as the piece was converted into a more conventional wardrobe. The collection also contains a number of other Dragenesti items.

Gary Sutton, an employee at Lisak, was tasked with researching the Moldovan antiques and writing up descriptive text for the auction catalog. In so doing he discovered that the wardrobe was, according to legend, the device used by the Count of Dragenesti to summon the supernatural horde that defeated the Ottomans. Five days ago, more out of curiosity than belief, he gave it a try. Opening the gate had no obvious effect, but later that evening a creature called a flagellatus came through. It violently escaped the Lisak storage vault and disappeared into the city. Over the evenings that followed, it went on a killing spree. Gary Sutton, walking home from work a couple of days later, happened to be one of its victims.

There's no obvious connection between the auction house and the murders. Police have

investigated the "break-in" at Lisak Auction Services and concluded, given the destruction and the lack of missing items, that it was either vandalism or a botched robbery. Investigation of the murders hasn't pointed to a culprit yet, but police are leaning toward some sort of animal attack.

Unfortunately, they're wrong. The flagellatus won't keep attacking forever—having come through an inapposite gate, it will eventually degrade and die. The gate, however, will remain open until Sutton's actions are reversed, and a force similar to that faced by the Ottomans may soon emerge through it.

### MOOD SUGGESTION

*The Wardrobe* incorporates two experiences: a police procedural followed by a horror story. Reflect this by beginning play with a just-the-facts approach, but when things get strange, start throwing darker events at the players with ever-increasing speed.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- The PCs help investigate several gruesome murders.
- The killings were committed by a creature that came through an inapposite gate from the recursion of Purgatory.
- The inapposite gate is built into a heavy antique wardrobe currently at Lisak Auction Services.
- An employee of the auction house, Gary Sutton, inadvertently opened the gate, and a flagellatus—a kind of demon—came through.
- The creature's violent escape from the auction house was mistaken for an attempted break-in and robbery.
- The flagellatus killed Sutton and has since preyed upon other people. Authorities don't

*The flagellatus will slowly lose its abilities over 1d6 x 4 days and then die.*

suspect a supernatural killer and haven't linked the murders to the "break-in" at the auction house.

- Other dangerous creatures could come through the gate if it isn't sealed.
- The gate cannot be sealed without a specific set of items.

## STARTING POINT

The map represents Santa Monica, California, but the session could be set in any city on Earth (tell the players to make their characters' Earth foci active). The PCs are drawn into the scenario via the murders and initially don't know about events at Lisak Auction Services or the wardrobe.

If the PCs are *Estate* operatives, they are assigned to investigate the murders. They are given cover as specialists in forensics and animal behavior to "assist" the local authorities and briefed on the three killings. Their assignment is to determine whether a creature or creatures from a recursion are behind the murders, and if so, to eliminate the threat without drawing public attention to its true nature.

## THE WRAP-UP

The only successful outcome is for the PCs to find sufficient means of closing and sealing the gate (one or more keys, depending on how long you'd like the adventure to run). Once sealed, the wardrobe is effectively just an unusual antique—at least until someone else discovers the means to unlock it again.



### KEYS

This scenario has three keys. Two of them are information that moves the investigation forward, and one is a necessary component for sealing the gate.



A connection between the killings and the auction house: anything on Sutton's body, a newspaper story about the "break-in," or a casual comment by a cop at a murder scene.



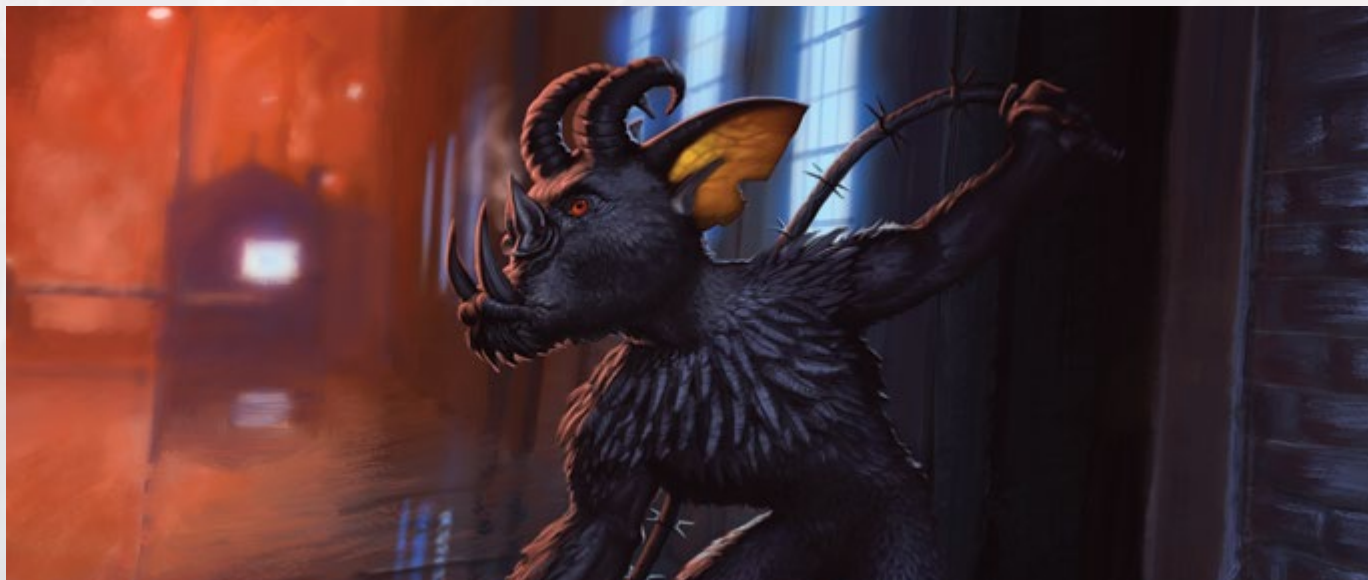
Evidence of Sutton's research into the wardrobe, in the form of notes for the auction (on paper or his laptop), an old text in archaic Romanian, or bad online translations of that text.



Something that controls the gate within the wardrobe: an actual key, a signet, a gorget, or an ancient text. The adventure can be extended by requiring two or even three of these keys, used in concert, to control the wardrobe gate.

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 Estate, page 148*







## THE FIRST KILLING

Bob Elgan, a homeless man, was mauled to death in an alleyway four days before the start of the scenario. The body was partially eaten, and it also had a huge growth similar to a goiter. The police assume it's because he was homeless, but it's actually a result of the "murderer's" attack.

**GM Intrusion:** A witness is extremely interested in helping out and can show the PCs the site of "another attack," not far away. He's really luring them into an attempted mugging—two of his buddies are waiting at the other location. All three muggers are level 2.



## THE SECOND KILLING

Gary Sutton, an employee of Lisak Auction Services, was walking along the street two nights before the start of the scenario when he was mauled to death but not robbed. Careful examination shows that one of his arms is shriveled (it would be obvious if not for the severity of the wounds). Witnesses heard snarling.

If the KEY that provides the connection to the auction house is present, it's in the form of a casual comment by a cop at the murder scene.

The other KEYS might be with Sutton's body or, if enough time has passed, in evidence at the police station. If the research KEY is present, it's on Sutton's laptop, and the password must be hacked to gain access (a difficulty 5 Intellect task). If the KEY that's a literal key to the wardrobe is present, it's on Sutton's keyring.



## THE POLICE STATION

If the PCs have appropriate cover stories, they can access police and coroner files on the murders (or on the Lisak break-in, if they know about it). Detective Marlene Rodriguez (level 5, social skills as level 6) is in charge of the murder investigation. She's helpful but harried—the attacks are starting to get a lot of press and city hall attention. Detective Franz Hoeffer (level 4, Speed defense as level 5) is in charge of the Lisak break-in investigation, although he's losing interest since nothing seems to have been stolen. The coroner is Dr. Rikki Martin (level 4). She's obsessed with the unusual tissue damage on the victims and talks enthusiastically with anyone who's open to the idea that these were very unusual events.

If any KEYS are present, they are the same as described under The Second Killing.

**GM Intrusion:** Something arouses suspicion over the PCs' credentials. The officer's demeanor turns negative, and the difficulty of social interactions with him or her increases by one step.



## THE THIRD KILLING

Two people were attacked near the shopping district the night before the scenario begins. One died and the other is in intensive care. During brief moments of consciousness, the survivor described a loping, hunched creature that came out of an alleyway.



## THE AUCTION HOUSE

With the police investigation ongoing, the auction storeroom containing the wardrobe has not yet been cleaned up. Shelving and tables are overturned, and antiques large and small are everywhere, including statuary, furnishings, and small items. The wardrobe stands half open. The gate within is not visible, but anyone entering the wardrobe can pass right through the back wall, as if it weren't there, and into Purgatory. If the characters show special interest in the wardrobe, *reveal Show 'Em G* (page 75).

The steel door to the storeroom and a side door to the outside both show damage from powerful claws, and both doors were seemingly broken from the inside. The "break-in" occurred at night and no employees were present. There's no surveillance camera in the storeroom, but video from the hallway is strangely blurred and filled with static, and the recording shows a large, indistinct shape moving erratically from the storeroom toward the exterior door (both doors are out of the frame).

The Dragenesti collection had not yet been fully catalogued, but Lisak personnel don't believe that any sizeable items were taken.

Receptionist Mary Kowolski (level 3) resists unofficial inquiries and directs most official visitors to Barton Lisak (level 4, social skills as level 6), who is pompous and haughty but genuinely horrified by Sutton's death.

**GM Intrusion:** A thief makes off with a bunch of valuables from the breached storeroom, including the KEYS.



## THE KILLER'S LAIR

The flagellatus makes its lair in an unused warehouse. The PCs might first encounter the creature on the streets at night, particularly if they attempt to lure it out by wandering in ones or twos along darkened side streets (*reveal Show 'Em H [page 75] to the players*). The flagellatus is a bipedal creature slightly smaller than a human, with a dark feathered hide, birdlike talons for feet, and curved horns and tusks. It often shambles on all fours, and it attacks with claws or a barbed whip.

Any KEYS present were collected by the creature as trophies from its kills.

**Flagellatus:** level 4; health 12; Armor 2; inflicts 5 points of damage, plus the victim must succeed on a Might defense roll or suffer a disfiguring growth that increases the difficulty of all Might tasks by one step. If the victim survives the encounter, this effect dissipates after one hour.

## PURGATORY

The wardrobe's inapposite gate opens into a niche in the side of what appears to be an underground passageway. The walls are too coarse to be man-made, but the vaulted tunnel is too uniform to be natural. Sputtering torches, and the reddish flicker of flames from far-off side chambers, provide a dim, uneven light. Moans and cries of pain and sorrow drift in from unknown distances, and the air is foul and acrid. Just like within the wardrobe, there's no visible sign of the gate—one simply steps through what looks like solid rock to emerge back on Earth.

Purgatory, seeded from medieval myths and stories, is a seemingly unending network of passages connecting chambers of various sizes—some as small as a typical bedroom, others larger than giant gymnasiums. Bands of sinners, chained and ragged, plead and pray as they are tortured within these rooms or driven in small groups from one chamber to another.

The tormentors are goat-legged, wickedly horned demons, skeletons, and creatures that seem like odd combinations of different animals. All are aggressive. A few can sense that the gate is open, and increasingly, they are beginning to wander toward it. If the PCs spend much time in Purgatory, they encounter a band of three Purgatory demons. One of them has been through the gate and may have seized a KEY from the Lisak storeroom before returning to gather its fellows.

**Purgatory Demon:** level 4; health 16; Armor 1; inflicts 5 points of damage with claws or a torture weapon such as a barbed whip

**GM Intrusion:** One of the demons scuttles along the walls and ceiling, moving a short distance to a PC who was previously protected by others, and attacking in the same round.

## THE BREAKOUT

This event occurs whenever the GM desires, but preferably before the PCs are able to close the gate (and perhaps while they are in Purgatory). A more powerful demon finds its way toward the exit and onto Earth. Unless stopped, it plows its way out of Lisak Auction Services and starts wreaking as much fiery death and destruction as it can.

**Fiery demon:** level 5; health 20; Armor 2; inflicts 5 points of damage with flaming claws or a stream of flaming breath at a target within long range

**GM Intrusion:** The demon's breath ignites the fuel tank of a nearby parked car, inflicting 5 points of damage on two PCs. The fire continues to burn throughout the encounter.

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



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

## ALTERNATE START

If the PCs are not Estate operatives, perhaps they are nearby when one of the attacks occurs, or maybe they are attacked by the flagellatus themselves. While being questioned by authorities in the aftermath, they overhear discussion of the similarity to the other murders.

## LISAK AUCTION HOUSE

Lisak Auction Services occupies a sizeable low-rise building. The front area is modern and tasteful, the antiques contrasting with clean, contemporary architecture. Behind a few auction rooms and offices is a series of storage rooms and a small warehouse where auction items are stored. Some of the rooms are actually light-security vaults. The place has a couple of dozen employees, most of whom are in shock over the recent violent death of coworker Gary Sutton.

## LIKELY COURSE OF ACTION

The likely flow of this scenario involves the PCs first investigating the murders, then connecting them to Lisak Auction Services, then investigating the “break-in” and recognizing the wardrobe as the gate, and finally figuring out how to close and seal it. Somewhere in there they may find and destroy the flagellatus.

You can control the length of this adventure by choosing how many keys are necessary to seal the gate. Perhaps the PCs simply need to lock the wardrobe’s heavy inner door with its hefty brass key (actually a cypher) or recite an ancient Romanian script from an old document. Or maybe they need to do both of those things while wearing the Dragenesti signet. A trip into Purgatory to recover one or more keys from the demons can really ratchet up the tension.

## THE WARDROBE’S STORY

The wardrobe was created in the 1400s by a Romanian “wizard”—actually, a quickened individual who used his ability to travel the Strange as a means of wielding what appeared to be supernatural power. As the legend states, he built the wardrobe for the Count of Dragenesti as a means to summon a dangerous horde of unearthly beings, whom the Count set upon an invading Ottoman army.

After that event, the gate was closed, and the wardrobe was stashed away in a moldering castle by Dragenesti’s descendants.

These are different times, and Moldova is riven by the strife that has affected many former Soviet satellites. A powerful oligarch by the name of Burlacu Voinescu took possession of the castle. His interest in antiques or Moldovan history goes only as far as his ability to exploit them, and he plundered the castle, sending anything of potential value to be sold off in the West. The contents were packed hastily into a shipping container to be auctioned to wealthy American antique buyers.



## PURGATORY

In some Christian faiths, purgatory is an afterlife realm that awaits anyone who was not, in life, holy enough to ascend straight to heaven or profane enough to go straight to eternal damnation—almost everyone, in fact. Upon death, these people suffer through a period of cleansing trials until they are ready to move on to heaven, a process that might take years or even centuries.

To the modern eye, the recursion known as Purgatory might be indistinguishable from a vision of Hell. It’s a seemingly endless maze of rocky tunnels and large caverns in which sinners stew in fire and water, and torture chambers where punishments ironically suited to specific sins are carried out.

Of course, despite appearances, no one in Purgatory is actually a human soul from Earth. All entities, both demonic and those undergoing trials, are born of the same fiction that seeded the recursion itself.

**Level:** 4

**Laws:** Magic

**Playable Races:** Human

**Foci:** Carries a Quiver, Channels Sinfire, Looks for Trouble, Slays Dragons, Works Miracles

**Skills:** Medieval theology

**Connection to Strange:** None

**Connection to Earth:** Various gates

**Size:** Vast tunneled space approximately 30 miles (48 km) in diameter

**Spark:** 10%

**Trait:** Tough. A creature making a recovery roll adds 1 to the roll.



Gary Sutton was given the task of documenting the lot's contents and preparing copy and photographs for the auction catalog. In addition to numerous furnishings and artworks, he found items related to the wardrobe, including the key(s) to opening the gate. An old handwritten book in archaic Moldovan (a variant of medieval Romanian) provided Sutton with the legend of Dragenesti, and he figured the interesting backstory would add to the wardrobe's appeal (and hence the selling price). He didn't speak Romanian, so his research was piecemeal and sketchy, but in it he discovered the means for opening the gate.

Depending on the number of keys required for the scenario, the lot might have included a signet ring, the book, a gorget, an actual key, or other similar items. Given how the shipping container was packed and documented, these items may or may not be in Lisak Auction Service's records.

## 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 you use *The Wardrobe* in a campaign, you may want to expand the murder investigation phase of the scenario. Perhaps more than one flagellatus came through the gate that first night, leading to additional grisly deaths. The PCs might realize there's an inapposite gate operating in their city and face two or three unearthly horrors well before they manage to track down the wardrobe's location.

Unlike recursions based in more modern fiction, Purgatory has been around for six centuries. The PCs aren't necessarily the first recursors to explore it, and those who have been there before might have their own agendas. In particular, the **Karum** have known about Purgatory for some time, and the organization became aware of Dragenesti's gate shortly after it was used. Six hundred years is a long time on Earth, but the Karum haven't forgotten. A Karum leader named Vilet-sha hopes to find the gate and make use of it, but the **Quiet Cabal** have gotten wind of the plot and are also seeking the gate. The PCs might tangle with Vilet-sha's agents if or when they venture into Purgatory looking for the keys to sealing the gate.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering the inapposite gate, and a further 2 XP for closing it.

Characters who succeed in ending the murders without many witnesses to supernatural activity will be recognized and rewarded by local police and the Estate (if they are Estate operatives). If they somehow manage to cover up all evidence of the supernatural, even better. On the other hand, if supernatural activity or creatures were extensively witnessed by the public, civilian authorities are likely to view the PCs more as part of the problem than as part of the solution. Still, if they established a relationship with Rodriguez or Martin, the detective or the coroner might call on the characters in the future if either of them come across other odd occurrences.

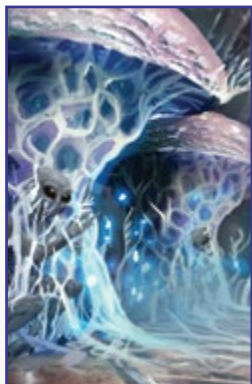
If the PCs are operatives of the Estate, that organization will reward them for closing the gate and reporting on Purgatory. And if they're not affiliated with the Estate, the group might attempt to recruit them.

*Karum, page 193*

*Quiet Cabal, page 194*







*The gravity in Crash is lower than that of Earth, but not so low that it affects the PCs' ability to perform tasks.*

## BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs search for valuable salvage and a dangerous fugitive in a massive alien spacecraft crashed on the surface of a dead moon.

## DETAILS

This scenario could continue from any adventure where a quickened NPC eludes the PCs by translating to the recursion of Crash and hiding within the dangerous spacecraft.

Otherwise, the fugitive the PCs are looking for is a quickened barrage crusader (a kind of cyborg soldier from *Cataclyst*) who has been salvaging dangerous Mad Science alien cyphers from the recursion it refers to as Crash. The barrage crusader, named *Siegfried*, sells the cyphers to merchants in *Crow Hollow* who resell them with a markup. Most things on sale in *Crow Hollow* have dubious origins, but the particularly deadly nature of the Crash cyphers means that the PCs (or the organization they work for) want to end their continued sale. Shutting down a merchant here or there won't do it; *Siegfried* himself must be stopped.

The crashed alien spacecraft is extensive, and finding *Siegfried* inside isn't easy. Worse, the encounters PCs have within the craft are weird and dangerous; the alien technology, remnants of alien life, and even the nature of the recursion itself are not especially friendly to human explorers. The kinds of threats PCs must face include exposure to vacuum (if a character's space suit, gained upon translation into the recursion, becomes damaged), mind-coring pods, flesh-dissolving nanobots, malfunctioning cryosleep chambers, an original alien crew member or two in cryosleep, and *Siegfried* himself. And then there are the alien cyphers he seeks, which carry an alien infection.

## MOOD SUGGESTION

The characters' experience in Crash is mediated visually through stained helmet visors, heard over crackly radio transmissions, and felt through the numbing layers of their protective space suits. Occasionally remind PCs of this reality when they perform even ordinary tasks like searching an area or manipulating a tool.



*Cataclyst, page 238*

*Crow Hollow, page 242*

**Siegfried, barrage crusader:** level 6; health 30; Armor 2; makes two melee attacks as a single action; accompanied by drones with a half-mile (800 m) range attack that inflicts 9 points of damage every other round; for details, see *The Strange Bestiary*, page 19



## SURVIVING VACUUM EXPOSURE

PCs who translate into Crash take on its context and appear on the surface of the airless moon, gazing at the ruins of a crashed alien spacecraft from the comfort of a space suit. But, as a GM intrusion, a character could appear in the vacuum without protection.

A PC exposed to sudden, complete vacuum due to translation problems or because his suit blows out catastrophically has about thirty seconds (five rounds) to find another suit, a vacuum tent carried by another PC, or some other salvation, and all the while his tasks are one step more difficult. If he doesn't find shelter, he succumbs to unconsciousness after five rounds and dies thirty to sixty seconds after that.

A PC in a suit that becomes damaged in a fight (or as a GM intrusion) might suffer a leak instead of a catastrophic blowout. In this case, if he spends three rounds using the suit's external repair kit and makes a difficulty 3 Speed roll, the suit is patched.



**SALIENT POINTS:**

- The fugitive the PCs seek has been tracked to a recursion called Crash. Crash is comprised of a crashed alien spacecraft smashed into an airless moon.
- Crash operates under the law of Mad Science, and those who translate into it must withstand the dangers of vacuum. Thankfully, translation normally provides the recursor with a space suit, even if a particular focus normally doesn't offer a suit as part of translation equipment.
- Within the narrative of Crash, the alien builders of the ship were called greys. Except for a few still in cryosleep, all the greys died when the ship crashed.
- Finding and dealing with the fugitive is the PCs' primary mission, though they might decide to do some salvage of their own.
- The alien-infected cyphers from Crash that are being sold in the Crow Hollow market have terrible side effects. They carry an infection that slowly kills the victim with invading fungal growth. Mind-coring pods sprout and feed on the corpse.

**ARTIFACTS****SPACE SUIT****Level:** 1d6 + 1**Form:** Lightweight full-body suit with helmet**Effect:** Serves as light armor and offers complete protection from environmental temperature and pressure dangers, providing breathable air, food pellets, and waste recycling services. Each day of use requires a depletion roll.**Depletion:** 1 in 1d100**VACUUM TENT****Level:** 1d6 + 1**Form:** Layer of folded cloth or 10-foot (3 m) cube (when pressurized)**Effect:** A vacuum tent can be deployed over the course of two rounds with a successful Intellect-based roll; on a failure, it takes 1d6 + 2 rounds. Once pressurized, the tent is filled with breathable air of a comfortable temperature and can hold up to two human-sized occupants for ten hours before requiring a depletion roll.**Depletion:** 1 in 1d10**STARTING POINT**

**Reveal Show 'Em I** (page 76) to the players and tell them to make their Crash foci active.

The PCs have translated to the surface of a moon containing a massive crashed spacecraft of alien origin. Ship debris from the impact is scattered about, and at least one massive hole provides an obvious entry point into the craft.

**THE WRAP-UP**

After the PCs deal with Siegfried, the barrage crusader, they are technically done with the scenario. Unless they caused the crashed ship to self-destruct, they could continue exploring the alien spacecraft despite the danger posed by some of the cyphers.

**What a Recursor Knows**

**About Crash:** When PC recursors first translate to this recursion, they know the first three salient points.

*The equipment a PC gains upon translating to Crash includes a space suit and a vacuum tent.*

**KEYS**

This scenario has three keys.



Something that serves to protect PCs from one or more varieties of alien technology or life on the crashed ship, or that detects whether or not a cypher is infected.



Something that can serve as a self-destruct sequence for the crashed ship.



An alien-infected cypher. Determine cyphers randomly. They are dangerous because when used, they infect users and others nearby with a nanovirus that slowly converts them into mind-coring pods (on a failed difficulty 4 Might defense roll) over the course of about a month.

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. (These are in addition to the alien-infected cyphers.)





## SHIP ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR

The crashed alien spacecraft is reminiscent of the curled whorls of a seashell spun of a silvery, reddish metal. Walking through the interior, explorers find that the curves and many branches follow a similar aesthetic. The ship interior is open to the vacuum.



## POD · SPECKLED HALLWAYS

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

Some of the hallways, including this one, are speckled with groups of two or three funguslike pods, each about 4 feet (1 m) tall. These mind-coring pods attack any creature that doesn't have the protection KEY.

**Mind-Coring Pod:** level 3; sessile; short-range psychic attack inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage and puts victim to sleep on failed Might defense roll; sleeping victims are automatically attacked

**GM Intrusion:** A PC put to sleep by a pod begins to sleepwalk and attacks another PC.



## ACCESS LECTERN

A shape like a lectern protrudes from the floor. Its complex surface dances with energy patterns. Various dormant functions of the ship can be brought online here (as level 5 Intellect tasks), including changing lighting conditions, pressurizing specific areas (by sealing them behind a level 5 bulkhead), and bringing up a video feed on specific areas.

If the self-destruct KEY is here, it is a pattern that can be displayed as a level 5 task. The pattern is entered at a different location (the Heart).

If the alien-infected cypher KEY is here, it is in a compartment in the base of the lectern and seems to serve as a component of the device. If the KEY is removed, the lectern ceases functioning.

**GM Intrusion:** The character operating the Access Lectern accidentally causes antibiotic nanobots to be sprayed into the chamber; see Nanobot Stain.



## EMPTY AREA . . .

This area seems free of machinery or objects.

**GM Intrusion:** If the PCs return to this area after exploring it once, a section of the floor gives way, and at least one character who fails a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll drops 10 feet (3 m) into a tub of thick, dark fluid. This is cryo-preserved fluid, and a victim takes 5 points of damage from the extreme cold each round. A victim must make a difficulty 5 Might defense roll to climb free of the chilling fluid. A PC "killed" by the fluid actually enters cryosleep and could be safely revived if someone successfully uses the Access Lectern. If the character is revived in some other fashion, he must make a difficulty 5 Might-based roll (after a one-hour thaw) to avoid permanently losing 1 Intellect point.



## SPATIAL ANOMALY

A glimmering sphere-shaped hole in space drifts about the area. Objects thrown into the anomaly reappear a few seconds after being tossed in, their trajectory reversed. A character who enters the anomaly must succeed on a difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll to exit safely, and she gains 2 points she can add to any Pool in the bargain. A failed defense roll spits the character out with no additional points and with so much extra imparted velocity that she impacts the nearest wall and takes 3 points of damage.

If the protective KEY is present, passing through the anomaly renders a character immune from mind-coring pod attacks or being affected by an alien-infected cypher for three days. It also renders all infected cyphers carried by that PC to a noninfected state.

If an alien-infected cypher KEY is present, a character who emerges from the anomaly is holding it, or an object tossed through the hole is replaced with it.

**GM Intrusion:** The character appears from a trip through the anomaly with a holed—or missing—space suit.



## NANOBOT STAIN

Various areas, including this one, contain residue of an attempt to scrub out the plague of mind-coring pods using antiseptic nanobot swarms. These areas are indeed clear of pods, but they contain nanobot residue in the form of blue-green speckling staining the walls and floor. If the PCs get within immediate range of a stain, a nanobot swarm lifts into the air and attacks.

If the alien-infected cypher KEY is here, it is lying in a pile of less-useful debris, all of which is stained with a quiescent nanobot swarm.

**Nanobot Swarm:** level 4; flies a short range each round; touch attack inflicts 2 points of Speed damage

**GM Intrusion:** The character who takes damage from the nanobot swarm must make a difficulty 3 Might defense roll or descend one step on the damage track.



## CATHODE

A thick pole of silver metal rises from this chamber to a height of 6 feet (2 m), and it visibly crackles with reddish energy. It inflicts 4 points of damage on anyone who touches it and knocks that person unconscious for one minute on a failed difficulty 4 Might defense roll. However, that person also becomes permanently specialized in using the two control surfaces (the Access Lectern and the Heart) in the spacecraft.

If the protective KEY is present, touching an alien-infected cypher to the pole clears that cypher of the infection. If an infected character grabs the pole and holds it (or is held against it) for four rounds, she is cleared of any alien infection she might be suffering from.

**GM Intrusion:** If a PC touches a cypher to the cathode, the item is cleared of any alien infection it hosts, but the character suffers 4 points of damage from the crackling energy.



## SLEEPING GREY

Visible through a transparent pane in the floor is a 4-foot (1 m) tall humanoid with large black eyes, grey skin, and a hairless body resting in cryosleep in a tub of fluid. This is a grey (level 4). However, it has been preserved too long. If the PCs use the Access Lectern or physically lever up the pane to bring the grey out of cold sleep, it takes an hour to thaw, and after that, it just stares and mumbles an alien language as if brain damaged.

If the protective KEY is present, it is the grey itself; in its presence, flesh-dissolving nanoswarms do not activate.

If the self-destruct KEY is present, it is the pattern of words that the alien repeats over and over, which could be entered at the Heart.

If the alien-infected cypher KEY is present, the grey carries three cyphers on a thin belt.



## THE HEART

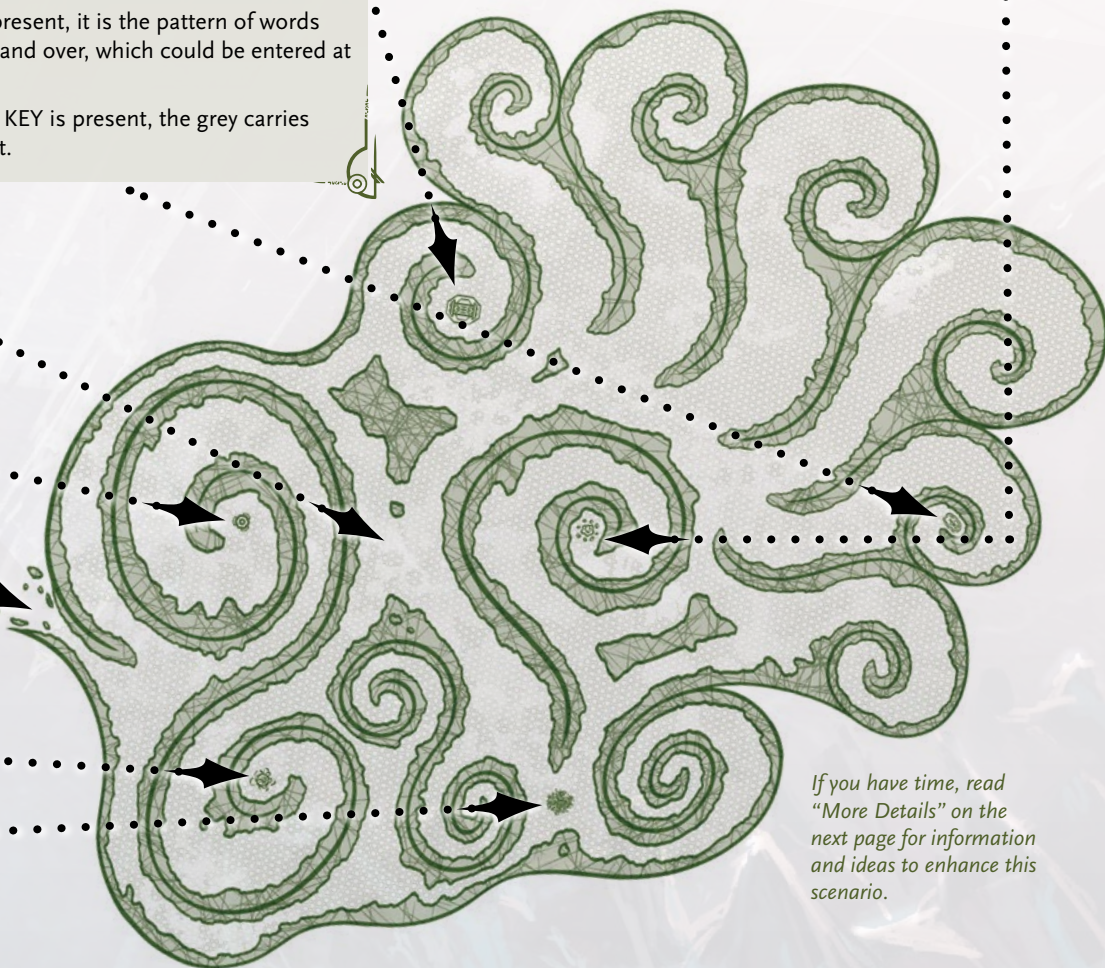
This chamber contains a control surface like that described in the Access Lectern room, and it functions in a similar way. However, if the self-destruct KEY is entered here, a countdown in alien script begins that ends ten minutes later with the total destruction of the recursion. PCs in the recursion when it is destroyed each take 12 points of damage, descend one step on the damage track, and are treated as if they'd failed a translation roll.

If Siegfried is in the Heart, he has begun to feel the effects of the alien infection himself; he's about one week away from dying and sprouting a litter of mind-coring pods that will happily feed on his corpse. As such, the difficulty of his tasks, attacks, and defenses is increased by two steps. The barrage crusader is initially aggressive, but if the PCs can persuade him that the cyphers he's been taking from the ship are infected, and offer to help cure him, he will aid the characters with their goal. To cure Siegfried, the PCs will need to use some kind of disease-healing cypher or subject him to a treatment from the cathode.

If the cypher KEY is here, it's because Siegfried has four alien-infected cyphers on his person.

**GM Group Intrusion:** If the PCs are negotiating with Siegfried, something happens that makes him suspicious of the characters again, and they must talk him down.

START



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



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### ALTERNATE START

Some of the other adventures in this book introduce NPCs who could conceivably elude the characters by translating into a dangerous recursion such as Crash. For instance, perhaps Gaben-saag, the Karum secret agent from *Into the Strange*, gets away from the PCs with the entropic seed and comes here to lay low. The characters learn his whereabouts thanks to a mole in the Karum who provides a cypher from this recursion (though no one realizes until later that the cypher is infected).

Alternatively, maybe one or more PC duplicates from *One Day on Campus* elude the characters, who chase them to Crash. The duplicates, knowing the minds of the PCs so well, leave trails and traps through the most dangerous portions of the ship in an effort to get the mind-coring pods or nanobot swarms to kill or weaken the PCs.

### ALTERNATE SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Instead of encountering Siegfried in the Heart, the GM could stage running encounters with the barrage crusader (or whoever the PCs are pursuing) throughout the ship, in a sort of cat-and-mouse game. Each time the PCs encounter their quarry, they might notice that for all his power, he seems a bit sicker each time. Siegfried is succumbing to the infection carried by the cyphers he's been salvaging from the ship. However, this means the PCs could overcome him (or convince him that



he needs their help) very quickly and thus end the session far sooner than planned. If you want to avoid this possibility, interrupt that encounter with a couple of cryo-decanted greys carrying grey guns who break up the fray, allowing Siegfried to slip away and adding a complicating factor to the equation. The greys don't speak English and consider the PCs and Siegfried to be the invading aliens.

### 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).

The crashed spacecraft can double as the interior of any alien installation the GM desires, possibly found in some other Mad Science recursion. Since exploring defunct alien ships is a common fiction trope and thus a common sort of recursion, *Crash* can be useful as is or adapted for another campaign in *The Strange* or the Cypher System.

Within the context of a campaign, it's easy to imagine that the PCs need something specific from the spacecraft other than the barrage crusader. Maybe the characters are after a sample of the nanobot swarm, hoping to gain control of it for their own anti-infection program in a different recursion. Or maybe there's an additional key, something the characters were commissioned to find by the Estate or OSR.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 1 experience point (XP) for discovering the spatial anomaly, 1 XP for discovering the cryo-preserved grey, and 2 XP for putting an end to the infected cyphers.

GMs can expand the spacecraft to be as vast as they want. In fact, the interior could be much larger than shown; the part on the map could be one "bulb" of a bigger spacecraft, the bulk of which is buried beneath the moon's surface. If so, the ship certainly holds more strange revelations, greys in cryo-preservation, and

*Gaben-saag*, page 48

*Into the Strange*, page 48

*One Day on Campus*,  
page 42



*The Estate*, page 148

*OSR*, page 157



#### ARTIFACT: GREY GUN

**Level:** 1d6 + 1

**Form:** A tiny, silver gun-shaped object with no moving parts

**Effect:** This device beams collimated microwaves at targets within long range, initially inflicting damage equal to the artifact level, and then inflicting half that amount in each of the two subsequent rounds. A living creature killed by a grey gun explodes as if it had been cooked in a microwave. The grey gun can also burn through solid objects of its level or lower.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d100



## CRASH ATTRIBUTES

**Level:** 5

**Laws:** Mad Science

**Playable Races:** Human

**Foci:** Conducts Weird Science, Entertains, Fights Aliens\*, Infiltrates, Integrates Weaponry, Is Licensed to Carry, Leads, Looks for Trouble, Operates Undercover, Wields Two Weapons at Once, Works the System

**Skills:** Crash lore

**Connection to Strange:** Hyperspace

**Connection to Earth:** None currently

**Size:** Though it looks like an entire moon, the recursion is only a little larger than the crashed spacecraft itself, around 33,000 square feet (3,000 square meters).

**Spark:** 10%

**Trait:** Sickly. When a character heals or makes a recovery roll, it gains 1 less point than normal.

\* indicates focus found in this book



alien artifacts and treasures, not to mention more dangers.

If the GM wants to make it easy to return to the alien ship to explore further (assuming the PCs don't enter the auto-destruct sequence), she can adapt the spatial anomaly to be a translation gate to Earth or another recursion. (Maybe this is the method used by the barrage crusader to move between Crow Hollow and Crash.)

Destroying all evidence of the mind-coring pods, including the microscopic spores that somehow infect cyphers, is impossible without entering the self-destruct sequence in the ship. Worse, if PCs don't destroy the recursion, the fungi, which already have an odd awareness of the Strange, could continue their evolution and not only gain a slow vegetable sentience but also gain the *spark* or even become *quicken*. In the latter case, the fungi would continue extending their reach into other recursions, but instead of doing so accidentally thanks to the barrage crusader, they would actively send infectious cyphers and servitors to other limited worlds. These servitors would take the form of recursors whose minds have been cored out and filled with controlling fungus.

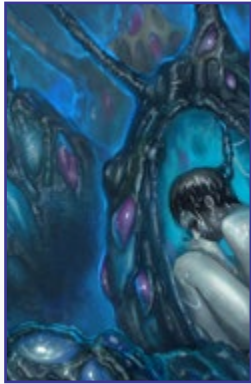
*Fights Aliens, page 8*

*Spark, page 22*

*Quicken, page 22*







## ONE DAY ON CAMPUS

### BRIEF SUMMARY

Something is amiss at the Estate, as PCs discover upon their return to the campus; duplicates of the PCs pretending to be the characters have been up to no good and must be eliminated.

### DETAILS

Countless fictions describe evil duplicates. Whether created by robots, space pods, mirror dimensions, or evil spells, such a duplicate is almost always motivated to eliminate the original person with whom it shares memories and appearance, but not allegiances and outlook. In fact, a duplicate is almost always fictionally depicted as wishing to eliminate the original person and take her place, with no one else the wiser. If successful, the duplicate commences a campaign to destroy everything positive the original ever created in her life. Like most fictions, recursions where duplicates can be spawned exist in the Strange. And unfortunately for the PCs, one of the recursions they recently translated into had just such a feature, though they departed before they realized it. When the duplicates formed, realized they were quickened doppelgangers of Estate operatives, and smiled their evil smiles, the original characters had no clue that their lives would soon become extraordinarily complicated.

In fact, the PCs don't realize something is amiss until they return to the Estate after an extended period away. When they show up on campus, friends and colleagues give them sour looks, mumble about inappropriate behavior, and generally give them the cold shoulder. Before the PCs can learn much more, they're called into a meeting with their supervising officer, Katherine Manners, who calls them

on the carpet for their unprofessionalism, arrogance, and deeds.

Assuming the PCs can convince her that they might not be responsible for the deeds she lays at their feet, they get an opportunity to clear their names by figuring out what's happened. To do so, they must travel around the Estate campus, looking for clues, talking to other operatives, and eventually discovering that they are being impersonated. To wrap things up, the PCs must eliminate their duplicates or at least evict them from the campus.

### MOOD SUGGESTION

The PCs have been to the Estate campus dozens of times or more, which throws into focus their sense of alienation and unreality as their friends and colleagues heap scorn and accusations upon them.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Unbeknownst to the PCs, evil duplicates of them were spawned in one of the recursions the characters recently visited.
- The evil duplicates are quickened, just like the PCs, possessing the characters' abilities and knowledge.
- The duplicates made their way to the Estate campus on Earth and passed themselves off as the characters.
- The duplicates want to ruin any credibility the PCs may have with their parent organization, and they also will take any opportunity to kill the originals and eliminate the corpses.
- The duplicates are working on a method to completely replicate everyone on the Estate campus, not just the PCs.

## STARTING POINT

The PCs return to the [Estate](#) after an absence of at least a week. When they do, one of them notices a guard shoot the group a dirty look. Another PC sees a couple of colleagues mutter to each other, frowning with distaste, as they point at the group. A third character is flipped the bird by another Estate operative (the [Fixer](#)) who's just leaving the campus.

If these rude behaviors are questioned, PCs get steely silence, mutters of "I never realized you were such a dick," or similar. Further clarification is difficult because that's when the PCs are summoned to the office of [Katherine Manners](#), their supervising officer (SO)—if no other SO has previously been assigned—via priority text messages on their Estate-issued smartphones.

Manners begins the meeting with a glare, tells the characters they are being put on indefinite leave, and asks them to turn in their badges. If they're lucky, she says, they *might* avoid being prosecuted as thieves (the duplicates stole several cyphers), embezzlers (the duplicates transferred Estate funds), computer hackers (the duplicates apparently crashed the Estate network as a prank), and perpetrators of unprovoked battery (the duplicates beat up several colleagues). And, she adds, if they could be prosecuted for being foul-mouthed, cruel, and vindictive bastards, she would add that to their offenses.

This interaction is where the PCs learn that "they" have been sighted all over campus taking part in exactly the kind of behavior they are being accused of. Of course, the PCs know they're innocent. If they can convince Manners that something fishy is going on, she tells them to bring her proof. If they can't, she'll have to assume the characters are "just lying again."

The characters can scour the campus, look for evidence of what's happened, and try to clear their good names. The PCs have a hard time getting other operatives to help them on this quest. Even the Fixer believes that the PCs are responsible for the disruptions. So the characters are essentially on their own. Mechanically speaking, the difficulty of all interactions the PCs attempt with other Estate staff is increased by one step. Not until a particular NPC is convinced that the PCs are being framed does that penalty lift, for that NPC only.

## THE WRAP-UP

The best-case scenario is that the PCs eliminate the duplicates one way or another and return to Katherine Manners with proof that the evil doppelgangers are actually to blame for the disruptions. Otherwise, the PCs could find themselves turned out of the Estate. Hopefully, they have also put an end to the duplicates' plans to replace even more Estate operatives.



*The Estate, page 148*

*The Fixer, page 149*

*Katherine Manners, page 149*

**Katherine Manners:**  
level 6

### KEYS

This scenario has four keys.

- ◆ Something that reveals a duplicate to be a copy of an original PC.
- ▲ Something that reveals the duplicates are planning on replacing many more Estate operatives.
- Something the duplicates are vulnerable to, such as an item that detects them or hurts them.
- ✱ One or more PC duplicates.

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.

**PC duplicate:** level 5; health 25; knows what the original PC knows; attacks and defenses evoke the PC's favorite attacks and defenses, including damage inflicted and Armor value





## GATE HOUSE

The Gate House contains permanent gates (mostly translation gates, but a few inapposite gates) to other recursions. Each gate is secure within its own room, locked by keypad.

Staff usually includes at least three guards (level 3; ranged pistol attacks inflict 5 points of damage) and Gate Scientist Shirley McGuire (level 2, science-related tasks as level 6). All react negatively to the PCs, since they know the characters were put on indefinite leave, and from the Gate House staff perspective, the last time the PCs were present they snuck into the facility and accessed a gate without permission. Shirley isn't sure which gate, but she caught the "PCs" as they were leaving through the foyer, carrying something bulky in a canvas bag that had presumably just been liberated from one of the recursions. She assumes it was contraband.

**GM Intrusion:** The guards try to start something with the PCs, hoping a character will react violently enough to give the guards a pretext to take the group prisoner and render them to holding.



## RECURSION LAB

The lab contains a handful of technicians (level 2, science tasks as level 5) at any given time. Several recursion gates are found here in locked cubbies, each flanked by scientific workbenches filled with laboratory equipment. The lab is overseen by Hertzfeld (level 5, tasks related to science as level 7). Unlike other Estate staff, only Hertzfeld is willing to take what the PCs say at face value.

If the KEY that the duplicates are vulnerable to is present, it's because Hertzfeld offers the PCs a smartphone app that detects creatures not native to Earth and highlights them on the phone screen in a shimmering outline (Depletion: 1 in 1d10).

If the KEY that is another duplicate is present, refer to this encounter's GM intrusion.

**GM Intrusion:** A duplicate PC attempts to surreptitiously replace the real PC. If it succeeds, the player plays the duplicate, with the other players none the wiser. Otherwise, it melts into anonymous goo.



## HOLDING

Holding is a detention center for keeping OSR spies, dangerous creatures from extreme recursions, or PCs who have been remanded here because of the deeds performed by doppelgangers. Translating out of a cell in Holding requires a difficulty 9 translation roll (failures go nowhere); breaking out is a difficulty 7 task to hack the lock system.

Holding is normally secured by five guards (level 3; ranged pistol attacks inflict 5 points of damage) and the warden Ivan Kozlov (level 4, security-related tasks as level 6).

If the KEY revealing plans for further duplication is present, it's something the duplicates brought to Kozlov with instructions to keep it safe. Kozlov doesn't know what it is, but if that cell is opened, inside is a large vegetable-like pod. If the pod is peeled, it is found to contain a half-formed duplicate of Shirley McGuire (from the Gate House). *Reveal Show 'Em K (page 77) to the players.*

If the KEY that is another duplicate is present, it's a PC doppelganger, preferably a spinner, who was brought into Holding for attacking a fellow operative just ten minutes earlier at a location the real PCs haven't yet visited on campus.

**GM Intrusion:** If a duplicate in Holding is confronted, that duplicate decries the actual PC as a Karum impostor and tries to get the guards and Kozlov to consider that all the characters might be compromised and should be locked up until everything is sorted.



## VAULT

The Vault stores dangerous artifacts from other recursions brought to Earth through inapposite gates, as well as items that (like cyphers) translate to Earth but remain incredibly dangerous. Individual vaults are level 7 spaces that are 10 feet by 10 feet (3 by 3 m). The Vault foyer normally has two guards (level 3; long-range pistol attack inflicts 5 points of damage) and is overseen by Jessica Lee (level 2).

If the KEY that reveals a duplicate to be a copy is present, it's because the duplicates rudely trooped into the Vault a few days ago (as Jessica can relate) and asked that something dangerous be stored. If that vault is examined, it contains several pods that failed to gestate properly. If peeled, they're found to contain a few half-formed versions of the PCs swimming in plantlike amniotic goo. This could also (or alternatively) be the KEY that shows evidence of a plan to copy other Estate staff if half-formed versions of Hertzfeld or Manners are here.

**GM Intrusion:** A guard or duplicate slams the vault door on any PCs inside a vault, trying to trap them until all the other duplicates can be brought together to deal with the threat.



## LIBRARY

This structure houses an extensive archive and library of hard-to-find books and similar documents. Librarian Larry Murchison (level 2, library-related tasks as level 6) is usually on hand to help browsers.

If the KEY that the duplicates are vulnerable to is here, it's that Larry remembers how the "PCs" recently came by and broke into the rare books section. They made off with a few books, including the *Langston Bestiary* that describes dangerous creatures across a range of recursions. (The tome devotes a lot of attention to podlike growths seeded into several recursions and how to recognize pod-derived duplicates on sight: a tiny stem on the back of each duplicate's neck, normally hidden by hair or a hat.) *Reveal Show 'Em L* (page 77) to players who get Larry to admit that he has a backup copy of the bestiary as an e-book.

**GM Group Intrusion:** A text alert goes out over all the Estate staff's smartphones, including Larry's, asking that the PCs' whereabouts be reported immediately so a team of security guards can come and collect them. This makes Larry wary of cooperating with the characters unless they can convince him otherwise.



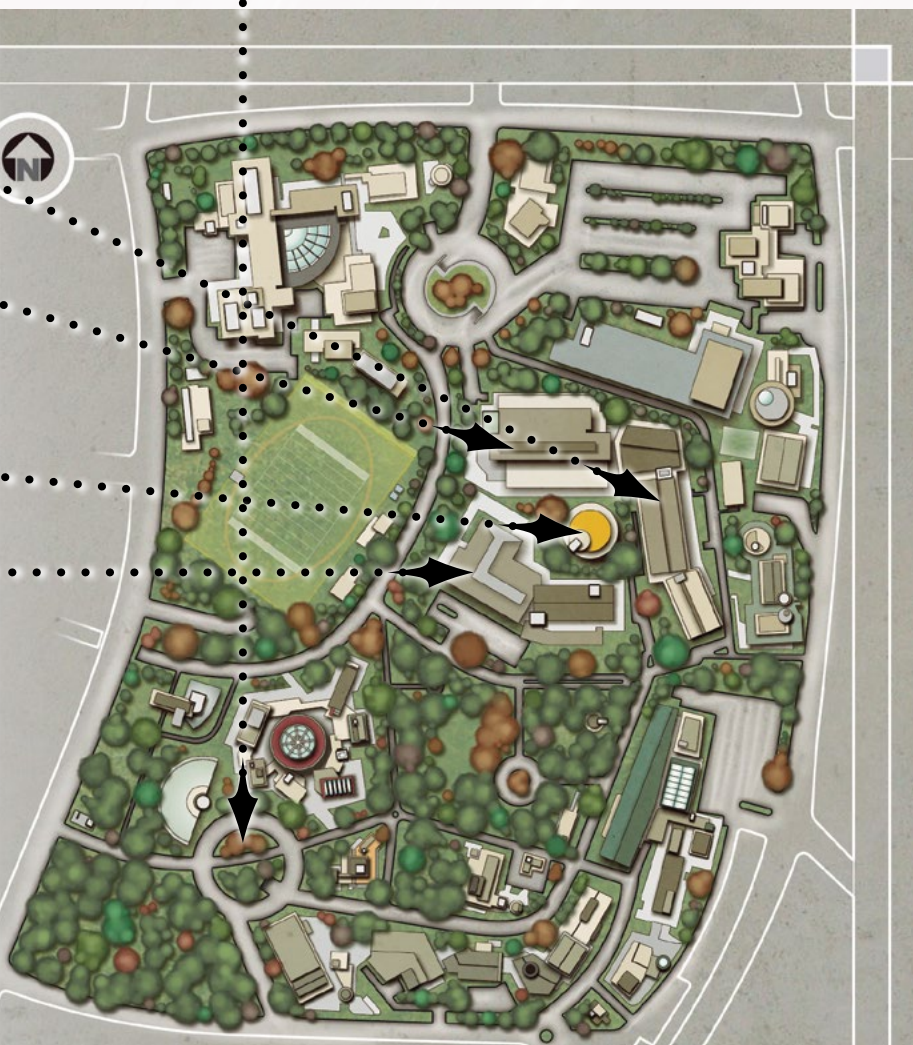
## DUPLICATES!

This encounter comes to the PCs, rather than the other way around, as a GM intrusion. When the GM feels it would be best, but preferably after the PCs have had time to investigate the Estate campus and realize the nature of the people tarnishing their bad name, all the duplicates not otherwise accounted for find the PCs. They arrange to ambush the characters with weapons in a location not under direct observation by other Estate staff, perhaps by faking a summons by *Lawrence Keaton* to a private meeting room.

Once the duplicates have the PCs where they want them, they try to kill the originals and dispose of the remains. However, they prefer not to fight to the death, and if the PCs look as if they may win, the duplicates attempt to flee.

**GM Intrusion:** A duplicate accurately predicts what the original is going to attempt and takes the perfect action to stymie that attempt.

*Lawrence Keaton,*  
page 149



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





The Estate, page 148

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### THE ESTATE CAMPUS

More information about the [Estate](#) campus can be found in the corebook, including additional Estate people of note, interesting areas of campus, and ongoing missions other operatives are likely involved in that might be happening at the same time as this scenario.

### ALTERNATE START

If the GM doesn't want to start the scenario when the PCs arrive on campus to find themselves already implicated, play could begin in a recursion called Moonbase Tranquility. This recursion has the trappings of Mad Science, but in fact, it operates under the law of Standard Physics and is seeded from hard science fiction novels, movies, hopes, and dreams about creating a base on the moon. A series of domes and tunnels, Moonbase Tranquility is operated by robots of limited scope and ability, though they're proficient in their particular specialties. One of those specialties is the collection of helium-3 from the moon's surface. Autonomous drones crisscross the moon (or, at least, the limited portion of it that makes up the recursion) mining the isotope, and huge magnetic helium-3 tanks are stored near the base.

Unfortunately, the science fiction sources the recursion is based on bled over into those in which alien life forms take over other worlds by replicating and replacing the inhabitants. When the PCs arrive in Moonbase Tranquility

(to test whether they can transport a sample of helium-3 back to Earth using a special storage mechanism developed by Hertzfeld), they discover that no humans have been alive in the recursion for several years—only robots, more than half of which have broken down. They also find dried and withered growths (dead pods) and the freeze-dried remains of two humans who seem to have killed themselves by going out on the surface without suits. If the PCs take the time to investigate, they discover that the dead people were apparently twins. In fact, one was the original killed by the duplicate. After the duplicate did what it could to seed the base with spores, it followed the original into death.

Once the PCs leave Moonbase Tranquility, new pods sprout and begin the process of duplicating the characters.

### ADDITIONAL COMPLICATION

One way to add a potentially interesting twist is to select one PC to start the game, secretly, as a duplicate instead of as his own character. If the player thinks this would be fun, he should play his character normally, but be on the lookout for opportunities to foil the other players' investigations, argue against crazy theories regarding duplicates, and so on.

At some point, the original PC, who extricated himself from wherever he was left for dead, shows up to confront the duplicate and challenge the rest of the group about who is who. Present this encounter as a group GM intrusion. Keep the mystery alive a little longer by having the player continue playing the duplicate while the GM plays the original character.

### ESTATE SITUATION EVEN MORE DIRE

If the GM really wants to put some fear into the players, she should consider having far more of the Estate staff already replaced by the time the game begins. Maybe Manners is already a duplicate, or maybe the PCs find her duplicated the next time they talk to her. When they learn the truth about the duplicates and tell another Estate staff member or operative, that person reveals himself to be a duplicate as all emotion flees his face, he sighs, and he tries to kill the PCs. Depending on how far the GM wants to go with this, it's possible to engineer the beginnings of the fall of the Estate in this scenario, unless the PCs can take decisive action to halt the process.







## 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 *One Day on Campus* is incorporated as part of campaign play, presumably the PCs are operatives of the Estate. The GM can use the alternate start provided above but flesh out the reason why Hertzfeld wants the helium-3. He is working on a device for visiting scholar Professor Brian Duncan, who needs a power source of special robustness—a fission reaction engine, to be precise. And, Hertzfeld assures the characters, nothing says “fission reaction” like helium-3. The device Professor Duncan wants to build is, as Duncan describes, a “personal dark energy control and amplification harness” that he promises will make all the Estate’s operations immeasurably easier, if perfected.

What no one realizes is that Professor Duncan is none other than **Moriarty**. The criminal mastermind conned Hertzfeld into helping him perfect a device of great power. If finished, the device will allow Moriarty (and no one else) to become an unstoppable power of the Strange. For more details, refer to the adventure *Mad Professor's Gambit*.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering that they've been duplicated, and 2 XP for eliminating said duplicates.

If any duplicates of the PCs survive this scenario, they will not stop trying to eliminate the characters, though they lay low for a while and hide from PC attempts to find them. Because they are quickened, the duplicates can translate and hide in a minor recursion just like the PCs could. On the other hand, the PCs can try to guess where their duplicates would go, given that they have the same knowledge. Ask a character where *she* would go, recursion-wise, if she wanted to go into hiding. There's a chance that's where her duplicate would go, too.

Of course, a duplicate could guess that the PC would be able to predict its choices, and maybe even count on that fact by preparing an ambush. In this situation, the duplicate uses its abilities to raise a small force of natives in her new recursion, convincing them that if the PCs appear, they are evil doppelgangers who should be swiftly dispatched before their influence can spread.

**Professor Moriarty:** level 7, interaction and knowledge skills as level 9; long-range pistol attack inflicts 7 points of damage that ignore Armor; carries several cyphers, including one that grants +5 to Armor

*Mad Professor's Gambit*, page 66





*The Orb of Worlds floats within a confluence of invisible tides in the Strange, allowing those who know how to channel it to accomplish extraordinary things, including seeding new recursions.*



Orb of Worlds, page 221

OSR, page 157



Karum, page 200

Ruk, page 190

Entropic seed, page 219

*An entropic seed is a computational spike, a singularity of calculation that approaches infinity—sometimes known as a “magic wish.”*

## INTO THE STRANGE

### BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs must journey into the dark energy network of the Strange itself, then resolve an ongoing disaster in the Orb of Worlds, a structure of some importance.

### DETAILS

The PCs learn that the **Orb of Worlds** has been attacked, and that its monk caretakers have requested aid. Before the characters can help, they must first enter the Strange, which is an unsettling experience even for veteran travelers of the dark energy network. If the PCs make it through the Strange to the Orb, they discover most of the caretakers missing, others dead or unconscious, and a couple roused to fend off additional violence. The PCs may also discover a few Office of Strategic Recursions agents onsite. (The **OSR** is an Earth-based governmental body that is active within the Strange.)

To figure out what's happened, the PCs must explore the Orb and assemble clues, which suggest that one of the monk caretakers was a spy or double agent. This traitor kicked off the attack on the Orb with the aid of inklings, entities out of the Strange. Remaining monk defenders of the Orb incorrectly presumed the OSR agents were the perpetrators of the violence, which escalated matters further. To set things right, the PCs will have to find the traitor and bring him to justice.

The traitor, a monk named Gaben-saag, is secretly an agent of the **Karum** in **Ruk**. Though no one knows it, Gaben-saag was attempting to smuggle an **entropic seed** out of the Orb by first transforming it into a mundane-looking sculpture and then absconding with it in the confusion of his attack. An entropic seed is a relic of the Strange of immense and terrifying power, and the arrival of the OSR agents gave the traitor the diversion he needed to take it.

### MOOD SUGGESTION

Bring home to players the utter alien realm of the dark energy network by using phrases like “inextricably alien,” “bizarrely abnormal,” and “literally beyond your mind’s ability to comprehend.” The alienation rules described below work hand in hand with this mood.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Entering the Strange itself is something many characters have little experience with, but that’s the first thing PCs must do as the adventure begins. Then they must “surf” through the Strange to the Orb of Worlds.
- The Orb of Worlds has suffered an attack by a traitorous monk—Gaben-saag of Ruk—who wants to steal an entropic seed.
- An entropic seed is a fabulously powerful relic of the Strange.
- Gaben-saag transformed the entropic seed into a mundane-looking sculpture and hopes to smuggle it out of the Orb in the confusion of his inkling-abetted attack.
- The surviving monks blame every stranger they come across, including OSR agents who were in the Orb, for the attack and apparent theft of the entropic seed.
- To put matters right, the PCs must reveal the traitor Gaben-saag and safeguard the entropic seed, returning it to the monk caretakers.

### STARTING POINT

Ask the players to choose a set of foci matching the recursion they most recently visited before starting this adventure; otherwise, they can use their Earth foci.

The PCs enter the Strange through a gate from another recursion (but not from Earth; no gates open directly between Earth and the

Strange itself), looking for a place called the Orb of Worlds.

**Experiencing the Strange:** The PCs plunge into a sea of spiraling fractal patterns forever iterating in upon themselves. A shock of bluish-purple color at first suffuses the gaze, but highlights of gold, orange, and blood red quickly break through. The twists and turns seem chaotic but reveal themselves as maddeningly complex patterns that threaten every PC with a headache like nothing they've ever previously experienced.

**Alienation in the Strange:** Things are so alien that each PC suffers 1 factor of alienation upon first entering the Strange, and 1 factor for each day spent exposed without a break. Each factor of alienation immediately inflicts 1 point of damage to each of a PC's three stat Pools. (A PC trained in a skill that provides a buffer, such as *Chaosphere navigation* or *fractal surfing*, doesn't suffer the initial factor of alienation.)

A PC with factors of alienation suffers damage again if the following situations occur:

- A PC's alienation factor increases by any amount.
- An eight-hour rest ends with the PC still suffering 1 or more factors of alienation.

Alienation factors are reduced by resting within an enclosed structure (such as the Orb of Worlds) or craft for eight hours.

**Traveling the Strange:** Moving through the chaotic boil of the Strange is an act of will. Mechanically, this comes down to an initial Intellect-based task to figure out which direction to head (called *Chaosphere navigation*), followed by a Speed-based task to harness the underlying currents of the Strange and surf along those waves (called *fractal surfing*).

The difficulty of the Intellect-based task of *Chaosphere navigation* to locate the Orb of Worlds is 4. It's not visible upon initially entering the Strange.

The difficulty of the Speed-based task to *fractal surf* to the Orb of Worlds is 4. On a success, a character (and other PCs hanging onto that character) can surf toward the Orb on a trip that takes  $1d6 + 5$  hours to complete (see *Dead Monks* on the following page). On a failure, the travelers risk becoming lost. Each day, a lost traveler can attempt a difficulty 5 Intellect-based task to reorient herself. Each failed reorientation roll increases her alienation factor by 1. If she finds her way again, it reduces her alienation factor by 1.

**The Orb:** As the characters draw near the Orb of Worlds, *reveal Show 'Em M* (page 78) to the players. The map on the following two-page spread is a cutaway depiction of the Orb. Inside it, gravity is normal to the ground, and PCs can move around without being subject to alienation.

## THE WRAP · UP

If the PCs can find Gaben-saag and return him (or his body, plainly tattooed with Karum loyalty slogans beneath his robes) to the Orb, relations between Earth-based agencies like OSR and the Estate are normalized. However, if the characters discover what Gaben-saag *really* risked all to find—an entropic seed—the few surviving OSR agents may decide they want it, too, and attempt to waylay the PCs just when events seem settled.



### KEYS

This scenario has four keys:



Something that will make surviving monks on the station give the PCs safe passage.



A cypher or artifact that will cause a transformed object to return to its base shape.



The entropic seed, transformed to look like a simple piece of elegant sculpture.



Something that implicates Gaben-saag.

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.

*Chaosphere navigation,*  
page 215

*Fractal surfing,*  
page 215





## DEAD MONKS

Four robed figures lie dead in the wide entrance vestibule. They suffered gunshot wounds and trauma (as if from being beaten), and one monk looks partly faded, as if his substance and color was leached away.

If the monks have the KEY that's a transformed entropic seed, it's in a satchel wrapped carefully in cloth. Someone who is versed in Strange phenomena or who uses a method to gain more information about it can tell only that the object's true nature is concealed.

If the monks have the KEY implicating Gaben-saag, it's in the form of a bruise shaped like an open hand; insightful PCs recognize that the monks were fighting one of their own.



## DEAD OSR AGENTS

Two men in combat fatigues lie dead in this area. Their ID tags show their names to be Daniel Mason and Andrew Hennessy, both of OSR. They died of blunt force trauma. Their gmm pistols are completely discharged. Their pack contains rations, water, small tools, and an envelope addressed "To the caretakers of the Orb of Worlds" that contains a letter from Colonel Angela Whitesides of OSR asking for aid in apprehending a Karum agent thought to be sheltering in the Orb.

If the bodies have the KEY granting safe passage, it is the letter signed by Angela Whitesides.

If they have the KEY that returns transformed objects to their native state, it's a cypher among a handful of other cyphers.

If they have the KEY implicating Gaben-saag, it's in the envelope in the form of a picture revealing Gaben-saag's likeness (at least his likeness as he appears in Ruk, wearing Rukian clothing). Recognizing him from the picture requires a character to make a difficulty 5 Intellect roll.

**GM Group Intrusion:** One of the bodies holds the handle on an armed level 5 shrapnel grenade. When the characters check the body, it rolls free and detonates in immediate range.



## MELISSA

Melissa (level 4; Armor 1; unarmed attacks inflict 6 points of damage), a caretaker monk of the Orb of Worlds originally from Earth, lies unconscious and bleeding here. If healed, she remembers her vow of silence and communicates with PCs via chalk on the stone floor. She relates in short sentences that she isn't sure what happened, but she got caught up in a fight with "shadowy" inkings, which are creatures native to the Strange, and "Earthers in combat gear" (OSR agents). Melissa believes the agents and inkings were in league.

If she has the KEY that grants the PCs safe passage when shown to other monks, she provides it out of gratitude as a hand signal, assuming the characters convince her that they are not OSR agents themselves.

If she has the KEY that is a cypher, she provides it as one of the three cyphers she gives to the PCs as thanks for helping her.

**GM Intrusion:** Upon first being healed, Melissa uses a cypher that brings her to full health, and then attacks the PCs, thinking in her confusion that they are OSR agents.

## PCs APPROACH



## HURT MONK

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

A bloody trail leads to a monk named Yar-daan who made it this far before collapsing. He asks the PCs for healing. If they express surprise that he's talking rather than adhering to his vow of silence, Yar-daan says he broke the vow when he was attacked by filthy OSR agents—just one more thing he blames them for.

If the KEY granting the PCs safe passage is present, Yar-daan provides it out of gratitude as a hand signal.

If the KEY implicating Gaben-saag is present, it's because Yar-daan is lying; he is Gaben-saag. But he hides that as long as possible, even offering to accompany the PCs, as he looks for the entropic seed. He transformed it so he could smuggle it out of the Orb under everyone's noses, but he lost track of it in the confusion.

**Gaben-saag:** level 5; health 25; Armor 2; two unarmed attacks inflict 6 points of damage each as a single action

**GM Intrusion:** If the PCs realize that the monk is Gaben-saag the traitor, he uses a cypher that renders him invisible for one minute and tries to get away.

## INKLINGS

Gaben-saag released swirling, semiliving shadows called inklings into the Orb of Worlds. The inkling invasion led to the evacuation of most monks, who followed a false lead planted by Gaben-saag that sent them off looking for the source of the invasion in the Strange (which is why the place is mostly empty of caretakers). This shadowed area is still thick with ten inklings feeding on the corpse of an OSR agent, mostly unraveled and faded into colorless nothingness.

If the KEY that is the transformed entropic seed is here, the corpse has it.

**Inkling:** level 2; touch inflicts 2 points of ambient damage; five inklings make a swarm that attacks as a level 4 creature whose touch inflicts 4 points of ambient damage

**GM Intrusion:** The character's light source goes out.

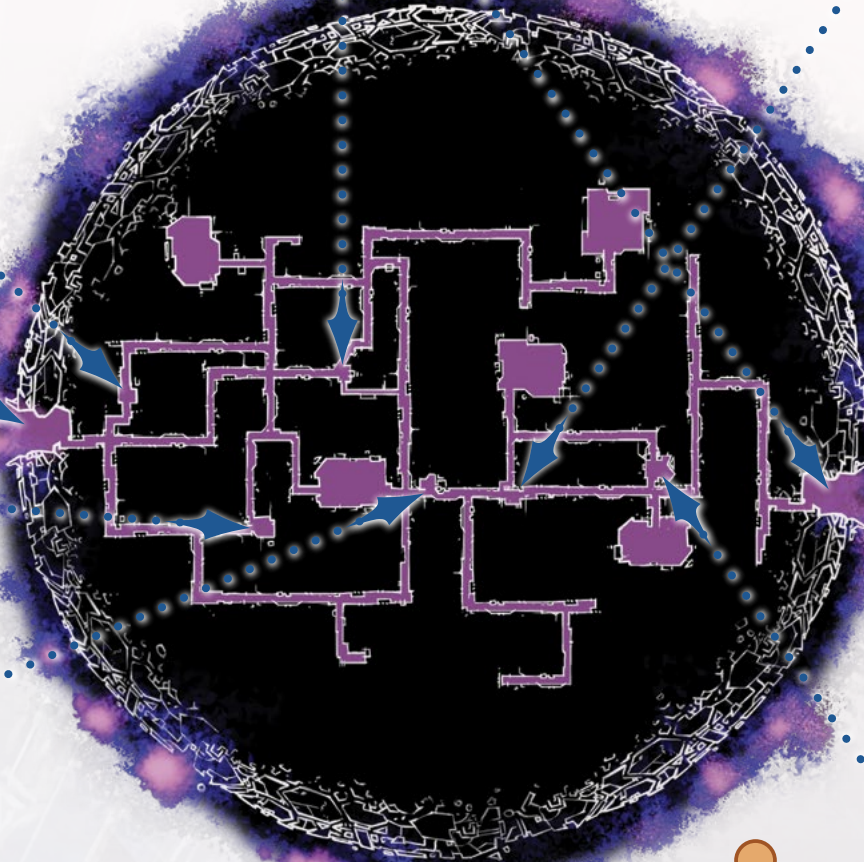
## TRAPPED OSR AGENT

OSR agent Jason Wang (level 5) is imprisoned behind a level 6 force field here. Jason explains that OSR agents came to the station acting on intel that a Karum spy was in the Orb looking to betray the monks and steal an entropic seed from the repository. However, things got confused, and the monks believe that OSR is behind the attack. Wang is being held here until the surviving monks still in the Orb have a chance to deal with him. He asks the PCs to free him.

If Wang has the KEY that transforms an object back to its base form, it's a cypher, and he knows that the entropic seed is hidden in a different shape.

If Wang has the KEY that implicates Gaben-saag, it is a picture like the one the dead OSR agents might have.

**GM Intrusion:** A swarm of five inklings attacks the character.



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

## MILITANT MONKS

Three caretaker monks (level 4) and battle teacher Rive-shamash (level 7) make plans of vengeance in the Orb repository. Rive-shamash just discovered that the entropic seed is missing. She blames OSR and all strangers in the Orb. If the PCs do not have the KEY that grants safe passage, they must rely on their ability to persuade and fast-talk to avoid a fight. If the PCs agree to find evidence of their innocence and, better yet, find the traitor and the missing entropic seed, Rive-shamash not only spares their lives but also agrees not to launch a pogrom against whatever group, recursion, or world the PCs hail from.

If the KEY that is the transformed entropic seed is here, Rive-shamash doesn't know it (because it was altered by Gaben-saag preparatory to stealing it).

**GM Group Intrusion:** If the seed KEY and the disguised Gaben-saag are both present, once the PCs gain the trust of Rive-shamash, the traitor makes his move, snatches the KEY, and uses a cypher to turn invisible for one minute to make good his escape.



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

## THE STRANGE ITSELF

The Strange, the region of dark energy that the game is named for, is as vast as the real universe that it underlies. Though not originally designed to be so, the Strange is home to many intelligent races and entities. Unfortunately for Earth inhabitants, natives of the Strange are often incomprehensible to beings of Earth and the recursions that it hosts. And the most powerful of all those beings—the **planetovores**—should be avoided at all costs, lest the threat that has silenced nearly every other form of intelligent life in the universe also find Earth.

## ORB OF WORLDS

Hanging at the center of the confluence of wave energy is the Orb of Worlds, an artificial structure built by natives of Ruk to facilitate the investiture of **reality seeds**. Like it sounds, the Orb of Worlds is spherical and measures more than a mile in diameter. The Orb has gravity, is lit by living bioelectric lamps, and provides shelter from the alienation of the Strange.

Under normal circumstances, any interior chamber could serve as a place where a traveler could rest peacefully (and reduce alienation). The five largest inmost chambers are set aside for investiture by those who come to the Orb with a reality seed. At any given time, most of the investiture chambers are empty and dusty, as are many of the other chambers.

The Orb of Worlds is home to a small community of monklike caretakers originally native to a recursion of Earth. This so-called Order of the Orb maintains the nexus and guards it against infestation or, as happened on more than one occasion, prevents it from being taken over by a radical organization of Ruk. Each member of the Order takes a vow of silence and serves for a stint of at least ten years, though many stay for their entire lives. Some are healers, others are wanderers who wanted somewhere to call home, and a few are battle-hardened warriors who seek peace after years of conflict. Thanks to the daily training regimen created by this last variety, all the monks of the Orb are proficient in combat.

Under normal, non-invasion circumstances, visitors to the Orb can expect lodging, the



*Planetovore, page 8*

*Reality seed, page 218*



chance to engage in limited trade with a handful of other visitors, and access to the investiture chambers. Visitors who overstay their welcome are either kicked out or inducted into the Order of the Orb.

## OFFICE OF STRATEGIC RECURSION

The Office of Strategic Recursion (OSR) is a secret agency of the USA that has ties to governments around the globe. Like other agencies that thrive without having any official existence, OSR is funded through misleading accounting, misdirection of seized funds, and other less palatable sources.

OSR is well aware of recursions, and its field agents are quickened individuals who use cyphers to accomplish missions. It monitors groups like the *Estate* and the *Quiet Cabal*. In fact, it's OSR's policy to feed these two groups leads on a regular basis to foster their belief that OSR is on their side.

The truth is, OSR isn't working for the same goals as either group. Sure, OSR will put down a rogue dragon from Ardeyn or deal with a Karum-aimed paradox trying to set fire to Washington, D.C. But its ultimate policy goal is to discover all the ways that elements of the Strange can be weaponized for use on Earth.

## 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).

*Into the Strange* is likely a mission assigned by an organization the PCs work for, either directly or as freelance contractors. However, the adventure could also be used as a random encounter while the PCs make their way through the Strange on an unrelated mission.

One way to accomplish the latter is to insert the scenario into the middle of a task related to the Orb of Worlds that is important to the PCs. Perhaps they come to the Orb hoping to invest a reality seed, only to find the place in an embattled state.

Alternatively, the characters could be sent to find the same entropic seed that Gaben-saag was after, which ties this adventure to others in this book related to the *Mad Professor's Gambit*. In this case, the PCs are working to prevent the "mad professor" from getting hold of the seed, or they are unwittingly working on his behalf under his alias, Professor Brian Duncan.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 1 experience point (XP) for each hurt NPC they heal (even if one turns out to be the traitor), and 2 XP for recovering the entropic seed and returning it to the safekeeping of Rive-shamash at the Orb of Worlds.

If the PCs free the captured OSR agent Jason Wang and he doesn't turn on them to gain the entropic seed, he could become a long-term ally in the Office of Strategic Recursion. In fact, if he ever found himself embroiled in a conflict with the PCs in the future, he might choose to help them instead of follow the commands of his own agency.

If the PCs decide to keep the entropic seed for themselves, several consequences result. For instance, if the monks of the Orb of Worlds discover that the characters took the seed without their blessing, they assume the PCs were involved in the entire plot orchestrated by the traitor all along. Rive-shamash marks the characters as enemies of the Orb of Worlds, banning them and any associated organization from visiting again unless reparations can be made.

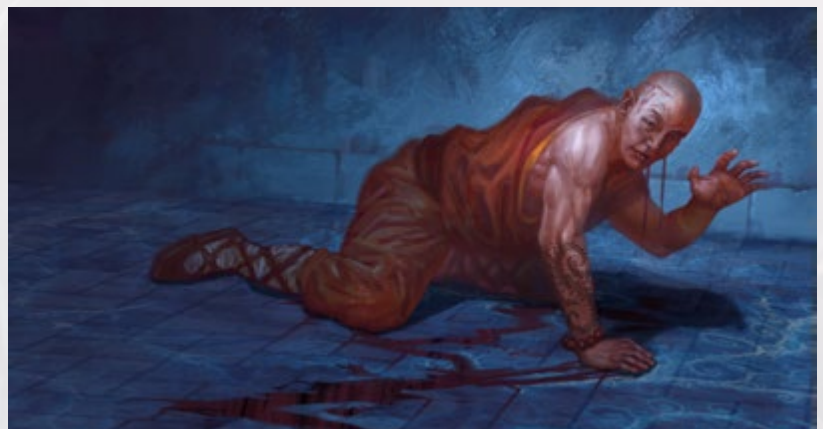
Likewise, if OSR command learns that the PCs have the entropic seed, they set up a sting operation to retrieve it, possibly by pretending that they have information on how to vastly increase the seed's power, if only they and the PCs can meet.

Last, if Gaben-saag gets away (with or without the entropic seed), he returns to the Karum and provides a full report on the PCs' actions. If the characters were effective in keeping the traitor from his goal, the Karum sends a small group of quickened assassins after the PCs with orders to strike when they least expect it.

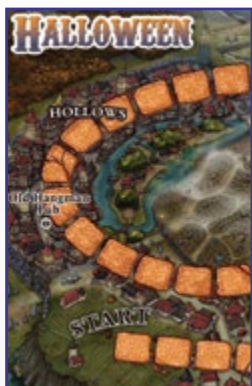
*The Estate*, page 148

*Quiet Cabal*, page 194

*Mad Professor's Gambit*, page 66







## GAME OF SCREAMS

*The Game of Screams is an artifact likely seeded into the Strange by stories and movies about malicious games with the power to suck players into dangerous other worlds.*

**Gwen Delfino:** level 3, playing games as level 5



*Recursion miner, page 156*

*Crow Hollow, page 242*

*Premonition, page 32*

### BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs play a Halloween-themed board game purchased from Crow Hollow, but discover it to be an artifact of the Strange with a deadly power over its players.

### DETAILS

The PCs get together to play a board game with their friend **Gwen Delfino**. Gwen is a **recursion miner**; she's not part of any official organization and travels the Strange looking for treasures, fun, or both. Prior to this evening, one or more of the PCs (or Gwen) purchased the Halloween-themed board game, *Game of Screams*, from the market in **Crow Hollow**. The shop owner teased the game as being "haunted" by witches and ghosts and guaranteed it to be a "genuine artifact of the Strange." The latter proved true because the game, like a cypher, translated with the purchasers back to Earth.

The game is set out and begins with a lot of laughs, snacks, and drinks. Gwen makes the first roll: a 1. The crystal dome at the center of the game lights up with a whirlpool of flickering orange light that sucks Gwen into the game. She's gone, as is her playing piece.

That's when the PCs realize that to save their friend, they'll have to finish the game, all the while risking further dangers with each roll of the dice.

As game play continues, the PCs discover that entities can emerge from the game to threaten them, though those entities may possess a "Trick" or a "Treat" that a player needs to claim to win the game. The first person to reach the end with a Trick and a Treat wins, and the game ends. Anyone still trapped within the game is released, and any creatures still loose in the world disappear.

### THE GAME BOX

The game box is old fashioned in that it is made of wood, not cardboard, and the top splits and

opens to reveal a wider board on which is painted a fantastical Halloween-themed city. A single path meanders from one edge of the board to the other, divided into forty-two squares. The box also contains a loose card with rules for players, a black twenty-sided die, and seven game pieces: jade stones carved to resemble Halloween goblins.

### STUDYING THE GAME

Characters trained in Strange lore who study the game (or who use the paradox **Premonition** ability) learn that the game is a level 9 artifact of the Strange. Once the game begins, the board keeps track of its state. If the game is abandoned for hours or years, when next the box is opened, the pieces from the last game tumble back to their places on the board.

Learning the following is a difficulty 5 Intellect task for someone trained in Strange lore.

The game is linked to a recursion called *Halloween*, but trying to use the game as a connection to translate directly there is cheating. Players of the game who are pulled into *Halloween* as a result of their rolls can't translate out again even if they are quickened; the only way they can escape is by dealing with the situation they find themselves in, or if the current game is played to completion by players not trapped in the game.

### MOOD SUGGESTION

*Game of Screams* should be spooky and haunting. Mood and ambience can be generated with subtle, lingering descriptions of the terrors that emerge from the game.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- The *Game of Screams* is linked to a malicious Halloween-themed recursion.
- Players can be menaced by Halloween creatures and be drawn into the game. The best way to free trapped players is to finish the game.

- The PCs' friend Gwen is sucked into the Game of Screams right as they begin play.
- Bats, ghouls, and witches can be released into the real world by the game, and they must be dealt with.
- The game ends when the first player advances her token to the end with both a Trick and a Treat, which are items gained during play.

## STARTING POINT

Reveal *Show 'Em O* (page 79) to the players. The PCs begin this adventure on Earth, with Earth foci active. If possible, replicate the board by copying it for players to use as an actual game board.

## GAME OF SCREAMS RULES

The PCs have much less information than the GM about playing Game of Screams.

### RULES FOR PLAYERS

Printed on a loose card is the following:

"Roll the die to move your token. The first one to reach the end with a Trick and a Treat wins. But beware: do not start unless you intend to finish. Finishing is the safest way to release those who become trapped."

### RULES FOR THE GM

Don't provide much more insight to the PCs than what's given under Rules for Players and the information a PC can gain by using Strange lore. Mystery is good in this case.

**Setup:** Photocopy *Show 'Em O* and use it as the game board; use coins or other tokens for playing pieces. Otherwise, players can simulate their positions on the board by recording their starting positions on a central piece of paper.

**Order of Play:** All players roll a d20. Highest roll takes the first turn (after Gwen, who rolls a 20). Play then continues clockwise.

**Taking a Turn:** On a player's turn, she rolls the d20. The GM determines the results according to the d20 Effect table, though she can apply whichever effect she wishes. If an effect indicates that an entity is summoned from the game, it must be dealt with before another turn can be taken. PCs can't use Effort on Game of Screams rolls. New players can sub in for other players who've left the game, and one player can play multiple pieces.

**Winning:** The winner is the first player whose piece makes it to the crystal dome (position 42) and who has both the Trick and the Treat (items potentially carried by the ghouls, ghosts, and witches encountered in the game). A player who makes it to the crystal dome without both

d20	Effect
1	Imprisoned. Character is sucked into the game and imprisoned in Witch's Potion Room (playing piece disappears while PC locked in game)
2	Cauldron. Character is sucked into the game and is free to act in Witch's Potion Room (playing piece disappears while PC locked in game)
3–4	Graveyard ghouls*
5–6	Bat swarm*
7–8	Witch visit*
9–10	Carousel of Chance
11–14	Move 3 spaces
15–17	Move 5 spaces
18–19	Move 7 spaces
20	Player takes a free roll on the Carousel of Chance

\* These results occur only once. If rolled again, the player is instead treated as having rolled a 9 or 10, or the GM can fashion a different result that is similarly scary.

the Trick and the Treat must keep rolling on subsequent turns until she gains what she is missing, another player gives her the required item, or someone else wins. The winner is rewarded with a bonus Halloween-themed cypher that is randomly selected.

**Cheating:** A player who takes a roll out of turn, who attempts to use the game board as a translation connection to Halloween, who fixes the die or uses telekinesis on it, and so on is penalized by the game. Subtract 10 from the result of his cheating die roll and refer to the table for what happens; results below 1 are treated as 1.

*Making arbitrary decisions about the effect of a player's roll deepens the mystery for players. In fact, the GM is encouraged to add more arbitrary effects, like screams bursting from the game, mist, or other effects not noted on the table.*

**Halloween-themed cypher options:** The cypher is shaped like a skull, ghost, or carved pumpkin. The cypher summons a ghoul that serves the PC for one minute. The cypher summons a rain of candy.

## THE WRAP-UP

The PCs either finish the game or abandon it. If they finish the game (by someone winning), any characters and NPCs trapped in the game are freed and returned. The keys gathered as a winning condition are sucked back into the game, but the PCs retain any cyphers or other rewards obtained.

If the game is abandoned, it waits until such time as someone else takes it up, whereupon play continues.



### KEYS

This scenario has two keys, though multiples of each may be available. All keys translate like a cypher, and players immediately recognize them as something needed to win the game.



Something that counts as a Trick.



Something that counts as a Treat.

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.





## 1-10 ON D20 ROLL

### ENTERING HALLOWEEN

If a character is sucked into the Game of Screams, the experience begins with a frightening "skydive" into the recursion. The character falls toward a mammoth city lit by leering pumpkins staring from windows and atop walls. Bonfires on surrounding hilltops are tended by witch covens, and firefly gleams from trick-or-treater candles dot the narrow streets. But before the character can splatter on those streets, she is sucked into the Witch's Potions Room.

### GRAVEYARD GHOULS

3 or 4 on a d20

A troupe (seven in all) of what at first might be mistaken as children wearing Halloween costumes and masks appears somewhere near where the Game of Screams is being played, possibly in a separate room or outside. In fact, the intruders are ghouls.

To resolve the turn, the ghouls must be killed or sated with candy, sweets, or other food (the latter requires that the PCs have food to give and make a difficulty 3 Intellect roll for persuasion). Once all the ghouls are dealt with, the next player can take a turn.

If the ghouls have the Trick KEY, it appears as a skeleton key in one of the ghoul treat bags and remains behind when the ghouls (or their corpses) dissipate after the PCs successfully resolve the turn.

**Ghoul:** level 3; two claw attacks as a single action inflict 3 points of damage each; on reaching 0 health, the ghoul immediately makes one final claw attack before expiring

**GM Intrusion:** A couple of ghouls appear far enough away to menace civilian NPCs (level 2) out in the street, in a neighboring house, or wherever the closest uninvolved NPCs are located.

### WITCH'S POTION ROOM

1 or 2 on d20

Three walls of this 15-foot (5 m) square chamber contain shelves jammed with varicolored potions. Roots in disquieting shapes hang from the ceiling, and something green bubbles in a central cauldron. A note on the cauldron reads "Drink Me." A single door (closed) leads out into a much larger creepy witch mansion.

PCs who arrive on a roll of 1 in the Game of Screams undergo some translation: they appear stuffed into a 4-inch (10 cm) tall glass vial, one of many potions on the shelves. The trapped PC can take no other action on his turn (in both senses of the word) than attempt a difficulty 7 Might task to rock the vial. On a success, the vial rocks off the shelf and smashes on the floor, releasing the PC. This inflicts 5 points of damage, but also instantly ejects him from the recursion to his prior position in the game.

PCs who arrive on a roll of 2 in the Game of Screams (or through any other fashion) arrive as if through an inapposite gate and can take any action they wish on subsequent turns (including smash the vial of a trapped fellow game player, releasing him; Gwen Delfino is also stored here in a vial). The free-to-act PC can search through the potions (some of which act like random cyphers, as determined by the GM) or sample the brew; doing the latter inflicts 3 points of Intellect damage and instantly ejects her from the recursion to her prior position in the game.

If the Treat KEY is here, it is a potion vial labeled Elixir of Treats. A sip restores 1 point to any Pool; the vial has five sips before it is used up.

**GM Intrusion:** Something large with airy, wheezing breathing moves out in the hall. PCs in the potion room must succeed on a difficulty 3 Speed task to remain quiet enough for the thing to move on. Otherwise, a human-sized doll made only of hair enters and attacks.

**Doll:** level 5; strangling attack inflicts 6 points of damage per squeeze; takes double damage from fire





## BAT SWARM

5 or 6 on a d20

A swarm of bats appears somewhere near where the Game of Screams is being played, possibly in a separate room or outside. The bats have tiny faces of human children that cry like infants as they fly (level 5; melee attack inflicts 3 points of damage on all targets within immediate range of each other). Individually creepy, a swarm of crying bats is terrifying and can strip victims of their flesh in minutes, leaving nothing but bones.

To resolve the turn, the bat swarm must be killed or sated with candy, sweets, or other food (the latter requires that the PCs have food to give and make a difficulty 3 Intellect roll for persuasion). Once all the bats are dealt with, the next player can take a turn.

If the bats have the Treat KEY, it appears as a baby's rattle clutched in one tiny bat hand and remains behind when the bats (or their corpses) dissipate after the PCs successfully resolve the turn.

**GM Intrusion:** A bat tries to force its way into the PC's mouth and down his throat; the character must make a difficulty 4 Might defense roll to avoid this disturbing result.

## WITCH VISIT

7 or 8 on a d20

A horrific witch appears somewhere near where the Game of Screams is being played, possibly in a separate room or outside. The witch might try to fool the PCs into thinking she is something other than what she is while she assesses their strengths.

To resolve the turn, the witch must be killed or her riddle answered (the GM should choose a riddle or use this one: How do you eat a child? Answer: With your mouth). Once the witch is dealt with, the next player can take a turn.

If the witch has the Trick KEY or the Treat KEY, it appears as a potion that remains behind when the witch (or her corpse) dissipates after the PCs successfully resolve the turn. A sip of the Treat elixir restores 1 point to any Pool, while a sip of the Trick elixir only makes the PC think she has restored 1 point. The vials each have five sips before they are used up.

**Witch:** level 5, deception and disguise as level 7, Speed defense as level 6 due to familiar (level 1 cat); health 21; attacks include shrivel and charm; can cast spell to gain +11 to health and +3 to Armor for one minute

**GM Intrusion:** The witch casts a spell on the character. On a failed difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll, the PC is treated as if she rolled a 1 on her normal Game of Screams turn.

## CAROUSEL OF CHANCE

9 or 10 on a d20

The image of a ghoulish carousel appears in the glass dome of the Game of Screams. The PC can choose to "take a ride on the carousel" or advance her playing piece by seven squares. If she chooses the ride, the image of painted wooden horses whirls around for a few seconds and then stops. To determine the outcome, the PC rolls a d20.

On a 1, the character is treated as if she rolled a 1 on her normal Game of Screams turn.

On 2–12, the character can move forward three spaces or choose to ride the carousel again.

On 13–20, she gains a random Halloween-themed cypher, a free one-action recovery roll, or a KEY. Won items materialize next to the winning player.

If the Treat KEY is present and won as a prize, it's a small blood pie. If the Trick KEY is present and won as a prize, it's a hand buzzer.

**GM Intrusion:** The character accidentally jostles the board, and everyone has to make a difficulty 5 Speed defense roll or move back five spaces. On a 1, a character is treated as if she rolled a 1 on her normal Game of Screams turn.

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



For a treat bag full of additional details regarding the recursion of Halloween, see *Worlds Numberless* and *Strange*, page 64

**Hair doll:** level 5; strangling attack inflicts 6 points of damage per squeeze; takes double damage from fire

**Ghost:** level 4, stealth tasks as level 7, tasks related to frightening others as level 6; immune to mundane damage, takes half damage from most other sources; short-range Intellect attack inflicts 4 points of ambient damage and freezes foe in place; can move through solid objects

*Graveyard ghouls, page 56*

**Night Watchman:** level 6; two claw attacks as a single action inflict 7 points of damage each; regains 2 points of health each round

## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

## OTHER HALLOWEEN LOCATIONS

As designed, the *Game of Screams* scenario doesn't encourage PCs to wander into (or be sucked into) locations other than the Witch's Potion Room. However, if a character is sucked into the game and the GM wants a variety of locations, or if the GM wants to draw inspiration from other Halloween locations, she can consider the following options.

## MIDNIGHT CIRCUS

A broad stretch of property in Halloween is set aside for the Midnight Circus. Hundreds of patchwork tents, rickety rides, sideshow carts, games of chance, and sweets dealers move about from night to night. But the red-and-white big top tent is always visible at the center of the sprawl, usually glowing and flashing with entertainments going on within. Rides, exhibitions, games, and special events are routinely staffed by shrunken carnies whose mouths have been sewn closed.

Characters who roll a 1 and become imprisoned in the Midnight Circus might be forced to serve as a shrunken carry until the transformation can be broken with a difficulty 6 Intellect roll (or with the aid of another character).



## HOUSE ON THE HILL

The House on the Hill is the official name for the "witch mansion" that contains the potion room. It's a large, rambling, haunted structure with many confusing rooms and hallways where wandering visitors are likely to run into bogeymen, **hair dolls**, **ghosts**, a witch, or even the witch's familiar Black Posie (a cat with paws like tiny human hands).

Characters who roll a 1 and become imprisoned in a different part of the witch mansion might find themselves tied up and folded into a huge baking pan that has already been fitted with a thick dough crust, waiting to be slid into a massive brick oven. They can break free without getting cooked by making a difficulty 6 Might roll.

## GRAVEYARD

This misty "neighborhood" lies at Halloween's center. Rutted roads meander around the gravestones, mausoleums, and leafless trees. Wandering them almost assures a character a run-in with ghosts, spirits, and **ghouls** that haunt the place, not to mention the **Night Watchman**—a ghoul with the ability to think beyond his next meal.

Characters who roll a 1 and become imprisoned in the graveyard find themselves



## ARTIFACT: GAME OF SCREAMS

**Level:** 1d6 + 4

**Form:** Board game in a wooden box with rules, a d20, and seven playing pieces

**Effect:** The game is linked to a recursion called Halloween and mediates effects between the two locations through game play. Gaining access to Halloween through game play changes the normal rules of translation and travel to alternate recursions, as described in the *Game of Screams* adventure. For instance, if sucked into the game (and thus the recursion of Halloween), a character can't translate back until she satisfies a game requirement.

The game has a special property allowing it to translate between recursions as if a cypher.

**Depletion:** 1 in d20 (Roll for depletion after a game is completed. If depleted, the game disappears and reappears in a random recursion.)



buried in coffins. To escape, first they must make a difficulty 3 Might roll to yell loudly enough to get the attention of the Night Watchman. Second, they must convince the ghoul to let them go (a difficulty 5 Intellect-based task).

## 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, the *Game of Screams* could be a component of another adventure, and the trapped individual could be a fellow operative of the *Estate* (instead of a recursion miner) who has information or possessions vital to the success of some other related mission. In this case, the first (and last) session of the *Game of Screams* played on the Estate campus was abandoned when two agents were sucked into the game, and the board was stored in the *Vault*. Getting permission to retrieve the game and continue playing it likely requires going all the way to the top of the Estate's leadership roster.

In fact, you could use the *Game of Screams* board as the item of interest or key that the duplicates in the adventure *One Day on Campus* are so hot to discover. In this case, that adventure would be paused or possibly continue in conjunction with resolving a session of *Game of Screams* because the

duplicates want to free other NPCs trapped in the game for reasons of their own.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for saving Gwen Delfino, and 2 XP if anyone wins the game.

The PCs can ask their friend Gwen to join them. Given that she's a quickened recursion miner, she could be useful in upcoming adventures as a companion or a source of information on developments in other recursions.

It's possible that the witch encountered during a session of the game will wonder what the characters are doing squatting around the game board. If she realizes that the game is a portal into her recursion, she becomes curious. If she doesn't try to abscond with the game board then and there (treat as a GM intrusion, rather than the one indicated), she may later try to track the board down after she's given the idea some consideration. In this case, it presumes that she is quickened, which allows her to translate to Earth in some guise other than as a gruesome witch and shadow the PCs until she has the opportunity to steal the game.

Alternatively, she may wait until the PCs need an ally and show up offering her aid, but only in return for the *Game of Screams*.

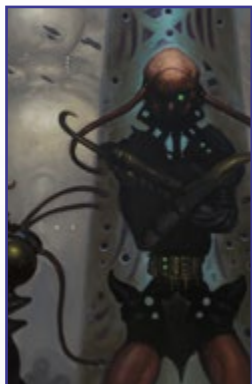
*The Estate*, page 148

*Vault*, page 153

*One Day on Campus*, page 42







## VENOM RISING

*This adventure occurs in the recursion of Ruk, but could be located in another recursion that operates under the law of Mad Science.*



Harmonious, page 196

Zal, page 194

Quiet Cabal, page 194

Venom trooper,  
page 300

Myriand, page 198

*Zal maintains other, mobile factories for venom trooper production, but those typically create venom troopers in lots of just four to ten at a time.*

*The Quiet Cabal is a sister organization to the Estate on Earth and may have requested Estate operatives to help diffuse the Zal witch-hunt for Kasa-bloom.*

### BRIEF SUMMARY

Everyone believes that a Quiet Cabal radical has destroyed various Zal facilities, but now that she's gone into hiding, she'll go unpunished. Finding the radical, or evidence that will clear her, is up to the PCs.

### DETAILS

Things are always frenetic in Ruk's central city of **Harmonious**, but events are reaching a boiling point after several acts of sabotage target **Zal** factories and shops. Zal faction representatives know who's responsible: a **Quiet Cabal** agent named Kasa-bloom. The Quiet Cabal has only occasionally opposed Zal, but Kasa-bloom is a known radical who has previously threatened to do just what's happened: blow up a Zal **venom trooper** cloning facility. Now Zal wants justice. But because the evidence is only hearsay, Harmonious's "police" force—a host of battle chrysalides of the **Myriand** faction—don't take immediate action, allowing Kasa-bloom to escape.

Taking her disappearance as evidence of guilt, the Myriand finally decide to act. It's only a matter of time until they track Kasa-bloom down.

Meanwhile, Kasa-bloom's Quiet Cabal handler, Am-geer, maintains her innocence. Am-geer approaches the PCs (because of their outsider and presumably non-biased status) and asks for their aid in clearing Kasa-bloom.

The truth is Kasa-bloom is innocent of the sabotage (though as a Quiet Cabal agent, she has a history of violence, especially against Zal interests). The actual saboteur is a venom trooper who gained free will in a clone factory accident that was later incorrectly deemed to be the first act of sabotage. Upon realizing its status and that of all its many siblings as thoughtless slaves, the venom trooper, who named itself Zero, decided to strike blows for freedom. The clone believes its

cause is morally right. But Zero's acts of sabotage have resulted in the deaths of innocent people.

When not striking blows for freedom, Zero moves about the city, hiding in plain sight as just another venom trooper. It sometimes visits the scenes of its past victories, and other times cases sites as future potential targets. If anyone fingers Zero as the culprit, the clone defends itself, though it could also be talked into turning itself in, if approached with delicacy and reason.

The PCs likely begin trailing Kasa-bloom, but along the way, they may discover evidence exonerating her while implicating the venom trooper named Zero.



### THE SABOTAGE EVENTS

By the time the adventure begins, four events of sabotage have occurred.

**Sabotage 1:** One month ago, Zal's primary venom trooper cloning factory in Harmonious was destroyed. Three workers and one entire lot of two hundred clones were lost.

**Sabotage 2:** Six days after the first event, a Zal nursery responsible for creating umbilicals was poisoned, and a whole colony of umbilicals was lost, as well as the lives of two technicians.

**Sabotage 3:** Two weeks ago, a Zal-owned body-modification shop called Zal Mods was firebombed. Most of the merchandise was destroyed, as well as two modification technicians.

**Sabotage 4:** Yesterday the original venom trooper facility that was destroyed, which Zal workers had been cleaning up and rebuilding, was struck again with a firebomb. One worker was slain and replacement clone vats were destroyed.



## MOOD SUGGESTION

Ruk is high tech and hard to take in all at once. Natives talk fast, move faster, and think nothing of undergoing amazingly invasive surgeries to gain some small enhancement. Highlight to PCs the weird oddities of the natives, the peculiarities of the *All Song*, and the disturbing nature of the pneumatic elevator tube transports.

### SALIENT POINTS:

- Zal facilities are being targeted, which is spiking the prices of Zal goods across Ruk.
- Zal has fingered a woman named Kasa-bloom as the responsible party.
- Kasa-bloom is known to be a radical Quiet Cabal agent, one who has threatened physical action against Zal in the past.
- Kasa-bloom is innocent but has gone into hiding until she can figure things out; she undertakes her own investigation, even as Myriand patrols search for her.
- The real saboteur is a venom trooper with free will who calls itself *Zero*.
- Zero believes it is striking a blow for clone freedom by acting against Zal interests.

## STARTING POINT

Reveal *Show 'Em P* (page 80) to the players to give them a general sense of what being in Ruk is like, and ask them to choose their Ruk foci.

*Am-geer*, a Quiet Cabal handler, has an ocular implant; his left eye is twice as large as his right and is whorled with green filaments. He explains the situation to the PCs and asks that they help locate Kasa-bloom and clear her name, if possible. (He doesn't tell them he worries that she might truly be responsible for the acts of sabotage, but hopes otherwise.)

In addition to providing a summary of what's known about the sabotage events, *Am-geer* tells the PCs more about Kasa-bloom. Unlike many Quiet Cabal agents, she was very concerned about faction dominance and outspoken against Zal. By her lights, Zal is a willing partner of the Karum—a faction that openly advocates destroying Earth—thanks to their business-as-usual attitude and their ready supply of venom troopers to anyone with the bits to pay.

*Am-geer* supplies an address for Kasa-bloom's crèche (her home), the location of a Zal cloning facility that Kasa-bloom threatened (but that hasn't yet been destroyed), and addresses for the three locations where her acts of sabotage are suspected to have occurred: the

clone factory (twice), the umbilical nursery, and the body-modification shop Zal Mods. *Am-geer* tells the PCs that with the addresses, they can use the pneumatic elevator system of Ruk to zip around town quickly without the expense of paying for a flyer.

## THE WRAP-UP

If the PCs capture Zero or convince the clone to give itself up, they can bring it to a Myriand battle chrysalid or a Zal representative. Zero admits to its "crimes" only if its statement of a demand for equality for venom troopers is read into the *All Song*, for all citizens of Ruk to experience. For its part, Zal is intrigued by the idea of a free-willed venom trooper, and the organization agrees to waive punishment and listen seriously to Zero's demands if the clone acquiesces to further study.

It's possible that the PCs don't find Zero, but instead track down Kasa-bloom and deliver her to the Myriand. In this case, the characters are awarded 100 bits.

*All Song*, page 192

*Am-geer*: level 4; pleasant social interaction, deceiving, and perception as level 6

The Zal Zealots encounter occurs whenever the GM decides it does, if at all.

*Zero*, venom trooper: level 5; health 25; Armor 1; flies a long distance each round; long-range needle rifle attack inflicts 6 points of damage plus 4 additional points of Speed damage on a failed Might defense roll; carries three level 7 incendiary detonations

### KEYS

This scenario has three keys:

- ◆ Evidence that exonerates Kasa-bloom.
- ▲ Evidence that a mysterious third party is the saboteur.
- Zero. Venom troopers are not uncommon in Harmonious. Factions and shop owners alike use them for security. Zero stands out only because of a burn discoloring its right arm and a red sash it wears around its neck. Only PCs who have encountered Zero at least one or two times at different locations are likely to recognize the singular venom trooper. If approached, Zero initially flees from the PCs by jumping off a nearby railing or other high place; its insect wings give it the ability to fly. Zero attempts to lead the characters into a trap at one of the sabotage sites it has prepared for such a contingency. If the PCs catch the clone and name it as the saboteur, Zero admits the truth, gladly. Zero wants its actions to become known to Zal and everyone else in the name of venom trooper equality.

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.



## KASA · BLOOM'S CRECHE

A crèche is the Rukian equivalent of a one-bedroom apartment on Earth, though one filled with biotech conveniences rather than Earthly appliances. Kasa-bloom is not home, nor has she been for some time.

If the house has the KEY implicating a third party, it's a picture of Kasa-bloom, clearly showing the woman as having three arms (one of which is a biomodification). Clues from other locations show that the saboteur has the more standard array of just two.

**GM Group Intrusion:** A patrol of four Myriand volunteers shows up. Things are touch and go at first, as the Myriand believe the PCs might be conspirators with Kasa-bloom.

**Myriand Volunteer:** level 4, tasks related to perception and truth detection as level 5; health 17; Armor 1; makes two melee attacks as a single action

## PLUG INTO THE ALL SONG

The All Song is the Internet of Ruk, where people go when they want to learn something, advertise something, or escape something. The PCs can plug in nearly anywhere in Harmonious at conveniently located communals. A character who successfully withstands the brain blast of sensory information discovers that specific knowledge regarding the acts of sabotage is sparse.

If the KEY implicating a third party is discovered in the All Song, it is in the form of a sensory feed from the Zal Mods shop. It shows a day where customers stream in and out, but it includes a figure in a disguising hood and body wrap lobbing a firebomb right before the sensory feed fails. The figure has two arms, and the PCs know, or will eventually learn, that Kasa-bloom has three arms.

**GM Intrusion:** A character who has never connected to the All Song before is in for a sensory overload. She must make a difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll or suffer 3 points of Intellect damage and move down one step on the damage track.

## DESTROYED ZAL CLONE FACTORY

The facility, located on the top several floors of a tall skyscraper, is guarded by four venom trooper clones assigned by Zal to keep the place secure in the aftermath of two separate attacks. The PCs can try to talk or sneak their way past the clones to explore the ruined interior, which features row upon row of blackened cloning tanks.

A Zal technician named Sal-veder (level 2, clone-related tasks as level 5) inspects the damage. He fully believes that Kasa-bloom is the culprit. In fact, he says, he was here when the second attack happened, and he clearly remembers seeing her flee the scene. But if asked, he can't remember whether the person he saw leaving had two arms or three.

If the KEY that is Zero is here, it masquerades as just one more venom trooper. If this is the first time the PCs have had a chance to notice Zero, it's unlikely they'll become suspicious until they see the same clone show up at a few more crime scenes.

**Venom Trooper Clone:** level 3, seeing through deception as level 2; health 10; Armor 1; forearm melee blades inflict 4 points of damage plus 4 additional points of Speed damage on a failed Might defense roll

**GM Intrusion:** If the character fails a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll, a massive clone vat, damaged in the firebomb, comes loose and topples onto him, inflicting 6 points of damage and pinning him until someone makes a difficulty 5 Might roll to shift the vat off of him.

START



## UMBILICAL NURSERY

The Umbilical Nursery was housed on a high level of a multiuse skyscraper. Four venom troopers hired by Zal guard the entrance, though PCs can try to talk or sneak their way past the clones to explore the ruined floor. The nursery features a very large corpse of a fishlike “mother” in the center of a wide basin filled with eggs and dead floating umbilicals.

If the KEY that exonerates Kasa-bloom is present, it's in the form of a three-armed woman who says she is investigating the scene on behalf of Zal; she says her name is Mar-saal. She is actually Kasa-bloom, trying to clear her own name. If the PCs confront her, she earnestly claims innocence. This evidence may not be enough for others, but perhaps it will sway the characters.

If the KEY that is Zero is here, it is masquerading as just one more venom trooper. If the PCs become suspicious, Zero bolts, leaping off the edge of someplace high (since it can fly). It leads the characters on a wild chase across balconies, around flying vehicles, and through pneumatic tubes. It's up to the GM whether the PCs catch the trooper before it leads them to a trap it has set up at Zal Mods.

## THREATENED ZAL CLONE FACTORY

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

The only other stationary Zal clone facility in Harmonious is in a midlevel location in a high skyscraper. It remains in operation, but due to the perceived risk, it is under increased security. Six venom troopers guard the facility to ensure that nothing will endanger the next clone batch. (There are only six because the shortage of troopers spiked the price, and someone in Zal found it profitable to sell several troop lots while prices remain high.)

Besides the venom troopers, four Zal technicians (level 2, clone-related tasks as level 5) are on the job.

If the KEY that is Zero is here, it is posing as one of the venom trooper guards, but only until it tries to set off a firebomb like the one it used in other clone facilities. If Zero is allowed a few rounds to set up, the blast radius is much wider than an immediate distance.

If Zero attempts to destroy the new facility with witnesses present, the event also serves as the KEY that helps exonerate Kasa-bloom, whether the clone fails or succeeds.

**GM Intrusion:** If the PCs attempt to stop Zero, the other venom troopers, too dim to understand what's actually happening, attack the characters in return, thinking that the PCs are attacking one of their own.

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

## ZAL MODS

This blasted, empty shop is located in a market skyscraper containing many other shops. It was declared a total loss by Zal and has been condemned and closed off with an amberlike sealant until something can be done about it. No venom troopers have been assigned here. Investigating PCs discover that although the sealant looks whole, it has been cut, allowing entry.

The KEY that is Zero is probably present only if the PCs have chased the trooper here from some other location.

**GM Group Intrusion:** A level 5 firebomb trap set by Zero goes off, inflicting 7 points of damage on all characters within a given area of Zal Mods, and blinding them for one minute on a failed Might defense roll. If Zero is present, the clone is not affected and takes advantage of the blast to escape.

## ZAL ZEALOTS

This encounter occurs whenever the GM feels it would be best, if at all. If used, it should be presented as a group GM intrusion.

Three Zal zealots (level 5; Armor 1) catch up to the PCs. These Zal learned that the characters are working on behalf of the Quiet Cabal to get Kasa-bloom off the hook. The zealots tell them to back off or they'll be sorry. Depending on how the PCs react, a fight could break out. The Zal do not fight to the death or try to kill the PCs.

**GM Intrusion:** A zealot pushes a character over one of the many edges in Harmonious. She must make a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll or fall to the next lower platform 100 feet (30 m) below, taking 10 points of damage and moving one step down the damage track.





## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### HARMONIOUS

Harmonious, the Glistening City, swarms with thousands of humanoids, each sporting unearthly biomechanical enhancements, most of them shocking to those born on Earth. The population travels by foot and by air, weaving aerial layers overhead that only partly obscure the magnificently elevated skyscrapers reaching higher still. The city hosts a plethora of wide public plazas thick with Rukians standing, sitting, floating, but mostly lying spread-eagled on the ground, their eyes closed and their umbilicals plugged into a central All Song communal.

### PLUGGING INTO THE ALL SONG

If you wish to inject a little color into a PC's first experience in plugging into the All Song, read aloud the following.

#### *read aloud*

*It's like you're in the middle of a swarm of a billion insects, all coming for you. Each promises to give you the name you seek, if you'll only let it in. Opalescent beetles against your eyeball. A furred hatch of spiders at the corner of your mouth. A marching ant colony seeking passage in your nose. And all of the unknown entities, the ones you've never seen—the silvered grubs, the black maggots, the torn-winged bloodmoths, the unnamed, the shadowed, the glistening, the newly hatched bodies that burrow and borrow and bite and eat.*

### PNEUMATIC ELEVATOR TUBE SYSTEM

The PCs can use these tubes to get around Harmonious quickly. The pneumatic elevator tubes are transparent, flexible hollow shafts that feel slightly wet and adapt in diameter to each individual passenger. The tubes go all over Ruk, providing direct, quick access to specific points around and beneath the city. Unlike elevators on Earth, any given tube can branch, bend, curve, and otherwise redirect a passenger in any direction on his way to the stated address. Some tubes can even change their destination on the fly, while a traveler is still zooming through them.

For a Rukian, the feeling of tube travel is entirely normal and unremarkable. For someone born on Earth, using a tube can be an intensely claustrophobic, potentially

horrifying, and certainly dizzying experience. A tube uses an instantly evaporating frictionless gel to rapidly accelerate travelers via complex peristaltic action—it's like the tube is constantly swallowing a passenger. Upon arrival, an Earthborn native, even one who has translated to Ruk, becomes nauseous for a few rounds on a failed difficulty 2 Might defense roll.

### 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). Dead ends are part of any investigation and help pace the scenario. However, too many dead ends can leave the PCs feeling bogged down and exhausted.

### 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 *Venom Rising* is used in an ongoing campaign, the PCs may have translated to Ruk for some other reason entirely, especially if they are Estate agents (as a courtesy, the Estate keeps the Quiet Cabal apprised of its operatives' movement in Ruk). They might be approached by Am-geer just as those matters are wrapping up. Better yet, the scenario could develop more organically—perhaps the PCs met Kasa-bloom during a previous mission in Ruk, a joint operation between the Estate and the Quiet Cabal, before she got the biomodification that increased her arm count to three. They found her to be competent but also somewhat unstable, a person who might well be capable of bombing Zal facilities. On the other hand, the characters owe her for the help she provided on that previous mission, and they might decide to clear her name (if it's possible) on their own.





Alternatively, to connect this adventure to a few others in this book, the PCs come to Ruk looking for clues regarding a recursion-traveling entity they know only as the **Mad Professor**. The characters know that a Quiet Cabal agent named Kasa-bloom had some interaction with the Mad Professor in the past. However, when they arrive in Ruk, they find Kasa-bloom has fled and been branded as a terrorist.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering Zero as the real saboteur, and another 2 XP if they manage to do so without killing Zero.

If Zero survives and is handed over to the Zal for further study, all goes quiet for a time. If the PCs do not pursue the matter further, they don't know that the Zal want to study Zero to figure out how it gained self-awareness mainly so they can ensure that it never happens again. In truth, Zero is essentially tortured in a variety of medical experiments by technicians who believe that the clone is as much a piece of

property as any other nearly mindless venom trooper. This experience gives Zero the **spark**, and what's more, the clone gains the psychic impetus required for it to become **quicken**.

Using its newfound abilities, Zero escapes the Zal and then flees Ruk, traveling through alternate recursions. Depending on the GM's needs, Zero might track down the PCs to thank them for helping it reach enlightenment, or to take vengeance on them for making it wake more fully to a world of cruelty where terrible things—such as the torture it was forced to endure—can happen.

On the other hand, Kasa-bloom is indebted to the PCs if they helped to clear her name. If the characters ever need her assistance, the Quiet Cabal agent is ready to provide it. At the very least, Kasa-bloom becomes a Quiet Cabal contact that the PCs can rely on for information, or who sometimes contacts them to pass on items of interest. If the characters are operatives of the Estate, they might become a primary conduit of communication between their employers and the Quiet Cabal.

*Mad Professor's Gambit,*  
page 66

*Spark,* page 22

*Quicken,* page 22





## MAD PROFESSOR'S GAMBIT

**Caution:** Mad Professor's Gambit will challenge characters who prefer to settle encounters through violence. The Moriarty Attacks encounter allows the PCs to ally with Moriarty2 instead of fighting him, which might be the only chance low-tier characters have of surviving the scenario.

**Professor Moriarty:** level 7, interaction and knowledge skills as level 9; long-range pistol attack inflicts 7 points of damage that ignore Armor; carries several cyphers, including one that grants +5 to Armor



Moriarty, page 307

Ardeyn, page 160

Ruk, page 190

Cataclyst, page 238

Entropic seed, page 219

Planetovore, page 8

### BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs are caught up in a feud between two cross-recursion criminal masterminds—alternate versions of Moriarty—who are building a device able to control the Strange.

### DETAILS

“Professor Brian Duncan” is the alias the original Moriarty uses when he translates between limited worlds and Earth. In that capacity, Duncan managed to become an accredited consultant for both the Office of Strategic Recursion and the Estate. For years, he’s used his position in those organizations, as well as contacts among his own criminal cross-recursion empire, to assemble plans and components for a device he believes will render him capable of controlling the Strange itself. In a nutshell, Moriarty wants to become all powerful.

Components for the device, gathered over years, include Magic artifacts from crypts of Ardeyn and similar worlds, Psionic artifacts from recursions seeded from roleplaying games, Mad Science artifacts from recursions like Ruk and Cataclyst, and an entropic seed taken from the dark energy network of the Strange. Moriarty was aided indirectly by all the people he duped over the years and by an array of henchmen and underlings who only ever saw part of his scheme. Perhaps most surprisingly, his main partner was a second Moriarty from an alternate recursion that diverged from his own.

The device Moriarty is assembling is a “personal dark energy amplification control harness,” though he usually just calls it “the harness.” It promises to give its wearer the ability to walk at will between recursions, either as if through a matter gate or in translation, while customizing foci abilities

on the fly, regardless of recursion or operant law. Furthermore, with just a bit of extra mental effort, the wearer can rework an extant recursion in small ways and possibly, as Moriarty hopes, in very big ways. He hopes to become, in effect, a god. (The Estate might have another name for Moriarty should he attain this goal: planetovore.)

For the final construction and assembly of the harness, Moriarty selected a recursion seeded from thousands of stories about improbable science and magic that he calls Steam London. It has the advantage of possessing technology far in advance of its Victorian trappings, where large construction projects that result in dirigibles, giant robots, and other wonders of “the modern world” do not draw undue attention from the locals (as long as one has paid the proper Mad Science Tax to the London authorities). The harness’s final construction requires an extensive industrial support infrastructure, though when finished, the harness will be small enough for a single person to wear.

Predictably, the two Moriartys fell out before the harness was completely assembled. The second version of the professor—call him Moriarty2—took a final few components and hid them around Steam London, and then launched a secret offensive against Moriarty in hopes of gaining control of the project. Because the henchmen of the original Moriarty can’t tell the difference between him and Moriarty2, the masterminds have become deadlocked.

Thus, Professor Brian Duncan finds the PCs (or the Estate, who in turn contacts the PCs) and asks for their help, lying about what’s going on while providing shadings of the truth. Duncan explains how Moriarty stole components for a device he was working on in Steam London designed to be used to defend

the Earth should a planetovore ever gain a foothold. Now Duncan is worried that Moriarty will use the components to confer the same abilities on himself. He needs to be stopped.

### SALIENT POINTS

- Steam London is a recursion that operates under the laws of Mad Science, Magic, and Psionics and is typified by a steampunk aesthetic.
- In Steam London, massive dirigibles, giant robots, rocket packs, and duels with rocket guns are not out of the question.
- The once-fictional Moriarty is alive and quickened, able to travel between the recursions of the Strange; his current base is in Steam London.
- Moriarty is a master of creating aliases, and he uses his Professor Brian Duncan alias to hide his true identity from the Estate (and other organizations).
- Moriarty has been building a powerful device he calls the harness to give himself godlike abilities.
- Another Moriarty from an alternate recursion (Moriarty2) stole vital components before the harness was finished.
- Forces controlled by the rival Moriartys fight each other at locations around Steam London.
- The PCs are thrust into the middle of this conflict with incomplete information, but they may learn the truth as they investigate.

### STARTING POINT

The PCs translate to Steam London; tell the players to activate their Steam London foci. Fresh from hearing Professor Brian Duncan's claims, they appear before the Tower of London, the default entry of the recursion, and are determined (or ordered by the Estate) to find the missing components that "Moriarty" stole and return them to Duncan at his mobile facility called the Camden Dirigible, also in Steam London.

The locations that Duncan identifies as potential hiding spots where "Moriarty" may have stashed the stolen components are Estelle's Curiosity Shop and Southworks. If the PCs investigate, he hopes they'll find a trail that leads to the recovery of both components.

The two components the PCs are looking for in particular are a canister of *helium-3* and a tome of bound parchments called the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*.

### THE WRAP-UP

If the PCs help Professor Duncan get back his stolen components by dealing with "Moriarty," he is grateful and rewards them with friendship, cyphers, and a promise of returning to Earth with the harness when he finishes it. However, a few months later, the PCs may have to deal with Duncan—revealed to be Moriarty—as a vastly powerful threat to all existence.

If the PCs learn that there are two Moriartys and deny both of them their goals, the characters potentially save Earth and all the recursions connected to it from the machinations of a villain made vastly more powerful. And although they do not gain the use of the harness for themselves (because only the Moriartys knew the secret of its construction and operation), they do gain the unfinished prototype, which is a powerful artifact in its own right.

#### KEYS

This scenario has three keys:



Something that reveals the truth about Duncan being the original Moriarty.



A canister of helium-3.



The Pnakotic Manuscripts.

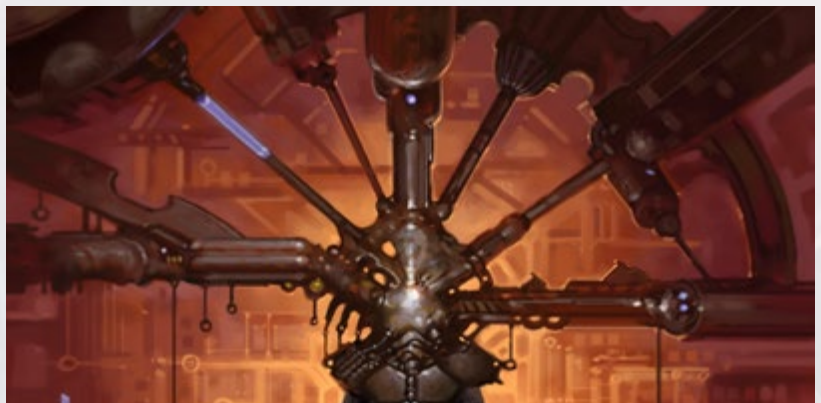
If an encounter has the potential to include a key but does not, it may have a few random cyphers instead, depending on the flow of the session. Overall, the entire scenario should offer the PCs eight to ten cyphers.

#### What a Recursor Knows About Steam London:

*When PC recursors first translate to this recursion, they know the first two salient points.*

*Helium-3, page 46*

*Pnakotic Manuscripts, page 23*







## GETTING AROUND STEAM LONDON

Black cabs, which are drawn by steam-powered robot horses, are the cheapest and most reliable way to get around Steam London. Merely having an address or the name of a public place of business is good enough for most black cab drivers. Most fares are less than 50 pence.

Someone with a pound to spare can flag down a mini-dirigible, which has a cab large enough to hold up to six passengers and the pilot. It's a great way to travel quickly across the city or to reach other, much larger dirigibles that rarely come in to dock.



## ESTELLE'S CURIOSITY SHOP

This London shop is owned by Lady Estelle Ealing (level 4), a middle-aged woman who tends to speak quickly and at length. Her shop contains a wide variety of goods, both useful and, as the sign outside promises, curious: glassware, fine clothing and hats, and tools, but also fossils, spare parts from broken steampunk machines, and dolls (some of which are steam-powered). She says she doesn't know anything about anyone named Moriarty.

If the PCs show interest in oddities she doesn't have (like helium-3 or old spellbooks), she suggests they go see Dr. McGonigal in Wandsworth. The characters can also find a few cyphers here for sale.

If Lady Estelle has the KEY that can reveal the truth about Professor Duncan, it's only a clue along the way. If Brian Duncan's name is mentioned, she remembers a man by that name who came into her shop over a year ago, looking for a magic talisman called the Holy Grail. She told him that the advertisement about having the Grail in her shop was a joke. He gave her such a glare that Estelle is sure she'd be dead if looks could kill, and then he stormed out.

**GM Intrusion:** A PC examining a curiosity is surprised by how slippery it is; on a failed difficulty 3 Speed defense roll, the character drops the item and it breaks. Cost: 20 pounds.



## SOUTHWORKS

This large structure is an abandoned metalworks. The place recently hosted a firefight between two groups of people, but except for bullet holes, electrical burn marks, and blood puddles, little of obvious importance remains, and there is no explanation of who the two groups were or why they were fighting.

If the KEY that helps unmask Duncan is present, it's just a clue. Someone has spray-painted the following message on one wall: "Which Moriarty is the real Moriarty?"

**Loot:** An electro-gun was left behind. It has a short range, inflicts 7 points of damage by electric arc, and stuns a victim for one round if he fails a Might defense roll (Depletion: 1 in 1d20).







## MORIARTY ATTACKS!

This encounter comes to the PCs, rather than the other way around, as a GM intrusion. When the GM feels it would be best, but preferably after the characters have had time to investigate Estelle's Curiosity Shop and Southworks, Moriarty2 comes for the PCs. He assumes they are willing servants of the original Moriarty; he doesn't know they've been duped.

If the KEY that unmask Duncan is divulged, it's when Moriarty2 attacks. He informs the PCs that *he* is the true Moriarty, and the one they're working for is an impostor. If the characters realize what that means and offer to ally with Moriarty2 against the original, Moriarty2 agrees, breaks off his attack, and accompanies them on their investigation. (If this happens, consider revising what's going on, so that it was the original Moriarty who hid the components until he could deal with Moriarty2, which he hoped the PCs would do by drawing him out.)

If the KEY unmasking Duncan doesn't play out as above, then Moriarty2 might carry one or both of the other KEYS with him.



## MAD PROFESSOR'S GAMBIT

### CAMDEN DIRIGIBLE

The Camden Dirigible is one of the largest floating over Steam London. It's easy to reach via mini-dirigible. The owner of record is one Professor Brian Duncan. One level of the multilevel gondola is a laboratory containing all manner of technical, magical, and psionic equipment. The unfinished harness is also mounted here in the center of the lab, connected via wires and tubes to various pieces of secondary equipment, inside a transparent level 8 containment vault to which only Moriarty has the key; *reveal Show 'Em S (page 81) to the players.*

If the PCs visit before they know the truth about Duncan, the professor is happy to show them around and offer them a drink, but he's anxious for them to get on with their work. Of course, if the characters have the sought-after components, he instead showers them with cyphers, hundreds of pounds, and maybe even an artifact or two before bidding them adieu.

If the PCs arrive knowing the truth, Duncan attacks them. If the characters have previously allied with Moriarty2 (see Moriarty Attacks!), the two Moriartys spend several rounds focusing their fire on each other, allowing the PCs to do as they wish. If they join the fight, whichever Moriarty the PCs focus their attacks on goes down first, leaving the other one to deal with, but he is wounded. The surviving Moriarty has sustained damage from the fight, and the difficulty of his attacks and defenses is increased by two steps.

**Loot:** If the PCs have time, they can load up on cyphers from the lab and perhaps even gain control of the dirigible. They might also take the harness, though it still doesn't work as Moriarty intended, and without the original mastermind to finish the device, it never will.

**GM Intrusion:** One of the characters is knocked off the dirigible (either over the edge or through a hole blasted in the deck) and must make a difficulty 5 Speed defense roll to catch onto something. Otherwise a fall into the Thames inflicts 10 points of damage and moves the PC one step down the damage track.



### DR. MCGONIGAL'S CLOCKWORK LAB

*Reveal Show 'Em R (page 81) to the players.*

This laboratory in an old clock tower features clockwork mechanisms of every sort, including Dr. McGonigal himself. McGonigal is a large humanoid clockwork entity. Initially cordial, if the PCs even breathe the name Moriarty, McGonigal assumes the worst and attacks. However, if the characters convince him that they are working against the villain, McGonigal breaks off the onslaught and offers his apologies.

Once calmed, McGonigal explains that Moriarty tried to bring him into the fold as another part of the mastermind's criminal network, which he believes stretches across London. McGonigal refused, and Moriarty tried to kill him.

If either of the component KEYS is present, it's because Moriarty2 approached the clockwork entity disguised as a fellow scientist (Dr. Simon Greenwell), asking if McGonigal could store a few samples from his research while Greenwell went on sabbatical. If the PCs describe the KEYS, McGonigal realizes that he may have been had, and he gives up the item in return for the characters' promise to bring Moriarty down.

If the KEY that helps unmask Duncan is present, it's a clue. If Brian Duncan is mentioned, McGonigal remarks (perhaps somewhat jealously) that Duncan is a man of amazing means for a professor; what other doctor in Steam London has a lab in a dirigible?

**Dr. McGonigal:** level 5; health 20; Armor 2; flame jet short-range attack inflicts 5 points of damage on target and anyone standing next to target, and on a second failed Speed defense roll, burns target for 1 point of damage for three rounds

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



## MORE DETAILS

Read this section if you have time.

### TALE OF TWO MORIARTYS

The original Moriarty is a criminal mastermind, but one who doesn't advertise his illicit nature. Instead he displays irascible charm, impeccable manners, and a thoroughly engaging manner. His smile seems guileless, his declarations are from the heart, and his absentminded fumbling comes across as endearing.

It's an act. Professor Moriarty can go from pleasant to as cold and deadly as an Antarctic blizzard.

It's also something of his undoing—his overweening ego led him to seek out another version of himself from one of several recursions spawned by tales and shows about the great detective. Being the "elder" Moriarty, he assumed that he'd have no trouble gaining the cooperation of another person who saw the world exactly as he did, a person who might be the only true confidante he could ever have. And at first, as he woke Moriarty2 to the spark, that's what he got. But soon enough, trust between the two dissolved, and eventually Moriarty2 judged that *he* should be the one to wear the harness.



#### ARTIFACT: THE HARNESS

**Level:** 1d6 + 1

**Form:** Chest harness with central crystal capacitor

**Effect:** Being incomplete, the harness does not function as Moriarty intended. However, it still confers a benefit. When worn, the harness decreases by one step the difficulty of all translation rolls, Strange lore rolls, and rolls related to using twists, revisions, or moves.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d10



### CAMDEN DIRIGIBLE

A wonder of steampunk technology, the dirigible is self-flying in the sense that a program can be punched into the control console in the cockpit, and the dirigible can take over from there. The dirigible also contains a dozen or so clockwork crewbots (level 3) who constantly see to the craft's maintenance. A cupola hanging off the bottom of the gondola contains a rocket emplacement, which can fire

rockets at targets within a few miles that inflict 8 points of damage on all creatures and objects within immediate range of the target.

In addition to the main harness lab, the gondola contains several cabins, an engine room, the cockpit, a meeting room, a library, a lounge, and other amenities.

Moriarty started customizing the dirigible to make it capable of traveling between recursions, but that was sidelined when he began the harness project. After all, what need would he have for such a craft once he gained the direct power of the Strange? Of course, the characters may feel differently. Finishing Moriarty's work isn't as simple as flipping a switch, but PCs who are interested in pursuing the option might be able to obtain the necessary equipment in future adventures. For instance, the helium-3 might be just what's needed to power the dirigible's cross-recursion engine.

### 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 meet and interact with Professor Brian Duncan one or two times before the scenario starts. Using his charm, Duncan should easily make the characters believe that he is a friend and someone to be trusted, especially if he helps them resolve some other unrelated issue. Then, when Duncan approaches the PCs for help, they'll be ready to assist.

In addition, it's possible that as part of a campaign, both Moriartys might have had the time and inclination to gather more henchmen. In this case, the GM may wish to draw out the final encounter on the Camden Dirigible by including additional forces hired by both Moriartys. Those forces could serve as intimidation, or they could dive into any fight that's offered to create a spectacular battle in the skies of Steam London.

Finally, it's probable that at least one Moriarty survives. If the PCs make off with or destroy the incomplete harness, the surviving criminal mastermind is likely to pursue them eventually to regain what they stole or at least take vengeance. Moriarty isn't one to let enemies prosper when they could be crossed off just as easily.



## STEAM LONDON ATTRIBUTES

**Level:** 5

**Laws:** Mad Science, Magic, Psionics

**Playable Races:** Human

**Foci:** Conducts Weird Science, Entertains, Infiltrates, Integrates Weaponry, Is Licensed to Carry, Leads, Looks for Trouble, Operates Undercover, *Wears a Steam-Powered Suit\**, Wields Two Weapons at Once, Works the System

**Skills:** Steam London lore

**Connection to Strange:** When the London fog rolls in, sometimes connections to the Strange form in the thickest banks of mist.

**Connection to Earth:** None currently

**Size:** About 600 square miles (1,550 square kilometers)

**Spark:** 10%

**Trait:** Scientific. The difficulty of science-based tasks in the recursion is reduced by one step.

*\* indicates focus found in this book*



## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Read this section after the session is over.

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for discovering the truth about Brian Duncan. If they stop either Moriarty from finishing the harness, award them an additional 2 XP.

If a Moriarty survives the scenario, he does not stop in his attempts to put together the harness, unless the PCs destroy both the harness and the dirigible that serves as his base and foundry. Such drastic steps also destroy many of the components Moriarty collected from across recursions and the Strange over years of looking. If this occurs, the professor takes a bit of a holiday from criminal masterminding. But only as long as it takes to come up with a new scheme for cross-recursion domination. It's possible that he'll attempt to ally with some other powerful entity, up to and including the *Betrayer* in Ardeyn. Moriarty's particular charm is something the Betrayer is likely susceptible to. Together, the duo might accomplish what neither has so far been able to do alone.

*Wears a Steam-Powered Suit, page 9*

*Betrayer, page 178*





A.



B.





C.



D.





E.



F.





G. \_\_\_\_\_



H. \_\_\_\_\_





I.



J.









M.

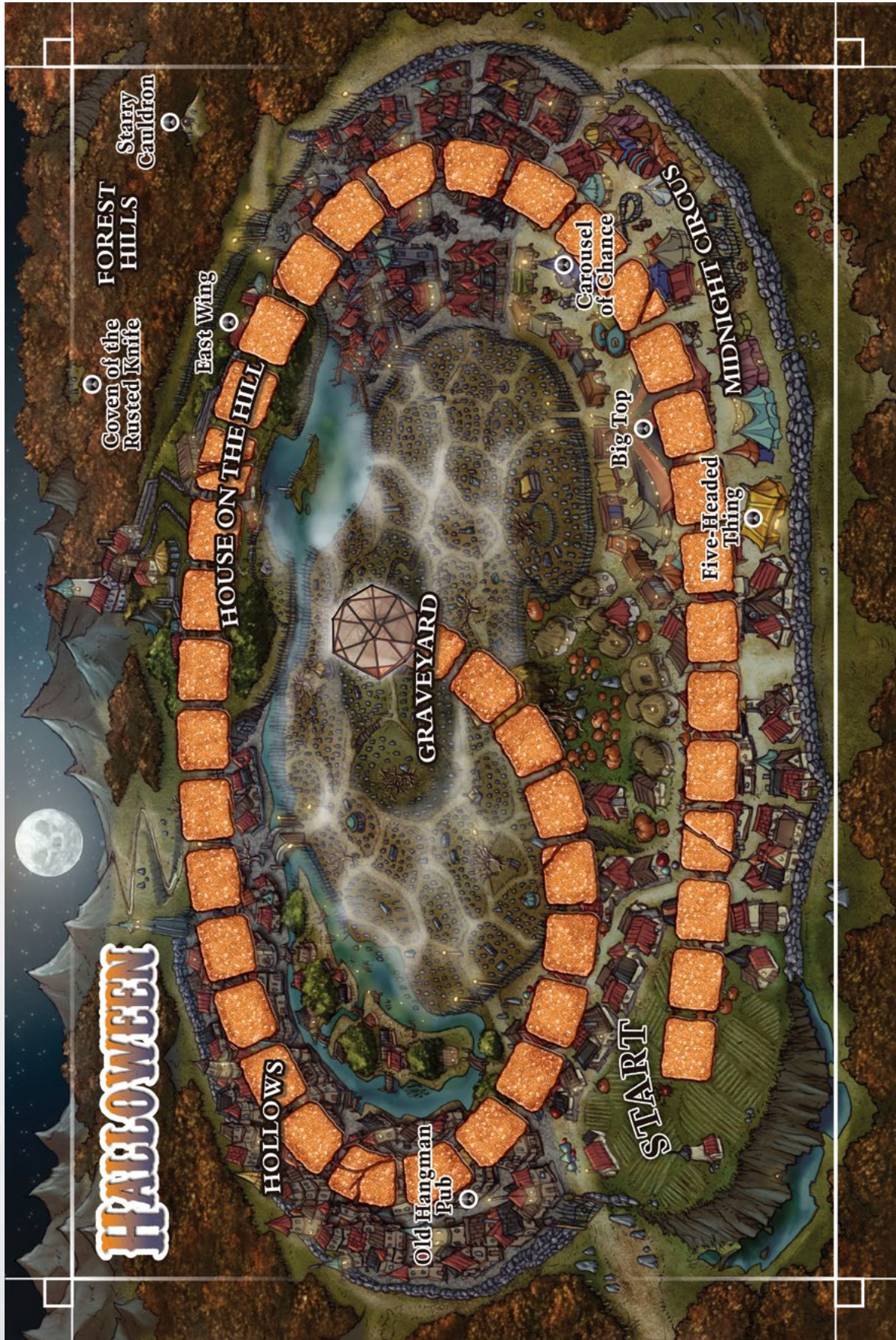


N.





0.





P.



Q.





R.



S.





### 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 Strange* corebook (page 21) for a list of sample skills.

# THE STRANGE

Camille Valentine

IS A **Strong** vector WHO

ON

TIER

1

EFFORT

1

XP

might

speed

intellect

19

1

POOL

EDGE

10

1

POOL

EDGE

9

0

POOL

EDGE

SKILLS

T = TRAINED, S = SPECIALIZED, I = INABILITY T S I

Breaking things	X		
Jumping	X		
Running	X		
Swimming	X		
Speed defense (when not wearing armor)	X		
+ active focus skills, if any			

ABILITIES

Practiced With All Weapons (enabler)
Practiced in Armor (enabler)
Bash (1 Might point)
Translation
From Strong (corebook page 50):
Breaking stuff (already figured into skills)
Very Powerful (already figured into Pools)
Jumps (already figured into skills)
+ active focus abilities, if any

ATTACKS

M D

Add from active focus equipment or ability, if any		

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+

1

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ACTION	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 HOUR
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 MIN	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 DAY

DAMAGE TRACK

<input type="checkbox"/> IMPAIRED	<input type="checkbox"/> DEBILITATED
+1 Effort per level	Can move only an immediate distance
Ignore minor and major effect results on rolls	Cannot move if Speed Pool is 0
Combat roll of 17-20 deals only +1 damage	

CYPHERS

Ceramic sphere (level 5, grenade): long-range attack creates electrical discharge inflicting 5 points of damage on all creatures within immediate range of the target.

Melt-all (level 4, fluid in clear container): organic slime dissolves 1 cubic foot of material each round. After one round per cypher level, the slime dies and becomes inert.

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Add from active focus


BACKGROUND & CONNECTION

You received an athletic college scholarship, but you got in so much trouble outside of class that the scholarship was eventually revoked.

Connection

When you first met, Padma got all weird on you and told you that you were going to die an early death. Well, it's been ten years of hard living, and nothing's hurt you yet.

Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were once part of a secret military project investigating paranormal abilities, but it disbanded a long time ago. A few months ago, you were reunited with a few friends from your old unit. Now you and your friends have been recruited by the Estate, an organization that safeguards Earth from the Strange.



## EARTH, STEAM LONDON, AND CRASH FOCUS:

### LOOKS FOR TROUBLE (corebook page 68)

**ADD TO SKILL:** Healing (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Brawler (already figured into attacks for melee damage); Wound Tender (already figured into skills)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Street clothes appropriate to recursion  
Heavy leather coat/Plastiskin in Ruk (+1 to Armor)  
Voice recording device  
First aid kit  
Utility knife  
Cell phone (umbilical in Ruk; delete in Steam London)  
\$400 (in Steam London, £40; in Ruk, 40 bits)

#### ATTACKS:

Fists [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 3  
Light knife [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 3  
Medium cudgel; DMG 5  
Medium pistol (needler in Ruk); DMG 4

## RUK FOCUS:

### FIGHTS ALIENS (*Strange Revelations* page 8)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Alien Target (enabler)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Space suit (+1 to Armor)  
Comfortable undergarments  
Alien sketchbook  
Holotablet  
Alien eye set in a pendant  
100 credits

#### ATTACKS:

Heavy laser; DMG 6  
Electronic whip [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2

## ARDEYN FOCUS:

### SLAYS DRAGONS (corebook page 77)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Dragon lore (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Dragon Lore (already figured into skills); Dragon Bane (already figured into attacks);  
Dragon Sword

#### EQUIPMENT:

Ardeyn clothing  
Chainmail (+2 to Armor)  
Explorer's pack  
600 crowns

#### ATTACKS:

Heavy talwar (greatsword); DMG 7  
Medium bow; DMG 5  
(+3 damage vs. creatures more than twice as big as you)

## CANNIBAL WASTELAND FOCUS:

### REGENERATES TISSUE (corebook page 74)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Regeneration (1 Intellect point)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Wasteland clothes, tattoos, piercings  
Long leather jacket (+1 to Armor)  
Solar-powered music player  
5 days of food  
100 bullets (currency and ammunition)

#### ATTACKS:

Shotgun (short range); DMG 6

# THE STRANGE

Kevin Chancellor

IS A **Skeptical** **paradox** WHO

ON

TIER

1

EFFORT

1

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

8

0

POOL

EDGE

8

0

POOL

EDGE

20

1

POOL

EDGE

SKILLS

T = TRAINED, S = SPECIALIZED, I = INABILITY T S I

Identifying	X		
Psychology	X		
Detect lies, illusions, etc.	X		
Strange lore	X		
+ active focus skills, if any			

ABILITIES

Practiced With Light Weapons (enabler)  
 Exception (1 Intellect point)  
 Closed Mind (enabler)  
 Translation  
 From *Skeptical* (corebook page 48):  
 Insightful (already figured into Pools)  
 Skeptical training (already figured into skills)  
 + active focus abilities, if any

ATTACKS

M D

Add from active focus equipment or ability, if any		

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+

1

☐ 1 ACTION ☐ 1 HOUR  
☐ 10 MIN ☐ 1 DAY

DAMAGE TRACK

☐ IMPAIRED ☐ DEBILITATED  
 +1 Effort per level Can move only an immediate distance  
 Ignore minor and major effect results on rolls Cannot move if Speed Pool is 0  
 Combat roll of 17-20 deals only +1 damage

CYPHERS

Piercer (level 4, nodule): light weapon (or ammunition fired from weapon) to which nodule is attached ignores Armor for one hour.

Curative (level 5, pill): restores 5 points to Might Pool.

Adhesive (level 7, tube with paste): creates a level 7 bond between any two objects.

3

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Add from active focus

ARMOR

MONEY

BACKGROUND & CONNECTION

An experiment you conducted in your garage blew up, caused your house to burn down, and killed some of your family. You still dream about it sometimes, so you joined the military.

Connection

Back in your military days, that bastard Léopold stuck you with a thrown knife during practice. It was reported as an accident, but you've always wondered. The scar is on your face, so you never forget. Some people say it makes you look dangerous.

You stayed in contact with Yuki Kobayashi because she asked you to make a device able to pick any key card lock. After you delivered the item, you felt guilty that she was going to use it for illicit ends and broke off contact—until recently.

Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were once part of a secret military project investigating paranormal abilities, now long disbanded. A few months ago, you reunited with a few friends from your old unit. Now you and your friends have been recruited by the Estate, an organization that safeguards Earth from the Strange.



## EARTH, CRASH, AND STEAM LONDON FOCI:

### CONDUCTS WEIRD SCIENCE (corebook page 57)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Engineering (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Lab Analysis (3 Intellect points);  
Scientist (already figured into skills)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Street clothing appropriate to recursion (in Crash, add a space suit, +1 to Armor, subtract 2 from Speed)  
Laptop (in Steam London, a portable difference engine)  
Science field kit  
Toolkit  
\$900 (in Steam London, £90; in Crash, 90 credits)

#### ATTACKS:

Light pistol (laser pistol in Crash) [-1 step difficulty];  
DMG 2

## RUK FOCUS:

### METAMORPHOSIZES (corebook page 69)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Battle Chrysalid (2 Intellect points);  
Practiced With Chrysalid Attacks (enabler)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Ruk street clothes  
Umbilical  
70 bits

#### ATTACKS:

Spiker pistol [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2  
Chrysalid attack; DMG 4

## ARDEYN FOCUS:

### SHEPHERDS THE DEAD (corebook page 76)

**SPEED POOL:** Subtract 2

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Question the Spirits (2 Intellect points)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Ardeyn clothing  
Leather jerkin (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)  
Explorer's pack  
Incense and 10 matchsticks  
400 crowns

#### ATTACKS:

Sickle pistol [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2

## CANNIBAL WASTELAND FOCUS:

### WIELDS TWO WEAPONS AT ONCE (corebook page 82)

**SPEED POOL:** subtract 2 points

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Dual Light Wield (enabler)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Wasteland clothes, tattoos, piercings  
Salvaged leather armor (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)  
Explorer's pack  
200 crowns

#### ATTACKS:

Light pistol [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2  
Light pistol [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2  
(attack with both pistols as one action)





## EARTH AND STEAM LONDON FOCI:

### SOLVES MYSTERIES (corebook page 78)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Perception (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Investigator; Sleuth (already figured in skills)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Street clothing appropriate to recursion

Heavy leather coat (+1 to Armor)

Cell phone (in Steam London, a bullhorn)

Flashlight

Laptop (in Steam London, a portable difference engine)

Utility knife

\$300 (in Steam London, £30)

#### ATTACKS:

Light knife [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2

Medium pistol; DMG 4

## RUK AND CRASH FOCUS:

### INFILTRATES (corebook page 62)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Stealth (enabler)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Street clothing appropriate to recursion

Plastiskin in Ruk/Space suit in Crash (+1 to Armor)

Umbilical

Bag of light tools

50 bits (in Crash, 50 credits)

#### ATTACKS:

Medium spear; DMG 4

Spiker pistol; DMG 4

## ARDEYN FOCUS:

### CARRIES A QUIVER (corebook page 55)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Making arrows (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Archer (enabler); Fletcher (enabler) (already figured in skills)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Ardeyn clothing

Leather jerkin (+1 to Armor)

24 arrows

Explorer's pack

Fletching tools

400 crowns

#### ATTACKS:

Medium bow; DMG 4

Light knife [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2

## CANNIBAL WASTELAND FOCUS:

### DRIVES LIKE A MANIAC (*Strange Revelations* page 7)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Drive car, truck, or motorcycle (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Driver (enabler) (already figured in skills); Driving on the Edge (enabler)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Wasteland clothes, tattoos, piercings

Salvaged leather armor (+1 to Armor)

Waterskin (1 day of water)

Access to a vehicle you can drive, with GM approval

90 bullets (currency and ammunition)

#### ATTACKS:

Medium pistol; DMG 4

# THE STRANGE

Luis Ventura

IS A **Tough**

spinner

WHO

ON

TIER

1

EFFORT

1

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

9

0

POOL

EDGE

9

1

POOL

EDGE

16

1

POOL

EDGE

SKILLS

T = TRAINED, S = SPECIALIZED, I = INABILITY T S I

Intimidation

X

Might defense

X

+ active focus skills, if any

ABILITIES

Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons (enabler)

Fast Talk (1 Intellect point)

Spin Encouragement (1 Intellect point)

Manipulator (already figured into skills)

Translation

From Tough (corebook page 50):

Healthy (already figured into recovery roll)

Resilient (already figured into Armor)

+ active focus abilities, if any

ATTACKS

M

D

Add from active focus equipment or ability, if any

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+

2

☐ 1 ACTION

☐ 1 HOUR

☐ 10 MIN

☐ 1 DAY

DAMAGE TRACK

☐ IMPAIRED

☐ DEBILITATED

+1 Effort per level  
Ignore minor and major  
effect results on rolls  
Combat roll of 17-20 deals  
only +1 damage

Can move only an  
immediate distance  
Cannot move if Speed  
Pool is 0

CYPHERS

Visual displacer (level 6, belt): have asset to Speed  
defense tasks for ten minutes.

Telepathic bond (level 5, two pills): two people enjoy a  
telepathic bond for one day, no matter how far apart.

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Add from active focus

1\*

ARMOR

\* + active focus equipment or ability, if any

MONEY

BACKGROUND & CONNECTION

You have no memory of anything that happened to you before the age  
of 18. One of your first memories is joining the military.

Connection

You want Kevin Chancellor to build a device to help you recover  
your memories, but you haven't asked him yet. What if you find out  
something you really didn't want to know?

Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were once part of a secret military project investigating paranormal  
abilities, but it disbanded a long time ago. A few months ago, you  
were reunited with a few friends from your old unit. Now you and  
your friends have been recruited by the Estate, an organization that  
safeguards Earth from the Strange.



## EARTH, CANNIBAL WASTELAND, AND CRASH FOCI:

### LEADS (corebook page 65)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Social interaction (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Natural Charisma (already figured into skills); Good Advice (1 Intellect point)

### EQUIPMENT:

Well-tailored clothing appropriate to recursion  
Laptop (holotablet in Crash; solar-powered in Cannibal Wasteland)

Smartphone (Earth only)

Space suit (Crash only)

\$1,500 (150 credits in Crash; 50 bullets in Cannibal Wasteland)

### ATTACKS:

Medium pistol; DMG 4 (Earth and Crash)

Polearm; DMG 4 (Cannibal Wasteland)

## STEAM LONDON FOCUS:

**WEARS A STEAM-POWERED SUIT** (*Strange Revelations* page 9)

**ADD TO MIGHT EDGE:** +1

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Steam-Powered Suit (already figured into equipment and attacks); Armor-Assisted Action (already figured into Might Edge); practiced in using gauntleted fists as medium weapons (already figured into attacks)

### EQUIPMENT:

Steam-powered suit (+2 to Armor; no Armor penalties)

Street clothes appropriate to Steam London

Toolkit

Debt of £20

### ATTACKS:

Gauntleted fist; DMG 4

## ARDEYN FOCUS:

**EMBRACES QEPHILIM ANCESTRY (COMMERCE)**  
(corebook page 59)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Deceiving (trained); Intimidation (trained becomes specialized); Persuasion (trained); tasks related to trade and barter (trained); Qephilim lore (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Kindred: Commerce (already figured into skills); Qephilim Lore (already figured into skills); Mythlight (enabler)

### EQUIPMENT:

Ardeyn clothing

Qephilim craft coat (+1 to Armor; no Armor penalties)

Shield (grants asset to Speed defense)

Qephilim relic badge, coin shaped

Explorer's pack

400 crowns

### ATTACKS:

Medium quarterstaff; DMG 4

## RUK FOCUS:

**ADAPTS TO ANY ENVIRONMENT** (corebook page 54)

**SPEED POOL:** subtract 2 points

**ADD TO RECOVERY ROLL:** +1

**ADD TO ARMOR:** +1 (applies to all attacks)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Heal (already figured into recovery roll); Defend (already figured into Armor)

### EQUIPMENT:

Ruk clothing

Slicksuit (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)

Bag of light tools

Breather

Umbilical

50 bits

### ATTACKS:

Medium slaughter pistol; DMG 4

# THE STRANGE

Padma Ananda

IS A **Appealing** **paradox** WHO

ON

TIER

1

EFFORT

1

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

9

0

POOL

EDGE

11

0

POOL

EDGE

16

1

POOL

EDGE

SKILLS

T = TRAINED, S = SPECIALIZED, I = INABILITY T S I

Computer use	X		
Resist persuasion or seduction	X		
Pleasant social interaction	X		
Strange lore	X		
+ active focus skills, if any			

ABILITIES

Practiced With Light Weapons (enabler)
Levitate Creature (2+ Intellect points)
Premonition (2 Intellect points)
Translation
From Appealing (corebook page 45):
Resistant to Charms (already figured into skills)
Charismatic (already figured into Pools)
Pleasant (already figured into skills)
+ active focus abilities, if any

ATTACKS

M D

Add from active focus equipment or ability, if any		

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+

1

1 ACTION

1 HOUR

10 MIN

1 DAY

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED

DEBILITATED

+1 Effort per level  
Ignore minor and major  
effect results on rolls  
Combat roll of 17-20 deals  
only +1 damage

Can move only an  
immediate distance  
Cannot move if Speed  
Pool is 0

CYPHERS

Field projector (level 4, belt buckle): grants +1 to Armor for one hour.

Antidote (level 5, large pill): ends an ongoing poison, paralysis, or disease.

Gravity inverter (level 6, ceramic sphere): gravity reverses for one minute in short-range diameter around sphere, excluding an immediate-range diameter around sphere. Sphere can be moved.

3

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Add from active focus


ARMOR

MONEY

BACKGROUND & CONNECTION

You worked for a famous psychic, but she threw you out when she realized your abilities were real, as opposed to her tricks. That's when you joined the military.

Connection

Back when you served together, you really loved hearing Léopold Watson sing, and you'd dearly love to hear him do so again.

You told the fortune for Camille Valentine ten years ago and predicted that she was going to die a grisly death. She didn't believe you, but you know that her death is closer than ever. (What you never told her was that the only way that death will pass her over is if you sacrifice yourself instead.)

Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were once part of a secret military project investigating paranormal abilities, but it disbanded a long time ago. A few months ago, you were reunited with a few friends from your old unit. Now you and your friends have been recruited by the Estate, an organization that safeguards Earth from the Strange.



## EARTH, STEAM LONDON, AND RUK FOCUS:

### ENTERTAINS (corebook page 61)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Pleasant social interaction (trained becomes specialized)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Levity (partly already figured into skills)

### EQUIPMENT:

Street clothing appropriate to recursion  
Smartphone (umbilical in Ruk; delete in Steam London)  
Flute (steam flute in Steam London)  
Pen knife  
\$300 (£30 in Steam London; 30 bits in Ruk)

### ATTACKS:

Light knife [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2  
Light pistol (spiker pistol in Ruk) [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2

## CRASH FOCUS:

### IS LICENSED TO CARRY (corebook page 64)

**SPEED POOL:** subtract 2

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Practiced With Guns (enabler); Gunner (already figured into attacks)

### EQUIPMENT:

Space suit (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)  
Comfortable undergarments  
Holotablet  
80 credits

### ATTACKS:

Light laser gun [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 3  
Heavy laser gun; DMG 7

## ARDEYN FOCUS:

### EMBRACES QEPHILIM ANCESTRY (SILENCE) (corebook page 59)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Perception (trained); Initiative (trained); Stealth (trained); Qephilim lore (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Kindred: Silence (already figured into skills); Qephilim Lore (already figured into skills); Mythlight (enabler)

### EQUIPMENT:

Ardeyn clothing  
Qephilim craft coat (+1 to Armor; no Armor penalties)  
Shield (grants asset to Speed defense)  
Qephilim relic badge, eye shaped  
Explorer's pack  
400 crowns

### ATTACKS:

Light crossbow [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2

## CANNIBAL WASTELAND FOCUS:

### INTEGRATES WEAPONRY (corebook page 63)

**SPEED POOL:** subtract 2

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Part of Me (partly already figured into attacks); Practiced With Integrated Weapons (enabler)

### EQUIPMENT:

Wasteland clothes, tattoos, piercings  
Long leather jacket (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)  
Gas-powered music box  
180 bullets (currency and ammunition)

### ATTACKS:

Integrated rifle; DMG 7

# THE STRANGE

Yuki Kobayashi

IS A **Lucky**

spinner

WHO

ON

TIER

1

EFFORT

1

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

9

0

12

1

13

1

POOL

EDGE

POOL

EDGE

POOL

EDGE

SKILLS

T = TRAINED, S = SPECIALIZED, I = INABILITY T S I

Deceiving

X

+ active focus skills, if any

ABILITIES

Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons (enabler)

Spin Identity (2+ Intellect points)

Sleight of Hand (1 Speed point)

Manipulator (already figured in skills)

Translation

From Lucky (corebook page 48):

Luck Pool: 3 points

Advantage

+ active focus abilities, if any

ATTACKS

M

D

Add from active focus equipment or ability, if any

RECOVERY ROLLS

1D6+

1

1 ACTION

1 HOUR

10 MIN

1 DAY

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED

DEBILITATED

+1 Effort per level  
Ignore minor and major  
effect results on rolls  
Combat roll of 17-20 deals  
only +1 damage

Can move only an  
immediate distance  
Cannot move if Speed  
Pool is 0

CYPHERS

Nullification ray (level 5, taser): end one ongoing effect within long range produced by an artifact, cypher, move, revision, twist, or other special Strange-related effect.

Phase changer (level 4, belt): puts the user out of phase for one minute. During this time, she can pass through solid objects as though she were entirely insubstantial, like a ghost. She cannot make physical attacks or be physically attacked.

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Add from active focus

ARMOR

MONEY

BACKGROUND & CONNECTION

You sometimes supplement your income by acquiring things with your five-fingered discount, either in person or via Internet hacking.

Connection

You met Kevin Chancellor and the others in the military. Afterward, he made an electronic lockpick for you that has really come in handy over the years. You were grateful, but he broke off contact soon afterward. Well, screw him—life is hard.

Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were once part of a secret military project investigating paranormal abilities, but it disbanded a long time ago. A few months ago, you were reunited with a few friends from your old unit. Now you and your friends have been recruited by the Estate, an organization that safeguards Earth from the Strange.



Yuki Kobayashi

## EARTH, STEAM LONDON, AND CRASH FOCUS:

### WORKS THE SYSTEM (corebook page 83)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Computer programming (trained)  
(in Steam London, this skill applies to programming steam machines and difference engines)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Hack the Impossible (3 Intellect points); Computer Programming (already figured into skills)

### EQUIPMENT:

Street clothing appropriate to recursion (in Crash, add a space suit, +1 to Armor, subtract 2 from Speed)  
Laptop (in Steam London, a portable difference engine)  
Smartphone (delete in Steam London)  
Electronic lockpick  
\$500 (in Steam London, £50; in Crash, 50 credits)

### ATTACKS:

Medium pistol; DMG 4

## RUK FOCUS:

### PROCESSES INFORMATION (corebook page 74)

**INTELLECT POOL:** add 4 points

**SPEED POOL:** subtract 2 points

**ADD TO SKILLS:** All Song research (trained); Ruk geography (trained); Microbiome engineering (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Storage Capacity (already figured into Pool); Knowledge Storehouse (already figured into skills)

### EQUIPMENT:

Ruk clothing  
Plastiskin (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)  
Healing kit  
Umbilical  
50 bits

### ATTACKS:

Spiker pistol; DMG 4

## ARDEYN FOCUS:

### PRACTICES SOUL SORCERY (corebook page 71)

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Intellect defense (trained); Might defense (trained)

**ADD TO ARMOR:** +1

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Phylactery (already figured into skills and Armor)

### EQUIPMENT:

Ardeyn clothing  
Explorer's pack  
Phylactery (amulet)  
6 rings set with semiprecious gems  
100 crowns

### ATTACKS:

Medium crossbow; DMG 4

## CANNIBAL WASTELAND FOCUS:

### SOLVES MYSTERIES (corebook page 78)

**SPEED POOL:** subtract 2 points

**ADD TO SKILLS:** Perception (trained)

**ADD TO ABILITIES:** Investigator; Sleuth (already figured into skills)

### EQUIPMENT:

Wasteland clothes, tattoos, piercings  
Long leather jacket (+1 to Armor; reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; already figured into Speed Pool)  
Solar-powered laptop  
Solar-powered flashlight  
Utility knife  
100 bullets (currency and ammunition)

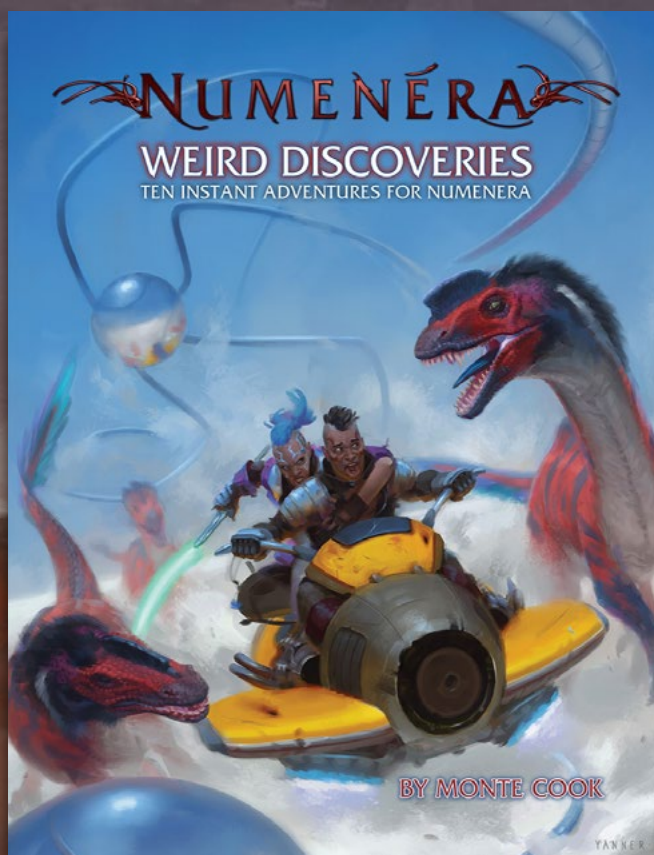
### ATTACKS:

Light pistol [-1 step difficulty]; DMG 2  
3-foot pipe wrench; DMG 4

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# THE STRANGE™

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